

## **Lewis & Clark Library System's Conflict Resolution Procedure**

Typically, concerns over service or problems with LCLS staff members should be directed to the Executive Director or another appropriate Lewis & Clark Library System employee. Employees of member libraries are encouraged to attend interest group meetings and share opinions and ideas with LCLS staff and other LCLS members. Occasionally, these approaches may not prevent a conflict from occurring. The Conflict Resolution Procedure gives members and LCLS employees a chance to resolve conflict in an informal setting with the help of other librarians.

### **Who May Initiate the Conflict Resolution Procedure**

- an employee of a member library hoping to improve his or her working relationship with any LCLS staff member
- an LCLS staff member hoping to improve his or her working relationship with an employee of a member library
- an employee of a member library who, on behalf of that library, wants to resolve a conflict concerning service provided by the system
- an employee of one member library hoping to improve his or her working relationship with an employee of another member library

Each member library should determine the circumstances under which someone other than that library's director can initiate the process. The circumstances under which an LCLS employee can initiate the process will be determined by the LCLS Executive Director.

No one, including an LCLS employee, can be forced to participate in this program. It will only work if both parties in a conflict are committed to working together to find a solution.

### **How It Works**

After discussing the problem with both parties the LAC Chair will decide if The Conflict Resolution Procedure can help resolve the problem. If the LAC Chair decides against using this procedure, both parties will be contacted by the Chair with an explanation. If a party still believes that the Conflict Resolution Procedure will help, he or she can present the problem to the Librarian's Advisory Council, which can vote to continue with the Conflict Resolution Procedure.

If the LAC Chair has a conflict of interest, he or she may decide that it's inappropriate to direct the Conflict Resolution Procedure. In that situation the LAC Chair will appoint another LAC member to fill the role of LAC Chair in the conflict resolution procedure.

The LAC Chair may choose between the following options or design a different one. If one option doesn't work, the LAC Chair can choose to try something different.

#### Option 1

If the LAC Chair believes the problem would best be handled in a small group the LAC Chair will appoint a facilitator to help both parties discuss the problem. The facilitator can be a member of LAC, the LAC Chair, an LCLS employee, or any other member of the system. The LAC chair will work with both parties to find a neutral person everyone feels comfortable with to serve as facilitator. The facilitator should be creative in finding a constructive way to resolve the problem. It may be best to hold meetings in a neutral setting. If agreeable to both parties, discussions held under this option can remain confidential.

If the conflict is not resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, they should report to the LAC Chair, who will decide what additional action, if any, can be taken.

#### Option 2

The LAC Chair can appoint a formal subcommittee to consider the problem.

If non-LAC members are included in this subcommittee, it will be known as a task force. The subcommittee or task force will speak to both parties together or separately, examine the problem, and discuss possible solutions. During the conflict=s remediation, the task force will report to LAC monthly regarding the situation. The task force or subcommittee may report the problem resolved or, if necessary, present a recommendation to LAC.

#### Option 3

The LAC Chair may recommend that the Librarian=s Advisory Council as a whole examine the problem and take appropriate action.

#### Option 4

Sometimes, a member may attempt to use the Conflict Resolution Procedure to resolve a problem that is beyond the scope of LAC. In this situation, the LAC Chair or another LAC member can volunteer to assist that member in presenting the problem to the appropriate body such as the LCLS Board of Directors.

#### **What if it Doesn't Work?**

The Conflict Resolution Procedure may not always resolve the problem. In those cases, one or more parties in a conflict may choose to file a formal grievance. LAC can write a letter to the Board with recommendations or it can choose to take no additional action.

#### **Conflict Resolution Program and the Grievance Procedure How are they connected?**

Lewis & Clark Library System is a growing network of diverse libraries. The people working for member libraries and LCLS Headquarters are dedicated to excellent service and hold strong opinions. In this environment, conflicts will occasionally occur. The Conflict Resolution Program and Grievance Procedure offer two different ways to resolve differences.

The Conflict Resolution Program can be used to deal with a variety of problems. It's not limited to those situations covered by the Grievance Procedure. Ideally, members should use the Conflict Resolution Program before using the formal Grievance Procedure. However, a member is not required to use the Conflict Resolution Program before pursuing a formal grievance.

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