

# Annual Report

## 2014–2015

March 31, 2016

Human Rights Office  
*Bureau des droits de la personne*



uOttawa

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## Director's message



The University of Ottawa is a busy work and study environment that includes over 42,000 students and 5,000 full-time employees. We are the size of a small city. We are both diverse and complex. There are two student groups, eight unions and one non-unionized employee group. Some students are also employees, sometimes unionized and sometimes not. The procedure for filing a harassment and discrimination complaint varies depending on which group the parties belong to and the specific provisions of applicable collective agreements. Similarly, the mode of communication for educational campaigns and activities also varies depending on which group of people we are trying to reach. Thus, as you will see from the sector reports that follow, the Human Rights Office (HRO) takes a collaborative approach to all of our work, whether it be responding to particular incidents, developing policies or holding public education activities.

During the 2014–2015 academic year, we continued the foundation-building activities required for a new institutional unit. We worked on creating a cohesive team, drafting a mandate that resonated with the two main areas of work, that is, managing harassment and discrimination complaints and proactively educating the community to improve the campus climate and reduce the number of complaints. We also started work on our strategic plan.

In addition, we invested in team building and professional development. We completed the Myers Briggs Step II training. The harassment and discrimination prevention officers and I completed a three- (3) day training program on how to draft investigation reports and attended the annual Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education (CAPDHHE) annual conference.

As director, I continued to participate in the Senior Equity Officers Reference Group, which includes senior administrators in other Ontario universities that also work in the areas of diversity, equity and human rights. I also contributed to finalizing the Task Force Report on Equality and to the work of the Mandatory Training Group and was nominated by the vice-president academic and provost to sit as a member of the Council of Ontario Universities Reference Group on Sexual Violence.

It was a productive year that focused on building cohesion within the team, clarifying what we can offer to the members of our university community and developing new working relationships, thus setting the stage for a productive year in 2015–2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Nigam".

**Sonya Nigam**

# Human Rights Office

## Mission, mandate, guiding principles

### Mission

The team of the Human Rights Office collaborates with the University community to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

### Mandate

To provide leadership in the creation, implementation and evaluation of policies, procedures and practices on diversity, inclusion, equity, accessibility and the prevention of harassment and discrimination.

### Guiding principles

Fairness, confidentiality, respect

## Sectors

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Employment Equity
- Accessibility
- Harassment and Discrimination

## Team



Figure 1: Top (left to right): Mélissa Charest, William Cornet, Marie-Claude Gagnon. Bottom (left to right): Ariana Anam, Yolaine Ruel, Sonya Nigam, Carole Bourque

### Administration

- Sonya Nigam, Director
- Mélissa Charest, Administrative Assistant and Communications
- Lavinia Allary, Assistant Policy Analyst

### Diversity and Inclusion & Employment Equity

- Carole Bourque, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist

### Harassment and Discrimination

- Ariana Anam, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Officer
- William Cornet, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Officer

### Accessibility

- Yolaine Ruel, Senior Policy Adviser, Accessibility
- Marie-Claude Gagnon, Web Accessibility Compliance Coordinator
- Anas Zurkiyeh, Project Manager – Communications Accessibility Compliance
- Cécile Chambeau-Bloc, Project Manager – Communications Accessibility Compliance
- Guy Jacques Affricot, Project Manager – Communications Accessibility Compliance
- Hananeel Robertson, Project Manager – Communications Accessibility Compliance
- Jean Robert Kwizera, Project Manager – Communications Accessibility Compliance

## Diversity and Inclusion

**Diversity** is a fact. It's naturally occurring. We're all diverse within ourselves, with a unique mix of values, beliefs and talents, not to mention characteristics like gender, sexual orientation, culture, language, and more. Diversity also exists among people and within institutions, with their many ways of doing and of being.

**Inclusion** takes effort. It's how we try to bring out the unique strengths of individuals, groups and institutions. Research shows that by adopting and integrating inclusive practices and policies, and by managing them well, institutions and the people within them thrive. They become more engaged, innovative and productive.

One of the key aims of the Human Rights Office is to help people develop the skills needed to integrate inclusive practices in everything they do.

### Capacity building

#### Expert advice

The following services, received expert advice in developing inclusive practices. Support included assessing current practices, uncovering barriers, identifying new practices, and training.

- Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement (formerly the Centre for Global and Community Engagement)
- SASS – Academic Accommodations (formerly Access Service)
- Facilities
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Common Law

#### Consultative committees

- Creation of a new consultative and working committee on questions of inclusion
- Creation of a working committee that included students and employees to increase both the accessibility to and inclusivity of gender diverse washrooms

#### Training and outreach

- Workshop entitled “Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion” offered four times per year through Human Resources’ Leadership, Learning and Organizational Development sector
- Ninety-minute session on inclusion for managers and supervisors offered throughout the year as part of the Interaction Management workshop through Human Resources’ Leadership, Learning and Organizational Development sector
- Training delivered to fitness attendants working with Sports Services
- Inclusion training for members of new consultative and working committee on questions of inclusion, which includes students, employees, union representatives and members of the community
- Lunch sessions: *Soup and Substance*, a monthly activity where members of the uOttawa

community are invited to come explore various inclusion-related topics (an initiative of the Human Rights Office, organized by the Inclusion Project's working group)

### Partnerships

- Collaboration with Human Resources and the SFUO Pride Centre to offer a workshop entitled "LGBTQ+ Inclusive Workplaces" to employees through Human Resources' Leadership, Learning and Organizational Development sector. This workshop was provided to the Human Resources team of directors and managers.
- Co-sponsor of presentation by Colin Druhan, executive director of Pride at Work Canada, as part of Career Week (with Human Resources and the Career Development Centre)

### External relations

- Active member of the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP). OLIP members meet several times a year to learn how to address racism in the workplace with the aim of removing barriers to employment for racialized new Canadians. OLIP also organizes and hosts public events to educate others.
- Active member of the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN). EARN members meet monthly to organize and host an annual conference, an annual career fair and other events to increase meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This is achieved by providing strategies, solutions and tools to employers to help create greater awareness of the talents and skills that people with disabilities bring to the workplace.

## Employment Equity

The University of Ottawa favours working conditions that remove disparities that are experienced by the four designated groups in Canada: women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. The University creates, implements and assesses policies and programs designed to facilitate employment and education for members of these groups. Human Resources ensures that the *Employment Equity Act* is applied appropriately to these groups.

### Capacity building

#### Expert advice

- Ongoing collection of employment equity data. In collaboration with Human Resources, each new full-time permanent employee is sent a self-identification questionnaire and asked to complete and return it.
- Ongoing discussions with Employment and Social Development Canada, a federal government agency responsible for overseeing the Federal Contractors Program, to clarify how program changes made by the government impact the University of Ottawa and identify any actions it should take.

## Partnerships

- Supported the Ottawa Job Match Network by connecting network members with employers at uOttawa who support the hiring of new Canadians.
- Supported the development of a new partnership between the Career Development Centre and EARN whereby postsecondary students with disabilities in Ottawa could access targeted career development training at uOttawa's Career Development Centre.

## External relations

- Member of Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO). HIO enhances employers' abilities to access the talents of skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area and works on addressing barriers and challenges. Participated in HIO's cross-cultural competency training for employers. Participated in HIO's 2012 annual employer's summit. Supported uOttawa's Human Resources in hosting its first-ever HIO coaching session for skilled immigrants. This popular event allows skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area to meet with a number of major employers in the Ottawa area.
- Became a member of the Ontario Employment Equity Practitioners Group, which met in Kingston in the summer of 2015.

## Accessibility

The Human Rights Office seeks to ensure that persons living with a disability enjoy free and unhindered access to the University's goods, services, facilities, housing, communications, events, employment opportunities and public spaces. Our goals are to

- Developed policies, practices and procedures to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Provided information and advice to help prevent incidents

## Skills development

### Advisory committee

Access Network: A network that brings together representatives from faculties and services to share best practices and develop accessibility-related skills

### Expert advice: Information and communication

- Evaluated accessible audiovideo content (YouTube, quality control of externally produced multimedia projects)
- Conducted accessibility checks of PDF forms and other documents on website and advise on configuration of accessibility evaluation applications and systems
- Provided training on best practices for ad campaigns

- Assessed accessibility of websites (the Library's LibGuides, Drupal)
- Assessed accessibility of intranet, intranet portals and extranet (VirtuO, Blackboard Learn, SciQuest, HR learning resource web application)
- Developed evaluation process for mobile technology (Android and iOS)
- Together with the Communications Directorate, faculties and services, created accessible templates

### **Support and troubleshooting (approximately 150 requests)**

- Answered questions related to accessibility (from IT help desk, extension 6555)
- Provided drop-in help: Consultations and ad hoc creation of accessible documents, verification of accessibility errors and resolutions

### **Technical assistance for accessibility projects**

- Communications Directorate: Hired two students under the Work–Study Program (WSP) and provided training in subtitling to one student in order to facilitate the transition to accessible online video content and in creating accessible documents to the other student
- Web content management system: Hired a WSP student and provided training on Web accessibility to allow student to analyze SiteImprove reports
- Other services and faculties: Assisted with hiring, training and physical accommodation processes of WSP students hired for information and communications accessibility projects on campus

### **Expert advice: Customer service**

- Organized inclusive and accessible events and meetings
- Assisted with accommodations for visitors to campus
- Provided information on possibility of requesting a personalized emergency response plan

### **Expert advice: Employment**

- Provided advice on hiring processes
- Supported accommodation measures for employees (recruitment, interviews, job offers)
- Provided advice on personalized emergency response plans
- Assisted in the area of mandatory training

### **Expert advice: Public spaces**

- Provided input on Grande Allée renovation project
- Oversaw campus accessibility audit with Quadrangle Architects and manage priorities

## Expert advice: General requirements

### Policies and regulations

- Consulted with services and faculties on regulations and guidelines that are inclusive for persons with a disability and on procedures and processes that meet the requirements of AODA

### Procurement

- Created checklist for purchasing accessible information and communication technologies

### Training and programs to raise awareness

#### Creation of 23 online training courses and 45 in-person training courses

- Basic principles: What is accessibility and accessible writing?
- How to create an accessible campaign: Printed material (posters, documents, brochures)
- How to interact with accessibility in mind: In person, by email, through newsletters and on social media
- Creating accessible websites and content: Multimedia, PDF, forms, online content
- Creating accessible documents on MAC and in Windows: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, InDesign and PDF

### Universal design for learning

- Gave presentations to academic and support staff at the Common Law section's annual dean's retreat

## External relations

- Participated in the AODA coordinators subgroup of the Council of Ontario Universities, a network for exchanges and meetings (two per year), comprising the individuals responsible for implementation of AODA at Ontario universities
- Participated in AODA Liaison, a group made up of representatives from major public organizations in the region with the same compliance requirements under AODA (City of Ottawa, Algonquin College, Ottawa Catholic School Board, University of Ottawa, Cité collégiale and the Ottawa Hospital) with the goal facilitating cooperation and exchange of accessibility best practices
- Participated in the Accessibility Conference in Guelph (March 26 and 27, 2015), a gathering of a full range of individuals in the area of accessibility to share ideas on how to create an accessible community. The Human Rights Office gave a presentation entitled *Helmets vs. square caps: A comparison of approaches to web accessibility*, which addressed the challenges of integrating accessibility in a centralized vs. a decentralized environment.

## Harassment and Discrimination

The Human Rights Office at the University of Ottawa provides information and assistance to all members of the University community who may have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment or sexual violence. Services are confidential and impartial.

## Complaint management and prevention service

Two officers assisted members of the University of Ottawa community with managing incidents of conflict involving harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment, which fall under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

The Office handles any complaints related to discrimination, harassment or sexual violence. Some complaints can be handled informally while other complaints can be handled formally. The Office can also refer individuals to other resources on campus and to external resources.

### Complaints

#### 118 files opened (from September 2014 to August 2015)

- 50 related to harassment
- 20 on discrimination
- 10 on sexual harassment
- 38 on other matters

#### Cases by parties

- 47 cases dealt with situations between employees
- 34 cases dealt with situations between student and an employee
- 24 cases dealt with situations between students

For additional statistics, please see the [Appendix \(H & D data\)](#).

## Skills development

### Expert advice

#### Policies and collective agreements

- Policy 67a review
- Interim protocol on the prevention of sexual violence
- Terms relating to harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment, in collective agreements

### **Individual consultations**

- Confidential consultation, support and information
- Interventions such as coaching, separate meetings, facilitated dialogue, group interventions, mediation and team building
- Support and advice to administrative leaders

### **Training and outreach**

The harassment and discrimination officers developed awareness and information programs and coordinate workshops and presentations.

#### **Training**

- Delivered workshop on understanding sexual violence against women and the Interim Sexual Violence Support and Response Protocol to employees in student residences
- Delivered Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination in the Workplace workshop as part of Human Resource's Interaction Management training
- Completed training workshop: Basic Workplace Investigation and Report Writing, presented by Rubin Thomlinson

#### **Outreach**

- Presented services provided by the Human Rights Office to the following faculties:
  - Health Sciences
  - Common Law
  - Medicine
  - Civil Law
  - Arts
    - Presented services provided by the Teaching and Learning Support Service

#### **Partnerships**

- Participated in student rights fair
- Partnered with the Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel (CALACS)
- Partnered with the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre

### **External relations**

- Participated in the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education's Human Rights & Equity: Who's in? Who's out? conference
- Participated in the annual EARN conference

## Appendix (H & D data)

Figure 2. Types of conflict treated by the H & D sector

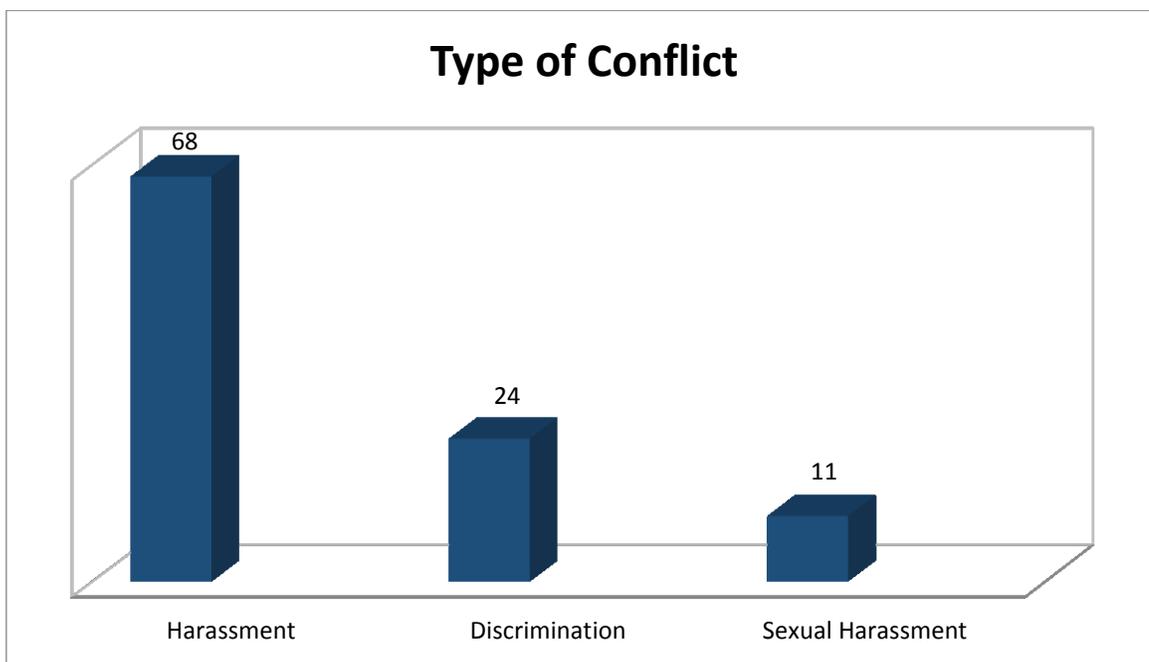


Figure 3. Complainant and respondent status

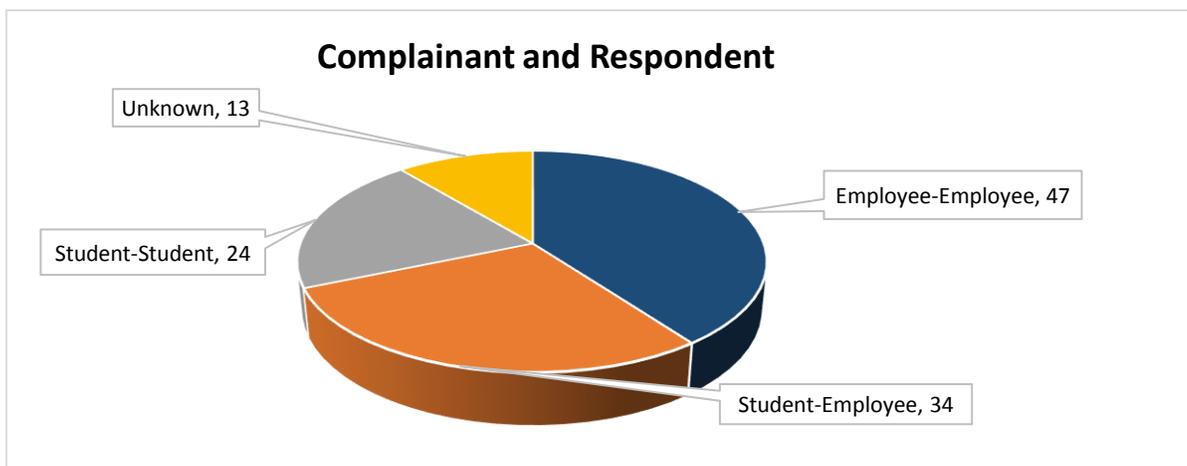


Figure 4. Service offered by H & D sector

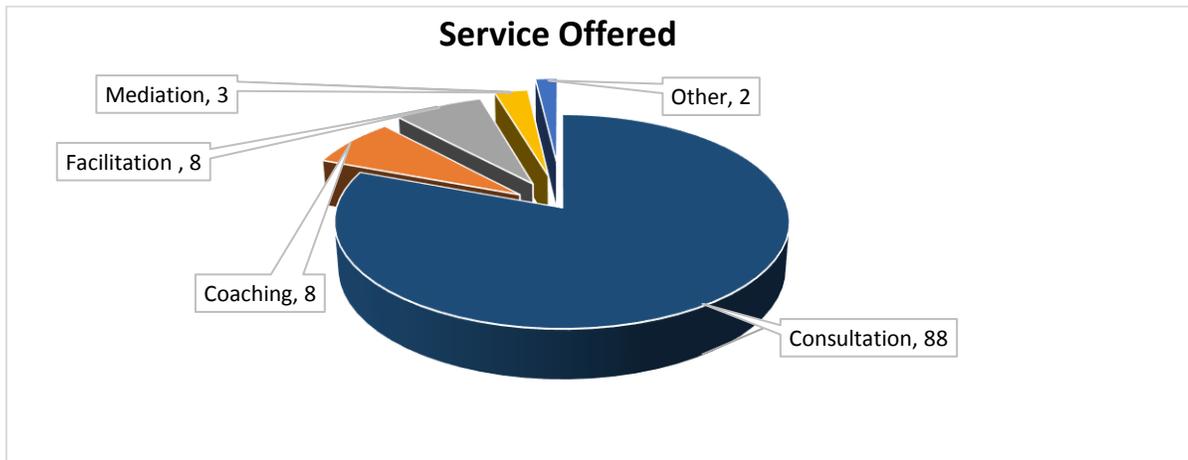


Figure 5. Faculties involved

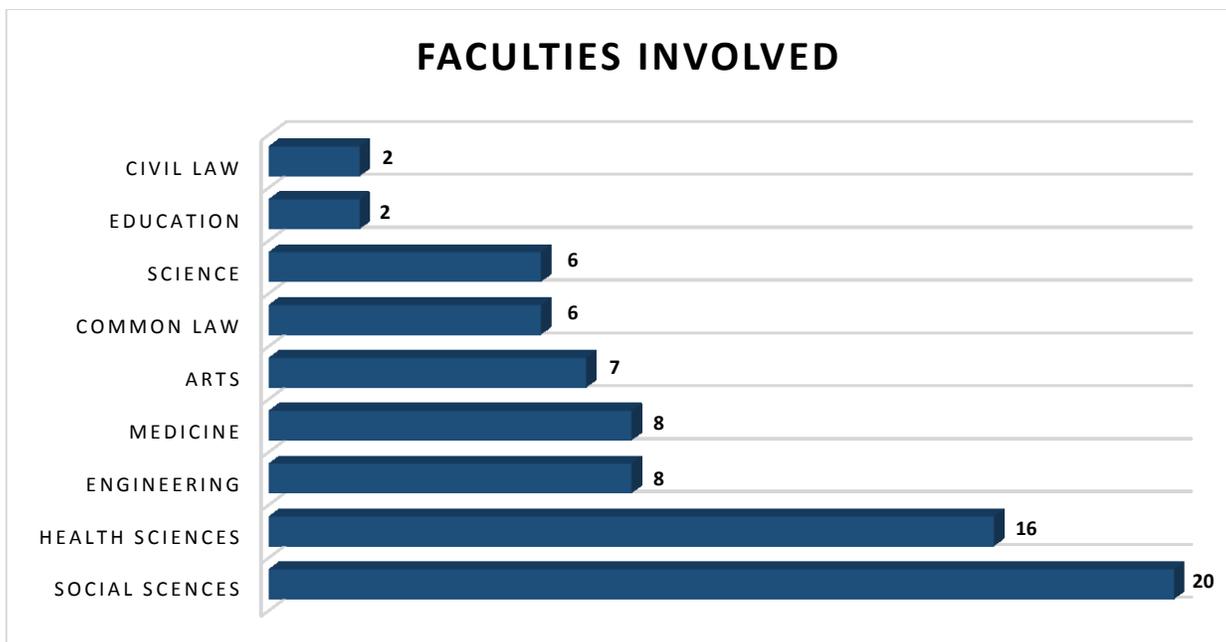


Figure 6. Languages of the parties

