



# Board of Trustees Report



October 10, 2023

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



California  
Community  
Colleges

Rising Scholars  
Network

Merritt College was awarded a grant recently from the Rising Scholars network for the purpose of providing instruction and wrap around services for incarcerated youth. **This grant will provide us with \$1.5 million over five-years.** and enable the College to implement

in-person, on site assistance with enrollment, student education planning, counseling, tutoring, exit planning and instruction. Our primary objective is to provide pathways for these young men and women to obtain a degree or CE certificate so that they have the support, knowledge, and inspiration to continue their forward momentum once they are able to come home. Along with the herculean efforts of Bianca Parazo, Chair of our COSER Program, this partnership with the juvenile facility is the result of coordinated efforts between our own *Street Scholars Program* and several other entities, including CSU East Bay's *Project Rebound*, UC Berkeley's *Underground Scholars*, and Oakland's *Youth Employment Partnership*. These re-entry resources are the next pathway for our students that will enable them to apply the education they will receive from Merritt College. It also is worth noting that this grant will provide peer mentorship opportunities so that students can utilize their lived experiences to encourage others, whether they are inside or outside of the justice system.

With the support of the *Aspira Project/HSI Title V Grant*, Merritt College will be sending six individuals to the upcoming Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference. The conference will take place from October 28th through October 30th, and will be held in Chicago, Illinois. HACU represents over 500 colleges and universities around the world, and is also the only national association that represents existing and emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). In addition to their legislative and policy work, HACU provides a variety of professional development and learning opportunities for faculty, staff, administrators, and students through various conferences and forums.



The Merritt Team comprises the following representatives:

- Brenda Mora, Fruitvale Center Coordinator
- Jorge Murillo, Director of HSI/Aspira Project
- Jamila Saleh, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Student Services
- Judit Trinidad Lopez, Academic Counselor
- Maria Valencia, Admissions & Records Clerk

The team's objectives for the trip are to expand institutional awareness of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), learn innovative programs and best practices from colleagues at other institutions, and bring back new ideas that will enhance the Merritt College student experience.

*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.*



On Thursday, September 28, Merritt College had its third and final visit from the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) Team. The meeting provided the occasion to review the strategies of our IEPI Grant workplan, which focuses primarily on strengthening professional development and building pathways for our Classified Professional Staff Members. Among the key takeaways from the discussion was the realization that a large majority (close to two-thirds) of our classified staff actually began their professional careers at Merritt as student workers before joining the college as permanent employees. The visiting IEPI Team shared that in their collective experience this dynamic is unique to Merritt College. They also emphasized how critical this relationship is to shaping and strengthening the commitment of Classified Professionals to the college. We thank the members of the IEPI Resource Team for their constructive feedback/support, and look forward to continuing our efforts to implement our IEPI Grant.

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