

ANNUAL REPORT

September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022

FAIRNESS MATTERS



Camosun College
OFFICE of the OMBUDSPERSON

Rob Thompson, Ombudsperson



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Camosun College is committed to the fair and just treatment of students. To this end, since 1992 the College and the Camosun College Student Society have together supported the operation of the Office of the Ombudsperson. Simply put, the Ombudsperson – or Solutions Office – works for fairness at the college. The role of the Ombudsperson is to deal with inquiries, concerns, complaints, and grievances on any college matter affecting students. The Ombudsperson serves as an independent, impartial and confidential third party in support of fairness and natural justice to provide all possible assistance to students so that they may advocate effectively on their own behalf.

During these twelve months, September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022, the Office was involved in 179 new cases and consultations (referred to as visitors), in addition to two ongoing cases from the previous academic year, for a total of 181 active visitor cases & consultations. Through 503+ substantial contact meetings, the Office met with 173 student visitors who raised questions and concerns about virtually every College-related school and service: academic marks and decisions, finances and tuition, course management, records, interpersonal conflicts, personal issues, placements and clinicals, and accommodations. This is roughly 1% of the total registered college student headcount of 13,985 (Institutional Research and Planning).

Students accounted for the vast majority of the 179 visitors: 173 students (97%); staff, parents, and community members, make up the other 6 cases (3%). Issues were raised more often by women (60%) than men (36%); other/unknown (4%). Considering the student visitors, at least 23% were international students, the remainder domestic. While 92% were current students, 5% were applying/accepted, and 3% had dropped. Regarding the overall subject of concerns, 73% were academic-related; 20% were non-academic, and 7% were both. Although questions and concerns were heard about almost every sector of the College, the School of Arts & Science, the Registrar's Office, and the School of Health & Human Services were the three areas most frequently discussed. COVID-19 was still impacting college life throughout this reporting period, though to a considerably lesser extent than the previous academic year. Once again, however, complaints directly concerning COVID-related themes were very infrequent. It is important to note that visitors use the Office services for a variety of reasons, including questions, requests, seeking clarity, concerns, and complaints. Many issues are resolved promptly once the student has the pertinent information.

To meet, the Office uses whatever mode visitors prefer: MS Teams video (33% of initial meetings), email (21%), and phone (31%) are the main initial modes of contact. Reduced COVID-19 restrictions allowed in-person meetings once again, though numbers nevertheless remained low (15%).

The outcomes of consultations and cases range include resolved (52% or 93 cases), no contact after 1 month / outcome unknown (40% or 71 cases), partially resolved (7% or 13 cases), and not resolved (1% or 2 cases). The categories of the Office's actions taken to resolve the concern are numerous and often a single case or consultation involves multiple actions including listening / providing info and advice / exploring options (179 cases and consultations), clarifying – info gathering and fact-finding (59), internal referral (16), shuttle diplomacy (11), meeting facilitation or observation (18), among numerous others. A complete list of actions taken and other reporting categories are presented in the data section.

Finally, during the last year the Office conducted a number of reviews of systemic college practices and policies where concerns had been raised through interactions with students, staff, and faculty. The Office made a number of recommendations, two of which are summarized in this report. Most of the recommendations involve relatively minor concerns, and informal, confidential recommendations were therefore made at the program level. One recommendation involves a college policy. More information regarding recommendations are included in both the Annual Office Statistical Data and Recommendations sections of this report.

INTRODUCTION

I began my role as Ombudsperson in March 2020 and am now pleased to present this annual report on my second full academic year at Camosun College, covering the period September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022. An important responsibility of a post-secondary ombudsperson, underlining transparency, is to report back to the community regarding the Office’s activities during the previous year. As Office records are not available from recent years, this report does not compare with past data and cannot detail long-term trends.

I am thankful to be able to support fairness at Camosun College, located in beautiful Victoria, British Columbia. As a visitor, originally from southern Ontario, I feel grateful to live and work on the Traditional Territories of the **Lekwungen** and **WSÁNEĆ** peoples. I acknowledge their welcome and graciousness to the students who seek knowledge here.

The Office of the Ombudsperson was established at Camosun in 1992 and therefore celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. While most Canadian universities have Ombuds offices, many colleges do not, and I am truly heartened by Camosun’s strong and ongoing commitment to fairness, equity, Indigenization, and reconciliation.

Conflict is natural. It’s not a negative thing in itself. Conflict is part of being human, growing and developing, and so it’s crucial that we see it this way as it will be with us our entire lives. **How** we deal with conflict is key. When conflict escalates, and especially when it becomes protracted or aggressive, it can become harmful and also costly. Escalated conflict can consume enormous resources, both personal and institutional, in the form of time, money and stress. This is the area which concerns the Office: supporting the college community to resolve conflicts before they escalate to the point where they cause damage, harm, or wasted resources.

I appreciate the support and openness of the Camosun community and enthusiastically look forward to continued collaboration with you to maintain fairness and equity on campus.

Submitted respectfully,

Rob Thompson, Ombudsperson

April 2023

WHAT THE OMBUDSPERSON DOES: MISSION, STRUCTURE AND MANDATE

The ombuds aims to prevent damaging and divisive conflicts from erupting on campus by providing an effective mechanism for the less powerful to safely voice concerns and seek solutions.

Jane Morson, "A Delicate Balance: The Role of the Ombuds in Resolving Campus Conflict," 2016

Ombudsman, a word of Swedish origin, is an official appointed to investigate individuals' complaints against a company or organization, especially a public authority ([dictionary.com/browse/ombudsman](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ombudsman)). Synonyms include: defender, preserver, minder, guardian, watchdog. The first post-secondary Ombuds in North America was established in 1965 at Simon Fraser University. There are currently over 35 post-secondary institutions in Canada which maintain ombuds offices.

MISSION

The mission of the Office of the Ombudsperson is to ensure that students are treated fairly at the College. The Office is a safe place to voice and clarify concerns and complaints. By advocating for fairness and natural justice, the Ombudsperson helps to achieve equitable resolutions.

STRUCTURE AND MANDATE

As Camosun College and the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) are committed to the just and fair treatment of every member of the College community, they collaborate in supporting the operation of the Office of the Ombudsperson. This service is independent, confidential, impartial, informal, free of cost, and highly accessible. It serves all Camosun students and campuses. To support its independence, the Student Society and the College fund the Office equally. The Ombudsperson is advised by the VP Student Experience and CCSS Executive Director, normally through bi-weekly meetings. While it is understood that college students (members of CCSS) comprise the vast majority of visitors, the Ombudsperson regularly consults confidentially with college and CCSS staff and faculty as well.

The mandate of the Office is twofold in nature. Firstly, the Office provides an independent, impartial and confidential process through which students may find assistance and advice toward a fair and equitable resolution of any college-related concern. The Ombudsperson acts as a support and resource, providing all possible assistance to visitors so that visitors may advocate and act on their own behalf. In order to do this, the Ombudsperson makes every effort to expeditiously obtain the necessary materials to inform visitors on matters of policy, procedure, and individual rights, as well as available services.

Secondly, when trends, patterns, policies, procedures, or practices of the college generate systemic concerns or conflicts, the Office can initiate reviews or investigations and make corresponding recommendations when appropriate. Some recommendations may be initiated to promote discussion or draw attention to institution-wide concerns. However, the Office cannot make binding decisions on any case. Monitoring for potential systemic concerns is the vital reason that the Office collects aggregate data on cases and consultations – to become aware of trends, such as an increasing number of complaints or conflicts in a certain area, to be able to offer support for conflict prevention and de-escalation.

The Ombudsperson acts in accordance with the principles of natural justice and fairness, within the existing policies of Camosun College and in compliance with the Standards of Practice of the Association of Canadian College and College Ombudspersons (ACCUO). Within a Canadian post-secondary context, ACCUO Standards of Practice state that an ombudsperson:

- fosters respectful, fair and equitable policies, practices and treatment of individuals
- functions independently of the administrative structures of the institution and of the staff, faculty and student associations
- operates in an impartial and objective manner
- respects confidentiality
- provides information, advice and intervention
- investigates and/or informally resolves complaints through access to persons, records, files and information
- recommends on individual and systemic issues without decision-making authority to implement the recommendation
- reports publicly and/or issues an annual report to the authority designated in the terms of reference of the office.

This is a partial list of the ACCUO Standards of Practice. For the complete list, see:

[accuo.ca](https://www.accuo.ca)
[accuo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SoP.pdf](https://www.accuo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SoP.pdf)

WHAT IS ADMINISTRATIVE FAIRNESS?

Administrative fairness, also known as procedural fairness, is a theme that people generally understand and feel strongly about – we have an expectation that the public should be treated well by public service staff. In fact, in our society, the concept of administrative fairness is very well developed. For example, we can expect in our public service delivery that staff follow rules and guidelines, treat the public with respect, and consider clients' needs. We expect that decisions will not be biased and that clear, transparent reasons for decisions will be provided by those with authority. Administrative fairness reinforces public trust in institutions and ultimately reduces conflict and correspondingly saves resources.



THE FAIRNESS TRIANGLE

A FAIR PROCESS REQUIRES:

- An impartial decision maker
- Information about any available review or appeal processes
- Reasonable notice that a decision is going to be made
- Clear information about the decision-making criteria
- Clear and meaningful reasons for decisions
- An opportunity for the person affected to be heard and have their views considered
- A timely decision

FAIR DECISIONS (OUTCOME) ARE:

- Made in accordance with applicable rules, laws and policies
- Considerate of the individual needs and circumstances of the person affected
- Made with appropriate legal authority
- Based on relevant information
- Based on rules that are fair (not unjust, improperly discriminatory or unreasonably burdensome)

FAIR SERVICE (TREATMENT) INCLUDES:

- Respecting confidentiality
- Being honest and forthright
- Being trauma-informed
- Being transparent about what you can and cannot do
- Offering respectful and courteous treatment
- Demonstrating cultural humility
- Making information clear and easily accessible
- Being accountable and apologizing if you or your organization makes a mistake
- Active listening

Source: BC Ombudsperson, Fairness in Practice Guide: A Guide to Administrative Fairness in the Public Sector

<https://bcombudsperson.ca/assets/media/OMB-FairnessInPractice-ForWEB-Feb18.pdf>

VISITOR STATISTICAL DATA

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

VISITOR CASES & CONSULTATIONS

179 > average ~15 new/month

Cases ongoing from 2020-21	2
Total active visitor cases & consultations 2020-21	181
Total student visitors	173
Faculty, staff and community visitors	6
% of student population visiting the Office	1%

NUMBER OF SUBSTANTIAL MEETINGS

503+

Average # meetings / visitor	2.9 > 29 visitors had 5+ meetings
Maximum # meetings / visitor	24 > 10 visitors had 10+ meetings

LENGTH OF INVOLVEMENT / VISITOR

Average # days / visitor	7.5 > 179N > 27 cases were open for 2 weeks+
Maximum # days / visitor	110 > 11 cases were open for 1 month+

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE

7

Area recommendations	6
Systemic college recommendation	1

ADDITIONAL OFFICE ACTIVITY/ACTIONS

Faculty/Staff consultations on policy or process	46 > Includes academic program introductions, networking, training, workshops, student orientation fairs, etc.
Student didn't pursue initial inquiry or complaint	8
Presentations & other meetings	20+

WEBPAGES

Ombudsperson four webpages total unique page views	2815
<i>Student Complaints Process</i> webpage unique views	701

OVERVIEW OF AGGREGATE VISITOR DATA

During 2021-2022, the Office welcomed a wide range of visitors and their concerns. Some were short consultations for information, guidance and referrals, while others involved numerous and lengthy meetings, further research, clarification, meeting facilitation and observation, and shuttle diplomacy. Normally, the Ombudsperson could arrange meetings promptly and meet with visitors in person, virtually, or by phone within a day or two.

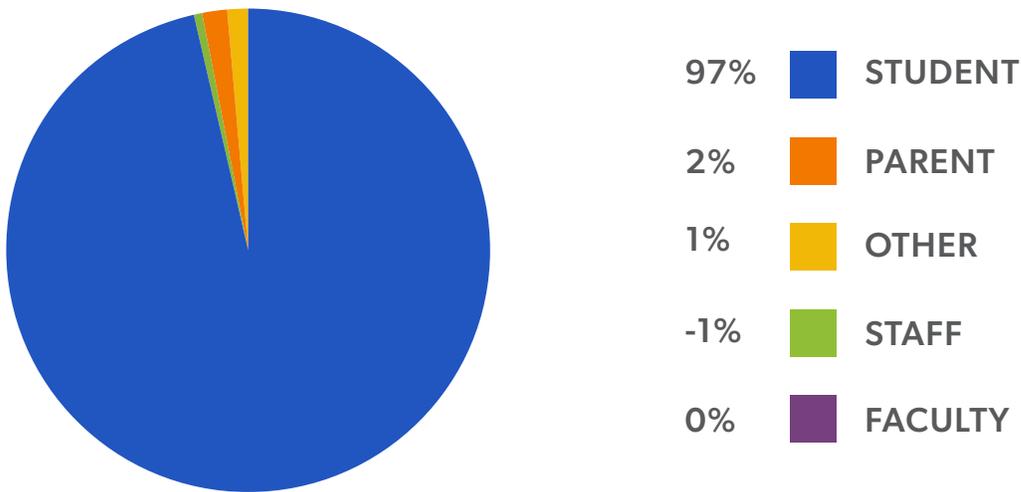
The Ombudsperson met with visitors who raised concerns about virtually every college-related faculty and service. Examples of questions and concerns addressed include:

- academic issues such as grades, exams, academic appeals, academic advising, academic status
- academic misconduct including plagiarism
- interpersonal disputes between students, faculty and staff
- tuition and finances
- COVID measures
- college policies and practices
- disability accommodations
- campus services
- personal matters

The 173 student visitors to the Office over the academic year represent roughly 1% of the total College population of 13,985 students [Institutional Research and Planning]. This percentage can indicate the current climate, transparency, and amount of student supports available at a given post-secondary institution. It is apparent that some students are either unaware of the Office or unclear of the Office's role. Therefore, it will be necessary to continually educate and create awareness about the Office so that students can take advantage of the service.

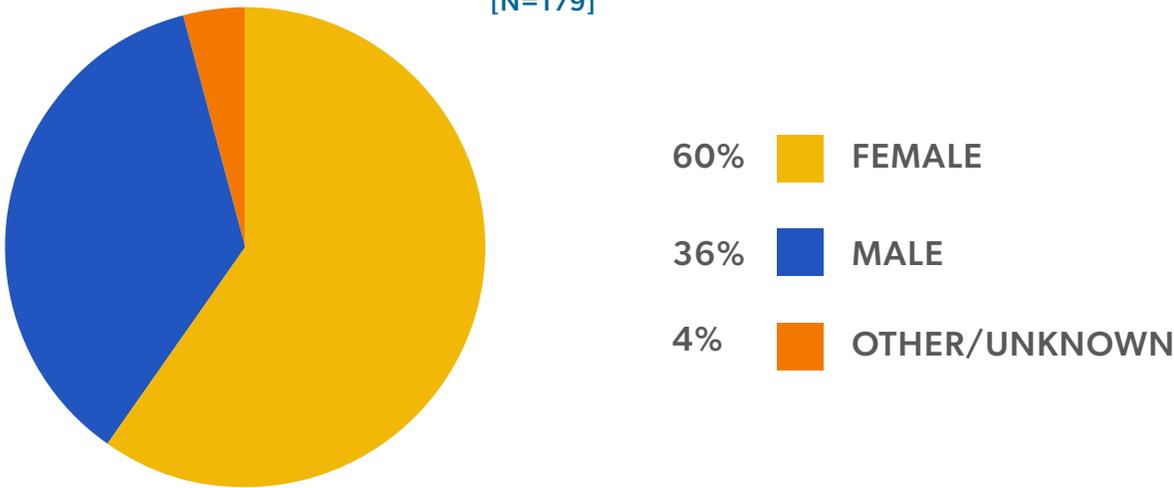
As this was the current Ombudsperson's second full academic year at Camosun in this role, and little detailed Office data from recent years exists, the Office is unable to compare this year to prior years. Next year, however, there will be three years of aggregate data, which may help the college identify themes for discussion.

FIG. 1
CONSTITUENCY
[N=179]



Considering the visitor data from the past year, we can see that students accounted for the vast majority of visitors (97%), while parents, staff, and community members accounted for 3% (please see Fig. 1 below). Of course, the Office cannot discuss students’ details with parents or others due to privacy guidelines. Nevertheless, it can explain college processes, which are also publicly available on the college website.

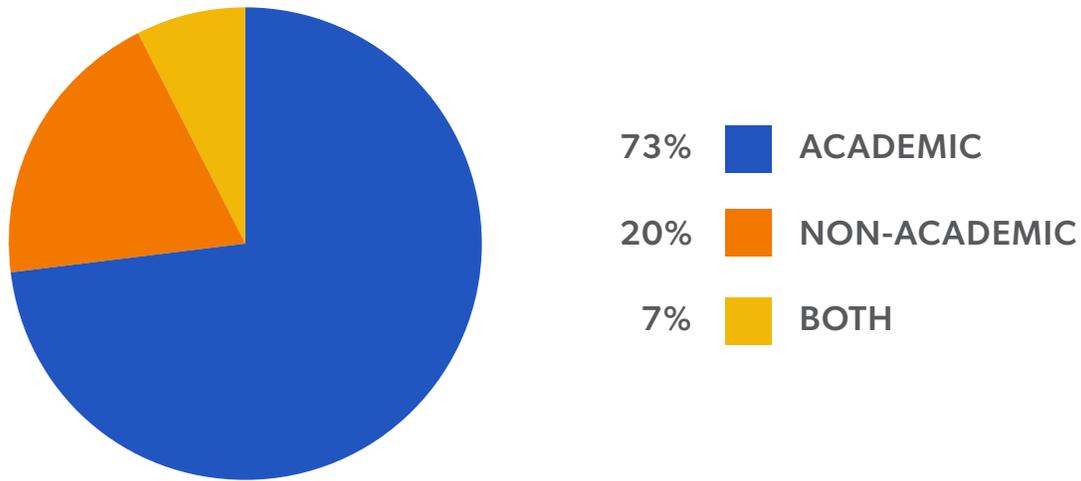
FIG. 2
GENDER
[N=179]



Concerns were raised more often by women (60%) than men (36%); other/unknown 4% (Fig. 2).

FIG. 3 CONCERN

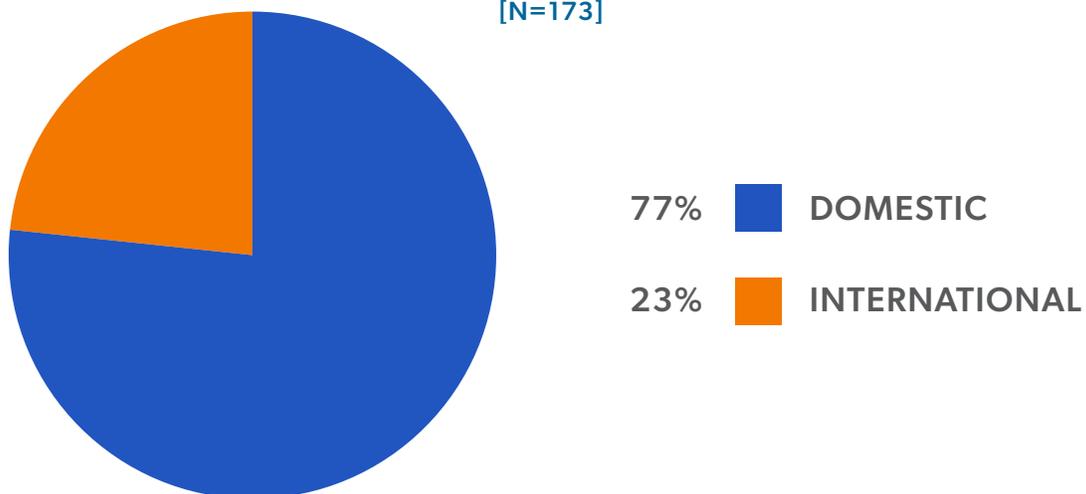
[N=179]



Regarding the subject of visitors' concerns, 73% were academic-related, 20% were non-academic, and 7% were both (Fig. 3). Data for detailed categories of academic and non-academic concerns is found below in Fig. 7 and Fig. 8.

FIG. 4 STUDENTS

[N=173]



Of the student visitors, 77% were domestic students while 23% were international students (Fig. 4). This figure is noticeably more than the general ratio of domestic to international students at the college [1,685 or 12% of the college's total student population of 13,985 were international in 2021-22, Institutional Research and Planning].

Examples:

To put a human face on the aggregate data, the Office will highlight specific examples from the reporting period throughout this report.

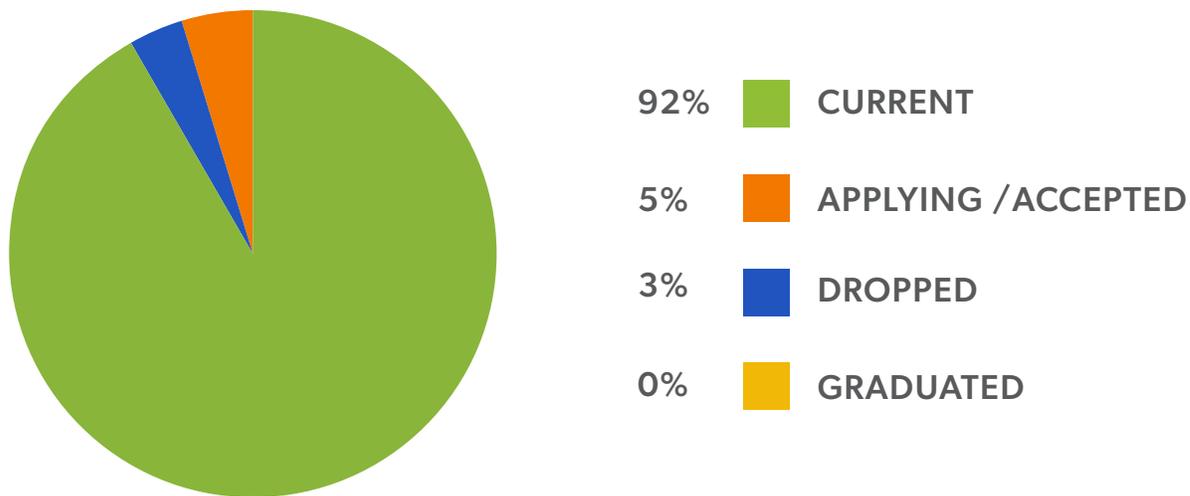
International students in Canada face numerous challenges, including language, culture, visas and paperwork, finances, and employment. Many international student access college supports and assistance to navigate their new Canadian circumstances and they are of course well supported by Camosun International. As an example of an international visitor to the Office, one student asked for support in navigating a request for a tuition credit for a course which she had already taken but for which she already had a transfer equivalency course from her home country. She felt that the advice she received from Camosun did not uncover this detail and she essentially had then completed the same course twice. The Registrar's Office reviewed the matter and generously granted her a one-time tuition credit for the following semester.

In another situation, an international student required documentation of her paid tuition fees for her home country. Following some confusion around which Camosun office is responsible to complete the task, the form was completed and sent. After reviewing the case, an understanding was reached to deal with similar requests in the future.

Two international students were suspended from the college in Winter 2022, one for academic misconduct and the other for student misconduct (non-academic). Both appealed the decisions to the highest college level and requested support through these appeal processes. After completing the Appeal of Suspension from College process, both students also raised concerns about this college policy. See the Recommendations section.

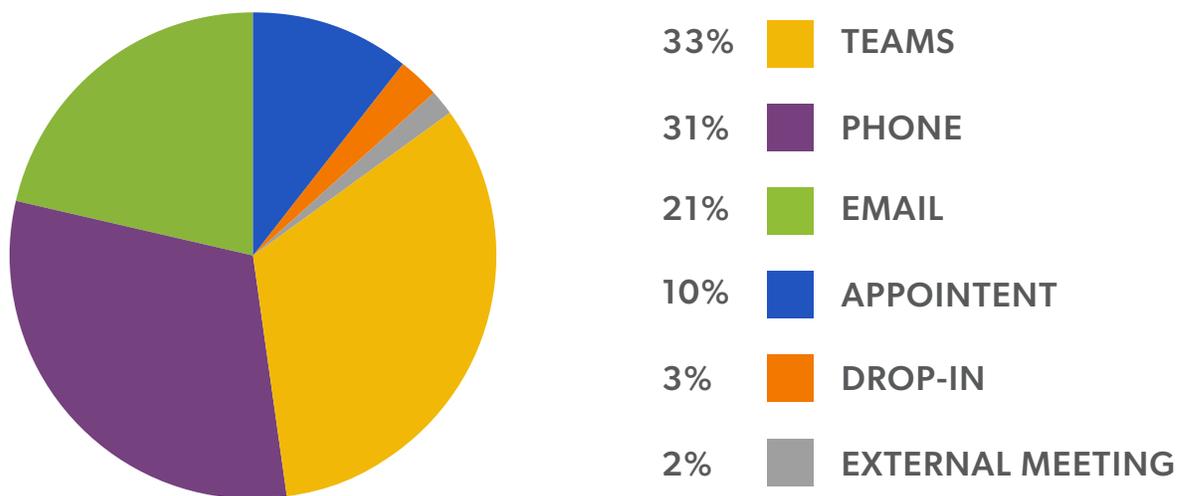
Many international students are referred to the Office by other college services as they seek guidance on college processes, such as final grade reviews, academic misconduct, academic progress, the student complaint process, and medical compassionate withdrawals. With cultural and language differences, we can expect that international students will require more support and make up a significant proportion of visitors to the Office.

FIG. 5
STUDENT STATUS
 [N=173]



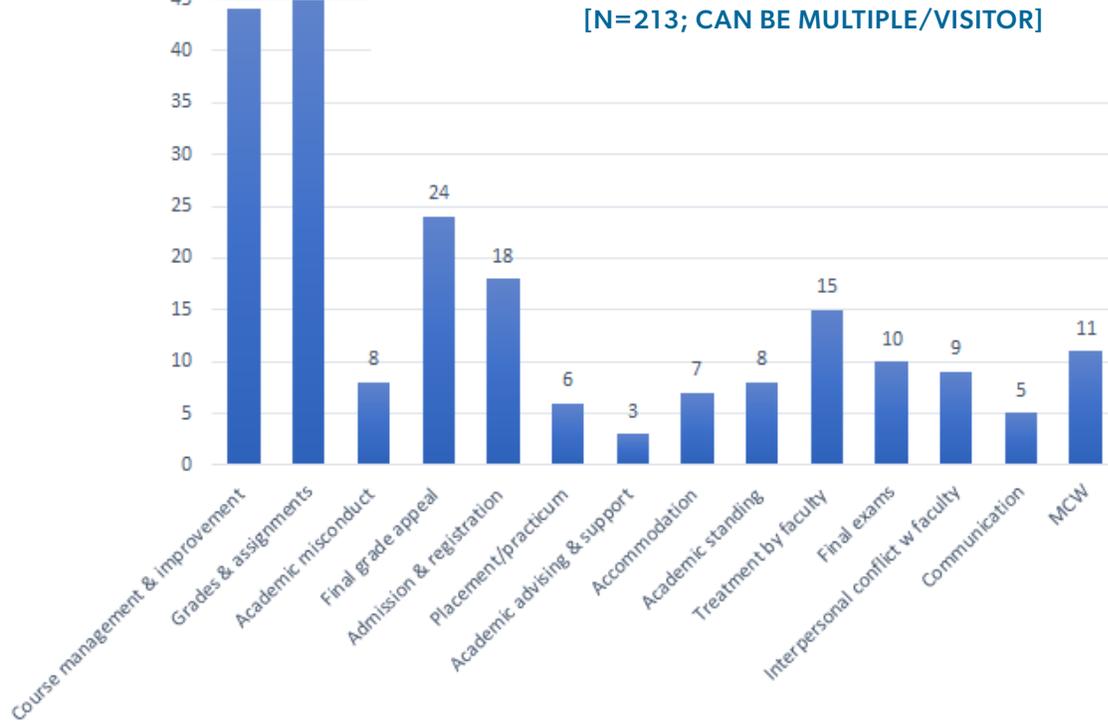
Most student visitors were current students (92%), while others were applying / accepted (5%), or dropped (3%) (Fig. 5).

FIG. 6
MODE OF INITIAL MEETING
 [N=179]



To meet with visitors, the Ombudsperson uses whatever mode is most suitable for visitors: Microsoft Teams video (33%), phone (31%), and email (21%) being most common for initial meetings (Fig. 6). Cheerily, meetings could once again be held in person following the reduction of COVID-19 restrictions; 15% of initial meetings were in person.

FIG. 7
TYPE OF ACADEMIC CONCERN



The broad range of academic concerns raised by visitors is presented here, and often visitors raised more than one concern. ‘Grades’ (45 visitors) was the concern most often raised, followed by ‘course/program management and improvement’ (44), ‘final grade appeal’ (24), and ‘admission & registration’ (18). (Fig. 7)

Examples:

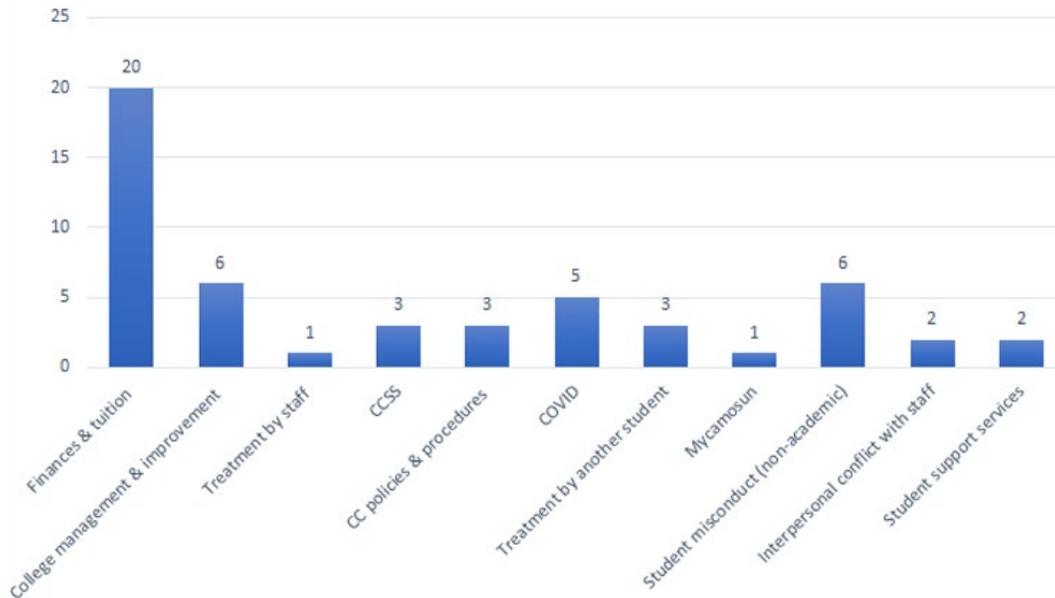
Several concerns in the ‘grades’ and ‘course/program management and improvement’ categories are worth highlighting. For example, some students faced a minor crisis during their course and requested academic concessions, such as one student who ‘blacked out’ during a final exam due to changes in their medication. After discussion with the instructor and chair, the student could rewrite the exam. A student in a School of Health & Human Services (HHS) program was required to wear a temporary medical device, which impacted their placement. A solution was found which allowed the student the opportunity to perform the essential skills. Several students requested exceptions, such as with prerequisites, repeating courses, and academic progress, and the Office coached them on these requests. Some students experience interpersonal conflicts with instructors or wish to raise a concern about course management. Again, the Office coaches students in how to best approach the situation, generally through an informal conversation with the instructor using I-statements and nonviolent communication.

Appreciation:

Once again, the Ombudsperson would like to highlight the positive example set by chairs and deans in providing timely responses for academic processes such as final grade appeal decisions. Bravo!

FIG. 8 TYPE OF NON-ACADEMIC CONCERN

[N=52; CAN BE MULTIPLE/VISITOR]

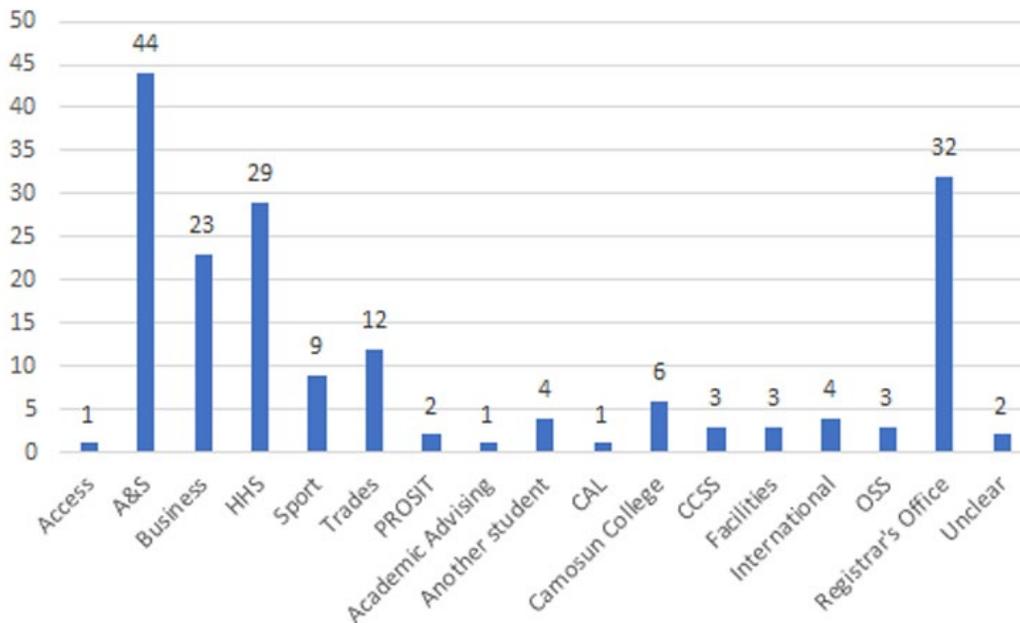


There were also a wide range of non-academic concerns raised by visitors. Again, some visitors communicated multiple concerns. The main concerns raised include 'finances and tuition' (20 visitors), 'college management & improvement' (6), 'non-academic student misconduct' (6), and COVID-related themes (5) (Fig. 8).

Example:

As the Office noted last year, very few complaints were received about COVID-specific policies, guidelines, or practices. In fact, only five students raised concerns, though not against the college's COVID guidelines, but once again requesting that the college do even more for health and safety. In fall 2021, a student was concerned for the health and safety of herself and others when she said that an instructor was not wearing a mask, as was required at that time in certain circumstances.

FIG. 9
SCHOOL OR AREA OF CONCERN
 [N=179]



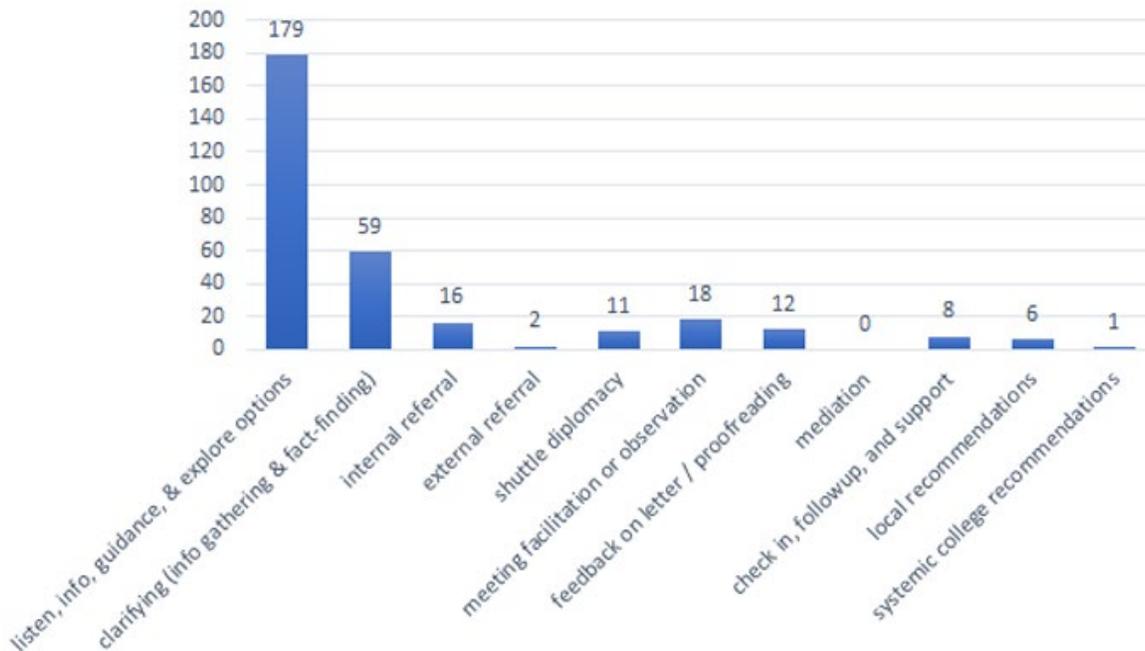
While concerns were heard regarding many sectors of the College, the School of Arts & Science, the Registrar’s Office, and the School of Health & Human Services were the three most frequently discussed (Fig. 9). Again, it worth highlighting that not all visitors are raising complaints or problems, and not all visitors create a ‘case.’ Not infrequently, a question or concern can be clarified during a brief consultation or two. This category has been updated to highlight the area of concern at the college rather than simply the visitor’s area of study, as they can differ; students often present concerns which are not related to their academic program or to their program school. For example, nursing students in the School of HHS are required to complete Arts and Science courses. Similarly, students ask questions or raise concerns about non-academic areas, such as tuition, student services, or another student. This category will therefore now better capture the area of concern.

Examples:

A student visited the Office in summer 2022, concerned about the recently-announced changes to the college’s drop/tuition refund deadlines, where a 100% refund would only be possible if a course is dropped before the first day of classes. In another instance, a student complained about the behaviour of another student on an online college discussion forum.

FIG. 10 ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE CASE

[N=312; CAN BE MULTIPLE/VISITOR]



The categories of ‘action taken’ are numerous and often a case or consultation involves multiple Ombudsperson actions. Normally a case or consultation includes ‘listening, offering information and guidance, and exploring options’ (with 179 visitors). Additional actions include ‘clarifying – info gathering and fact-finding’ (59), ‘meeting facilitation or observation’ (18), ‘internal referral (16), and ‘feedback on letter / proofreading’ (12), among others. When referring visitors to other internal staff and services, I referred numerous students to faculty members (chairs, advisors and deans) and services including Centre for Accessible Learning, the Counselling Centre, Office of Student Support, Admissions and Registration, Eye? Sqa’lewen, Academic Advising, and the International Office. A complete list of ‘action taken’ data is presented below (Fig. 10).

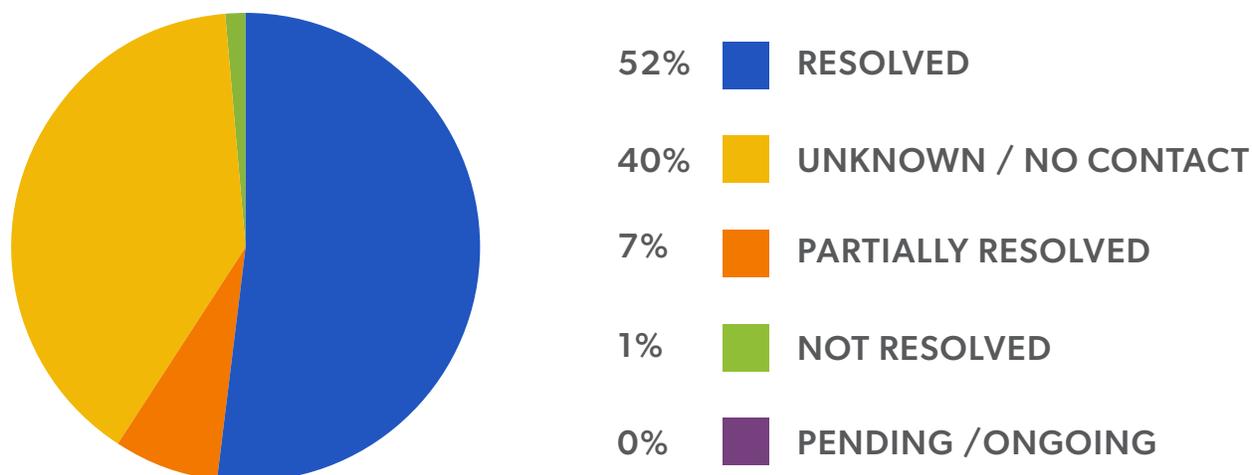
EXAMPLES:

A student’s behaviour in the form of numerous long email requests per day precipitated a strained relationship with a college office. A behavioural contract was drafted, which the student was requested to sign. However, the student had some legitimate fairness concerns about the contract, for example, requesting that a review date be included for the terms of the contract. The student ultimately accepted and signed the contract following ‘shuttle diplomacy’ between the parties.

A student felt that he was not respected in class by the instructor. The Office facilitated a meeting between the instructor and student, with the chair present as well. The meeting seemed to resolve the misunderstandings and the student’s concerns, and he continued in the course.

FIG. 11 OUTCOME

[N=179]



The 'outcome' categories of consultations and cases include 'resolved' (52%), 'unknown / no contact after one month' (40%), 'partially resolved' (7%), and not resolved (1%) (Fig. 11).

EXAMPLE:

It is key to clarify the outcome categories here and to highlight that 'resolved' indicates that the concern was reviewed in a way that met administrative fairness and natural justice standards. For instance, a student requested a final grade review/appeal and over the course of several weeks followed the college process by meeting with the instructor, then chair, then dean to argue that the final grade should be higher. The student's appeal was not successful and the original grade was upheld at each level. The role of the Ombudsperson, however, is not to advocate for a particular outcome or to determine if a decision was in one group's perceived favour or another. Rather, the Office observes that a concern was handled fairly through the appropriate college process, the process is publicly available, there was no bias in the decision, and a timely decision was provided and communicated with sufficient rationale and detail.

Similarly on this theme, the Ombudsperson does not attempt to indicate in this report an individual's level of satisfaction with a particular outcome. For example, a student submitted a Medical Compassionate Withdrawal request and the Registrar's Office provided a timely decision, with clear reasons supported by college policy, but ultimately did not approve the request. From the standpoint of administrative fairness and natural justice, this case is considered 'resolved' by the Office of the Ombudsperson, regardless of whether the parties agree or whether the request was approved or not, as a fair process was followed. The Ombudsperson certainly understands that a student in this case might feel disappointed and quite possibly frustrated. Therefore, the outcome indicated by 'resolved' or 'not resolved' is not synonymous with 'request granted / not granted' or 'happy / unhappy.' Rather, 'resolved' indicates that the Office observed that the college process was followed fairly and a fair decision was provided within the stated timeframe or reasonable timeframe.

However, the Ombudsperson will intervene in circumstances where a college policy or process is not followed or a policy is witnessed to be unfair or unjust. In the latter case, the Office may conduct a systemic review of a college policy and can make recommendations if it is inconsistent with procedural fairness and natural justice.

Please refer to the section 'What the Ombudsperson does: Mission, Structure and Mandate' for more detail on administrative and procedural fairness, as well as the Recommendations section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A key role of the Camosun Ombudsperson is to track, review, and investigate potential systemic issues at the college – potential gaps or recurring problems – and if appropriate, make recommendations. Throughout the last academic year, a number of systemic complaints and concerns were raised through the Office. After conducting reviews, the Ombudsperson made corresponding recommendations in a number of situations, starting with informal, confidential discussions. Most were localized recommendations within a program, while one involved a college policy, specifically the G-1.7.1 Process for Appeal of Suspension from College. Several other systemic reviews did not result in recommendations, as the Ombudsperson perceived that fairness and equity were not at risk. Two recommendation examples follow.

RECOMMENDATION EXAMPLE 1: in-person final exam for online course

The logistics of a final exam did not meet standards of fairness and transparency. The Ombudsperson recommended to the program chair that more consideration for fairness and transparency be given to planning the particular final exam in the future.

Background: A student who had completed about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an online course discovered that the default option for the final exam was in-person. The student lived outside of Victoria and had registered for the course explicitly because it was online. In this course, students wishing to complete an online exam were required to request it by a certain date well in advance of the final; by missing the deadline, a student would be required to write the exam in-person. The student felt that the situation was unfair because clear and transparent exam information should have been provided at the outset of the course and in the course syllabus, with the in-person exam aspect highlighted, so that students could make an informed decision. The student was ultimately allowed to write the final exam online. The Office shared the student's concerns about fairness and reviewed the case with the program chair, recommending that in the future, if a fully online course has an in-person final exam, the exam details should be highlighted in the course description so that students are aware when they register, the syllabus should be equally transparent, and the process to request an online exam should be simple and barrier-free. The recommendations were accepted.

STATUS: resolved

RECOMMENDATION EXAMPLE 2: Casper test

The Casper test admission requirement is not presented transparently on the college website. The Allied Health and Technologies (AHT) department uses the results of the Casper test as an admission requirement for both the Sonography (SONO) and Radiography (MRAD) programs. The Ombudsperson recommended that the programs update all public-facing SONO and MRAD program communications to provide clear, thorough, and transparent information on the Casper admission requirement, in line with procedural fairness standards and other Canadian PSIs. Admission requirements for all college programs must be clearly and transparently communicated in college communications.

Background: The current SONO and MRAD webpages, as well as the MRAD info session slides, do not explicitly mention the Casper test by name. Rather, the description of the required “non-academic assessment” is very vague. Acuity Insights, the company which owns and administers Casper, describes Casper as “an online, open-response situational judgment test (SJT). It asks what you would do in a tough situation, and more importantly, why. This helps determine behavioral tendencies of applicants pursuing people-centered professions.” [source: <https://acuityinsights.app/casper/>] The Office is continuing discussion with the SONO and MRAD programs and the School of Health and Human Services on this systemic recommendation.

STATUS: ongoing

OFFICE ACTIVITY

OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

This year, the Ombudsperson got to know more staff and faculty, many finally in person, and had regular meetings with deans, chairs, VPs, managers, directors, and coordinators on both campuses. In addition, to better explain and increase awareness of the Office's services, the Ombudsperson had new promotional materials created through Graphic Services. Including academic program introductions, networking, training, workshops, student orientation fairs, the Ombudsperson conducted almost one hundred outreach and networking meetings. The reception at Camosun has invariably been very welcoming, open, and collaborative in support of fairness. Please contact the Office to arrange an Ombudsperson introduction, presentation, or discussion in your department or office.

OVERVIEW OF OFFICE ACTIVITY

Bi-weekly meetings with the Office advisors, the VP Student Experience and CCSS Executive Director

Presenting at Welcome Week, student academic program orientations, CCSS, and faculty meetings, including:

- Dental programs orientation
- HHS student rep meeting
- CCSS board & staff retreat re: fairness
- chairs & program leads re: appeal processes

Meeting regularly with faculty & staff to share current concerns and gather feedback
Providing recommendations or feedback on draft and current policies, procedures, plans, and practices, including:

- Medical Compassionate Withdrawal process
- Practicum concern processes
- Several Camosun website pages
- COVID measures
- Learning contracts
- Academic calendar

Participating in Association of Canadian College and College Ombudspersons (ACCUO) events and activities, such as the annual conference and AGM (online this year), as well as remaining an active member of the ACCUO Communications Committee

Participating in numerous workshops and trainings, mostly online and no-cost, including:

- Toolkit Launch: A Comprehensive Guide to Campus Gender-Based Violence Complaints
- Guide to e-mental health supports on BC post-secondary campuses
- Understanding Grief and Loss workshop
- Safeguarding Diverse Newcomer Women: Supporting Immigrant Women Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence
- Empowering faculty to address low-level forms of academic misconduct
- Drupal website training
- Walls Optional
- When Negativity Strikes: Communicating Despite Negative Behaviour
- Creating a psychologically safe space for the LGBTQ2S+ community

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