

**MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP (EEAG)**

**MARCH 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS**

## I. Background

The Montgomery College mission manifests a commitment to tend to our internal spirit. The goal of the Office of Human Resources, Employee Engagement team is to tend to that spirit by maximizing the number of engaged employees at Montgomery College. Engaged employees are those employees who feel passionate about their work and have a strong attachment and commitment to the organization; those employees who would recommend to a friend employment at the organization.

In order to encourage behaviors and philosophies contributing to engagement as well as identify impediments to engagement, it was first necessary to obtain a baseline assessment of engagement. Survey instruments (tailored to the terminology employed by different employee groups) were developed in collaboration with representatives of Academic Assembly, Montgomery College Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, Local 2380 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Staff Senate, and the Office of Institutional Research. The survey instruments include eleven questions designed to measure engagement as well as questions designed to assess the following dimensions: perceptions of various supervisor competencies as well as chair competencies, collegewide communication, performance evaluations, the consistent application of disciplinary processes, and awareness of employee engagement.

The on-line survey was active from October 5, 2009 to October 16, 2009. Employees were encouraged to complete a survey in a variety of manners, including: an email from the Interim President, Dr. Pinkney, to all College employees; notices appearing in MC Online; notices appearing on My MC; and a link to the survey on the OHR website. Additionally, the Chair of Staff Senate sent an email to non-bargaining unit staff encouraging completion of the survey. 906 surveys were submitted resulting in a 25% collegewide participation rate. Some employee groups recorded higher participation rates, including: administrators, non-bargaining unit staff, full-time faculty, and bargaining unit staff. The response rate for part-time faculty was 13%.

The results of the survey were shared with all College employees on December 16, 2009<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Pinkney sent an email to all employees encouraging review of the survey results, which were posted on My MC. Notices announcing the survey results also appeared in MC Online. The following next steps were identified in the December 16, 2009 document: establish an Employee Engagement Advisory Group (EEAG) by inviting representatives of Academic Assembly, Montgomery College Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, Local 2380 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Staff Senate, SEIU, deans and other administrators to participate; conduct focus groups specific to employee groups (separate groups for administrators, bargaining unit staff, full-time faculty, non-bargaining staff,

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<sup>1</sup> See Attachment A, Montgomery College, Office of Human Resources, Employee Engagement, October 2009 Survey Results

and part-time faculty) to obtain additional insight regarding engagement; analyze data collected and establish recommendations to remove impediments to engagement and foster policies, behaviors, and philosophies which contribute to increased engagement and publicize the results by March 5, 2010; sixty days following the release of the recommendations, communicate the status of each recommendation to the College community; and review survey instruments and conduct the second annual engagement survey in October 2010.

In accordance with the December 16, 2010 next steps, the EEAG committee members included: Victoria Baldassano, part-time faculty, SEIU Local 500; Liz Brandenburg, president, AFSCME Local 2380; Robert Brenneman, acting dean; Anne Bunai, chair, Staff Senate; Terry Evelyn, campus director of facilities; Joan Gough, chair, Academic Assembly; and Rose Sachs, president, AAUP. Focus groups were conducted for each employee group in January and February 2010. All employees were invited to participate in focus groups through notices posted in MC Online. Additionally, employees were randomly selected and invited to participate in focus groups. After focus groups, sub-committees of the EEAG met, reviewed the results, and discussed potential recommendations to forward to the president for consideration.

## **II. Recommendations**

After discussion of the available data, the Employee Engagement Advisory Group offers the following 41 recommendations by unanimous consent for consideration by the president. These recommendations are intended to remove impediments to engagement and foster policies, behaviors, and philosophies which contribute to increased engagement. The recommendations are numbered for ease of further discussion and are not listed in order of priority.

1. Develop training specific to applicable collective bargaining agreements for supervisors: in order to increase awareness of contractual requirements (see supervisor competencies – p. 7-9).
2. Develop a series of round table discussions and briefings available to supervisors (including chairs) and hold on each campus: offer sixty minute sessions on relevant, timely topics and encourage informal mentor relationships between supervisors (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).
3. Develop a mandatory training program specifically for chairs with responsibility for managing staff members with initial training requirements and ongoing refresher training requirements: in order to aid in providing the skills necessary to successfully lead a work group, including enhancing competencies (how to create an environment of encouragement by celebrating a job well done; how to engage in frequent and constructive communications; how to champion civility in the workplace; and other

management best practices) and providing information regarding compliance issues. Investigate the use/development of computer based training to deliver some modules (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).

4. Develop a mandatory training program for all supervisors with initial training requirements and ongoing refresher training requirements: in order to aid in providing the skills necessary to successfully lead a work group, including enhancing competencies (how to create an environment of encouragement by celebrating a job well done; how to engage in frequent and constructive communications; how to champion civility in the workplace; and other management best practices) and providing information regarding compliance issues. Investigate the use/development of computer based training to deliver some modules (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).
5. Develop mandatory training for administrators specifically related to how to supervise and support supervisors (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).
6. Create top down encouragement of professional development by establishing the opportunity for staff to participate in a minimum of four (4) hours of professional development every year: include this expectation on employee performance evaluations in order to provide employees with support and training to perform at their best (see supervisor competencies p. 7-9).
7. Encourage part-time faculty participation in professional development activities (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).
8. Explore the possibility of establishing 360 degree evaluations for chairs as well as establishment of a supervisor accountability metric within the context of the faculty evaluation cycle and collective bargaining agreement (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).
9. Implement 360 degree evaluations for all administrators and supervisors (excluding chairs), including evaluation by all direct reports: in order to provide constructive feedback to supervisors to enhance supervisory competencies (see supervisor competencies – p.7-9).
10. Include the following supervisor accountability metric on the performance evaluation of every supervisor/administrator: number of hours of supervisory training completed (see mandatory supervisor training requirement as stated above), percentage of late

performance evaluations, and overall rating of 360 evaluation (see supervisor competencies – p. 7-9).

11. Establish a committee: to benchmark best practices and make recommendations to improve current staff performance evaluation process, including the possible establishment of an overall rating category, development of quantifiable metrics, where possible, and discussion of the calibration of performance ratings by department and collegewide (see performance evaluations -p. 12).
12. Include 360 degree evaluations in all staff performance evaluations: in order to provide additional constructive feedback (see performance evaluations -p. 12).
13. Institute annual collegewide employee appreciation events: in order to promote a climate of acknowledgement and appreciation keeping in mind the current budgetary constraints (see supervisor competencies – p. 7-9).
14. Encourage the use of existing reward programs: by developing a communication strategy to publicize criteria for the awards and publicizing recognition award recipients (see supervisor competencies -p. 7-9).
15. Explore opportunities to standardize and enhance reward and recognition programs for part-time faculty, including: participation in length of service award celebration, special recognition awards, and outstanding service awards (see p. 7-9).
16. Budget for outstanding service awards
17. Update policy & procedure specific to non-bargaining staff by including the ability to bring a fellow employee/witness to meetings where there is a reasonable expectation that discipline may result (see supervisor competencies p. 7-9).
18. Establish a committee: to benchmark best practices including a review of other community colleges and County agencies to develop a recommendation specific to updating the entire non-bargaining staff grievance process, including exploring alternative dispute resolution processes (see supervisor competencies p. 7-9; p.13).
19. Recommend the Office of the President explore the establishment of an ombuds position: in recognition of the need to provide non-bargaining staff with guidance regarding options available under existing college procedures.

20. Include a segment in part-time faculty orientation which explains the College's structure, department structure, and define the roles of VPPs, deans, chairs.
21. Offer an orientation for part-time faculty, specific to each campus, including, when possible, introduction of key individuals on campuses.
22. Update policies and procedures related to part-time faculty members: in order to provide greater guidance and consistency with collective bargaining agreement (see supervisor competencies p. 7-9).
23. Look for opportunities to include part-time faculty members in department meetings where appropriate: in order to provide greater input in recommendations/decision making.
24. Include the relevant stakeholders to explore greater access for part-time faculty to technology tools that may assist in providing quality instruction to students.
25. Provide training/briefing sessions open to part-time faculty members and staff regarding guidance on how to successfully apply for full-time faculty positions.
26. Conduct all administrator meetings at least once a quarter: in order to provide a forum to convey expectations, direction, solicit input, and make brief unit presentations.
27. Explain rationale for collegewide decisions: in order to encourage transparency, adopt as a standard practice inclusion of the following information in the announcement of any decision: why the decision is consistent with the mission of Montgomery College, the process followed in arriving at the decision, explanation as to why other alternatives were not adopted, (see collegewide communication – p. 10-11).
28. “Closing the Loop”: be sure status updates and outcomes are provided on a regular and timely basis whenever input has been solicited. Tell those from whom you are soliciting input when and how those status updates and outcomes will be communicated (see collegewide communication – p. 10 – 11).
29. Increase effectiveness of communication tools by: establishing an office telephone number for each department, listing office locations, creating an efficient search tool on the home page of the website, and more responsive and more effective use of the calendar.

30. Increase transparency in communication by creating a central, accessible location to post meeting minutes of various committees, as appropriate.
31. Increase transparency in communication by, where appropriate, posting consultant reports, the cost of the reports, and periodic status updates regarding action, if any, taken as a result of the report.
32. Where possible, announce decisions to the college community prior to press releases.
33. Better utilize Human Resources webpage: in order to create a user friendly location for all communication specific to employees, including posting memoranda and emails from other offices which contain information specific to employees.
34. Provide all part-time faculty with college email accounts and voicemail.
35. Explore and improve mechanisms to encourage administrators to periodically teach a course, as appropriate.
36. Encourage administrators in central administration to spend informal time on the campuses on a regular basis.
37. Institute a separate annual survey: to gauge internal customer service satisfaction in regard to internal service providers (advancement, auxiliary services, business services, equity and diversity, facilities, general counsel, human resources, information technology, procurement) and commit to publicize the results and action taken, if any, as a result of the survey results.
38. Separate Employee Engagement from the Office of Human Resources and establish a reporting structure independent of human resources.
39. Hire an outside consultant to align the organizational structure to promote accountability, better use of resources, and improve communication. Post the cost of the consultant, the results of the consultant's report, and provide periodic status updates regarding action taken, if any, as a result of the report.
40. Include questions on annual engagement survey specific to whether the internal service providers tend to increase or decrease engagement.
41. Include a definition of ombuds on next annual engagement survey: to determine whether non-bargaining employees feel the role would aid in increasing engagement.

### **III. Next Steps**

1. In accordance with the next steps listed in the December 16, 2009 survey results, the EEAG will communicate the status of each recommendation (and whether it has been adopted, modified, or not accepted) to College employees in sixty days.
2. The EEAG will communicate the updated status of each recommendation to College employees again in September 2010.
3. The EEAG will review the survey instrument, modify if necessary, and develop strategies to increase employee participation in the second annual engagement survey.
4. The second annual employee engagement survey will be conducted in October 2010.
5. The results of the survey will be reported to College employees.
6. The EEAG will re-visit recommendations and communicate updated recommendations to College employees.