

Ombuds Officer Report May 8, 2013
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A view of the cases presented to the Hunter College Ombuds Office during the academic year 2012/2013 is given below. In a glance, they are very similar to recent years, but there are several interesting points.

	2012/2013	2011/2012
Students	62	68
Faculty	11	3
Parent/Relative	4	0
Community	0	0
Administrator	1	0
Other	0	0
Totals	76	69

First notice that the parents are back. Several years ago, we were introduced to helicopter parents and their emergence into society: however a new term that has been adopted in professional circles is "snowplow" parents -- and it is clear why.

There were more students in the Ombuds Office during this academic year than last, most of which was attributable to Sandy. This storm created headaches of all kinds, and as a result, the fall semester was heavy.

Some years ago, the issue of narcissism in today's younger generation became quite visible. In some academic circles, it is a major focus of attention. Personally, I don't see this much among my own students, however I do see it in the Ombuds office.

Finally, notice that the number of faculty cases rose again after the previous year's drop. While I cannot say that the nature of the problems has changed, I think that we do need to consider if we tend to bully each other?

There is a literature on bullying in the workplace, and as many of you know, there have been articles about bullying in the Chronicles of Education. And it seems that colleges and universities are particularly vulnerable.

There are three reasons given for university vulnerability: 1. big egos, 2. an individualistic ethic and, 3. a tolerance for behaviors not accepted elsewhere. Moreover "mobbing", a group form of bullying, is also on the rise and the most likely workplace for mobbing is thought to be the university!

Again this year, I want to point out that the Hunter Ombuds Office has a staff of one, but that this works well in conjunction Student Services. I thank them.