

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

Volume 1, Number 1, Jan/Feb 2000

Building for the Future: Connecting up with High School Mediation Program Alumni



While the number of mediation programs at colleges and universities is growing rapidly, with well over 200 programs now up and running, the number is no where near that of high school mediation projects, which number in the 1000's. Each year students with mediation training and experience graduate from highschools across North America, and many of them go on to college. Unfortunately, there is no system currently in place to help these skilled conflict resolvers hook up with budding or even well-established college and university mediation initiatives and conflict studies programs, and much less to find each other on large university campuses. I believe it is now time for the higher education conflict resolution community to do a better job welcoming the high school mediation program alumni in their midst.

With this in mind, [Campus Mediation Resources](http://www.campus-adr.org/) (<http://www.campus-adr.org/>) and the **Higher Education Focus Project** are interested in helping to build a national networking system for high school mediation program alumni. The details of how this might best be accomplished are still quite sketchy, however, and we are looking for help and ideas. I (Bill Warters) have had preliminary conversations with Heather Prichard, Director of the [Conflict Resolution in Education Network](http://www.crenet.org/) (<http://www.crenet.org/>) (CREnet), and she agrees that the idea is timely and of real value, and she has offered to support the initiative in whatever way CREnet can within the limits presented by their admittedly small staff and already rather full agenda. CREnet and its predecessor NAME have been pioneers in the K-12 conflict resolution efforts, and thus NAME/CREnet members could play a vital role in helping to identify recent and soon-to-be-graduating high school peer mediators and help feed them into a higher education support network.

We also need to identify and consider the interests of peer mediation program alumni themselves. These may include, for instance, access to information on degree programs in conflict resolution at the

undergraduate level; scholarships for conflict resolution students; opportunities to participate in on-campus or on-line conflict resolution skill-building and skill-maintenance sessions; information on existing campus mediation programs and how they can get involved; models and strategies for setting up new mediation initiatives at campuses that are lacking them; and opportunities to identify and then meet other conflict resolution trained students on their college campus. Other ideas may surface as well.

Existing conflict studies programs and higher education mediation projects may also have interests that a network could help address. These may include access to potential students who will major in their area if they are informed about it; links to existing campus student "sub-cultures" that peer mediation program alumni have integrated themselves into, and which might be used to help increase the use of mediation services on campus; a source of volunteers to work in campus mediation programs, or to serve as coaches at mediation trainings; potential trainers for conflict resolution service-learning projects going into local schools; and other ideas I haven't yet imagined.

If you are interested in getting involved somehow with building a new network along these lines, and especially if you are a high school mediation program alumni or a person with access to funds that might support such an initiative, please [send me a note](#) indicating your interest. Mention any ideas you might have about what is needed and how we might get started most effectively. Also, if you are an alumni, please be sure to indicate this in the [newsletter subscription and registration form](#) (<http://www.campus-adr.org/CMHER/ReportResources/Subscribe.html>) used to sign up for the Conflict Management in Higher Education Report. Finally, please consider joining us in the higher education events of [ADR Cyberweek](#) (http://www.campus-adr.org/CMHER/ReportEvents/Edition1_1/Cyberweek1_1.html), where we can begin to explore these ideas together in some more detail.

By working together, I believe we can significantly strengthen the growing conflict resolution in higher education community, and in the process help better the living and learning climate on campuses across North America.