



Board of Trustees Report



October 11, 2022

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



At the end of September, Merritt College had the honor of hosting the Native American Health Center’s Golden Anniversary Powwow. Founded in San Francisco’s Mission District in 1972, and now located in East Oakland, NAHC’s mission is to “provide comprehensive services to improve the health and wellbeing of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and residents of the surrounding communities with respect to cultural and linguistic differences.” It was our privilege that NAHC chose Merritt to hold this solemn yet celebratory event. There were many community members of all races that came to support the Powwow, and Merritt’s Intertribal Student Union represented

as well (in fact, the three past presidents were in attendance). To quote our Outreach Specialist Maria Spencer, who helped bring the experience to Merritt, “the campus came alive, and the energy and prayers provided throughout the day were much needed for our community to heal. Keep in mind that these are direct decedents from the relocation era that survived the transitioning from the reservation. We must never forget that this government wanted to kill American Indians and force them into assimilation, so it was a powerful day at Merritt because they did not succeed—Native Americans kept their language, culture and traditions and it showed at the Powwow.”



NHS Open House

9/30/22 at the Environmental Center*

Come see how we’ve grown our new office and garden...



On Friday, September 30, the Natural History and Sustainability (NHS) Program hosted their Open House at the refurbished and revitalized Environmental Center. The event began with the NHS Advisory Board Committee Meeting, whose stated goals are threefold:

- Provide insight into program offerings to help expand student knowledge of environmental issues
- Prepare students to become more competitive job applicants by offering internships, bringing guest speakers, and arranging on-site study trips
- Help students develop key skills for the specific field of desired employment

We were also honored to have Trustee Nicky González Yuen in attendance to share his passion and provide his perspectives on environmental sustainability. And since we are giving “shout outs,” I want to thank faculty members Ben Nelson and Brad Balukjian for their leadership and dedication to the program. I also want to give a plug for the Sustainability Club’s event on Saturday, October 22 that begins at 10am. **Habitat Restoration Day** will take place right at the back of campus in the Leona Canyon. So come out and help plant native species of flora to help revive the environment.

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.



And saving the most exciting news for last, Merritt College recently learned that we were awarded nearly \$3,000,000 as the recipient of the **HSI Title V Grant**! Conceived as the *Aspira Project*, our efforts will focus on the recruitment, preparation, and guidance of Latinx and lower-income students. Specifically, funding will be used for:

- The development of bilingual outreach and dual-enrollment programs
- Peer-Mentoring
- Tutoring for students enrolled in high-need courses
- The improvement of academic retention and success rates
- Professional development for faculty and staff in culturally-responsive curriculum, pedagogy, and practice

On Friday, October 14, at 11:00am the College will hold an HSI Meeting to provide an overview of the goals, timelines, and guidelines of the grant. Then at noon—in celebration of the receiving the grant and the end of Latinx Heritage Month—the Office of the President will host a gathering. So please come out for some good food and fellowship.



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