

OEO Annual Report 2025-2026 Academic Year

August 2026



Preface

This report describes the work of the Office of Equal Opportunity during the 2025–2026 academic year. It is offered as a high-level view of how members of the Tufts community brought concerns forward, how the office responded and where our work is heading.

Case volume reached 1,563 matters, the highest of the six years tracked here; nearly all of this year's growth came from accommodation requests, which now account for about half of requests the office handles. Investigative categories held steady or eased. We read rising or steady numbers as a sign of growing awareness.

The year also brought a university-wide training on Title VI/Title VII rights and responsibilities: nearly 100 voluntary sessions reaching 2,063 faculty and staff, with staff attending at almost four times the faculty rate.

At the same time, OEO closed matters more quickly this year. The average complaint now resolves in 51 days, down from 100 two years ago. The number of cases still open beyond a year fell from 8% to 1%. Alongside that, 148 no-contact orders were maintained across six terms for 78 pairs, serving more than 150 community members.

Accommodations are monitored differently so we do not track how long they were open. Some accommodations are short and defined (e.g. a religious accommodation request) and some are monitored for longer (i.e. a pregnancy, or illness). Some are complex and involve multiple requests and a longer legally required interactive process. Still others are easy to address. The most important thing to note about accommodations is that the accommodation requests continue to rise.

The pages that follow set out the data, definitions and context behind these headlines.

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About the Office of Equal Opportunity

Our Mission

The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at Tufts University is responsible for providing a learning and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and related retaliation. OEO administers and enforces university policies related to equal opportunity, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), religious accommodations and other related state and federal regulations. The office manages allegations, case intake and resolution, coordinates accommodations for students, employees, patients, visitors and other community members. We also provide proactive outreach, education and training across all Tufts campuses. Through its work, OEO not only addresses individual concerns but through its action and collaborations with other university offices (i.e. HR, TUPD, OIIE, Provost Office, Deans' Offices, etc.) also promotes a respectful, inclusive climate that supports the university's mission of academic and community excellence and equal opportunity.

How to Read this Report

For clarity, all case data and trends are reported by **starting academic year (AY)** which is also the fiscal year. For example, **AY 2025** refers to the period from **July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026**. Case counts are classified by primary policy category; some reports may implicate multiple policies, but each case is recorded under only one main type for consistency. No case is double counted. This report is intended to provide a high-level overview of OEO activity and should not be interpreted as a comprehensive record of all matters handled.



Office of
Equal Opportunity

How OEO Classifies Cases

In carrying out this mission, OEO responds to a wide range of allegations, reports and concerns. Cases are classified into specific categories based on the nature of the allegation or request. If a report involves more than one area or protected category, it is not counted more than once but it is put into the tier that corresponds to the primary category.

Title IX – Sexual Misconduct

Involving any students, employees and/or community members (such as patients, affiliates and visitors to campus): sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, relationship/interpersonal/dating/domestic violence, (cyber) stalking, etc. must generally involve a student; if no students are involved, OEO categorizes such a case as a Title VII matter, depending on who is involved.

Title VI – Student to Student, Non-Sexual

Student discrimination reports (race, color, national origin, shared/ancestry). OEO adds religion, ethnicity, language, creed, color and disability to this category for ease of reporting. Sometimes a Title VI report is also a Title VII report, depending on who is involved.

Accommodations

Requests from employees, students, patients, visitors and other affiliates and/or visitors to campus; public accommodation requests (e.g., ADA/504). This work includes religious requests, disability-related requests and/or pregnancy accommodations. The OEO team does not handle academic accommodations but handles the StAAR Center's appeals of their denials of academic accommodations.

Title VII – Employee to Employee

Staff, faculty, affiliates, vendors and other community members who report discrimination/harassment based on protected categories (race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, shared/ancestry, age, disability, sex/gender, gender identity and expression, transgender identity, sexual orientation, military status, genetics, retaliation) and other state and federal categories. Sometimes a Title VII report is also a Title VI report and/or a Title IX report, depending on who is involved.

OEO – Reviewed, Outside Jurisdiction

Reports that OEO reviews and determines are outside its jurisdiction, such as insensitive or biased conduct that does not constitute discrimination, *Working with One Another* matters (bullying, disrespect, incivility), hazing, Time/Place/Manner violations, freedom of speech/expression issues, unsafe practices, private social media concerns, research misconduct, conflicts of interest, etc.

Referred Cases

Matters OEO immediately determines are outside OEO's jurisdiction (physical assaults, theft, performance issues, etc.) are promptly sent to OIIE, HR, TUPD, Deans' and/or other relevant offices.

Important Considerations, Context, and Limitations

The following notes are provided to guide interpretation of this report and to ensure transparency regarding the scope and limitations of the data presented. Because OEO case information involves sensitive matters and evolving processes, these disclaimers are intended to clarify how the data should be read, what it does and does not represent and the boundaries of its use. They also serve to preserve confidentiality, prevent misinterpretation and protect Tufts community members who were involved in these matters:

- **Confidentiality:** Case numbers and summaries are anonymized to protect the privacy of all parties; no identifying details are included
- **Jurisdiction:** Data reflects matters within OEO's scope; cases handled by other offices (e.g., HR, Student Affairs, TUPD) are not represented here
- **Classification Limits:** Cases are categorized by *primary policy type*. A single report may involve multiple issues but is counted only once to avoid duplication
- **Data Fluidity:** Case statuses reflect information as of this report's date; outcomes may change as pending cases progress
- **Non-Comparability:** Year-over-year changes in case numbers may reflect reporting patterns, awareness, or policy updates, not necessarily a change in conduct
- **Reporting Culture Impact:** Fluctuations in volume may be influenced by an increase in conduct and/or related to national and local climate, awareness campaigns, training initiatives, external events or other significant social matters
- **Policy Changes Over Time:** Data and categories may be affected by updates to federal/state law or university policy; cross-year comparisons should be made with caution
- **Aggregate & Trend Data Only:** All information is presented in aggregate form. Individual case outcomes are not disclosed to preserve confidentiality and prevent misinterpretation
- **Educational Use:** This report is intended to highlight trends and inform policy/training decisions, not to adjudicate individual cases
- **No Determination of Liability:** Inclusion of a case in this report does not imply a legal finding of fault, liability or violation of law
- **No Waiver of Rights:** Nothing in this report constitutes a waiver of Tufts University's rights or obligations under applicable law and policy
- **Interpretation Authority:** OEO reserves the right to contextualize, interpret, and adjust case data, classifications, and methodologies consistent with university policy, professional standards and applicable law.

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Equal Opportunity

Office of Equal Opportunity Staff



The team behind the Office of Equal Opportunity; investigations, accommodations, education, and support across all Tufts campuses.



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OEO Case Data by Type (AY 2020 – AY 2025)

Total cases rose over five years from 817 in AY 2020 to 1,563 in AY 2025, with accommodations now roughly half of all matters driving most of our growth while the other categories held steady.

Tier	AY 2020	AY 2021	AY 2022	AY 2023	AY 2024	AY 2025
Accommodations	266	556	679	649	715	797
Office of Equal Opportunity	79	121	148	240	266	250
Referred to Others	36	67	70	115	84	80
Title IX	166	225	226	194	230	210
Title VI	93	77	45	77	57	58
Title VII	177	205	195	224	164	168
Total	817	1251	1363	1499	1516	1563

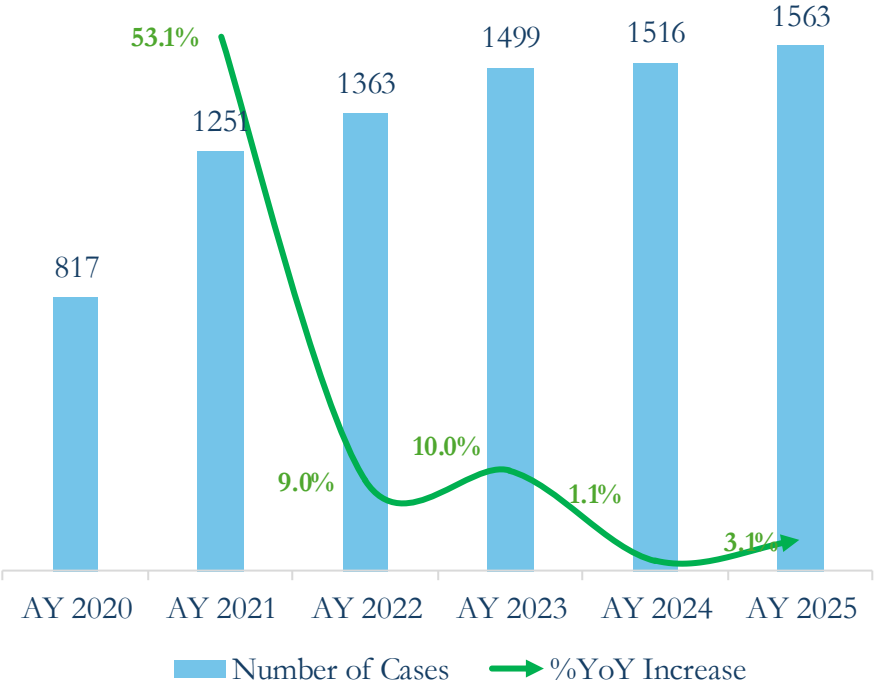
For clarity, all case data and trends are reported by starting **academic year (AY)**. For instance, **AY 2025** refers to the period from **July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026**.



Total OEO Cases and Year-over-Year Change (AY 2020 – AY 2025)

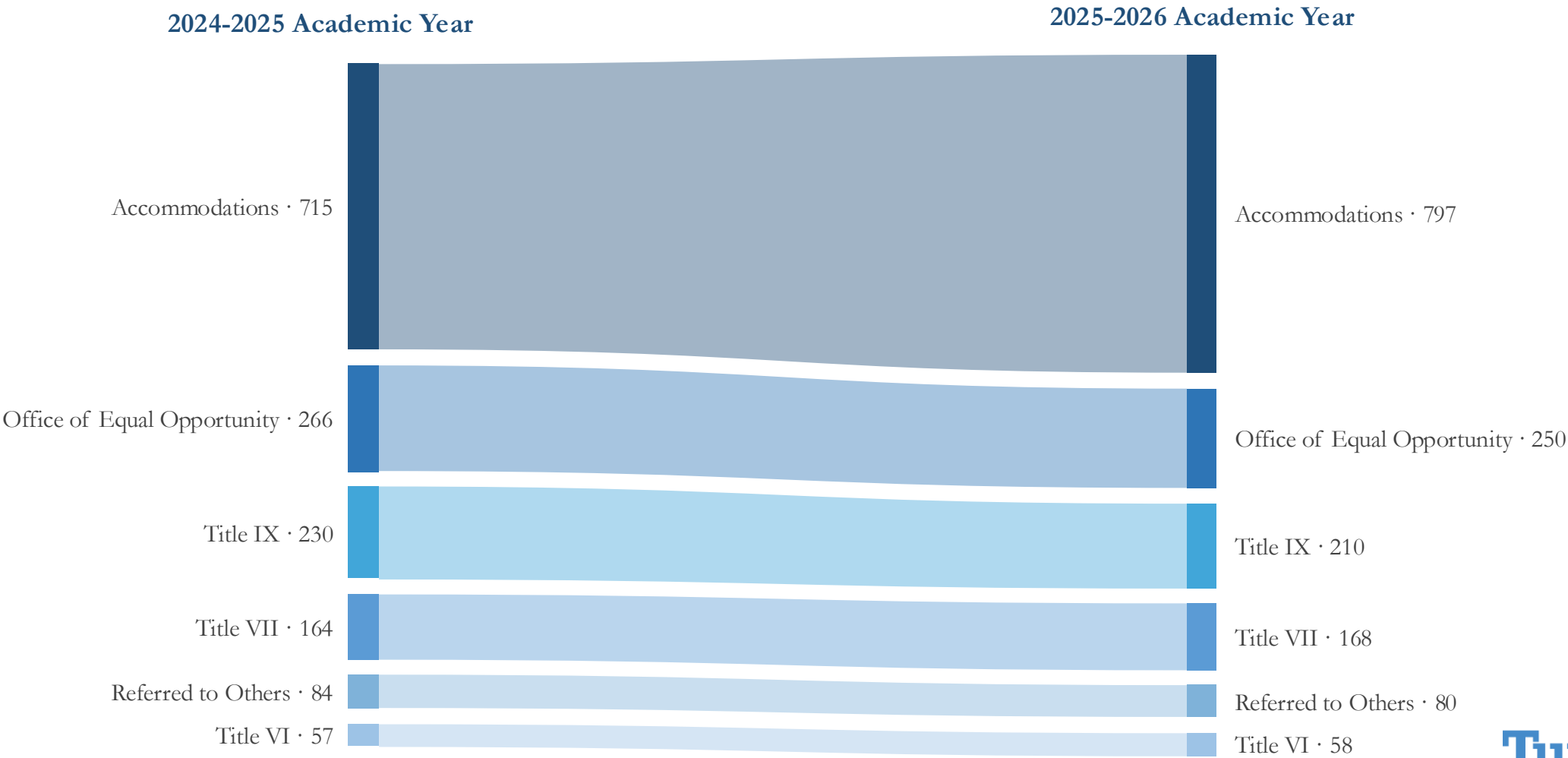
What This Means

Case volume has nearly doubled since AY 2020, rising from 817 to 1,563. The steepest jump came in AY 2021 (+53%), as the community returned to campus post-Covid and resulting awareness of OEO grew. Growth has since leveled off (about 9% and 10% in the following two years, then 1% and 3%) suggesting reporting has settled into a steady, sustainable pattern rather than continuing to climb. Higher volume reflects a community that knows how and where to raise concerns, not necessarily more incidents.

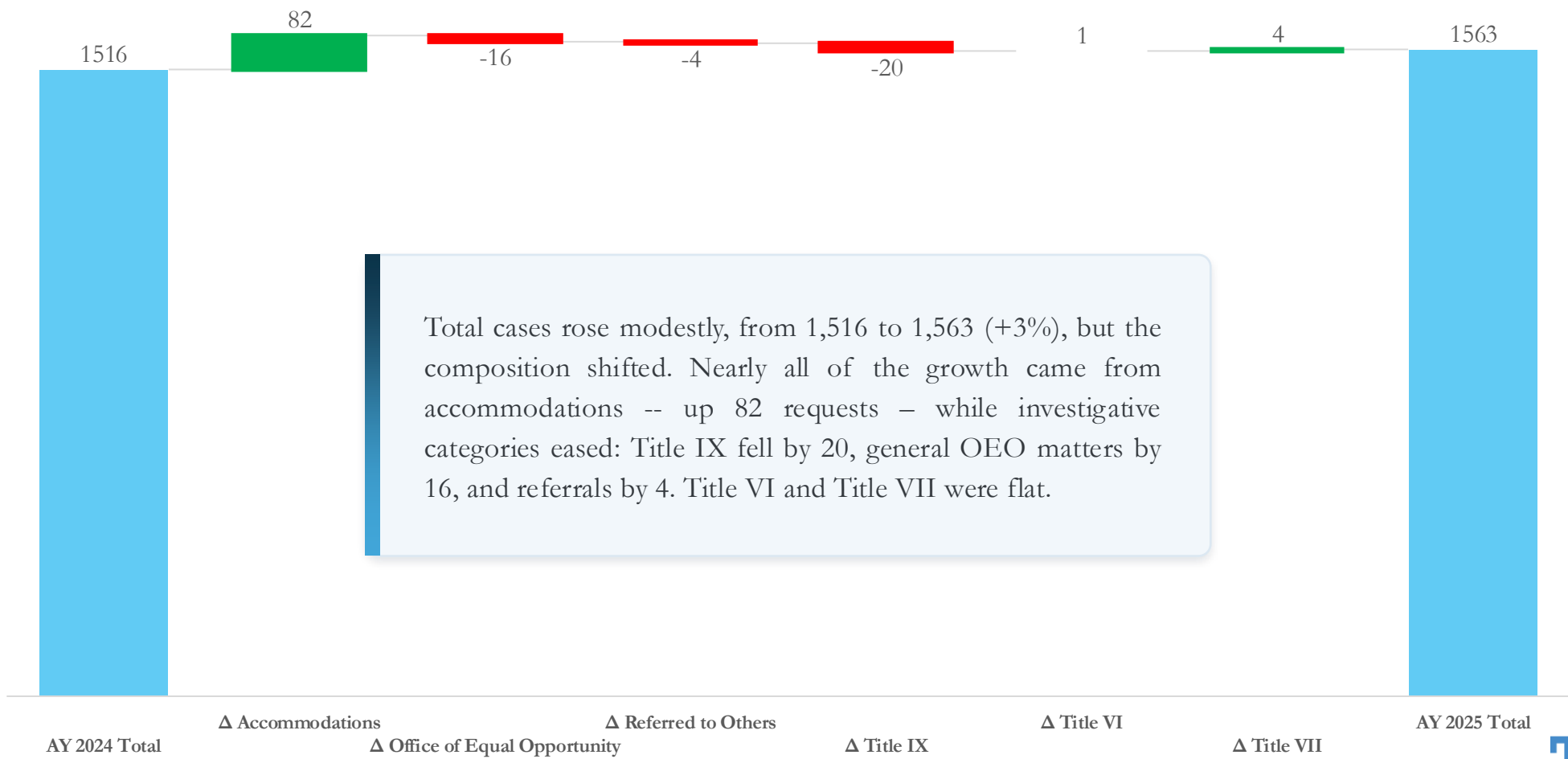


Case Flow by Type: AY 2024 → AY 2025

Band thickness is proportional to case volume; total cases rose from 1,516 to 1,563 (+3%).



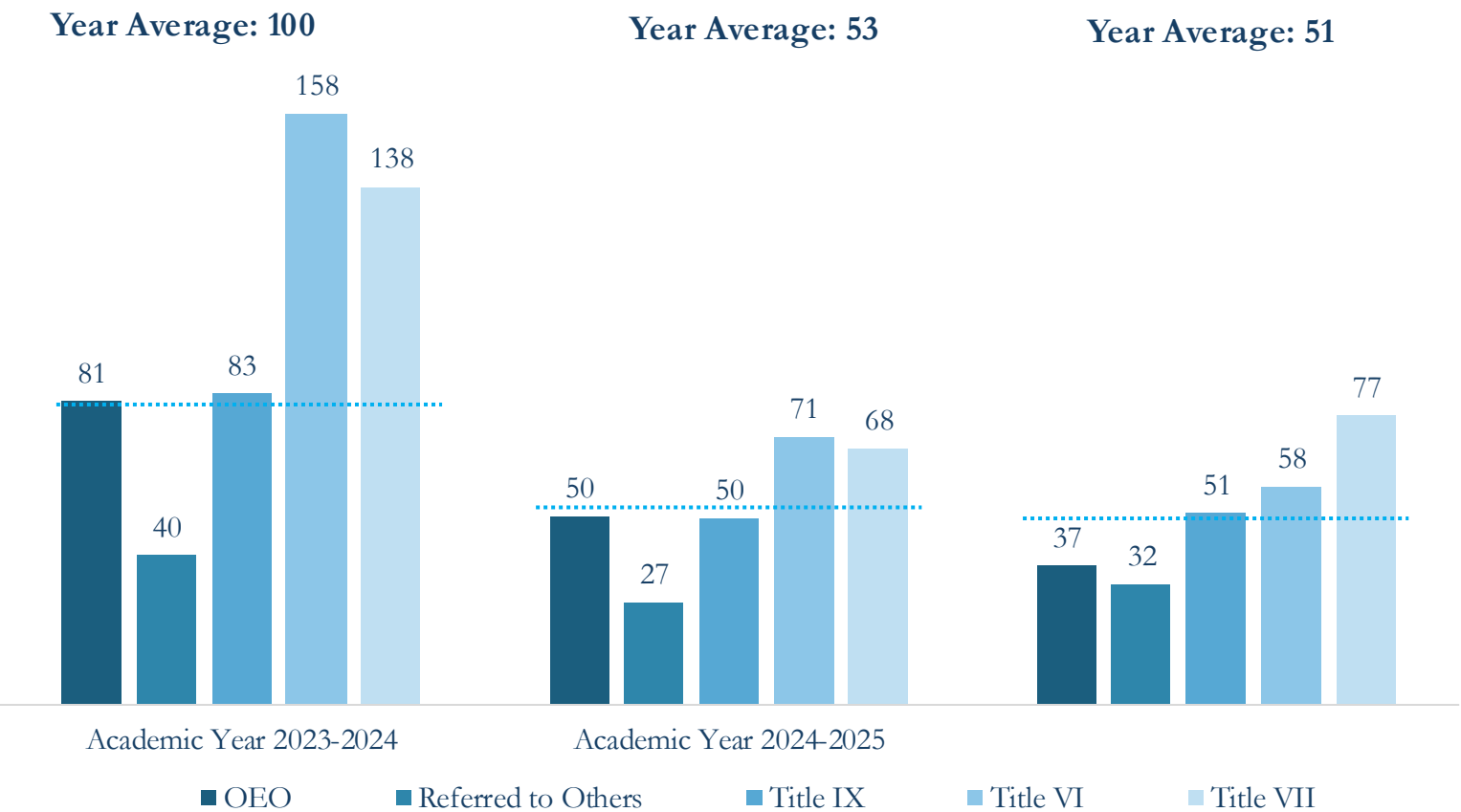
Year-over-Year Change in OEO Case Types (AY 2024 → AY 2025)



Total cases rose modestly, from 1,516 to 1,563 (+3%), but the composition shifted. Nearly all of the growth came from accommodations -- up 82 requests -- while investigative categories eased: Title IX fell by 20, general OEO matters by 16, and referrals by 4. Title VI and Title VII were flat.



Average Days Open by Case Type (AY 2023-AY 2025)



What This Means

Cases are being resolved faster across nearly every category. Excluding accommodations, the average time to close a case fell from 100 days to 53 and then to 51, a drop of roughly half in two years. The largest gains came in the most complex investigations: Title VI matters went from 158 days to 58, Title VII from 138 to 77, and Title IX from 83 to 51. Taken together, the trend points to a steadily more efficient office: handling more cases each year while shortening the time community members wait for resolution.



Case Duration Distribution (AY 2024-AY 2026)

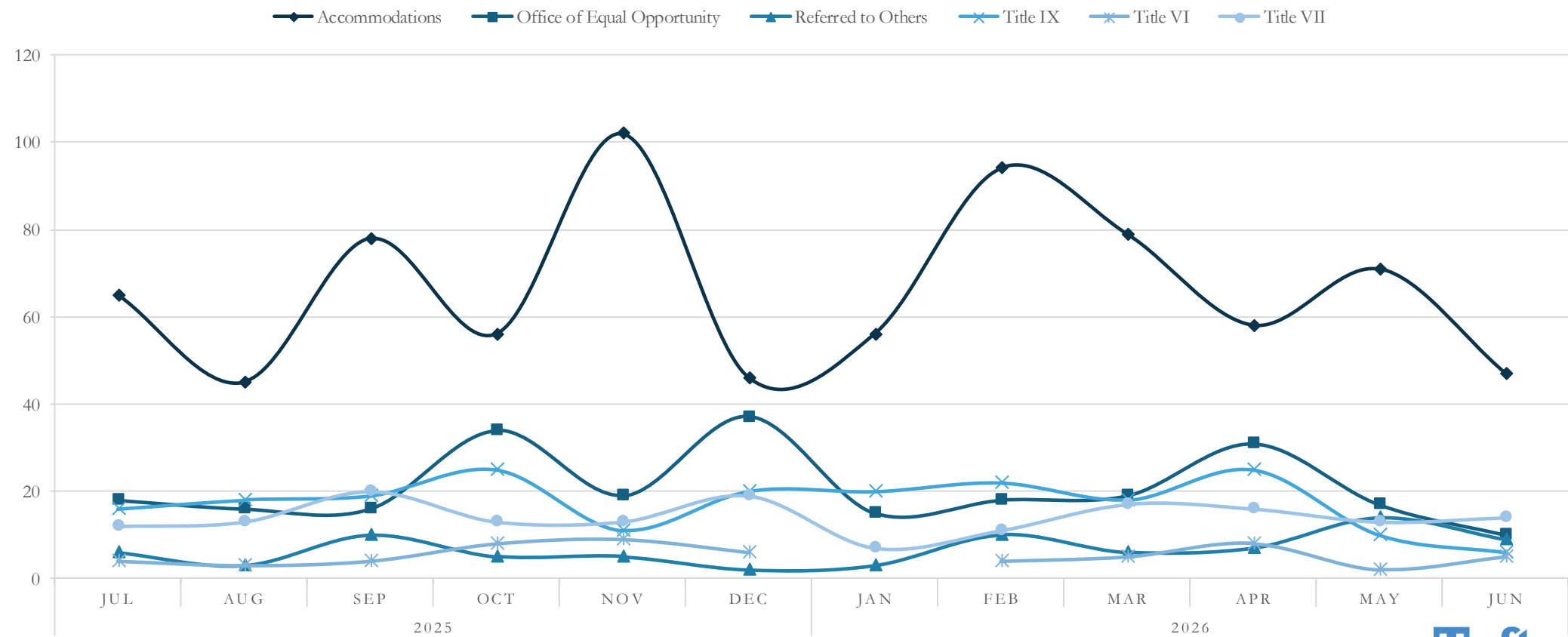
Days Open	>5	>10	>15	>30	>45	>60	>90	>120	>180	>360
AY 2023-2024	79%	68%	60%	48%	38%	30%	19%	15%	11%	8%
AY 2024-2025	78%	67%	62%	47%	37%	28%	18%	14%	8%	1%
AY 2025-2026	76%	66%	60%	43%	32%	27%	18%	11%	6%	1%

OEO is becoming increasingly efficient in handling cases. Each column shows the share of cases still open beyond that number of days, so lower figures mean faster resolution - and the numbers have improved at nearly every stage across the three years. The change is most striking in the longest-running matters: cases open beyond 180 days fell from 11% to 6%, and those beyond a year from 8% to 1%. Even as case volume rose, the office is resolving its most complex matters substantially faster than it did two years ago.



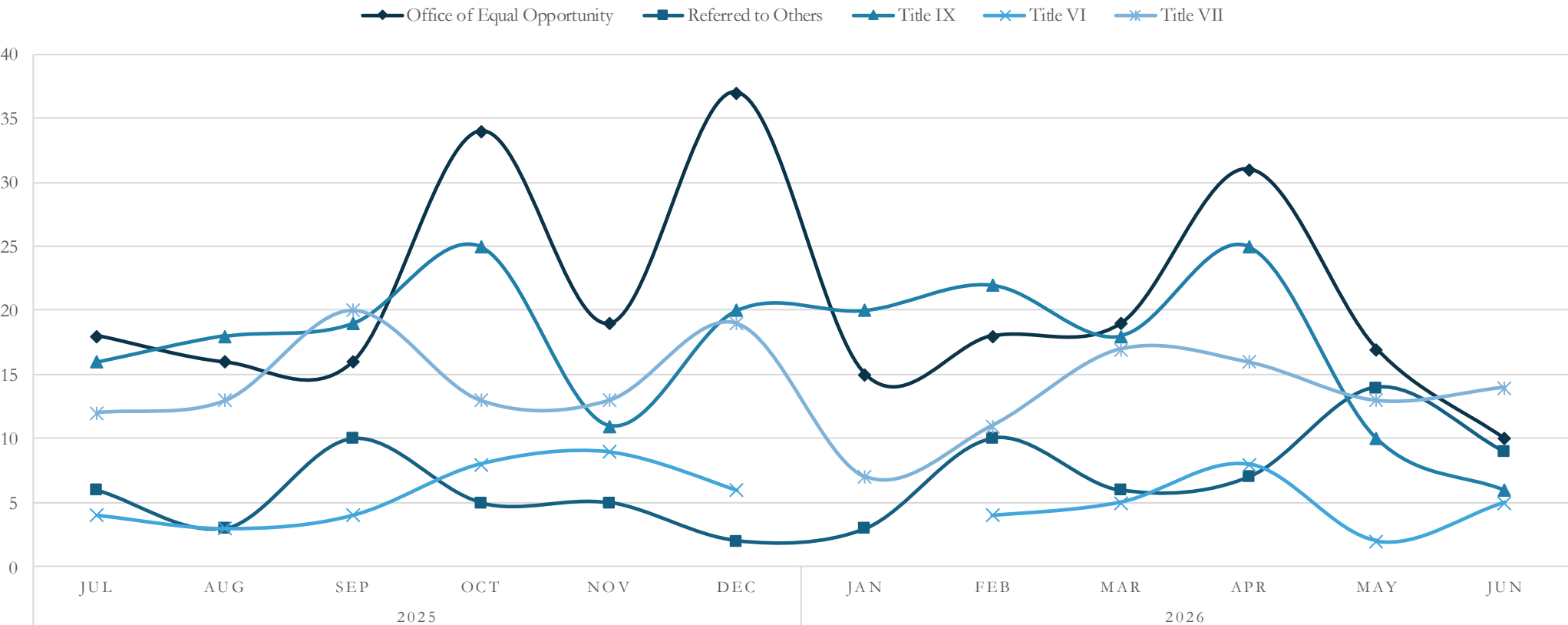
Monthly Case Intake by Category (All Cases)

Intake follows the academic calendar: accommodation requests drive the peaks in November (102) and February (94), while total volume falls to its lowest in August, December, and June.



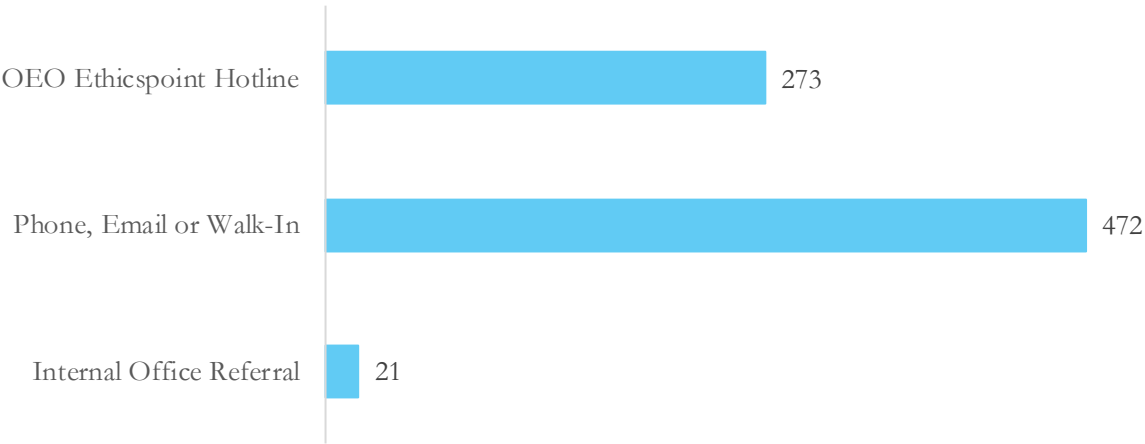
Monthly Case Intake by Category (Excluding Accommodation Cases)

With accommodations excluded, reports cluster in the busiest stretches of each semester (October, December, and April) and taper off in January and over the summer. Title VI cases have dropped to zero when students are not on campus. The rest follow predictable trends during busier times in the academic year.

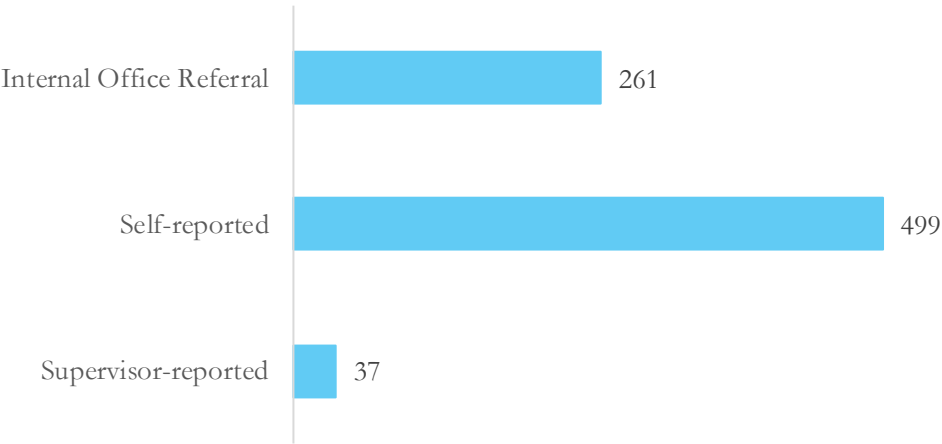


How Did the Reports Reach OEO? | What Were the Intake Methods?

Discrimination/Harassment Cases by Reporting Source



Accommodation Cases by Reporting Source



Intake-format Definitions

Groups are based on discrimination/harassment reports and their Intake Method; or how the case reached OEO.

Phone, Email or Walk-In	E-mail, Letter/Mail, Other, Phone, Walk-In or Front Desk Intake: the case arrived through direct communication
OEO Ethicspoint Hotline	OEO Ethicspoint known or anonymous report; the case arrived through a formal reporting call through the hotline or directly through the hotline.
Internal Office Referral	Internal, Legal, Compliance, Audit or other Referral: the case was referred or transferred to OEO by another internal referral source.

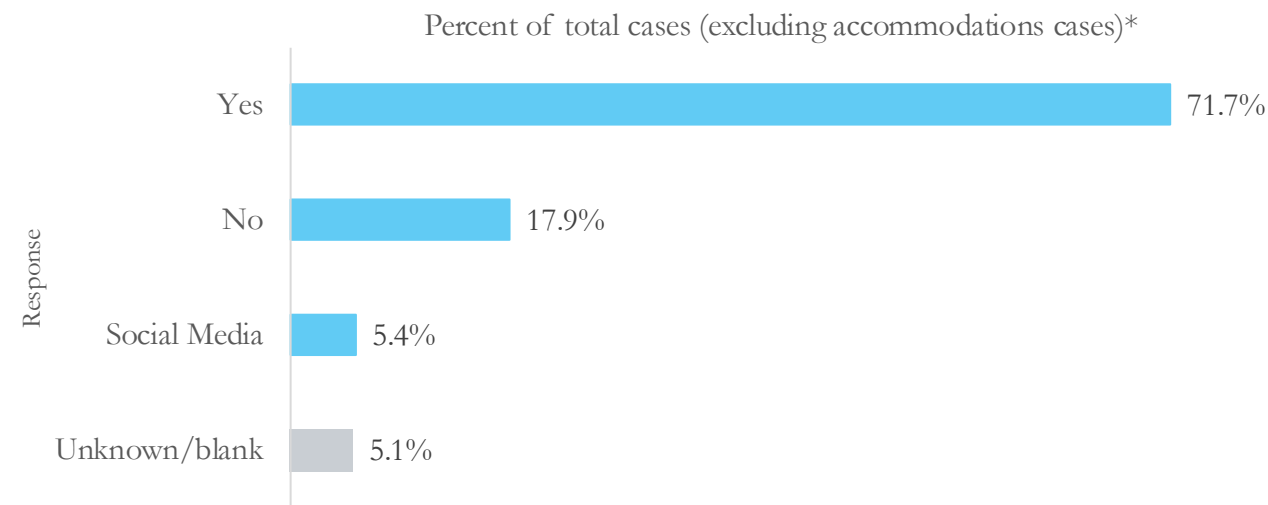
Reporting-source Definitions

Groups are based on the accommodation record’s Intake Method and indicate the recorded source of the intake.

Self-reported	Graduate student or Employee (Staff and/or Faculty); the intake came directly from an individual.
Internal Office Referral	Leave Administrator, Student Administrator, HRBP, Health Services, Deans Office, etc.; the intake came through another university office.
Supervisor-reported	Supervisor: the intake came through a supervisory channel.



Did the Allegation Occur on a Tufts Campus?



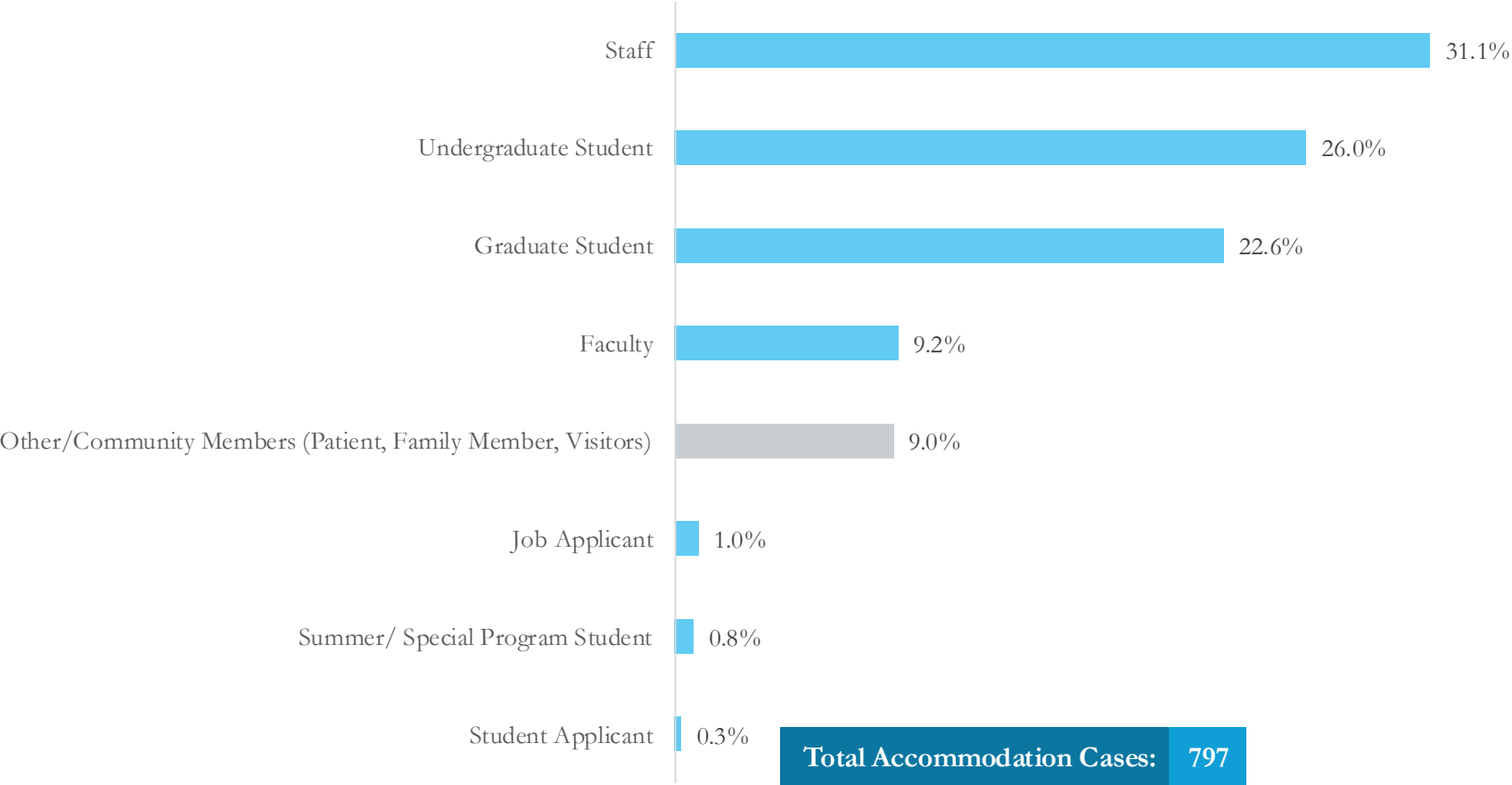
Roughly seven in ten allegations (71.7%) describe conduct that occurred on a Tufts campus, which is where the university’s policies and response processes apply most directly. Another 17.9% happened off campus and 5.4% occur online or on social media - a reminder that OEO’s jurisdiction can follow the community relationship not necessarily the address: off-campus and online conduct is reviewed whenever it affects a person’s ability to work or study at Tufts. The remaining 5.0% could not be classified from the information reported.

* Because of the nature of accommodation cases, OEO excludes the tier from this assessment.



Staff and Students Drive Most Accommodation Requests

Accommodation Cases by Requester's Relationship to Tufts (%)

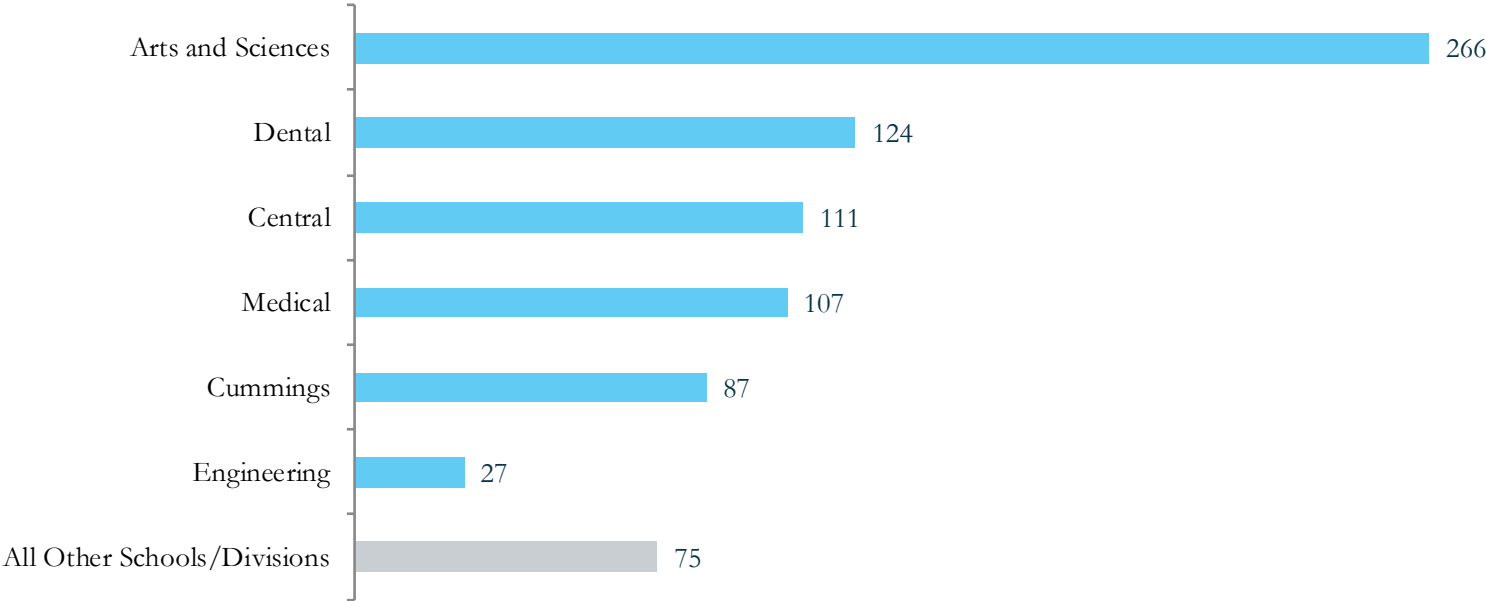


Accommodation requests come overwhelmingly from inside the community. Staff (31.1%), undergraduates (26.0%) and graduate students (22.6%) together account for roughly four in five requests. Faculty add 9.2% and other community members (patients, family members and visitors) 9.0%. Applicants and summer/special program students together make up about 2%.



School of Arts and Sciences Drives Most Accommodation Requests

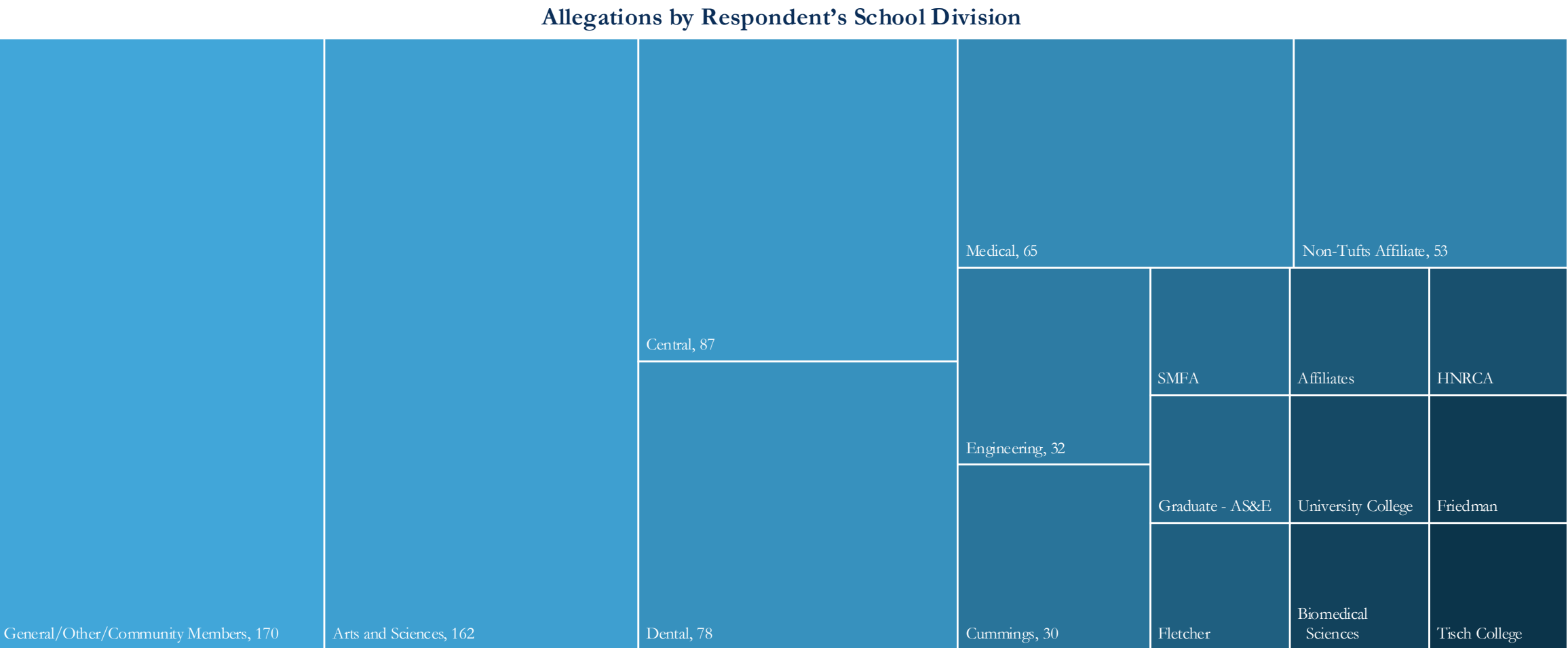
Accommodation Cases by Requester's School/Division



Accommodation requests are concentrated in a handful of schools. Arts and Sciences alone accounts for 266 requests (33.4%), followed by Dental (124), Central administration (111), Medical (107) and Cummings (87) - together roughly seven in eight of all requests. Engineering accounts for 27, and the remaining 75 requests are spread across all other schools and divisions.

Total Accommodation Cases: 797

Where Do Allegations of Discrimination/Harassment Tend to Originate?



Counts under 30 are not shown to protect the privacy of the individuals involved; those divisions are displayed at a uniform size.



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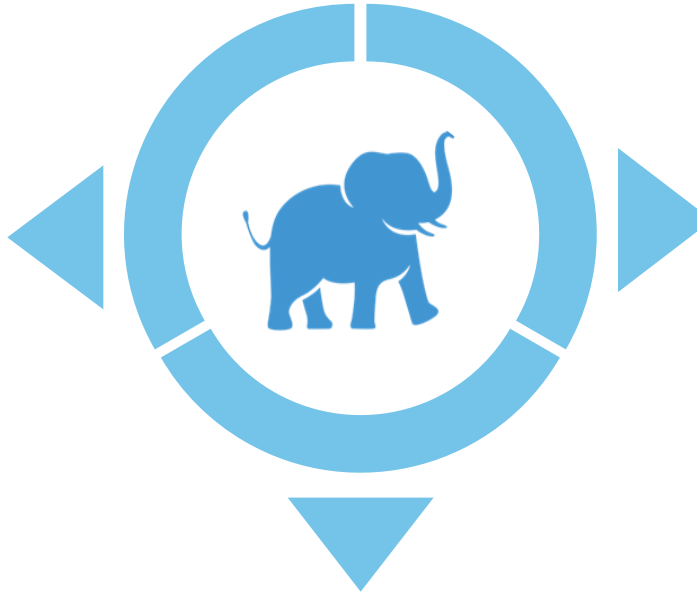
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Outreach, Training, Policy Updates, External Reports, and NCOs

University-Wide Trainings

- New employees attend live Zoom sessions on Discrimination & Harassment Prevention in the first 90 days of their employment at Tufts
- New students complete a five-module Canvas course during orientation about accommodations, discrimination/harassment prevention, sexual misconduct prevention, consent, reporting and resources/supports
- Student employees, including RAs, tutors, and other student employees receive personalized training before they start working with other students
- Dining employees receive annual in-person training in their three most common languages
- Various departments request OEO to organize targeted and specific training for their employees.



Specialized Trainings

- OEO Liaisons and Title IX adjudicators receive a day long annual training each summer
- OEO provides outreach and training across schools during special situations
- OEO monitors our cases for patterns and trends and alerts community members, when necessary, to mitigate and/or take effective action for prevention.

Policy Updates (2025–2026)

- OEO continuously reviews and updates its policies as federal, state, and local laws evolve; Tufts stays compliant with legal requirements
- Updated policies and procedures are published on the OEO website; training materials are refreshed to match the new policies
- Because the categories and definitions can shift with these updates, year-over-year comparisons should be read with that context in mind.

External Reporting and Compliance Obligations

Beyond individual cases, OEO carries recurring, deadline-driven obligations that never appear in case counts: reports submitted to state and federal offices, and inquiries answered for other Tufts units and outside parties.

06

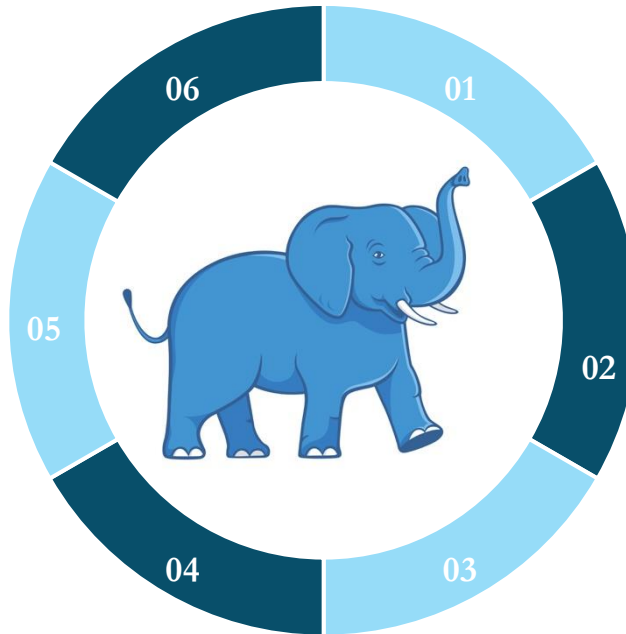
Third-party inquiries. Third parties such as federal and state agencies and/or accreditors ask for policy documents, process descriptions, aggregate case data or background information. No names are shared, only report numbers.

05

University offices. Various Tufts units seek OEO review, data or policy language for university materials or make inquiries on behalf of certain specifics. No names are shared, only report numbers.

04

Other filings. Additional state and federal submissions as law and policy require. No names are shared, only report numbers.



01

Clery Act reporting. OEO supplies statistics and case context for the annual security report required by the federal Jeanne Clery and the Commonwealth's Campus Safety Act. No names are shared, only report numbers corresponding to calendar year.

02

Campus Sexual Violence Prevention (CSVP) report. Annual reporting to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the Campus Sexual Violence Prevention (CSVP) law, covering prevention programming, resources, and response data. No names are shared, only report numbers corresponding to academic year.

03

Federal research partners. Certifications and disclosures required by sponsoring agencies such as National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in connection with funded research. No names are shared, only report numbers.

Every response is verified, aggregated and anonymized before release and is coordinated with Legal and Compliance as needed.



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No Contact Orders: How OEO Handles Them

A No Contact Order (NCO) is an administrative, non-disciplinary supportive measure directing two or more community members to have no contact with one another. NCOs are not findings of responsibility; each party has the same expectations set for them. OEO issues NCOs for students and employees when the underlying concern involves discrimination, identity-based harassment or sexual misconduct – both in informal and formal matters; the Office of Community Standards handles stay-away requests arising from any other reason for students. OEO publishes an NCO FAQ, a student NCO flowchart, and campus-specific resource guides on oeco.tufts.edu.



How a Request Reaches OEO:

Students and employees may come to OEO directly, through an OEO Liaison or through a confidential resource which can help arrange an NCO with the requestor's consent. No formal complaint or investigation is required. NCOs are also instituted between parties in formal OEO processes. All parties are offered resources and supports.



Intake and Assessment:

An OEO staff member meets with the requesting party, confirms that the matter falls within OEO's jurisdiction, explains what an NCO can and cannot do and reviews the other supportive measures available alongside it, such as academic flexibility, housing changes and/or safety planning. The OEO staff member then meets with the other party of the NCO to explain the NCO process and extend the same information about supportive measures.



Issuing the Order:

The order is written. It is mutual, bilateral and issued to both parties with the same terms, so neither party is identified as being at fault. Both receive the same explanation of what conduct may be restricted in their specific situation. The goal is not to restrict anyone's access or movement but rather to support keeping the parties separate so there are not further incidents and upset.



As a Case Outcome:

An NCO may also result from a resolved matter. When there is an OEO finding of responsibility, a NCO directive can be imposed on the respondent as part of the sanctions. In this case, the NCO is not mutual, bilateral or voluntary and remains in effect for the period specified in the decision as an outcome (i.e. "until Complainant has graduated" or "until December 31, 2026.")

No Contact Orders: Once an Order Is in Place

Once a NCO is issued, OEO's work continues. The sections below set out what the order actually restricts, who on campus helps carry it out, how the terms can change over time and what happens if the NCO is not followed.



What Is Restricted:

Direct and indirect contact alike: in person, by phone, text, email or social media and through third parties together with the expectation that the parties will agree to separate themselves in shared spaces.



Coordinating Across Campus:

Residential life, deans' offices, Provost's Office, athletics, faculty, supervisors, Human Resources and TUPD are brought in only as needed, so class or work schedules, housing and activities can be adjusted without disclosing the underlying report.



Modification and Closure:

Either party may ask OEO to revisit the terms and OEO reviews each NCO regularly to determine whether it should be updated. Parties may need a change or modification to the NCO based on changes in their classes, schedules, functions and/or job duties. Parties can request changes which can be reviewed at any time.

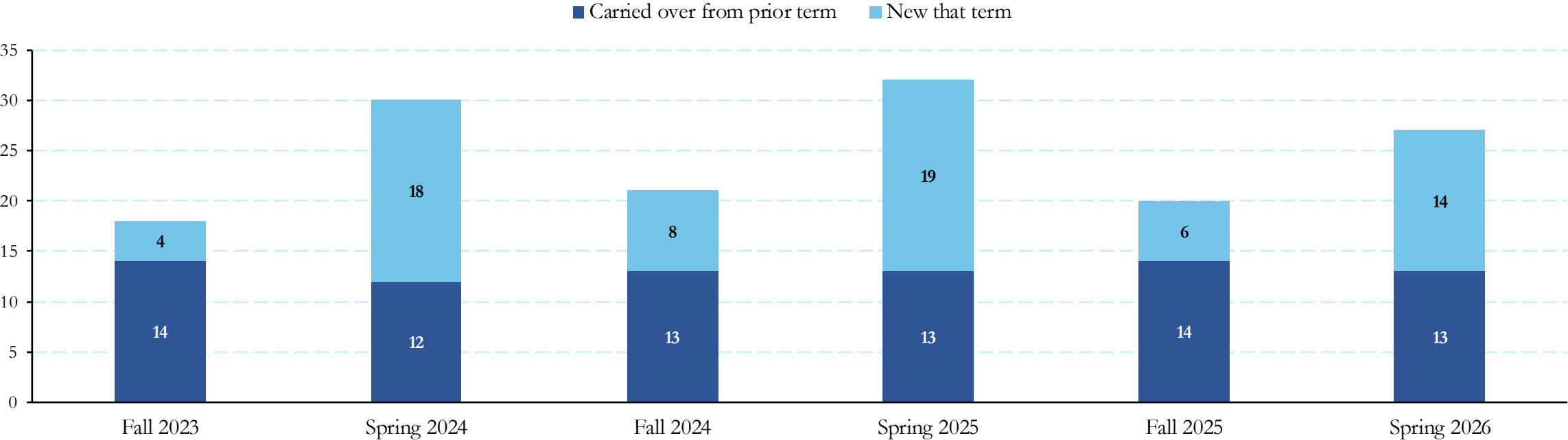


Violations:

Reported violations are reviewed by OEO and may be referred for disciplinary action to Community Standards (students) or the Provost's Office (faculty) and/or Human Resources (staff) if an employee is involved.

Maintaining No Contact Orders* Each Semester

* Two or more individuals (and sometimes several parties) may be involved in one NCO.



Maintaining NCOs is continuous, hands-on work. Across the six semesters shown, OEO maintained 148 active orders covering a minimum of 78 community members or more. Some NCOs involve multiple parties on one or both sides. Not all NCOs are pairs and not all NCOs include students. Some NCOs span across several semesters but are counted once in the data. Keeping an NCO effective takes ongoing coordination and close communication with all parties since schedules and duties can change at any moment. OEO stays in regular contact with both parties, checks in as circumstances and schedules change and reinforces the terms whenever a shared class, residence hall, activity or workplace might bring them back into proximity. Each semester OEO checks in again and verifies whether all the parties are still enrolled or employed. OEO works with deans' offices, residential life, athletics, faculty, HR, TUPD, Provost and other relevant partners as needed to keep schedules and spaces separated for parties and determines whether an NCO should continue, be adjusted or closed. OEO then shares the updated NCO again with the relevant campus partners who may need it to support and/or enforce the NCOs. Violations of NCOs are reported to the relevant dean's office, HR or Provost's Office depending on their relationship to Tufts (student, staff or faculty, respectively).



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T6/T7 University-Wide Training: Program Overview

In addition to ongoing case work and annual trainings, OEO organized a university-wide training program in 2025-2026. The training was called “Student and Employee Rights and Responsibilities” and was compliant with Tufts’ Title VI and Title VII obligations. Co-sponsored by the Office of the President, OEO delivered 100 live trainings either in person or on zoom. Between August 13, 2025 and April 8, 2026, faculty and staff in every school and administrative unit were invited to attend. The training covered all employee rights and responsibilities under the Non-Discrimination Policy, obligations under the Declaration on Free Expression, and state-mandated reporting responsibilities. Participation was voluntary and strongly encouraged but not required. At the end of the year, 2,063 of the 6,095 eligible faculty and staff attended.

2,063

Employees trained

~100

Sessions delivered

33.8%

Overall completion rate

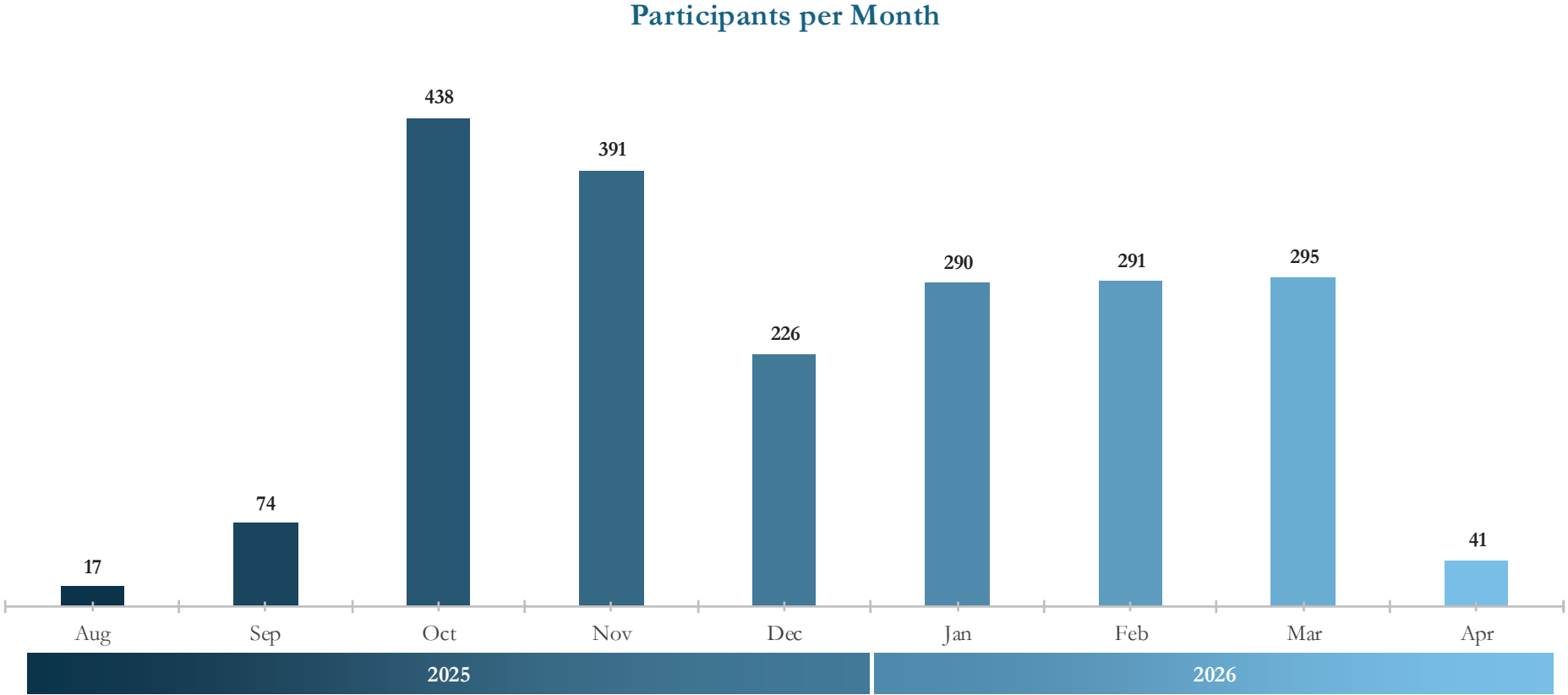
83.0%

Said the training improved their
understanding of the policy



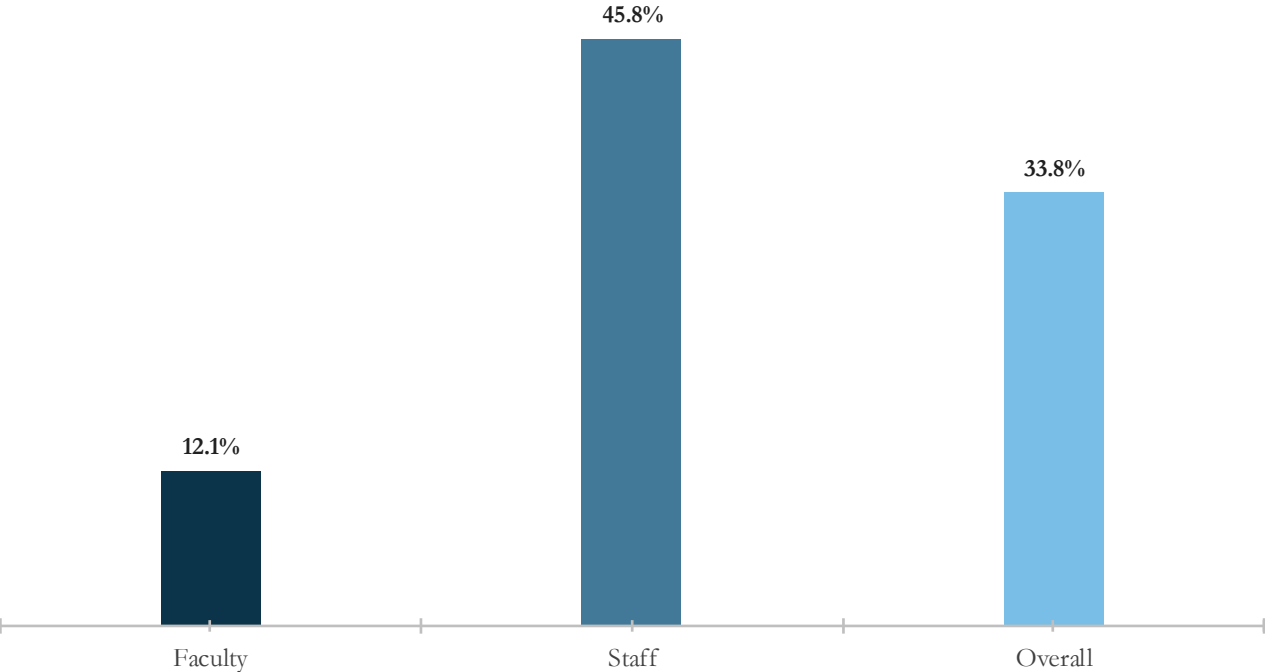
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Participation Trends Across the Program



Staff Completed at Nearly Four Times the Faculty Rate

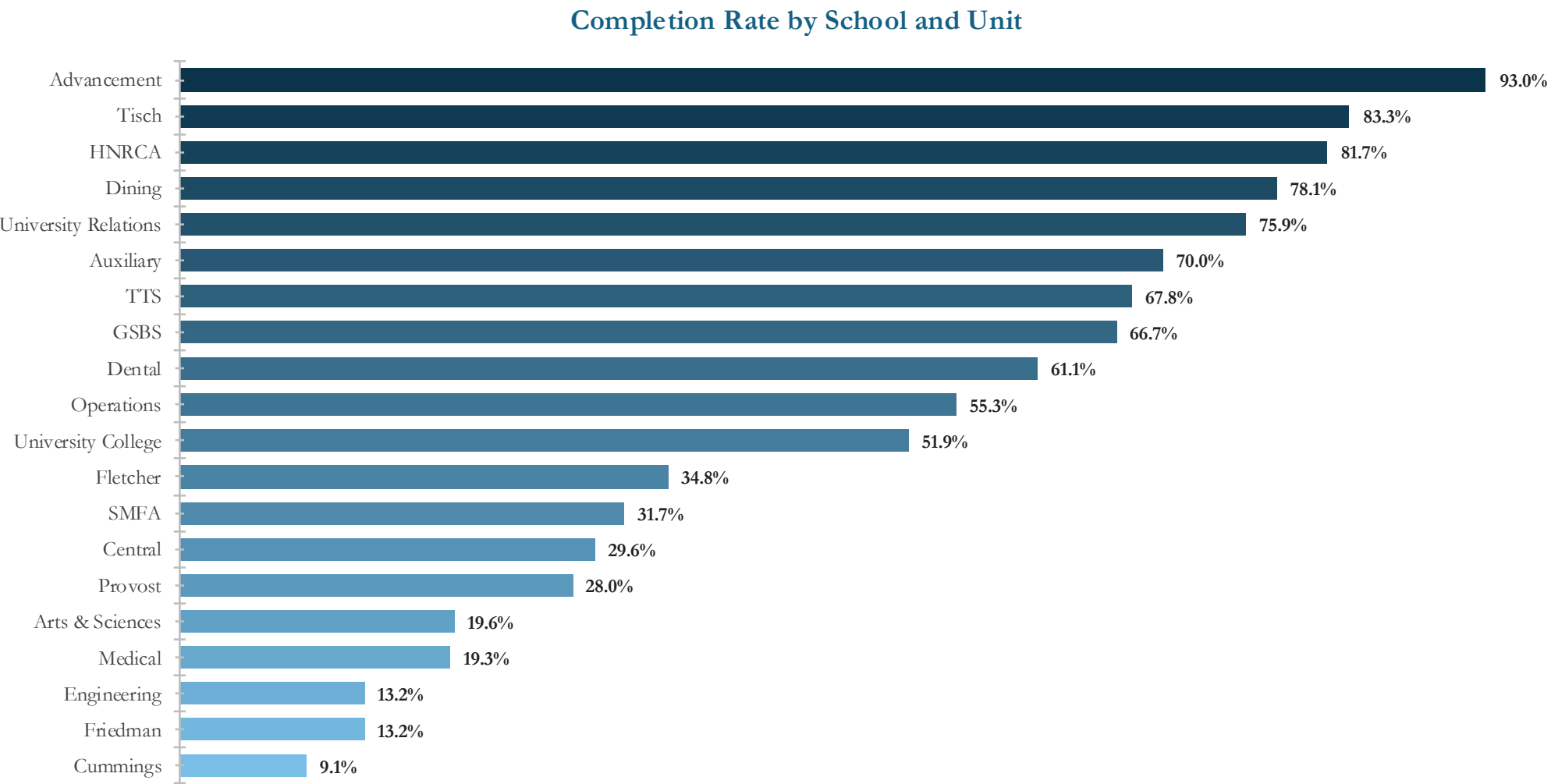
Completion Rate by Employee Group



What This Means

Exactly 45.8% of staff completed the training, nearly four times the faculty rate of 12.1%, lifting the overall rate to 33.8% of 6,095 eligible employees. Because attendance was voluntary, participation followed how easily a unit could gather its people to attend: centrally managed staff teams scheduled sessions together, while faculty, spread across decentralized departments and their own teaching calendars, proved harder to reach despite outreach to deans, chairs, and faculty governance groups. Unlike the separate training employees complete at onboarding, this program was entirely voluntary, so the implication is that voluntary scheduling alone will not close the gap - bringing sessions to faculty on their own terms, through department and faculty meetings and school-level scheduling could increase the faculty number.

Completion Varied Widely Across Schools and Units



Participants Reported Strong Comprehension Gains

Post-Training Anonymous Survey Responses (n = 1,925 responses)

Do you understand your responsibility as a mandated reporter to submit a concern of a policy violation?  99.7%

Did today’s training help you better understand your rights and responsibilities under Tufts’ Non-Discrimination Policy?  83.0%

Did today’s training help you better understand your rights and responsibilities under Tufts’ Declaration on Free Expression?  78.6%

Survey Response Rate

1,925 of 2,063 attendees completed the anonymous survey post-training survey.  93.3%



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Looking Ahead

This year OEO responded to 1,563 matters from across Tufts and resolved them more quickly than in prior years, with the average matter closing in 50 days. Nearly 100 voluntary sessions brought 2,063 faculty and staff together to learn about their Title VI and Title VII rights and responsibilities. We read growing numbers of reports as a sign of growing trust: more of our community knows that OEO is here--reaching out leads to resolution.

Growing efficiency

We closed matters faster this year; an average case resolved in 50 days. We will keep streamlining intake and case management so that response times continue to improve even as volume grows.

Education across the university

Our outreach, training and policy education reached faculty and staff across every school this year and participants reported strong comprehension gains. We will focus our training offerings, tailor them to each community and keep measuring what people learn.

Transparency and a shifting national climate

We will keep our reporting options visible, confidential and easy to use. We also expect the national climate to shape our work, particularly around reporting obligations and policy requirements. We are committed to adapt and communicate changes as they come.

Resources



OEO Website: oio.tufts.edu



Anonymous Reporting: tufts-oio.ethicspoint.com



OEO Policies: oio.tufts.edu/policies-procedures



OEO email: oio@tufts.edu | OEO accommodations email: Accommodations.OEO@tufts.edu



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