



## Lehigh University Human Resources Policy

Policy Number:	301
Effective Date:	circa 2007
Revisions:	
Applicability:	All Staff Members

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

#### **Purpose:**

Policy on resolving conflicts appropriately in the workplace

#### **Policy:**

#### ***Introduction***

Conflict is a natural aspect of human interaction. Not all conflict is bad. Lehigh encourages dialogue, discussion, debate, differences of opinion, and diversity as an integral part of the learning process. When conflict is resolved positively it can lead to consensus, discovery, innovation, and creativity. An example of positive conflict was developed by Socrates when he challenged his students in constructive debate.

However, conflict can be destructive, detrimental, and counterproductive when it is malicious. To resolve destructive (or non-constructive) conflict, Lehigh has established a network of resources to assist all members of the University community.

#### ***Policy***

The University expects all members of the Lehigh community to develop effective conflict detection and resolution skills. In addition, managers and supervisors are required to demonstrate proficiency at conflict resolution and to provide coaching and mentoring in these skills.

The University has established a variety of resources with multiple points of contact to assist individuals who need or want assistance in resolving conflict. Lehigh will not tolerate any form of retaliation or intimidation against those who seek assistance in resolving conflict.

There are certain types of conflict that will not be tolerated at Lehigh. Examples include, but are not limited to: intimidation; harassment; abusive behavior; threatening behavior, or violent behavior of any kind.

#### ***Levels of Conflict Resolution***

**Level 1** – Individuals resolve differences and conflict at the lowest possible level through informal problem resolution. They may work with their immediate supervisor or anyone in the management

chain to resolve conflict.

**Level 2** – Individuals may access internal or external resources for assistance with conflict resolution.

*Internal:* Individuals may contact and request assistance from other resources within the University offered by specially trained individuals, such as HR representatives; the University's ombudsperson; the harassment policy officer; any member of informal harassment network; and special trained internal mediators. [See Resource List below.]

*External:* Individuals involved in an unresolved conflict may request assistance of external resources, such as the [Employee Assistance Program](#). External mediation offered by a trained professional may be introduced with the agreement of the involved parties.

**Level 3** – *Internal:* Higher level authorities may become involved. Examples: formal complaint; a harassment or discrimination complaint; internal auditor investigation of a conflict of interest or ethics complaint; or other serious situations involving misconduct or serious violation of policy.

**Level 4** – *External:* Individuals involved in conflict may seek assistance from external resources such as governmental agencies or the legal system.

**[Resources for Conflict Resolution at Lehigh](#)**

**Keywords:** Problem Solving, Conflict, Problems