

Facilitating Difficult Discussions

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Overview

- Sources of Conflict
- Fostering Collegial Discussion
- Case Studies- Conflict Scenarios
- SO...what would you do?

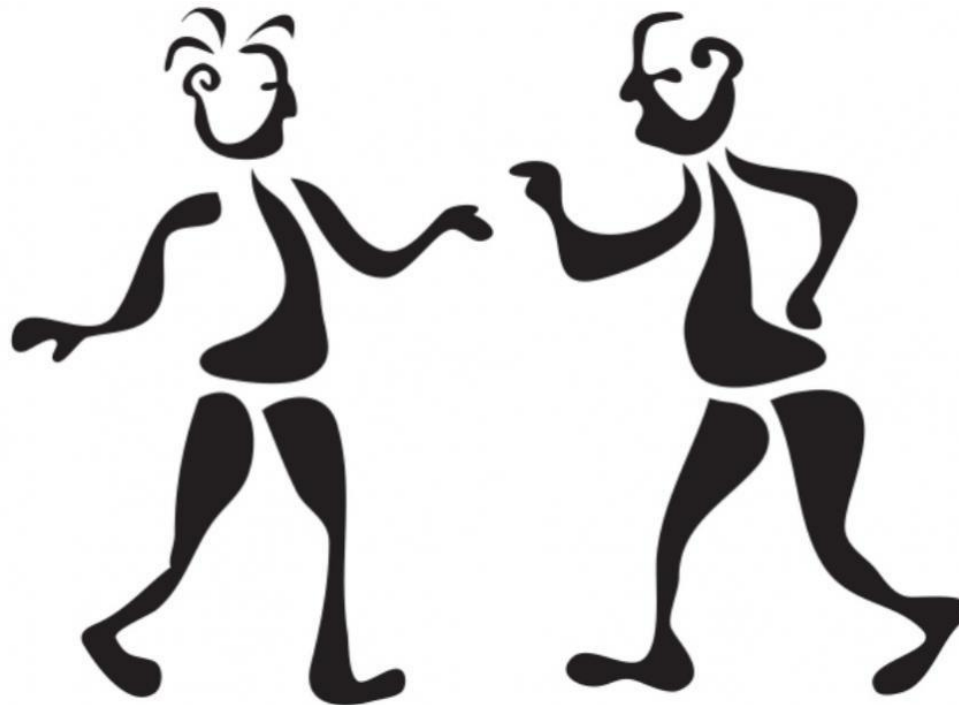


Sources of Conflict

- Conflict between Curriculum Committee and Administrators
- Conflict between Curriculum Committee and College Senate
- Conflict between members on the Curriculum Committee
- Conflict between Faculty to Faculty
- Conflict between curriculum committees at multi-district campuses

Fostering a Collegial Discussion

- Many of the topics Academic Senates and local Curriculum Committees may need to moderate are conversations with discordant viewpoints



Factors for Creating Collegial Environment

- Strategies for Reducing Conflicts:
 - Process Conflicts
 - Ask yourself, “How much control do I have over this process conflict?”
 - Identify the root cause of the problem and analyze the improvement opportunity
 - Talk first to the owner of the process.
 - Describe the current problem and get agreement.
 - Suggest a workable solution and action plan.
 - Follow-through on the plan and give recognition to the owner of the process.
 - Role conflict
 - Ask yourself, “Exactly how do I perceive my role in relation to others involved in this issue?”
 - Take responsibility for clarifying your role with others involved.
 - Be prepared to change your perception of your role.
 - Show your willingness to be flexible in achieving your organization’s goals.
 - Stay positive. View any role change in terms of the opportunities it presents.

Factors for Creating Collegial Environment – Conflict Resolution

- Strategies for Resolving Conflicts, cont'd.
 - Interpersonal Conflict
 - Ask yourself, “How much do my personal biases and prejudices affect this relationship?”
 - Write down three behaviors that you could change in order to reduce the conflict in this relationship. Commit to following through on these changes for at least three months.
 - **Ask the other person involved how you could defuse the existing conflict. Encourage feedback that might seem brutally honest.**
 - **Put yourself in their position. How do you think they view your commitment to reducing conflict in your relationship? Why?**
 - Make a list of 5 strengths that you see in the other person. Then list five ways that improving this relationship would benefit you.

Factors for Creating Collegial Environment – Conflict Resolution

- Strategies for Reducing Conflicts cont'd.
 - Clarify the discrepancy so that it can be easily described in neutral words and take action.
 - Ask permission to address the discrepancy with the other person in a friendly, non-confrontational way and gain agreement.
 - **Use “I” and “we” messages rather than “you” messages.**
 - **If there is a difference in values, always go with the higher value.**
 - Make authentic commitments.

Factors for Creating Collegial Environment – Conflict Resolution

- External Conflicts
 - Ask yourself, “How much control do I have over this factor?”
 - **Choose to fight battles that are worth the price.**
 - **Put your energy into things you “can do” rather than complain about what you “can’t do.”**
 - Do something good for others.
 - Maintain perspective and a sense of purpose.
 - **Talk to someone you trust.**



Scenario

- The Curriculum Committee has approved a new course but the VP of Academic Affairs refuses to send it to the local board for approval
- The Curriculum Committee sends a certificate to the senate for approval and the senate wants to change the title of the certificate
- The Curriculum Committee is tasked with implementing regulatory changes and mandates that apply to curriculum (course repetition). The Senate President doesn't agree with the new regulations and has instructed the Curriculum Committee to ignore them.

Scenario

- In a multi college district, one college petitions to have a 4-unit English course, the sister college wants to retain the 3-unit English course
- The philosophy department offers logic as Philosophy 5. The math department has forwarded a proposal to the curriculum committee to add the same course to their curriculum, with the same course outline of record, as Math 5. The philosophy department objects the creation of the course.