



# Board of Trustees Report



May 12, 2026

President David M. Johnson

As we make our way into the *Season of Exuberance* (aka graduation season), we have already experienced some amazing events that celebrate, inspire, and enlighten our campus community. Here are some highlights from a few of them...



On Cinco de Mayo, Merritt College Student Clubs hosted their first World Cup Festival in the Student Lounge (R-110). Over 160 students, staff, faculty, and community members attended the two-hour celebration. Guests enjoyed pupusas, a traditional Salvadoran dish, pasteles, aguas frescas, and pineapple soft-serve ice cream. The event concluded with a piñata activity filled with candy and prizes. Thanks to Campos Jewelers, attendees



also had the opportunity to participate in a raffle for a pair of silver earrings.



This event would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of Aspira, United Panthers, Puente, Street Scholars, ICC, various student clubs, the Wellness Center, EOPS/CARE, Basic Needs, the Tutoring Center, the Welcome Center, the Athletic Department, and the Oakland Roots professional soccer team.

Special thanks go to Doris Hankins, Nancy Moreno, Charlie L. Morales, and Omar Sanchez for stepping up as Student Club advisors. They went above and beyond this semester to help launch new student clubs and guide students in organizing and executing this successful event.

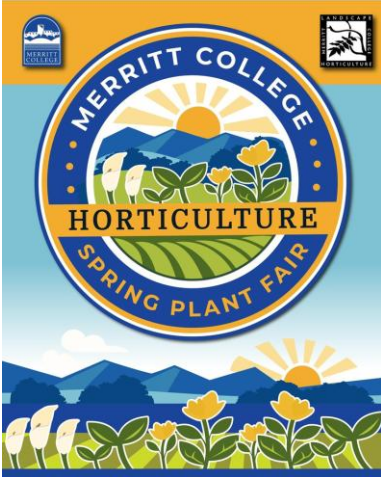




On Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> the College hosted a Lowrider Car Show in our Parking Lot C. The theme, *Preserving Culture and Resilience*, was apropos given our institutional commitment to expand educational access, strengthen transfer and career pathways, and provide a safe environment where students and employees can learn and work without fear. Ricardo Cortez, author of *The ABCs of Lowriding*, served as the keynote

speaker. He provided attendees with the history of lowriding, making sure that we understood how inextricably tied it is with broader social and cultural currents within the community. The event also featured a dance performance from local high school students, community resource tabling, representation from the College of Alameda Automotive Technology Program, free tacos and ice cream, and music provided renowned DJ Chuy Gomez. And last (but certainly not least) we had the cars!! Thanks go out to HSI Director Mario Flores and the rest of the team for bringing to fruition this tremendous day of culture and community!





For the first time since the pandemic, the Merritt College Landscape Horticulture Program was able to put on our incredible *Spring Plant Sale* affair. With the assistance of our marketing and communication specialist, Ms. Jasmine Bledsoe, was particularly well-promoted, which helped us bring together nearly 500 community members, artisans, campus folks, and general lovers of flora. This year also marked the first time we were able to host the event in our state-of-the-art Landscape Horticulture complex! Our students also had the opportunity to showcase annual vegetables, perennial edibles,

herbs, California natives, indoor plants, ornamental plants, and succulents. Kudos to the Merritt faculty, staff, and more than twenty volunteers who planned and pulled everything off!

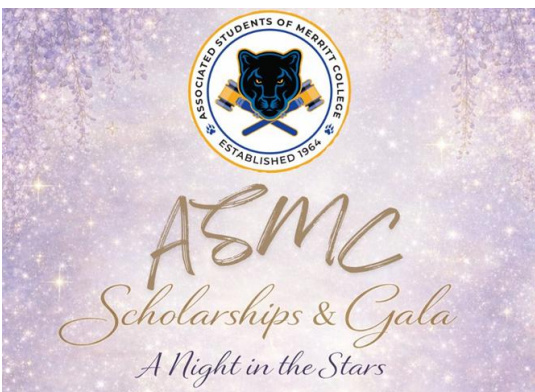




The new MESA program at Merritt College is officially up and running! MESA Director Christina Tinsley shared that the program recently welcomed its first student, and recruitment is ongoing as we look to

build our first cohort. Recent outreach activities have included information sessions with Merritt faculty and participation in various high school events, such as Skyline’s Community College and CTE Fair, a visit to Sojourner Truth’s homeroom, and a workshop for students from Fremont High at Merritt’s Career Exploration Day. The next phase of recruitment will involve targeted outreach to continuing Merritt students, leveraging institutional data to identify students enrolled in MESA-eligible majors and courses.

In addition to campus-based programming, the Directors of the four Peralta MESA programs plan to host district-wide MESA events in the upcoming academic year, where we can bring our students together to build a greater community. Students enrolled in any of the Peralta MESA programs are already able to utilize MESA Centers and participate in events at the other campuses. Another exciting district-wide initiative, spearheaded by Director Alyssa Arnold at Laney, is the creation of an MOU with UC Berkeley’s Space Sciences Laboratory, allowing Peralta MESA students to participate in a paid summer research opportunity. Work is underway on MOU’s with additional partners for student internships in Summer 2027 and beyond. As our district moves toward creating a more unified experience for students, MESA is happy to be an example of collaboration in the spirit of best serving our students.



I want to close by congratulating the scholarship winners honored at the ASMC Gala on May 6<sup>th</sup>. I was inspired, moved, and proud all at once, but I believe that our Sankofa Coordinator Tauheeda



Anderson best described the evening:

*From the laughter, the sunsets, the elegant outfits, and the conversations shared throughout the night, it was more than just a gala—it was a space filled with memories, accomplishments, friendship, and student excellence. Seeing students, leaders, mentors, and community members come together to celebrate the work we’ve all poured into them was something special.*

*So proud of everyone who continues to show up for our campus, advocate for students, and create spaces where people feel seen and celebrated. Nights like this remind me that student leadership is not just about meetings and events, but about building lasting connections and creating moments people will remember forever.*

*Thank you to everyone who helped organize, support, and attend the ASMC Gala. The energy, the love, and the community in the room was unmatched.*



*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.*