

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

April 24, 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. DeRionne Pollard, President

From: Dan Moskowitz, SEIU Representative
Richard Penn, AAUP President
Jason Rivera, College Council Chair (Governance)
Carl Shorter, AFSCME Vice President
Jacia Smith, Director of Employee and Labor Relations and Recruitment (HRDE)
Laura White, Center for Professional and Organizational Development (CPOD)

Subject: Integrated Conflict Management System (ICMS) Workgroup/Ombuds Office Charter

In October 2012, representatives of the collective bargaining units, governance, and Human Resources, Development, and Engagement attended two-day training at Cornell University Industrial and Labor Relations School on Designing Effective Dispute Resolution Systems for the Workplace. The workgroup, which has knowledge of and, in some instances, responsibility for certain components of the current dispute resolution processes at Montgomery College, was trained in the design and implementation of an Integrated Conflict Management System.

Since October, the workgroup has:

1. Conducted research on business systems and other higher education institutions, including those with collective bargaining agreements, to better understand how comparable institutions manage conflict.
2. Examined the various existing conflict resolution processes utilized at Montgomery College and identified the areas that were deficient.
3. Developed a framework for Montgomery College that we believe addresses all constituent groups and stakeholders conflict resolution needs equally.

As the workgroup engaged in its research and planning, there were two collegewide announcements that converged with our efforts and affirmed the timeliness of our work. On February 21, 2013, you accepted the Employee Engagement Advisory Group's (EEAG) recommendation to provide institutional support for the continuing work of faculty, staff, and administrator stakeholders to explore the creation of an integrated conflict management system, including the possible establishment of an ombuds or other neutral resource to assist employees in resolving workplace issues, in accordance with best practice. In accepting the EEAG recommendation, you elaborated in part:

...I will commit to providing organizational support for an employee ombuds. In accordance with best practice, the ombuds will serve as an

independent, confidential, impartial, and informal resource where employees can obtain information about options available to resolve conflicts or problems. The ombuds will also collect data and identify trends to draft administrative attention to areas of concern. The ombuds will also collect data and identify trends to draw administrative attention to areas of concern. The ombuds will be a part-time temporary with benefits position that reports to the Chief of Staff/Chief Strategy Officer in the Office of the President.

On March 12, 2013, it was announced that, effective July 29, 2013, Sarah Miller Espinosa would transition to the role of employee ombuds. The workgroup has now completed its draft of a recommended charter, benchmarked with the International Ombudsman Association and several higher education institutions, for Montgomery College's Office of the Ombuds, which forms the foundation of the Office in research-based and industry standard best practices.

The charter drafted by the workgroup is attached for your consideration. We collectively believe that providing the ombuds as a confidential, independent resource for faculty, staff, and administrators, will complement our existing conflict resolution systems and benefit our constituencies. Thank you for your consideration.