

**College of Visual Arts
Conflict Resolution Process**

Section 1: Scope and Purpose

This conflict resolution process applies to workplace conflicts involving faculty, staff, administrators, and student workers at the College of Visual Arts (CVA). This program provides a conflict resolution process that fulfills the following goals:

- (a) **Dialogue is encouraged.** College employees have a structure within which to express their concerns when conflicts emerge in the workplace, seek skilled assistance in resolving conflicts, and engage in constructive dialogue with the people directly involved.
- (b) **Interests are identified.** This process helps people reorient their perspective from their “rights” or “positions” to their “interests.” Interests are the parties’ needs that underlie their positions in a dispute; when people recognize their own interests and the interests of others, perspectives change and constructive problem solving can occur. Options are identified for creative solutions.
- (c) **Accords are built.** Harmonious working relationships are restored through addressing needs and reaching a mutually acceptable solution.
- (d) **Fair hearings are conducted.** If a conflict cannot be resolved through the informal resolution process, formal hearings are available to resolve the issues.

Section 2: Conflict Resolution Procedures

(a) Conflict Resolution Officer

The Vice President and General Counsel of the college shall serve as the Conflict Resolution Officer. It shall be her role to coordinate the process of resolving workplace complaints.

(b) Initiating a complaint

An employee initiates a complaint by submitting a written statement to the Conflict Resolution Officer including the complainant’s name, the respondent individual(s) involved, the incident giving rise to the complaint, and the relief that the complainant seeks. The complaint must be filed not less than thirty (30) calendar days after the incident.

(c) Informal resolution

Most complaints can be resolved through the informal resolution process. The Conflict Resolution Officer shall meet with the complainant and the respondent within fifteen (15) days of receiving the complaint. The informal resolution process encourages the parties to recognize their interests and those of others involved, identify options for amicable resolution, and reach an agreement. If an agreement is not reached, the complaint enters the formal resolution process.

If the complaint is resolved through an informal process, the terms of the agreement resolving the complaint are communicated to the President and Chief Academic Officer.

(d) Formal resolution

If informal resolution of the complaint does not occur, the complaint is resolved through a formal hearing process coordinated by the Conflict Resolution Officer.

(1) Formation of Hearing Panel

The Conflict Resolution Officer may serve as panel chair or may designate another employee to chair the panel. The panel chair, with the advice of the Conflict Resolution Officer, shall select two other employees who shall serve as panel members for the hearing.

- (2) **Hearing Panel Procedures**
The hearing panel shall review the written evidence offered by the complainant in support of the complaint and take testimony, if they in their sole discretion deem testimony to be necessary. The hearing panel shall prepare a written report recommending a resolution of the matter and provide copies of the decision to the Conflict Resolution Officer, the complainant, and the respondent. The Conflict Resolution Officer shall give the complainant appeal instructions.
- (3) Within fifteen (15) days after receiving the panel's decision, the complainant may appeal the decision by presenting to the CVA President and Chief Academic Officer a written appeal statement of reasons why the panel's decision should be modified. In the absence of the president, the appeal may be presented to the Conflict Resolution Officer to be forwarded to the president. During school vacation periods, the appeal instructions may specify a longer appeal period, if necessary to preserve the complainant's right to appeal.
- (4) The president shall review the panel's written decision and the complainant's written appeal statement. The president, in her sole discretion, may request that the complainant and/or the respondent or the Conflict Resolution Officer meet with her to discuss the matter before ruling on the appeal. The President shall communicate her ruling on the appeal to the complainant, the respondent, and the Conflict Resolution Officer; the President's decision is final.
- (5) If the complainant does not file a timely appeal, the panel's decision becomes final upon the expiration of the appeal period.