

Cancer Biology Dept. Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Procedure

In the event that conflict should arise within a laboratory or classroom setting, (student-student conflict, student-mentor conflict, student-professor conflict, etc.) we have established a workflow to help resolve these situations:

We understand that situations of conflict can be nuanced and complex, and propose the following steps for you to consider in order to resolve the situation you might be experiencing.

1. Discuss concerns with your mentor.
 - a. Clear communication between all parties is essential for resolution of conflict. This necessitates that in most cases, the first step is to clearly communicate about concerns or conflicts with your primary mentor to ensure that they are aware of the situation.
2. If matters cannot be resolved by conversations with your mentor, next steps include bringing in a third party to help mediate these conflicts. We propose the following possible actions for your consideration:
 - a. Discuss issues with the **CB Graduate Program Director** (Dr. Joan Lewis-Wambi).
 - i. The director of your graduate program is a great resource to talk through situations of conflict or tension in order to find a solution. They can mediate a conversation between both parties (student-student conflict, student-mentor conflict, student-professor conflict) to decide on next steps on how to move forward.
 - ii. If the director is the mentor/professor that you are experiencing conflict with, we encourage you to consider the following alternative resources.
 - b. Discuss issues with another faculty member who is on the **CB Advisory Committee**
 - i. The **Department of Cancer Biology Advisory Committee** includes faculty from the department (**Drs. Shrikant Anant, Stefan Bossmann, Prasad Dandawate, Michael Vansaun, Joan Lewis-Wambi, Michael Washburn, and Scott Weir**). You can reach out to any of the members of the Advisory Committee.
 - ii. If issues have not been resolved after conversations with your primary mentor and director of graduate studies, you can contact a faculty member on the CB Advisory Committee. This committee can advise, and mediate if necessary to help resolve issues.
 - iii. If you wish to stay anonymous, you can inform a faculty member of the Advisory Committee, and they will present your case to the Advisory Committee for discussion on your behalf.
 - c. Discuss issues with student executives of the Cancer Biology Society (CBS)
 - i. CBS was created to represent and support students within the CB graduate program. Students that hold executive positions within the board are upper-level graduate students who have valuable experience and knowledge within academia and the department of CB. If this knowledge seems applicable to the situational conflict that you are experiencing, you can address this with a CBS executive member for further discussion and advice.
 - ii. Furthermore, the CBS executive member that you choose to discuss your situation with could serve as an advocate by meeting with you and the faculty of the CBP Education Committee. This would give you the opportunity to gain both student and faculty advice.

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- iii. If you wish to stay anonymous, you can notify the CBS executive member of this, and they can present your case to the Education Committee for discussion on your behalf.
- d. Discuss issues with your Student Advisory PhD Committee
 - i. Your Student Advisory Committee (SAC) should serve as experts not only in areas of science, but also in areas of career and professional advising. We encourage you to consider discussing situations of conflict or concerns with your SAC for advice, as they have experience within and outside of the department. They can also serve to mediate mentee-mentor conversations in SAC meetings.
3. Early discussion and mediation of interpersonal conflict is essential to reduce the likelihood of escalation to situations that might lead to assembly of a grievance committee. The Department of Cancer Biology and the Cancer Biology Society are great resources to contact if you feel you are in a situation that needs to be resolved. Reaching out for mediation, or even just advice and another perspective is an excellent first step to resolve any issues or misunderstandings.

For any questions regarding this workflow and next steps, please reach out to any of the following contacts listed on the CB Advisory Committee or the CBS Executive Board. This workflow is not absolute, as each situation can be complicated and nuanced, and these individuals are here to provide support and further advice.

Cancer Biology Advisory Committee Contact Information:

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Shrikant Anant – sanant@kumc.edu

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Valerie Freeman (Administrative Director of Cancer Biology Department) – vfreeman2@kumc.edu