Conflict Resolution and Mediation Programs in Higher Education: Institutional Need, Benchmarking, Development, and Evaluation

Abstract

Conflict is a natural, inherent part of academic culture. In the increasingly competitive landscape of higher education, many institutions are striving to gain prestige by achieving higher external rankings. The institutional changes associated with this process, as well as other factors, often contribute to an increase in the level of stress for faculty and staff. This, in turn, leads to a rise in conflict. An effective means of conflict resolution is an absolute necessity.

This report will first review literature on the role of institutional transitions in increasing stress and conflict among faculty in higher education. It will examine how university leaders, by taking into account how humans adapt to transition, can support faculty during such institutional transitions. Second, it will review literature supporting the view that effective conflict management can strengthen institutions. Next, it will describe the evolution of modern-day conflict resolution and mediation programs in higher education, as well as how institutions have determined a need for such programs. To provide models of best practices, it will then describe key features of several existing conflict resolution and mediation programs, focusing on programs at Emory University, Case Western Reserve University, University of New Mexico, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Tech. Finally, it will describe key resources to help institutions develop and evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution and mediation programs. By proactively implementing well-designed conflict resolution and mediation programs, institutions of higher education can position themselves to significantly improve their organizational cohesiveness and effectiveness.

Introduction

Conflict is inherent in higher education, and it is critical that university leaders prepare their systems and structures to withstand whatever conflict may arise (West, 2006). Conflicts arise for a multitude of reasons. One factor that often leads to a rise in conflict is the pressure that faculty face in times of institutional transition. A common example of an institutional transition is the process of increasing expectations for faculty scholarship in order to become more research-oriented. This is often a function of institutional "striving," which, as defined by O'Meara (2007), is the "pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy" (p. 122). Prestige in this case refers to external national rankings of institutions.

Research has provided evidence that faculty in striving institutional cultures experience a heightened sense of conflict. Striving environments are often characterized by increasing demands on faculty time to produce scholarship while maintaining a high teaching load. O'Meara and Bloomgarden (2011), in a study based upon data from 29 faculty interviews at a striving institution, found that faculty felt fragmented or pulled in many different directions. Faculty reported that the striving culture had made it difficult for them to prioritize and commit to different aspects of their work, due to the leadership's conflicting messages about what was most important for faculty evaluation.

In another study, Gonzales, Martinez, and Ordu (2014) found that faculty in striving environments experienced a lack of time and the sense of constant surveillance. Faculty felt they always needed to watch themselves and had the constant sense that others were watching or evaluating them.

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This led to increased anxiety and a sense of self-doubt. Faculty described how they faced multiple, often competing, new expectations, with very little additional support. This led to work-life balance struggles.

From the faculty viewpoint, striving institutional culture can result in a lack of clarity in the institutional mission and in the role of the faculty (Gardner, 2013). Striving environments often result in a lack of work-family balance (O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011), leading to an increased sense of dissatisfaction among faculty. Research has provided evidence that this lack of satisfaction results in decreased faculty retention. For example, Gardner (2013) conducted in-depth interviews with 11 women faculty who had left one striving, comprehensive university and found that the striving culture of the university strongly affected their departure decisions. It is important for institutions with striving cultures to balance external demands with the availability of internal resources (Gardener & Veliz, 2014). As O'Meara and Bloomgarden (2011) assert, leadership strategies and skills are needed to move institutions through striving periods without breeding discontent and fragmenting work-lives.

As RIT's Strategic Plan for 2015-2025 exemplifies, RIT is in the midst of a major transition, with expectations for faculty scholarship continuing to rise (Rochester Institute of Technology, 2014). What needs has this created for RIT faculty? In Academic Year 2015-2016, tenure-stream and non-tenure-track RIT faculty completed the *Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey* developed by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE). The overall response rate was 51% (491/958). In one question, faculty were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that in the past five years, institutional priorities have changed in ways that negatively affect their work in their department. Responses on this item were reverse coded, such that they ranged from 1 ("Strongly Agree") to 5 ("Strongly Disagree"). Both male and female faculty provided low mean ratings on this item, indicating more agreement than disagreement that institutional priorities have changed in ways that negatively affect their work. Female faculty provided a lower mean rating (2.72) on this item than male faculty (2.86), with a small effect size of 0.11. The results highlight the need for improved faculty support during times of institutional transition at RIT.

What can university leaders do to support faculty and staff through times of institutional transition? First, it is important to understand how humans adapt to transition. Many theories analyze such adaptation. For example, Schlossberg's transition theory (1981) states that three sets of factors seem to influence adaptation to transition: the characterization of the transition itself (including role change, affect, source, timing, duration, and degree of stress); the characteristics of the pre-transition and post-transition supports, and the physical setting; and the characteristics of the individual. As Mecca (2004) points out, most organizational change initiatives are undertaken with minimal attention to the human aspects of change and to the resistance that generally occurs during the implementation. When change increases an individual's uncertainty, this disrupts the individual's sense of controls. If old expectations become invalid, individuals react with feelings such as uncertainty, disorientation, and loss of equilibrium. To avoid increased anxiety, confusion, low morale, defensiveness, and territoriality, leaders responsible for the implementation of major organizational change need to understand what impact change efforts will have on employees (Mecca, 2004). One way to support faculty and staff, particularly through times of institutional transition, is through conflict resolution/mediation programs.

Effective Conflict Management Can Strengthen Institutions

Organizations combine the energy, ideas, and knowledge of a diverse set of individuals, which requires ongoing conflict management. Conflict, when managed appropriately, can be essential to teamwork and organizational effectiveness (see Tjosvold, 2008). According to Tjosvold (2008), members

of organizations often have competitive relationships and orientations to addressing conflict. This leads to conflict avoidance and escalation. However, by developing cooperative relationships and skills to discuss different viewpoints with an open mind, Tjosvold (2008) states, "organizations can empower managers and employees to use conflict to probe problems, create innovative solutions, learn from their experience, and enliven their relationships" (p. 19).

In a study of 57 autonomous teams, Behfar and colleagues (2008) found evidence that teams that are successful over time are likely to be both proactive in anticipating the need for conflict resolution and pluralistic in the development of conflict resolution strategies that apply to all group members. West (2006) asserts that once employees trust and consent to institutional structures that have been established for conflict resolution, they will accept the structures as having the authority to resolve their conflicts. This is far superior to the alternative of attempting to solve issues on their own with support from lawyers, trade unions, and the media, which could harm the reputation of the university (West, 2006). Mediation programs provide an informal, collaborative, non-adversarial approach to resolving conflict.

The Emergence and Evolution of Conflict Mediation Programs in Higher Education

How did conflict mediation programs emerge and evolve in institutions of higher education? Warters (2001) reviews the historical background of mediation in higher education. In 1967, Michigan State University became the first major university in the United States to establish an Ombuds office. Such offices were an attempt to respond to demands for a place to discuss concerns and voice complaints that was neutral, confidential, and safe. Over time, the laws surrounding higher education became more complicated, and the number of lawsuits brought against universities by faculty and students increased. This led to a growing interest in using alternatives to litigation to resolve conflicts (Warters, 2001). Changes in the external environment, such as tightening budgets, led to academic culture supporting the use of mediation to settle disputes. Most of the early mediation programs primarily served students. However, over time, programs emerged that served the entire campus population (Warters, 2001).

Determining the Institutional Need for Conflict Resolution and Mediation Efforts

How do institutions determine their need for conflict resolution and mediation efforts? Two examples, from the University of Minnesota and Emory University, illustrate some ways that institutions of higher education determine their need for such efforts.

In 1993, the Regents of the University of Minnesota (UM) established a university-wide Grievance Office. In 2004, the Advisory Committee conducted a thorough policy review and recommended more informality and flexibility in the conflict resolution process. In 2005, Regents revised the policy and changed the name of the office to the Office for Conflict Resolution. The office offers consultations, facilitated discussions, mediation, a peer hearing process, and educational programming (University of Minnesota, n.d.).

UM's Mediation Program was founded on the premise that institutions in higher education are not known for their adaptability to change. In preparation for the creation of UM's Mediation Program, a memorandum was sent to Deans, Directors, and Department Heads. The memorandum asked if they could identify a situation over the past year for which, if a mediation system had existed, they would have requested to use it. Further, it asked them to nominate an individual at UM whom they felt would make a good mediator (Fiutak, 2000).

In 2014, Emory University approved a special committee to explore the creation of a process for faculty to address and resolve interpersonal conflicts and organizational challenges. This committee spent several months assessing the demand among Emory faculty for mediation training and studying how faculty conflicts are handled across schools. The committee reported a high demand for mediation training. In January of 2015, the Faculty Council approved the creation of a faculty-led committee, which is embedded within faculty governance structures, to help provide informal mediation services and training in conflict resolution for Emory faculty. The goal of the mediation training is to help faculty resolve conflicts before the conflicts become formal grievances (Emory University, 2015). The next section of this report will describe Emory's mediation program, as well as other mediation programs, in more detail.

Best Practices: Examples of Conflict Resolution and Mediation Programs

This section of the report will describe examples of best practices for conflict resolution and mediation programs in higher education. It will focus on programs at Emory University, Case Western Reserve University, University of New Mexico, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Tech.

Emory University

In Emory University's mediation program, scheduled for implementation in January 2016, trained faculty mediators help colleagues to resolve conflict and heal damaged working relationships (Emory University, n.d.; E. Becker, personal communication, December 21, 2015). In addition, faculty receive training opportunities to broaden the benefits of conflict resolution within the Emory culture (Emory University, n.d.).

The Faculty-Peer Mediation Committee offers certification-level mediation training from a third-party vendor, mediation services, and strategies to address everyday work conflicts before they escalate. All information is confidential. The exceptions to confidentiality are if all participants agree to make the content non-confidential; if the mediator becomes aware that someone might be in physical danger, experiencing illegal harassment, or engaging in serious criminal activity; or if the mediator is subpoenaed by the court system (Emory University, n.d.).

"Mediation ambassadors" serve as informational contacts for fellow faculty members about the mediation program. Ambassadors complete training on the mediator's role and objectives. Fellow faculty members may contact the ambassadors to learn about the mediation process informally in their schools before contacting the mediation office (Emory University, n.d.). As of December 2015, Emory had trained approximately 40 faculty from Emory's nine schools to serve as mediation ambassadors. Program members are currently discussing how to evaluate the effectiveness of the mediation program (E. Becker, personal communication, December 21, 2015).

Certain issues do not qualify for peer mediation and are referred to other university units. Such issues include violation of the university constitution or by-laws, academic misconduct, decisions on tenure and promotion, sexual harassment, discrimination, research misconduct, and any issue in which legal action is pending (Emory University, n.d.). Gender-related issues are ineligible for mediation. Mediators refer gender-related issues to the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) or the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) at Emory (E. Becker, personal communication, December 21, 2015).

The OEI conducts in-person training with faculty and staff, to raise awareness of discrimination and identify certain risks as they pertain to discrimination. It does not formally evaluate the effectiveness of this training. However, it tracks whether contacts to the OEI increase or decrease post-training. In addition, the OEI conducts formal investigations of complaints. It recommends sanctions, but the ultimate decisions with regard to sanctions rest with leaders of local units on campus (e.g., deans). The process also involves the OGC and Human Resources. The OEI does not use metrics to assess the effectiveness of this process (M. Middleton, personal communication, January 7, 2016).

The OGC provides advice to internal clients (e.g., supervisors) to avoid litigation. In cases of litigation, the OGC defends Emory in connection with complaints of discrimination that employees file (A. Adelman, personal communication, January 7, 2016).

Case Western Reserve University

At Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), the Faculty Conciliation and Mediation Program provides a confidential, semi-structured process as an alternative to the formal grievance process. The initiating party to the conflict meets with the conciliation counselor to determine the nature of the problem and to discuss possible options for resolving it. If the initiating party desires conciliation/mediation, then either the initiating party or the conciliation counselor contacts the other party to determine if it is interested in participating. If both parties agree, the conciliation counselor serves as the mediator. For various reasons (such as confidentiality, conflict of interest, or legal issues), however, one or both parties may request a referral to an outside professional mediator at the university's expense (Case Western Reserve University, n.d.).

The content of a mediation is confidential. The only information that is disclosed to the Office of the Provost is the names of the individuals involved, meeting dates, and whether a resolution has been reached (Case Western Reserve University, n.d.). Typically, the Faculty Conciliation and Mediation Program handles cases between a faculty member and a supervisor, or between faculty colleagues. The Program has handled, on average, approximately twelve cases per year (W. Leatherberry, personal communication, December 18, 2015).

Issues that do not qualify for conciliation and mediation include violation of the university constitution or by-laws, academic misconduct, decisions on tenure and promotion, sexual harassment, discrimination, research misconduct, and any issue in which legal action is pending (Case Western Reserve University, n.d.). These issues are ineligible for mediation because CWRU has legal obligations in such cases and wants to make certain that the cases are thoroughly investigated, consistently handled, and properly decided. Private, confidential settlement of discrimination matters could address a single case well, but enable discrimination to continue to harm others. This is because, due to the confidentiality of the conciliation/mediation process, the conciliation counselor would be unable to report the details of the parties' conflict or its resolution to the CWRU Administration (W. Leatherberry, personal communication, December 18, 2015).

Once a faculty member who is involved in a mediation asserts that the alleged mistreatment is discriminatory, the Faculty Conciliation and Mediation Program must refer the matter to another office. It refers discrimination complaints to the Faculty Diversity Officer (in the Office for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity) for investigation and possible remedy. If a party alleges discrimination and the Faculty Diversity Officer investigates the complaint, the conflict may go back to the conciliation counselor in the Faculty Conciliation and Mediation Program only if the decision is that there was no discrimination (W. Leatherberry, personal communication, December 18, 2015).

If the Faculty Diversity Officer determines that a university policy has been violated, a formal investigation begins. A hearing may occur, with the possibility of sanctions. The Faculty Diversity Officer makes the final decision as to whether to impose sanctions. For discrimination complaints concerning staff, the procedure is identical except that the administrative offer is the Staff Diversity Officer. At present, CWRU does not assess the effectiveness of its procedures for handling discrimination-related complaints. However, CWRU has recently filled a new position (Assistant Vice President and Director of Equity) with an individual who will be responsible for developing such assessment procedures (D. Davis Reddix, personal communication, January 8, 2016).

University of New Mexico

The University of New Mexico (UNM) offers Ombuds/Dispute Resolution (ODR) Services for faculty. The office, headed by the UNM Ombudsperson for Faculty, offers services for difficult workplace interactions that do not involve discriminatory matters (J. Civikly-Powell, personal communication, December 18, 2015). (Note: UNM also offers ODR Services for staff; for more information, see http://ombudsforstaff.unm.edu/.) Services for faculty include mediation services, consultations, workshops, and mediation training. Administrators, deans, chairpersons, and faculty are invited to utilize free mediation training (University of New Mexico, 2015).

Training topics include the experience of conflict, types of faculty conflicts, and myths of conflict resolution. Training emphasizes skills such as acknowledging, clarifying, power balancing, and saving face. Trainees have many opportunities to practice mediating faculty conflicts in hypothetical scenarios and role-playing, followed by discussion and feedback. The training sessions occur over four days, for 32 hours. Faculty spend an additional four hours viewing and reviewing two mediation videos, bringing the total to 36 hours. Faculty who have completed the mediation training serve as coaches (University of New Mexico, 2015).

The UNM Ombudsperson for Faculty provides a report of ODR activities to the Provost. The effectiveness of the ODR program is assessed by the number of requests for services, the number of services provided, the number of mediations reaching agreement versus not reaching agreement, anonymous survey feedback from parties who participate in mediations, and faculty survey feedback on mediation training sessions (J. Civikly-Powell, personal communication, December 18, 2015; University of New Mexico, 2015).

If questions or concerns involve discrimination, faculty work with the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) and follow that process instead (J. Civikly-Powell, personal communication, December 18, 2015). The OEO utilizes two procedures: educational conferences and formal investigations.

In an educational conference, the OEO counsels the individual who is the subject of the complaint. That individual's supervisor is also present during the conference. This informal, non-punitive process does not involve any recordkeeping in personnel files. The initiating party to the complaint decides whether the OEO reveals his or her identity to the subject of the complaint. After the educational conference, an OEO investigator monitors the environment for three months, by calling the initiating party to the complaint twice to follow up on the status of the situation (F. Cordova, personal communication, January 6, 2016).

UNM assesses the effectiveness of educational conferences by measuring the rate of *formal complaints* that are filed with regard to the issues discussed during the educational conferences. In each case, if no formal complaints are filed with regard to the issue of concern, the educational conference is

deemed successful. However, if a formal complaint is filed, the educational conference is deemed unsuccessful. The OEO is also exploring the possibility of administering surveys to both parties to assess their satisfaction with the process (F. Cordova, personal communication, January 6, 2016).

In severe cases (e.g., patterns of recurring behavior or one severe act of discrimination), educational conferences are not used. Instead, formal investigations of complaints are utilized. UNM is in the process of updating its procedures for investigating formal complaints (F. Cordova, personal communication, January 6, 2016).

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) offers mediators to faculty and staff. The mediators are faculty and staff from across the university who have received training in conflict resolution techniques and the mediation process. They enter the process of mediation among faculty and staff as neutral third parties. The program administrator assigns two mediators to each dispute (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015). Faculty who request mediation go through the faculty mediation program. Staff who request mediation go through the staff mediation program (G. Council, personal communication, December 18, 2015).

The faculty mediation program assesses its effectiveness anecdotally and via confidential recordkeeping by the coordinator. The program reports to the Faculty Senate annually (M. Miller, personal communication, January 7, 2016). The staff mediation program tracks the number of mediations on a fiscal year basis. If the program does not hear back from individuals who have participated in mediation, then it assumes that the issue of concern has been resolved. It does not proactively follow up with individuals who have participated in mediation (G. Council, personal communication, December 18, 2015).

Typically, gender-related issues are not mediated; they are referred to other offices at VCU. Discrimination-related issues are referred to Equity and Access Services. Equity and Access Services has a larger staff than the mediation programs, and it is better able to handle gender-related issues. Equity and Access Services investigates complaints of harassment and discrimination. In addition, it develops and monitors policies and procedures related to equal opportunity (G. Council, personal communication, December 18, 2015). As a new office at VCU, it is building policies and practices, as well as developing strategies to assess the effectiveness of its efforts. It plans to develop a five-question electronic customer satisfaction survey in Academic Year 2016-2017. It will send the survey to parties who have had contact with the office regarding a number of services, including services that address gender discrimination complaints (L. Rugless, personal communication, January 4, 2016).

Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech's Conflict Resolution Program offers Conflict Management Coaching, facilitation, mediation, and resources to faculty and staff. Conflict Management Coaching is a "structured process that helps individuals on a one-to-one basis, to develop or enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies, to more effectively engage in and manage interpersonal conflicts that may arise in the workplace" (Virginia Tech, n.d.). A trained conflict management coach focuses on each individual's conflict management goals. Conflict Management Coaching can be targeted toward specific disputes or "General Conflict Competency" (Virginia Tech, n.d.). This technique is used, among other situations, when one individual agrees to mediate and the other does not (D. Robinson, personal communication, December 21, 2015).

In addition to receiving coaching, individuals may complete a Conflict Dynamics Profile. This assessment helps individuals to learn more about their own constructive and destructive behavioral responses to conflict. In facilitation, facilitators lead small groups or representatives of different organizations to help them resolve conflicts. In mediation, trained mediators meet privately with individuals involved in conflicts to help them resolve issues (Virginia Tech, n.d.). The Conflict Resolution Program does not have a formal protocol to assess its effectiveness (D. Robinson, personal communication, December 21, 2015).

The Conflict Resolution program is part of Virginia Tech's Office of Equity and Access, which also includes the Compliance function for the university. Virginia Tech uses a social justice mediation model and is comfortable using mediation to address some harassment and discrimination concerns. If a faculty or staff member has a gender-related concern, this is discussed with the Director for Compliance, who decides whether the subject matter is appropriate for mediation. If the matter is ineligible for mediation, Compliance handles it (D. Robinson, personal communication, December 21, 2015).

Table 1 summarizes the five conflict resolution/mediation programs described up until this point.

Table 1. Summary: Key Features of Five Conflict Resolution/Mediation Programs.

University	Key Features
Emory University[1]	- Faculty-Peer Mediation Committee: Offers certification-level mediation training, provides mediation services, and offers strategies to address everyday work conflicts before they escalate - Provides Mediation Ambassadors, who serve as informational contacts about the Program in different schools and units
Case Western Reserve University[2]	- Faculty Conciliation and Mediation Program provides conciliation and mediation internally - Program makes outside mediators available as needed, at the university's expense
University of New Mexico[3]	- Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services offers mediation training for administrators, deans, chairpersons, and faculty - Faculty who have completed mediation training serve as coaches
Virginia Commonwealth University[4]	- Offers faculty and staff mediators who have received training in conflict resolution techniques and the mediation process - Program administrator assigns two mediators to each dispute
Virginia Tech[5]	- Provides Conflict Management Coaching - Offers Conflict Dynamics Profile Assessment

[1] http://provost.emory.edu/faculty/governance/mediation/index.html

[2] https://www.case.edu/facultysenate/conciliation-mediation-program/

[3] http://ombudsfac.unm.edu/mediation-training-for-faculty/

[4] https://www.hr.vcu.edu/employee-relations-and-performance-management/mediation-and-problem-solving/

[5] http://www.hr.vt.edu/oea/conflictresolution/

Other Programs

Other, larger universities have conflict resolution programs with key features that developers of new programs should consider modeling. For example, at Texas A&M University (TAMU), the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity offers workshop and training opportunities in mediation for faculty and administrators. This includes 40-hour Basic Mediation Training (Texas A&M University, n.d.). TAMU works closely with The Center for Change and Conflict Resolution (http://www.cccrtx.us/), which provides it with services related to conflict management and conflict interventions such as mediation (C. Stanley, personal communication, December 15, 2015).

At TAMU, the workshops in mediation are assessed via course evaluation and participant reflection on how to implement the workshops into their work to affect (1) individual capacity and (2) building/refining/enhancing organizational capacity (C. Stanley, personal communication, December 15, 2015). TAMU has a large group of volunteer faculty and administrators who have received a 40-hour Basic Mediation Training certificate. Training sessions include the use of intensive case study scenarios, conflict management models, and short lectures (Texas A&M University, n.d.). To assess the effectiveness of its mediation training, TAMU uses course evaluation, administrator-reported impact on college climate, and feedback in the College's annual Diversity Accountability Report (C. Stanley, personal communication, December 15, 2015).

At TAMU, the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity provides mediation services for faculty and administrators (Texas A&M University, n.d.). Trained mediators handle gender-related concerns, with the exception of sexual harassment. Mediators address issues of gender bias and perceptions of discrimination. Examples include concerns about gender-based differences in treatment, expectations of service that are different for men and women, and disrespect due to gender. The Office of the Dean of Faculties assesses whether the parties involved in the conflict have achieved what they consider a workable and acceptable plan/solution. In addition, TAMU assesses the extent to which the presenting issue of conflict re-appears for the parties. Gender-related concerns that are ineligible for mediation are referred to other units, such as to the Office of the Dean of Faculties and to Ombuds Services (C. Stanley, personal communication, December 15, 2015).

The University of Arizona uses a co-mediation model, with a mediator from Human Resources and a volunteer mediator from the campus community. Mediators are faculty, appointed professionals, and classified staff who have participated in mediation training. Mediation is confidential, with limited exceptions. If a University employee alleges that a fellow employee has discriminated against him or her, the mediators must report that information to the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). If a mediator believes that the potential for harm to self or others exists, the mediator must report that information. Some issues are not eligible for mediation, including workplace violence, discrimination complaints, involuntary terminations, compensation, and tenure and promotion (University of Arizona, n.d.).

At the University of Arizona, complaints related to bias and harassment are handled by a formal process in the OIE. The OIE enforces the University's Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (University of Arizona, 2012). In cases with findings of discrimination/harassment, the OIE addresses the misconduct, works to ensure that it does not recur, and remedies harm that may have occurred with regard to the affected party. At present, the OIE does not have a survey or other post-investigation evaluation process in place. However, it has explored the use of surveys for individuals who have used its services (M. Tucker, personal communication, January 5, 2016).

The University of Washington has a University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office (UCIRO) in addition to an Ombudsman's office and a Law School Mediation Clinic. The UCIRO "conducts neutral, internal investigations of complaints that University policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation have been violated" (University of Washington, 2008). It guides, participates in, or refers parties to various resolution activities. It often works in conjunction with Human Resources, the Provost's Office, and the Ombudsman's Office (University of Washington, 2008).

Resources for the Development and Evaluation of Conflict Resolution/Mediation Programs

What resources are available for the development and evaluation of conflict resolution/mediation programs? This section will describe three key resources: the Social Justice Mediation Institute, the Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (CNCR), and the Campus Conflict Resolution Resources Project.

Social Justice Mediation Institute

A key component of the development of conflict resolution and mediation programs is training. Various organizations provide this type of training, with different focuses, to institutions of higher education. This training can be either stand-alone training, or training that is incorporated into formal conflict resolution and mediation programs. The Social Justice Mediation Institute, a unit of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has conducted training at RIT on conflict resolution and mediation. Dr. Leah Wing, the founding director of the Social Justice Mediation Institute, has worked with more than 100 educational institutions and non-profits. She has trained more than 3000 people in this approach to social justice mediation (University of Massachusetts Amherst, n.d.).

During the five-day training, participants explore the relationship between social justice and the development and resolution of conflicts in mediation. They do so through mini-lectures, interactive activities, analyses of videotaped mediation sessions, role-plays, and simulations. The social justice mediation training introduces principles and new strategies that account for privilege, both structurally within institutions and interpersonally between disputing parties. It works to counter the discriminatory effect of privilege (Sherry, 2015).

Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (CNCR)

The Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (CNCR), based at Georgia State Law and supported by the University of Georgia, assists institutions of higher education that are seeking to improve how they handle campus conflict. CNCR was established in 1987 through a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. One of CNCR's focus areas is providing research, training, and mediation for the University System of Georgia and other organizations worldwide (Georgia State University College of Law, n.d.).

CNCR offers a Summer Institute on Conflict Management in Higher Education, as well as customized training and workshops. In addition, it offers training sessions in basic mediation, co-mediation, effective communication for resolving conflict, negotiation, and introduction to conflict resolution. CNCR's higher education clients include the American Association of University Administrators, Auburn University, Cambridge University, Emory University, Oxford University, the University of Hawaii, and the University of Maine (Georgia State University College of Law, n.d.).

<u>Campus Conflict Resolution Resources Project</u>

Another major initiative to guide the development and evaluation of campus conflict resolution and mediation programs is the Campus Conflict Resolution Resources project (http://www.campus-adr.org). This project aims to significantly increase awareness of, access to, and use of conflict resolution information in institutions of higher education (Campus-ADR, n.d.). The project came into being from seed funds from the Conflict Resolution Information Source project, followed by a three-year grant from the federal Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The Department of Communication at Wayne State University currently administers the project (Campus-ADR, n.d.).

According to Campus-ADR, campus conflict resolution and mediation efforts are growing in popularity, but are apparently available at less than 25% of campuses nationwide. Campus-ADR describes a number of current challenges that have hindered the further growth of these efforts. These challenges include difficulties related to accessing relevant program materials, wide dispersion of the relevant literature, the inability of programs of similar purpose to locate and network with one another, lack of shared standards of practice, and minimal program evaluation and assessment (Campus-ADR, n.d.).

The Campus Conflict Resolution Resources project offers a Resource Center with a wealth of information on its website (http://www.campus-adr.org). Examples include program development and assessment tools; skill-training and in-service workshop exercises, case studies, and role-plays; and collections of full-text articles on campus conflict issues that can be packaged as customized online supplements to teaching and training efforts. Additional resources include annotated, searchable bibliographies; information on upcoming professional development and networking opportunities in the campus conflict management field; and an index of university dispute resolution policies. The project has sponsored a group of researchers, campus mediation staff, and volunteers that has developed a Campus Conflict Resolution Program Evaluation Kit (Irvine et al., 2001).

The tools in the evaluation kit are designed to be adapted to meet the customized needs of specific mediation programs. The kit contains three modules that pertain to program assessment: (1) Process Monitoring Module, (2) Mediation Outcomes and Impact Module, and (3) Evaluation of Mediation Training Module. Table 2 summarizes the names, objectives, and research tools of each module (Irvine et al., 2001).

Table 2. Campus Conflict Resolution Program Evaluation Kit: Key Modules, Objectives, and Research Tools (based on Irvine, 2001).

Module	Objective	Research Tools
Process Monitoring Module	To monitor an existing mediation program and provide a framework for assessment	• *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Review* • *New Policy and Procedure Development* • *Structures of Responsibility* • *Internal Decision-Making Process*
Mediation Outcomes and Impact Module	To assess outcomes and impact of the mediation program, in order to help determine the program's future directions	• *Case Characteristics* • *Participant Characteristics* • *Does Mediation Work?*

Evaluation of Mediation Training Module	To evaluate mediation training workshops	• *Mediation Selection Checklist* • *Conflict Orientation Survey* • *Mediation Training Evaluation Survey* • *Mid-Training Evaluation Feedback*

The objective of the **Process Monitoring Module** is to monitor an existing program and provide a framework for assessment. It emphasizes the need to address the issues of anonymity and confidentiality. This module includes four tools: *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Review*, *New Policy and Procedure Development*, *Structures of Responsibility*, and *Internal Decision-Making Process*.

The *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Review* tool assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems that the mediation service office is currently using. This includes policies (e.g., confidentiality) and/or procedures (e.g., Intake time and process). The program selects a procedure or policy it wishes to evaluate, and the evaluation kit provides a template to follow. This includes asking questions about specific steps in the process and factors that make the policy/procedure credible. In addition, it includes stating the goals of the policy and the metrics that indicate a goal has been met. Further, it includes answering additional questions based upon the objectives of the process evaluation, as well as re-evaluating the steps involved in the specific policy or procedure in light of the evaluation data.

The *New Policy and Procedure Development* tool assesses the development of new work of problems in existing areas of work. It is based upon the *SOP Review* or ongoing campus assessments of conflict. The evaluation kit provides questions to evaluate how a mediation program office implements new procedures and policies. It encourages several individuals within the program to answer the questions and compare responses. The questions focus on which procedures and policies an office selected to implement in the past year, its rationale for doing so, the status of implementation for selected procedures/policies, and the plan for the implementation of other procedures/policies.

The *Structures of Responsibility* tool examines the roles, responsibilities, and relationships among conflict-related efforts on campus. It includes questions that may be best addressed through interviews and/or self-assessment surveys with relevant individuals. It helps assess whether the current structure of responsibilities within the program is effective, efficient, and meeting the needs of individuals and of the program. In addition, it is designed to suggest ways to improve efficiency in this regard.

The *Internal Decision-Making Processes* tool helps to evaluate the internal dynamics in the office of the conflict resolution/mediation program. It includes suggested questions to pose through interviews, self-report, and/or individual self-reflection techniques. For example, questions include asking how decisions to implement a specific policy or procedure were handled, as well as with whom the decision-maker consulted. It is designed to suggest areas for modification and refinement.

The objective of the **Mediation Outcomes and Impact Module** is to assess outcomes and impact, in order to help determine the program's future directions. It recommends using a questionnaire-based survey format to collect data. This module includes three tools: *Case Characteristics*, *Participant Characteristics*, and *Does Mediation Work?*.

The *Case Characteristics* tool provides information about the type of cases and how they are managed. The tool collects data on the types of disputes, the sources of awareness of the program's services, referrals to other offices, and other avenues the disputants have tried. It also collects data on time spent during mediation, days the mediation office was involved in a conflict, and resolution. Outcomes

can inform programs about what marketing venues best inform people of the program services, what types of conflicts are occurring on campus, and whether cases are being managed efficiently.

The *Participant Characteristics* tool provides information on who utilizes the program's mediation services. Sample questions collect data on participant demographics and the relationship among the parties involved in the dispute. In addition, questions collect data on whether participants have previously utilized mediation, and if so, whether they did so through the mediation program office.

The *Does Mediation Work?* tool provides information on participants' satisfaction with the services that the program offers and on the effectiveness of mediation for different types of conflicts. It also provides feedback on mediators' skills and abilities in a mediation setting. Participants complete a survey pre-mediation, immediately following mediation, and at a three- or six-month follow-up. Participants evaluate program effectiveness by the outcomes of mediation, satisfaction with mediated outcomes, durability of mediated outcomes, and the impact of mediation on the relationship between the participants. Next, participants evaluate the appropriateness/usefulness of the mediation process, the preparation process and materials, and the fairness of the process. Then, participants evaluate mediators on their skills, knowledge, and impartiality. Finally, participants provide an overall assessment of the program and suggestions for improvement.

The objective of the **Evaluation of Mediation Training Module** is to evaluate mediation training workshops. This module includes four tools: *Mediation Selection Checklist*, *Conflict Orientation Survey*, *Mediation Training Evaluation Survey*, and *Mid-Training Evaluation Feedback*. The Mediation Selection Checklist assesses how representative the mediators are of the groups the program is serving. The Conflict Orientation Survey, administered both pre- and post-training, assesses how people approach conflict. It is useful in evaluating the effectiveness of mediation training with respect to attitude change about conflict situations. The Mediation Training Evaluation Survey assesses the effectiveness of training. The Mid-Training Evaluation Feedback provides a rough measure of how participants feel about the mediation training around the mid-point of the training. It is most useful for multi-day training sessions. The results provide ideas about how to modify training while conducting it.

Table 3 lists the three key resources for the development and evaluation of campus conflict resolution/mediation programs that this report has described, as well as the website for each resource.

Table 3. Key Resources for the Development and Evaluation of Campus Conflict Resolution/Mediation Programs.

Resource	Website
Social Justice Mediation Institute	http://people.umass.edu/lwing/
Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (CNCR)	http://law.gsu.edu/centers/consortium-on-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/
Campus Conflict Resolution Resources Project	http://www.campus-adr.org

Conclusion

This report has described a significant need for campus resolution and mediation programs, particularly among institutions that are in transition. It has provided models of best practices by describing existing programs. Moreover, it has described key resources for developing and evaluating the effectiveness of conflict resolution and mediation programs. The background and tools provided in this report will empower campus leaders with a foundation of knowledge as they consider creating conflict resolution and mediation programs at their own institutions. By proactively developing and implementing effective programs, universities put themselves in a position of strength. Effective conflict resolution and mediation programs help faculty and staff constructively work through problems, thereby increasing organizational cohesiveness and strengthening institutions.

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