



Workshop | atelier

Managing and Resolving Conflict in the University La gestion et résolution des conflits en milieu universitaire

Wednesday | mercredi, Nov. 6, 2019

Intercontinental Toronto Centre Hotel, 225 Front street West

How can university managers and leaders address counterproductive and costly conflicts while protecting fundamental university values?

University relationships are often difficult.

Dysfunctional academic units and individual litigious, conflictual personal styles can create disorder.

Ideological and politically charged communication influences how faculty relate to one another, their managers and especially university leadership.

Sometimes faculty members and their associations are vexatious for no clear reason.

A history of unresolved conflict, incivility and inattention to the impact of communication on the progress of discussions and relationships create a charged environment.

Freedom of speech and academic freedom, often misunderstood, both galvanize and protect challenging faculty behaviour.

Renewal, promotion and tenure processes, curriculum reform/restructuring and budget processes and redistributions are common contexts from which tensions rise and unproductive behaviour results.

This workshop will focus on organizational conflict involving faculty and university leaders, whatever the source of the conflict including electronic communication.

KEY LEARNINGS

How to:

- React and respond constructively
- Reframe sensitive and challenging language
- Avoid assumptions, expectations and perceptions that interfere with identifying and resolving issues
- Identify and manage legal and ethical issues
- Use questioning effectively and appropriately
- Conduct difficult conversations
- Plan and strategize effectively for challenging interactions
- Use a range of informal conflict management options
- Understand the intent, impact and influence of academic freedom, freedom of speech and conflict management
- Deal with written and especially electronic communications
- Manage meetings more effectively

Topics:

- Communication skills: active listening, effective questioning, reframing, etc.
- Basic principles of alternative/appropriate dispute resolution
- Difficult conversations
- A working theory of human behaviour
- Analysing roles and systems within the paradigm of organizational conflict
- Informal conflict management system design
- Electronic communication and conflict management
- Academic freedom and freedom of speech in action

Learning Approach:

This will be a practical, active workshop that engages participants in understanding stakeholders' needs and interests and in developing strategies based on both actual and anticipated scenarios from across the country. Sessions will be supported by prepared printed and electronic materials, as well as presentations. Video clips will be used to demonstrate and highlight relevant skills and present issues. Demonstrations and role-plays will further contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of realistic conflict management scenarios impacting the university community at all levels.

Workshop leaders:



Bridget Brownlow, Conflict Resolution Advisor, Saint Mary's University, Halifax



Neil Gold, FBS/CAUBO, Field Representative, Professor Emeritus and former Provost and Vice-President, Academic at the University of Windsor