ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Number of Visitors

741

Types of Visitors

24% Students
25% Faculty
44% Staff
7% Other

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL RISKS:

73% of Visitors
- Loss of Productivity 37%
- Policy Violations 18%
- Turnover 16%
- Grievance 14%
- Safety 7%
- Litigation 5%
- Negative Publicity 3%

NO PERCEIVED RISKS:

27% of Visitors

Satisfied Visitors 83%

42 workshops
1100 participants

Consults 91

Disrespectful Behavior
30% in 2020
30% in 2019

ANNUAL REPORT

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https://ombudsperson.org.uiowa.edu/
Race

Since 2013 with the creation of the Black Lives Matter Movement, our country has been increasingly focused on the deaths of Black people at the hands of police. This has led to a national examination of institutional inequities and disparities in healthcare, education, employment and safety, disparities which have been further highlighted by COVID-19.

At the local level, the Iowa Freedom Riders have protested and worked closely with the Iowa City City Council to create community change. On campus, students, faculty and staff at The University of Iowa have looked at institutional failures and inequities, which affect everyone at every level of our institution. In our office, we have seen a number of cases involving race and inequality. Faculty, staff, and students of color on our campus report feeling overwhelmed, isolated, and disrespected, and they have cited numerous examples of microaggressions and overt racism.

We support the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion action plan, which includes four laudable goals: to

- create an inclusive and equitable campus environment;
- recruit, retain, and advance a diverse campus community of faculty, staff, and students;
- integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the university’s core academic mission; and
- enhance campus-wide accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration.

We believe, though, that above and beyond the details of this plan, The University of Iowa needs a unifying and compelling vision about diversity, which can lead both to the large-scale changes we need in resources and policies and the strong support we need for positive actions at the local level across campus.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed the world, our nation, our community, and our campus. It has caused tremendous fear, great uncertainty about the future, and enormous economic distress. It has revealed existing inequities and has had an outsized impact on the most vulnerable among us. On our campus, change feels constant, and new information and new decisions are shared daily. The stress of fear, uncertainty and change has exacerbated existing conflicts and produced new conflicts. We have had visitors who are fearful and reluctant to return to campus or to particular situations on campus and others who are unable to return to campus due to caregiving or health concerns, all of which have produced inequalities in risk and workload. We have seen immediate conflicts over wearing masks and other public health recommendations as well as broader conflicts over policy decisions. We have seen building frustration and growing divisions in our community.

This pandemic will be around for the long term. To endure and even thrive, we need to unify as a community, support one another, and protect one another. This means shared decision making and transparency in communication. It also means recognizing and respecting that we have different values, perspectives, and risk tolerances and that we need to be flexible and innovative in managing these differences.