Faculty Grievance Office Inquiry Process

William Donohue, Interim Faculty Grievance Officer

Overview

Currently the faculty grievance office handles faculty grievances that focus most commonly on RPT, performance evaluation, and disciplinary issues. However, many of these issues stem from long-standing conflicts that might have been addressed more productively earlier in the process. In addition, faculty often face other kinds of conflicts that would typically fall outside of the FGO jurisdiction, yet are detrimental to a collaborative work climate.

It has been many years since any kind of conflict resolution needs assessment has been completed at MSU. What kinds of disputes are faculty experiencing? How are they attempting to resolve these conflicts? What kind of support do they need to address these concerns? To answer these questions it would be useful to conduct a conflict resolution needs assessment on campus to determine if our current resources are sufficient to address the needs.

Needs Assessment Methodology

1. Work with the Personnel Subcommittee of UCFA to organize and direct the study.
2. Conduct brief interviews, either by phone or in person, with the administrative staff of each college (Deans and Associate Deans), the Provost's office, and the Steering Committee. Questions would focus on what issues departments and colleges are facing that might be impacting the collaborative climate of the units.
3. Conduct an online survey of faculty and department chairs from the Faculty Grievance Office. Questions could focus on the following variables:
   a. Work climate
   b. Conflict history with peers including frequency and type of conflict whether work or personal (faculty and staff)
   c. Conflict history with supervisors or subordinates and type of conflict whether work or personal (depending on whether the respondent is faculty or administrator)
   d. Conflict resolution strategies that were used in these conflicts from avoidance to direct negotiation to mediation to adjudication
   e. Satisfaction with the outcome of the conflicts
   f. Conflict resolution services/resources that would be viewed as desirable
4. Summarize the data and present a report to the Personnel Subcommittee of UCFA. The report would include results and recommendations for the FGO position, and perhaps other dispute resolution resources on campus.