Supervisor Roundtable

ADDRESSING CONFLICT with Student Employees

Office of the Ombuds
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A Safe Place to Navigate Through Difficulties at UCSC

• Confidential
• Informal
• Neutral
• Independent

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Today’s Conversation

- Student Employment as developmental
- Define and explore “conflict”
- Review student employment best practices
- Explore some conflict resolution skills:
  - Active Listening
  - Intent vs. Impact
- Share information about conflict resolution resources at UCSC
- Closing
Student Development in Employment

- Involvement Theory

  - Astin - Involvement Theory:
    - “Student involvement refers to the quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience. Such involvement takes many forms, such as absorption in academic work, participation in extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and other institutional personnel. According to the theory, the greater the student’s involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development.”


  - Strong correlation proven in later research: “students learn from what they do in college. Research has strongly supported this assumption, indicating that engagement is positively related to objective and subjective measures of gains in general abilities and critical thinking.”

Expectations Students have

- **Leadership Experiences vs. Work Experience**
  - They’re the same - you are providing them leadership experiences with work experiences.

- What experiences with conflict resolution do students bring to their role?
  - What do students expect of you/supervisors regarding conflict on the job?
  - What do students expect of themselves regarding conflict on the job?
Defining Conflict

- A disagreement between two or more parties resulting in a perceived risk or threat to one’s needs, interests, or concerns.

Interpersonal Conflict

- Two or more people have incompatible goals and,
- One or both believe that the behavior of the other prevents their own goal attainment.

The Conflict Cycle

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Sources of Conflict

- **Resources**
  Money, time, land, labor and material things.

- **Information**
  Not having sufficient information or possessing varying perceptions of information.

- **Emotional and Psychological**
  “Bad day” reactions or mental/psychological conditions may affect actions and attitudes.

- **Values**
  Religion, culture, beliefs.

- **Relationships and Roles**
  Conflict can arise when people don’t fulfill how another sees their role.

- **Power and Structure**
  Who has access to power and/or resources, and who has the authority to make decisions.
What are common sources of conflict with student employees?
Possible Outcomes of Conflict

**Negative Outcomes**
- Decreased performance
- Dissatisfaction
- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Wasted time / energy
- Reduced efficiency

**Positive Outcomes**
- Identifies issues of importance to others
- Resolution of underlying problems
- Enhancement of group development
- Intergroup conflict can increase within-group cohesion
- Facilitation of needed organizational change
- Learning about self and others

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What is your “Conflict Style”?

Conflict theorists have observed that how we engage in conflict can be charted according to two variables:

1. how much we care about the **outcome** (and are thus willing to be **assertive**)
2. how much we care about the **relationship** (and are thus open to **cooperation**).

https://ombuds.emory.edu/blog/conflict_style.html
Active Listening: Defined

Seek FIRST to understand. Only then to be understood.” ~ Steven Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

► Active Listening is NOT:
  ► “Hearing” (physiology); “Listening” is psychological.
  ► Focused on immediate solution development or defending actions that are criticized while listening.

► Active Listening ...
  ► Facilitates empathy and understanding.
  ► Listens for what is truly communicated, not in anticipation of what one thinks the speaker will say or what we want to hear.
  ► Creates trust - leading to open, honest input.

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Active Listening...

- Does not ignore or pretend to listen.
- **Avoids selective listening** - Takes in shared facts, interests, positions, and even resistance. *Remember:*
  - Defensiveness halts dialogue.
  - Formulating a response while listening prevents actual listening.
  - The speaker will often mirror the listener’s behavior.
- Active Listening aims to **understand** experiences, feelings, & perspectives regardless of what the listener knows or believes they know.
The Art of the Powerful Question

Powerful Questions ARE:
- Open-ended
- Simple and clear
- Thought-provoking
- Energy inspiring
- Truly inquisitive and curious
- Able to create storytelling opportunities
- Designed to OPEN possibilities.

Powerful Questions AVOID:
- Yes or No responses.
- *Beginning* with the word “why” which can lead to defensiveness.
- Asking questions that imply a solution to the problem.
- Getting at the correct or “right answer”
Powerful Questions: Examples

▶ What would you like to see happen ...?
   ▶ *Not so powerful version*: What do you want?

▶ Can you help me understand the rationale for our standard process?
   ▶ *Not so powerful version*: *Why* do we have this process?

▶ What would it look like for you if this were resolved/not resolved?

▶ Are there actions that you were hoping would result from this discussion?
Powerful Questions are Open-Ended Questions

Open-Ended Questions

- Avoid asking questions that imply a solution to the matter or that seek the correct or “right” answer.
- Do not begin with “Why…” It may seem open but leading with why tends to close-off dialogue.

CLOSED: Did you get cost estimates?
CLOSED: Why did you ask Brandon for the program budget?

OPEN: What information might we need to decide how this could fit into our college budget?
Understanding Intent vs. Impact

- **Intent (n):** “The act or fact of intending or purposing; intention, purpose (formed in the mind). Formerly also, in more general sense, will, inclination.” (Oxford Dictionary)

  - Interpersonal matters: what you meant to say or do.

- **Impact (n):** “The effective action of one thing or person upon another; the effect of such action; influence; impression.” (Oxford Dictionary)

  - Interpersonal matters: what someone thinks of or feels about your words or behavior; how someone perceives or reacts to their understanding of your words / actions.
Intent versus Impact

Intent

THE GAP

Impact

Assumptions, gossip/third parties, confusion, anger, conflict, avoidance, and more
Reducing the GAP: The Role of Active Listening

1. **Powerful questions** are critical!
2. “In our leadership we operate with great intentions, but…”
   - Failure to consider **unintended IMPACT creates** opportunities for conflict.
   - **Leaders need to consider their own impact** and the impact of others.
   - **Solicit feedback** from all involved parties and stakeholders to minimize the GAP.
3. Stating our intent can mitigate unintended impact.
4. **Active Listening** - your greatest tool in reducing the intent-impact **GAP**.
   - When you listen and ask questions, you can learn how someone was impacted, and you can then respond with empathy and compassion.

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Reducing the GAP:

Intent

Impact

Active Listening Seeking out Underlying Interests
Responding to a Negative Impact

- A simple apology can change the dynamic.
- Two types of apologies
  - “I’m sorry I did . . .”
  - “I’m sorry about the impact this had on you.” or “I’m sorry about how this has affected you.” or “I regret this has affected you this way…”
- Components of an effective apology
  - Acknowledge or Own the harm regardless of intent.
  - Show empathy, kindness, and compassion.
  - Offer solutions if warranted. “Can we start again?” or “Might it work if we did this instead?”
Let’s practice

- A student employee of yours has been on the job for one week and is shadowing another student employee regarding daily tasks. This is the first job for this student and they seem to not understand the flow of the job: not showing up on time consistently, on their phone, and not completing tasks when left alone. The lead student (the one being shadowed) is frustrated and is now upset with both the new student employee and you - they feel like they are carrying more responsibility than they should. You are about to have a 1on1 meeting with this student.

- Practice:
  - What powerful questions can you ask?
  - How can you focus on the impact for this student employee?
Best Practices for Student Employees

- Setting **expectations** early, revisiting regularly:
  - Individual employee
  - Team
- Goals - establish them early, revisit/revise as needed
- Performance feedback - evaluations that are:
  - Regular (timeframe communicated actively to employees)
  - No surprises (opportunities to improve should be communicated as soon as possible, giving the opportunity for the employee to improve/show that improvement)
- Transparency in processes (hiring, evaluation, job needs)
  - Including the needs of the role, which may evolve (share this up front)
- Other best practices to share that help create a culture ready to address conflict productively?
# You Have Options

**Conflict Resolution Resources for UC Santa Cruz**
**Students, Staff, and Academic Employees**

## Emergency Response

Emergency response is for immediate needs, including after-hours needs. The offices listed as emergency response units are staffed 24/7 and may take one or more business days to respond if needed.

**UCSC POLICE DEPARTMENT**
- **STUDENTS, STAFF & ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES**
  - TEL: 911 (non-emergency)
  - TEL: (831) 459-2420

**CAMPUS MOBILE CRISIS TEAM**
- **STUDENTS**
  - TEL: (831) 459-4358

## Confidential Resources

UC Santa Cruz strives to have a “no questions asked” policy and will provide a warm hand-off to the appropriate office. These resources will not share information they receive without permission, and are a great first stop for anyone unsure of where to go with an issue or concern.

**CARE OFFICE:**
- **STAFF & ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES**
  - TEL: (831) 459-7973
  - WEB: care.ucsc.edu

**COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)**
- **STUDENTS**
  - TEL: (831) 459-2420

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
- **STAFF & ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES**
  - TEL: (831) 459-2420

## Informal Conflict Resolution Services

**SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, STAFF, ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES, PROFESSIONALS, NAS, TAS**

The best conflict resolution method is to address the conflict early. Start with those closest to the situation, moving to informal resources when needed.

**BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM (BIT)**
If perceived danger to self or others. For an emergency response, call 911.

**EMAIL:** bits.ucsc.edu

**WEB:** bits.ucsc.edu/stopabuse/bit

**OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT & CONFLICT EDUCATION**
- **EMAIL:** conduct@ucsc.edu
  - TEL: (831) 459-4577

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS**
- **STUDENTS, STAFF & ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES**
  - TEL: (831) 459-2500 (business hours)
  - WEB: ombuds.ucsc.edu

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## Reporting & Complaints

(Internal & External)

**ACADEMIC PERSONNEL**
- **TEL:** (831) 459-4100
- **WEB:** aps.ucsc.edu

**OFFICE OF EQUITY AND EQUAL PROTECTION**
- **EMAIL:** equity.ucsc.edu
- **WEB:** equity.ucsc.edu

**BIAS RESPONSE PROCESS**
- **STUDENTS**
  - To report an incident of hate or bias
  - WEB: biasresponse.ucsc.edu

**LOCALLY DESIGNATED OFFICER/WHISTLEBLOWER**
- **TEL:** 1-800-426-4744
- **EMAIL:** mlitt@ucop.edu

**TITLE IX OFFICE**
- **EMAIL:** titleix@ucsc.edu
- **WEB:** titleix.ucsc.edu

**HR/EMPLOYEE & LABOR RELATIONS**
- **WEB:** hrms.ucsc.edu/contact/location-team

**ABUSIVE CONDUCT**
- **EMAIL:** reports@hrms.ucsc.edu
- **WEB:** hrms.ucsc.edu/abusive-conduct-at-workplace

**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS**
- **EMAIL:** student.grievance@ucop.edu
- **WEB:** student.grievance@ucop.edu

(Grievance procedures and related information)
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