

## **Assisted Problem Solving and Issues Resolution**

### **Summary**

#### **Assisted Problem Solving:**

The college encourages a working atmosphere that involves healthy and productive dialogue. However, conflict between individuals may occur which requires support to be successfully resolved in a respectful and positive manner. The Conflict Resolution Resource Services offers conflict-coaching sessions and mediation services to all members of the college community. If faced with a conflict situation, it may be useful to have a neutral and confidential resource or someone to discuss approaches to conflict resolution, options, or clarify the underlying issue that is most important.

The conflict-coaching service allows an individual to seek confidential advice on how best to alleviate workplace conflict. Mediation, on the other hand, is a confidential conversation between two parties in conflict, structured and assisted by a neutral third party, the mediator. The structure of a mediation session allows both parties to move beyond their initial positions to discover their own and the other's underlying interests. The parties can then generate options to address their needs. When mediation is successful, the parties review and select the best options, and conclude with a written agreement.

For more information about conflict resolution services, please contact Conflict Resolution Resource Services or Human Resource Services.

#### **Issues Resolution:**

Dickinson College seeks to promote and maintain a work environment that provides for the full and satisfying performance of their duties. However, the college also recognizes that there may be occasions in which work-related issues, misunderstandings and frustrations may arise that cannot be resolved in the normal day-to-day interaction with peers and supervisors.

Employees who believe that college policies have been inappropriately applied to them or who encounter situations in which they have work-related issues or concerns with other employees or visitors that require intervention by the college, or in which they have issues with the work setting itself that have not been resolved, may use these procedures. The college encourages employees to seek answers to work-related questions and concerns. Certain matters, specifically limitations included in the college benefits, job classifications, compensation and non-work-related issues or concerns are not subject to procedures beyond general inquiry. Additionally, reports or concerns of discriminatory harassment should be made in accordance with the specific reporting procedures set forth under the "Eliminating All Forms of Discriminatory Harassment" section of the Handbook.

### Informal Process

With other concerns, as a first step, an employee is encouraged to direct a particular work-related issue or query, within 5 days, to an appropriate department administrator, for example an immediate supervisor or second-level supervisor. Alternatively, an employee may contact Human Resource Services, which will attempt to answer questions and advise the employee on how to resolve issues in the most appropriate and timely manner. To the extent consistent with the need to gather facts and try to assist in facilitating a resolution, employee communications relating to concerns will be held in confidence. Employees also may discuss these problems or concerns with a member of the college's employee assistance program (EAP) if they wish to discuss the issues confidentially with someone outside the college. The college encourages early discussion of problems and concerns in accordance with the above informal process so that there is the potential to resolve concerns when they first arise and where any resolution can be most efficient and effective.

### Request for Review

If an employee has a concern that he or she feels has not been adequately resolved through the informal issues resolution procedure outlined above, the employee may file a formal request for review. The formal request for review must be in writing and submitted to the employee's director or department head and Human Resource Services within a timely manner. If the employee is not satisfied with the determination of his/her director/department head and Human Resource Services, he or she may seek to address the matter further in writing with the appropriate dean or vice president. If the employee is not satisfied with that determination, the employee then may seek further consideration, within 10 days of the determination at the prior level, by presenting his/her concerns to the associate vice president of Human Resource Services. The decision of the associate vice president of Human Resource Services is deemed the final decision of the college.

Dickinson College is committed to a timely response at each level to assure that prior discussions relating to issues or concerns do not become stale. Absent extenuating circumstances, a decision should be expressed to the employee making the request for review within 5 days of the conclusion of the fact-gathering for each level in the process.