



Board of Trustees Report



December 12, 2023

Dr. David M. Johnson, President

As the Fall 2023 semester draws to a close, I want to share a few of the exciting and critically-important activities and initiatives that Merritt College is engaged in to grow enrollment, enrich our campus culture, achieve greater equity, and put our students first.



- Cultivating community partnerships with ROOTS at Parker Elementary school to plan potential course offerings in Child Development/Early Childhood Education, Community Social Services/Substance Abuse (COSER), and African American Studies. We are also expanding Dual Enrollment by working with the OUSD continuation schools
- Creating several positions to expand Career Education Pathways and Academic Support for our students. Positions include: CE Coordinator, Cannabis Pathways Coordinator, Cybersecurity Enhancement Pathway Coordinator, and Zero Textbook Cost/Open Educational Resources Coordinator.
- Re-invigorating the Sankofa/UMOJA Learning Community by providing greater counseling and administrative support. We are also pursuing the Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander (ANAPISI) federal grant funding, as well as building administrative capacity for the *Aspira Project* (HSI). Finally, we are looking to bring on a Dean of Student Success and Equity to oversee these initiatives.
- Holding ongoing Engagement Forums to identify and address the most pressing issues as identified by **Merritt Students**. At the December 5th session, several themes emerged:



- I. Students want to take more in-person courses, as online instruction is not the optimum learning modality for many of them. Going forward our class scheduling approach needs to reflect this (including evening courses, Saturday offerings, etc.)



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II. Students miss the vibrant and bustling campus environment that existed pre-pandemic. We will continue to work through our Student Activities and Campus Life Office to re-engage and providing compelling reasons to return (more in-person course offering will support this goal).



III. Many students continue to struggle with food insecurity, homelessness, and the struggle to meet basic needs. In response, we will continue to fund our Free Breakfast program, our Food Bank, and (of course) the Spring is Free Campaign. We are also pleased to provide direct support to students under the leadership of our Basic Needs Coordinator Susana Abdurahman.

IV. Students are concerned with campus safety and the increased criminal activity in Oakland in general. We are continuing to work closely with Director of Public Safety Tim Thomas to identify strategies to effectively deter campus incidents.

These are just some of the things we are doing to realize our vision of making Merritt a preeminent institution of learning, training, and civic engagement.



We are gearing up for the Spring 2024 semester. Enrollment looks encouraging thus far, with our resident FTES at 823. This constitutes 51% of our enrollment target, and we still have six weeks remaining to grow that number. Of the 432 sections scheduled, 30% have enrollments above 20 students. We have also increased the number of in person course offerings, with 43% of our spring courses having a face-to-face component (which is up 11% from Spring 2023). We also are continuing to build our dual enrollment programming, as we are offering 25 courses at OUSD and local charter schools. Finally, we have scheduled our comprehensive Express Enrollment events, with activities planned for Friday December 15, Friday January 19, and Saturday January 20. We invite everyone to come out and support the effort!

Finally, the end of the year also marks a set of new beginnings. After more than 35 years of service to the Peralta District, Mr. Randy Dillard is finally retiring from his post as Campus Custodian. We wish him the best of luck as he starts this next chapter of his life, which includes spending time with his new grandchild.



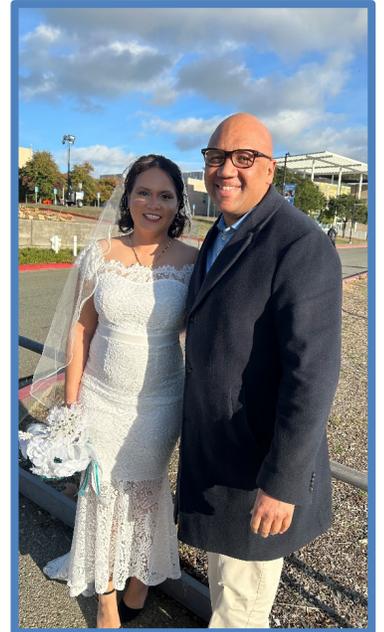
Ms. Jamila Saleh is settling into her new role as Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Instruction. Jamila is a first-generation college graduate and a Merritt College alumna who received her Associate Degree in Health Sciences. She went on to CSU East Bay, where she completed her Bachelor's Degree in Health Sciences with a concentration in Administration & Management and is currently pursuing her MSW. Before coming over to the Office of Instruction, Jamila served in several key roles in Student Services, including Staff Assistant to Cal Works, Staff Assistant to the Vice President of Student Services, Student Services Specialist, Enrollment Coordinator and Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Student Services.

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We recently learned that Ms. Brenda Mora, who currently serves as Coordinator/Merritt College @ Fruitvale, is about to begin a new academic pursuit: a Master's in Social Work program at the University of Southern California! In reflecting on her recent accomplishment, Brenda had this to say: "I am grateful for the support and guidance I received from Dr. Chriss Foster, Evan Nichols, Maria Valencia, and Edwin Towle in my journey to continue my education. With your continued support I'll reach my goal of graduating with a master's degree!" We are extremely proud of you Brenda!

Finally, a wonderful event occurred on Friday, December 1. Our own Classified Senate President Marisol Roque Chaves got married, and Merritt College was fortunate to host the reception. Congratulations to Marisol and Sal, and we appreciate having the opportunity to share in your special day!



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