

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

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Current Trends in Graduate ADR Programs: Preliminary Findings

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This article presents a few preliminary findings from a two-year study of all graduate ADR and CR programs in the United States. The study concentrates on 45 areas of inquiry utilizing semi-structured interviews of program directors and coordinators concerning issues such as the growth and direction of their programs. As this project nears completion we are moving into the second phase that will focus on international programs. Below we briefly present a few intriguing categories from our findings.

What is in a Name?

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and conflict resolution (CR) have developed within the last two decades into a joint area of graduate study for which certificates, masters, and doctoral degrees are now being awarded. Generally speaking, ADR and CR are categorical program labels that create a link to the prevailing dispute settlement systems. Many programs that prefer the ADR label use this as a means of identifying with conflict intervention processes and practices in relation to court-based activities. Conflict resolution programs, on the other hand, often tend to downplay the connection between what they teach or do and court-based systems. Programs in this category often use conceptual frameworks (e.g., structural and systemic conflict analysis) and techniques (e.g. early warning systems) that address complex social conflict.

Depending on where a program is located in a university structure and the philosophy of the people in charge these labels can make a significant difference. Of the official program titles for graduate programs in the United States the most common phrases used are

- Conflict Resolution 28
- Dispute Resolution 22
- Peace Studies/Science 21
- Conflict Management 13

There are also specialization titles such as International Peace and Conflict Resolution, Conflict Transformation, Litigation and Conflict Management, Conflict Management and Peacemaking, Conflict Resolution and Peaceable Schools, Psychology and Conflict Management. and Peace and World Order Studies. The field is genuinely creative!

The Growth of Graduate Programs

Historically, graduate ADR and CR programs are rather young. In 1985, there were four established graduate programs in the United States as well as a handful in Canada and Europe. Only one of them awarded a degree that specifically stated it was in conflict management. Since then ADR and CR has captured the imagination and attention of university administrators, faculty members and students and the resulting demands for courses, services and degree granting programs has rapidly grown. As of spring 2000, there are approximately 130 graduate programs internationally that offer certificates, minor concentrations, masters and doctorates. Of the 130 programs the largest number in one country is 80 programs which are located in the United States. There are a large number of programs located in private universities and of those that have a religious affiliation we have seen an increase in programs at Catholic, Mennonite, Quaker, and Methodist schools. In total 28 states and the District of Columbia have graduate ADR or CR programs. California has 11 programs; Indiana 8, Massachusetts 6, Texas 6, Ohio 5, New York 4, Pennsylvania 4 and the rest are scattered throughout the country.

It is too early to provide detail to the other 50 programs located around the world. Of the 130 programs the authors know of only 4 -- George Mason, Nova Southeastern, Uppsala (Sweden) and the University of South Australia -- award doctorates directly in ADR or CR. We also know from the present research that within the last five years approximately 14 other universities have created ADR concentrations within Ph.D. programs that provide students with some level of ADR expertise. The rest of these programs offer ADR certificates, masters directly in ADR or concentrations attached to other masters programs.

Multiple Origins

From our conversations with program directors and other participants we now recognize that a good deal of our field of knowledge owes its development to many disciplines and depending on the program focus to specific pre-existing fields of study such as peace studies, labor relations and urban and regional planning. The interesting finding is that many people being interviewed see the multi-disciplinary origins and direction of ADR and CR programs yet somehow find it in their overall world view to state that one or another discipline or area has more of an impact on the field than others. Sociology, Psychology,

Political Science and Public Administration are favorites of many of those interviewed.

A Link between Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Development?

Some programs see their development as a direct result of the existence of undergraduate programs and recent events on their campuses. One of the plausible reasons for the evolution of graduate ADR and CR programs comes from the academy itself in the **sizable base of undergraduate peace studies programs** that have acted as one of the primary feeders for these graduate programs. According to the Program in Peace and World Security Studies (PAWSS) as of January 1999 **there are well over 160 undergraduate peace studies and conflict resolution programs in the United States alone**. Not surprisingly, undergraduate education in Peace Studies has been around many decades longer and has subsequently outpaced similar graduate programs. For instance, Earlham College's program is over 50 years old and Iona College's program is closing in on 30. On the other hand, the older graduate ADR programs such as Syracuse and George Mason are only in their mid to late teens.

Another trend that is supporting graduate ADR program development stems from the incredible growth of ADR services being provided on campuses that have quickly outpaced their academic program counterparts. According to Dr. William Warters of Wayne State University's Mediating Theory and Democratic Systems program, as of June 1998 there are at least 164 campus mediation centers in the United States alone. In addition, there are at least 35 law schools (probably more) that have clinics that specialize in ADR services. Another rapidly increasing service trend is to incorporate dispute resolution managers, such as university ombudspersons, directly into university systems. At present there are at least 120 active university ombudspeople in the United States. What is most important to note about these service trends is that approximately 40% of the ombuds offices, 60% of the campus mediation and 70% of the ADR legal clinical services are less than fifteen years old.

Placement of Programs within University Structures

We have found that ADR and CR programs exist in many parts of the academy. ADR and CR programs are found in Communication, Anthropology, Psychology, Social Psychology, Business, Law, Economics, Sociology, International Relations, Urban and Regional Planning, City Planning, Cross-Cultural Studies, Intercultural Relations, Public and Environmental Affairs, Public Service, Economics, Education, Political Science, Peace Studies, Women's Studies, African American Studies, Public Administration, Family Studies, Natural Resources and Social and Systemic Studies to name a few. ADR and CR institutes, programs, centers and departments are also found in

multi-disciplinary settings such as the Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts at Syracuse University. A tentative data pattern distinguishes between programs in professional and well-established academic disciplines to more general ADR or CR focused programs. In more established professional and academic programs there is a strong tendency to create a sense of ascendancy wherein knowledge development and practical utility of ADR and CR is presented as being most useful in one specific area of social interaction. It is also interesting to note that in many multi-disciplinary programs there generally is a broader sense of the utility of the knowledge and practice of conflict analysis and conflict intervention.

Curriculum

The curriculum of many programs varies widely. The predominant factor in curriculum offerings is primarily a function of the unit housing the program. For instance the International Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) program housed with the School of International Service at American University places a strong emphasis on international topics, theory, and application. Another model is the more generic course offering within a specific social science department that tends to emphasize one or perhaps two dominant disciplinary schools of thought.

Tentatively speaking the following tracks are found scattered throughout many programs. Many models appear to place at least some emphasis in the areas of

- **social competency skills** (e.g. communication and problem solving);
- **process specialization** (negotiation, mediation and facilitation theory and practice)
- **substantive specialization** (e.g. victim offender, ethnic, business, gender, environmental, law, public policy, etc.);
- **theoretical analysis** (e.g. micro and macro theories of conflict and conflict resolution and specialty such as gender);
- **the synthesis and evaluation of knowledge via first hand practical application** (e.g. supervised field experiences, mentoring programs, internships);
- **experiential classroom based learning** (e.g. laboratory and classroom simulations, role plays, exploratory gaming); and
- **basic and applied research** (e.g. controlled laboratory experiments and field research).

The tracks that are seen as being in the least state of maturity are the practical experiential learning courses. There is a general feeling among many of the programs that practical experience is important but some struggle with the reliance on one area of practical application say the courts while also emphasizing the universal application of ADR and CR skills. In more generic programs courses in specialization areas vary wildly from none to the ability to choose throughout a major university's entire course offerings.

The range of credit hours among US programs is huge. The least intensive requires only 6 credits or two courses while the most intensive program that requires more than 90 credits or 30 courses. As degree plans vary so do the number of credit hours. What is most interesting to note is that the more established programs most often have more requirements for the successful completion of the degree plan.

Generally speaking specializations, concentrations, minors, emphases, tracks, sub-concentrations and areas range in length from 11 to 24 credits. Certificate programs range from 6 to 25 credits. Juris Doctorates (J.D.) range from 84 to 91 credits with 15 to 21 credits in ADR or CR concentrations. Masters of Law (LL.M.) curriculum are uniformly 24 credits in length with no specified number of credits being specified to ADR or CR courses. Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs range from 30 to 56 credits depending on the ADR or CR concentration that varies widely. Masters of Art or Sciences (M.A. M.S.) range from 30 to 81 credits. Sub-concentrations in ADR or CR range from 12 to 24 credits. Doctorate Degrees (Ph.D.) in particular the social sciences, behavioral sciences and humanities range from 57 to 90 credits. Some of the programs completely emphasize ADR or CR (four programs) while others (about 14) have concentration tracks.

The Need for Programs to Specialize

Another variation among degree granting programs is the tendency to focus on specific areas of substantive development so as to carve out a distinct identity and role within the field. There are an interesting variety of substantive based programs among which to choose. For instance, one can focus their ADR graduate study in: international conflict (e.g. American, George Mason, Syracuse), community and urban (e.g. Wayne State), environmental (e.g. University of Arizona, Cornell, Nova Southeastern, Syracuse) human services (St. Edwards), cross cultural (e.g. Antioch), theory building (e.g. Syracuse), peace studies (e.g. Notre Dame, Penn State), conflict resolution in education (e.g. Lesley College, The University of Massachusetts at Boston, Nova Southeastern), management (e.g. Cambridge College), labor relations (e.g. Cornell), communication (e.g. Clark University, Temple, Utah), public policy (e.g. Duquesne, University of Texas), family (e.g. LaTrobe), general practice (Pepperdine), behavioral science and negotiations (e.g. California State Dominguez Hills), psychology (e.g. Teachers College Columbia), political science (Hawaii), or theology (e.g. Bethany Theological Seminary) and ecumenics (e.g. Irish School of Ecumenics). Another variation is to provide ADR curriculum within professional schools such as law (e.g. Arkansas, George Washington, Hamline, University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law) and business (e.g. Northwestern) that typically stress skills enhancing professional competencies.

What is next?

In an upcoming publication of the entire study many more categories will be made available. However, for the time being these tentative findings should illustrate that graduate ADR and CR programs are developing in the most creative of ways in many parts of the academy. The variety of specializations and practical applications being created by sister programs clearly demonstrates the flexibility and utility of ADR and CR knowledge in many facets of society. However, we also need to caution you with one more data pattern that focuses on perceptions regarding job opportunities and what is being taught in various programs. There is not a uniform understanding or agreement among programs either regionally or nationally on the nature or increasing number of job opportunities within the ADR and CR field. Many participants do see the absolute need for everyone in the field to educate the public at large about ADR and CR. As a developing area of study and practice many also agree that those students who get involved promoting the field (and themselves) are likely to move on to job opportunities within the field. For those students who have concerns about the perceived lack of opportunities upon graduation these findings should help provide some encouragement. Many programs are quite good demonstrating that what we do in ADR or CR is applicable in every group, organization, and institution. We are encouraged by what we are finding in the present research and suggest that students and faculty should proceed with the idea that we are only limited by our own imaginations.

For extensive information and links to graduate programs and university based ADR research centers see Nova Southeastern University's Department of Dispute Resolution's web page at -- <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/DR/>. For information on undergraduate programs see the PAWS Program in Peace and World Security Studies which is part of the Five College Consortium at <http://pawss.hampshire.edu/>.