

To: Dr. Tracey Smith-Bryant, College Council Chair

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

Subject: **College Council Recommendation 19-12: Improved First-Line Manager Communications**

Date: June 28, 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 19-12: Improved First-Line Manager Communications. The document presented to me by the College Council is attached.

On May 14, 2019, the College Council voted to move recommendation 19-12 forward to the president. This action recommends that the College develop a brief and reasonable communication plan to be used by all first-line managers with their employees.

Based on my review, I am approving this recommendation. I am assigning Associate Senior Vice President for Advancement and Community Engagement Ray Gilmer to review best practices for organizational communications and then create a video for college managers on communicating important information to their employees. This project will be conducted during the fall 2019 semester.

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)
2018-2019 College Council Chair, Ms. Catherine Giovannetti

ESC Council Recommendation for College Council

Subject of Recommendation: Information is made available through a plethora of communications vehicles; however, often times messages pertinent to various sets of employees get lost and could better be communicated from supervisor/manager to employee.

Date of Presentation to ESC Council: Ongoing for two years culminating on May 9, 2019

Person Presenting Motion: Liz Feldman

ESC Chair: Richard Cerkovnik

Background Information/Rationale:

According to the Institute for Part-Time Faculty Engagement and Support (IPTFES) constituent concerns and small scale focus groups, the Employee Engagement report, the Equity and Inclusion report, the Middle States report, and almost anyone you ask, communication at the College could be better. Information is made available through a host of emails, newsletters, blasts, blogs, tweets, and other informative communications; however, often times, messages pertinent to employees, get lost and could better be communicated from supervisor/manager to employee.

Over the past two years, one of the goals of the ESC has been to focus on the standardization of processes across the college. Specifically:

- To identify a subset of relevant processes that are not standardized across the college.
- To recommend changes for a reasonable number of those processes that have the greatest probability of implementation and would increase their standardization for the benefit of employees and the College.

As a result of this effort, an ESC subgroup identified “first-line manager-communication with their direct reports” as a potentially productive process to focus on, in addition to allowing for added alliterative activity. Discussions with part time faculty and non-teaching staff suggest that there is widespread disparity and inconsistency across departments (teaching and non-teaching) regarding communications from first-line managers to their direct reports. Some managers demonstrate best practices on communications that result in a feeling of inclusivity by their direct reports; whereas, other managers might focus their energies, on other also important matters, perhaps missing opportunities to be inclusive, as well as, missing opportunities to emphasize the information needed by employees within their departments to support the mission of the entire College.

This recommendation does not address all communications across the College, nor does it demand uniform implementation at the local level; however, it does request attention to and focus on, the first-line manager communication with their direct reports, as well as, requesting that each first-line manager articulate a brief and reasonable communications plan to be used

with their employees and that the next-in-line supervisor have a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the communication plan with a reasonable degree of accountability and supportive empowerment.

If this recommendation is approved, the ESC subgroup is ready and willing to work with the designated leads to recommend some specific actions that some first-line managers might choose to implement such as:

- Inviting part time employees to department meetings in addition to full time employees
- Sharing minutes from meetings through handouts or emails
- Sending group texts with information shared
- Providing a bulletin board with key information
- Using virtual Go To or Zoom technology to reach all employees
- Other

Additionally, the ESC subgroup is available to assist with suggestions for any training that might be needed for this implementation, as well as, suggestions for future related initiatives, such as implementing a system where all College communications are identified and categorized and be available for selection by managers and employees for regular access, similar to RSS Feeds.

Student Impact:

There is no direct student impact of this resolution. Indirect student impact would be positive if employees, overall, were better informed about College, unit, and department initiatives and if all subgroups across the college felt more included.

Economic Impact:

The council expects there will be a minimal economic impact of this resolution.

Motion:

The ESC moves that the College, “establish an effective communication system that managers can implement to better inform employees whom they supervise. The goal is to keep employees informed and up to date with what is happening at the College and in the area/department they head.

To: Dr. Michael Mills, Vice President of the Office of E-learning, Innovations, and Teaching Excellence

From: Dr. Clevette M. Ridguard, Governance Director and Manager of Presidential Projects

Subject: **Video for Improved First-Line Manager Communications**

Date: February 5, 2020

In May 2019, the College Council voted to move recommendation 19-12: Improved First-Line Manager Communications forward to the president for consideration. This action recommends that the College develop a brief and reasonable communication plan to be used by all first-line managers with their employees.

Dr. Pollard approved this recommendation and assigned the Associate Senior Vice President for Advancement and Community Engagement Ray Gilmer to review best practices for organizational communication and to then create a video for college managers on communicating important information to their employees. The video is complete and should be incorporated into the ELITE management training opportunities for new and existing managers.

The video is housed on our MC YouTube channel and can be viewed using the following link:
<https://youtu.be/tRae5Z5aQIU> .

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Attachment

Presidential Memo dated June 28, 2019

cc: Senior Administrative Leadership Team
College Council Chair