The Office of Human Resources Employee Engagement unit was formerly known as the Employee and Labor Relations unit. This unit continues to be responsible for negotiating collective bargaining agreements; contract interpretation and administration; working in collaboration with the employee organizations to resolve issues; reviewing performance appraisals; administering the award and recognition program; providing advice to supervisors and employees in accordance with relevant policies and procedures; and reviewing recommendations for disciplinary actions. Additionally, the unit is responsible for developing and implementing an employee engagement program. Gallup defines “engaged employees” as those who feel passionate about their work and have a strong attachment and commitment to the organization; those employees who would tell a friend that this is a good place to work. At Montgomery College, engaged employees are those employees who understand that the job they do contributes to achieving the mission of the college and that the college respects and appreciates their contributions. Please help determine the short term and long term objectives of the engagement program by participating in the Employee Engagement Survey.

Sarah A. Miller

Sarah A. Miller is the Director of Employee Engagement in the Office of Human Resources. In this role, she is responsible for the overall development and direction of the employee engagement program, including employee recognition and performance management. Additionally, she oversees the labor and employee relations programs, including serving as Montgomery College’s chief negotiator. Prior to joining Montgomery College in April 2009, she served as the labor relations manager for Montgomery County Government, assistant general counsel for the State of Connecticut Board of Labor Relations, and as a mediator for the State of Connecticut Board of Mediation and Arbitration. Sarah received her Bachelor of Science from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Connecticut School of Law. She is also certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR). Sarah can be reached at sarah.miller@montgomerycollege.edu or ext. 75380.

Jacia T. Smith

Jacia T. Smith joined the Employee Engagement team as a Human Resources Specialist in September. In this role, she provides guidance, consultation, and
assistance to managers on grievances and appeals, employee conduct and discipline, and related matters. Additionally, she is responsible for reviewing staff performance evaluations and assisting in the administration of the faculty staff assistance program (FSAP) and awards and recognition programs. She will also be involved in the development of the engagement program. Prior to joining Montgomery College, she was a practicing attorney at a large regional law firm in both the environmental and labor litigation practice groups. There her practice focused on the research and analysis of significant employment claims, and counseling educational institutions in all aspects of labor and employment law including federal and state discrimination laws, personnel relations and discipline and student discipline matters. Jacia received her Bachelor of Arts in political science from Hampton University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Buffalo Law School. Jacia can be reached at jacia.smith@montgomerycollege.edu or ext. 75361.

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Yanira Ruiz

Yanira Ruiz, Senior Administrative Aide joined the Employee Engagement team this past August. She worked in the Counseling and Advising Department for over two years and in the Dean of Students Office for over five years. In 2006, she received the 2005 NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Excellence Award for her outstanding work performance. She left the college to pursue a full time career in real estate; however, due to the country’s financial crisis that slowed down the real estate area, she decided to come back to work at the college. She was hired as a temporary staff in the Office of Human Resources for over a year before she was hired for her present position. Her responsibilities include providing administrative support to the Director of Employee Engagement and she is also responsible for awards programs. Yanira can be reached at extension 75396 or by e-mail yanira.ruiz@montgomerycollege.edu.