



Board of Trustees Report



July 11, 2023

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



I am pleased to officially welcome Lisa Cook to Merritt College as the Acting Vice President of Instruction. Lisa comes to us from Berkeley City College, where she has served as the Dean of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences since 2016. Her time in the Peralta District as an experienced leader and educator, however, spans more than 25 years. Over her career she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and access. In addition, under her leadership Berkeley City College established vital partnerships with local high schools, which resulted in a remarkable increase in dual enrollment (from 342 to 1574 students over four years), and significant growth in the participation and success of Black and Latino/a/x students. In her prior position as an ESOL instructor at Laney College for 18 years, Lisa was a strong advocate for students and faculty through her work as program coordinator, department chair, accreditation faculty lead, and faculty senate president. She played an integral role in the redesign of the ESOL program, expansion of learning support

services, and institution of the Laney Eagle peer recognition award and annual faculty senate retreat. She received five district and college awards for her excellent contributions, including Faculty of the Year in 2016.

Lisa holds a bachelor's degree in writing and poetics from Naropa University, a master's degree in applied linguistics (English Language Studies) from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and two certificates in online teaching and learning.

Students who enrolled in Merritt College's African American Studies 27 course (Afro-Caribbean History, Politics, and Culture) recently returned from their study abroad trip to Jamaica. This was a tremendous opportunity for them to learn first-hand about the historical, economic, and cultural development of the Caribbean and the effects of colonization on the region. Dr. Siri Brown led and coordinated tours, which included a visit to the Bob Marley Museum, Nanny Town (also known as the Maroon Community), schools, and neighboring communities. A local guide (Tony) helped the group navigate and adjust to Jamaican cultures and norms as they participated in specialized tours, lectures, and moderated discussions in Kingston, Port Antonio, and Negril. Our students generously donated school supplies and learned about Jamaica's educational system and the effects that foreign policies and the pandemic have had on the community. The Director of Jamaica's *Peace Management Initiative* met with students to provide information and answer questions regarding how they are addressing youth violence and working to reconcile and heal their community. The trip was organized and led by Dr. Siri Brown, who I would like to congratulate on her recent retirement and thank for her many years of service to our community and students.



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.



Finally, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank Director of Public Safety Tim Thomas and Administration of Justice Professor Mildred Oliver for planning and providing exemplary public safety to the Merritt College campus during the weekend of the 4th of July holiday. By having Marina Security work together with the Merritt College Safety Aides, we were able to control unauthorized access to campus and prevent firework activity in the immediate area. Given that we had various activities planned on campus over the weekend

(including hosting over a thousand fans at the Oakland Soul soccer match on Sunday, July 2nd), this was no small feat. Moreover, our Ridgemont Community neighbors were very concerned about the potential blaze that could result from crowds gathering in Parking Lot B and setting off fireworks. So suffice it to say that we appreciate our Public Safety team, and applaud their efforts to keep everything and everyone in order. Job well done!



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