

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022

OMBUDS ANNUAL REPORT



BELL TOWER

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During Academic Year 2021-2022, the University Ombuds for California State University Channel Islands served a broad range of staff, faculty, and student employees, navigating workplace concerns, conflicts, and policy, and began preparing to serve first-year and residential students. The Ombuds Office focused on developing and presenting educational content to increase “conflict competence” skills. This effort brought about opportunities to collaborate with other CSU Ombuds and other academic Ombuds outside the CSU system. The Ombuds Office also focused on advising the Office of the President in creating a new campus Inclusive Excellence Action Plan, which includes a focus on interpreting the 2020 Campus Climate Survey.

Our pivot to increased education and outreach also stems from a statistical reduction in the use of direct Ombuds services by individuals and groups. Overall, our assessment revealed that workplace conflicts tended to diminish in the face of the second year of pandemic restrictions, while informal conflict management skills got somewhat rusty.

Ombuds Mission

Enable individuals and organizations to manage conflict effectively, collaborate equitably, and navigate policy purposefully.

Ombuds Vision

Build a campus resilient in conflict, inclusive of diverse backgrounds and experiences, and skillful in affecting change.

Ombuds Values

- Respect confidentiality and protect anonymity. (Confidentiality)
- Act independently of organizational obligation and control. (Independence)
- Serve all without preference. (Impartiality).
- Exercise no authority or control over University processes or outcomes. (Informality)
- Honor individual choice regarding actions to be taken. (Autonomy)

Ombuds Tools

The University Ombuds uses coaching, facilitation, mediation, consulting, skills development, and cross-functional connections to accomplish the Ombuds Mission.

In furtherance of the Ombuds Vision and Values, the University Ombuds listens without partiality or judgment, creates no personally-identifying records, explores concerns outside formal processes, seeks and shares information, assists visitors in connecting with appropriate resources and processes (internal and external), and discusses options for dispute resolution, conflict management, and orderly and responsible systems change, within the parameters of the laws and policies governing the University.



What do people discuss with the Ombuds?

Categorizing issues raised in Ombuds visits is based on assessments by the University Ombuds after an individual visit is complete. Visitors to the Ombuds Office are not asked to categorize their own concerns. The categories are applied sequentially; therefore, they should all be considered to possess equal weight. The following Concern Categories (CC) are used in university settings.

1. Interpersonal Conflict: represents a peer-to-peer conflict.
2. Exercise of Authority: captures displays of authority from the top down, bottom up, or laterally.
3. Legal and Policy Application: questions on how a policy should apply, not necessarily the climate the policy creates.
4. Information Flow and Communication: addresses unclear communication or how information is distributed (e.g., email communication).
5. Organizational Priorities and Strategy: includes unit, department, office, and University.
6. Employment Status and Benefits: includes in-grade pay progression issues and accommodations
7. Workplace Processes: Distinct from outcomes, the focus is on how formal and informal matters or issues are moved forward. It includes the absence of an established policy. For example, when a procedure is supposed to be followed but is not. This category is more discrete and includes policy implementation.

- 8. Workplace Climate: policies and practices that create persistent Conflict, broader than Workplace Processes (CC7).
- 9. Other

Type	Concern Category	AY 19/20 ¹	AY 20/21	AY 21/22
1	Interpersonal Conflict		35	19
2	Exercise of Authority		36	24
3	Legal and Policy Application		29	19
4	Information Flow and Communication		43	29
5	Organizational Priorities and Strategy		15	12
6	Employment Status and Benefits		18	7
7	Workplace Processes		28	17
8	Workplace Climate		26	12
9	Other		11	6
Number of concerns raised		258	241	145
Number of visits		137	101	57
Repeat visitors		37	39	0
# of visitors that raised two or more concerns		101	50	46
Facilitations & Mediations conducted		4	12	4

¹ Concern categories for the Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020 were revised for subsequent years. Therefore, only totals are listed for AY 19/20.

Finally, the Ombuds Office does not track the time spent with individual visitors or making inquiries about issues. However, most individual visits take roughly 75 minutes on average. The Ombuds Office also does not track the "resolution" of issues as a resolution is a highly subjective assessment and could create individually identifiable records.

Demographic Data

When individuals schedule an appointment with the Ombuds Office through the scheduling website, individuals are automatically directed to an intake form that asks for non-identifying background information. Completion of the intake form is voluntary.

Below are statistics illustrating the employment status of Ombuds visitors, how long visitors have worked for CSUCI, what organizational Divisions they come from, length of employment at CSUCI, and gender identity, race, and ethnicity as reported voluntarily.

This information is included to help assess patterns and potential needs for informal conflict management support.

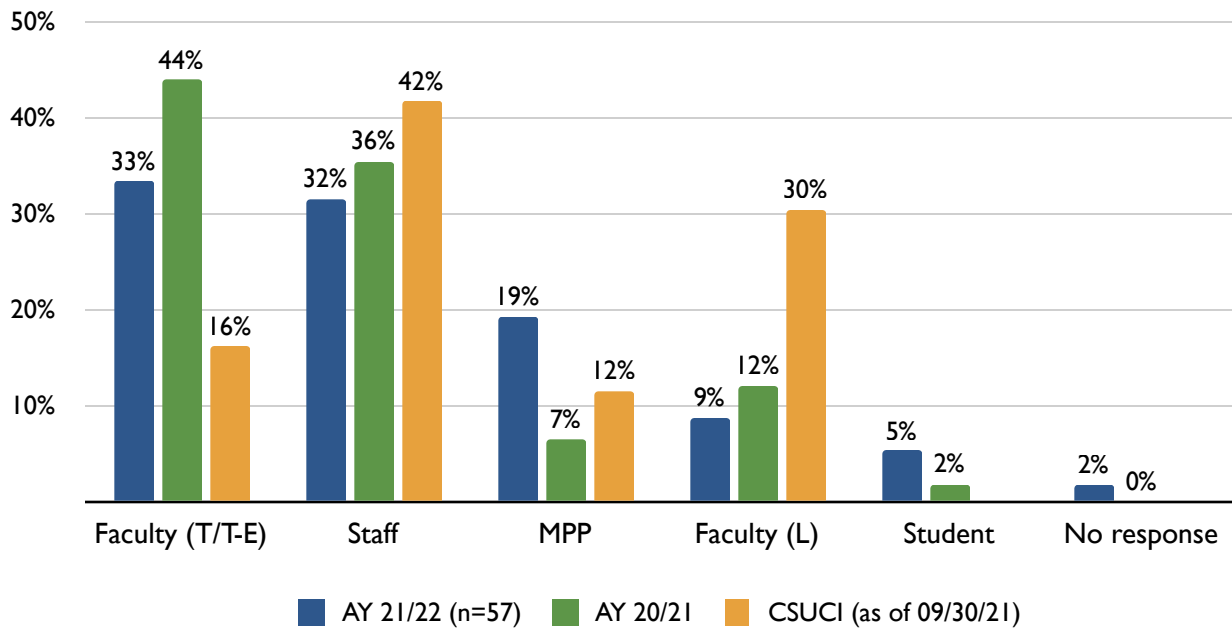
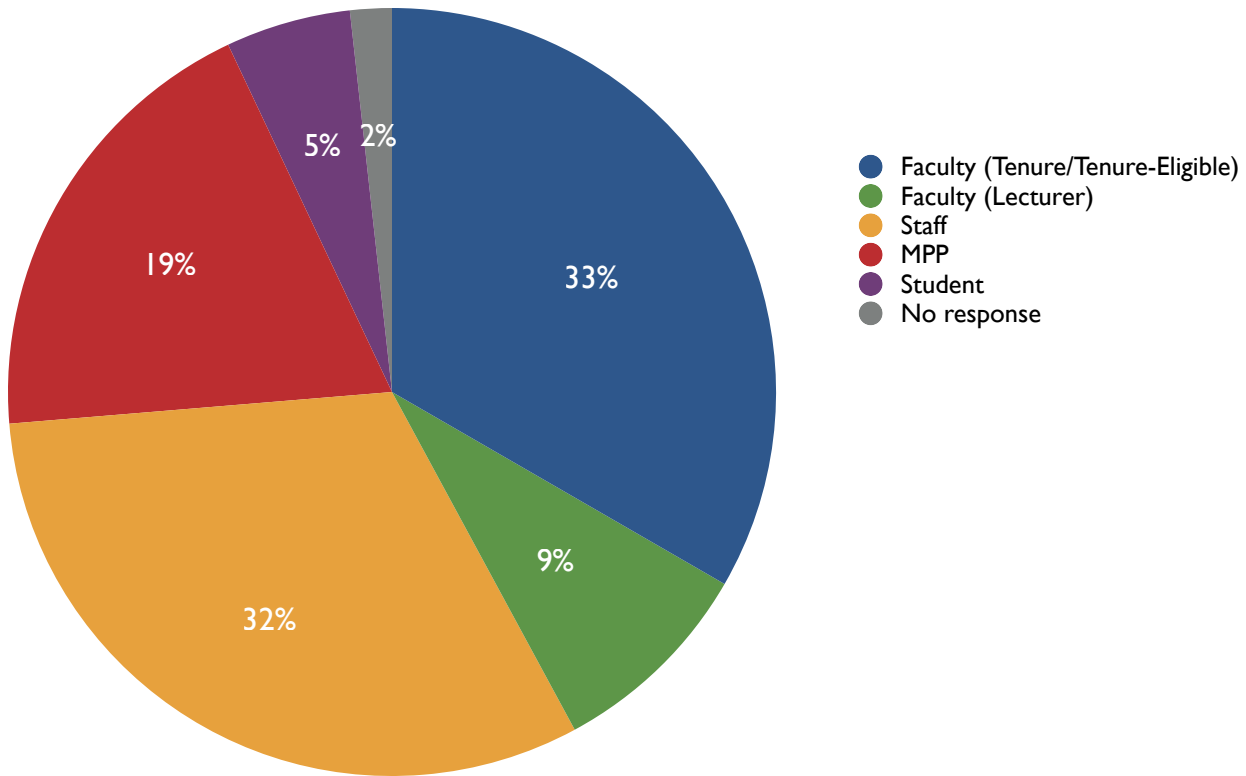
Regarding demographic questions, potential visitors are told: "Gender/gender identity, sexuality, race, and Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx status help the Ombuds office identify patterns or clusters of concern regarding conflict and the experiences of conflict at CSUCI. Answering these questions is optional. In each case, you may choose 'other' and provide your own description. No personally identifiable information is correlated with your answers. Individual answers will not be shared with anyone. Your answers will not be considered in determining how the Ombuds office will help, except to the extent you authorize it."

Employment category information is self-reported when an individual makes an appointment online. Providing information is voluntary. Many individuals were counted more than once because they sought Ombuds services on more than one occasion for the same issue(s). However, intake information is not linked to specific meetings, so duplicate information cannot be deconflicted. Additionally, a small percentage of individuals may have completed intake forms but did not complete a visit (cancellation or no-show). Nonetheless, these charts provide a reasonable breakdown of what types of employees seek Ombuds support.

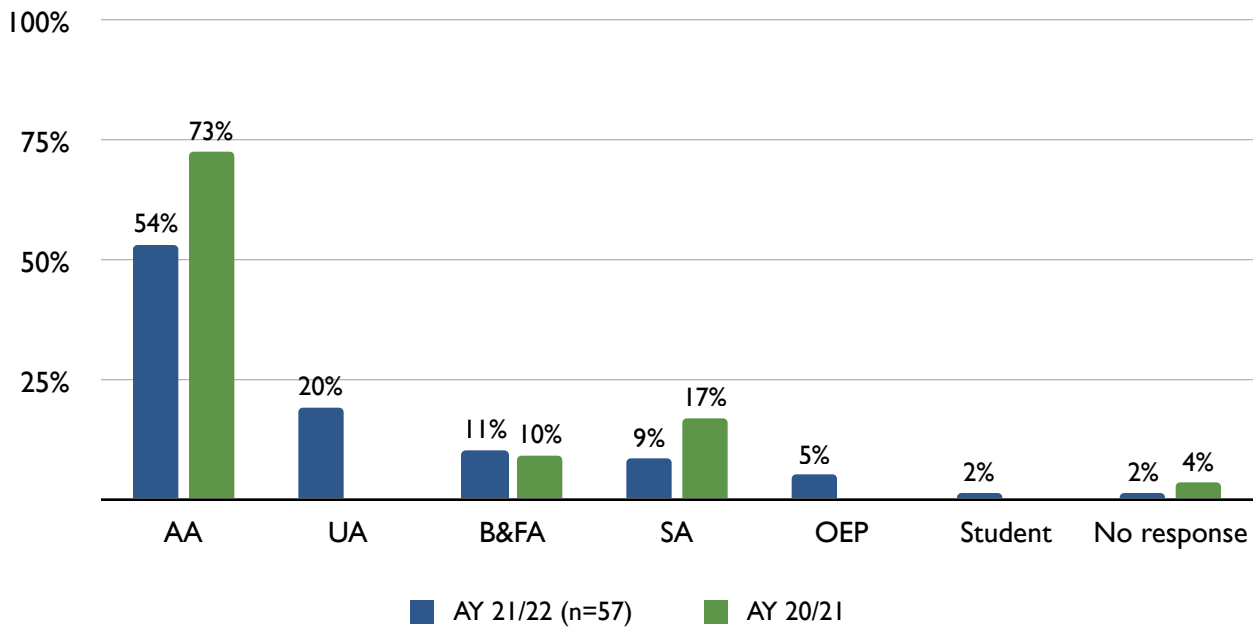
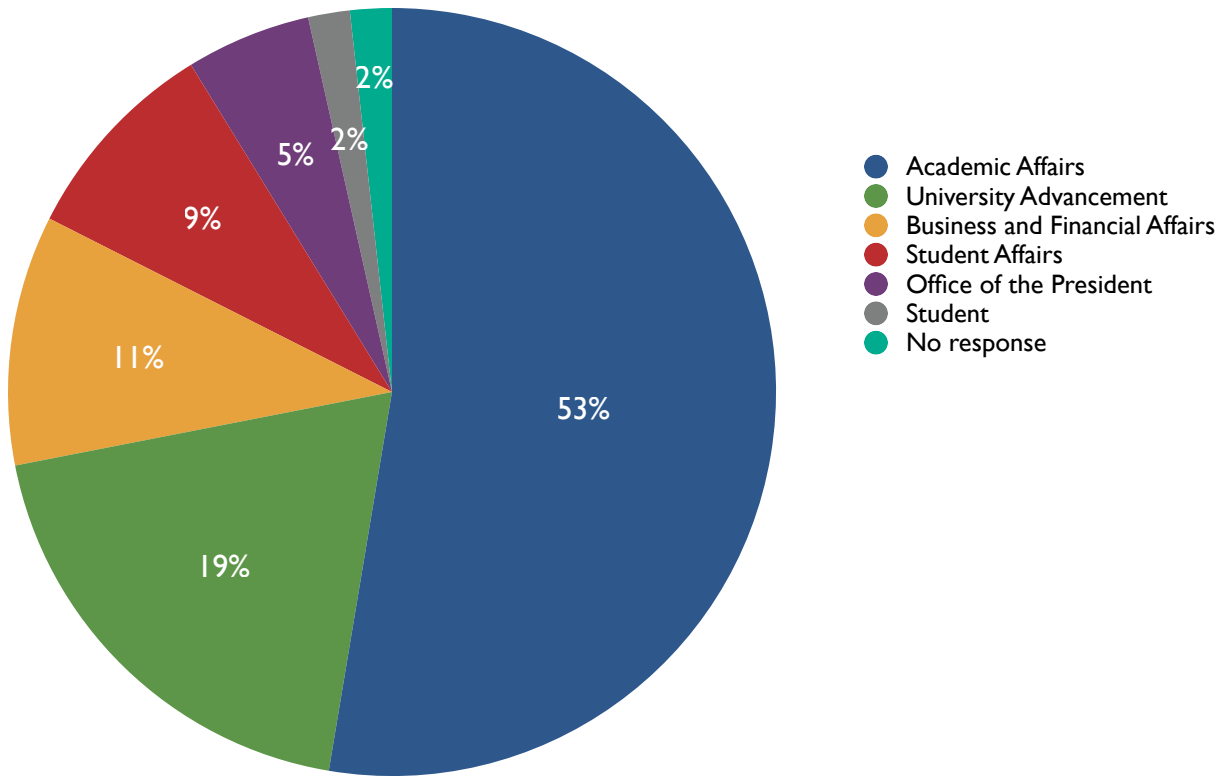
For reporting purposes, Academic Year (AY) 2021/22 n=57. Some reporting categories have been combined to facilitate clearer data presentation and/or protect identities. Additionally, where available, CSUCI-wide data is provided for comparative purposes and reflects data collected for the Fall 2021 survey.



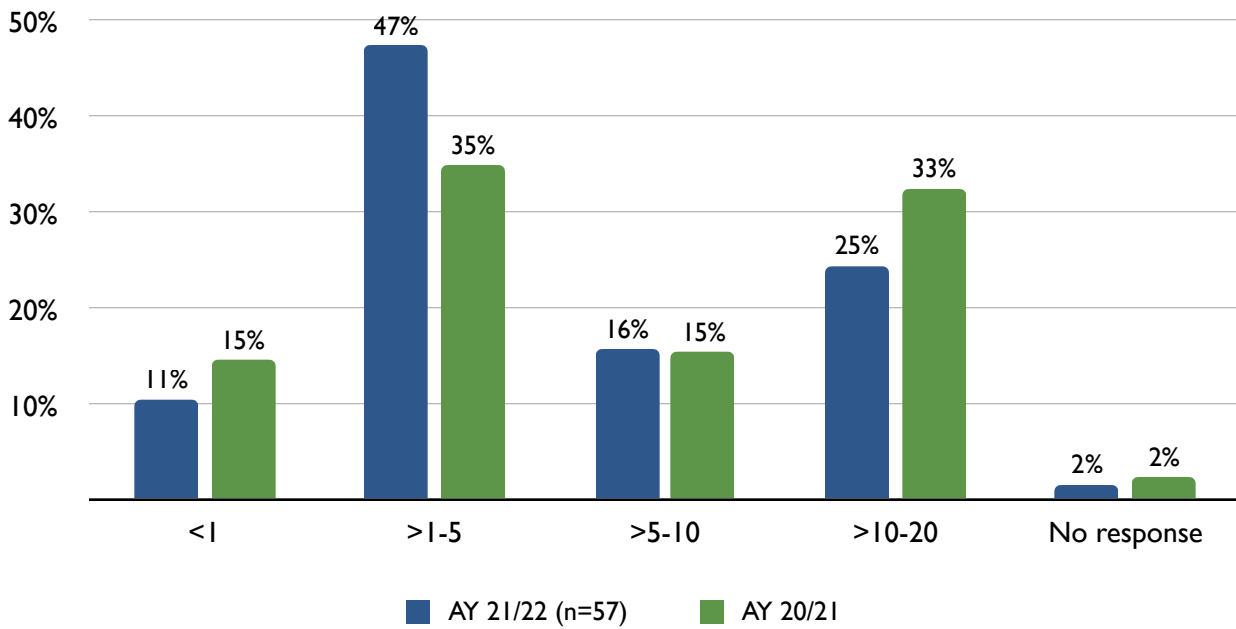
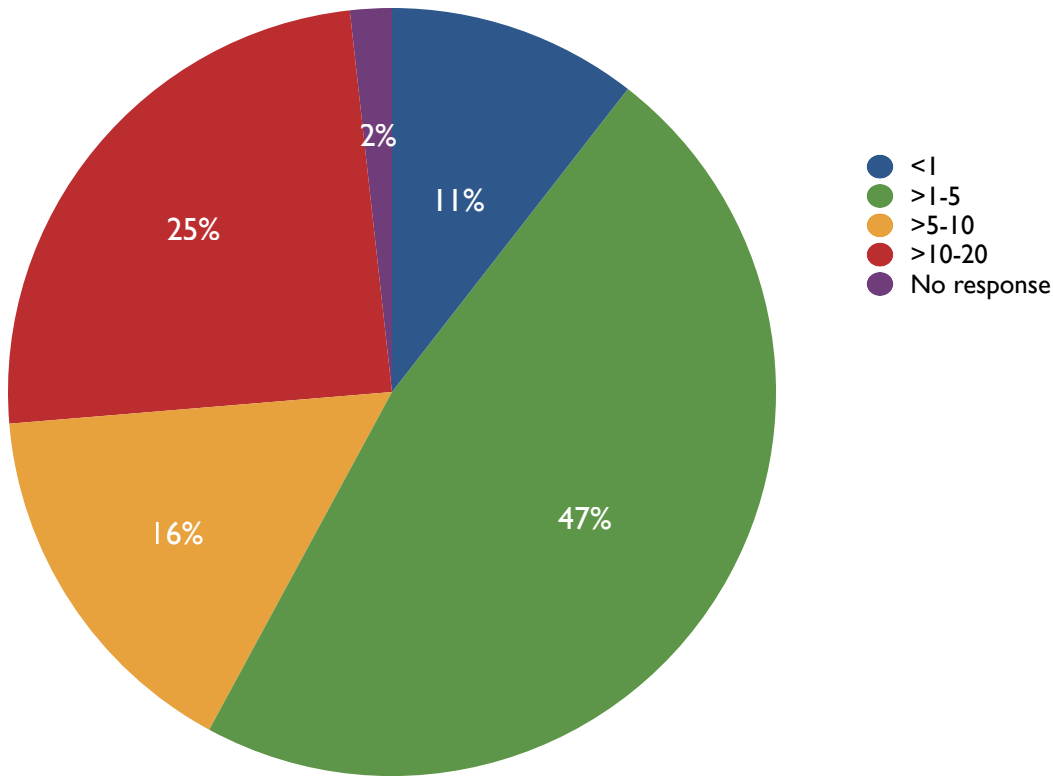
What is your CSUCI connection?



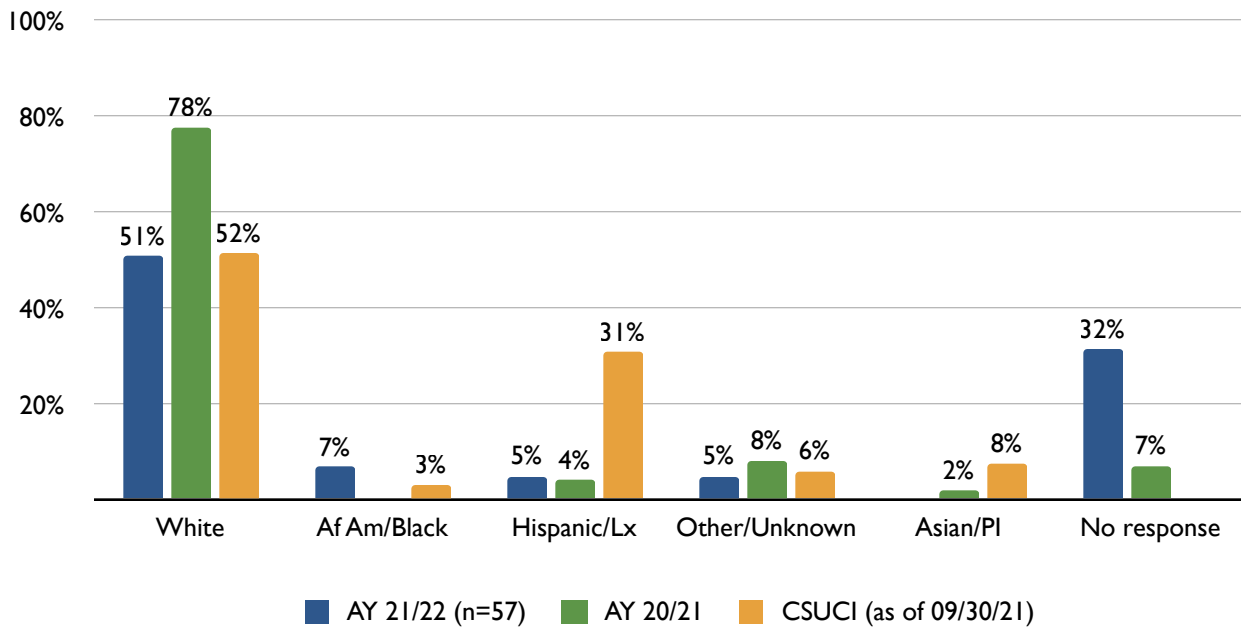
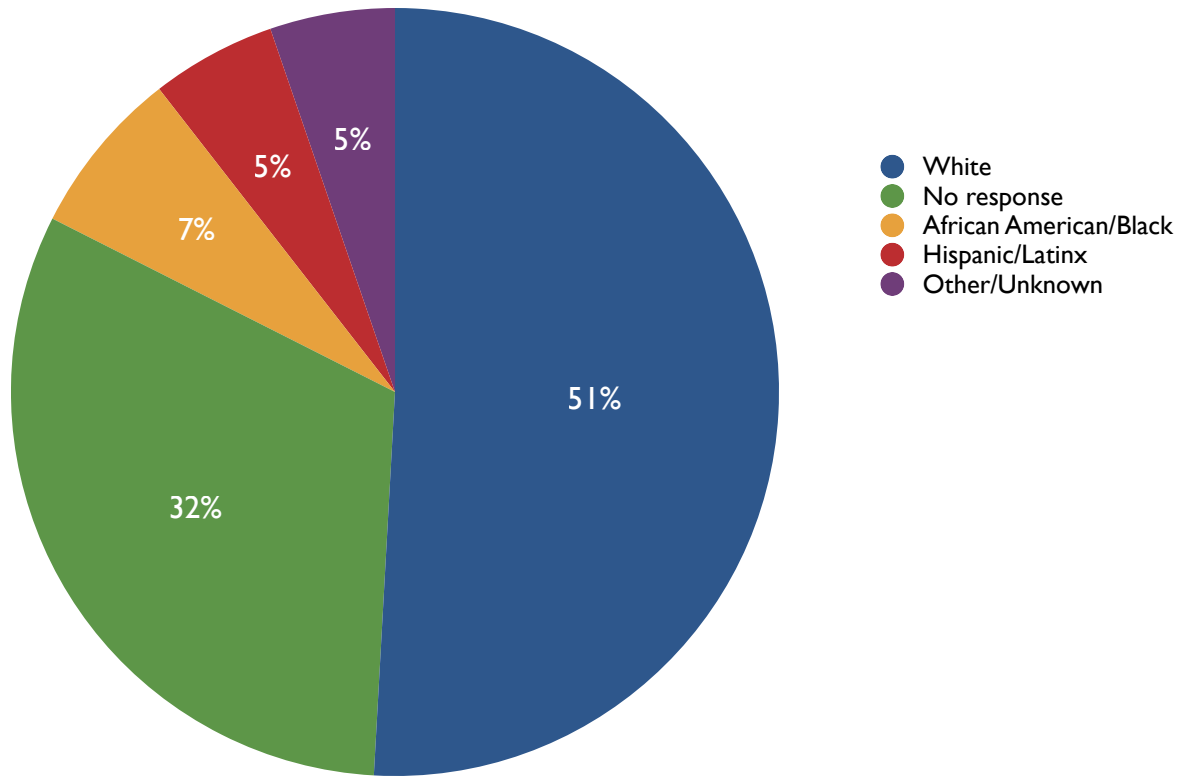
What is your CSUCI Division Affiliation?



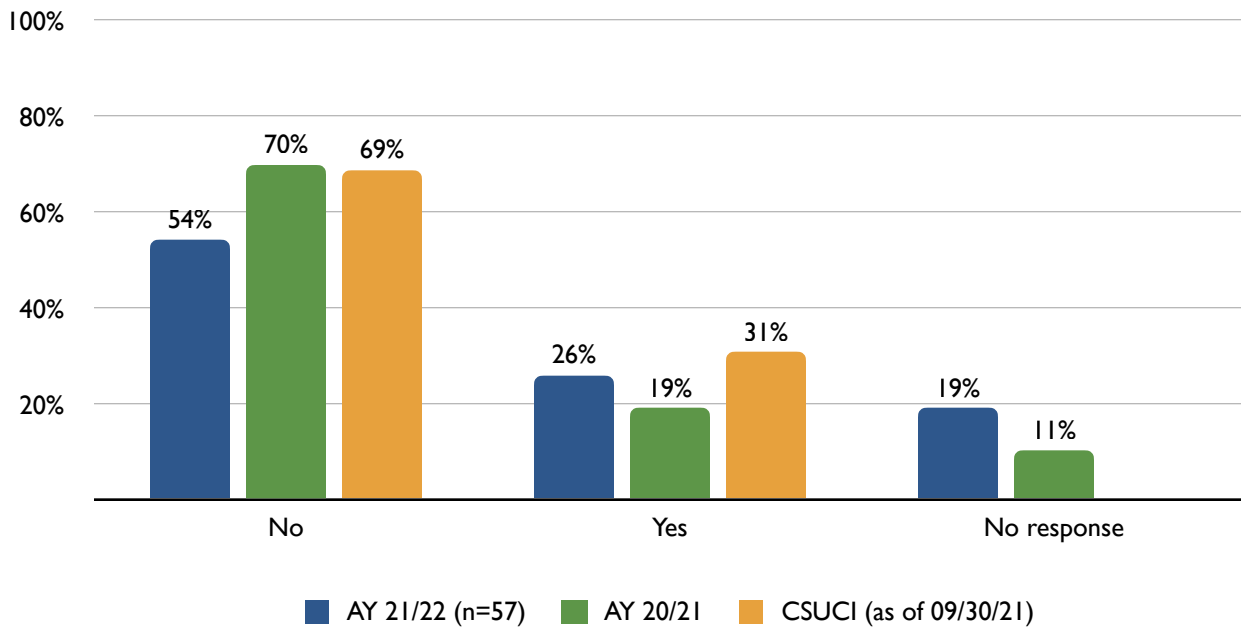
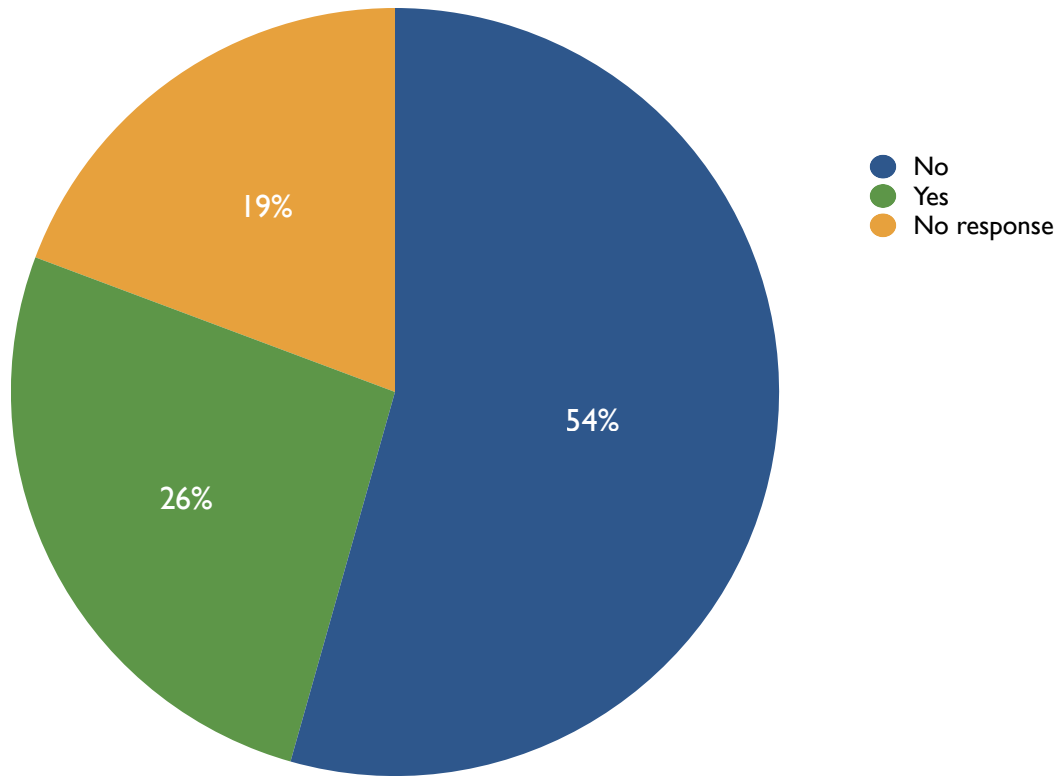
How long have you been with CSUCI (total years in any role)?



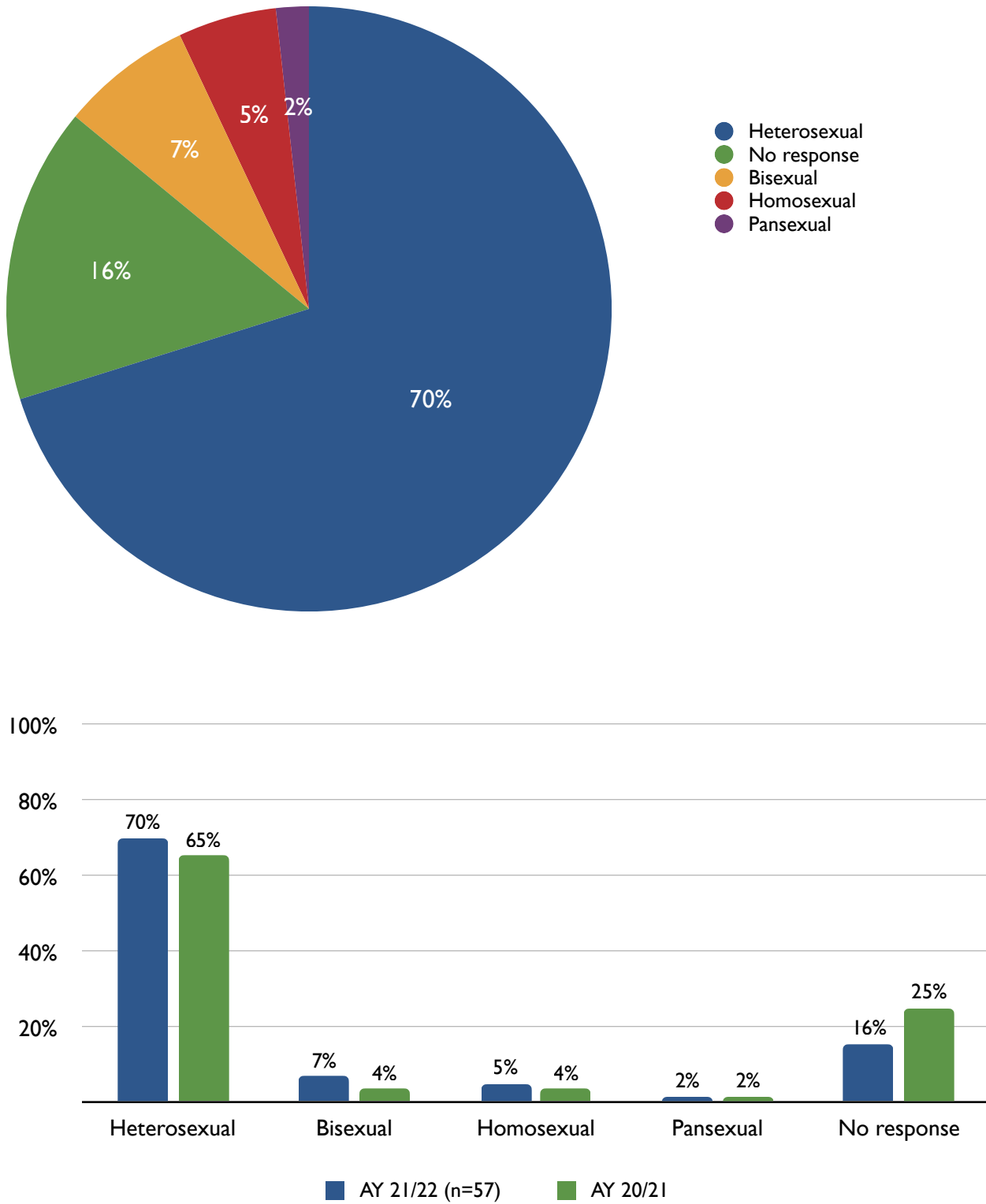
What is your racial identity?



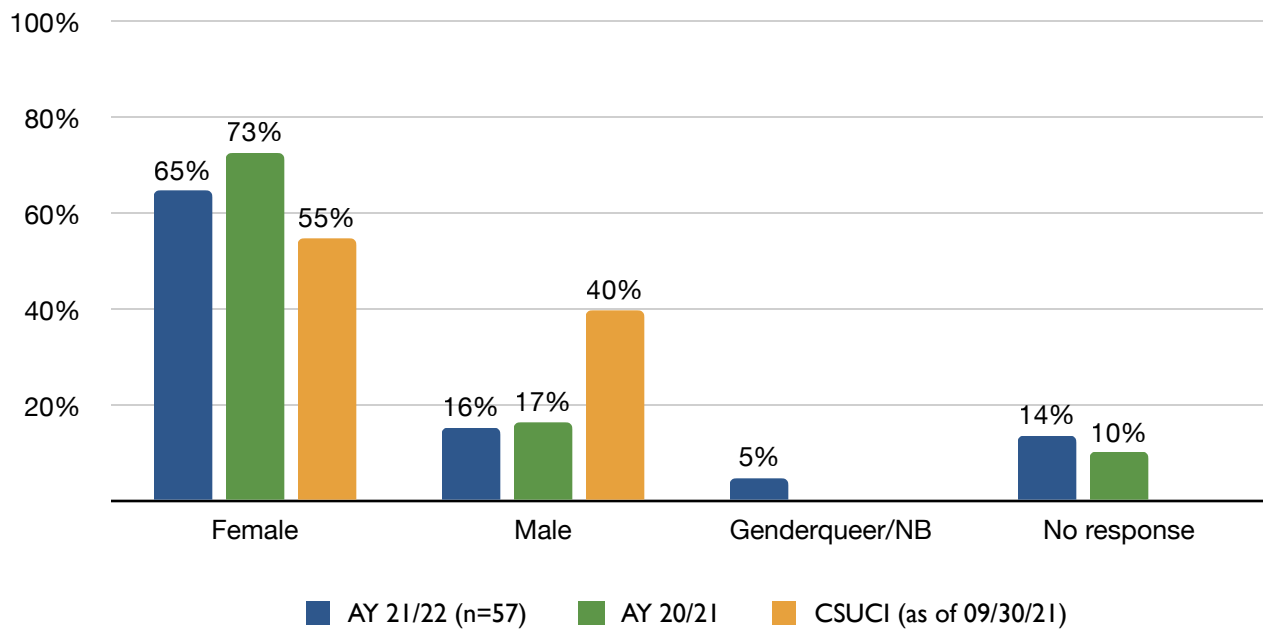
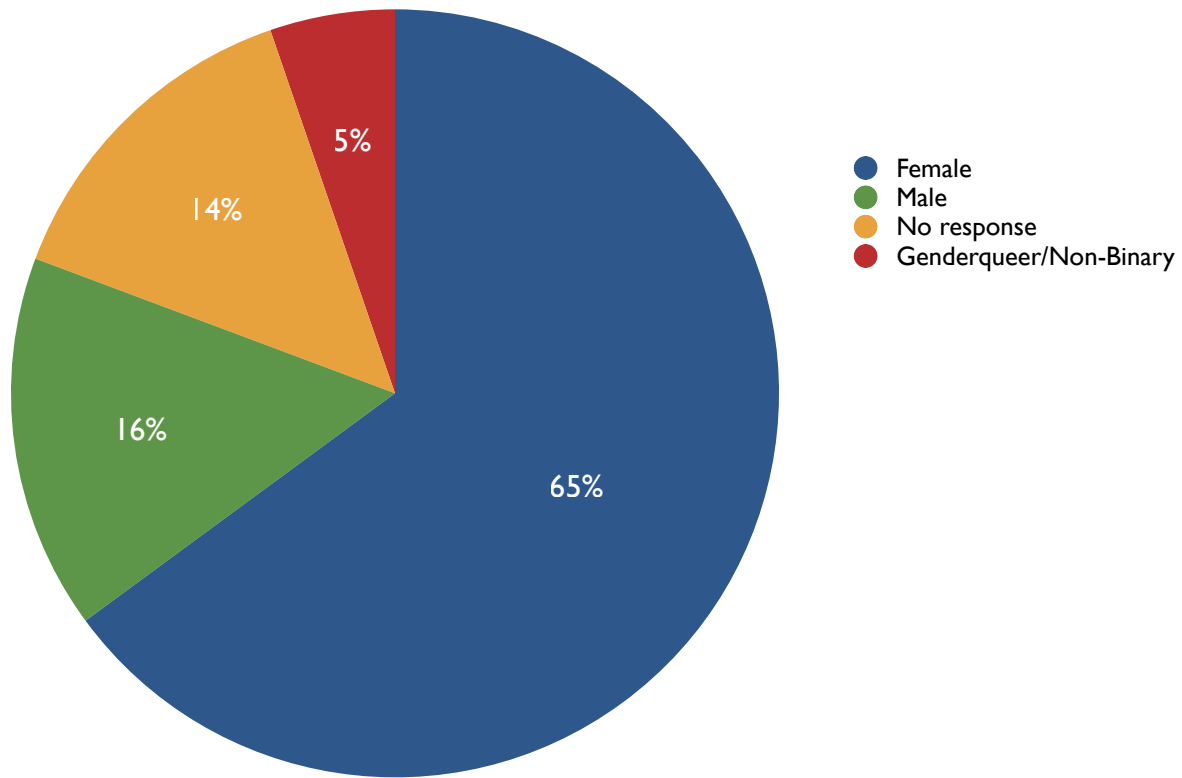
Do you consider yourself Hispanic/Latinx?



What is your sexual orientation?



What is your gender/gender identity?



Other Services

Creating awareness is a challenge with a service unaffiliated with any Division. The Ombuds Office continued to employ various methods to get the word out and establish trust in using the Ombuds service. Additionally, the University Ombuds participated in many professional development events, including serving as Conference Committee Co-Chair and later as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Ombuds Association, as a webinar presenter for the IOA, as a presenter at the California Caucus of College and University Ombuds, the CSU Ombuds Roundtable, and other informal ombuds groups. The University Ombuds also partnered with the Student Ombuds for Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to host CSU-wide workshops on de-escalating conflict.

Additionally, the Ombuds Office continued with its “Coffee and Collaboration” workshops. Initially begun in 2020, the University Ombuds hosts a weekly seminar bringing staff and faculty together across campus for a 30-minute discussion about conflict management insight and — more importantly — for opportunities to connect. Similarly, the Ombuds Office began a monthly column in the CSUCI Staff “In the Loop” newsletter and participated in a “Critical Learning Collective” team to qualify to facilitate new CLC groups.

In a consulting capacity, the University Ombuds continued to serve as a member of the President’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence and as a member of Inclusive Excellence Action Team 4, helping identify and enhance campus climate assessment communications resources.

Outreach presentations included New Employee Orientation and New Faculty Orientation events which provided an opportunity for the University Ombuds to explain how the Ombuds Office works and to introduce employees to the Ombuds. The Ombuds Office also conducted a workshops for Learning & Development. As the Ombuds Office extends its services to the CSUCI student population writ large, outreach is anticipated to expand.

Service Area	AY 19/20	AY 20/21	AY 21/22
Facilitation / Mediation	4	12	4
Education and Outreach Events	76	50	52
Totals	80	62	56