

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

October 13, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery College Colleagues

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

Subject: 2014 Ombuds Recommendations

As you may recall, I established the Office of the Ombuds in August 2013 to provide confidential assistance to staff, faculty, and administrators in mitigating and resolving workplace issues and concerns. The ombuds operates in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as established by the International Ombudsman Association. Over 150 employees accessed the services of the Office of the Ombuds in Fiscal Year 2014, and the feedback received from employee visitors to the office about its services was overwhelmingly positive. This newly established office is an example of the College's commitment to empowering and enriching the working lives of all our employees, and in furthering and reaching our vision to be a model of excellence, opportunity, and student success.

In addition to providing a safe forum for individual employees to discuss concerns, the Office of the Ombuds contributes to organizational wellness by identifying and sharing trends with senior leadership, sharing data in an annual report, and making recommendations for change. By seeking to improve the employment experience at Montgomery College, these recommendations help to contribute to the achievement of the Common Employee Experience, which is a cornerstone of our Destination Employer initiative.

Ombuds Sarah Espinosa communicated and [posted](#) the FY14 annual ombuds report in early September. That report contained six recommendations, which I am adopting as follows.

RECOMMENDATION 1. Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

Adopted. I agree that formally setting ethical expectations and standards of conduct is a best practice that will provide clarity and consistency for all employees. It will also enhance the institutional value of integrity. I will ask the College Council to lead a discussion about these expectations and standards and then to make a recommendation to me regarding what they should be. From there, we will work to draft or modify appropriate policies and procedures, and then develop a plan for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-degree evaluations.

Adopted. The suggested modifications to the 360-degree evaluation procedure for administrators will be incorporated into this year's evaluation process. These modifications will enhance this already powerful tool, and assist administrators in developing even more meaningful professional development goals for Fiscal Year 2016. Additionally, a 360-degree evaluation program will be expanded to managers in FY16, and then be conducted every other year so that all College managers may also benefit from this valuable feedback. I will ask the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) to implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 3. Critically examine the employee experience, particularly for underrepresented minorities, to ensure an inclusive workplace.

Adopted. Ensuring equity, respect, and inclusiveness is of the highest priority to the College. I will ask HRSTM and its Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Employee Relations to develop a plan to implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Assist and support administrators, staff with supervisory responsibilities, and department chairs by providing and requiring additional training. Further, reward those exhibiting the skills developed in these training and hold accountable those who choose not to exhibit those skills.

Adopted. Providing training that can support and assist those with managerial responsibilities is a critical responsibility of the institution. HRSTM and its Office of Professional and Organizational Development (CPOD) have many effective programs currently in place for critical professional training. I will ask HRSTM and CPOD to develop a plan that includes the following topics as mandatory training over the next two fiscal years:

- Developing skills in creating and nurturing inclusive workplaces that that promote respect for and appreciation for diversity
- Promoting respectful communication
- Creating a culture of civility

RECOMMENDATION 5. Consider the creation of a competitive, developmental cohort program or programs to help develop future model managers and administrators.

Adopted in part. Developing outstanding leaders and model managers is essential to achieving the College's goal of becoming a Destination Employer, as well as an opportunity to thoughtfully engage in succession planning. I will ask HRSTM to develop possible options related to the modification of the Administrative Associate program (as contained in Procedure 34001CP) and bring a proposal to the President's Executive Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION 6. Commit to continue to provide Montgomery College employees with access to the Office of the Ombuds by: transitioning the ombuds from a temporary

position, committing resources to recruit an Associate Ombuds, and incorporating the Office of the Ombuds, its role, responsibilities, and ethical obligations, into Montgomery College Policy and Procedure.

Adopted. Given the valuable services the Office of the Ombuds provides to individual employees and the College collectively, this recommendation represents an important investment of resources that are critical to our success as an institution. I will ask the chief of staff/chief strategy officer to work closely with the ombuds in developing a plan and timeline to implement an associate ombuds position and to review the Policies and Procedure Manual to incorporate the ombuds appropriately within it.

The recommendations I have adopted represent a prioritization of resources and our commitment to achieving an effective workplace that reflects the holistic values of Montgomery College—excellence, integrity, innovation, diversity, stewardship, and sustainability—and will help us all to realize and enhance the Common Employee Experience. For all of those who worked to bring these recommendations forward, and to all of you who work diligently each day for the success of our institution, I thank you all for your continued dedication to our students and our community.