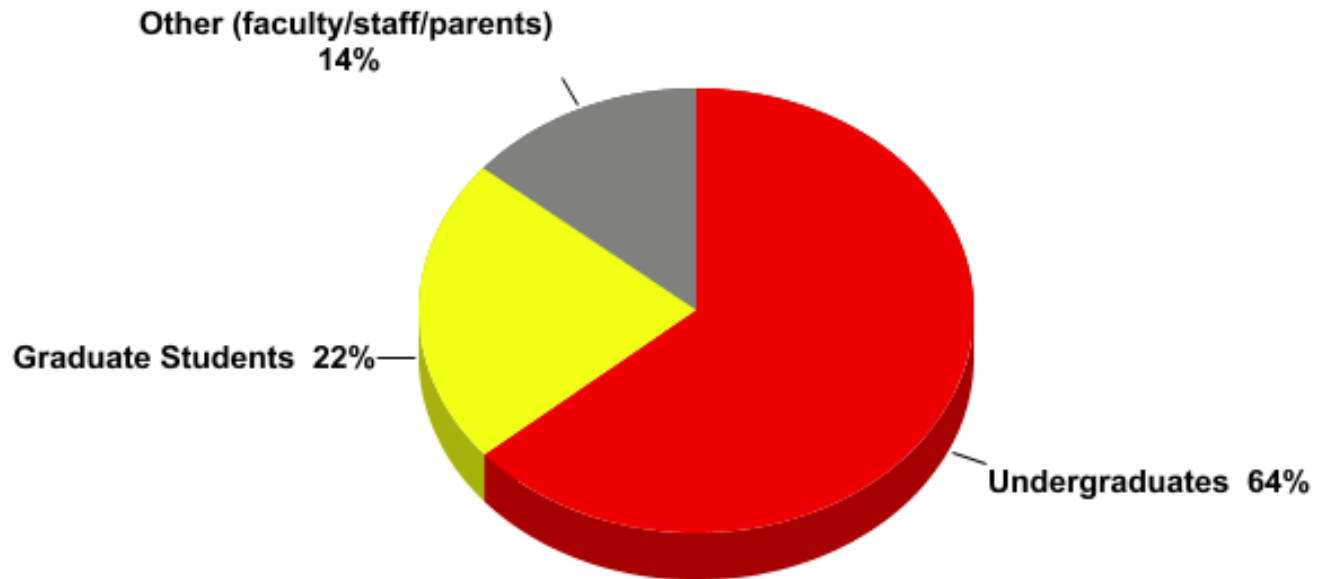


## **Student Ombuds Services 2015-16 Annual Report**

Submitted by Mike Giancola  
Assistant Vice Provost/Student Ombudsperson

- Roger Callanan served as the Assistant Vice Provost/Student Ombudsperson during the first part of the academic year until his retirement in December 2015, at which time Mike Giancola served in the role as Interim Ombudsperson in addition to his role as Associate Vice Provost for Student Leadership & Engagement. Mike was hired as the Assistant Vice Provost/Student Ombudsperson on May 23, 2016.
- Student Ombuds Services provides confidential, impartial and informal assistance for students to address conflict management, prevention and resolution. The Ombudsperson advocates for fair processes and empowers students to successfully navigate NC State.
- 287 cases were handled by the Student Ombudsperson during the 2015-16 academic year resulting in 501 contacts. This represents an increase of 21% over 2014-15. (excludes absence verification cases).
- As I was serving in an interim role, while also maintaining my other administrative responsibilities, I was unable to prioritize facilitating programming and prevention education. This is a priority for Student Ombuds Services moving forward.
- Student Ombuds Services provided feedback on an on-going basis to various departments and units around campus with suggestions for how to improve our processes and the overall student experience at NC State.
- Student Ombuds Services provided outreach to the following units during the academic year: Student Government/Student Senate, Inter-Residence Council, Academic Support Program for Student Athletes, Disability Services Office, Counseling Center, and Student Legal Services. This will be another area of focus during 2016-17 to ensure the campus community knows of the services offered by SOS and to expand the conversation about how we can all work together to ensure student success at NC State.

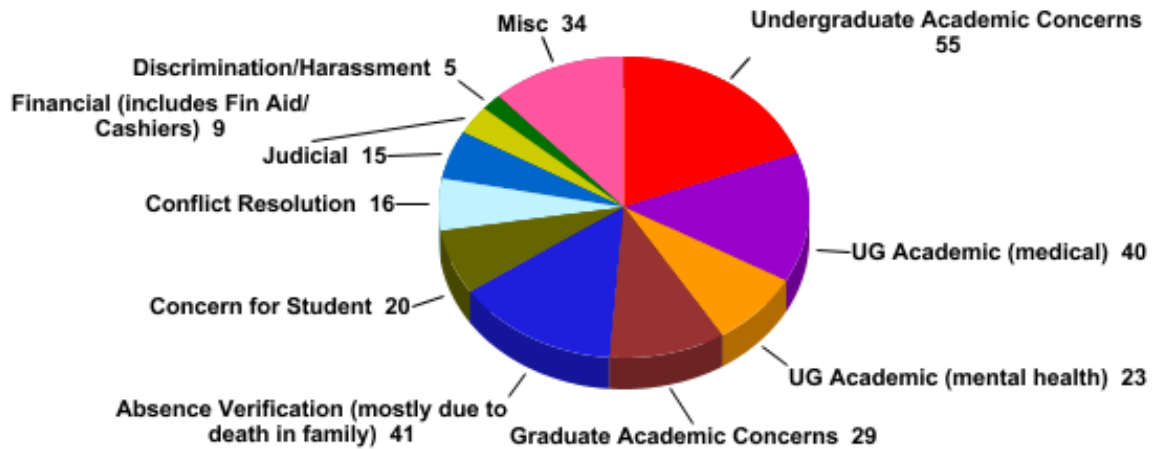
**Number of Cases = 287**



**Total Contacts = 501**

- 21% increase in cases over 2014-15 (excludes absence verification)
- Most contacts from faculty/staff were to share a concern about a student or seek clarification about a policy or best course of action.
- 60% of graduate cases were due to relationship/communication issues with advisor.

## Types of Cases



- General Academic Concerns include grade disputes, concerns regarding treatment by professors and related academic policies.
- UG Academic (medical) often involved requests for assistance after some traumatic medical incident (car accident, difficult diagnosis, etc.)
- UG Academic (mental health) often involved requests for assistance during or after psychological distress (stress, hospitalization, etc.)
- Most judicial cases involved students wanting to better understand their rights within the student judicial process.
- Financial cases included questions and concerns related to financial aid and charges for dropped courses.
- Most absence verification cases were handled by the DASA central office. The cases handled by SOS typically involved the more complicated cases that required additional follow-up or support.
- Of the five cases that alleged discrimination and/or harassment, one was based on racial tension in the classroom, one was an allegation of gender discrimination by a professor, one was harassment of a group of students by a former student and two were based on disability discrimination.

## **Recommendations for the Future:**

- Having served in the Student Ombuds role since December 2015, I see the benefit to the university and its constituents of having a comprehensive Ombuds Services. Our current offerings do not provide any support for staff, arguably one of the constituencies that have the greatest need for ombuds services. In addition, by consolidating the services we provide, we will be better able to handle cases that pose conflicts of interest (i.e. This year, the alleged victim and perpetrator of a sexual assault reached out to Student Ombuds Services for support) as well as provide back up support when one ombuds is out of the office. Per our discussions, I will continue to build support for this proposal and work with the appropriate campus leaders and stakeholders to ensure their needs are represented.