

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

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## ASJA Mediation Component Gaining Strength

by Rick Olshak (Illinois State University) and Susan Trageser (University of North Carolina-Greensboro)



The Twelfth Annual International Conference of the **Association for Student Judicial Affairs** (ASJA) held this past February in Clearwater Beach, Florida, saw a continuing association commitment to the incorporation of mediation into the student disciplinary process in colleges and universities. These efforts build on a Mediation Resolution passed by the association in 1994 that supports the use of mediation as an adjunct to campus judicial processes, and the establishment of an On-Campus Alternative Dispute Resolution working group in 1997.

For the third straight year, the annual conference opened with a full-day workshop dedicated to mediation training. This year's session focused on training the trainer in the higher education setting, and was facilitated by Nancy Geist Giacomini (University of Delaware), Bill Fischer (University of New Hampshire) and Rick Olshak (Illinois State University). The program offered a comprehensive overview of new training materials (detailed below) and sessions on developing role plays, coaching, developing effective intake processes, physical set-up, quality control, and other topics. Approximately twenty four people attended the program.

In addition, the conference concluded with a half-day post-conference workshop for over fifty participants on incorporating a mediation program into a campus judicial process. The presenters: Kim Novak (Texas A&M University), Lyn Davis (University of Pennsylvania), Bill Fischer, and Rick Olshak shared their own experiences in designing and implementing mediation programs and reviewed such topics as needs identification, community involvement, mediation models, funding, confidentiality, agreements and enforcement, recruiting and selecting mediators, mediation training, and developing effective intake and outtake procedures.

These programs demonstrate ASJA's recognition of the convergence of mediation into many campus judicial programs, as well as ASJA's commitment to providing quality support and training to professionals in this area, according to Susan Trageser, ASJA's ADR Representative and Assistant Director of Student Conduct at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. In addition, ASJA is actively pursuing plans with

Rick Olshak, Director of Student Dispute Resolution Services at Illinois State University and president-elect of ASJA, to publish a second generation of Olshak's training materials for campus mediation programs. The program, now titled "Training mediators in the College and University Setting: A Guide from the Association for Student Judicial Affairs" is in final editing and should be available sometime during 2000.

ASJA's plans also include a **third annual mediation training track** at the Donald D. Gehring Campus Judicial Affairs Training Institute **this June** at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island. For information on the institute, visit the ASJA web site at <http://asja.tamu.edu>

ASJA will be seeking member feedback through a planned membership survey. The purpose of the survey will be to gauge membership needs and provide services, training and support based on those needs. Campus judicial affairs has seen a steady increase in the number of programs offering some types of mediation option during the past several years, and this will likely have implications for future programs, services, and materials.

For more information on campus mediation and judicial affairs, contact Susan Trageser at (336) 334-5516 or [trageser@uncg.edu](mailto:trageser@uncg.edu) To inquire about bringing mediation training to your campus, you may contact Rick Olshak at [rtolsha@ilstu.edu](mailto:rtolsha@ilstu.edu).