Greetings from the Ombuds Office

Conflict is natural and exists everywhere. It is how we choose to address, manage, and resolve conflict that helps us define our values as an institution.

It is my pleasure to share with you the Ombuds Office’s 2015 annual report. This year, the Ombuds team has had the opportunity of meeting and working with some of the most thoughtful, intelligent, and respectful individuals on both campuses who are either enduring hardships due to conflict or are hoping to avoid conflict by addressing concerns sooner rather than later. We are incredibly honored that over 535 people have chosen to work with us this year to address, manage, and hopefully, resolve conflict at the University.

We have initiated some new programs, including a tri-campus student conflict ambassador program at the Denver Campus and have developed a climate awareness plan which includes a climate survey, focus groups, and partnerships with leaders willing to receive the information necessary to improve the overall morale and productivity of their departments. Both initiatives have proven quite successful and further demonstrate the University’s commitment to improving the overall professional and academic experience. We are grateful for the collaboration with many individuals and units who have helped us navigate through complex situations. If you have time, please see our formula for determining how much conflict actually costs (p. 14), see our accomplishments (p. 15), and find out about our offered trainings (p. 11).

I welcome your feedback; please contact me at melissa.connell@ucdenver.edu or 303.724.2950. With gratitude and appreciation,

Melissa Connell, JD
Director, Ombuds Office
Our Team

Melissa Connell, Director
JD, CO-OP
Melissa has served in the Ombuds Office for over 17 years. Her law professor and founding member of this office, Roberta Steinhardt, inspired her to pursue ombudsing and seek alternative ways to positively resolve conflict.

Lisa Neale, Associate Director
M.S.S., CO-OP
Since 2003, Lisa has been ombudsing and has taken an active role in our training program, including helping develop our Crucial Conversations program at the University. Prior to ombudsing, Lisa was a middle school and high school teacher.

Katherine Greenwood, Ombuds
JD, Ph.D., CPCC, CO-OP
Katherine brings experience in law, academia, and conflict coaching to her ombuds work at the University. She recently started a tri-institutional student conflict ambassador program to further engage students in the process of artfully navigating conflict.

https://www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds
FY15 At a Glance

538 Visitors assisted

965 People trained in conflict management workshops

4250 Constituents informed about ombuds services and the conflict management tools we provide

Cases per campus: 70% Anschutz, 27% Denver, and 3% undefined

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What We Do

Conflict can be complicated, messy, and time-consuming. Without the assistance of the Ombuds Office, attempting to address interpersonal conflict, perceived unfairness, or challenges associated with our large, complex organization often diverts the energies of those here to teach, learn, conduct research, or support the mission. As ombuds, we provide an alternative forum for the resolution and management of conflict. Some of the services Ombuds offer:

- Provide one-on-one consultations
- Facilitate conversations, including mediations
- Conduct conflict management trainings
- Clarify policies and procedures
- Provide upward feedback
- Explore options for reporting issues and concerns

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Utilization of our Office

Our office continues to be actively utilized, with this year showing a 5% increase in visitorship from last fiscal year. Note: repeat visits are common yet not calculated into our overall visitor data.

https://www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds
### Groups Visiting Our Office: Anschutz Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Illustration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>🧑‍🏫</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>🧑‍💼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exempt &amp; classified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>🧑‍ студ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undergrad and graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PRA/Post Doc/Residents</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>🧑‍👨‍👩‍👧‍👦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Unknown</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>🧑‍👨‍👦</td>
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[https://www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds](https://www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds)
Groups Visiting Our Office: Denver Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff exempt &amp; classified</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students undergrad &amp; graduate</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Unknown</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Issues for the Anschutz Campus

- Supervisory/Performance
- Interpersonal
- Organizational
- Policies/Procedures
- Financial/Legal
- Safety
- Compensation/Benefits
- Services/Administration

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Issues for the Denver Campus

- Supervisory/Performance
- Organizational
- Interpersonal
- Policies/Procedures
- Services/Administration
- Compensation/Benefits
- Financial/Legal
- Safety

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Trainings and Workshops

Giving employees the tools to effectively manage conflict minimizes the impact of disputes for the University. The Ombuds Office does not charge for training time, only materials, when applicable. Some of our offered trainings include:

- Conflict Management for Supervisors
- DiSC Personality Assessments
- Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Crucial Conversations *(University cost = $265/person vs. Executive Forum's cost =$1200/person)*
- Microabrasions and Microaffirmations
- Bullying and Incivility in the Workplace
- Communication Strategies for Student Leaders
- Using Conflict Styles Wisely
- Creating Civility in the Workplace
- Creativity: A Code to Crack Conflict
- Comfort Strategies for Conducting Uncomfortable Conversations

*Compared to Colorado firm, Executive Forum's training fees, the University saved $139,315 for 149 Crucial Conversations participants in FY15

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Demonstrating Effectiveness: Improving our Culture & Climate

- In FY15, the Ombuds Office worked closely with Facilities Management and the Office of Information Technology to assist in the development of more positive, civil climates. Our activities included anonymous surveys, focus groups, recommendations for training, and one-on-one consultations with executives and upper-level management. Outcomes included a management certificate program, monthly newsletters, and improved working conditions for staff.
- The cost of conflict is usually not included in annual budgets, however we know that its impact does cost the University money (see page 13). While many departments and schools seek consultation, climate surveys, and training outside of the University, our office was able to provide these same services free of charge. We conservatively estimate, with the number of executives and leaders we worked with in FY15, we saved the University well over $200,000, not accounting for any averted litigation costs.*

*Based on an average coaching/facilitation rate of $9000/person from Colorado firm Resnick Partners, a frequently used firm on the Anschutz campus.

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The Tangible Costs of Conflict

Demonstrating the effectiveness of an Ombuds Office has always been challenging because much of the work is done behind closed doors. Here are examples of the tangible costs directly related to conflict in the workplace, noting that these are general statistics and individual workplaces may vary in their experiences:

- Recent studies show that more than 44% of managers spend more than 20% of their time addressing workplace conflict issues.
  
  *Working Dynamics, April 2014*

- The cost savings of avoiding the hiring/retention of a toxic worker is $12,489.
  
  *Harvard Business School, November 2015*

- According to a 2008 study, more than 1/3 of employees cited conflict as a reason for leaving a job, almost 10% stated a workplace conflict caused the failure of a project.
  
  *CCP, Inc. (Publishers of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Assessment), 2008*

- According to Ernst & Young, the cost of losing and replacing an employee may be as high as 150% of the department's employee's annual salary.
  
  *Entrepreneur.com, June 21, 2010*

- $700,000 is the U.S. average jury award in wrongful termination lawsuits.
  
  *Conflict Solutions Center, 2014*

*https://www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds*
The Intangible Costs of Conflict

Only recently have the intangible costs of conflict begun to gain awareness in the workplace. Increased attention related to workplace bullying and incivility have helped to highlight the consequences of conflict, which include increases in the following symptoms:

- Stress, frustration, anxiety
- Loss of sleep
- Strained relationships
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Employee turnover
- Loss of productivity
- Employee complaints
- Workplace sabotage
- Injury and accidents
- Disability claims
- Sick leave

What is the Actual Cost of Conflict?
Answer the following questions:
1. Looking back over the past 6 months, how much time, each week, on average, did you spend dealing with conflict? _____ hours/weeks
2. What is your rate of pay per hour? $ _____
3. Multiply your answer in #1 by your answer in #2 = _____/week
4. Multiply your answer in #3 by the number of weeks you work each year = _____. This is about 1/4 the cost of conflict for you in the workplace. Hidden costs include poor morale, attrition, wasted/nonproductive time, poor decision making, discrimination, harassment, stress-related medical conditions, workers' compensation claims, violence and lawsuits.

*Conflict Solutions Center, Copyright 2014

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Accomplishments for FY15: Internal

- Designated as confidential resource for Title IX issues;
- Created the Student Ambassador Conflict Resolution program; a tri-institutional effort designed to promote conflict resolution models, improve students' leadership & communication styles, and promote positive campus relations;
- Created a 12-week climate improvement exercise; intended to promote trust, safety, and transparency;
- All members of the Ombuds Office now Certified Organizational Ombuds Practitioners (CO-OP);
- Worked with three departments to conduct climate surveys and provided consultations to leaders in order to improve their cultures;
- Sponsored Conflict Resolution Month activities on each campus.

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Accomplishments for FY15: External

- Leadership roles in our professional organizations
  - International Ombudsman Association chairmanships
  - California Caucus of College and University Ombuds convener and editor of journal;
- National recognition for CU Denver | Anschutz Ombuds Office
  - Presentations at international conferences, mentoring of new ombuds;
- Continued collaboration with other entities, e.g., CU Boulder, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and Community College of Denver to create and deliver conflict management workshops and seminars;
- Collaboration with University of Denver and Phoenix Strategies to sponsor guest speaker Dr. Joseph Folger, Temple University, to promote the benefits of mediation.

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