"In a successful negotiation, everyone wins. The objective should be agreement, not victory."

**Topics for discussion**
1) How to assess your conflict style
2) Conflict and ways of handling and resolving it
3) How to resolve conflicts specifically among team members

Our original intent was to break up into three groups at the February meeting and discuss three topics. However, the majority of participants were interested in discussing manuscript preparation. We decided to table the discussion of conflict resolution until March. Below is a summary of that discussion.

1) **How do you know your conflict style?**
   a) Several variables affect conflict style including: 1) region of country, 2) gender, 3) personality type (Myers-Briggs, etc) 4) power differentials and 5) communication between members in conflict prior to conflict.
   b) To learn further about your style and 5 ways of handling conflict (below), use the Thomas and Kilmann's Conflict Mode Instrument. This is a test of your particular tendencies on resolving conflicts. (http://www.cpp-db.com/)

2) **How do you handle conflict?**
   a) In general there is a tendency to avoid conflict. Therefore, it is important first to recognize that conflict is occurring and make a conscious decision to get involved or not.
   b) There are 5 ways of handling conflict: 1) competing, 2) collaborating 3) compromising, 4) avoiding, and 5) accommodating.
   c) One can generally choose one of the 5 for different situations; however, one’s personality type and need to satisfy one’s needs and that of others also determine which type of conflict resolution style he/she uses.

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<th>High Satisfying the Other's Needs</th>
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   d) In addition, several considerations below influence tendency to engage in or resolve conflicts:
3) **When should you choose to engage in conflict?**
   a) First of all, in an emergency, act; do not delay resolving a conflict that has dangerous implications for yourself or others.
   b) When an unpopular rule or regulation needs to be promulgated.
   c) To protect yourself against people who take advantage of others.

4) **Working out conflicts within your lab or among your staff**
   a) It can be helpful to document the tendency of a person not to live up to your expectations
      a. Document by email after meetings on negotiated solutions
      b. Know university policies and regulations
      c. Understand legal ramifications of possible termination if conflict cannot be resolved (contact Ann Richmond in the BRETT office for more information).
   b) It is best to work out the problem among your staff and not involve others; not just let it go. It will work against you if many people leave your lab.
   c) Sometimes these are personality conflicts within the lab that impact the entire lab’s functioning
      a. Best to intervene when it impacts other people in the lab to keep morale from deteriorating
      b. Intervene subtly; for instance, bring in the member and state: “you don’t seem to be happy when you are in the office…”
      c. Evaluate differences in conflict resolution styles between members who are feuding; intervene accordingly
   d) Be systematic about going for win-win first. Compromise is generally not the first choice.
e) The downside of an active approach is that it is time consuming and perhaps what people are complaining about is not the true problem. People sometimes try to minimize their unhappiness.

f) Clear communication prior to conflict generally pre-empts conflict. Since conflict is costly in time, turnover and money, an ounce of prevention can be worth a pound of cure.

g) “Elevate” sessions are currently ongoing among faculty; will help managers evaluate conflict and work with those with whom conflict can be resolved and evaluate people who are truly detrimental to the university's mission. As a manager, we must all become good at doing the above.

**Tip:** One member used a celebratory approach that gave positive feedback from all members of the lab to all members of the lab (i.e. “top ten reasons Jennifer is a star…”) and was able to raise morale and decrease conflict through this indirect route. It turns out that those who feel appreciated are less likely to engage in conflict.

**Future:**
We will plan to discuss the remaining two “How to organize your lab so as not to waste time/money” in our April session and “Peer Mentoring” for our May session.

**Additional Resources:**