Conflict Management

Every group has members with diverse backgrounds, ideas and opinions. As a result, your group may encounter conflict at some point. Conflict is something people typically try to avoid because we haven’t learned how to address it effectively. Conflict can become a problem when it impacts group productivity, and lowers morale.

Understanding and learning to manage conflict is one of the most important skills you can possess. When conflict is effectively managed it can bring important issues to the surface, encourage the team to look at all points of view, and improve the quality of team decisions because all team member’s ideas will be valued. Conflict can also increase creativity by forcing the group to look outside the box and encourage participation of members if they feel there is a format for them to openly disagree.

What Causes Conflict?
1. Communication Problems (i.e. members are not informed about important decisions, programs, or events).
2. Members are unclear about tasks assigned to them.
3. Members do not have the resources needed to follow-through on tasks.
4. Values and opinions of members clash.
5. Leaders don’t follow-through on decisions.

Ways People Deal with Conflict:
*All the styles listed below have both advantages and disadvantage’s and can be useful in different situations.

1. Avoiding – this can take the form of withdrawing, addressing the issue at a later time, or evading the issue.
2. Competing – pursuing your concerns at the expense of team members.
3. Accommodating- neglecting your own concerns to satisfy team members concerns.
4. Compromising – team members identify a mutually acceptable solution by finding some middle ground (where each party has to give up a little).
5. Collaborating – working together to find a solution that satisfies the concerns of the team.

How to Use a Collaborative Approach:
1. Start by determining the nature of the conflict (values, expectations).
2. Share with the individual the effect the conflict is having on you.
3. Actively listen. Try not to think about how you want to respond while the other person is talking. Avoid argument provoking responses. Paraphrase what the other person is saying to ensure understanding.
4. Generate a list of possible solutions as a team.
5. Select a solution together that is acceptable to all team members.
6. Develop a plan for implementing the solution and review after a period of time.

Effective Confrontation Strategies:
1. Go to the source, rather than talking to other team members about the problem you have with a specific person.
2. Show respect for the individual by confronting them in private.
3. Collect all the facts and information before you
confront someone.

4. Listen to the individual’s perspective on the situation and try to understand their point of view (but don’t excuse their behavior or get trapped by excuses).

5. Share with the person you’re confronting how their actions are impacting the organization.

6. Outline the consequences, set clear standards, and follow-through with agreed upon solutions made during the discussion.

NOTES:

MISSION STATEMENT
To create a vibrant campus environment by educating and empowering student leaders through implementation of campus programs and the celebration of Ursuline Traditions.