FY26 OMBUDS REPORT

2025 - 2026 REPORT

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Montgomery College Ombuds Office

Independent | Impartial | Informal | Confidential

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

110	3.0%	-6%
UNIQUE VISITORS FY26	**UTILIZATION** of workforce	**USE** over FY25

An annual overview of confidential employee support, recurring workplace concerns, and patterns in the use of the Ombuds Office.

Billy Struemke, JD, LLM | CO-OP Certified Ombuds

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Reporting period

FY26 covers July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. The report presents visitor use, recurring concerns, policy references, and College population context.

A Message from the Ombuds

FY26 records show employees turning to the Ombuds Office for a confidential place to be heard, clarify concerns, prepare for difficult conversations, and understand their options. The work included individual consultations, follow-up conversations, facilitated dialogue, and connections to appropriate College resources.

Several themes appeared repeatedly in FY26 visits: how feedback is communicated, how expectations are explained, how responsibilities are assigned, and what employees can expect as formal processes move forward. Visitors also described hesitation about raising concerns and uncertainty about how doing so might affect workplace relationships.

Access remained a central part of the work

83%

Visits conducted over Zoom



Zoom was the predominant visit method in FY26: 83 percent of visits took place over Zoom. The report also records 14 student reach-outs over the fiscal year, tracked separately from employee services.

*The remaining share includes other methods and should not be read as in-office only.

This report reflects 110 unique employee visitors during FY26 and summarizes office use, monthly activity, and the concerns raised. The information is presented in aggregate, protects the confidentiality of individual visitors, and does not resolve disputed facts.

The office is led by a CO-OP Certified Ombuds whose professional background includes legal practice, advanced training in arbitration and mediation, and leadership instruction as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. The office remains available as an independent, impartial, informal, and confidential resource for employees seeking constructive next steps.

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Ombuds Services and Access

The office provides voluntary, confidential support to employees navigating workplace concerns. Faculty, staff, administrators, temporary employees, and student employees with workplace concerns fall within the published employee service population. [4]

Independent

Operates outside ordinary management and formal complaint channels.

Impartial

Supports fair process without representing a person, office, or outcome.

Informal

Explores options; does not investigate, make findings, or impose decisions.

Confidential

Protects visitor privacy within the standards and limits of the Ombuds role.

Common forms of support in FY26

- Listening and confidential consultation
- Conflict coaching and preparation for difficult conversations
- Policy and process navigation; referral to formal resources
- Voluntary facilitated conversations and follow-up support
- Supervisor consultation on communication, feedback, and team norms

Convenient access

Virtual appointments provide a practical way to connect across campuses and work schedules. In-person contact and other communication methods remain available.

Privacy and accessibility

Service planning should preserve visitor choice, a private setting, and communication access needs. A high Zoom share does not establish why each visitor selected that method.

Important boundary

Contacting the Ombuds does not give formal notice to the College or replace HRSTM, compliance, union, grievance, or other formal processes. [4]

Sources: MC Ombuds Office scope and contact information [4]; FY26 visit-modality figure confirmed by the Ombuds.

FY26 Dashboard Facts

110
UNIQUE VISITORS
employees used office

89.1%
TOP ISSUE
evaluative concerns

3,695
WORKFORCE
March 31, 2026 [1]

83%
VISITS VIA ZOOM
FY26 visit method

3.0%
FY26 UTILIZATION
of workforce

3.2%
FY25 UTILIZATION
of workforce

Unique Visitor Use Over Time

Fiscal year	Visitors	Workforce	Utilization
FY24	95	3,538	2.7%
FY25	117	3,668	3.2%
FY26	110	3,695	3.0%

Year-over-year change

7 fewer visitors
110 in FY26, compared with 117 in FY25.
Utilization: 3.2% to 3.0%
A decrease of about 0.2 percentage points.
Workforce: 3,668 to 3,695
27 more employees (+0.7%).

FY26 use remained above FY24: 110 visitors compared with 95, an increase of 15 visitors (15.8%). Visitor volume describes use of the office; it does not measure the prevalence of conflict or the success of individual consultations. U.S. organizational ombuds research identifies 1%-5% of the population served annually as the most common utilization range.*

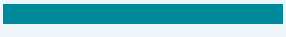
Counting note: The reported total of 110 unique visitors is used for year-over-year comparison. It does not include repeat visits or separately count every participant in mediation or other multi-person sessions; the number of service interactions was therefore higher. FY25 issue-instance and repeat-use measures are not directly comparable.

Sources: Workforce: FY25 Q2 and FY26 Q3 snapshots. [1] International Ombuds Association, “Effectiveness of Organizational Ombudsmen: Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness,” revised April 2001, pages 10-11. Open the cited research.

The College Community: Workforce

Montgomery College reported **3,695 employees** as of March 31, 2026. This FY26 snapshot includes regular and contingent employees; it is not a June 30 headcount. [1]

Employee headcount by type

Employee type	Employees	Relative to largest type
Faculty (all types, including chairs)	1,842	100% 
Staff	1,195	64.9% 
Administrators	87	4.7% 

Workforce context

Ombuds visitor figures should be interpreted in relation to the College's broader workforce. They reflect employees who chose to contact the office and should not be read as a complete measure of workplace concerns across the College.

Employee headcount by division

Division	Employees
Academic Affairs	2,439
Administrative and Fiscal Services	617
Student Affairs	499
Advancement and Community Engagement	97
Offices of the President	43

Source: MC HRSTM, FY26 Quarter 3 Report, snapshot March 31, 2026. Faculty combines part-time/WDCE, full-time faculty, and department chairs. The type chart omits student aides/work-study and casual temps. [1]

Visitor Distribution: FY25 and FY26

Academic Affairs represents 51.8% of the FY26 reporting total, compared with 30.8% in FY25. Staff remains the largest identified role group.

FY25 (117) FY26 (110)

Visitors by Division

Division	FY25	FY26
Academic Affairs	36	57
Administrative and Fiscal Services	33	22
Student Affairs	40	19
Other or mixed divisions	4	8
Not recorded	4	4

Visitors by Role

Role	FY25	FY26
Administrator	18	14
Faculty (all types, including chairs)	28	33
Staff	63	49
Group	4	6
Not recorded	4	8

Visitors by Gender

Gender	FY25	FY26
Female	81	70
Male	23	26
Other or not recorded	9	8
Group	4	6

Visitors by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	FY25	FY26
Asian	7	6
Black	23	23
Hispanic	11	3
Other	9	3
White	52	59
Not recorded	11	10
Group	4	6

Each FY26 distribution totals 110. FY25 figures are shown for comparison. Missing fields remain visible so the limits of demographic comparison are clear.

Visitor Use by Month

The report allocates the annual total of 110 employee visitors across FY26. October had the highest monthly count, with 16 recorded visitor entries. The monthly distribution shows when office use was first recorded.

110
REPORTED VISITORS
FY26 total

16
HIGHEST MONTHLY COUNT
October 2025

12
MONTHS WITH CONTACTS
July 2025-June 2026

Monthly recorded visitor totals

Month	Relative to highest month	Total
Jul 2025	18.8%	3
Aug 2025	25.0%	4
Sep 2025	68.8%	11
Oct 2025	100.0%	16
Nov 2025	87.5%	14
Dec 2025	81.2%	13
Jan 2026	87.5%	14
Feb 2026	37.5%	6
Mar 2026	50.0%	8
Apr 2026	37.5%	6
May 2026	43.8%	7
Jun 2026	50.0%	8

The 14 student reach-outs are reported separately and are not assigned to months without a complete dated student log. The monthly series is the annual reporting total; it is not a complete count of repeat visits or participants in multi-person sessions.

Student Contacts and Reach-Outs

The Ombuds Office received 14 student reach-outs during FY26. This annual total establishes a baseline for tracking student contact separately from employee consultations.

14
STUDENT REACH-OUTS
FY26 annual total

FY26
TRACKING BASELINE
July 2025-June 2026

Separate
CONTACT MEASURE
outside employee totals

A baseline for future tracking

Student outreach remains separate from visitor contacts and is not included in the Office's utilization count; likewise, employee consultations concerning student-related work do not increase this count. Although the Office is not advertised to students and does not provide ombuds services to them, students continue to locate and contact the Office independently, indicating that they view it as an accessible resource. These students are informed of the Office's scope and referred to the appropriate student-serving resources.

College-wide student population

Montgomery College's published annual student population is **more than 46,000**. This describes the College as a whole, not Ombuds service use. The Ombuds Office recorded **14 student reach-outs** in FY26, as shown above. [2]

Proposed tracking fields

Count distinct student inquiries and repeat interactions separately; record the contact date, channel, scope, and referral disposition. Keep student employee workplace matters within employee tracking. [4]

Uniform Reporting Categories

The International Ombuds Association (IOA) Uniform Reporting Categories (URCs) organize the general nature of concerns raised with organizational ombuds. They describe reported issues; they are not findings, verified complaints, or judgments about individuals.

Uniform Reporting Categories and FY26 examples

URC area	Examples reflected in FY26 notes
1. Compensation and Benefits	Pay, working hours, benefits, leave questions
2. Evaluative Relationships	Feedback, evaluation criteria, respect, supervision
3. Peer and Colleague Relationships	Communication, trust, cooperation, boundaries
4. Career Progression and Development	Role clarity, assignments, transitions, development
5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance	Accommodation and formal process questions
6. Safety, Health and Physical Environment	Work-related stress, safety, work-life concerns
7. Services/Administrative Issues	Responsiveness, process ownership, records
8. Organizational, Strategic and Mission Related	Change, decision-making, structure, communication
9. Values, Ethics and Standards	Reporting integrity, ethics, professional standards

A contact may involve more than one category. Pages 11-12 show the statistical distribution and leading subcategories, normalized to the IOA framework. Counts describe concerns discussed, not findings of misconduct.

Categories and Policy References

Each chart counts employee visitor contacts containing a category or policy reference. The denominator is 110 visitor contacts. A contact can appear in several rows, so percentages overlap and do not sum to 100%.

IOA reporting categories — all 9 categories

Category	Contacts	Percent
2 Evaluative relationships	98	89.1%
8 Organizational and strategic	63	57.3%
9 Values, ethics, and standards	53	48.2%
6 Safety and health	45	40.9%
3 Peer and colleague relationships	43	39.1%
4 Career progression	36	32.7%
5 Legal and compliance	30	27.3%
7 Administrative issues	30	27.3%
1 Compensation and benefits	16	14.5%

Most-referenced MC policies — top 10 families

Policy family	Contacts	Percent
10100 Code of Ethics and Employee Conduct	71	64.5%
31006 EEO and Non-Discrimination	36	32.7%
29003 Protection Against Retaliation	33	30.0%
36001 Performance Evaluation and Employee Development	27	24.5%
35003 Leave Program	21	19.1%
32106 Employment of Individuals with Disabilities	19	17.3%
10108 Reporting Suspected Acts of Wrongdoing	13	11.8%
34101 Grievance Process for Non-Bargaining Staff	13	11.8%
21011 Prevention of Bullying and Workplace Violence	12	10.9%
34002 Disciplinary Action and Suspension	12	10.9%

Policy figures reflect references or potential relevance, not formal complaints or findings. Current policy numbers are used; a policy and its procedure count as one family.

Leading IOA Subcategories

The 12 most frequently recorded subcategories show the concerns most often discussed across FY26 visitor contacts. Relationship and organizational communication should be read with their category codes.

Leading IOA subcategories

Code	Subcategory	Visitor contacts	Percent of 110
2.e	Communication	48	43.6%
8.b	Leadership/management	48	43.6%
2.j	Assignments/schedules	43	39.1%
6.i	Stress and work-life balance	41	37.3%
2.o	Supervisory effectiveness	37	33.6%
2.b	Respect/treatment	36	32.7%
2.r	Equity of treatment	35	31.8%
3.e	Communication	34	30.9%
9.a	Standards of conduct	34	30.9%
3.b	Respect/treatment	31	28.2%
2.h	Retaliation	29	26.4%
2.k	Feedback	25	22.7%

How to read the codes

2 = evaluative relationships; 3 = peer relationships; 6 = safety/health; 8 = organizational issues; 9 = values/ethics. One contact may contain several subcategories.

FY26 Observations from the Records

The themes below recur in the reviewed records and within-year summaries. They are Ombuds observations, not a ranked survey of employees or a determination that misconduct occurred.

Supervisory communication

Concerns centered on tone, respect, changing expectations, performance feedback, and the fairness of evaluation criteria.

Process clarity and fairness

Questions concerned decision criteria, case ownership, benefits, development opportunities, and timely responses or closure.

Trust and speaking up

Fear of professional consequences contributed to hesitation about asking questions or using available channels.

Workload and role sustainability

Shifting duties, limited staffing, leadership demands, unclear responsibilities, and work-related stress appeared across the notes.

Access and workplace support

Concerns included accommodations, communication access, leave, flexible work, safety, and coordination with responsible offices.

Relationships and belonging

Peer conflict, exclusion, inconsistent working norms, and difficulty rebuilding trust affected workplace relationships.

Technology and judgment

Automated measures, system changes, and training prompted questions about respect for professional judgment.

Ethics and information integrity

Concerns included confidentiality, accurate reporting, external influence, and alignment with professional standards.

Supporting Informal Resolution

FY26 records show the office helping employees identify choices and prepare for constructive engagement. The visitor retains control over whether to pursue an informal option or approach a formal resource.

1. **Confidential listening**
   Separate events, interpretations, needs, and desired outcomes.

2. **Conflict coaching**
   Prepare specific questions, feedback, meeting agendas, and next steps.

3. **Facilitated conversations**
   Support voluntary dialogue about expectations, communication, and working relationships.

4. **Follow-up support**
   Check understanding, revisit commitments, and consider whether further support is needed.

5. **Resource connection**
   Explain options and connect visitors to the office or process with authority to act.

How to interpret progress

A useful outcome may be greater clarity, a prepared conversation, a referral, or improved communication described at follow-up. The available notes do not establish an office-wide resolution rate. The Ombuds does not provide therapy, legal representation, or formal adjudication.

Closing Reflection and Contact

A confidential place to consider next steps

FY26 records show continued use of the Ombuds Office for workplace concerns that cross relationships, processes, and organizational change.
The practical value of the office lies in helping visitors be heard, understand their options, prepare for constructive conversations, and reach an appropriate resource when formal action is needed.
The office will continue to provide aggregate insight while protecting the confidentiality of the people who seek assistance.

Contact the Ombuds Office

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Appendix: Reporting Notes

Period and scope

FY26 is July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026. This report covers employee support and separately recorded student reach-outs.

Visitor use and reach-outs

The Ombuds-confirmed total of 110 unique visitors is used for continuity with prior reports. It does not include repeat visits or separately count every participant in mediation or other multi-person sessions; the number of service interactions was therefore higher. Duplicate follow-ups are excluded. The 14 student reach-outs are tracked separately.

IOA classification

Descriptions and existing codes were harmonized to IOA URC Version 2 (2007), including retrospective classification where needed. Each category and subcategory is counted once per record. Percentages use 110 records; multiple concerns may apply, so percentages overlap.

Policy and procedure references

Counts include identified College policies cited or noted as potentially relevant. Current numbers replace older or inconsistent identifiers using policy titles and the College catalog. A policy and its procedure count as one family per record. Generic laws, unresolved references, and routine Ombuds-charter citations are excluded.

Annual comparison measures

FY25 Public Report V4 (R) supplies the prior-year baseline: 117 visitors and 3,668 employees. FY26 uses 110 visitors and the 3,695-employee Q3 snapshot. The change is -7 visitors (-6.0%) and about -0.2 utilization points. A repeat-use rate and issue-instance total comparable to FY25 remain unavailable.

Visitor profile classification

Division and role use recorded titles and the MC organization chart. FY25 demographic counts are unchanged. Names are not used. Groups remain visible.

Confidentiality and interpretation

No visitor names, exact visit dates, or small-unit profiles are published. Demographic fields are not sufficiently complete to establish changes in the demographic reach of the office. Categories and policy references describe concerns raised, not findings, violations, or evidence that formal procedures began.

Appendix: Policy Reference Distribution

All 54 identified policy/procedure families, using current College numbers. Counts show contacts referencing each family; repeated references within a contact count once. There are 391 family references across 94 contacts.

Policy and procedure family reference distribution

Policy and procedure family	N	Policy and procedure family	N
10100 Ethics and employee conduct	71	76004 ICT accessibility	3
31006 Equal opportunity and non-discrimination	36	82001 Construction projects	3
29003 Protection against retaliation	33	97001 Public safety	3
36001 Performance and development	27	10804 Public records inspection	2
35003 Leave program	21	11001 Board bylaws	2
32106 Disability employment and accommodation	19	14002 Organization functions	2
10108 Reporting suspected wrongdoing	13	32100 Regular employee hiring and onboarding	2
34101 Non-bargaining staff grievances	13	34003 Administrator and staff discharge	2
21011 Bullying and workplace violence	12	37001 Employment records	2
34002 Discipline and suspension	12	58003 Academic freedom	2
10103 Conflict of interest	8	70001 Emerging technologies	2
11004 Governance	8	11000 Mission, vision and values	1
31102 Employee responsibilities	7	11005 Policy/procedure development	1
33001 Staff classification and job descriptions	7	11007 Institutional risk management	1
35001 Compensation programs	7	21001 Sexual misconduct	1
11003 Labor relations	6	22003 Public information and communications	1
25000 Diversity, equity and inclusion	6	26801 Intellectual property	1
32305 Staff working hours	6	28005 College closing	1
32500 Flexible work arrangements	6	32101 Employment practices	1
91000 Public health and environmental safety	6	32103 Part-time faculty employment	1
35002 Faculty/staff assistance program	5	42001 Student conduct	1
63001 Procurement and contracts	5	61001 Fiscal control	1
32206 Faculty workload	4	61010 Asset management	1
32207 Department chair appointments	3	76001 Acceptable use of IT	1
33002 Position establishment and management	3	76002 Confidential data and security	1
34001 Employee status changes	3	85001 Use of facilities	1
53001 Academic regulations	3	95005 Protection of minors	1

N = number of visitor contacts, out of 110. A contact may reference multiple families. Labels are abbreviated; official policy titles and the renumbering list are available from MC.

Sources and Reference Information

Public sources were checked on September 1, 2026. Internal evidence consists of FY26 visitor records and annual figures confirmed by the Ombuds. Individual record identifiers are not reproduced.

[1] Workforce

MC HRSTM, Fiscal Year 2026 Quarter 3 Report, employee headcount page. Snapshot as of March 31, 2026.

[2] College-wide student population

MC news release, March 30, 2026, reporting that the College serves more than 46,000 students annually. This is the published population context.

[3] Current policy and procedure catalog

MC Policies and Procedures index. Current identifiers and titles are used to harmonize policy-family references in the FY26 notes.

[4] Scope and contact

MC Office of the Ombuds website and About Us and Charter page. Employee scope includes temporary and student employees with workplace concerns.

[5] Policy numbering

MC current Policy and Procedure List is used, documenting the Fall 2025 reorganization and old-to-current policy number crosswalk.

[6] FY26 organization and unit mapping

MC Administrators Organizational Chart, February 19, 2026. Used with documented visitor roles and units to organize the FY26 division profile.

Internal evidence: FY26 employee visitor records, thematic summaries, team facilitation materials, Staff Enrichment Day resources, regional event planning, and proposed FY27 goals.

Prior-year source: FY25 Public Report V4 (R), pages 5-7 and 13. **Classification:** IOA Uniform Reporting Categories, Version 2 (October 2007), retained in the FY25 report.

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