

**To:** Ms. Cathy Giovannetti, College Council Chair

**From:** Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

**Subject:** College Council Recommendation 19-01: Improved Communication Plan for Employee Compensation

**Date:** March 22, 2019

Thank you and all the members of the College's participatory governance system for your leadership in considering issues of importance to the Montgomery College community. I have received and reviewed the College Council's recommendation 19-01: Improved communication plan for employee compensation. The document presented to the College Council from the Staff Council is attached.

On January 22, 2019, the College Council voted to move recommendation 19-01 forward to the president. This action recommends that the College improve communications to employees whose salaries were frozen due to market survey results to include improved language, clarity surrounding eligibility for General Wage Adjustments (GWA), and the use of a variety of communication methods to disseminate this important information to the affected employees.

Based on my review, I am approving this recommendation. It is evident that improved communication is needed. Concerning all future communications regarding market surveys and salaries freezing, I will ensure the following processes take place:

- (1) A specific letter will be constructed for each affected employee.
- (2) Supervisors will be notified ahead of time regarding those in their unit affected by the market survey results before any letter is sent to those employees from the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM).
- (3) Efforts will be made to provide small-group or one-on-one meetings with affected employees to answer any questions.
- (4) All presentations will provide clear communication and specific language regarding employees' salary eligibility or ineligibility for GWA increases.

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Any further questions concerning this recommendation should be directed to Ms. Donna Schena, interim senior vice president for administrative and fiscal services.

Thank you for your dedicated service to Montgomery College's governance system and all of the work you do to support Montgomery College's mission and vision. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Attachment

cc: Senior Administrative Leadership Team  
Director of Governance (Administrative Associates)

# Staff Council Resolution

## Recommendation for Improved Communications

### Background:

A constituent brought a concern to Staff Council about how the College communicated the impact of freezing an employee's salary under the new compensation plan.

The original constituent was under the impression that having one's salary frozen only applied to performance-based salary increases, but not to the General Wage Adjustment (GWA). The constituent believed that HR/STM should have communicated more clearly that when an employee's salary is frozen, this makes the employee ineligible to receive any applicable annual GWA in addition to any other salary increases.

The constituent believed that there was potential for confusion because, under the old compensation plan, being frozen at the top of one's salary grade did not preclude receiving a GWA, and so an employee might think that "being frozen" under the new plan worked the same way unless it was explained clearly.

The Council learned that under the old plan, the maximum salary for each grade increased by the amount of the GWA each year, and so an employee at the top of his or her grade would, practically speaking, receive the GWA because his or her maximum allowable salary had also increased by that amount. Under the new plan, some employees' salaries *exceed* the newly established maximum for their grade, and so these employees are ineligible for any type of increase while still in that grade at the current maximum. In addition, the maximums no longer automatically increase each year under the new plan, but only change in relation to the market, which means that an employee at the top of his or her grade does not automatically get a GWA, as this would make the salary exceed the maximum.

The council communicated this to the constituent, and the constituent expressed the concern that the College's official communications about the impact of the new compensation plan did not explain this clearly enough to avoid the potential for confusion.

In researching the College's communications efforts related to the new compensation plan, the Staff Council learned that HR/STM explained this impact on the GWA explicitly in at least at some of the compensation forums when someone asked this question directly. In addition, HR/STM sent a memo on July 12, 2018 that included, "This [Board of Trustee's] resolution included a 1.0% general wage adjustment and a 2.0% increment for eligible non-bargaining staff (those not currently at the top of their salary grade)."

The Council also reviewed the content of the standard letters that HR/STM sent directly to employees who had their salaries frozen under the new plan. These did not appear to state explicitly that having one's salary frozen made an employee ineligible for the GWA.

In the course of researching this concern, the council also heard reports from constituents who said they had their salaries frozen under the new plan but never received the aforementioned letter from HR/STM.

**Whereas:**

Some constituents report that it was unclear from the College's official communications efforts that having one's salary frozen under the new compensation plan includes being ineligible for the GWA.

**Whereas:**

Some constituents reported that their salaries were frozen and that they did not receive an official letter from HR/STM informing them of this.

**Whereas:**

Future shifts in the market might lead to other employees' having their salaries frozen, which would necessitate communications to these employees to inform them of this.

**Be it Resolved:**

That the Montgomery College Staff Council respectfully requests that:

1. Montgomery College include explicit language in future communications to employees whose salaries are being frozen that this makes them ineligible for the GWA in addition to all other salary increases,
2. examine why some employees whose salaries were frozen may not have received direct communication to this effect and take steps to ensure all employees whose salaries are frozen in the future receive a direct communication from the College, and
3. use multiple communication methods when communicating this information to employees, e.g. email, Workday, etc., in addition to mailed letters.

**Purpose:**

To improve communications.

**Student Impact:**

There is no direct student impact of this resolution.

**Economic Impact:**

The Council does not foresee any economic impact of this resolution.