

ABSTRACT

University campuses are a breeding ground for student conflict, challenging university administrators hoping to avoid litigation and preserve their reputation (and brand) as well as their relationship with students as alumni may be donors and brand promoters or could be a university's worst nightmare. If a conflict with a student remains unresolved leaving the student dissatisfied, a best-case scenario might see the former student indifferent about their relationship with the university and in a worst-case scenario being angry and seeking retribution. Universities are in fact businesses and students are their customers. The difference between managing and mismanaging the student (customer) complaint can either reap positive benefits or can have dire consequences. Although many universities employ conventional complaint procedures (which rely on inflexible adversarial conflict resolution models that fail to facilitate collaborative win/win outcomes), a growing number of universities have introduced voluntary mediation to address student conflict. This paper explores the benefits of implementing a mandatory mediation process to resolve all campus conflict as a tool to improve customer (student) satisfaction with respect to campus life and their post-graduation relationships with the university. The initiative should also protect and perhaps improve the brand-reputation. We conclude with a proposed study to address the impact that mediating campus conflict would have on improving student (customer) satisfaction and its effect on positive branding.

Keywords: Campus Conflict; Mediation; Litigation; Student Satisfaction; Brand and Reputation; Alumni; Relationship;

Impact on and of the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, and Complaining Behavior*: A 30 -Year Retrospective

**Val Larsen, PhD, James Madison University
Newell D. Wright, PhD, North Dakota State University**

ABSTRACT

On the 30th anniversary of its first publication, this we focus on the people and practices that have shaped the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, and Complaining Behavior*. It also focuses on the influence that the journal has had on our understanding of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. We suggest that the journal has not only developed knowledge about how consumer satisfaction is created, dissatisfaction avoided; it has also applied that understanding to enhance the value of the journal itself. Moving forward, we examine strategies to enhance the exposure and reputation of the journal and conference.