

Annual Report
2 March – 31 August 2020
Office of the Ombudsperson
Camosun College



CAMOSUN
COLLEGE
50 YEARS
1971-2021



Rob Thompson, Ombudsperson
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

Contents

Executive Summary..... 2

Office Activity..... 3

Visitor Data 3

Visitor Data Graphs 6

Executive Summary

Camosun College is committed to the just and fair 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. 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 on their own behalf.

I am excited to join you at Camosun College. I feel grateful as a visitor, originally from southern Ontario, to live and work on the Traditional Territories of the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples.

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. I am very pleased to present this initial report covering the period March 2 – August 31, 2020. As I began as Camosun Ombudsperson on March 2, 2020, and Office records are not available from the prior six months nor recent years, my first report is a six-month snapshot and not a comparison with past data. For these reasons, this mini-report will not detail long-term trends. In coming years, however, this aggregate data may help the College identify themes for discussion.

During these six months, the Office was involved in 71 cases and consultations. Through 140+ substantial contact meetings, I met with 67 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 accommodation.

Issues were raised more often by women (58%) than men (31%); unknown (11%). Students accounted for the vast majority of the 67 visitors: 62 students (87%); staff (1%) and faculty (4%). The number of student visitors extrapolated to one year (124 visitors) is roughly .7% of the total College student population. Considering the student visitors, at least 24% were international students. While questions and concerns were heard about almost every sector of the College, the schools of Health & Human Services and Business were the two most frequently discussed, with 18 and 10 visitors respectively. Regarding the overall subject of concerns, 72% were academic-related; 20% were non-academic and 8% were both. It is important to note that issues which visitors raised include questions, requests, concerns, and complaints, and many issues could be resolved promptly. To meet with visitors, I use whatever mode they prefer: in-person appointments (4%), phone (34%), MS Teams video (13%), and email (49%). Because COVID-19 restrictions began in mid-March, in-person meetings were no longer possible soon after I started.

Finally, while I did not conduct formal investigations on systemic issues during these six months and am not making formal recommendations in this report, I have made a number of informal, confidential recommendations at the department level, included in this report as 'own motion' cases. I very much appreciate the warm Camosun welcome. Despite COVID restrictions, I have enjoyed working with you and getting to know you, and am sincerely grateful for your support and patience as I find my bearings.

Office Activity

- 30+ networking meet n greet /introduction meetings with faculty & staff
- Providing feedback on 6 draft policies & procedures:
 - Student Misconduct
 - Academic Integrity
 - Grade Review and Appeals
 - Accommodation
 - Sexual Violence
 - Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals
- Cleaning out and organizing both offices, including extensive filing & shredding
- Organizing with staff re: office painting, furniture, new computers
- Old computers removed from offices, docking stations installed, loaner laptop exchanged for permanent
- Arranging and installing for Titanium case management software
- Completing TTW training
- Participating in numerous online, no-cost webinars and workshops, including:
 - “HM|HC Talks: Coping with COVID-19 on Campus”
 - BC Human Rights Commissioner introduction & discussion
 - CAN/US college ombuds group discussion
 - Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (ACCUO) AGM
 - “Personal Resilience in Change” workshop (HR dept)
 - Academic misconduct at PSIs during COVID
- Participating in Chairs & Program Leads Development training

Visitor Data

- ❖ Total cases and consultations: 71
- ❖ Total visitors: 67, own motion 4
- ❖ Substantial visitor contacts [meetings, detailed emails; not logistics, sending basic info or links]: 140+
- ❖ **Gender [n=67]:**
 - female 39
 - male 21
 - unknown 7

❖ **Visitors [n=67]:**

Students 62
faculty 3
staff 1
other 1

❖ **School [n=51]:**

A&S 4
Access 1
Bus 10
HHS 18
Sport 1
Trades 5
Unknown, not relevant or non-academic concern 33



❖ **Students [n=62]:**

current 32
applying 2
dropped all courses 2
graduated 2
former [not graduated] 2
unknown 22

❖ **Student international / domestic [n=62]:**

International 15+
Domestic 47

❖ **Mode of initial substantial contact [n=71]:**

in-person appointment 3
phone 24
Teams video 9
email 35

❖ **Concern [n=71]:**

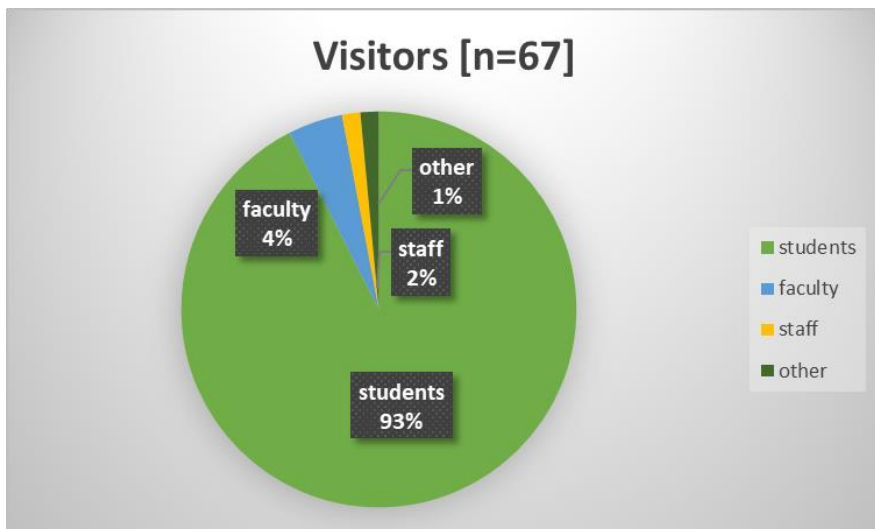
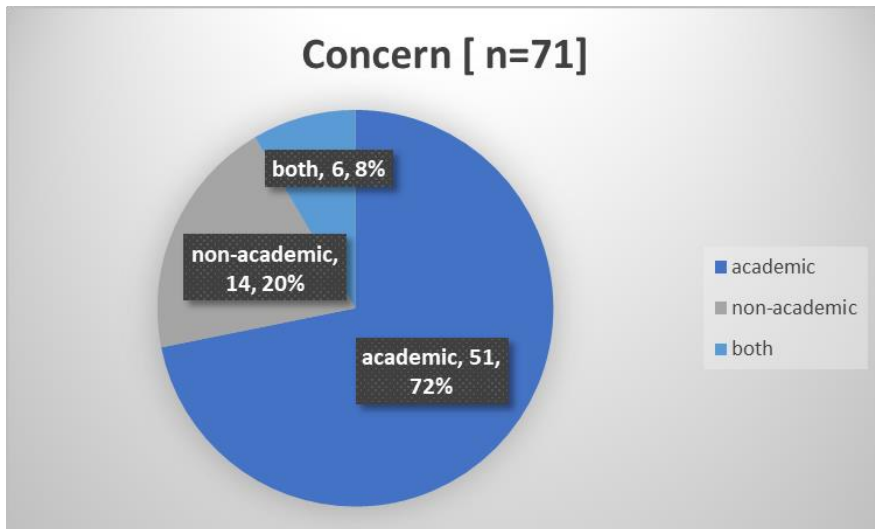
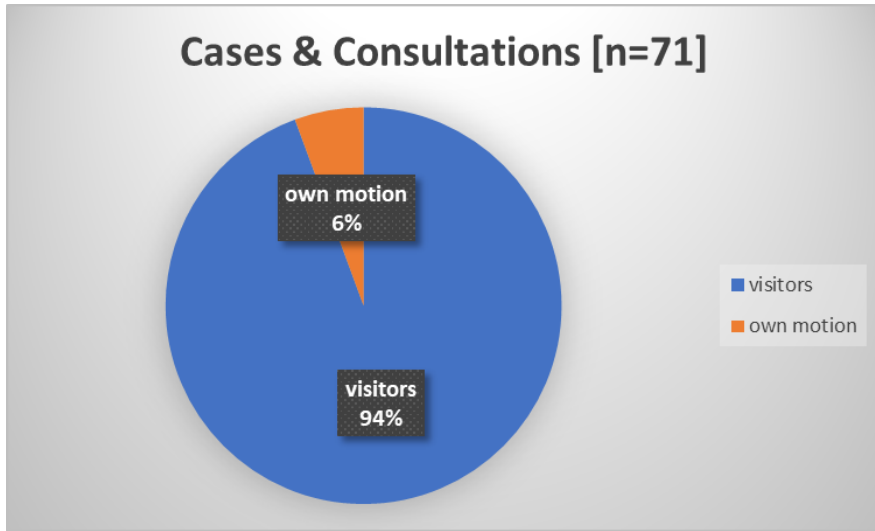
academic 51
non-academic 14
both 6

- ❖ **Academic concerns [n=86; can be multiple/visitor]:**
 - Course management & improvement 21
 - Grades 20
 - Final grade appeal 10
 - Admission & registration 9
 - Academic integrity 5
 - COVID 5
 - Placement/practicum 5
 - Academic advising & support 3
 - Accommodation 2
 - Academic standing 2
 - Treatment by faculty 2
 - Exams 1
 - Interpersonal conflict 1

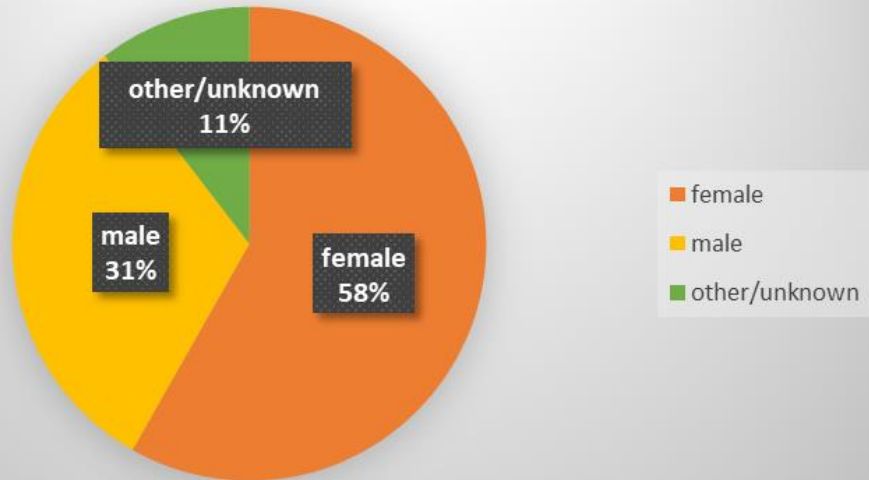
- ❖ **Non-academic concerns [n=23; can be multiple/visitor]:**
 - Finances & tuition 12
 - College management & improvement 3
 - Admin/Registrar office 2
 - Treatment by staff 2
 - CCSS 1
 - Ombudsperson observation 1
 - CC policies & procedures 1
 - Other 1

- ❖ **Action taken beyond standard listening, providing info & guidance, and exploring options [n=93; can be multiple/visitor]:**
 - Clarity [contacting staff, faculty or external] 50+
 - Internal referral 21
 - Meeting accompaniment/facilitation 8
 - Proofread/provide feedback on letter 7
 - Local recommendations 4
 - Shuttle diplomacy 3

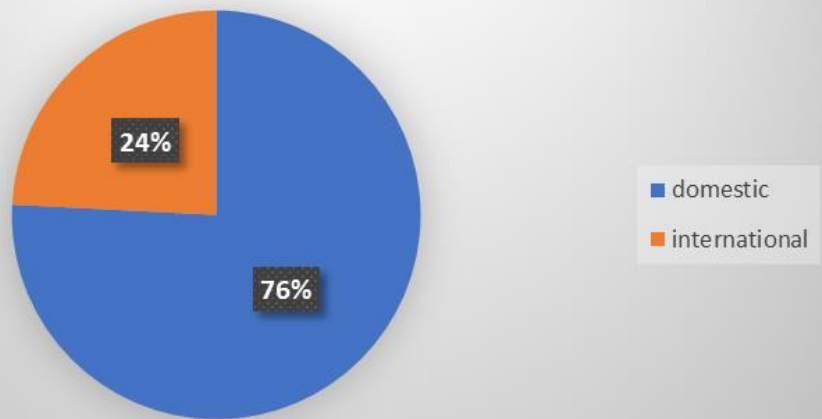
Visitor Data Graphs

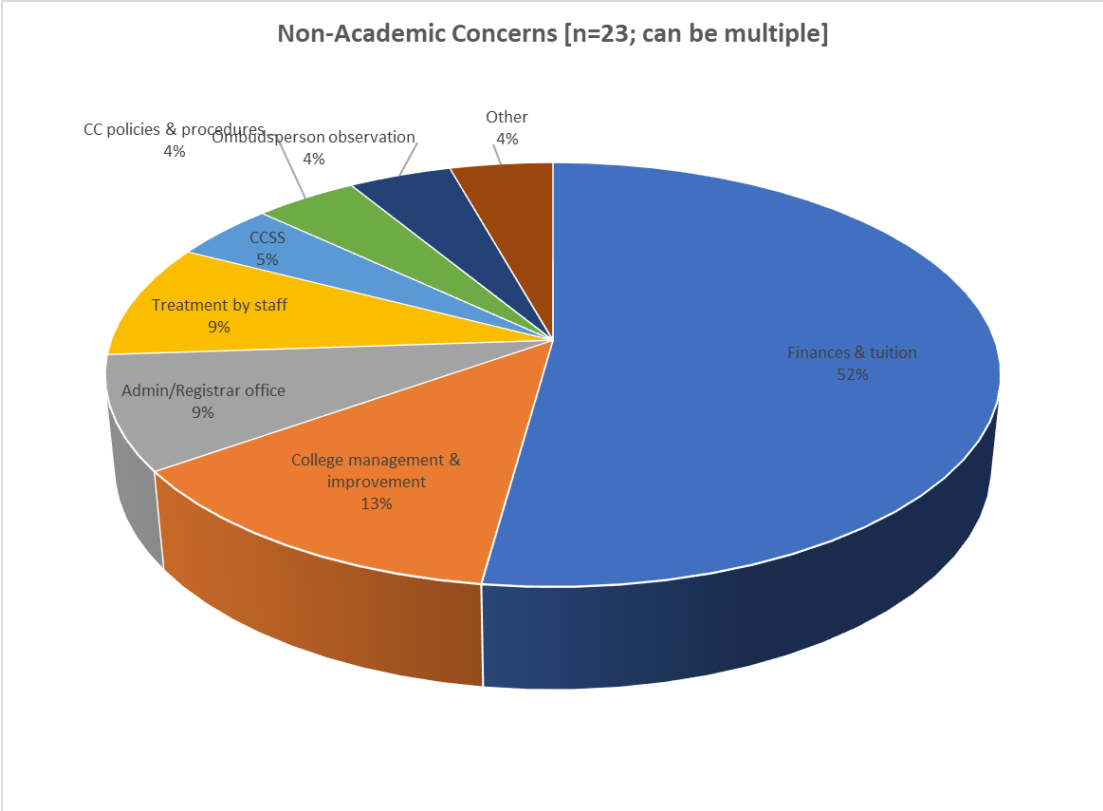
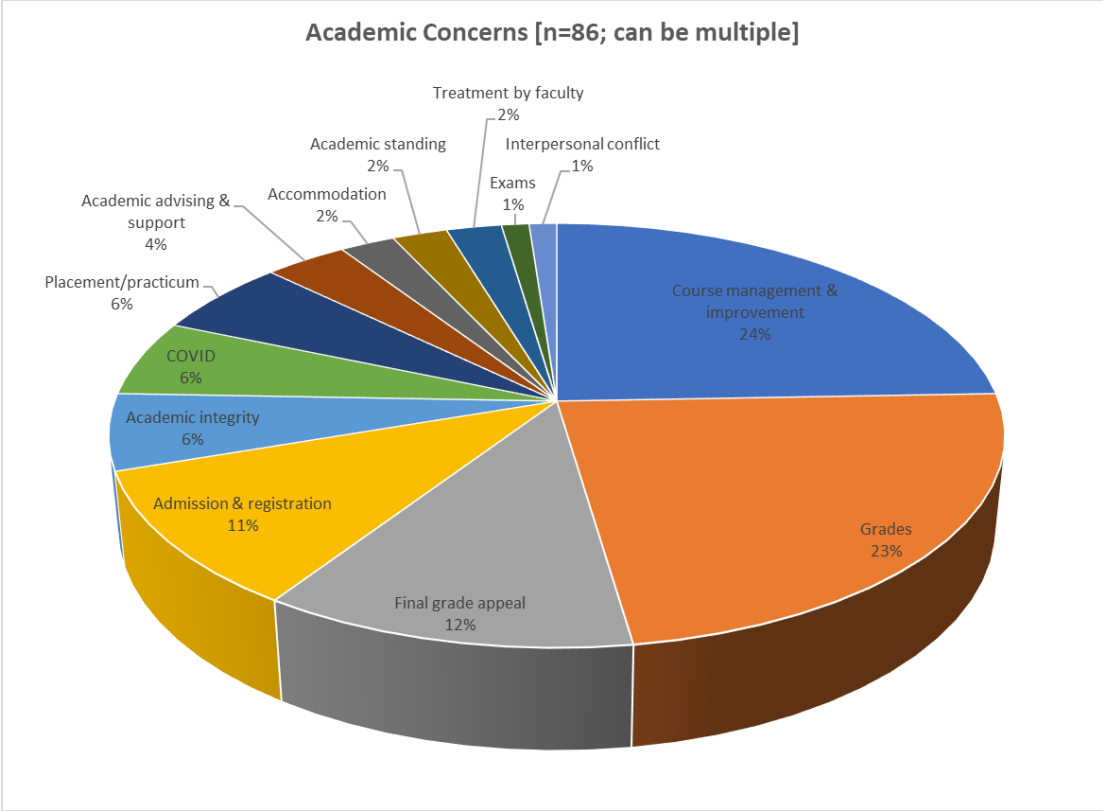


Gender [n=67]

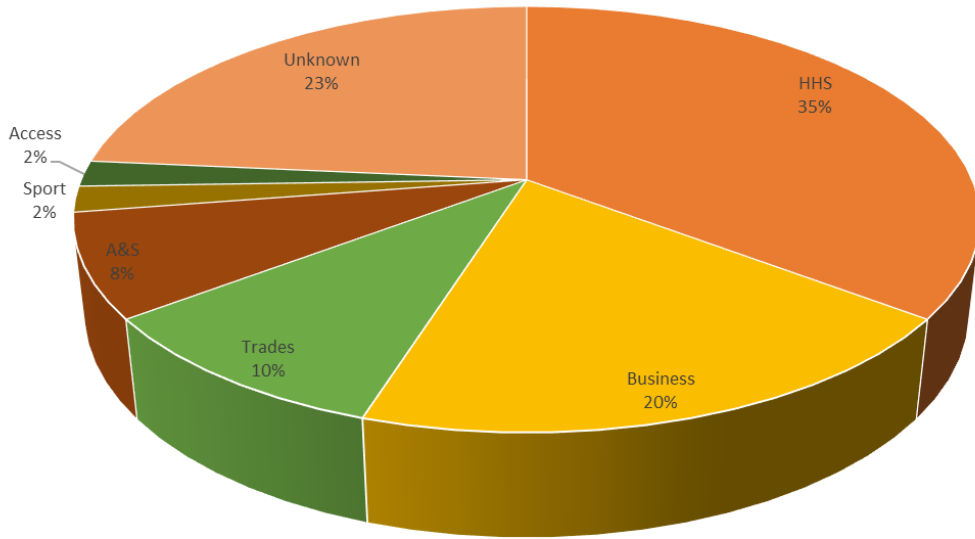


Student Visitors, Domestic / International [n=62]





School
[n=51; only academic cases & consultations]



Action Taken by Ombudsman
beyond standard listening, providing info & guidance, and exploring options
[n=93; can be multiple/visitor]

