Conflict Resolution Process
for Memorandum of Understanding Partners
(Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and County Agricultural Extension Districts)

The purpose of establishing a process for resolving issues involving the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to provide a method of open communication and early resolution of issues. Parties should have equal interest in reaching resolution in a timely and efficient manner. Sometimes the current issue is not necessarily the real source of the issue. Designating a system of standardized process for resolution tends to create more consistency and objectivity.

An approach to addressing disputes will be characterized by the following terms defining a proactive resolution approach:

- **Practical** — Saves all parties time, effort, and energy that can be re-directed toward accomplishing the mission of the organization.
- **Hands-on** — Early intervention leads to smaller problems, and is best implemented by a ‘hands-on’ approach. It is important to address problems at the lowest level in order to keep perspective.
- **Down to business** — This approach requires the right mix of sharpness and clarity with tact and diplomacy. Important issues come to the table quickly, and do so while reinforcing understanding of the concerns and viewpoints of both parties.
- **Positive and Upbeat** — The approach is positive and upbeat with each party conveying a sincere desire for a more positive future relationship in which both parties benefit from one another.

Conflict Resolution Process

**Step 1**
Request a face to face meeting for identified issue/question. Either partner may request a meeting with the other partner and raise the issue/question(s). Question/issue is presented in written form; resolution is documented at close of meeting. By sitting down and talking, a resolution can be reached and no further action needs to be taken.

If resolution is not reached, proceed to Step 2.

**Step 2**
When a resolution isn’t reached in Step 1, move to this step. Ask for a meeting with the MOU Advisory Council to review concerns and determine resolution. The three- to five-member standing advisory council is composed of members of the current MOU committee and will include representatives from county extension councils and staff.

- Issues or concerns are provided in written form.
- Committee will receive written documentation at least 72 hours prior to conference call or meeting. During the meeting, a roll call process allows each member to ask further questions or state a position. The review committee makes a recommendation to the VPEO on resolution.
- Recommendations must be consistent with current Code of Iowa and operating policy, and ISU Extension and Outreach operating policy.

Source: Resolving Disagreements by Working Together: A Dispute Resolution Handbook

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