

# Annual Report

APRIL 2014–MARCH 2015

INDEPENDENT • INFORMAL • IMPARTIAL • CONFIDENTIAL



The Columbia University Ombuds Office is a confidential resource for faculty, students, and staff to express concerns about workplace and academic issues.

The Ombuds Office adheres to the core principles of independence, informality, impartiality, and confidentiality that form the foundation of organizational ombudsman practice. These principles allow the Ombuds Office to facilitate discussion to help visitors to the office assess and review options. Most importantly, this structure allows the Ombuds Office to hear serious concerns from individuals who might not otherwise come forward.

# Year in Review

## Personnel News

In **March 2014**, Joan C. Waters reopened the Ombuds Office after a brief closure due to the retirement of Columbia's founding ombuds officer, Marsha Wagner. Joan brought relevant experience in mediation and arbitration in labor and employment as well as higher education administration and is a full member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA).

Michael B. Steinberg joined the office in **April 2015** as the associate University ombuds officer. Michael brought higher education experience through his extensive background in mediation both in a higher education setting as well as in the public sector. Michael is a full member of the IOA.

The team became complete in **July 2015**, with the addition of Marilyn Molina as administrative manager of the Ombuds Office. This is a new position focusing on the outreach, publications, and event management activities of the office. Marilyn brings almost a decade of knowledge of how Columbia works from the Facilities events management division as well as an MS in conflict management from Columbia. She will be taking IOA training in the fall and will soon become an associate member of the IOA.

## Refresh of the Physical Office and Promotional Materials

The first year of the reopened Ombuds Office at **660 Schermerhorn Extension** saw changes at the Morningside office with new carpet, paint, and furniture to create an open and welcoming space. The CUMC office was relocated, twice, with the final space at **154 Haven Avenue, Room 412** being one with westward-facing windows over the Hudson providing a light-filled space that is also fresh and welcoming.

The Ombuds Office also rebranded itself with new promotional materials in the form of **pens**, branded **tote bags**, and new **information cards** and **posters**. These items supported an extensive outreach plan to help raise awareness about the office, professional standards, and types of ombuds services provided.

Finally, the refresh extended to the **website**, which brought the branding full circle and added additional resources, a lending library, and a very well-used computer-generated form for scheduling appointments.

## Outreach

In an effort to both learn about the various components of the University and to raise awareness about the office, the Ombuds Office engaged in a varied array of outreach activities. Joan conducted **42** presentations to faculty, staff, and students across the campuses in small and large groups. The office participated in **15** new student orientation sessions on both campuses. Additionally, **77** individual "meet and greet" sessions were conducted with administration and faculty throughout the year and across the University about management, enterprise architecture and information standards, and overall leadership effectiveness.

# Testimonials

““ The Ombuds Office was a **huge help** to me in thinking about how to deal with a situation I am facing. ””

““ [The Ombuds Office] is an **important resource** for employees because it can be difficult to know what University rules and procedures are, and just how best to approach a situation for the best outcome. ””

““ The Ombuds Office experience was very valuable and **gave me confidence** and a safe place to discuss my concerns/issues with a professional who was neutral and open to understanding my concerns. ””

““ It was a **tremendous help** and provided me with important administrative tools that prepared me to deal with my concerns in a professional manner. ””

““ The Ombuds Office’s guidance through a VERY difficult situation was not only **extremely helpful**, but helped to keep my nerves calm as well. ””

# Statistics

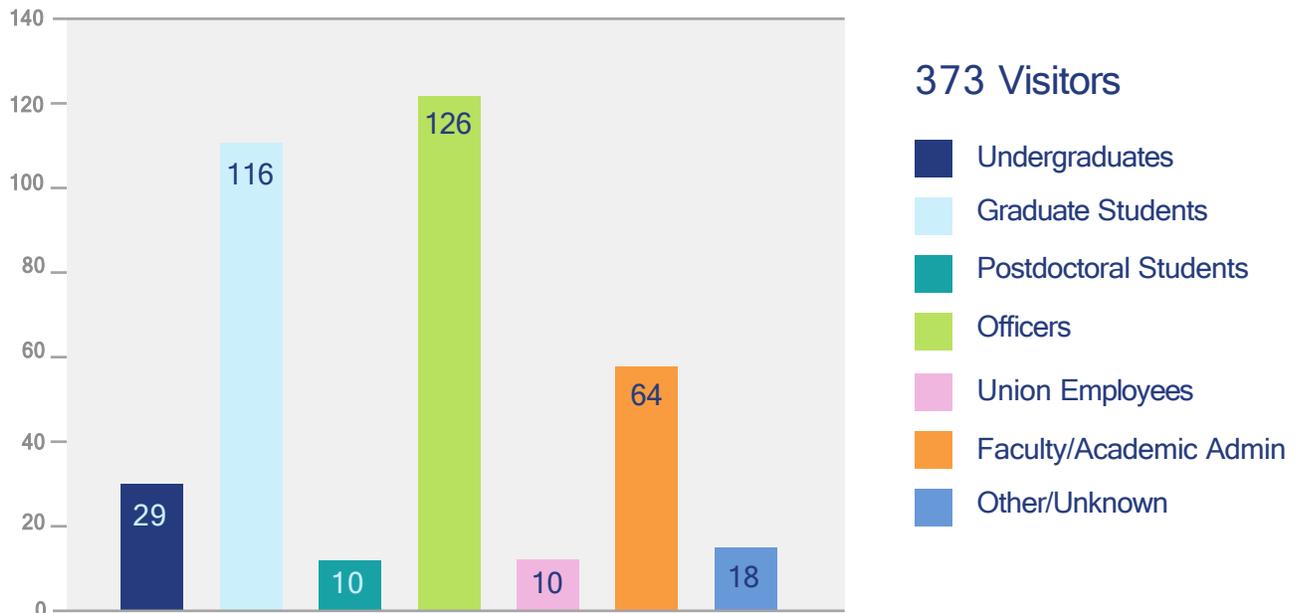
**373** unique visitors to the office

**83** visitors scheduled

**132** repeat meetings

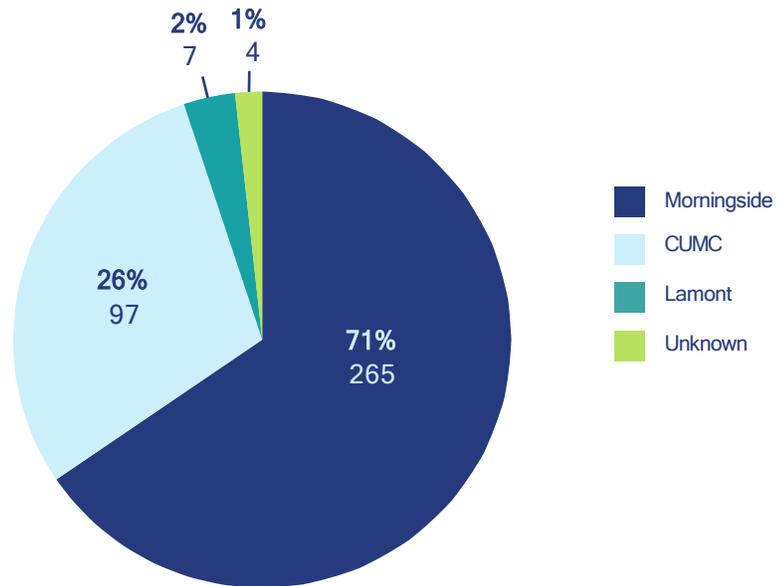
For a total of **505** individual meetings

## VISITORS April 1, 2014 – March 30, 2015

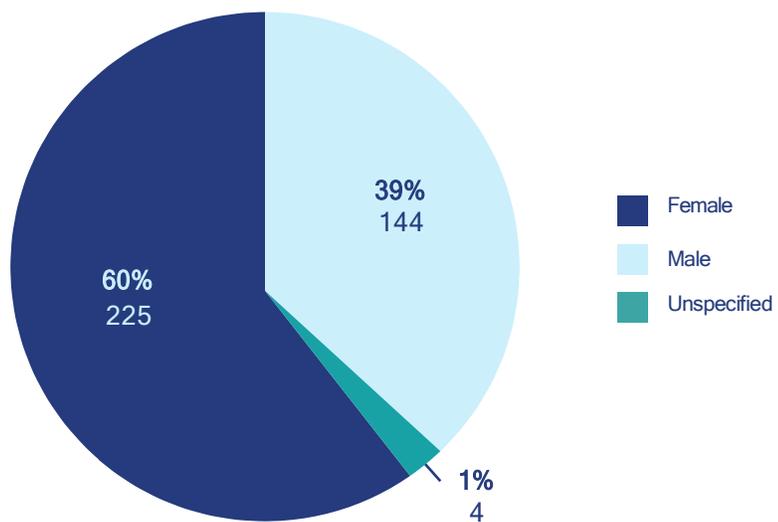


# Statistics

## Campus Affiliation

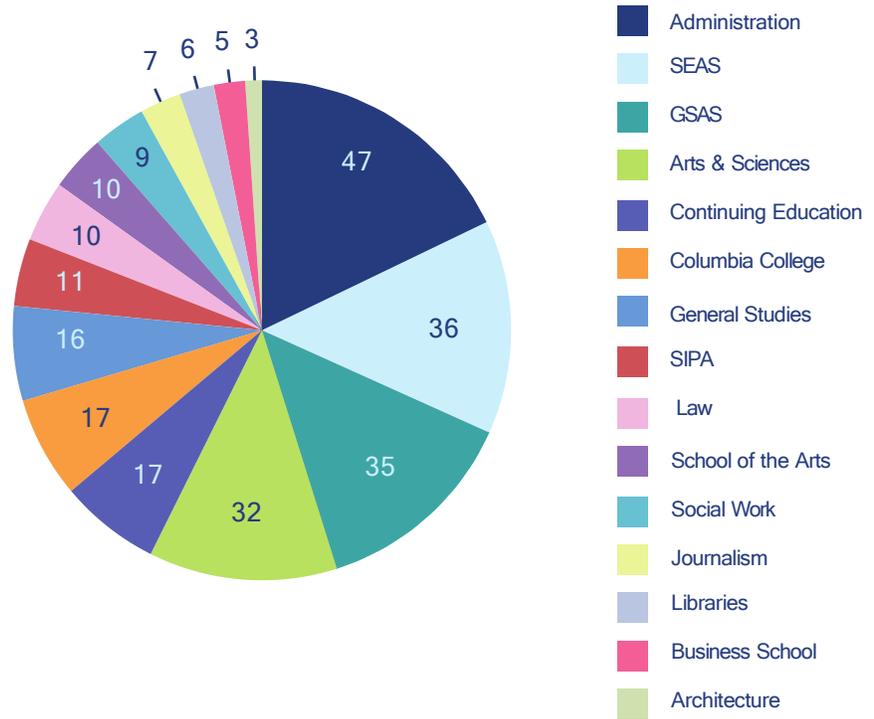


## Gender

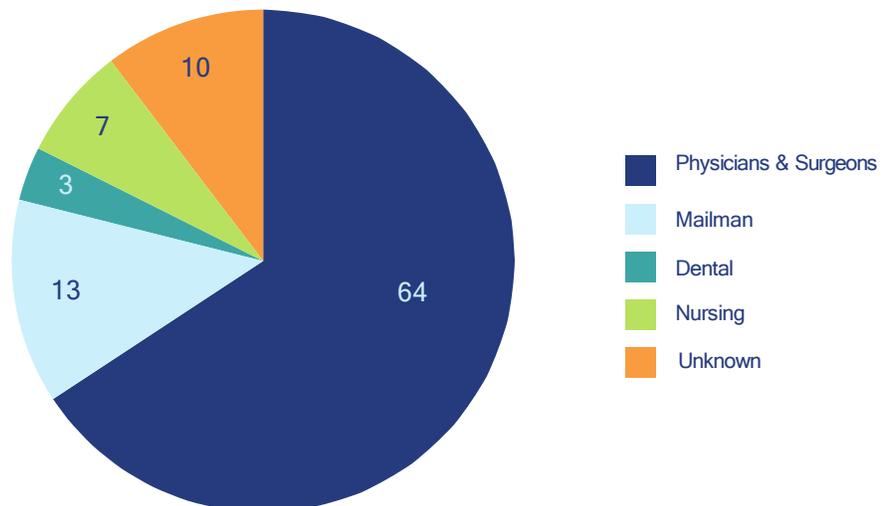


# Statistics

## Morningside Visitors by School Affiliation

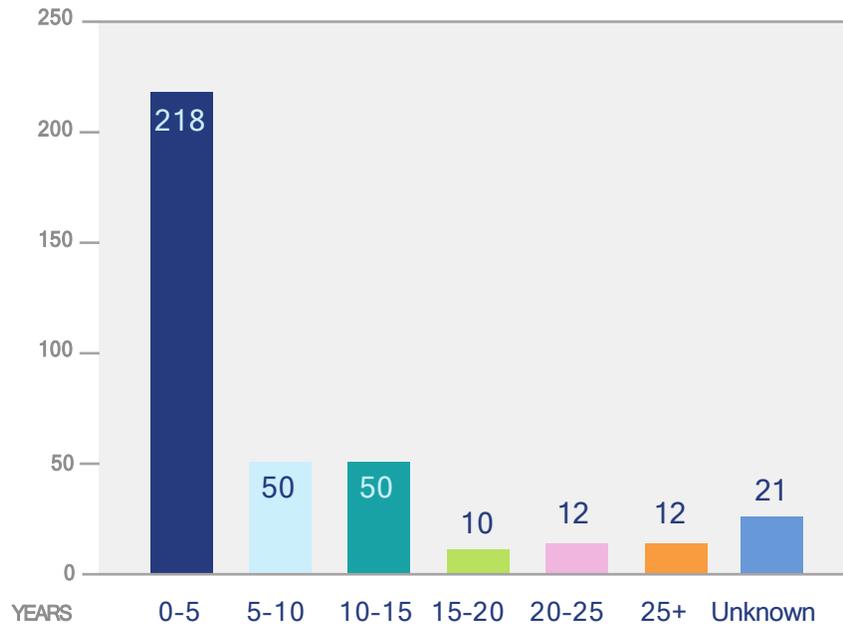


## CUMC Visitors by School Affiliation

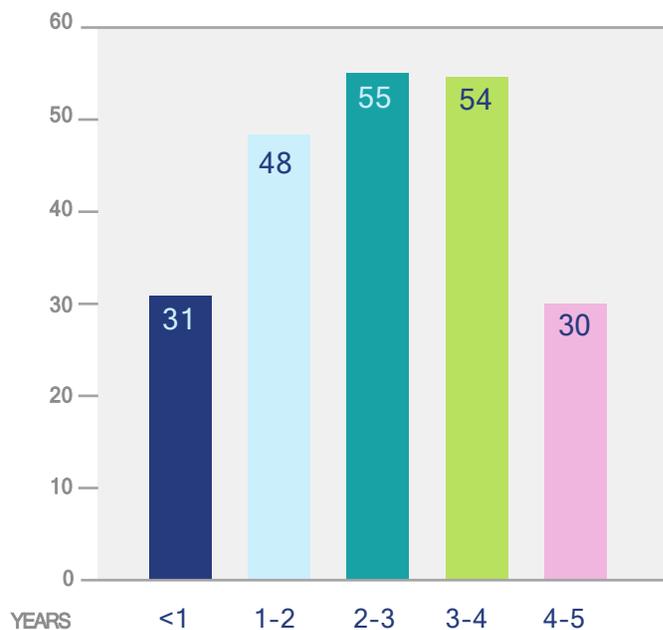


# Statistics

## Years at Columbia



## Visitors at Columbia Less than Five Years



# Thank You...

This first year of the second-generation of the Columbia University Ombuds Office has been one of discovery, growth and introduction.

We are grateful to the many members of the Columbia University community who met with us, invited us to meet with you, and those who listened to us explain the role of the Columbia University Ombuds Office.

Thank you for the opportunity to be an independent, informal, impartial and confidential resource for the University community. We look forward to the challenges of the year ahead.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Michael Marilyn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Columbia University Ombuds Office

“ I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles;  
but today it means getting along with people. ”

—Mahatma Gandhi

