Conflict Resolution (CR)

Purpose
The purpose of Middle Georgia State College's Conflict Resolution (CR) process is to assist in the resolution of disputes at their lowest level whenever possible. Conflict in an academic environment is a natural phenomenon, but constructive (i.e., less adversarial, more collaborative) methods of conflict resolution are sometimes difficult. The text represented here defines the relevant terms and outlines our local process.

Definition of Terms
Conflict - A dispute arises when two or more parties experience actual or perceived competing interests or when the actions or values of one person are incompatible with the values, actions, or wishes of another person. (Deutsch, 1973) Rather than be destructive, conflict can stimulate communication, problem-solving, goal identification, and constructive resolution.

Mediation - Using the help of an impartial third person, conflicting parties come together informally to talk through their conflict and attempt to reach a mutually acceptable solution. In mediation, both parties have the opportunity to express their concerns about the issues involved in their conflict. All decisions are made by the parties, not the mediator. Mediation is free and confidential, and no records are kept by the mediator.

Campus Mediation Process
If you believe that you have a dispute which remains unresolved after your own attempts to resolve the matter, you might consider contacting the Office of Student Affairs. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs or designee will screen your issue to determine if mediation is the proper course of action.

If mediation might help remedy the situation, then the Office of Student Affairs will refer the conflicting parties to a trained mediator on campus.

The mediator will meet with the conflicting parties to discuss the dispute and facilitate the discussion. A trained mediator helps people examine their situation in terms of personal needs and interests. Disputants reach their own resolution (a fair, equitable, and workable agreement that satisfies everyone); it is not one mandated by the mediator.

Should the mediation fail to reach an acceptable resolution, either party may next proceed to utilize one of the existing complaint, grievance, or legal procedures for redress.
Conflict Resolution Flowchart

Some areas where mediation can help...
Conflict between student and school officials
School conflicts between students
Conflicts involving service providers and students, staff, and faculty
Management-employee conflicts
Faculty-faculty conflicts
Inter- and intradepartmental conflicts
Faculty-staff conflicts
Faculty-administration conflicts

Benefits of Mediation
Enhances communication
Can lead to cooperation
Encourages people to take control of won decisions
Less costly than litigation
May make it possible for relationships to continue
Less violent than war or face-to-face fighting
Keeps conflicts from getting worse
Sessions are confidential: People don't have to talk about their problems in public
People live up to their agreements

The Middle Georgia State College Conflict Resolution process should not be considered the first step in conflict resolution, but the second. The first attempt should be between the two parties alone. MGSC’s Conflict Resolution process is designed to assist students in the resolution of disputes. Students involved in unresolved disputes are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs or designee will review the student’s situation to determine if mediation is the proper course of action. The student will be referred to a trained mediator on campus who will meet with those involved in the dispute with the goal of facilitating a discussion, if necessary.

For more information about the College’s Conflict Resolution process, call or visit the Office of Student Affairs at (478) 757-7383.