Conflict Resolution Policy

Adopted by President's Cabinet 11/27/12
Revisions Adopted by President's Cabinet 6/28/16

Policy Statement: East Georgia State College strives to make the institutional environment for its students, faculty and staff protective of human dignity and trust, effective in fostering communication, and respectful of the value of conflict as a normal aspect of human interaction and organization to promote debate and herald change. The goal of the EGSC Conflict Resolution Policy is to achieve timely, equitable and satisfactory resolutions at the lowest possible level, in a cost effective manner and with intention to reduce conflict recurrence.

Scope of the Policy: "Conflict Resolution" as defined in this policy is a non-binding and voluntary mediation process for disputes involving one or more of the college's faculty, staff or students, including student employees. The Conflict Resolution Policy does not apply to complaints of sexual assault or violence, which are addressed in the EGSC Sexual Misconduct Policy for faculty, staff and students. Such complaints should be reported to the Director of Human Resources who serves as the Title IX Coordinator and handles under the procedures outlined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Conflict Resolution is designed to be used only when the individual's resort to first and second-line supervisors has failed to resolve the conflict. Conflicts involving promotion, tenure, salary and non-renewal of contracts shall not be appropriate for the consideration by the Conflict Resolution Committee.

Role of the Conflict Resolution Committee: The East Georgia State College Conflict Resolution Committee manages the Conflict Resolution process. The Committee is composed of five individuals appointed by the President on an annual basis and includes at least one faculty member, one student, one administrator and one classified employee. The Committee assists the parties in reaching a negotiated settlement of their differences in a private informal setting. The process is voluntary and its goal is to reach a signed agreement defining the future behavior of the parties. The Committee helps parties communicate, negotiate and reach settlements, but is not empowered to render a decision.

Conflict Resolution Procedure: Faculty, staff and students that have failed to resolve a conflict with first and second line supervisors, may request Conflict Resolution by contacting the Chair of the Conflict Resolution Committee. If any party to the dispute chooses not to participate, this Conflict Resolution process is not available as a dispute resolution mechanism and the parties to the dispute shall have access to any other process applicable to that dispute as provided by the Board of Regents policy, these statutes or the Policy and Procedure Manual of the College.
After the disputing parties have consented to the Conflict Resolution process, the Chair will convene the Conflict Resolution Committee and evaluate the subject matter of the dispute and determine whether a conflict of interest exists with the Conflict Resolution Committee. In the event the Committee determines it is unable to hear a particular dispute due to a conflict of interest, appearance of a conflict of interest or other appropriate reason, the dispute may be heard by an individual qualified as a mediator under standards established by the University System of Georgia. If the Committee determines that the dispute is outside the scope of the Conflict Resolution Policy, the parties will be directed to any other applicable process for the dispute as provided by the Board of Regents policy or the Policy and Procedure Manual of the College. After the Committee determines the dispute is within the policy scope, no conflict exists, and all parties have consented, a meeting will be scheduled between the parties and the Committee (or mediator, in event of conflict of interest). The Committee or mediator will facilitate the discussion to assist the parties in reaching a mutually agreeable solution. At the conclusion of the Conflict Resolution process, the Committee or mediator will recommend a resolution to the parties and to the President. The

President will review the recommended resolution and may reject a resolution that is not consistent with the policies and procedures of East Georgia State College and the Board of Regents, impractical and/or financially imprudent.
If the parties cannot agree on a satisfactory resolution or the recommended resolution is rejected, the Committee or mediator will recommend each to any other process applicable to the dispute as provided by the Board of Regents policy or the Policy and Procedure Manual of the College.

If a party has filed a grievance, but prior to its resolution by the grievance committee the complaining party elects mediation and both parties agree to mediate, the complaining party may opt out of the grievance. Upon this opt out election, the clock stops on the grievance process. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the complaining party may opt in and continue with the grievance.

Prohibition of Retaliatory Action: Any party to Conflict Resolution shall not be harassed, intimidated or otherwise penalized for using the procedure. If, as a result of using Conflict Resolution, a party believes that retaliatory actions have been made, the party should seek redress as provided by the Board of Regents policy or the Policy and Procedure Manual of the College.