

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR STAFF

Note: For conflicts primarily involving faculty members, the policies described below are replaced by those in section III.I.1 (Grievance Procedures) of the Faculty Handbook.

Informal Resolution of Conflicts

Interpersonal or job-related problems should be resolved within an employee's department or office if at all possible. Such problems should be discussed promptly with the employee's immediate supervisor. If the employee and the supervisor are unable to resolve the problem, it may be necessary to take up the matter with the person to whom the immediate supervisor reports.

The College encourages the use of informal approaches to working through conflicts and provides additional resources to assist employees. In cases of job-related difficulties, employees may wish to consult with the Office of Human Resources.

The director of human resources or the director of employee relations will confidentially discuss with an employee their concerns. These individuals are also empowered by the College to address those concerns through mediation either individually or, if appropriate, in a group setting.

If the conflict is one that concerns sexual or other harassment, other discrimination, or retaliation, an employee must follow the reporting procedure in the College's Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy.

While the right to use the formal grievance procedures is available to an employee, the nature of the employee's concern will be considered carefully and, if appropriate, an informal resolution will be attempted first.

Formal Grievance Procedures

A staff employee who is unable to resolve a problem by using all available informal procedures may file a formal grievance. The first step is to present the grievance in writing to the director of human resources, which should describe the policy or practice that has been violated or unfairly enforced and the remedy that is being sought.

Following receipt of the grievance, the director of human resources will assist in assembling an Appeal Committee consisting of three full-time employees who have worked at least one year at the College. The employee who has filed the grievance will select the first member of this committee and the person

against whom the grievance is addressed will select the second member. These two committee members will choose a third member, and the three will then choose a chair from among themselves. All members of the Appeal Committee must work in an area of the College unrelated to the grievance.

The major functions of the Appeal Committee are fact-finding and presenting recommendations concerning the grievance to the senior vice president for administration and finance or their designee, which may include in appropriate cases the College's provost or director of human resources. The committee will begin by meeting with the vice president (or their designee) to review the matter and to discuss appropriate ways to approach its fact-finding function. The committee will then meet with the employee who has filed the grievance, giving them the opportunity to elaborate on their reasons for doing so.

The committee will also meet with the person against whom the grievance is addressed, as well as any other individuals who can provide relevant information. The committee may also review documents relevant to the grievance.

The process is intended to be fact-finding and no attorneys will be permitted to participate in the process. Confidentiality is expected to be maintained by all who are involved in the process consistent with the committee's need to engage in fact-finding. The committee will endeavor to present its recommendations in writing to the senior vice president for administration and finance (or their designee) within 30 days after it receives the grievance; more complex cases, or cases where appeal committee members' schedules are difficult to coordinate, may necessitate additional time for the committee to be able to prepare its recommendations. The Senior Vice President (or their designee), who is free to accept, reject or modify these recommendations, will make the final decision as promptly as possible and will notify in writing all parties involved of the decision which has been made along with a summary of the reasons for the decision.

Formal grievances are limited to the interpretation and application of the College's established policies and practices. Performance evaluations are not grievable. For example, an employee may file a grievance claiming inconsistent or improper application of College policy or that proper procedures were not followed. This formal grievance procedure may only be used by current employees or by former employees during the 30-day period immediately following their termination.

The College will not retaliate against anyone who makes good faith use of the grievance procedure and the College will not permit any employee to do so. Any claim of retaliation should be reported to the director of human resources or senior vice president for administration and finance.