

# Brandeis University Ombuds

*Supporting an ethical and civil culture encouraging mutual understanding and resolution through respectful dialogue and fair practices.*

## Annual Report: July 2022 - June 2023

(Updated: March 29, 2024)

### Introduction

The Ombuds Office is a campus resource that serves as an outlet to process any type of challenging situation, a bridge to navigate campus resources, and to serve as a coach to help, support, and empower community members, offices, and teams.

The Ombuds team is available to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and anyone who has a situation, related issue, or conflict involving Brandeis University or anyone having an affiliation with Brandeis. The current Ombuds team includes [Don Greenstein](#), [Esther Lin](#) and [Mike Rozinsky](#). Mike departed the Ombuds team in May 2023.

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about our standards of practice of confidentiality, impartiality, informality, and independence in the [Policy Statement](#) on the Brandeis Ombuds Office. The Ombuds are not mandatory reporters, nor an office of notice for Brandeis University. This makes the Ombuds Office a good place to start when you don't know where to go or when you have experienced something, and you want an informal space to explore your options before you potentially involve others.

The Office has faced challenges this past year as Mike Rozinsky departed the Office team at the end of the Spring Semester. Esther has been on Family leave since February. The office has been staffed by Don, who has handled all visitors and office work until Esther Lin returns and a new part time Ombuds will be on-boarded as a staff member to replace the departure of Mike Rozinsky.

### Ombuds Mission Statement

The Brandeis Ombuds Office exists to ensure fair process and attentive listening for all visitors. Our goal is to offer resources that empower individuals, teams, and groups to find acceptable and workable solutions for those involved. In our role as Ombuds, we support the dignity, well-being, and safety of each person who visits us by providing a safe space to talk confidentially, off the record about demanding situations. We are an outlet to process any type of challenging situation and a bridge to navigate campus resources. We are here to help, support, and empower you to find all reasonable options and acceptable solutions for everyone involved.

### Highlights

The Ombuds office continues to support the Brandeis community and has had over 300 visitors since July of 2022. The Ombuds office markets our services throughout the campus community. We are engaged in weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly meetings with teams, offices, and campus leaders on a regular basis to discuss issues, concerns, and considerations that individuals are concerned about how to appropriately manage.

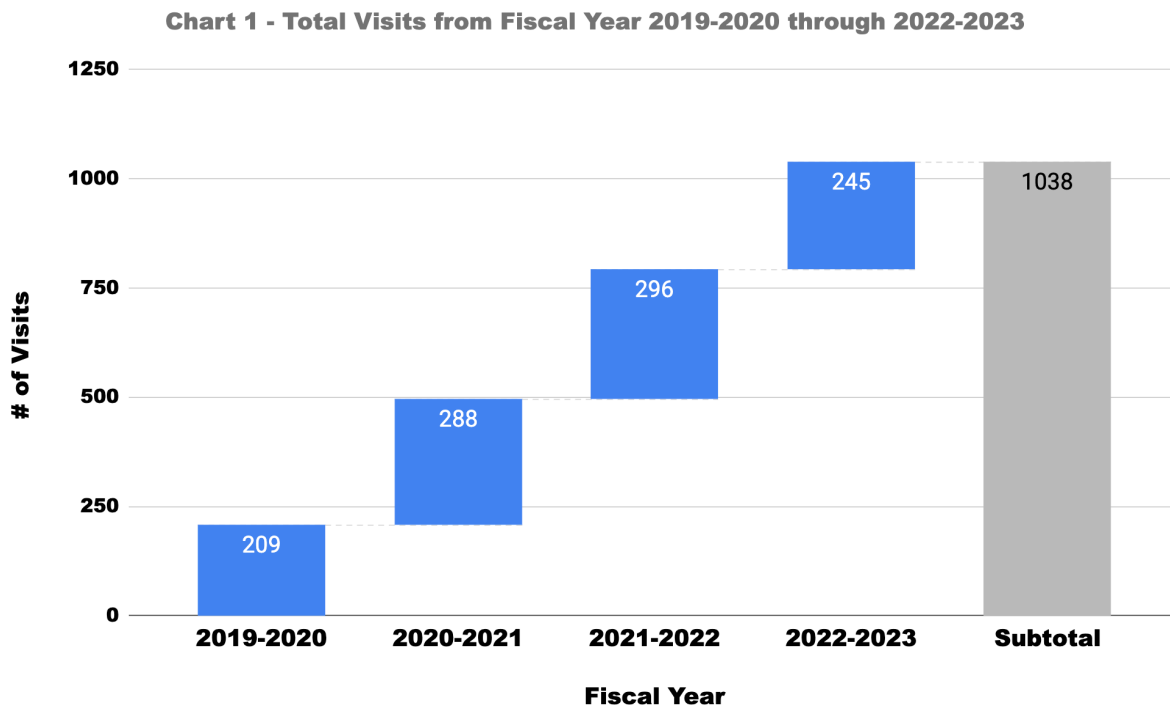
## Data

Our most recent Ombuds report (Spring 2023) reflects the following: Over 250 visitors came to the Ombuds team this past year and we met with over 330 total individuals. This number reflects that sometimes we met with one individual, and we also facilitated conversations with anywhere from 2-10 or more people.

## Defining “Trends”

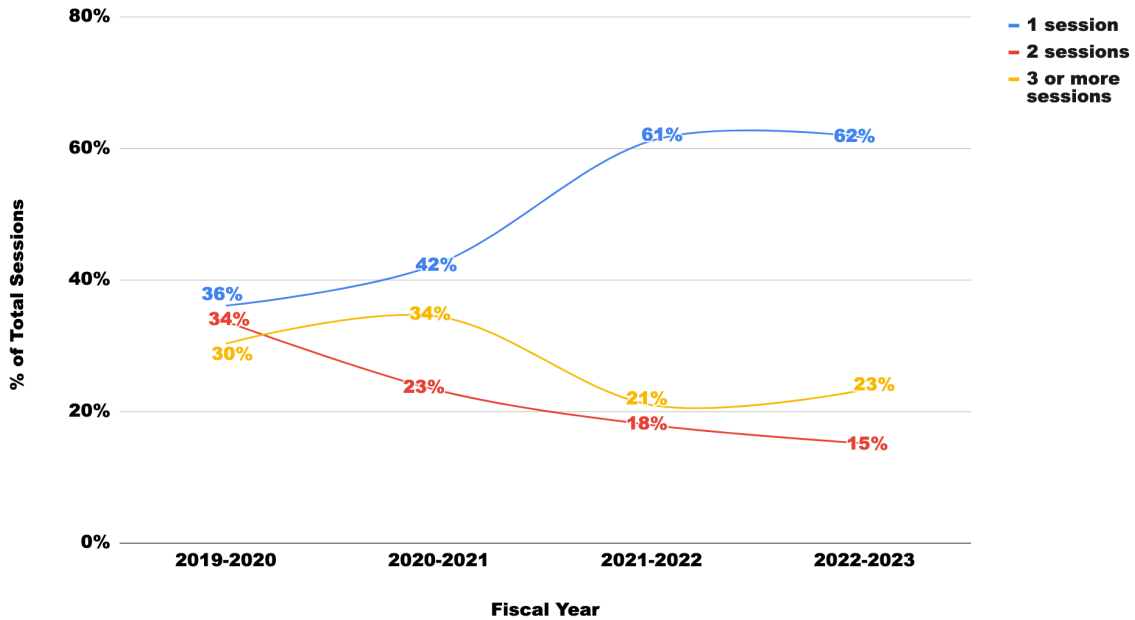
“Trends” are informed by our data and the topics and issues raised voluntarily by visitors during visits which we believe either signal the need and/or present an opportunity for intervention or action by campus leadership and the Brandeis community. Individual issues become “trends” when we recognize that multiple visitors from one or more offices, departments, or schools throughout the University community are visiting us about the same problem/topic/concern. We also may choose to raise awareness about a significant issue that may not be a trend but is a major concern that needs to be promptly addressed.

## Trends, Highlights, Anomalies, & Considerations



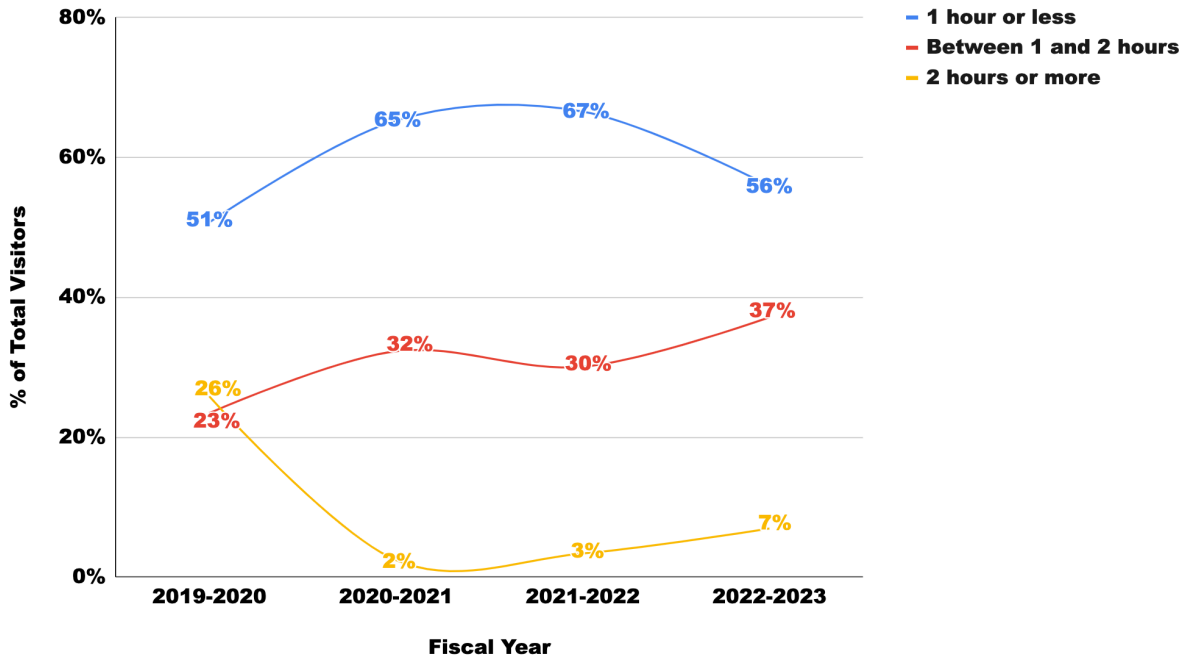
The total number of visits to the Ombuds Office from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, is 245. This number does not include workshops, presentations, regular meetings with leadership, and other outreach activities. [See tabular view of Chart 1](#)

Chart 2 - Percentage of Number of Sessions across Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2022-2023

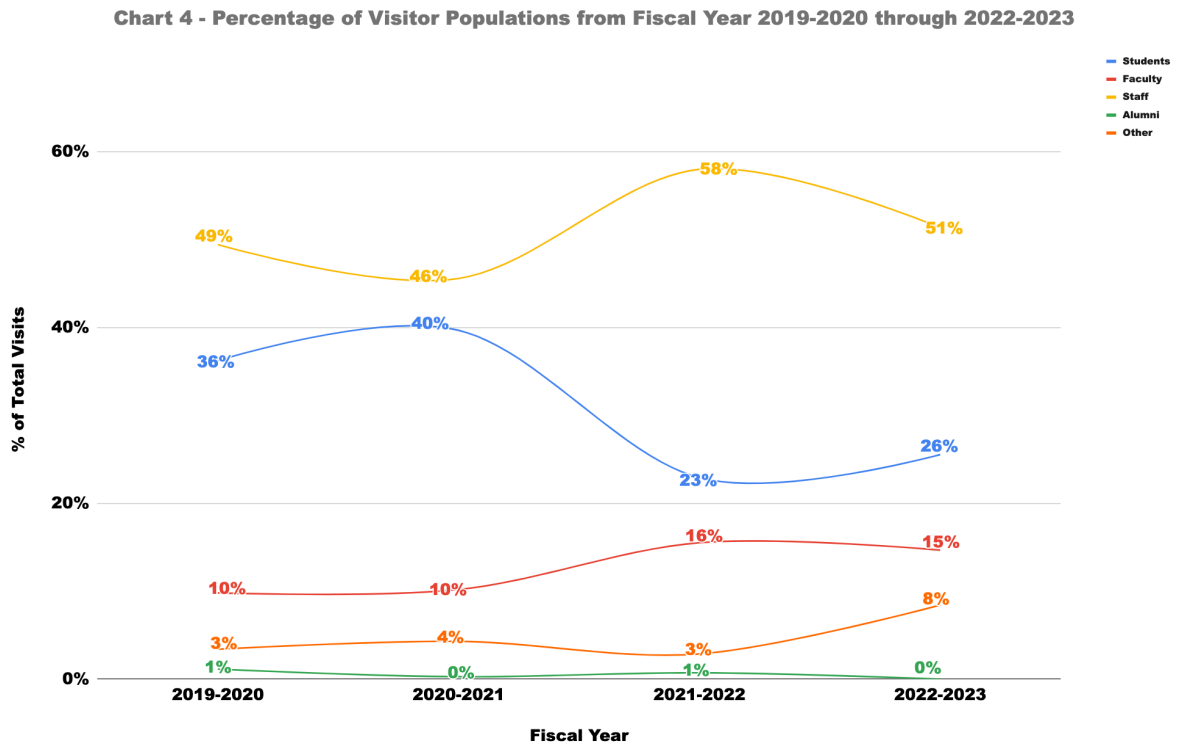


The number of sessions any given visitor has with our Office has remained steady since the prior fiscal year. 62% of visitors come in for a single session, while 15% return for a second session, and 23% for a third session or beyond. See tabular view of Chart 2

Chart 3 - Percentage of Mix of Time Spent across Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2022-2023

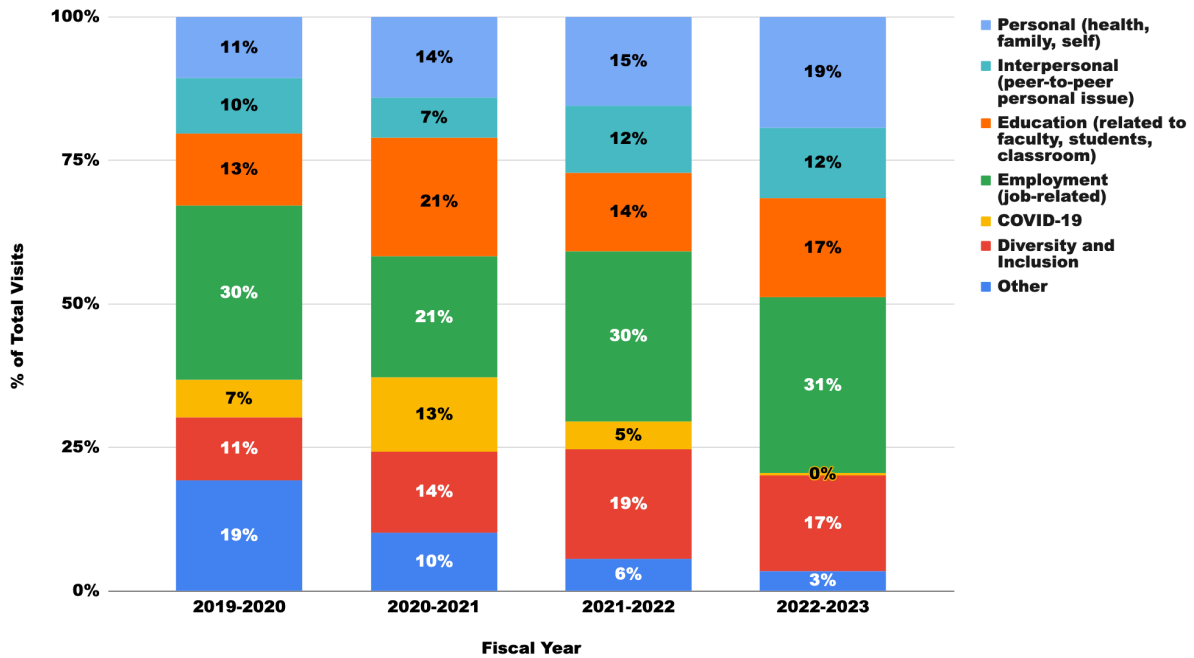


The percentage of visits lasting between 1 and 2 hours has increased this year from 30% to 37%, and visits of 2 hours or more have increased from 3% to 7%. [See tabular view of Chart 3](#)



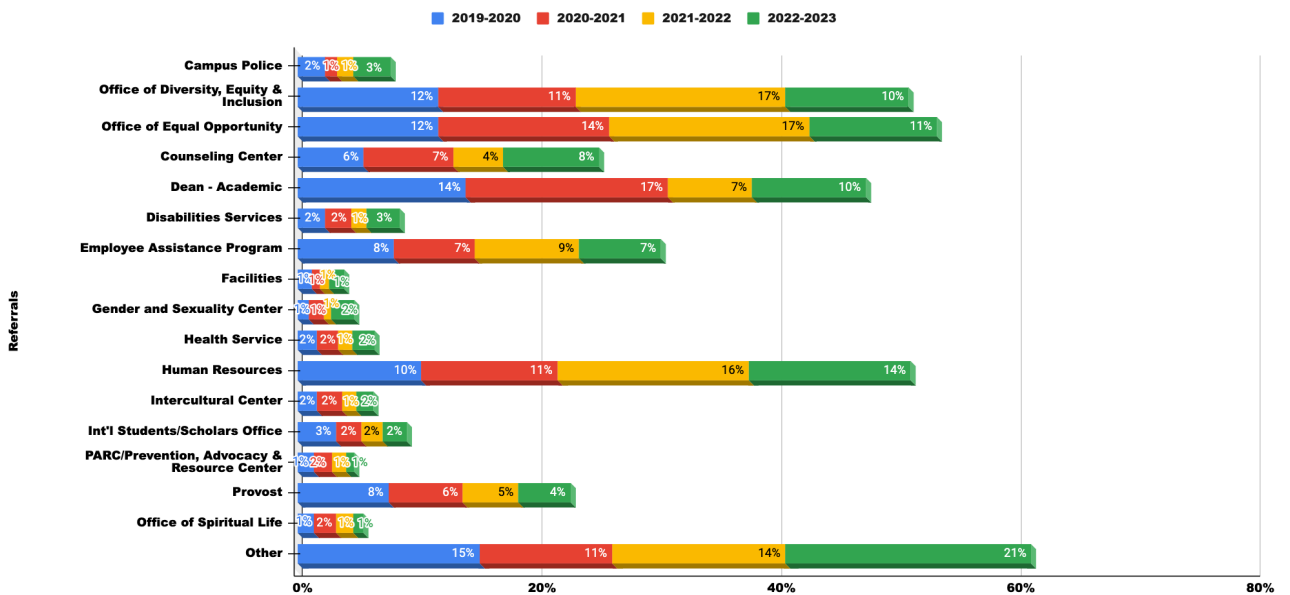
Students and staff remain the most frequent visitors to the Ombuds Office, together composing 77% of our visitors. Faculty visitors have remained about the same, at 15%, though their usage of the office has trended upward since FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021. [See tabular view of Chart 4](#)

**Chart 5 - Percentage of Primary Issues across Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2022-2023**



The most prevalent type of primary issue we encountered this past year is employment (job-related), at 31%. Next prevalent is personal (health, family, self), followed by diversity and inclusion and education (related to faculty, students, classroom). COVID-19 as a primary issue for visitors has decreased to 0% this past year. [See tabular view of Chart 5](#)

**Chart 6 - Percentage of Referrals Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2022-2023**



We regularly refer visitors to on-campus and, occasionally, off-campus resources as appropriate. One of the key roles of the Ombuds Office is to help visitors navigate the breadth of resources available to them and seek the support that fits their situation. A list of referrals in the “Other” category can be found in Appendix B to this annual report. [See tabular view of Chart 6](#)

## Collaborations/Partnerships

The Ombuds office has attended and participated in annual orientation and other events:

- Health Director/Wellness programmers
- Annual Stress buster’s fair (Health Wellness partnership)
- ISSO’s inSTEP program,
- End of semester stress sessions in the library
- ICC cookout
- ICC club orientation
- GSAS orientation
- Arts and Science new student family orientation
- ICC orientation
- Science Dept. PhD Researchers Orientation and Ethics training
- Heller Orientation and Leadership retreat

## Marketing and Outreach

The Ombuds website contains our [marketing flyer](#) and some [self-help documents](#) posted as well as listing other resources.

## Goals

Hire and on-board a new part-time (8 or fewer hours per week) Ombuds person to complete the staffing of the office. We plan to add Restorative Justice training and skills to our “Ombuds toolbox” to begin to address bullying behavior on campus. Advancing these skill sets will bring new capabilities to the office and allow us to better support and work with recurring campus issues. Don and Esther will continue to be International Ombuds Association Resource trainers, networking and mentoring with Ombuds in other higher educational organizations. This allows us to monitor and have resources for better being prepared for trends and issues as they arise at Brandeis. We will continue to participate in skill building and networking training and other Ombuds conferences. We plan to update the marketing materials and the Ombuds website with new materials highlighting new personnel and information that reflects and introduces the staffing and work of the Ombuds team. We are creating and locating new self-help materials to share with visitors, related to concerns and issues they bring to the office.

## Summary

It has been a busy year for the Ombuds team. We will continue to meet with all visitors in person, virtually by Zoom or phone with online open office hours for scheduling 5 days a week, Monday-Friday. We plan to offer workshops on difficult conversations, establishing norms/guiding principles and self-care to any and all campus offices, individuals, and groups who seek such supportive workshops. The Ombuds office will continue to market our services throughout the campus community and offer Restorative Justice listening circles to any team or campus department who requests support.

The Ombuds Office continues to promote our services and partner with campus offices that serve the entire Brandeis community. We are available presently for in person meetings on or off campus if such is desired. We are an outlet to process any type of challenging situation, a place to turn when an individual has no idea where to go, a bridge to navigate campus resources, a resource to educate about and facilitate difficult/challenging conversations, and a coach to help, support, and empower anyone affiliated with the Brandeis community. Our goal is to serve the community as a whole in ways that are needed, desired, and supportive for community growth, advocacy of fair process, and inclusiveness.

## Appendix A – Tabular View of Charts within the Report

Table View of Chart 1: Total Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2022-2023

<b>Total Number of Visits</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Total Number of Visits</i>	209	288	296	245	793

Table View of Chart 2: Percentage of Number of Sessions across Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2022-2023

<b>Percentage of Number of Sessions with Visitors by Number of Sessions</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>
<i>Percentage of Number of Sessions with Visitors with 1 Session</i>	36%	42%	61%	62%
<i>Percentage of Number of Sessions with Visitors with 2 Sessions</i>	34%	23%	18%	15%
<i>Percentage of Number of Sessions with Visitors with 3 or More Sessions</i>	30%	34%	21%	23%



Table View of Chart 3: Percentage of Mix of Time Spent across Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2021-2022

<b>Percentage of Mix of Time Spent with Visitors</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>
<i>Percentage of Mix of Time Spent with Visitors of 1 Hour or Less</i>	51%	65%	67%	56%
<i>Percentage of Mix of Time Spent with Visitors of Between 1 and 2 Hours</i>	23%	32%	30%	37%
<i>Percentage of Mix of Time Spent with Visitors of 2 Hours or More</i>	26%	2%	3%	7%

Table View of Chart 4: Percentage of Visitor Populations from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2021-2022

<b>Percentage of Visitor Populations</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>
<i>Percentage of Students</i>	36%	40%	23%	26%
<i>Percentage of Faculty</i>	10%	10%	16%	15%
<i>Percentage of Staff</i>	49%	46%	58%	51%
<i>Percentage of Alumni</i>	1%	0%	1%	0%
<i>Percentage of Other</i>	3%	4%	3%	8%

Table View of Chart 5: Percentage of Primary Issues across Visits from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2021-2022

<b>Percentage of Total Visits</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>
<i>Personal (health, family, self)</i>	11%	14%	15%	19%
<i>Interpersonal (peer-to-peer personal issue)</i>	10%	7%	12%	12%
<i>Education (related to faculty, students, classroom)</i>	13%	21%	14%	17%
<i>Employment (job-related)</i>	30%	21%	30%	31%
<i>COVID-19</i>	7%	13%	5%	0%
<i>Diversity and Inclusion</i>	11%	14%	19%	17%
<i>Other</i>	19%	10%	6%	3%

Table View of Chart 6: Percentage of Referrals Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through 2021-2022

<b>Percentage of Referrals</b>	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>FY 2021-2022</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023</b>
<i>Campus Police</i>	2%	1%	1%	3%
<i>Office of Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</i>	12%	11%	17%	10%
<i>Office of Equal Opportunity</i>	12%	14%	17%	11%
<i>Counseling Center</i>	6%	7%	4%	8%
<i>Dean - Academic</i>	14%	17%	7%	10%
<i>Disabilities Services</i>	2%	2%	1%	3%
<i>Employee Assistance Program</i>	8%	7%	9%	7%
<i>Facilities</i>	1%	1%	1%	1%
<i>Gender and Sexuality Center</i>	1%	1%	1%	2%
<i>Health Service</i>	2%	2%	1%	2%
<i>Human Resources</i>	10%	11%	16%	14%
<i>Intercultural Center</i>	2%	2%	1%	2%
<i>International Students /Scholars Office</i>	3%	2%	2%	2%
<i>PARC/Prevention, Advocacy &amp; Resource Center</i>	1%	2%	1%	1%

<i>Provost</i>	8%	6%	5%	4%
<i>Office of Spiritual Life</i>	1%	2%	1%	1%
<i>Other</i>	15%	11%	14%	21%

## Appendix B – Other Referrals

Athletics Director

Chief Financial Officer

General Counsel

Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

Registrar

Student Conduct

Student Union

Waltham District Court

Waltham Police