

Institutionalizing CRE in Higher Education

By Jennifer Batton

Five years ago, the Commission began a pilot project with the American Association of Health Educators and the Conflict Resolution Education Network to integrate conflict resolution into higher education. Faculty at Ohio's colleges and universities are invited to take part in an annual Conflict Resolution Education Institute. Currently 36 Ohio colleges and universities have participated. The objectives for participants are to understand the rationale for the integration of conflict resolution into higher education, to demonstrate the knowledge of core concepts, and to develop an action plan to implement conflict resolution education in teacher education, thus providing tools for integrating conflict management into their curriculum for new teachers. The next Institute will be offered during the spring of 2005 in Cleveland, Ohio. Educators also have access to university-based distance learning courses on how to implement school conflict resolution programs offered through the University of Cincinnati.

To further expand its work in this area, the Commission recently partnered with Temple University, Cleveland State University, Kent State University and Cuyahoga Community College to design the Conflict Resolution Education in Teacher Education (CRETE) project, which addresses two crises in urban education across the U.S. - teacher attrition and unsafe, conflict-ridden learning environments. Through this project we will develop a conflict resolution education (CRE)/social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and training process for higher education faculty and develop a CRE/SEL curriculum and training process for education majors outside the higher education course delivery system. The impact of curricula and training processes on teacher success in classroom management, establishing positive classroom climate, student learning and academic achievement, and on teacher satisfaction and teacher retention will be evaluated. A version of the curriculum suitable for use in traditional and on-line/distance education formats will be developed along with a mentoring structure that utilizes university-based teacher educators and school-based educators. The first pilot training occurred on August 19th and 20th, 2004 at Cleveland State University.

In an attempt to further integrate conflict resolution methods into the daily operations of Ohio's colleges and universities, the Commission will be offering two trainings for university ombuds offices, residence life offices, judicial affairs offices, and human resources. These will cover the topics of conflict resolution systems design in higher education November 15th - 16th, 2004 and mediation in university settings on March 30th and 31st, 2005. They will be conducted in Columbus, Ohio by Georgia State University's Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution.

For more information on upcoming Institutes and Workshops for Higher Education offered by the Commission, please contact Jennifer Batton, Director of Education Programs at 614-644-9275 or via e-mail at: Jennifer.Batton@cdr.state.oh.us