MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 15, 2015

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

This document is the second annual report of the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds and includes data gathered in Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15), July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015.

The Office of the Ombuds served 160 employee visitors in Fiscal Year 2015. This report also includes a summary of the establishment of the Office of the Ombuds in 2013, in order to place the office and its services in context. Additionally, visitor demographics and data collected on workplace issues and concerns are shared. As confidentiality is essential to the Office of the Ombuds, the data collected are shared in terms of categories of issues and in a manner that protects the anonymity of the visitors to the office. In addition, the report includes recommendations to affect positive change, with the hope of addressing the most prevalent category of workplace concerns, as well as the feedback provided by visitors in regard to the ombuds services provided.

B. Organizational Ombuds Programs

Organizations establish ombuds programs as important cornerstones in the mitigation and/or resolution of workplace issues and disputes. Such organizations recognize the positive impact ombuds programs may have in promoting an ethical culture, employee engagement, retention, and the potential reduction in employment litigation. Ombuds programs are increasingly utilized in corporate settings, where, in addition to the benefits described above, the ombuds office provides a voluntary, confidential forum for whistleblowers to raise concerns, satisfying certain federal legal requirements. The federal sector also has a number of successful ombuds programs.

In regard to higher education, many four-year colleges and universities have long-established ombuds programs. These ombuds programs often serve students as well as employees at the college or university. At community colleges, ombuds programs have not yet been as widely utilized. It appears that there are fewer than 20 community colleges utilizing ombuds, and that the majority of those programs limit services to students. In this regard, Montgomery College's commitment to providing employees with the option of utilizing an ombuds program is notable.

C. MC Office of the Ombuds — Background & Functions

The Office of the Ombuds was established by President DeRionne P. Pollard in 2013. In establishing the Office of the Ombuds, Dr. Pollard considered and adopted recommendations from the Employee Engagement Advisory Group as well as the Integrated Conflict Management System workgroup, both of which included governance leaders and faculty and staff union

leaders. The Office of the Ombuds began providing service to the Montgomery College employee community in August 2013.

The Office of the Ombuds facilitates the mitigation and/or resolution of workplace conflict in the following manner:

- provides a safe and confidential forum to surface individual and group issues;
- listens to and helps to clarify employee concerns;
- helps identify underlying issues and interests;
- provides information and explores possible options available;
- facilitates discussions to resolve issues, where voluntarily agreed to by all involved parties and if appropriate;
- collects and evaluates data on emerging trends and patterns at the College; and
- makes recommendations for systemic change through an annual report.

These functions supplement the formal resources available to employees, and are outlined in the Office of the Ombuds Charter, which is located at www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds. Each is performed in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

D. IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The IOA Code of Ethics requires an ombudsperson to be truthful, act with integrity, foster respect for all members of the community served, and to promote procedural fairness within the organization. The ethical principles are as follows:

INDEPENDENCE: The Ombudsperson is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

NEUTRALITY AND IMPARTIALITY: The Ombudsperson, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombudsperson does not engage in any situation that could create a conflict of interest.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

INFORMALITY: The Ombudsperson, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

The IOA Standards of Practice provide additional guidance on ombuds best practices. The Office Charter, under which the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds operates, incorporates both the IOA Code of Ethics and IOA Standards of Practice, and may be reviewed at www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds.

E. Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds

The purpose of the Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds is to assist the ombuds by providing constituent feedback, opinions, suggestions, and ideas related to the activities of the ombuds, and in support of the ombuds' goal to help the College community constructively and cooperatively manage conflict. Representatives from the College Council, AAUP, AFSCME, SEIU, and Human Resources Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) served on the committee. Much appreciation and many thanks to the following individuals who served on this committee in FY15: Ana Awwad, Sharon Fechter, Bill Primosch, Carl Shorter, Krista Leitch Walker, and Harry Zarin.

F. Office of the Ombuds Staff

The Office of the Ombuds is currently staffed on a part-time basis by Sarah Miller Espinosa, J.D., CO-OP, College Ombuds. During FY15, Ms. Espinosa participated in a number of professional development opportunities, including mediation training specific to employment disputes. Ms. Espinosa was selected by the American Arbitration Association as one of the 12 individuals invited to participate in the 2015 Higginbotham Fellows, a national program designed to provide professional development opportunities for emerging neutrals. Also in FY15, Ms. Espinosa achieved certification as a Certified Organizational Ombudsman Professional (CO-OP). She is a member of various professional organizations, served as a co-chair of the Association for Conflict Resolution's Workplace Section, and recently was appointed to serve on the board of the Association for Conflict Resolution.

II. FISCAL YEAR 2015 OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS' VISITORS

A. Overview

One of the benchmarks of a well established ombuds program is that it is likely to serve between three to five percent of the employee population each year. During Fiscal Year 2015, the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds served 160 individual employees, or five percent of the overall employee population.[1] Of those 160 visitors, 153 were full-time faculty, staff, and administrators, accounting for eight percent of this (full-time faculty, staff, administrators) employee population.

B. FY15 Ombuds' Visitors by Employee Category

Of the 160 individual visitors to the Office of the Ombuds, 109 visitors were staff members, 19 visitors were full-time faculty members, 6 visitors were department chairs, 19 visitors were administrators, and 7 visitors were part-time faculty members. The following reflects the percentage of employees served by the Office of the Ombuds by employee category: one percent of part-time faculty, three percent of full-time faculty, nine percent of staff, 16 percent of department chairs, and 23 percent of administrators.

The percentage of visitors by employee category in FY15 compared to FY14 is:

Employee Category	FY15	FY14
Part-time Faculty	1%	1%
Full-time Faculty[2]	3%	4%
Staff	9%	9%
Department Chairs	16%	--
Administrators	23%	18%

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[1] The employee population of 2,919 employees was derived from the October 2014 Human Resources Strategic Talent Management report, which listed 552 full-time faculty, 38 department chairs, 980 part-time faculty, 1,266 associate and support staff (including temporary with benefits employees), and 83 administrators.

[2] In FY14, department chairs were included in the full-time faculty category.

C. Visitors by Division

Divisions are categorized as follows: Academic Affairs (AA), Advancement and Community Engagement (ACE), Administrative and Fiscal Services (AFS), offices and individuals reporting to the Office of the President (OP), and Student Services (SS). The following reflects the percentage of employees served by the Office of the Ombuds by division: seven percent of employees in Administrative & Fiscal Services; six percent of employees in Student Services; and four percent of employees in Academic Affairs.[3]

D. Visitors by Gender

Of the 160 visitors, 110 visitors were female and 50 visitors were male. The following reflects the percentage of employees served by the Office of the Ombuds by gender: seven percent of female employees and four percent of male employees.

E. Visitors by Race/Ethnicity

The Office of the Ombuds served the following percentage of employees: six percent of White, Non-Hispanic employees; five percent of Hispanic or Latino employees; five percent of Black or African-American employees; and three percent of Asian employees.

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[3] The percentage of employees served in each division was calculated utilizing information provided by Institutional Research concerning the number of employees in each division as of Fall 2014 and number of employee visitors from each division as collected by the Office of the Ombuds. Given the relatively small number of employees in the divisions of ACE and OP and in order to preserve the anonymity of visitors, the percentage of visitors is not reported for these divisions.

III. CONCERNS RAISED BY VISITORS TO THE OMBUDS

A. IOA Uniform Reporting Categories

The Office of the Ombuds identified concerns raised by visitors and utilized the IOA Uniform Reporting Categories, of which there are nine, with multiple sub-categories associated with each category (see www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds):

(1) **Compensation & Benefits:** questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits, and other benefit programs.

(2) **Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships:** questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student).

(3) Peer & Colleague Relationships: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization)

(4) Career Progression & Development: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation).

(5) Legal, Regulatory, Financial, & Compliance: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction, etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud, or abuse).

(6) Safety, Health, & Physical Environment: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and infrastructure-related issues.

(7) Services/Administrative Issues: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.

(8) Organizational, Strategic, & Mission Related: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to whole or some part of an organization.

(9) Values, Ethics, & Standards: questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.
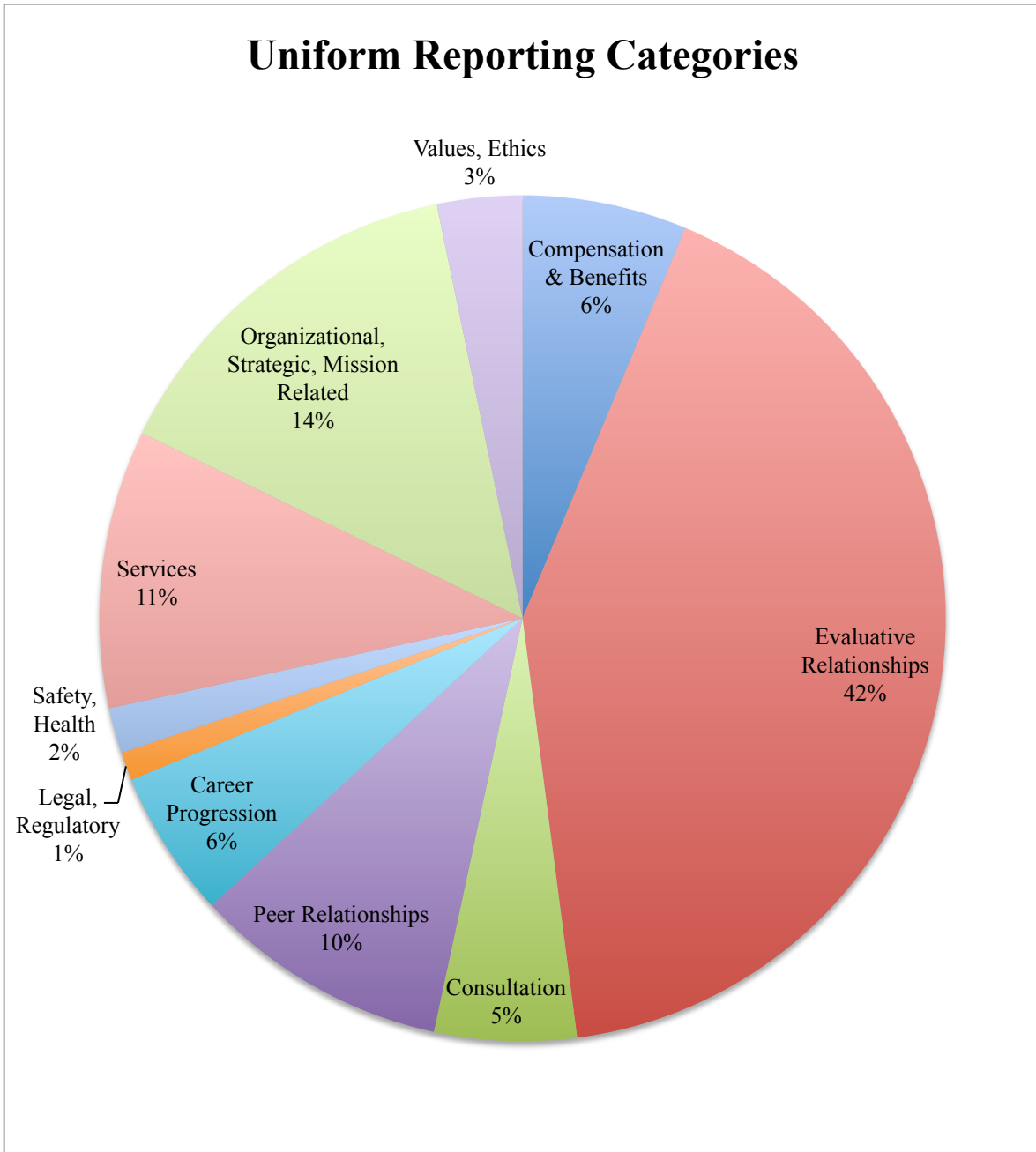
Additionally, the Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships sub-category of consultation has been reported separately herein, to more ensure more clarity in regard to the types of issues raised. **Category 2(l), Consultation**, was utilized when a supervisor sought assistance in identifying options to resolve issues involving one or more subordinate employees.

Multiple issues were often identified after speaking with each visitor.

B. FY15 Issues

Chart B depicts the 461 issues raised by visitors during Fiscal Year 2015:

Chart B

Uniform Reporting Categories

Values, Ethics
3%

Compensation
& Benefits
6%

Organizational,
Strategic, Mission
Related
14%

Services
11%

Safety,
Health
2%

Legal,
Regulatory
1%

Career
Progression
6%

Peer Relationships
10%

Consultation
5%

Evaluative
Relationships
42%

The three most prevalent issues in FY15 were: Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships (42 percent), Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related (14 percent),

and Service/Administrative Issues (11 percent). In FY14, Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships was also the most prevalent issue. However, the percentage of overall issues attributable to Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships declined from 51 percent in FY14 to 42 percent in FY15. The second most prevalent issue in FY14 was Compensation & Benefits, which yielded 11 percent of all issues, as compared to 6 percent in FY15. In FY14, the third most prevalent issue was Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related, which yielded 10 percent of all issues, and in FY15 accounts for 14 percent of all issues. The percentage of issues associated with Service/Administrative Issues also increased, from 7 percent in FY14 to 11 percent in FY15.

C. Employee Category

The following table depicts the three most prevalent issues identified in each employee category.[4]

Employee Category	Issue #1	%	Issue #2	%	Issue #3	%
Staff	Evaluative Relationships	48	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	12	Peer Relationships	10
Full-time Faculty	Evaluative Relationships	32	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	20	Peer Relationships	16
Part-time Faculty	Compensation & Benefits	29	Evaluative Relationships	22	Career Progression; Services	21; 21
Admin-istrator	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	32	Evaluative Relationships	22	Consultation	20

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[4] To ensure anonymity of visitors, and given the small number of department chairs, information concerning this employee category is not included in this table.

D. Division

The following table depicts the three most prevalent issues identified in each division: [5]

Division	Issue #1	%	Issue #2	%	Issue #3	%
Academic Affairs	Evaluative Relationships	37	Services	14	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	12
Administrative & Fiscal Services	Evaluative Relationships	49	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	16	Services	9
Student Services	Evaluative Relationships	49	Peer Relationships	14	Services; Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	10 10

D. Gender

The following table depicts the three most prevalent issues for females and males, respectively.

Gender	Issue #1	%	Issue #2	%	Issue #3	%
Female	Evaluative Relationships	39	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	15	Peer Relationships	13
Male	Evaluative Relationships	49	Services	16	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	13

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[5] To ensure anonymity of visitors, and given the small number of visitors from ACE and offices reporting to the president, information concerning these divisions is not included in this table.

E. Race/Ethnicity

The following table depicts the three most prevalent issues identified by race/ethnicity:

Race/Ethnicity	Issue # 1	%	Issue #2	%	Issue #3	%
Asian	Evaluative Relationships	39	Compensation & Benefits	14	Peer Relationships; Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	11; 11
Black or African American	Evaluative Relationships	47	Peer Relationships	11	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	11
Hispanic or Latino	Evaluative Relationships	60	Peer Relationships	13	Services	13
White, Non-Hispanic	Evaluative Relationships	36	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	17	Services	12

F. Generation

The following table depicts the three most prevalent issues identified by generation:[6]

Generation	Issue #1	%	Issue #2	%	Issue #3	%
Millennials	Evaluative Relationships	54	Peer Relationships	13	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	9
X	Evaluative Relationships	38	Peer Relationships	15	Organizational, Strategic, Mission	12

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[6] The generational categories are defined as follows: Senior (born prior to 1945); Baby Boomer (born 1945-1963); X (born 1962-1980); and Millennial (born 1981-1997).   Given the small number of senior visitors, the issues raised by this generational category are not reported.

					Related	
Baby Boomers	Evaluative Relationships	45	Organizational, Strategic, …	19	Services	12

G. Length of Service

The following table depicts the three most prevalent issues identified by length of service:

| Length of Service	Issue #1	%	Issue #2	%	Issue #3	%
0-5 years	Evaluative Relationships	46	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	13	Peer Relationships	11
6-10 years	Evaluative Relationships	43	Peer Relationships	13	Services; Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	9; 9
11-15 years	Evaluative Relationships	46	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	15	Peer Relationships; Career Progression; Services	8 8 8
16-20 years	Evaluative Relationships	41	Services	19	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	19
20+ years	Evaluative Relationships	43	Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related	22	Services	15

IV. Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships

A.   **Overview**

Forty-two percent all the issues raised by visitors involved the Evaluative Relationships category. The Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships category is defined as: "questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relations (supervisor-employee)." Issues concerning evaluative relationships were the top issue in every College division, whether male or female, in each race/ethnicity, every category of length of service, and each generation. In regard to the employee category, 48 percent of all staff issues, 32 percent of all full-time faculty issues, 22 percent of all part-time faculty issues, and 22 percent of all administrator issues fell within the Evaluative Relationships category.

B. Subcategories

Chart C

Evaluative Relationships
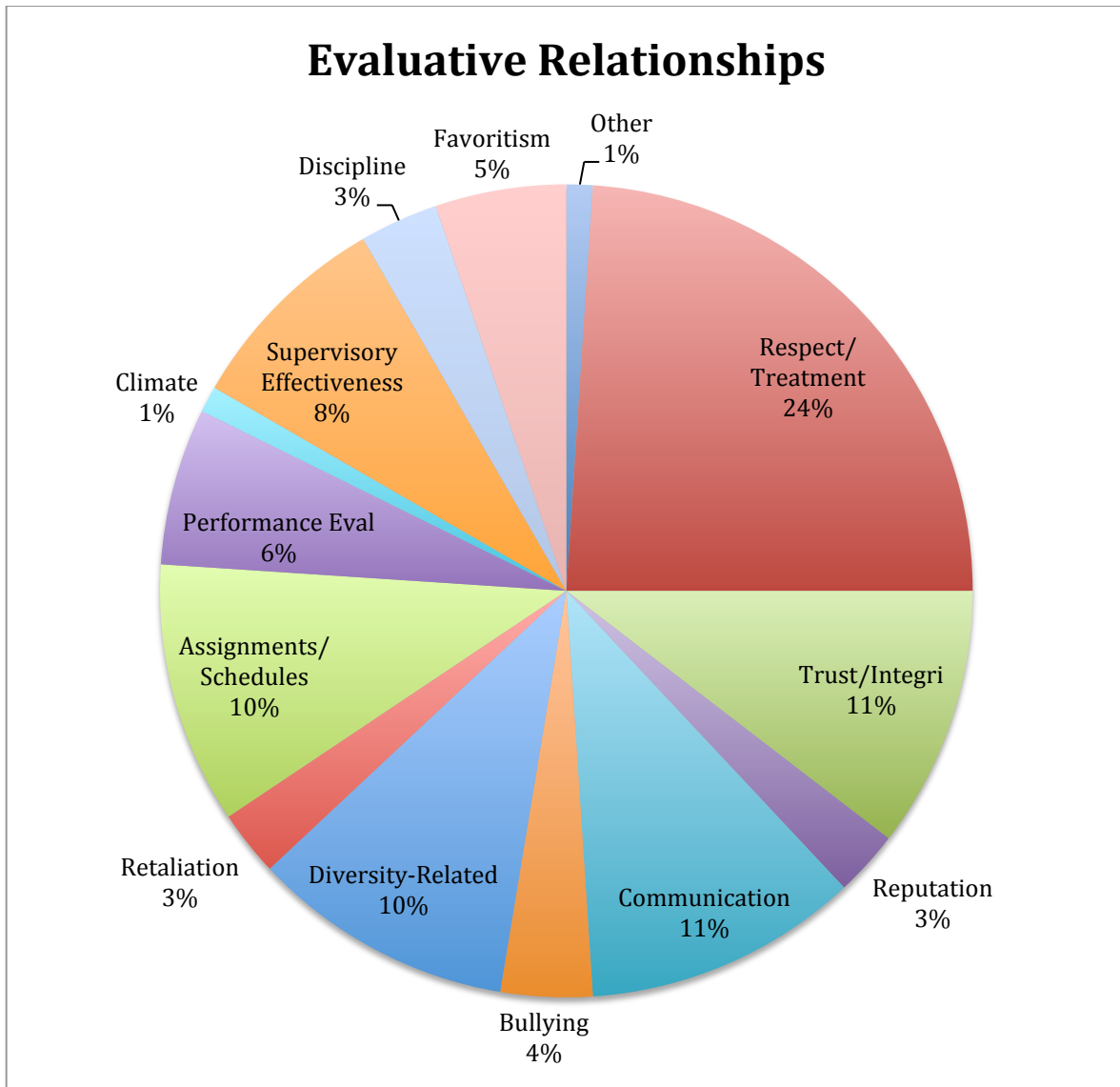
Further considering the subcategories associated with the Evaluative Relationship issues, respect/treatment accounted for 24 percent of issues identified. The subcategory of respect/treatment is defined as: "demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc." Eleven percent of issues were attributed to communication concerns. The subcategory of communication is defined as: "quality and/or quantity of communication." The following three subcategories each respectively yielded ten percent of all evaluative relationship issues: trust/integrity; diversity-related; and assignments/schedules. The subcategory of trust/integrity is defined as: "suspicion that others [supervisors] are not being honest…". The subcategory of diversity-related is defined as: "comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation." The subcategory of assignments/schedules is defined as: "appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work."

C. Areas of Particular Note in Regard to Evaluative Relationships

60 percent of all concerns expressed by Hispanic or Latino visitors were related to Evaluative Relationships.

54 percent of all concerns expressed by millennial visitors were related to Evaluative Relationships.

V. Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related

A. Overview

Fourteen percent of all issues raised involved the Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related reporting category, the second most prevalent issue overall. The Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related category is defined as: "questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization." The percentage of overall issues associated with this category has increased since FY14, when the percentage of overall issues related to Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related concerns was 10 percent.

B. Subcategories

Chart D

Further considering the subcategories associated with Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related issues, 55 percent were associated with the subcategory of Leadership and Management, defined as: "quality/capacity of management and/or

management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations." Additionally, 38 percent of issues were associated with the subcategory of Restructuring and Relocation, defined as: "issues related to broad scope planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g. downsizing, offshoring, outsourcing."

C. Areas of Particular Note in Regard to Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related

32 percent of all concerns expressed by administrator visitors were related to the Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related category. This was the most prevalent issue raised by administrators.
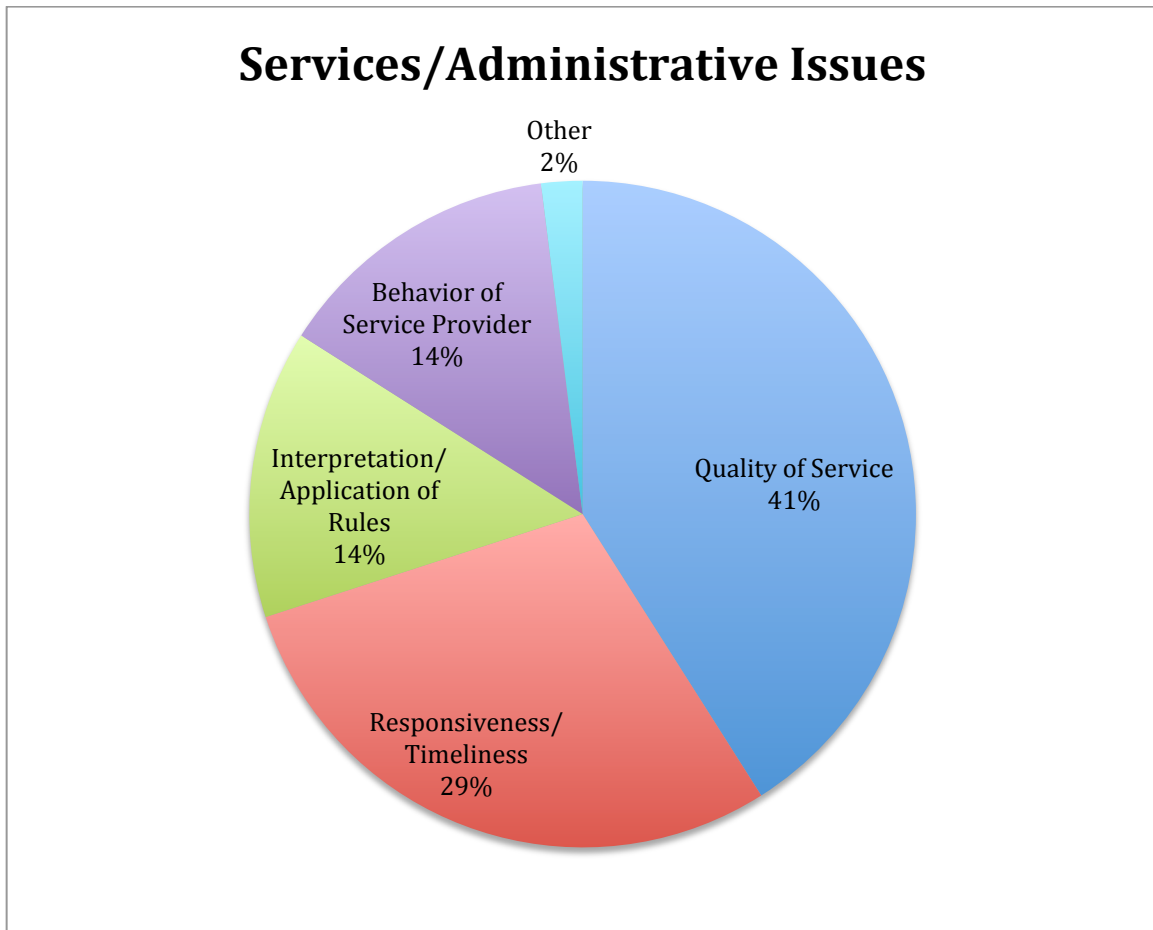
VI. Services/Administrative Issues

A. Overview

Eleven percent of all issues raised involved the Services/Administrative Issues category, the third most prevalent issue overall. The Services/Administrative Issues category is defined as: "questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices.". All but one of these issues concerned the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management. Of the issues associated with HRSTM, 45 percent were related to EEO matters.

The percentage of overall issues associated with the Services/Administrative Issues category has increased since FY14, when the percentage of overall issues related to Services/Administrative Issues was 7 percent.

B. Subcategories

Further considering the subcategories associated with Services/Administrative Issues, 41 percent were associated with the subcategory of quality of services, defined as: "how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc." Twenty nine percent of issues were associated with the subcategory of responsiveness/timeliness, defined as: "time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided." Additionally, 14 percent of issues were associated with the subcategory of administrative decisions and interpretation/application of rules, defined as: "impact of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services…" and 14 percent of all issues were associated with the subcategory of behavior of service provider, defined as: "how an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with a constituent, customer, or client, e.g., rude, inattentive, or impatient."

C. Areas of Particular Note in Regard to Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related

21 percent of all concerns expressed by part-time faculty visitors were related to Services/Administrative Issues.

VII. Fiscal Year 2016 Recommendations

A.   General

On the basis of data collected in FY14, in September 2014, the Ombuds made six recommendations for positive change. Five of the six recommendations were made with the goal of mitigating and avoiding some of the most prevalent issues raised, those concerning evaluative relationships.   The sixth recommendation concerned the Office of the Ombuds. All six recommendations were adopted by Dr. Pollard in October 2014 (see Appendix A).   Though some progress has been made on some of these adopted recommendations, none is yet fully implemented.   As detailed below, the Ombuds recommends one previous recommendation be revised and adopted, as well as the implementation of five of the six previously adopted recommendations.

B.   FY16 Ombuds Recommendation

Revised Recommendation Three: Critically examine the employee experience and take affirmative steps to ensure an inclusive workplace for <u>all</u> employees. Provide a fair and efficient process to address employee concerns about identity-related inequities, including those rising to the level of discrimination.

In the September 2014 Office of the Ombuds Annual Report, the Ombuds highlighted concerns regarding the percentage of issues raised by Hispanic or Latino visitors related to evaluative relationships. At that time, the Ombuds stated: "The evaluative relationship category in regard to Hispanic/Latino visitors falls so far away from the mean as to warrant a recommendation for further examination by the administration, particularly given the potentially negative impact on recruitment and retention of an employee group already underrepresented in the Montgomery College workforce." The Ombuds also stated: "The anecdotal evidence previously discussed suggests that further scrutiny is warranted, particularly within the AFS division." To date, the Ombuds is unaware of any efforts taken to address these critical concerns and the percentage of issues related to evaluative relationships continues to remain highest among Hispanic or Latino employees.

Additionally, the concerns raised by visitors, irrespective of race and ethnicity, regarding the EEO complaint process, merit serious scrutiny. These issues, voiced by those utilizing the existing process- including: those who filed complaints; those seeking assistance in determining whether to file a complaint; those against whom complaints were filed; and witnesses interviewed during the complaint process- must be addressed if fair treatment and efficiency in this critical internal process is to be ensured.

Integrity and diversity are core values of Montgomery College. The Ombuds respectfully and firmly suggests that providing an EEO complaint process in which employees have confidence should be the floor. Ensuring an inclusive workplace by

addressing and eliminating inequities, regardless of whether they rise to a legally actionable level, should be the goal.

C.   FY16 Ombuds Recommendations – Implement Five of Six Recommendations Adopted by Dr. Pollard

Please see Appendix A to review the memorandum sent by Dr. Pollard to the College community on October 13, 2013 wherein she explained why she was adopting these recommendations.

Adopted Recommendation One: Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

Adopted Recommendation Two: Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-degree feedback instruments.

Adopted Recommendation Four: Assist and support administrators, staff with supervisory responsibilities, and department chairs by providing and requiring additional training. Further, reward those exhibiting the skills developed in these training and hold accountable those who choose not to exhibit those skills.

Adopted Recommendation Five: Consider the creation of a competitive, developmental cohort program or programs to help develop future model managers and administrators.

Adopted Recommendation Six: Commit to continue to provide Montgomery College employees with access to the Office of the Ombuds by: transitioning the ombuds from a temporary position, committing resources to recruit an Associate Ombuds, and incorporating the Office of the Ombuds, its role, responsibilities, and ethical obligations, into Montgomery College Policy and Procedure.

VII. VISITORS EVALUATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS

This information was compiled from the 57 completed evaluations that were returned to the Office of the Ombuds in Fiscal Year 2015[7] . There was a 36 percent rate of return in FY15, an increase over FY14 when the rate of return was 32 percent.   Please note that five possible responses were provided for survey questions: " strongly disagree," "disagree," "neither," "agree," and "strongly agree." The feedback was as follows:

❖ 98 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "The Office of the Ombuds provides an informal, off-the-record resource for all employees."

❖ 96 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "I trust the ombuds to maintain confidentiality."

❖ 95 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "The Office of the Ombuds acts independently from other organizational units and management."

❖ 96 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "The ombuds responded to my e-mail(s)/phone call(s) in a timely manner."

❖ 98 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "The ombuds listened carefully to my concerns."

❖ 98 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "The ombuds treated me fairly, without prejudice or bias."

❖ 94 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "The ombuds helped me identify and evaluate the options available to address my concerns."

❖ 94 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "I found the ombuds to be knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures."

❖ 98 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "I would refer others to the Office of the Ombuds for assistance."

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[7] Surveys were provided to visitors in person, and visitors were asked to complete and return the survey via interoffice mail (with an envelope provided). For visitors assisted over the phone, surveys were provided via e-mail (with the same instructions requesting return through interoffice mail).

❖ 96 percent of visitors responding answered that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement: "Overall, I was satisfied with the assistance I received from the Office of the Ombuds."

Representative comments received by visitors on the evaluations included:

This is a very valuable service to the MC community. I have mentioned it to others already. Helping me set goals was very useful aside from listening to my concerns.

I found the ombuds very helpful in organizing my own thoughts. She is a very good listener and her calmness helps in keeping a constructive attitude.

I thought the session was cathartic.

Someone from the Ombuds Office responded promptly to my initial inquiry and offered various availability to meet/talk with me. I felt heard and my concern was resolved. Further help has been provided. I am really appreciative.

I found the Office of the Ombuds helpful and effective. I am very glad the office exists at MC.

The Office of the Ombuds is like an oasis. It's a place of non-judgmental conversation where we can talk about issues without fear of retaliation. It also helps that the ombuds is knowledgeable, kind, and compassionate.

IX. CONCLUSION

In FY15, the Office of the Ombuds continued to provide visitors with assistance to identify and evaluate their options, and, in many cases, resolve workplace issues and concerns.   Almost without exception, units throughout the College worked collaboratively with the Office of the Ombuds when contacted to obtain information or collaboratively work to resolve issues. The ongoing support of President DeRionne Pollard, Chief of Staff/Chief Strategy Officer Stephen Cain, governance and union leaders, and the College community is much appreciated.

APPENDIX A

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

October 13, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery College Colleagues

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

Subject: 2014 Ombuds Recommendations

As you may recall, I established the Office of the Ombuds in August 2013 to provide confidential assistance to staff, faculty, and administrators in mitigating and resolving workplace issues and concerns. The ombuds operates in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as established by the International Ombudsman Association. Over 150 employees accessed the services of the Office of the Ombuds in Fiscal Year 2014, and the feedback received from employee visitors to the office about its services was overwhelmingly positive. This newly established office is an example of the College's commitment to empowering and enriching the working lives of all our employees, and in furthering and reaching our vision to be a model of excellence, opportunity, and student success.

In addition to providing a safe forum for individual employees to discuss concerns, the Office of the Ombuds contributes to organizational wellness by identifying and sharing trends with senior leadership, sharing data in an annual report, and making recommendations for change. By seeking to improve the employment experience at Montgomery College, these recommendations help to contribute to the achievement of the Common Employee Experience, which is a cornerstone of our Destination Employer initiative.

Ombuds Sarah Espinosa communicated and posted the FY14 annual ombuds report in early September. That report contained six recommendations, which I am adopting as follows.

RECOMMENDATION 1. Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

> **Adopted.** I agree that formally setting ethical expectations and standards of conduct is a best practice that will provide clarity and consistency for all employees. It will also enhance the institutional value of integrity. I will ask the College Council to

lead a discussion about these expectations and standards and then to make a recommendation to me regarding what they should be. From there, we will work to draft or modify appropriate policies and procedures, and then develop a plan for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-degree evaluations.

Adopted. The suggested modifications to the 360-degree evaluation procedure for administrators will be incorporated into this year's evaluation process. These modifications will enhance this already powerful tool, and assist administrators in developing even more meaningful professional development goals for Fiscal Year 2016. Additionally, a 360-degree evaluation program will be expanded to managers in FY16, and then be conducted every other year so that all College managers may also benefit from this valuable feedback. I will ask the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) to implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 3. Critically examine the employee experience, particularly for underrepresented minorities, to ensure an inclusive workplace.

Adopted. Ensuring equity, respect, and inclusiveness is of the highest priority to the College. I will ask HRSTM and its Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Employee Relations to develop a plan to implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Assist and support administrators, staff with supervisory responsibilities, and department chairs by providing and requiring additional training. Further, reward those exhibiting the skills developed in these training and hold accountable those who choose not to exhibit those skills.

Adopted. Providing training that can support and assist those with managerial responsibilities is a critical responsibility of the institution. HRSTM and its Office of Professional and Organizational Development (CPOD) have many effective programs currently in place for critical professional training. I will ask HRTSM and CPOD to develop a plan that includes the following topics as mandatory training over the next two fiscal years:
- ·   Developing skills in creating and nurturing inclusive workplaces that that promote respect for and appreciation for diversity
- ·   Promoting respectful communication
- ·   Creating a culture of civility

RECOMMENDATION 5. Consider the creation of a competitive, developmental cohort program or programs to help develop future model managers and administrators.

Adopted in part. Developing outstanding leaders and model managers is essential
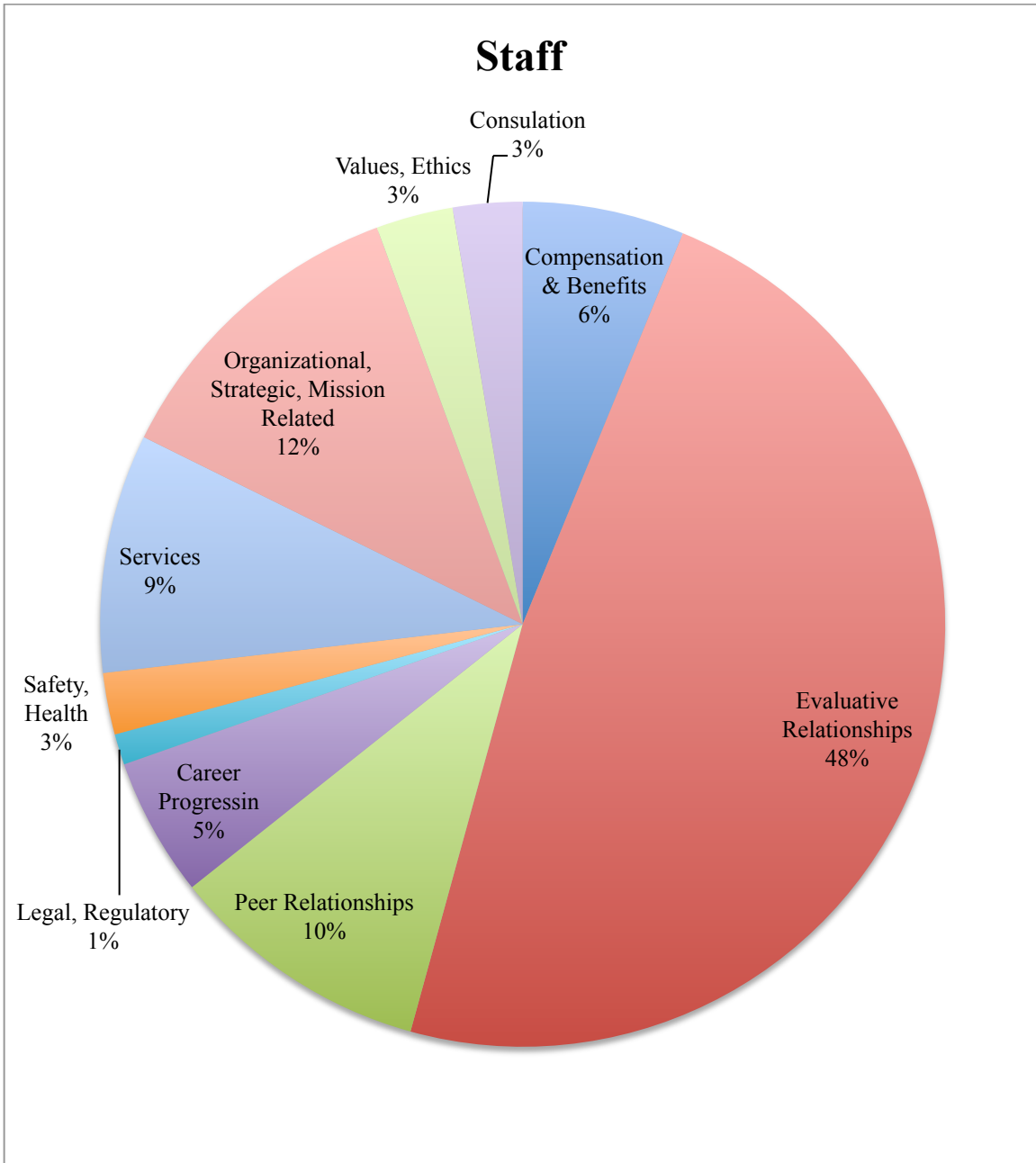
to achieving the College's goal of becoming a Destination Employer, as well as an opportunity to thoughtfully engage in succession planning. I will ask HRSTM to develop possible options related to the modification of the Administrative Associate program (as contained in Procedure 34001CP) and bring a proposal to the President's Executive Cabinet.
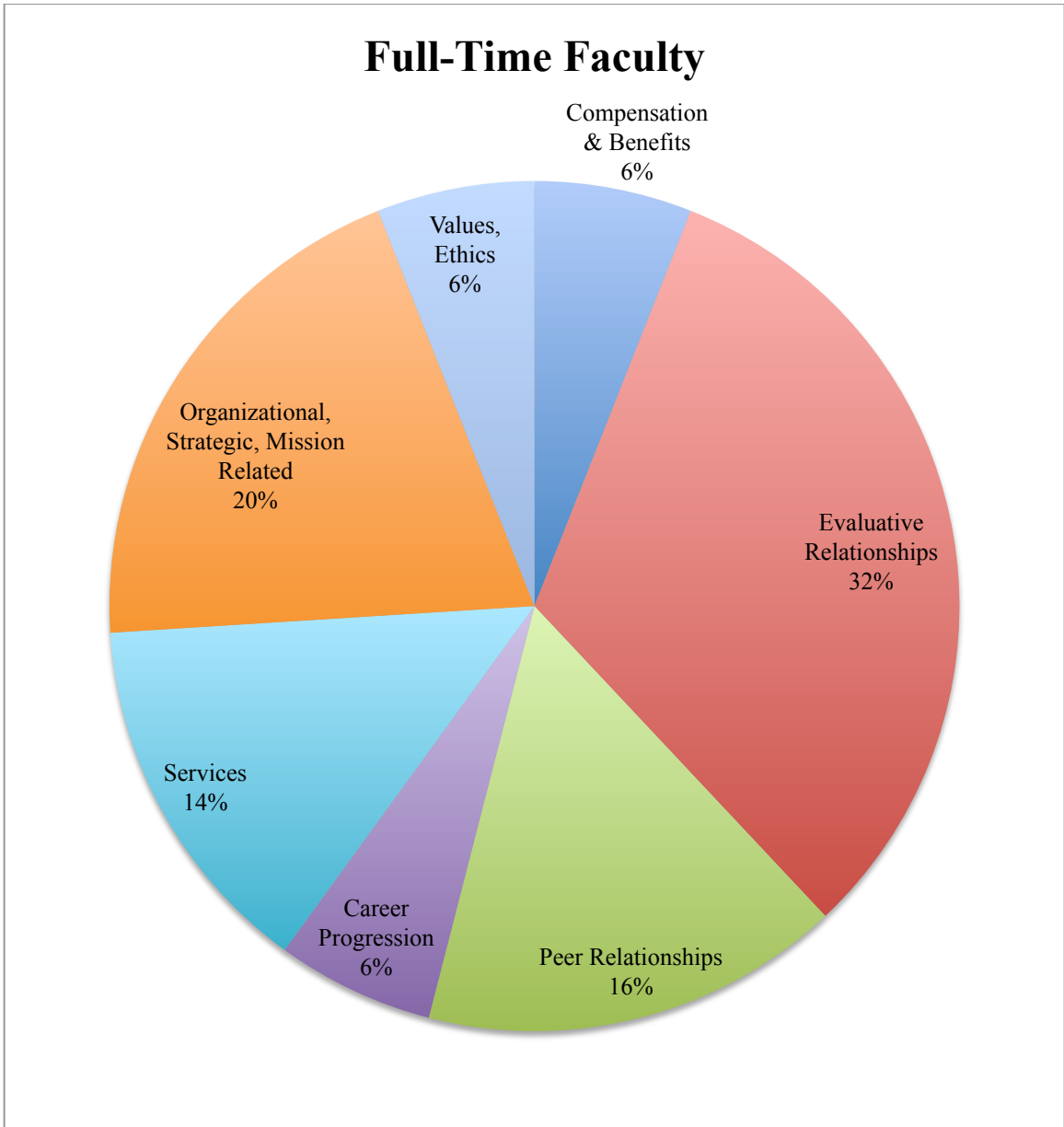
RECOMMENDATION 6. Commit to continue to provide Montgomery College employees with access to the Office of the Ombuds by: transitioning the ombuds from a temporary position, committing resources to recruit an Associate Ombuds, and incorporating the Office of the Ombuds, its role, responsibilities, and ethical obligations, into Montgomery College Policy and Procedure.

Adopted. Given the valuable services the Office of the Ombuds provides to individual employees and the College collectively, this recommendation represents an important investment of resources that are critical to our success as an institution. I will ask the chief of staff/chief strategy officer to work closely with the ombuds in developing a plan and timeline to implement an associate ombuds position and to review the Policies and Procedure Manual to incorporate the ombuds appropriately within it.

The recommendations I have adopted represent a prioritization of resources and our commitment to achieving an effective workplace that reflects the holistic values of Montgomery College—excellence, integrity, innovation, diversity, stewardship, and sustainability—and will help us all to realize and enhance the Common Employee Experience. For all of those who worked to bring these recommendations forward, and to all of you who work diligently each day for the success of our institution, I thank you all for your continued dedication to our students and our community.

APPENDIX B

Staff

Consulation 3%
Values, Ethics 3%
Compensation & Benefits 6%
Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related 12%
Services 9%
Safety, Health 3%
Legal, Regulatory 1%
Career Progressin 5%
Peer Relationships 10%
Evaluative Relationships 48%

Full-Time Faculty

Compensation & Benefits
6%

Values, Ethics
6%

Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related
20%

Evaluative Relationships
32%

Services
14%

Career Progression
6%

Peer Relationships
16%

Part-Time Faculty

Services
21%

Compensation &
Benefits
29%

Career Progression
21%

Evaluative
Relationships
22%

Peer
Relationships
7%

Administrators

Values, Ethics
4%

Evaluative
Relationships
22%

Organizational,
Strategic, Mission
Related
32%

Consultation
20%

Services
12%

Peer Relationships
4%

Legal, Regulatory
2%

Career Progression
4%

Academic Affairs

- Values, Ethics 3%
- Consultation 9%
- Compensation & Benefits 8%
- Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related 12%
- Evaluative Relationships 37%
- Services 14%
- Safety, Health 1%
- Legal, Regulatory 0%
- Career Progression 6%
- Peer Relationships 10%

Administrative & Fiscal Services

Pie chart titled "Administrative & Fiscal Services" with the following segments:
- Compensation & Benefits 6%
- Evaluative Relationships 49%
- Peer Relationships 6%
- Career Progression 4%
- Legal, Regulatory 2%
- Safety, Health 3%
- Services 9%
- Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related 16%
- Values, Ethics 5%

Student Services

Values,
Ethics
2%

Consultation
3%

Compensation
& Benefits
2%

Organizational,
Strategic, Mission
Related
10%

Services
10%

Safety,
Health
2%

Career Progression
8%

Peer Relationships
14%

Evaluative
Relationships
49%