

## Conflict Resolution Policy

Adopted by President's Cabinet 11/27/12

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**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 covered under the EGSC Sexual Misconduct Policy. Such complaints should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator and handled 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 purpose of the Conflict Resolution Committee is to provide education and awareness about conflict resolution as a non-binding and voluntary mediation process for resolving disputes involving faculty, staff and students. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for receiving requests for conflict resolution, arranging mediation and maintaining records of requests and mediations. The Committee is composed of the Director of Human Resources, Title IX Coordinator, Director of Housing, Director of Student Conduct, Chief of Police and one faculty member elected by the faculty.

**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 Director of Human Resources. The conflict resolution process is voluntary and its goal is to reach a signed agreement defining the future behavior of the parties.

Upon receipt of a request for conflict resolution, the Director of Human Resources will review the request to determine whether the dispute is within the scope of this policy, verifying the consent of both parties to conflict resolution and that attempts to resolve the conflict with first and second line supervisors have failed. If the Director of Human Resources determines that the dispute does not qualify for the conflict resolution process, the Director of Human Resources will inform that parties to the dispute of any other process applicable to that dispute as provided by the Board of Regents policy, the statutes or the Policy and Procedure Manual of the College.

After the Director of Human Resources has evaluated and determined that the dispute qualifies for conflict resolution, the Director of Human Resources will contact an external individual qualified as a mediator under standards established by the University System of Georgia to hear the dispute. The Director of Human Resources will schedule the mediation and inform the parties to the dispute of the date, time and location. The mediator will facilitate the discussion to assist the parties in reaching a mutually agreeable solution. At the conclusion of the conflict resolution process, the 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 mediator will refer the parties 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.