



Annual Report:

July 2010 to June 2011

Human Rights Advisor



*"We ALL have the Right
to Fairness and Respect!"*

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Executive Summary

As required under the institution's Human Rights Policy this report provides an overview of the activities of the Office and the Human Rights Advisory Committee over the past year.

The core activities of the Human Rights office are responding to consultations from students and employees and providing education on human rights and diversity to the University community.

During the 2010/11 year the Human Rights Office accomplished the following:

- Completed 72 consultations with students and employees. These consultations resulted in 19 requests for intervention (this includes informal complaints) and 6 situations which were addressed using a formal process.
 - The most common reason for a consultation with the Advisor were issues related to personal harassment, followed by issues related to disability, sexual harassment and interpersonal or group conflicts.
 - Forty -two educational sessions were offered to 1,141 Vancouver Island University students and employees.
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- Special educational events included a showing of the new film ***Cedar & Bamboo*** in both Nanaimo and Cowichan, the bringing of the one man show ***The Big Smoke*** to the Malaspina Campus and a special Webinar session for Positive Space participants on ***LGBTQ Students: Creating a Safe and Welcoming Campus.***
 - Collaboration with community partners in two projects – a ***Living Library*** of human books focused on diversity of religious and spiritual practices and a ***Youth Dialogue on Racism.***
 - The recommendation to the University of a new policy titled Diversity and Equity Policy. While the Human Rights Policy tackles issues of discrimination on an individual level the Diversity and Equity Policy addresses issues at a more systemic level, committing the University to continue building an educational community that is equitable, diverse and inclusive.

Introduction

The Human Rights Office at Vancouver Island University is responsible for implementing the Human Rights and Personal Harassment Policies and Procedures. The office is staffed by the Human Rights Advisor (.8 FTE) and the Human Rights Clerk (.6 FTE). The Advisor reports to the President on issues related to policy and to the Executive-Director, Student Services for issues related to operations.

Recommendation for New Mandate

In the fall of 2011 new policy on Diversity & Educational Equity will be considered by the University. When these recommendations are approved the mandate of the Office will expand to include responsibility for enhancing institutional diversity and educational equity and a new University Committee will be established to guide the activities of the Office.

The primary roles of the Human Rights Advisor are:

- to provide education on human rights and harassment;
- to advise employees and students of options in responding;
- to assist with conflict resolution; and
- to address complaints filed with the office.

The Advisor provides impartial and confidential assistance to university members. The Advisor does not advocate for any individual but does advocate for the goals outlined in the two policies that guide the Advisor's role; Policy 21.03, Human Rights and Policy 21.05, Personal Harassment.

The Human Rights Advisor works closely with the Human Rights Advisory Committee; an institutional committee with representation from administration, BC Government and Services Employees Union local 702, Canadian Union of Public Employees Union local 1858, VIU Faculty Association, and the VIU Student Union. This

committee has shared responsibilities with the Advisor in relation to organizing educational initiatives and monitoring the effectiveness of the Human Rights Policy and Procedure. The committee also serves as a vehicle for the various University constituencies to bring forward any concerns or new initiatives in relation to human rights issues. In the past year additional members were added to increase the diversity of perspectives on the committee. A heartfelt thank you to all committee members for their contributions and a special acknowledgement to Sandra Galloway who retired this year after eight years of service on this committee.

Education & Prevention

The Human Rights Office is active in providing opportunities for members of the University community to learn about human rights as well as organizing programs and activities that expand awareness of and respect for diversity.

During the past year the following was accomplished:

✓ **Diversity Partnership: A Community in Action**

Representing VIU in the Community Partnership the Human Rights Advisor was involved in the planning and implementation of two projects. The first was **Living Library** events in Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Parksville and Qualicum focused on faith and spirituality. A number of VIU employees and students participated as “living books”, sharing in one on one conversations with “book readers” about their faith and spiritual paths.



VIU alumni Laura Tait (School District #68), a community participant and Janis Libby (Tsow-Tun Le Lum Healing Centre).

The second was a **Dialogue on Racism** for youth which involved a number of VIU employees and students as adult facilitators. Both events were well attended and received by participants.

✓ **Cedar and Bamboo**

The Human Rights Office was privileged to collaborate with the Anthropology Department, the Office of Aboriginal Education and the Chinese Canadian Historical Society in bringing this new film to the Nanaimo and Cowichan campuses. The events featured a panel discussion after the film with Sharon Hobenshield, Director, Aboriginal Education, Hayne Wai, Chinese Canadian Historical Society, Harley Wylie, involved with the conception of the film and Leah Vaisanen, VIU student of Aboriginal/Chinese ancestry.



Harley Wylie and Hayne Wai, holding the Cowichan Campus Paddle

Cedar and Bamboo

explores the inter-community histories and shared experiences of Chinese Canadians and First Nations. It is now available in our University library.



Elder in Residence Florence James at the Opening event of the new Cowichan Campus

✓ **The Big Smoke**

A one man play, *The Big Smoke*, was brought to the Nanaimo Campus with the assistance of the VIU Theatre Department, the Out on Campus Student Club and the



Positive Space Alliance. The play, created and performed by VIU Alumni Jeremy Banks, was well received by the full house of students and employees. The play focuses on the experience of a young man, new to the big city, exploring his sexuality. It brings to life *the ambivalence of leaving home, the loneliness of being new in town, the euphoria and heartache of being in love and the torture of being ashamed.*¹

✓ **International Women's Day**

The Human Rights Office co-sponsored with a number of community and campus groups a potluck dinner to celebrate International Women's Day. Attended by over 200 women there was great food, reconnecting, making new connections, entertainment and a guest speaker.

✓ **Building a Village Workshop**

This outstanding workshop offered by Kathi Camilleri on the impact of residential schools was once again offered during the fall semester. It was attended by 32 students and employees who found it a powerful way to understand the impact of colonization on First Nations communities. Special thanks to the co-sponsors of this workshop – the Faculty of Health & Human Service, the Student Programs area, and the Office of Aboriginal Education.

✓ **Educational sessions and materials**

Forty -two educational sessions were offered to 1,141 Vancouver Island University students and employees. These sessions range from ½ hour orientations provided to new students enrolled in non-University programs, to longer workshops exploring human rights and diversity. Some of the sessions were tailored to address specific concerns within the group.

✓ **Positive Space Campaign**

The campaign, focused on creating inclusion on campus for students and faculty who are Bisexual, Transgender, Gay or Lesbian, continues to offer orientation sessions, a holiday gathering for employees and students, and special events. Members participated in a Webinar session on LGBTQ Students: Creating a Safe and Welcoming Campus which provided new ideas for moving forward with the campaign.

¹ CBC Review by Iris Yudai at www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/fringe/2011/07/16/the-big-smoke/

Policy Issues

Institutional Diversity, Equity & Human Rights

A draft policy and procedure were recommended to the University by the Transitional Committee on Diversity, Equity & Human Rights. The policy will commit the University to enhancing the diversity of our students and employees and providing supportive and equitable learning and working environments. Special thanks goes out to the employees who contributed to this endeavour – Karen Baxter, Linda Derksen, Brock Dykeman, Sandra Galloway, Eliza Gardiner, Coleen Harris, Ruth Kroek, Darrel Mansbridge, Craig McGuigan, Lynn Meyers and Manjit Uppal.

DIVERSITY & EQUITY POLICY – DRAFT STATEMENT UNDER GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Vancouver Island University recognizes that the values of equity and diversity are integral to the institution's educational mission and standards for excellence. The University is committed to continue building an educational community that is equitable, diverse and inclusive. This commitment requires the elimination of unnecessary barriers that prevent full participation, proactive measures to increase the diversity of our University and the maintenance of healthy, supportive campus climates.

Vancouver Island University recognizes that people experience forms of social and economic marginalization and exclusion based on social identities such as Aboriginal ancestry, race, sex, disability, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. We further recognize that to fulfill our purpose as a University we need to ensure we are accessible to and inclusive of all members of our communities. Academic excellence is enhanced when an educational community embraces the broadest range of people, takes full advantage of the exchange of diverse perspectives and offers students critical tools for living and working in a diverse world.

Responsibility for the creation of a diverse and equitable educational community requires the work of every member, including students, faculty, and administrative staff. While for operational purposes responsibility for this statement rests with the Equity and Human Rights Advisor, responsibility for ensuring that the values expressed in this Statement become a reality also rests with the senior officers of the University.

Additional Activities

School District #68 Nanaimo/Ladysmith, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee

The Human Rights Advisor was asked to sit on this committee to assist with the implementation of their policy. Composed of representatives from parent groups, the local gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, students and school district staff the Committee is responsible for developing initiatives to make the local schools safer and respectful of LGBT students and staff.

VIU Threat Assessment Team

The Human Rights Advisor is a member of the institution's Threat Assessment Team. This team is responsible for identifying, assessing and responding when any member of the campus community behaves in ways that are worrying or threatening to others.

Conference Presentation

The Human Rights Advisor co-presented with Nancy Twynam, Coordinator of Student Services and Sharon Hobenshield, Director of Aboriginal Education at the **2011 Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) Conference: At the Heart of Diversity**. The session, titled **From Heart to Head to Action**, focused on the importance of self-awareness regarding your own social location when working with students from a marginalized group. It also provided a competency model based on working with an open heart, continual enhancement of knowledge of self and others, and learning from the results of actions we take.

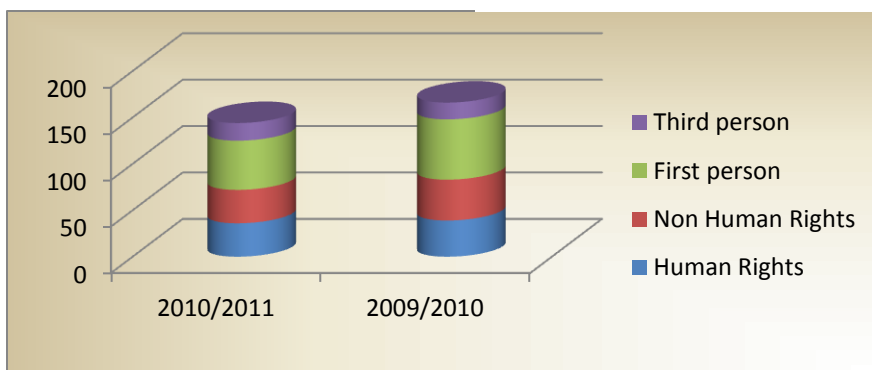
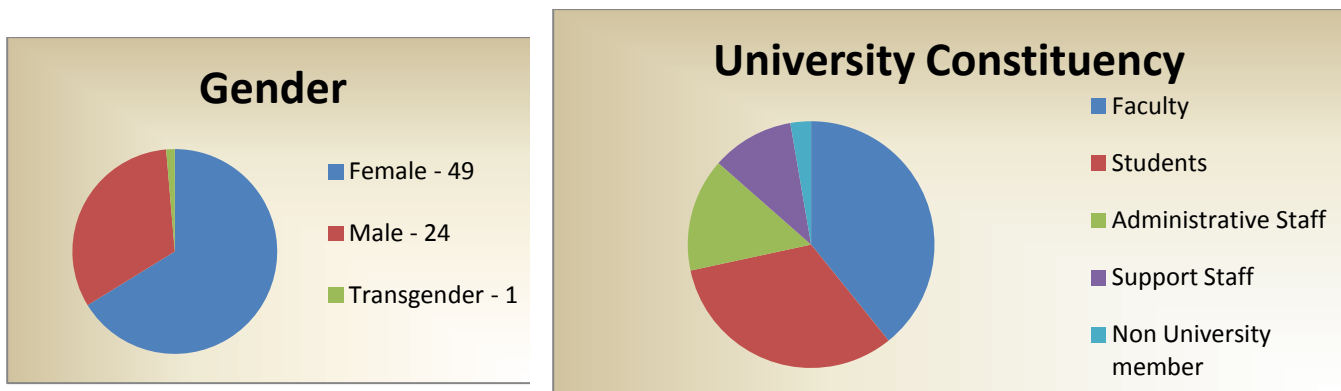
Overview of Consultations with the Human Rights Advisor July 2010 to June 2011

The total number of consultations with students and employees was 72. These consultations resulted in 19 requests for intervention (this includes informal complaints) and 6 situations which were addressed using a formal process. The most common reason for a consultation with the Advisor was issues related to personal harassment, followed by issues related to disability, sexual harassment and interpersonal or group conflicts.

The following graphs provide further information on the consultations.



The following is some demographic information on the persons consulting the Human Rights Advisor.

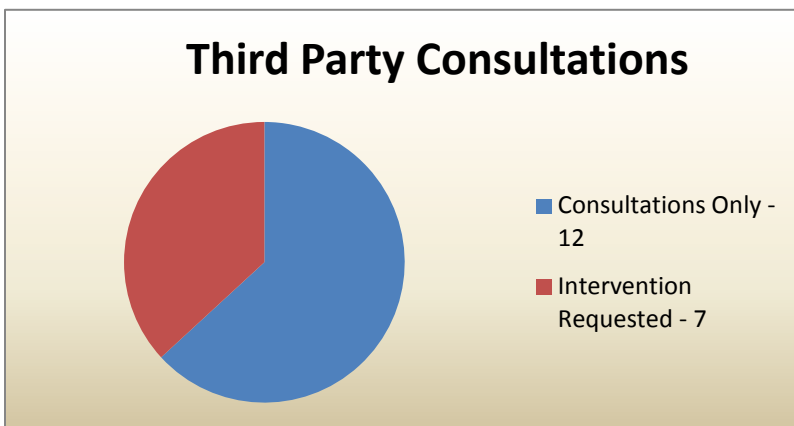


Comparison to 2009/10

The number of consultations declined by 11, while the balance between the types of consultations remained constant.

Third Party Consultations

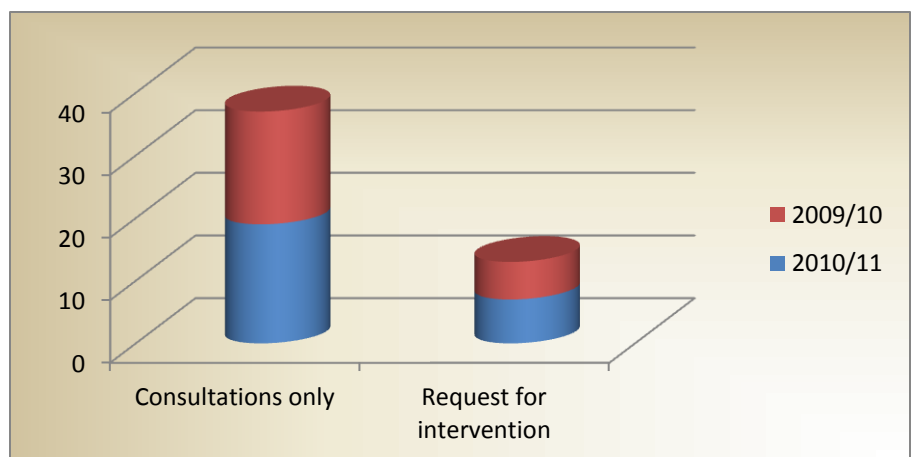
Third party consultations are from individuals who are not parties to the situation but may need to respond. Third parties are often instructors or managers but can also be a family member or friend of one of the parties.



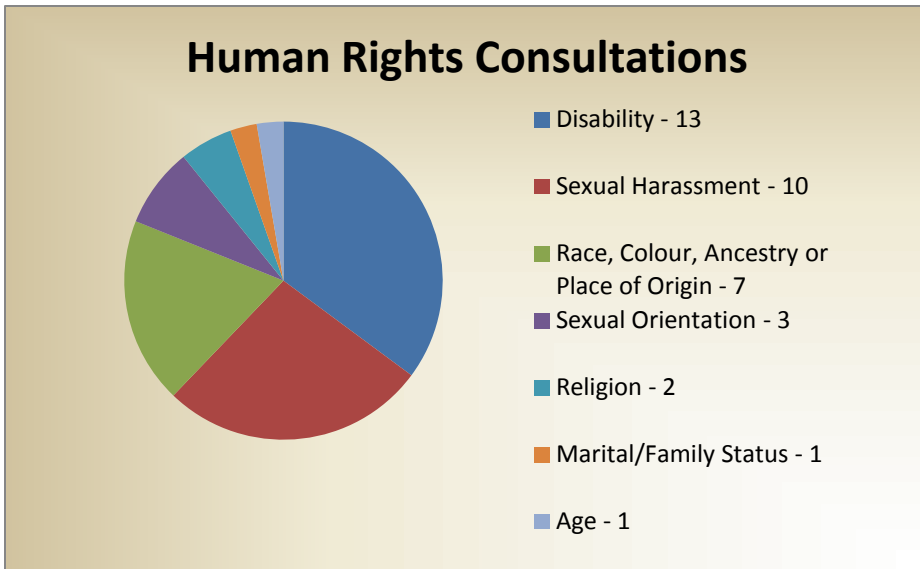
The Advisor is at times asked to intervene directly in the situation; these interventions can include meeting directly with the parties involved, mediation, group consultation, or fact finding and the making of recommendations. During the 2010/11 year the Advisor intervened in seven third party consultations.

Comparison to 2009/10

The number of third party consultations and number of interventions have remained constant from 2009/10 to 2010/11.

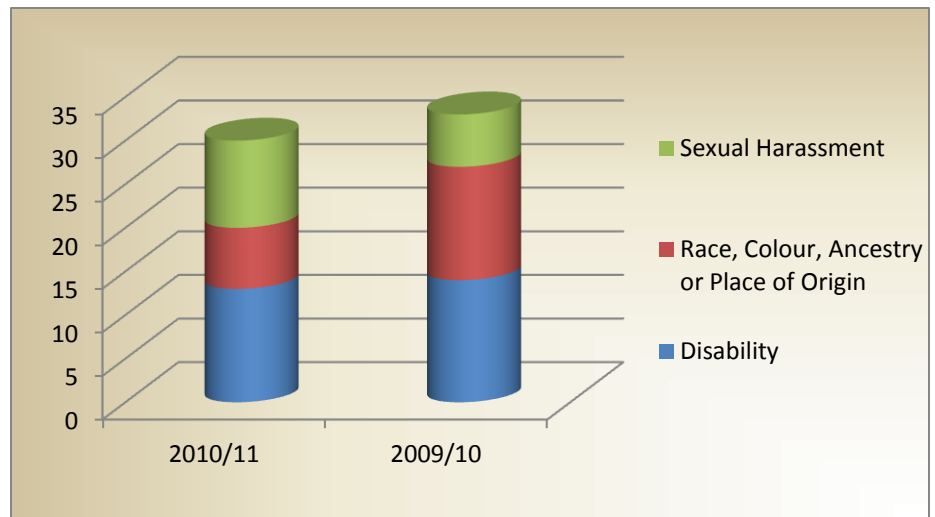


Grounds/Reasons for Consulting the Advisor

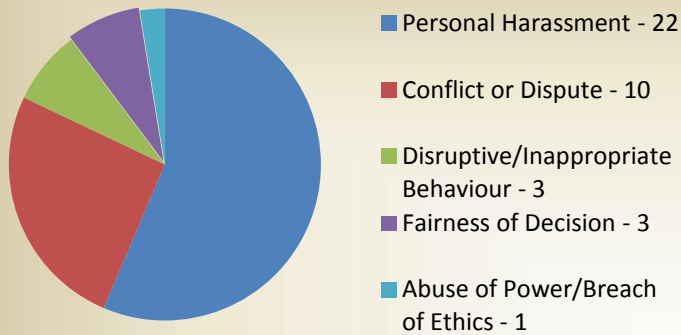


The ground of disability was the most common human rights related reason for consulting with the Advisor. Concerns are varied, relating to physical access, fairness of evaluation, and concerns regarding treatment by others.

As this comparison shows the top three reasons for consulting with the Advisor remain unchanged from the previous year.



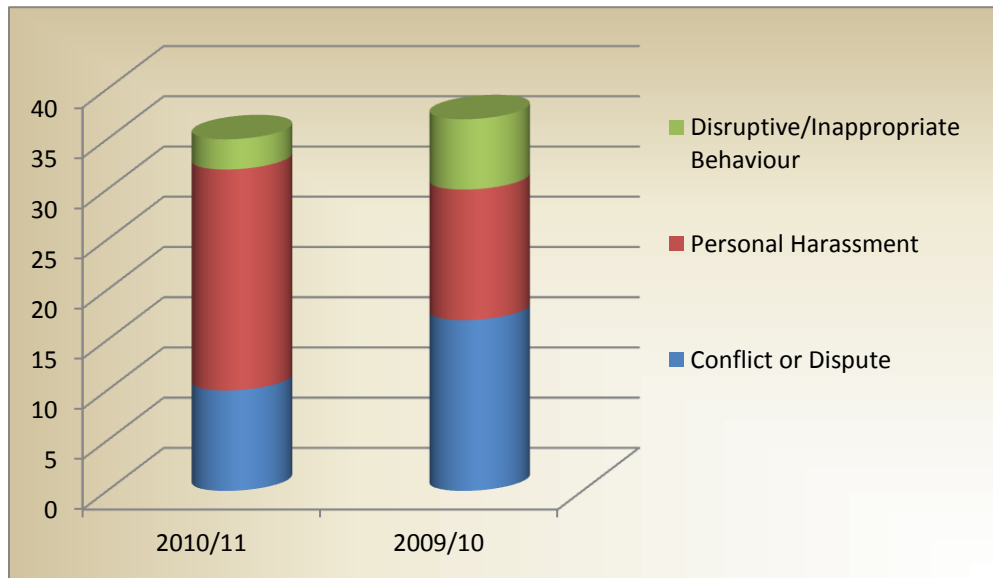
Non-Human Rights Consultations



Consultations have been categorized as Personal Harassment if the person named their concern “harassment” and categorized under Conflict or Dispute if the person identified their concern in those or similar terms.

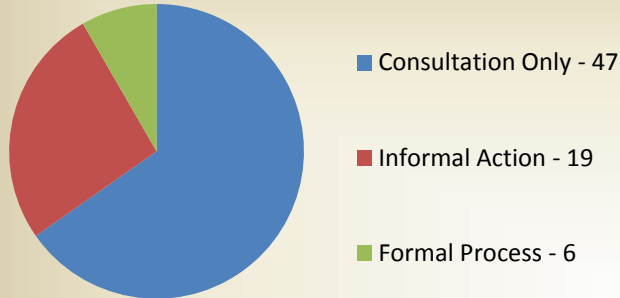
Comparison to 2009/10 – Top Three areas for Non-Human Rights Consultations

The top three areas for non-human rights consultations have remained unchanged. When compared to 2009/10 there was a slight decrease in the total number of consultations, an increase in the number of consultations related to perceived Personal Harassment and there were fewer consultations related to disruptive/inappropriate behavior.



Complaints/Interventions

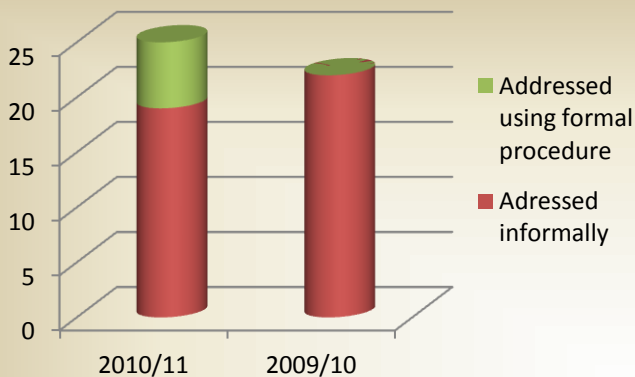
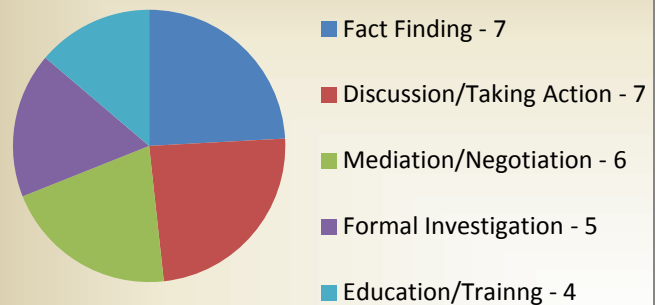
Type of File



There was an increase in the number of formal complaints and formal investigations. In the six situations where a formal process was used, four were the result of formal complaints being filed, one formal investigation was initiated by the Human Rights Advisor and one formal investigation was requested by Administration.

In the 25 situations where action was taken, most issues were resolved using a combination of informal processes - fact finding, discussion with the parties, taking action to resolve, and education/ training. Five informal requests for action involved mediation or negotiation and one formal complaint was resolved through mediation.

Type of Intervention



Comparison to 2009/10

As there were no formal complaints the previous year there was an increase in the number of formal complaints and investigations in the 2010/11 year.

*For more information
about the role and
activities of the
Human Rights Office
please contact
Maria Gomes
Human Rights Advisor
at
250-740-6430 or
email
Human.Rights@viu.ca*