

OMBUDS OFFICE

Promoting Fairness at Concordia
Annual Report 2024-2025

February 4, 2026

Members of the Board of Governors Concordia University
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Montreal, QC
H3G 1M8


To the Board of Governors;

As per article 29 of the Terms of Reference of the Ombuds Office, I am pleased to submit the **2024-2025 Annual Report of the Ombuds Office: Promoting Fairness at Concordia University**.

We have provided an overview of the year's activities from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025 with several examples of our files and certain recommendations.

This report has been presented to you in person.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Amy Fish in black ink.

Amy Fish, MHSc.

Ombudsperson

Concordia University / Université Concordia

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Ombuds Office Overview

The Ombuds Office at Concordia University was founded in 1978 and was one of the first in the country. Our role is to assist current community members with concerns relating to University policies, to offer coaching regarding academic fairness/unfairness and to provide information and clarify University procedures. The office looks at systemic issues, conducts thorough investigations and offers recommendations when appropriate.

The Ombuds Office reports directly to the Board of Governors and is supervised by the University Secretariat.

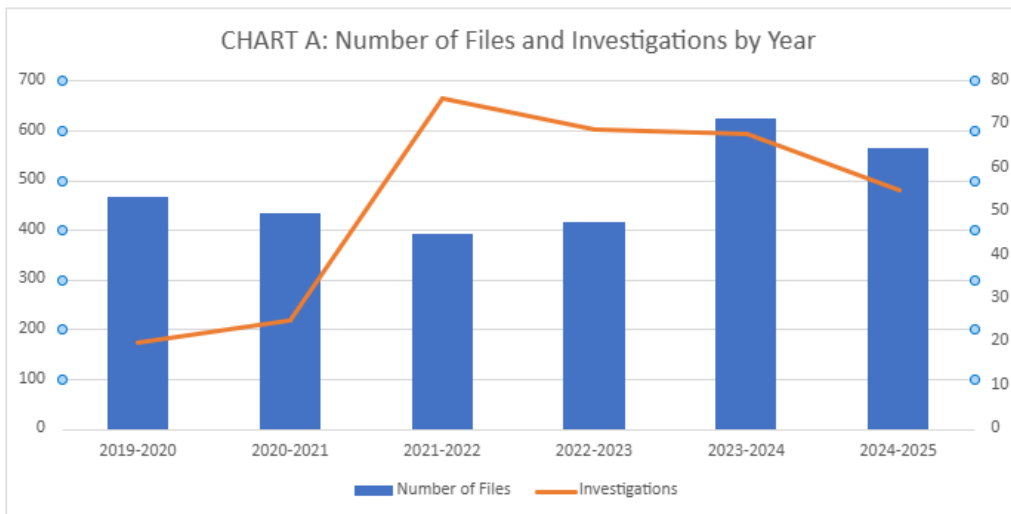
The day-to-day role of the Ombuds Office is to:

- Listen to community members concerns;
- Advise on policy matters where needed and refer when appropriate;
- Investigate alleged unfairness by reviewing documents, interviewing witnesses and conducting detailed analysis;
- Recommend changes to policies, rules and procedures where needed and following investigation;
- Coach community members on how to improve communication; and
- collaborate with other departments such as the Office of Rights and Responsibilities (ORR), The Equity Office and the Provost's Office to jointly offer workshops and respond to community needs.

The core values of the Ombuds Office are independence, impartiality, accessibility, and confidentiality.

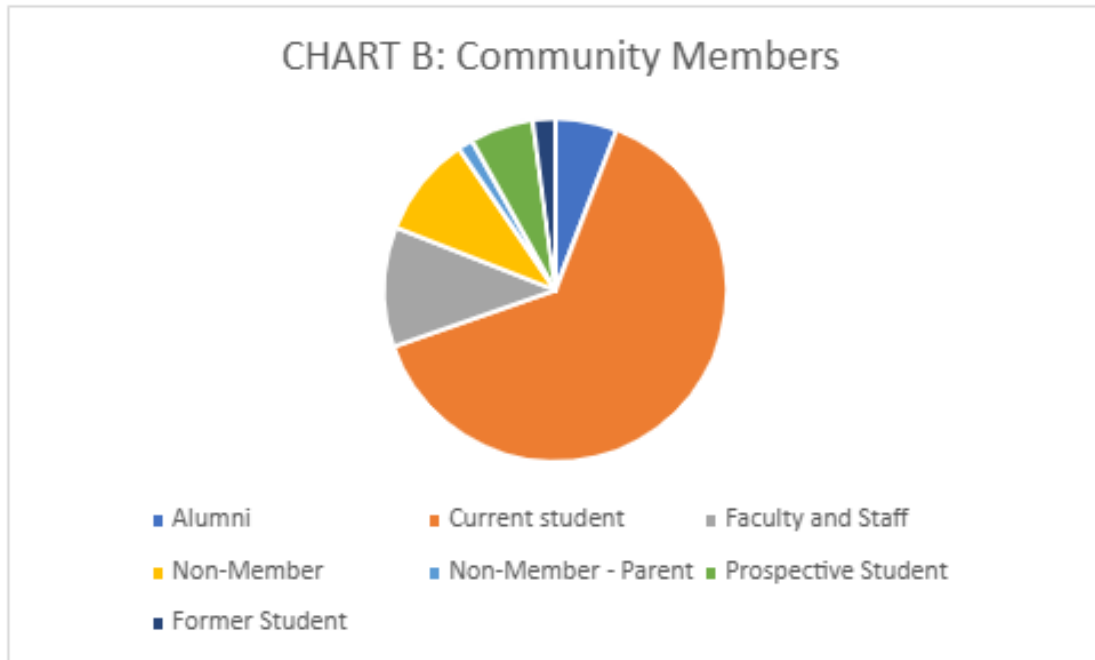
Ombuds Files 2024-2025

The Ombuds Office saw a slight decrease in files this year from 625 to 565. Of those, 8 were from parents and 54 were from other people outside the Office's jurisdiction. All of those cases received a response from our office and were referred to a more appropriate office for resolution. The number of investigations dropped slightly this year from 68 to 58. As you can see from Chart A below, there was a large jump in investigations post-Covid, and this appears to be a slight correction.



Community Member Overview

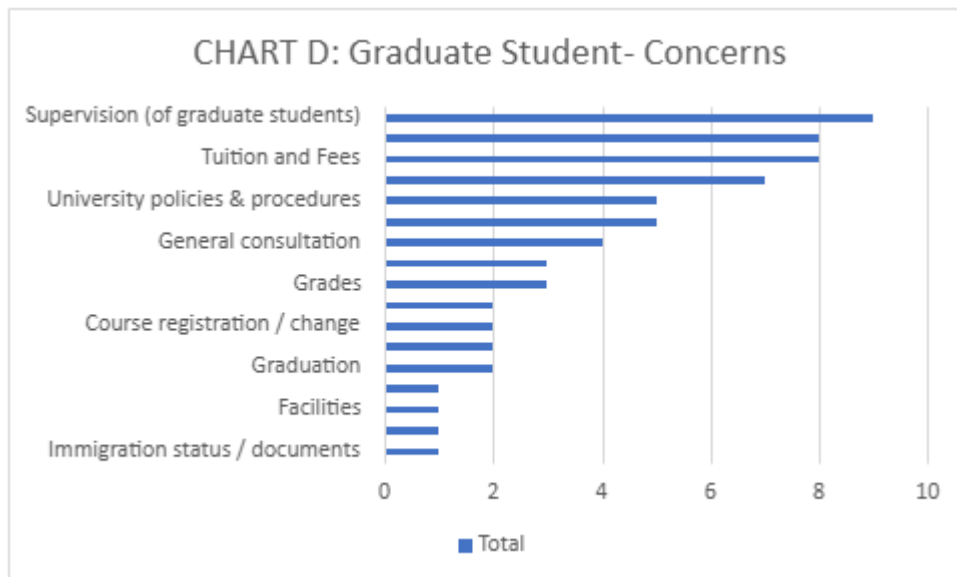
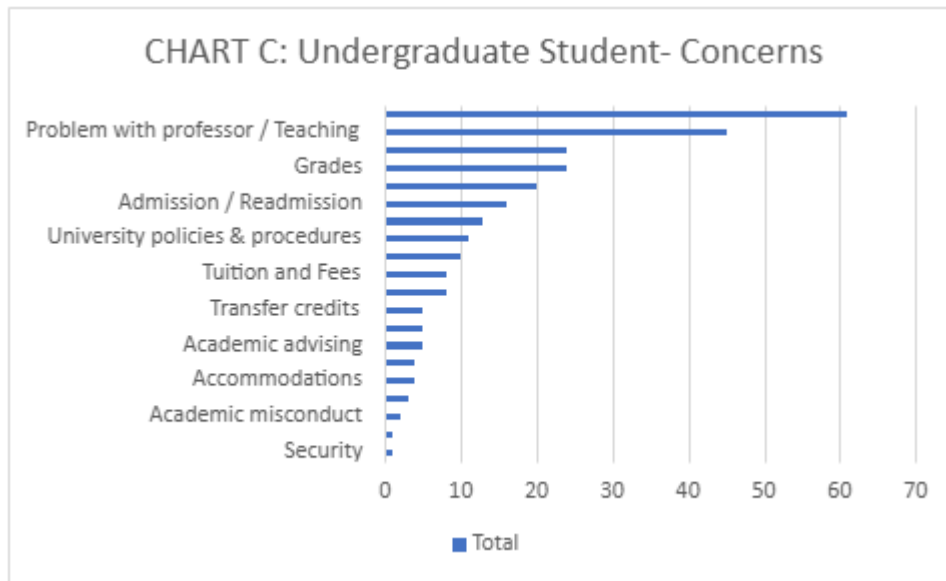
Please see Chart B below, for a breakdown of what type of community members came to our office. Most of our files (63%) came from current students. The remaining files were fairly evenly distributed from faculty and staff, prospective students and non-members.



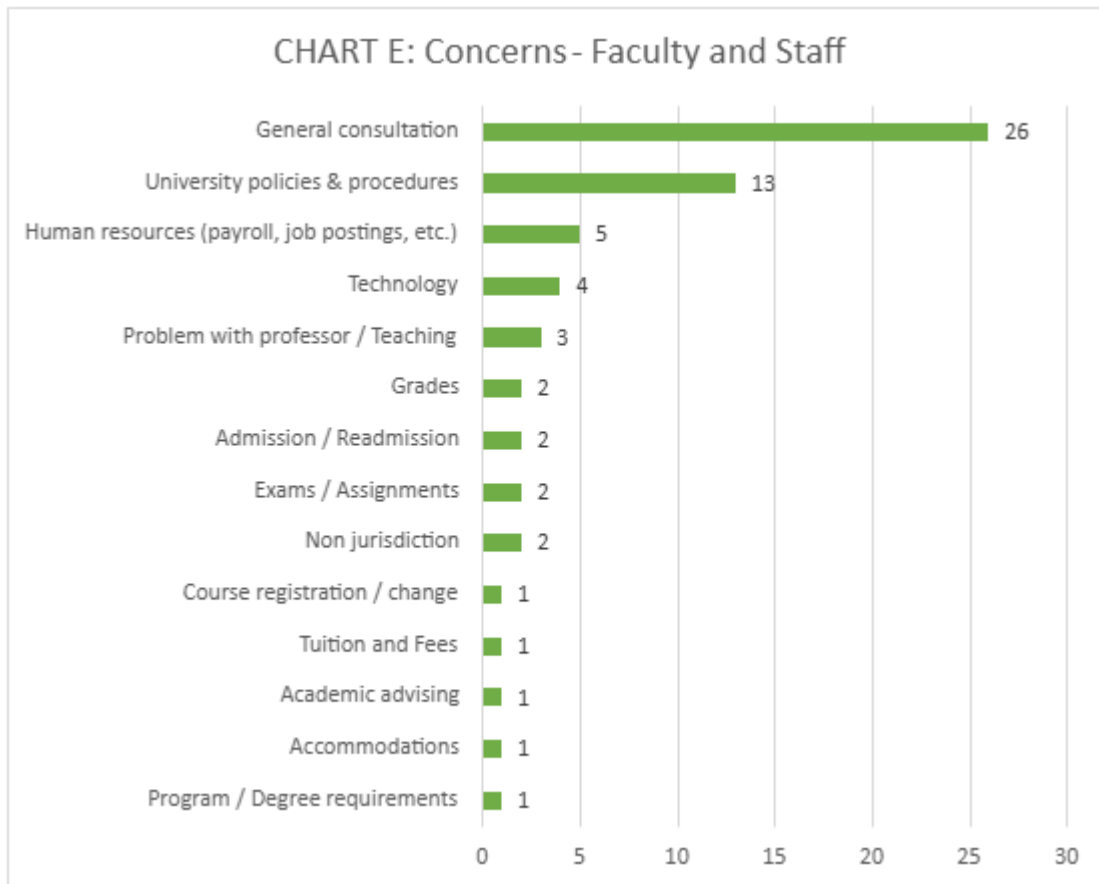
The category of Current Students can be further broken down to include Undergraduate (74%), Graduate (18%) and Independent (3%). The remaining 5% is attributed to Prospective Students and those who left the category blank.

Student Concerns

This year, we looked at Undergraduate and Graduate student concerns separately because there are significantly fewer Graduate Students. As you will see in Charts C and D below, there are similarities and interesting differences. Both Undergraduate and Graduate students had as their primary concern interpersonal issues with faculty members (“problem with professor/teaching” or “supervision”). However, for undergraduate students, their next major concern is grades, while for graduate students this is tuition and fees.



Faculty and Staff Overview

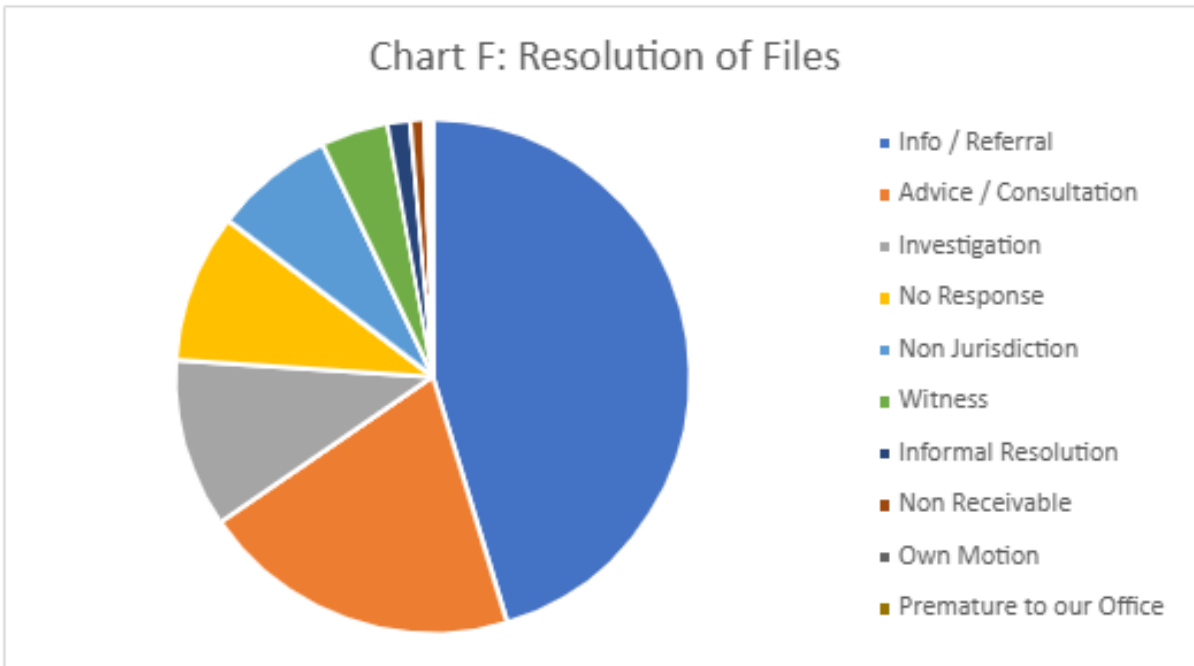


Faculty and Staff Concerns

Faculty and staff concerns have slightly decreased (from 69 to 64), but still within what would be expected from a University of our size. The number of consultations also dropped slightly from 34 to 26, but there was an increase in files regarding University policy and procedure (from 5 to 13). Human Resources files remained the same at 5 files, mostly relating to concerns about payroll and expense reimbursement.

Resolution of Files

There are many different ways that the Ombuds Office can assist in the resolution of concerns. Mainly, as in previous years, we provide advice, consultation, information and referral. For example, a student who believes they did not receive their accommodation might be sent back to their course instructor and to the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) for assistance. Or, a student who has a concern about the lighting in the library might be sent back to the Library and to Facilities Management.



In 8% of our files, we did a preliminary review and then determined that the question at hand was outside of our jurisdiction. For example, a student came to us with concerns about their graduation photos. Because these were taken by a private company, this is outside the jurisdiction of the Ombuds Office. In that case, we would send the student back to the private company. Of the 565 files received, we were asked to Witness in 24 cases. This is when we are kept in cc to observe what is happening. For example, if a student would like to view their exam and they are not getting a response, they may copy Ombuds in all of their correspondence. Our role in that case would be to observe in case further action is eventually needed.

Select Recommendations 2024-25

The Ombuds Office had several minor recommendations this year, here are some examples:

A student came to us for assistance because they registered for a course and when classes started, they learned that the name of the course had changed between their registration and the first day of class. The Ombuds Office reviewed the situation and, with the help of the Provosts Office and the Centre for Teaching Learning, concluded that course names are listed in the Academic Calendar and are not subject to change once registration has started. The Course Outline is considered a contract between the student and the course instructor. For that reason, the Course Outline must have the same course name as the Academic Calendar. The Ombuds Office recommended that faculty members be reminded of this and that in the event that a course name changes it may be considered a curriculum change and subject to the appropriate review.

The Ombuds Office believes that, when possible, students should be given reasons for the University decisions reached. This past year, we recommended that when a Student Request is denied, the Student Request Committee give a simple explanation to the student. For example, the student did not offer enough information to persuade the committee, or the committee did not find their circumstances sufficiently exceptional.

Finally, the Ombuds Office recommended that in light of the changing needs of students and campus climate concerns, the Hall building Mezzanine be repurposed to reflect core values such as studying and health/wellness. We also recommended that the role of the Dean of Students be reviewed in light of evolving priorities on campus.

In conclusion, we thank all of our colleagues for their continued collaboration and support, and we appreciate the opportunity to serve this university.