MANAGING CONFLICT BY DESIGN: A SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

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ABSTRACT

Student unrest on university campuses has been and continues to be an on-going concern for both campuses and the communities in which they reside. Historically, if students and/or faculty perceive either a lack of legitimate means to express their issues or unfair outcomes resulting from those means, then demonstrations ensue. Police are frequently involved in the arrest of demonstrators, and some confrontations, unfortunately, lead to violence, including death. In the past five years, there has been tragic loss of life on campuses in Haiti, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and India and student and faculty protests have occurred in the United States, Australia, Western Europe, and Africa.

A desire to provide mechanisms for fair and timely resolution to student and faculty concerns has resulted in the development of a variety of conflict management processes at universities, such as mediation, ombuds, and conciliation or negotiation services. Many programs claim success in handling disputes which have the potential for violence. However, program implementation has been idiosyncratic, lacking a systemic approach to both development and implementation.

This paper details a comprehensive system design approach for developing and implementing conflict management in a large public university system in Georgia, USA. Since 1995, Georgia has become a national exemplar in developing a model for the design and institutionalization of conflict management in higher education. This model and the implementation methods are presented.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2001, students at Pennsylvania State University occupied a campus building to support black classmates who had received hate mail and death threats. The protestors, basically half white and half minority students, charged that the university had failed to confront racial problems on the campus. The students vowed to stay until administrators met their demands, including the hiring of more black-studies faculty members. The spontaneous gathering earned the name "the village" and became the epicenter on a campus where race, politics, and intimidation collided frequently during the last academic year.
(Hoover, 2001)

In France, Italy, and the United Kingdom academics protest against stagnant salaries, dwindling career prospects and increasing demands made on them by their employers. Half of France's scientific administrators threatened to resign from their management duties in protest at low research funding levels and job cuts. Italian academic scientists took part in strikes to protest a draft law that restructures professorships, drastically increases minimum teaching hours and gives the government control over university posts. (Nelson and Butler, 2004)

Students and faculty members at Mindanao State University system fearing the "militarization" of their university protested the decision to appoint a retired general and former police chief as the new President of one of the largest higher education systems in the Philippines. Over a five year period, armed gangs have operated fairly freely on the university campus with dozens of staff members and students having been kidnapped. (Overland, 2005)

These few examples excerpted from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* illustrate the prevalence and escalation of conflict on college campuses across the globe. The sources of campus conflict vary in these examples and often are complicated by multiple sources, unstable social environments, extreme economic conditions, or a history of intractable disputes. However, what all these examples have in common is the escalation of conflict. As the conflict escalated a community of demand and protest emerged. Faculties or students and in some cases both perceived a lack of voice in making decisions about their academic lives. As these various issues began to emerge, the institutional mechanism was not sufficient to prevent escalation. A desire to provide mechanisms for fair and timely resolution to student and faculty concerns has resulted in the development of a variety of conflict management processes at universities, such as mediation, ombuds, conciliation or negotiation services. Many programs claim success in handling disputes which have the potential for violence. However, program implementation has been idiosyncratic, lacking a systemic approach to both development and implementation.

The transferability of models for comprehensive conflict management systems has to take into consideration factors such as cultural context, internal and external driving forces for change, leadership and the system's readiness and willingness for innovation. The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents' Initiative and Policy Direction on Conflict Resolution (the *Initiative)* is a thoughtfully designed and creative response to campus conflict. This paper endeavors to explain some of the factors necessary for model adaptation by examining the University System of Georgia's conflict management system. The goals of the *Initiative*, the context of the Georgia system including the creation of policy, the Georgia model for developing and implementing conflict management, progress at institutionalization of conflict management and a view toward the future are presented.

1.1 The Initiative and Policy Direction on Conflict Resolution

During the summer of 1994, the Board of Regents appointed a Blue Ribbon Committee comprised of faculty, staff and administrators from different campuses. This committee adopted a set of recommendations that was eventually adopted by the board in the fall of 1995 and is referred to as The Initiative and Policy Direction on Conflict Resolution. The goals of the *Initiative* are:

> To establish a System-wide conflict resolution program that maximizes collaborative resources and guidance for institutional processes and practices, which are developed for and well integrated into the particular institutional culture of each campus;
>
> To decrease the reliance on adversarial processes, such as formal grievances and appeals and courtroom litigation, both within the System and in its dealings with other persons and agencies;

> To achieve timely, equitable, and satisfactory resolutions at the lowest possible level within the System and at its institutions in the most efficient and cost-effective manner commensurate with the interests and rights of all concerned and reduce conflict recurrence while anticipating and responding to future conflicts;
> To make the institutional environment for students, faculty and staff more protective of human dignity and trust, more respectful of the value of conflict, and more effective in fostering communication and community; and
> To make the University System of Georgia an exemplar and nationally recognized leader in the development of alternative dispute resolution for higher education. (Yarn & Boyens 1995, p. 4)

1.2 Context: The University System of Georgia

In 1784, the General Assembly of Georgia set aside 40,000 acres of land for the endowment of a "college or seminary of learning". The following year, a charter was granted for the establishment of Franklin College, now the University of Georgia. From these beginnings, the University System of Georgia has grown to include 35 institutions (four research universities, two regional universities, thirteen state universities, seven state colleges, and nine two-year colleges). In addition, four institutions maintain a postsecondary vocational-technical unit. These campuses are governed by a central board that was created in 1931. The Board of Regents, appointed by the state Governor, is composed of 18 members, five of whom are from the state-at-large and one from each of the thirteen congressional districts. The Chancellor, elected by the Board, serves as its chief executive officer and the chief administrator of the University System. (Information Digest: University System of Georgia Public Higher Education in Georgia, 1994-95)

According to the Office of Research and Planning (Information Digest: University System of Georgia Public Higher Education in Georgia, 1994-95), during the mid 1990's the University System of Georgia (USG) enrolled 204,000 students with 90% of enrollment coming from within the state. There were 29,738 full time employees and 9,071 faculty, 55% of who were tenured. The total budget for 1994-95 was $2.2 billion with another $346 million in external grants to support research and service. The system owned over 53,000 acres and 2,667 buildings valued at $4.3 billion. In the late 1990s this large, complex, public system of higher education was fast approaching the new millennium with an emphasis on self-examination and a commitment to innovation.

2. POLICY CREATION

How did the desire for self-examination and a commitment to innovation serve as a catalyst for the adoption of the Georgia Board of Regents' Initiative and Policy Direction on Conflict Resolution. Organizational development theory and practice regarding how change occurs in large, complex systems helps to answer this question. Systems maintain a status quo as a result of forces driving change in opposition to forces restraining change. Kurt Lewin's force field analysis (cited in Constantino & Merchant 1996, p. 28) has been particularly helpful in designing a conflict management system for higher education in Georgia. Lewin has written that there are three methods for changing the status quo: 1) increase the driving forces, 2) reduce the restraining forces, or 3) change the restraining forces into driving forces. Constantino and Merchant (1996, p.28) claim that reducing the restraints that operate to prevent or inhibit those with a dispute from using dispute resolution procedures yields a faster more effective result in changing the status quo. In 1995, the driving forces for change included leadership, multiple costs associated with dispute handling mechanisms, changing demographics, diminishing resources, and ADR activity at the local, state, and federal levels. Restraining change was the lack of perceived resources, lack of knowledge, and the power of "status quo".

2.1 Driving Forces for Change

Leadership shifts occurred at various levels including a new Chancellor, developing awareness and appreciation of ADR by certain Regents, commitment of Legal Counsel to consider new approaches for conflict management, and faculty with expertise in conflict resolution. With the ninth Chancellor selected since 1932, a new vision and strategic thrust emerged. The following language was crafted in the systems' strategic planning that set the stage for alternative dispute resolution and was later to become the philosophical underpinnings and terms of reference for *The Initiative*.

> … efforts to teach and use alternative dispute resolution are congruent with the Board of Regents' vision and principles for the System. Institutions of higher education are communities that should

> encourage collegiality, trustworthiness, and collaboration. The resolution of campus conflicts should improve the atmosphere for learning, teaching, research and service; it should maximize benefit and minimize costs; it should stress individual and institutional responsibility, respect collaboration, and accountability; it should embody principles of fairness, equity, and accessibility; and it should serve the community-at-large by providing students with collaborative skills and instilling a sense of personal responsibility that make good citizens and effective leaders. (Yarn & Boyens 1995, p. 3)

Coordinating conflict resolution options within and across institutions and aligning those options with each other and with the mission, vision, and values of the University System provided a congruence that framed the Regents' discussion in such a way that the adoption of the *Initiative* was inevitable. That discussion was also facilitated by those regents who were attorneys. Their familiarization with alternative dispute resolution (ADR) concepts, skills and processes along with their enthusiasm for making a contribution were influential in adopting a policy.

Others who played key roles in pushing the system toward change were faculty who had the necessary knowledge in comprehensive system design and a few individuals with the role and/or responsibility for managing conflict on their respective campus. The Associate Chancellor for Legal Affairs coordinated many of the earlier activities. With exceptional political acumen she chose the right people at the right time to take on different tasks. She successfully represented the goals of the *Initiative* to multiple stakeholders enabling others to embrace the tedious process of consensus based policy development and implementation.

The cost of litigation and other adversarial processes such as grievance proceedings served as a catalyst for developing a policy that addressed the effectiveness and efficiency of handling conflict. The cost of conflict includes more than financial awards from litigation. It can include the time and resources absorbed by inefficient processes. If the solution is seen as unfair, then the consequences often include a negative impact on the health and reputation of individual parties and the institution at large. A very public crisis in the 1980s at the University of Georgia exemplifies an institution's inefficient response to conflict and the consequences it suffered as a result. Twenty years ago, the University of Georgia Bulldogs football team was a national power fortified with players who lacked academic credential for college work and were being tutored in the Developmental Studies program. Jan Kemp, an English teacher in the Developmental Studies program, alleged that her contract was not renewed because she voiced concern about unethical practices by the university and the preferential treatment for athletes and for children of influential families. Her lawsuit went to trial in Atlanta in January 1986. After 3 weeks of testimony, a federal jury awarded her $2.57 million in damages. She later settled with the university for $1.1 million. The putative issue was Kemp's right of free speech. The named defendants, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the director of the Developmental Studies program both lost their jobs. The trial embarrassed the university within the state and nationally and its impact continued for months through post-trial motions and settlement negotiations. Jan Kemp appeared in *People* magazine and on morning network news programs winning public opinion. The Georgia Board of Regents conducted a post-trial audit of the Developmental Studies program and uncovered many questionable practices and angry accusations among administrators. The president of the University of Georgia resigned after 19 years of service. It is hard to judge how much damage was done to faculty recruiting, either immediately or over the next several years. Although Kemp won in a court of law and in the mind of the public, her life since that time has been fraught with tragedy. Footlick (1997, p. 61) claims that careers were irreparably harmed with student athletes were viewed as "a kind of raw material in the production of some goods to be sold as whatever product, and they get nothing in return." (Taped statement made by the Director of Developmental Studies at a faculty meeting.)

In corporate America, the focus on team building had been essential to the efficiency and productivity of the American workforce. With the advent of continuous quality improvement efforts in higher education and the changing demographics of campus communities, leadership saw the need for more collaborative problem solving strategies. During the 1990's team building became the mantra for many academic administrators. With the focus on a more business model combined with increasing campus diversity, there was an emerging need for conflict resolution processes that fostered cooperation.

Diminishing resources and funds for higher education created an economic crisis causing institutions to scrutinize processes that were deemed inefficient. Campuses were engaging in total quality management, process re-engineering, and continuing quality improvement for the primary purpose of cost saving. These corporate models were often met with resistance and conflict. The sole reliance on quasi-judicial approaches for resolving conflict during a time of change presented obstacles for those responsible for managing change and for those experiencing the change.

Mediation in federal courts and agencies also influenced the movement toward ADR within the Georgia University System as did the federal Civil Rights Act of 1991 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which endorsed ADR to resolve discrimination and equal access disputes. During the 1990's a majority of states empowered trial courts to refer matters to ADR for resolution prior to trial and established state-wide offices of dispute resolution to resolve public and community conflicts and facilitate the courts' use of ADR. (Yarn & Boyens 1995, p. 1, 2) In the private sector, many US corporations began using ADR instead of litigation and revised their policies and procedures to incorporate more collaborative, cooperative methods to resolve conflict. All these external activities created pressure for the university system to re-examine its internal mechanisms for conflict resolution.

2.2 Forces Restraining Change

Just as there are events and people that propel innovation, there are also events and people that create resistance. The lack of resources such as money and personnel was often the first line of resistance. Another significant restraining force to change was the lack of knowledge about conflict management. Often administrators feared losing managerial control. Most university officials view problem solving as their job responsibility and to relegate that responsibility to a third party facilitator is in essence an abrogation of their duty. Additionally, administrators and managers sometimes fear any process that allows people to solve their own problems thereby removing the administrator even further from the role of decision maker/problem solver. In 1995, only a handful of people had the knowledge and skill set to be confident that such a grand scheme could indeed produce the promised results. With the proliferation of rights-based processes and their advocates, the status quo was deeply rooted in the academic mindset as were certain organizational structures and decision making processes that do not support the idea of collaborative problem solving. These "many levels, rules and regulations, specialized disciplines, segmented rewards, autonomy, and high interdependence" is viewed by Gmelch (1995, p. 36) as establishing "bastions of resistance" to innovation.

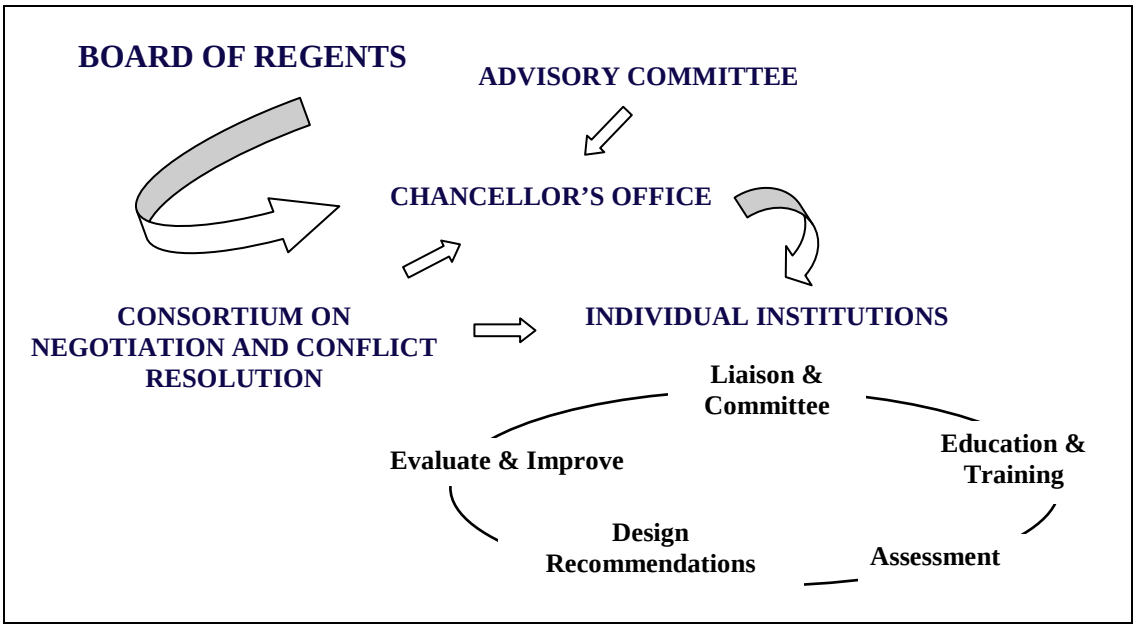
3. COMPREHENSIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DESIGN

An integrated conflict management system (CMS) introduces a systemic approach to preventing, managing and resolving conflict. Hallmarks of this approach include collaborative/interest-based problem solving, encouragement of voicing concerns and constructive dissent, and the provision of understandable, flexible and user friendly options for all types of problems.

3.1 Stakeholders' Roles and Responsibilities

The architects of the Georgia conflict management system (CMS) focused on designing a system involving multiple stages, moving from interest-based to more rights-based approaches as a conflict is resolved. These visionaries, working with stakeholders at the institutional and system level, played a key role in design and implementation. The overall scheme for the Georgia system involves stakeholders at every level. (See Table 1)

Table 1
Conflict Management System Design for the University System of Georgia



The board of regents charged the chancellor's office to provide education, training and support; assemble a panel of system-wide mediators; compile data for assessment; and use ADR in contracts. The Chancellor's advisory committee has the responsibility to develop education programs for all institutions; to recommend a comprehensive system-wide plan; and to advise the Chancellor's office on implementation. Once the policy was adopted the Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (CNCR) was immediately designated as the technical consultant to the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on ADR who had oversight for the *Initiative* and to each of the systems' institutions as they developed and implemented a conflict management program/services. CNCR was given partial funding to hire a manager and full funding for the position of a director of education and training. (This accounted for new monies delegated at the system level. Each institution had to carve out of their existing budgets any funds necessary for implementation.) At the institutional level, presidents at each of the 34 institutions were required to appoint a campus ADR liaison. The campus liaison provides the "communication bridge" both within their institution and between their institution and outside contacts. This boundary spanning role requires the selection of a person with an excellent grasp of institutional culture, leadership skill to facilitate a committee of diverse constituents, position of influence to promote the *Initiative* and the interest in improving conflict management on their campus. The first task of the campus liaison was to form a Campus Conflict Resolution Committee (CCRC) that was charged to identify current conflicts, anticipate future conflicts, analyze current conflict handling procedures, and design and implement an improved CMS if necessary.

Over the past decade the roles and responsibilities of these key players have expanded. For example, today the campus liaison is obliged to:

provide/coordinate on-going education and training in CM theory, design and skills;
disseminate information received from CNCR and the ADR Advisory Committee;
conduct periodic evaluation of CM program/services;
review campus policies to assure integration of ADR;
determine ways to accomplish all goals of the Initiative on their campus; and,
when referring mediation to the System-wide Mediation Program, handle logistics of mediation including reimbursement of funds to off-campus mediators.

CNCR has also expanded its role by founding and directing a Summer Institute on Conflict Management in Higher Education; developing an international network on conflict resolution education and peace education; consulting with colleges and universities nationally on conflict management system design; providing large group assessments and interventions such as mediation, ombudsing, conciliation, etc.; and, creating resources for developing and implementing interest based programs.

3.2 Policy Implementation

Guiding principles for implementing the *Initiative* were identified in the early stages of design. The following principles were first presented to each institution in the *Guidebook for Implementing the Initiative and Policy Direction on Conflict Resolution*:

"Walk the talk" (Individuals in the design effort should model principles of facilitation and mediation as much as possible.)
No two conflict management systems are alike.
Users should design it.
Build and use a network of experts and proponents.
Experiment and be creative.
Key decision-makers should be on board.
Hear no evil and see no evil? (Effective implementation requires honest appraisal of disputing. An ignored problem may be the costliest.)
Commit the necessary resources.
Look before you leap. (Before implementing any program or procedure, understand campus culture and current dispute processing mechanisms. Have key players on board, an infrastructure for system delivery in place, and an educational and marketing plan set to go.)
Be realistic, be patient.
Review and improve.

CCRCs were encouraged to keep these principles in the forefront while following the steps to developing and implementing conflict management programs/services on their respective campuses.

In addition to these principles, the 34 institutions were provided with a six step model for developing and implementing conflict management at the institutional level. (See Table 1) The steps are:

Step 1 – Form a Campus Conflict Resolution Committee (CCRC) who are representative of the full range of campus stakeholder.
Step 2 – Educate and train liaisons, CCRC members, key decision makers about conflict management theory, practice and design.
Step 3 – Assess disputing and dispute processing honestly and in-depth.
Step 4 – Recommend a systems design that fits the institution.
Step 5 – Implement recommendations for CM program/services.
Step 6 – Evaluate and improve.

This implementation model allowed for flexibility and creativity at the institutional level. Each campus had freedom to devise their own assessment methodologies, to recommend a design that fit their campus, and to determine a means for evaluating and improving their programs.

Soon after the adoption of the *Initiative*, the CNCR began training liaisons, CCRC committee members and administrators throughout the state. Initially, these trainings covered basic mediation skills with some introduction to conflict management system design. During the past ten years, annual liaison workshops covering a wide range of topics have been conducted. Workshop themes reflect topical issues identified by the Chancellor's Advisory Committee and illustrate to some degree the depth and breadth of implementing the *Initiative*. In the early years, workshops focused on topics such as "Dispute System Design", "The ADR Liaison as Boundary Spanner" and "Engaging the CCRC in Strategic Planning for the Future". Later concentration was given to "Innovations in Managing Campus Conflict", "Collaborating for the Future" and "Using CCRC to Manage Change". The most recent workshop, "Fine Tuning Your Conflict Management Services", stressed the importance of evaluation and continuous improvement while revisiting the first principles of system design.

In addition to training opportunities, the CNCR has created a variety of resources to assist the institutions with their implementation plan. These resources include a trainer's handbook for *Introducing the Initiative*;

a mediation video, *Trouble in the Lab;* a video that introduced the *Initiative* with endorsements by senior level administrators; a *Guidebook for Implementing the Initiative and Policy Direction on Conflict Resolution: University System of Georgia;* and, a DVD on *The Facilitated Discussion of Academic Honesty*. Each campus liaison was also provided with a copy of Fisher and Ury's *Getting to Yes* : *Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* and *Getting Disputes Resolved: Designing Systems to Cut the Costs of Conflict* by Ury, Brett and Goldberg.

4. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The mission of the CNCR is to understand the institutionalization of conflict prevention and resolution in organizations, specifically institutions of higher education, and to disseminate the resulting knowledge. As defined by Miller and Sarat (1980-81), institutionalization is "the extent to which there are well-known, regularized, readily available mechanisms, techniques, or procedures for dealing with a problem." It includes, but is not limited to:

The policies, laws, procedures and practices imbedded in the social and organizational systems and culture of society to integrate conflict prevention and resolution in an organization;
The process by which conflict prevention and resolution become part of the organizational identity; and
Absorption, adoption, or melding of conflict prevention and resolution activities into an organization or policy.

As research is developed to understand institutionalization of conflict management, the CNCR has identified four areas of examination: policy, resource allocation, program service design and implementation, and sustainability. Policy should be specific to drive direction, adaptable to allow discretion, and amendable to implementation. Resource allocation is more than financial budget and includes appropriate personnel and organizational structures. Program/service design and implementation includes a strategic, integrated, comprehensive design; capacity building; evaluation; and, continuous improvement. Sustainability is usually reflected by utilization and innovation. The CNCR has conducted three case studies and three evaluations that examine these four components of institutionalization. These evaluations were originally designed to assess the status of the six step system design process; to provide feedback and raise awareness within and across institutions; and finally, to stimulate growth and commitment within institutions. The evaluation protocols, which included structured interviews, surveys, site visits with phone follow-up, collection of written policies, institutional records and anecdotal information, provided information in all four areas of examination identified by the CNCR. The progress reported in these evaluations notes a significant change in the culture of disputing at both the institutional and system level. Progress reflecting evidence of institutionalization includes:

ten years of liaison and CCRC activity;
changes in grievance policies and procedures that allow for interest-based processes;
establishment of Ombuds Offices at 5 institutions;
creation and utilization of system-wide mediation program and on-campus mediation services;
founding of a Summer Institute for Conflict Management in Higher Education;
extensive training at both the institutional and system level;
incorporation of campus liaison responsibilities in formal job descriptions;
facilitation of large-group interventions; and,
creation of a Masters Degree Program in Conflict Management.

The impact of these evaluations has been positive primarily as a result of the evaluation process modeling the principles of constructive conflict management. I.e. Policy compliance was fostered in a non-punitive fashion while accountability was being established. At the same time the process was providing a tool for cross-fertilization of ideas, the written reports created a record. The evaluation process assured consultation with all institutions facilitating growth and commitment to the *Initiative*.

Obstacles for implementing CM programs and strategies for overcoming them were frequently reported in the evaluations. Building capacity has been difficult for some institutions with little or no financial resources. However, creative formats for delivering concepts and developing skills have emerged such as web-based training, new employee/faculty orientation, freshman orientation, curriculum infusion, periodic articles in campus/local newspapers, and continuing adult education classes. Some campuses have created

cost-saving collaborations for providing mediation training while others have mandated as much as 16 hours of training in conflict management for senior leadership.

When looking at innovations that evidence institutionalization, there are two notable programs: the mediation of grade disputes and the facilitation of academic honesty cases. On most campuses in the United States grades can be disputed by filing a grade appeal. This appeal triggers a quasi-adjudicative, confrontational set of rules and procedures by which the student and faculty member must abide. One of the Georgia institutions has introduced mediation as an alternative to the typical academic grievance process in resolving a disagreement about a course grade. Since scheduling and convening a mediation are informal and a less cumbersome, the process is usually faster. According to Lisby (1999), mediation promotes understanding, compromise, and reconciliation.

The University of Georgia's Academic Honesty Facilitated Discussion Model is yet another innovation stemming from the *Initiative*. Using the principles of interest-based negotiation this process provides for an immediate educational opportunity for addressing an allegation of academic dishonesty. When a student is charged with a violation, the Office of the Vice President for Instruction schedules a discussion between the faculty member and the student. This discussion is unique in that it is facilitated by a trained, impartial third party. Facilitated discussion has been beneficial since the inception of the model in 2000. For example, cases that used to take up to three months to be heard are being resolved on an average of 11.5 days. Only 5-6% of the cases are unresolved in a Facilitated Discussion. These cases are forwarded to a panel for a final determination. Previous to using Facilitated Discussions approximately 35% of the cases were referred to a hearing panel. The savings in time and personnel to handle these allegations has been significant. (2004-2005 Office of the Vice President for Instruction Annual Academic Honesty Report to the University Council) The use of a third party facilitator has allowed the institution to focus on education rather than punishment while maintaining the integrity of scholarship and to provide access to a fair, efficient mechanism that is less adversarial than the more traditional method of resolution. According to Debbie Craddock-Bell (D. Bell 2006, personal communication, July 20), Coordinator for Academic Honesty, faculty have demonstrated an increased willingness to report a violation since there is a stronger likelihood for the outcome to be an improved faculty-student relationship.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

Managing the institutionalization of conflict management in the university system of Georgia has provided CNCR with knowledge about design and implementation that at times was unexpected and at other times affirming. Early in the design phase there was the recognition of having a conflict management system that was flexible but not inconsistent. Institutions were encouraged to work within the parameters of the guiding principles which advocated a degree of flexibility. Flexibility at the institutional level meant that the users would design their conflict management program/service that was available to everyone in their community and reflected the motivations, skills, and competence of the community members. Although the system as a whole showed a readiness for a culture change, individual institutions varied considerably with some key administrators stating that "there was no need for conflict management since they had no conflict on their campus". Resistance takes many forms and CNCR soon realized the need to assess institutional readiness in order to deal with the resistance. Sensitivity to competing demands for institutions and individuals aided the CNCR to address some of the concerns expressed during the design phase.

In recent years, sustainability has been a continued focus at both the system and institutional level. Leadership transitions have presented lags in the campus' momentum to implement and/or improve their programs with institutions reporting varying success in finding the right person who was fully engaged, committed to succeed, and ready to take the lead. Imaginative improvisation supports the vitality of any change effort but when stakeholders are battling with fatigue and impatience caused by glacial change processes it is difficult to improvise in a positive fashion. Strategically planning for sustainability during the design phase allows for some of the hurdles to be overcome.

As implementation was initiated the CNCR realized that a mandated policy without institutional buy-in created obstacles that would be long lasting. These obstacles were overcome in most incidences by a

strong commitment to education, training and the cultivation of champions. Using champions at the institutional level facilitated the preparation for a culture change in disputing. Even with education and champions some institutions acting as a system tended to implement without adequate assessment and planning. This "ready, fire, aim" method was seen in the design recommendations that resulted from poor assessment and no defined data collection systems beyond the inchoate stage of implementation. Measurements for program/service effectiveness were rarely described by the CCRCs.

Movement toward interest-based approaches in any large, complex system requires vigilance, nurturance, and political acumen. As consultants, the CNCR has watched institutions take certain action toward achieving the goals of the *Initiative* only to discover that those actions had unintended consequences. For example, a few of the institutions have incorporated the roles and responsibilities of the Campus Liaison into the job description of certain positions. Although this action exemplifies institutionalization, there have been individuals filling those positions who were not the best choice for the campus liaison. Maintaining the energy and enthusiasm for program development and/or improvement has been boosted by the recognition and acknowledgement of individuals and institutions who model the principles of conflict management. Each year an individual is presented with the "Outstanding Liaison" Award and a Human Resources Director and a CCRC from one of the 34 institutions are recipients of training scholarships to the Summer Institute on Conflict Management in Higher Education. Understanding the political environment within and outside the university system has augmented the progress of institutionalization. While engaging individuals or entities with influence, the CNCR has designed dialogue processes that have fostered ownership in designing and administering conflict management programs/services.

In an effort to study the replication of the UGA system design model, a multidisciplinary team of program developers and an external evaluator applied the model for a Conflict Resolution in Schools Program (CRiSP). The CRiSP, a program intended to further the institutionalization of conflict resolution in K-12 schools, was initiated in 1998 as a service-learning pilot engaging university students to teach conflict resolution knowledge, skills, and abilities to students in the Atlanta Public Schools. An outcome of this pilot and currently a work in progress is *The CRiSP Guide to Empirical Evidence on Conflict Resolution Programs*, which is a compendium of research summaries regarding the effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) programs used in grades kindergarten through 12.

6. TODAY, TEN YEARS LATER

Graff (1998, p. 13) wrote that "The unprecedented challenges higher education faces today make it imperative to develop a new idea of administrative conflict management, one that seeks to make productive use of academic conflicts instead of trying to shut them down." The University System of Georgia continues to meet this challenge. As the *Initiative* moves into its second decade, there are two realizations. First, the whole systems approach to managing conflict has brought an unparalleled shift in the culture of disputing. With conflict management systems in place at the local and system level, the CNCR's primary function at this time is to support the continuous improvement of those systems and to disseminate information about systems design through consultation and international networks. Secondly and most importantly, the success of this initiative is due to the commitment, energy, and innovation of the many people within and outside the university system who envisioned a community where collaborative problem solving is both valued and practiced.

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