



Board of Trustees Report



May 9, 2023

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



The RP Group and the State Chancellor's Office have joined forces to develop *Leading From the Middle* (LFM) Academies to provide college stakeholders an opportunity to delve into relevant research and develop new ways to lead. Using themes from the Merritt College equity plan (and at the suggestion of faculty member Lowell Bennett), VPI Denise Richardson submitted an application on behalf of Merritt

College. On April 28th, we were notified that Merritt was selected.

Merritt's six-member team is as follows:

Doris Hankins
Feather Ives
Bianca Parazo
Loan Nguyen
Nathan Pellegrin
Maria Valencia

During the fifteen-month Academy participants will have the opportunity to:

- **Engage** in experiential learning to explore effective leadership strategies.
- **Formulate and articulate** a collective and individual equity-minded leadership identity.
- **Develop and implement** a project that advances systemic equity-focused, student-centered reform efforts and aligns with their colleges' strategic priorities and the *Vision for Success*.
- **Apply** leadership skills and strategies to their day-to-day work and LFMproject.
- **Examine** data, research, and other forms of evidence to make informed decisions to advance their LFM project.
- **Create** sustainable professional relationships where peers share ideas and strategies around equity and transformative change.
- **Work** with a designated coach who will support and provide guidance throughout the LFM Academy.

Our acceptance letter stated, "We hope your experience will prepare you to take risks, disrupt old patterns, and create new ways of thinking, doing, and leading." Our team is looking forward to doing just that.



The National Cyber League (NCL) Spring 2023 season just concluded, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Merritt College's team of student/scholars (they go by the name *Merrittocracy*). To provide a bit of context, the mission of the NCL is to prepare the next generation of cybersecurity professionals by

providing college students with an online, safe platform of real-world cybersecurity challenges. Hundreds of colleges (including four-year institutions) and thousands of teams participate every year. This virtual training ground features a competitive process and a supportive community to help students develop, improve, and validate their cybersecurity skills. I am proud to report that *Merrittocracy* (with team members Angela Hong,

Calvin Hsieh, William Dilbeck, Jeremiah Proffitt, Erica Dong, and James Toalu) placed 16 out of 3593 teams/players (which ranks them in the top 0.4 percentile)! This is an incredible achievement, and attests to the talent and hard work of our students, as well as the support provided by sponsors and faculty members such as Jim Cates, Mark Egan, and Beverly Brooks.

MERRITTOCRACY



The quote “Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle” may have come from self-help author Napoleon Hill, but it certainly epitomizes the approach that Ms. Esperiza Kimble (affectionately known as Carmela) has taken to achieve her academic goals. Arriving to the United States from the Philippines at age 17, seeking a better life for herself and her daughter, Carmela had to overcome many obstacles—challenges that included poverty, depression, and self-doubt. But she remained resilient, enrolling at Merritt College and working first in the bookstore, and later in the library. Determined to reach her goals, she successfully landed a permanent classified position as a Senior Library Technician and kept pressing forward academically. And now I am delighted to share that she just received word of her acceptance to University of California, Davis as a transfer student. Please join me in congratulating her and wishing her continued success as an AGGIE!!

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.