



Board of Trustees Report



March 14, 2023

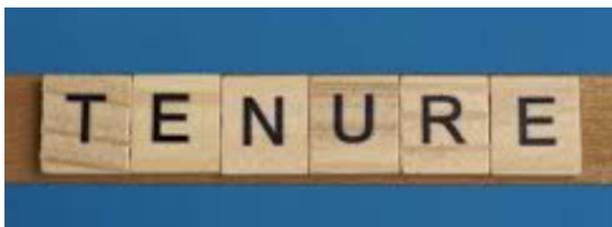
Dr. David M. Johnson, President



On March 4th Merritt College and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center were pleased to welcome the Quilters of Gee’s Bend, Alabama. Their presentation was held at the Oakland Marriott and part of the Barbara Lee and Elihu Harris Lecture series. It focused on the art of quilting as conduit of African American culture, collective memory, and civic engagement. Mary and China Pettway opened their talk by sharing their personal stories, including the fact that they are not related. Rather, they are *Pettways* as a result of their descendants coming from the same plantation and deciding to take their master’s name. By the end of the evening, the audience had gained a deeper understanding of what it means a fully-realized human being, despite whatever the prevailing economic, social, and

racial barriers might be. In these quilts we are reassured that these things can be surmounted, and know at once that these artifacts are nothing short of cultural conduits that continue to inform and inspire us.

Within the Bay Area Community College Consortium (BACCC), Merritt College is leading the charge and strengthening our commitment to helping Black and Brown entrepreneurs in East Oakland and throughout the Bay Area. An important aspect of this work is the ability to provide access to capital investments and seed funding to entrepreneurs through our partnership with ESO Ventures and Workforce Innovation Labs. As the Fiscal Lead and founding college for the "Building an Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem" Regional Joint Venture, Merritt is providing pathways in Digital Marketing and Business Management, as well as resources to support entrepreneurs in growing their small business. We believe that empowering Black and Brown entrepreneurs to build and grow their own small business is critical in closing the racial wealth gaps in East Oakland and we are proud to renew our commitment to this work and to this Regional Joint Venture.



Finally, I want to extend a hearty congratulations to two of our faculty members who just achieved a significant milestone. Sun Young Ban (Math) and Alejandro Garcia will be awarded tenure, having demonstrated their teaching acumen in the classroom, as well as their service to the College. Dr. Sun Young Ban received a BS in Mathematics from New York University and obtained her MS and Ph.D. at Columbia

University. Dr. Ban is an accomplished instructor who has created an engaging classroom environment and effectively connects with her students in both online and face-to-face modalities. In addition to serving as the Co-chair of the Math and Physical Sciences department, Dr. Ban has been active in college wide participatory governance committees, including serving as Professional Development Committee chair. She has also been involved in establishing planning grants such and HSI and MESA initiatives. Dr. Alejandro Garcia earned his

Merritt College puts students first. Through our rich educational programs, we foster a culture of equity and inclusion that empowers students to achieve their greatest potential and make meaningful contributions to their respective communities and our global society.

doctorate degree from UC Berkeley's Department of History, and did so while also on tenured track at Merritt College. While in the last years of his doctoral program, Alejandro Garcia began as an adjunct faculty at Merritt College. However, collaborating with colleagues and teaching students at Merritt College reminded him of the significant role that community colleges play in our society. This motivated him not only to seek a career at Merritt College, but his growth with staff members, administrators, faculty, and students from all Peralta Colleges also inspired him to walk his own 'talk' on higher learning to the extent that his own convictions drove him to finalize the completion of his doctorate degree. Merritt College became his second wind.



Please join me in congratulating them both!

Merritt College puts students first. Through our rich educational programs, we foster a culture of equity and inclusion that empowers students to achieve their greatest potential and make meaningful contributions to their respective communities and our global society.