



Promoting collaborative dispute resolution

AMS Ombuds Office
Annual Report to Council

2014 — 2015

Role of the Ombudsperson

▶ Main Role

- ▶ Receive, address, and investigate complaints related to the Alma Mater Society
 - ▶ This may be related to any of the society's clubs, resource groups, constituencies, services, businesses, staff, executive, and council

▶ Other Roles

- ▶ Mediation & Conflict Management
- ▶ Confidant
- ▶ Information
- ▶ Resources



Values & Ethics

- ▶ Core values of the AMS

- ▶ Honesty, Effectiveness, Accountability, Respect, and Teamwork

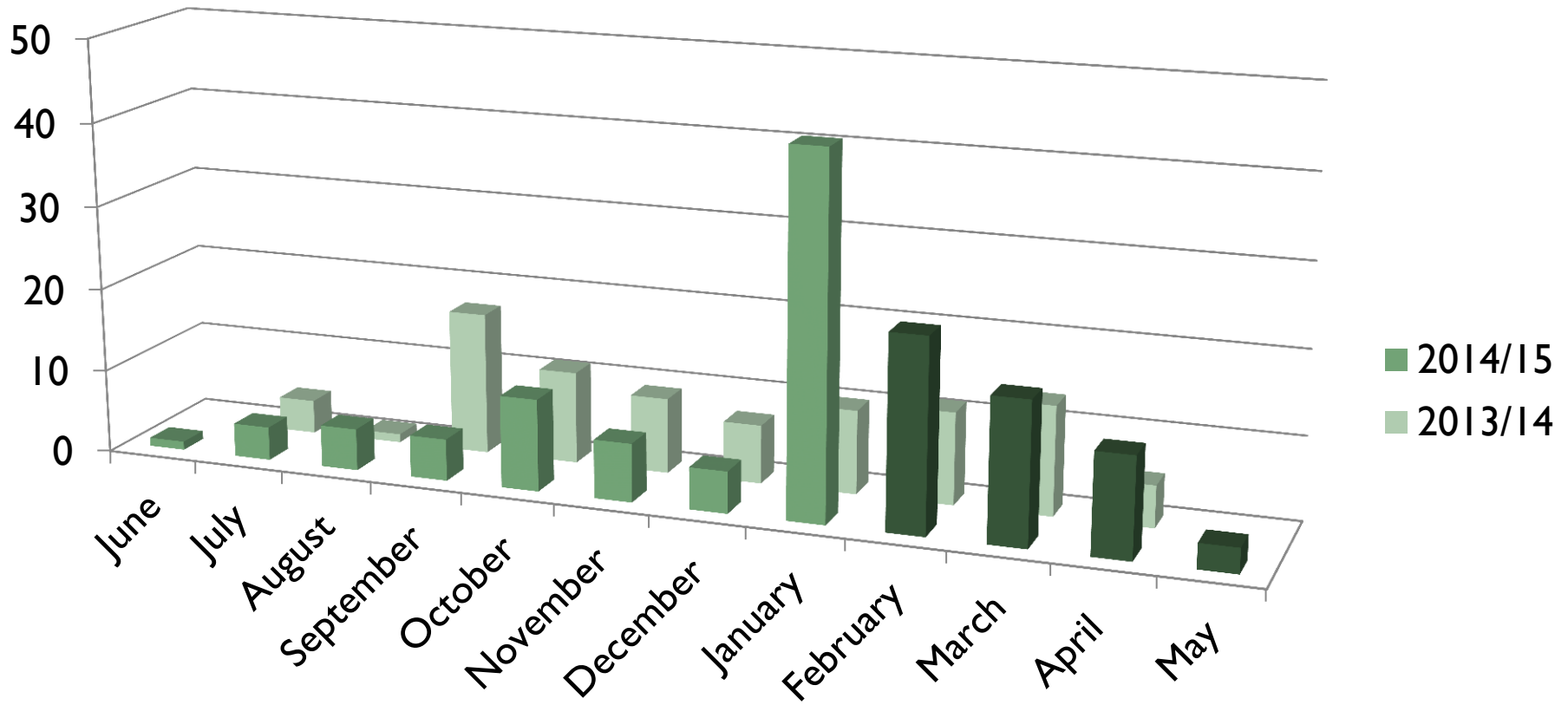
- ▶ IOA Code of Ethics

- ▶ Independence
- ▶ Neutrality & Impartiality
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Informality



Data Comparison

Visitors to the AMS Ombuds Office



Personal reflections

Good

- ▶ Helping people
- ▶ Feels good to provide information, make someone's day, etc.
- ▶ Working with passionate student leaders
- ▶ Feeling motivated by awesome coworkers, visitors to the office, etc.

Bad

- ▶ Stressful job
- ▶ Overworked during BDS
- ▶ Communication with external groups was not cohesive
- ▶ Hard to provide bad news
- ▶ No one to debrief with on a regular basis
- ▶ Feeling outnumbered/intimidated at times



Cases this year

▶ Major cases/issues

- ▶ Student Court
- ▶ BDS
- ▶ Opting in/out of AMS Student Fees
- ▶ Relationships between constituents and their constituencies
 - ▶ HR Practices
 - ▶ Active Listening Skills Workshops
- ▶ Constituency Fee Referendums
 - ▶ VSEUS
 - ▶ KUS
- ▶ Other:
 - ▶ Voter Media
 - ▶ Wrestling Club
 - ▶ Expulsion from SUB Case



Student Court?

- ▶ A few student inquiries in October/November
 - ▶ Does it exist?
 - ▶ How do we get a case heard in court?

- ▶ Recommendations:
 - ▶ Governance review is vital
 - ▶ Takes a long time to mobilize
 - ▶ Hard to fill positions



Boycott Divestment Sanctions

- ▶ Definition of neutrality from the Ombuds perspective:
 - ▶ International Ombudsman Association
 - ▶ Key ethical principal
 - ▶ Every visitor is treated even handedly
 - ▶ Don't have own interest in the outcome of a situation
 - ▶ Don't favor one person over another
 - ▶ Strive to be fair and objective
- ▶ Follow the governing documents of the society
- ▶ March 4th council meeting
 - ▶ Recommended a 'no' to the **wording** of the question because it was not a 'yes' or 'no' question because it contained an answer in and of itself



AMS Student Fees

- ▶ **2 Groups:**

- ▶ 65+ category of students
- ▶ AMS Members who want to OPT OUT of particular fees

- ▶ **Recommendations:**

- ▶ Better communication between AMS/UBC, more up to date information, make opt out/in process fully online, training



Constituent/Constituency Relations

- ▶ Sometimes misunderstandings on both sides...it happens!
- ▶ Situations get out of hand
 - ▶ Rumors
 - ▶ Defamation
- ▶ Recommendations:
 - ▶ Active Listening Workshops
 - ▶ Ask questions early on
 - ▶ Mediation
 - ▶ AN OMBUDSPERSON CAN HELP!! 😊



Fee Referendums

- ▶ A governance review of this is VITAL!
- ▶ VSEUS
 - ▶ Long process
- ▶ KUS
 - ▶ KUS/MYM coordinator has good intentions and has dedicated years towards finding a 'hub' for KIN students
 - ▶ Small constituency, sometimes feels intimidated
 - ▶ Misinformation, misguidance
 - ▶ Out of control, malicious, defamatory media/blogging
 - ▶ Attacking the people and not the main issues involved!



Other

▶ Voter Media

▶ Need for clearer code

- ▶ Identity of the Editor: make it more explicit that their identity is not necessarily confidential
- ▶ Ethics: Expand on what defines libel, and what kinds of posts are offensive or a violation of personal privacy
 - Perhaps include that their posts must adhere to the Respectful Environment policy in order to participate in voter media



New Ombudsperson...hopefully soon!





The end