



Board of Trustees Report



March 10, 2026

President David M. Johnson

FACULTY PRIORITIZATION

I want to begin by thanki ng our Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors (CDCPD), the Merritt College Academic Senate, and the Chancellor’s Office for their work, circumspection, and support as it pertains to this year’s *faculty prioritization*. I understand and appreciate the time and effort that went into evaluating Merritt’s staffing and programmatic needs as we prepare ourselves for this next chapter. I am pleased that Merritt College was approved to recruit for a total of four full-time faculty positions: two positions in the **Radiologic Science** department, and two for our Landscape Horticulture program. As I have

noted, there are several areas at Merritt where we can grow and thrive (and I am confident that there will be future opportunities to hire in those disciplines), but given the accreditation implications, room for growth, and fiscal resources already committed, I am firm in my conviction that hiring faculty in Radiologic Science and Landscape Horticulture is the best direction at this time. As such, we are in the process of reaching out to faculty members to serve on screening committees so that we can complete the process this spring term, and we look forward to welcoming our new faculty colleagues in Fall 2026!



STUDENT SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

This past week ASMC President Davina Malbrough had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. as a part of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC) to represent the Federal Student Advocacy Delegation. This was a singular experience for

her—so much so that I want to share with you some of what she conveyed to me in her own words...

This past week I had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. with the Student Senate for California Community Colleges to advocate for students on a federal level. During this experience, I met with members of Congress to discuss issues impacting community college students across California. As part of our legislative advocacy, I spoke with Representative Lateefah Simon and her team about the importance of increasing federal funding for student basic needs—specifically as it concerns affordable housing for community college students...

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During our time in Washington, D.C., we developed our legislative priorities and practiced how to effectively communicate our policy requests. We also had the opportunity to hear from influential leaders, including Dr. David Mays, Executive Director of the Umoja Community Education Foundation, and Sonya Christian, Chancellor of the California Community Colleges. Both leaders reminded us that the work we are doing today may not only benefit us, but also the generations of students who will come after us...



For the final days of the trip, we participated in multiple legislative visits to ensure that student voices were represented before federal budget decisions are made. I was also part of history during this trip, as it marked the first time the Student Senate for California Community Colleges had ever advocated at the federal level. Representing the voices of over 2.2 million California community college students was both empowering and humbling, and being Washington during this time also made the experience even more real. The national climate was tense, and we were present during a moment when global conflict was beginning to unfold. It reminded me that advocacy does not happen in isolation. The decisions made in those rooms impact real communities and real lives. That experience reinforced my belief that if now is not the time for advocacy, then when is?!

This opportunity has been one of the most meaningful leadership experiences of my academic journey and strengthened my commitment to continue advocating for equitable resources and opportunities for students.

Thank you, ASMC President Malbrough for your leadership and commitment to Merritt College and your fellow students!



On Tuesday, February 24th, Merritt College kicked off its inaugural Lunar New Year Celebration! This is not only the Year of the Horse, but more specifically, it is the *Year of the Fire Horse*, which is part of a rare, 60-year cycle occurrence, merging the Horse (symbolizing energy, speed, and independence) with the Fire element (representing passion and intensity). It short, signifies a period of bold action, high-energy, transformative change, and major opportunities—very apropos given where we are attempting to become here at Merritt and Peralta. I want to take a moment to thank all of

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the students and employees who celebrated with us, but I need to give special recognition to AANHPI Counselor Angie Change, Dean of Counseling Angela Khoo, and her amazing Staff Assistant Skye Nikaidoh for all of their work to make this event (the first of many) a smashing success!



TENURE

Finally, I want to congratulate Ms. Andrea Henderson on her receiving tenure as a Merritt College English instructor. After being laid off from OUSD in 2004, she enrolled in an English 1B course taught by Dr. Chriss Foster that focused on the writings of Toni Morrison. That experience was transformative, and Andrea emerged with renewed focus on becoming a college English instructor herself. She applied to the Faculty Diversity Internship Program, earned her master's degree in English literature, and joined the faculty as a part-time instructor in the spring of 2013. Perseverance and her love for Merritt ultimately resulted in her being hired as a tenure-track faculty member in 2022, and I am so pleased that we will have her in the years to come. Well done Professor Henderson!!



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