

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

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

**Subject:** College Council Recommendation 19-02: Collegewide Governance Training and Messaging

**Date:** May 30, 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 reviewed the College Council's recommendation 19-02: Collegewide Governance Training and Messaging. The document presented to me by the College Council is attached.

On March 26, 2019, the College Council voted to move recommendation 19-02 forward to the president. This action recommends that the College incorporate governance training and messaging strategies. Based on my review, I am approving this recommendations as follows.

- (1) The College will create materials that provide an overview of the participatory governance system for new employees' orientation.
- (2) The College will incorporate information about the governance system into the MC Management curriculum and the Crucial Conversations curriculum, and include the following themes:
  - a. The College actively encourages those in leadership positions to allow their direct reports who are elected to a council to participate, if at all possible.
  - b. There are benefits to having someone in your unit participate on a council, including their professional growth in participating in the College dialogue, increased knowledge about how the College functions, and information about College issues that may impact your unit.
  - c. Council members may sometimes reach out to those in leadership positions for general information when researching a possible resolution.
  - d. Employees in leadership positions may not discourage employees in their units from communicating with governance council or its members about College matters. In addition, retaliation is not tolerated and is addressed in Policy 39003—Protection against Retaliation.
- (3) The College will incorporate this information into any mandatory online training the College creates for current employees, as appropriate.
- (4) The College will incorporate this information into the Toolkit for Decision Makers currently available on the governance website.

In addition, supervisors and employees are encouraged to address any questions about governance participation as a part of their annual performance review.

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 Recommendation

## College-wide Governance Training and Messaging

### Background:

During discussions about how to promote participation in governance, councilmembers shared what they thought might be potential barriers to employees getting involved in governance or participating effectively.

Councilmembers noted that not all departments or employees in leadership positions have had an equal opportunity to become acquainted with the governance system, or to learn the advantages of having a member of one's unit on a council.

The council also noted that last year, the Ombuds reported that some people were discouraged from going to the Ombuds to discuss issues. The College took steps to inform those in leadership positions that discouraging employees from using the Ombuds is not acceptable, and that people should in fact be encouraged to use the Ombuds' services.

The council agreed that it might also be useful to provide similar messaging to those in leadership positions about not discouraging employees from participating in governance, or from speaking openly about issues within the purview of governance when serving on a council. *This is especially relevant in light of the finding from the most recent Equity & Inclusion Survey that:*

*“Most employees fear speaking truth to power. That often leaves leaders with overly positive perceptions about what is actually happening and how employees really feel.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Whereas:

There is not currently a unified training or messaging campaign that reaches all employees at the College to promote and explain the governance system.

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<sup>1</sup> Equity & Inclusion Survey Executive Summary Report, pp. 24.

## **Be it Resolved:**

That the Montgomery College Staff Council respectfully requests that Montgomery College integrate some or all of the following suggestions:

- Create a document that gives an overview of the participatory governance system and provide this document to new employees as part of orientation.
- Incorporate training about the governance system into the MC Management Curriculum. In addition to basic information about the participatory governance system and what falls within its purview, the training could incorporate the following messages:
  - The College actively encourages those in leadership positions to allow direct reports who are elected to a council to participate if at all possible.
  - There are fringe benefits to having someone in your unit participate in a council, such as networking; increased knowledge about how the College functions as a whole; and improved knowledge about College issues that may impact your unit.
  - Councilmembers may sometimes reach out to those in leadership positions for general information when researching a possible resolution.
  - Similar to the Office of the Ombuds, employees in leadership positions may not discourage employees in their units from seeking the help of governance. This includes imposing or threatening to impose negative consequences for something said during a council meeting that falls within the purview of governance and the College's Policies and Procedures.
- Incorporate the above content into the next mandatory online training the College creates for current employees.
- Incorporate the above content into the Toolkit for Decision Makers currently available on the governance website.
- Incorporate the above content into the Crucial Conversations curriculum.

## **Purpose:**

To ensure that all College employees are equally familiar with the governance system, and to promote participation in governance.

**Student Impact:**

The council does not foresee a direct student impact from this resolution. However, the council believes that more robust participation in the governance system can only serve to improve the College as a whole, and thereby positively impact students.

**Economic Impact:**

The council expects there will be an economic impact of creating documents and training materials. The resolution suggests incorporating the suggestions into pre-existing programs to try to mitigate these costs.