

CONFLICT RESOLUTION INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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3RD ANNUAL CONRES CONNECT BRINGS STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND PRACTITIONERS TOGETHER

The first Con Res Connect event, held in 2009, was designed to be an event to simply bring together students, faculty and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution. The 3rd annual Con Res Connect prevailed in not only building on the successes of the events of the past two years, but also paving new ground for what Con Res Connect could be in the future. The occasion was organized by the Conflict Resolution Graduate Student Association (CRGSA), and took place on Thursday, April 28th at the Wellshire Inn in Denver, CO. In its third incarnation, Con Res Connect was conceived of as an affair designed to offer a chance for students to meet and network with conflict resolution professionals, but also to give those professionals an opportunity to connect and collaborate with each other.

One difference from this year's occasion compared to the past two years was also seen in both the number and diversity of attendees. There were more than 60 practitioners, students and faculty from the Con Res field who participated in this year's event, which was a significant increase compared to the previous manifestations. In regards to diversity, the participants represented areas including mediation, restorative justice, higher education and environmental agencies, just to name a few.

Another new feature of this year's event was the addition of a keynote speaker to the agenda, and Colorado State Senator Linda Newell (D-Littleton) filled this role perfectly. Senator Newell has been a strong supporter of conflict resolution and alternative dispute resolution measures in Colorado and even sponsored a recent bi-partisan resolution in the State Senate to officially designate October as "Conflict Resolution Month" in Colorado. This experience and belief in conflict resolution made Senator Newell an ideal speaker for Con Res Connect. Adam Brown, a CRGSA officer and Con Res Connect attendee asserted that "Senator Newell was a great addition to the event this year because she was able to bring the participants together around a common message regarding the Con Res field."

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CRGSA Officers, CRI Co-Director Karen Feste and Conflict Resolution Month Committee

CONRES CONNECT (CONT.)

Finally, this year's version of Con Res Connect featured a ceremony to present a \$1,000 donation from CRGSA, in conjuncture with the University of Denver's Conflict Resolution Institute, to the Conflict Resolution Month Organizing Committee. This contribution was meant to recognize and support their continued efforts to expand the use of conflict resolution in Colorado. This donation was in synch with the overall theme of the 3rd annual Con Res Connect event, which was intended to provide an opportunity to educate individuals and organizations from the broader community about the value of conflict resolution, help them see ways in which its practices and philosophies can be applied to their lives or activities, and develop potential for future collaboration.

CRGSA officer Adam Brown stated that "we wanted it to be a networking opportunity while also having a focus on providing potential internship or employment opportunities to those attending." In this latter respect, Con Res Connect also appears to have achieved its goal. Numerous guests said that they were able to make promising connections with

individuals and organizations with internship or job opportunities, including at least one promising lead with Senator Newell herself.

Moving forward, Con Res Connect can continue to grow and evolve according to the needs and desires of Conflict Resolution students in the future. CRGSA made a concerted effort to involve fellow students in the design and invitation process in order to make sure that it was reflective of their opinions and inputs, not just the CRGSA officers themselves. The collaborative effort that brought together this year's event was reflected in the experience itself according to many participants and organizers. Continuing this type of inclusive effort in the coming years can only help to make Con Res Connect more and more beneficial to all parties involved.

Thanks to all those who attended this year's event, and a special thanks to all those who helped bring it all together.

-- *Brandon Rhea*

CRI HOSTS YARIV OPPENHEIMER, PEACE NOW, ISRAEL

CRI was proud to welcome Yariv Oppenheimer, Director of Shalom Achshav (Peace Now, Israel), the largest peace organization in Israel, to discuss "Israeli-Palestinian Peace: A Negotiated Necessity." Oppenheimer is a leading political figure and advocate for a two-state solution peace agreement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that returns to the 1967 borders.

Oppenheimer was introduced by Ambassador Christopher Hill, Dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies (JKSIS) and commentary was provided by Hasan Ayoub, a Palestinian and JKIS Ph.D. candidate and Robert Prince, an active member of the Denver Jewish Community and JKIS Lecturer.

The discussion was lively among the panel and the audience, particularly around the issues of settlements and the challenges of a two-state solution, such as whether or not Jerusalem could serve as a capital of two countries and how to improve ethnic divisions.

Oppenheimer was born near Tel Aviv in 1976 and became involved in Israeli politics at the age of 15, serving as Youth Department Director of the Labour Party from 1998-2002. He has a Law and Public Policy Degree from the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel.

Peace Now, Israel operates through public campaigns, advertisements, petitions, distribution of educational materials, conferences, lectures, surveys, dialogue groups, street activities, vigils, and demonstrations. It is leading the political resistance to Israeli settlements in the West Bank sharing information on settlements through its "Settlement Watch" project.



Panelists Ayoub, Prince, Oppenheimer & CRI Co-Director Karen Feste

ALUMNI IN THE FIELD

Lindsey Sexton: US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution

Since July 2010 Lindsey Sexton has been a Program Associate at the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR) in Tucson, AZ. The institute's mission is to help resolve environmental disputes that involve federal government, by providing mediation, training and related services. They assist any federal agency with environmental conflicts and conflict prevention. USIECR often convenes multiple agencies to discuss environmental issues all over the nation.

As a Program Associate Lindsey assists program managers who facilitate meetings between agencies. Lindsey takes meeting notes, summaries, organizes meetings. She has found that the skills she has learned at CRI have been essential for her work. In order to provide accurate summaries she has to know how to look behind participants' positions to get to their interests. In fact, she says that she is constantly reminded of classes that she has taken with CRI, especially Bob Melvin's negotiation class. She is reminded of the life lessons and techniques for communication that Professor Melvin taught. She often finds herself practicing those very skills that she learned in his class and thinking, "Oh, Bob taught me that!"

Next summer (2012) USIECR is putting on a conference in which Lindsey will be a part of the conference committee. She was placed on the committee because of her experience putting together CRI's Environmental Conflict Resolution conference in June of 2009, done in partnership with ACR's Environment and Public Policy



Lindsey Sexton

(EPP) section. She contends that the opportunity to help plan the EPP conference was a valuable experience, which she will now have the opportunity to use in her current position. This is one example of the experience and knowledge that she has gained from CRI that has been vital for her success in her position at USIECR. In fact, she was told by one of her interviewers that it seemed as if she had done exactly all the right things she needed to do to get to where she wanted to be. She was told that she studied the right things, had the right internships, and the right experiences. Lindsey believes that she is doing exactly what she had been planning to do all along and it feels great. She believes that her time was well spent at DU.

Lindsey hopes that everyone who graduates from CRI can have the same experience as her and end up exactly where they want to end up. There are several tips that she believes will be helpful for getting you to where you want to go. First, she recommends that students take advantage of the opportunities for experience in the conflict resolution field while attending DU, as she did. She is very glad

that she took every opportunity she could to do informational interviews, two internships — one with the Department of Transportation and one with the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington D.C. — (see CRI Winter 2010 Newsletter), volunteering with the Keystone Center and other agencies and government organizations. She believes that these experiences made her seem desirable to potential employers because it showed that she had initiative and had great interest in the field. She also recommends that students attend career fairs, go to the career center to do practice interviews and work on your résumé, do more than one internship, conduct informational interviews, and network with other people in the field of your interest. When doing informational interviews and networking, she recommends always following up with a thank you note or email.

One final piece of advice is an idea that was recommended by her mentor when she was interning at the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center, a department of the Environmental Protection Agency. Write down your objectives at the beginning of your internship and then create a working document in which you list all of your accomplishments during your internship. This document can then be used to strengthen your résumé and provide concrete examples of experiences that can be shared during your interviews. Lindsey also wants students at CRI to know that she would love to give back, after receiving so much help from others, by providing any information or advice that students are seeking.

-- Fernando Ospina

ALUMNI IN THE FIELD

Ariana Harner: City of Lakewood

Ariana Harner (MA, 2006) serves as the Employee Relations Specialist for the City of Lakewood. She describes her job as one-third managing the recruitment process, one-third training, and one-third mediation, facilitation, and coaching. Obviously, her responsibilities include a broad range of responsibilities including recruitment, training and mediation. Doing many different things is an aspect of her job that she loves.

Ariana and her colleagues are certainly doing a great job. Denver Business Journal recently ranked the City of Lakewood as the best place to work in the mega-sized employer category. Since they are a government agency, this accomplishment is a significant one. Because there is not a fund for morale or team-building, the city puts a strong focus on employee relations and a dedication to internal and external customer service. Ariana works with supervisors to train them in communication skills, such as how to approach certain situations and what the different communication styles are. Ariana explains “the key is to recognize that when people have filed a claim, it is in large part due to the fact that they have not had the opportunity to express their problems. Knowing their options and alternatives is key.” Because of her role in listening and highlighting options, Ariana sees her job as one that helps people become empowered.

In addition to her work in the City of Lakewood, Ariana also serves on the Board of Directors at the Conflict Center. The Conflict Center is an organization in Denver that promotes peacebuilding through outreach programs in schools and the community. This Board meets monthly to look at long term strategies and finances and to set goals for the organization. They also plan several events throughout the year. For the past two years, Harner served as President; this year, she serves as Vice President and on the Board’s Development Committee. Harner loves the work she does at the Conflict Center because it is closely connected to the conflict resolution field, and she likes maintaining that connection. Ariana is the only individual with a conflict resolution background at her workplace, she finds her involvement with the Board a way to keep her grounded in the field. She is incredibly proud of the Board of Directors and the Conflict Center as a whole because of the work the Center does and its incredible reputation throughout the community.

Ariana had an open mind when entering the Conflict Resolution Program at DU. She had several ideas for possible careers, from being a mediator to working internationally. While in the program, she discovered that her interest lay in workplace conflict. It was with this realization and inter-

est in mind that she finished her degree and planned her post-graduate decisions.

When Ariana graduated from the University of Denver in November 2006, she did not know exactly what she wanted to do within this workplace interest. She sent out applications to several places, but, like many people recently out of graduate school, was consistently told that she did not have enough experience. Ariana took this time to challenge herself, so she volunteered in



Ariana Harner

Cambodia for three months where she taught mediation skills to members of a peacebuilding organization in hopes of starting a pilot program of mediation in the schools. Unfortunately, the organization suffered in the economic crisis and was unable to fulfill this ambition. Ariana believes that this work abroad set her apart when interviewing for jobs. Her current boss appreciated her perspective and well-roundedness. The City of Lakewood is known for being less structured, looking at fit for both the prospective employee and the organization.

As for DU’s Conflict Resolution Program’s effects on her current job, Ariana says that the mediation and facilitation skills she learned while in school have proved to be invaluable. Another important aspect from her graduate education is the philosophical understanding the program gives its students as to what leads people into conflict. Ariana says that having this academic background knowledge is incredibly important; the knowledge and theory learned while in school all comes together in practice. When these things came together for her, Ariana says she realized that this program helped her to look at things differently.

When addressing the current students in the Conflict Resolution Masters Degree Program, Ariana’s advice is to remain open. She believes that this program helps individuals do any job more effectively because it educates them in understanding human dynamics, a great foundation for jobs in every field. Ariana advises students to “soak it up with the perspective of how this degree is going to help me as a human, more than as a conflict resolution professional because it may be awhile before you become a professional in the conflict resolution field.” Ariana’s final words of advice are incredibly encouraging: “No matter what job you get, this education is relevant to everything.”

-- Brittany Cassell

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT - DARRIN HICKS



Darrin Hicks, Associate Professor of Communication Studies and member of CRI's faculty.

Communications Studies Associate Professor Darrin Hicks got to know many current conflict resolution students last fall during his course in communication and collaboration, as they looked into designing and evaluating collaborative processes. With a background in argumentation, rhetoric, cultural studies, debate coaching and collaboration, he has also served on many students thesis committees since joining the CRI Core Faculty in 1999.

Hicks' latest work includes a *New York Times* editorial review on the word "reasonable", a term frequently used in policy debates. However, the policies described as 'reasonable' has shifted significantly. One example is in how protections against 'unreasonable' search and seizure in the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution have changed over time. The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USAPATRIOT) Act redefined what is considered 'unreasonable' search and seizure in 2001.

Hicks further notes the use of 'rea-

sonableness' has shifted in the world of financial representation. After the Great Depression, financial professionals were held to the standard of *fiduciary duty* for their client – i.e. a financial representative should never act in any manner contrary to the interests of the client, or make choices for the representative's own benefit¹. Today, financial managers are held to a different standard, one that only considers a client's *risk tolerance* – the degree of uncertainty that an investor can handle in regard to a negative change in the value of his or her portfolio². Both kinds of representation were considered reasonable at the time.

'Reasonableness' is often a basis for legitimizing conflict. Both sides claim to be reasonable and have evidence to support their conclusions, although Hicks has discovered that conclusions drawn on the same evidence may later no longer be seen as 'reasonable'.

Hicks also works in collaboration. He has observed how collaboration is often misused, how most collaborations fail and how many programs use a great deal of time and money, without delivering significant results. To change this paradigm, Hicks and colleague Carl Larson are working on a new collaborative site development model for the health and education programs of Invest in Kids, an organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable children and families throughout Colorado.

Functioning as an intermediary between communities and state agencies, Invest in Kids is attempting to link program development with the community, using a bottom-up collaborative process instead of a tradition top-down model.

Hicks and Larson's work includes the development of a process quality scale

that can statistically measure a community's collaboration processes and their effects on outcomes. To date, they have been able to prove this model results in increased fidelity to the programs and improved relationships between the caregivers and the patients, which has lead to significant reduction in crime, teen pregnancy and drug use, and higher graduation and employment rates.

Hicks and Larson's collaboration statistical model could serve as a guide for other large-scale programs – from ways to stage inclusion to increase effectiveness and how to maintain multiple collaborations, to how to exit collaborative process to another without losing energy. Neglecting these issues can have disastrous consequences, including reducing stakeholder commitment and communities' trust in future programs.

To become more effective conflict resolution practitioners, Hicks advises students take courses in collaboration and evaluation, which will help them understand the synergy between processes and programs. However, he also recommends that a basis in philosophy is necessary for good work in conflict resolution and collaboration. For it is in studying the work of philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and John Rawls that students can gain insights into why processes work, and the natures of reason, affect and emotion. Such insight is necessary to innovate in practice.

Professor Darrin Hicks can be reached at dhicks@du.edu

¹<http://definitions.uslegal.com/b/breach-of-fiduciary-duty>

²<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/risktolerance.asp>

-- Autumn Gorman

INTERNSHIPS

Aneesha Kumar: The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy

After completing her degree at the Conflict Resolution Institute in November 2010, Aneesha Kumar's interest in international conflict resolution drew her to Washington, D.C., and an internship with the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD). For quite some time, Aneesha's goal was to work for the organization, whose mission it is to "promote a systems-based approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict." Happily, since January 2011, Aneesha has been working as the India-Pakistan Program Manager in a year-long internship with IMTD, a position which provides her with significant responsibility but also allows her substantial flexibility.

As the India-Pakistan Program Manager, Aneesha oversees and directs IMTD's conflict resolution efforts and projects in the region. From "the creation of an idea to the development, coordination, and implementation of a project," Aneesha is the sole person charged with project development for the region. Aneesha works directly with retired Ambassador John W. McDonald, chairman and chief executive officer of IMTD, in the coordination of her projects. She notes that "there is no one in the middle between the former ambassador and myself, so that the work for the region is almost entirely on my shoulders." Although only months into her internship, Aneesha relishes the responsibility, affirming that "IMTD is a great organization to find your own voice and explore your interests; for instance, if you'd like to set up or experiment with new projects, this would be a great place because there's a lot of flexibility. It may be a one-person show but



Aneesha Kumar

there's a lot of scope and freedom."

Aneesha is working on two projects. The first, a continuing project, involves the establishment of a "peace corridor" between India and Pakistan to benefit border Sikh communities. In contention are two important shrines for adherents of Sikhism that are located on opposite sides of the border. This has created "an unpredictable situation, with visas hard to get, even though for Sikhs the shrines are important because one of the shrines is the tomb of their founder," making a pilgrimage to these holy sites an intrinsic component of their faith. Aneesha affirms, "The whole point is that it's a great peacebuilding measure between both countries," with a peace corridor conceivably leading to the creation of a peace zone for the harmonious interaction of Sikh communities in both countries. With the second project, Aneesha is organizing cattle donations for the victims of the 2010 Pakistan floods. According to Aneesha, the communities within the agricultural sector of Pakistan "lost more than 33% of their livestock, and thus their livelihood, in the wake of the floods." Although still in the process of develop-

ment, Aneesha anticipates the project will serve to bolster stability and peace in the aftermath of the devastation.

For Aneesha, the skills she learned at the Conflict Resolution Institute have been immensely helpful in the conduct of her work. A significant aspect of her work at IMTD is interacting with people, and as Aneesha states, "As Program Manager, you need to know the right people and manage a lot of contacts. At DU, the mediation course I took taught me skills that have been very useful – how to talk to people, active listening skills, how to rephrase things, how to give another person an understanding of how they want to be perceived." Collaboration and coordination have also been crucial in Aneesha's work. Through CRI, Aneesha states, "I realized how difficult it can be to bring people together, to get them on the same page. The most important thing was that I realized I had a sense of confidence that helped me interact with different people. Honestly, the program made me believe in both what I was doing and in how I could incorporate theory into practice. The Reflective Practice and Evaluation course was really useful in teaching me the importance of clarity." Finally, Aneesha found that her academic work on the development of proposals and on grant writing beneficial, given her extensive work on the formulation of goals and objectives for the programs she manages.

In addition to being able to utilize the conflict resolution skills she learned from DU, Aneesha has also become acquainted with the organization's unique approach to conflict resolution, multi-track diplomacy. For IMTD, "multi-track diplomacy is an expansion of the 'Track One, Track Two' paradigm that has defined the conflict resolution field

INTERNSHIPS (CONT.)

during the last decade.” As an elaboration of the traditional paradigm, “multi-track diplomacy is a conceptual way to view the process of international peacemaking as a living system. It looks at the web of interconnected activities, individuals, institutions, and communities that operate together for a common goal: a world at peace.”

For Aneesha, IMTD’s multi-sectoral approach has enabled a far more nuanced understanding of the non-profit sector’s role in conflict resolution, as she relates that it is more complex and unpredictable than she anticipated. “Some days go by slowly; other days are fast-paced and more challenging. It is very different from what I thought it would be as a sector. In practice, so much overlaps in conflict resolution – it isn’t just the government, or a matter of funding or communication, it’s all interrelated. I have had to learn how to maneuver in this complexity.”

For those who are interested in exploring opportunities at IMTD, Aneesha notes that there are two options for prospective interns: the first is to undertake a two-to-three month internship, during which interns complete research and become involved with certain projects; the second option is to commit to an extended year-long internship as a Program Manager, which entails directing entire projects on one’s own. Aneesha also recommends that students who know what their interests are in international conflict resolution further develop their country or region specialization during their Master’s degree studies.

Overall, Aneesha considers that her internship experience thus far has been exceedingly rewarding and she looks forward to continuing work on her projects. She concludes, “It feels right. After doing my degree, it feels like a little step in the right direction, towards a long and promising career.”

-- Ambar Velazquez

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CRI Co-Director and Professor Karen Feste’s latest book, *America Responds to Terrorism: Conflict Resolution Strategies of Clinton, Bush and Obama*, was released on May 10th by Palgrave Macmilion. What policy is best for the United States to reduce the threat of Islamic extremist terrorism? Recent American presidents have applied alternative conflict resolution approaches. Clinton

practiced conflict avoidance, talking tough but rarely retaliating against anti-American terrorist attacks. G. W. Bush adopted a fighter approach and the Global War on Terrorism and military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq reflect this strategy. Obama introduced a third alternative: problem solving and extending peaceful overtures while keeping up resistance. Will the strategy succeed? Feste analyzes presidential rhetoric on counterterrorism policy through the lens of issue framing, enemy aggression, self-hardship, and victimization expressed in a variety of speeches delivered by these chief executives to highlight and compare their conflict resolution strategies.

Six new course modules on religion and international affairs are now available at <http://religionandconflict.org/rc2>. The modules are the result of a symposium co-sponsored by CRI, the Iliff School of Theology and the Center for Sustainable Development and International Peace. {see CRI’s Summer 2010 Newsletter}. Unit topics include: religion and economic development; religion and post-conflict peacebuilding; religion, conflict and peace process; religion, environment and sustainability; religion, the state and governance in the 21st century; and religion, traditions and contemporary human rights.



CONGRATS TO 2010-2011 CRI GRADUATES

Dennis Barbour
Adam Brown
Tiffany Bruschi-Barber
Briana Callen
Mitchell Chrismer
Brittany Eskridge
Jonathan Geurts
Kathryn Harshbarger Michaels
Jonathan Howard

Chari-Lynn Koppel
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Jeffrey Hartje, Associate Professor, Sturm College of Law
Darrin Hicks, Associate Professor, Department of Human Communication Studies
John (Jack) Jones, Research Professor of Conflict Resolution
Amy Kelsall, Academic Director, Organizational & Professional Communication/Strategic Human Resources Management, University College
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Center for Research and Practice
303.871.7685
cricrp@du.edu

Graduate Program
303.871.6477
cri@du.edu



UNIVERSITY OF
DENVER
Conflict Resolution
Institute

2201 S Gaylord Street
Denver, CO 80208
www.du.edu/con-res