
CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER

(956) 872-2180
Fax: (956) 872-2500

Role of the Conflict resolution Center/ Ombudsperson

The Conflict resolution Center/ Ombudsperson a designated neutral who facilitates the informal resolution of concerns of employees, managers, students and, sometimes, external clients of the college.

The role of the Conflict resolution Center/ Ombudsperson is to work with individuals and groups in within the college to explore and assist them in determining options to help resolve disputes, conflicts, problematic issues or concerns, and to work to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the college for resolution.

The Conflict resolution Center/ Ombudsperson attempts to operate in a manner to preserve the confidentiality of those seeking services, maintains a neutral/impartial position with respect to the concerns raised, and works at an informal level within the college.

Informal Conflict Resolution Options

Consultation/ Option Generation

Consultation and option generation is the initial stage of conflict resolution. This is a process in which a party to a dispute will have an opportunity discuss in detail the dispute from their vantage point. The Conflict Resolution Center will then assist the party in exploring the different avenues that may be available to them. Discussion will include but not be limited to an open and candid discussion about college policy that may ultimately play a role in determining the final outcome of the dispute.

Consultation/ Option Generation Procedures:

- 1) The concerned party will be asked to describe their concern in detail to a member of the Conflict Resolution Center staff.
- 2) The Conflict Resolution Center staff will provide discuss and clarify all appropriate college policies and procedures.
 - a) The Conflict Resolution Center staff will make referrals as appropriate.
 - b) The Conflict Resolution Center staff will request participation in facilitated dialogue or mediation as appreciate.
- 3) The Conflict Resolution Center staff will assist the concerned party by developing and generating options. This process will include reality testing the probability of these options.

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Fact-Finding & Inquiry Reports

Fact-Finding and Inquiry Reports are neutral, objective and independent investigations conducted by the Conflict Resolution Center. This service is designed to gather information and provide evidence-based conclusions to assist with the referral processes as well as potential resolution of issues by providing incite and information that members of the college may not be aware of. Fact-Finding and Inquiry Reports are designed to provide members of the South Texas College community with impartial and objective information prior to the initiation of formal proceedings.

Fact-Finding & Inquiry Reports Procedures:

- 1) The Conflict Resolution Center staff will conduct an information investigation to gather information and facts.
 - a) The investigation can include reviewing documents provided by both parties and appropriate departments within the college when deemed to have a legitimate educational need to know.
- 2) The Conflict Resolution Center will compile all information gathered into an Inquiry Report.
 - a) The Conflict Resolution Center will produce an Inquiry Report free of opinions or personal insight.
 - i. The Inquiry Report shall contain the following
 1. Purpose of the Report
 2. Notation of the
 3. Date the report was developed
 4. List of involved parties as appropriate
 5. Summary of the concerns
 - a. Including chronological notes
 6. Requested outcome if applicable
 7. Request for anonymity if applicable
 8. Issues of concerns
 9. Reasons for not proceeding
 - b) The Conflict Resolution Center may provide options for the resolution of an issue after receiving a written request from the receiving party.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER(956) 872-2180
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Facilitated Dialogue is the open and free exchange of information using a neutral third party to facilitate the discussion and understanding of one or more issues that exist between parties who have reached a communication impasse. Facilitated dialogue provides parties an opportunity to voice their concerns in a calm manner while promoting respect for opposing points of view. The facilitator is responsible for maintaining a respectful environment and ensuring that the parties are able to express their concerns in a manner that each party can clearly understand. Facilitated dialogue is a process that works best in the early stages of a dispute. Facilitated dialogue is a relatively short process that can take place in 30 minutes to one hour depending on the needs of the participants.

Facilitated Dialog Procedures:

- 1) The student complainant must inform the Conflict Resolution Center that they would like to participate in facilitated dialogue.
 - a) All parties must agree to participate in facilitated dialogue. If one or more parties do not wish to participate in facilitated dialogue, the student complainant may move forward with the conflict resolution option approved by the Conflict Resolution Center.
 - b) Facilitated dialogue must be scheduled at a time and location that is agreeable to all parties. Facilitated dialogue may be scheduled at any campus.
- 2) The Conflict Resolution Center will provide a safe and comfortable environment, in which all parties can engage in open and meaningful conversation.
- 3) The facilitator will not solve the problem for the parties involved, but will ensure that all parties have an opportunity to be heard.

Mediation

Mediation is an informal process where a neutral third-party assists two (or more) disputants in reaching a mutually agreeable solution. Mediation includes opening statements, information gathering, identifying the problem, generating options, negotiating and bargaining, writing an agreement, and closure of the process. The mediation process is designed for more complex disputes and disputes that have lingered for a period of time. The goal of mediation is to uncover all the concerns the parties may have which they have been unable or unwilling to express. Mediation can take place over the course of a few hours or a few days depending on how quickly the parties are able to express all of their concerns.

Mediation Procedures:

- 1) The student complainant must inform the Conflict Resolution Center that they would like to participate in mediation.
 - a) All parties must agree to participate in mediation. If one or more parties do not wish to participate in mediation, the student complainant may move forward with the conflict resolution option approved by the Conflict Resolution Center.
 - b) Mediation must be scheduled at a time and location that is agreeable to all parties. Mediation may be scheduled at any campus.
- 2) A Certified Mediator will facilitate the meeting. The Certified Mediator seeks to assist the parties in developing a shared understanding of the conflict and generates options that will help the parties reach a practical and lasting solution.