



The Merritt Connection

March 15, 2016

Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, President

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President's News & Notes



Merritt Supports Oakland Rotary's Effort to Help Children

Merritt College recently joined in to support the efforts of the Oakland Rotary #3 to make a difference in the lives of children and young adults by donating a basket that was auctioned off at the Rotary OAKtown Gala on March 12 at the Paramount Theater. The proceeds will help prepare Oakland trans-kindergarten students for academic success, provide college scholarships for Oakland students, and mentor Oakland youth, among other efforts. The basket was beautifully put together by Stefanie Harding and contained Merritt "swag" like tote bags and flash drives, as well as crackers and cheese, and a handcrafted cutting board made by Christine Olsen's father. A true Merritt family effort!



Congratulations to Heather Casale as Newly Tenured Faculty Member



At a reception just prior to the March 8 Board of Trustees meeting, eight faculty members were recognized as newly tenure track faculty before the formal recognition at the Board Meeting. We are proud that one of them was Heather Casale, faculty member in Nutrition & Dietetics, and congratulate her for all of her current and future contributions to Merritt College.

Cuban Embassy Secretary Brings Message About New U.S./Cuba Relations to a Packed Audience



More than 100 students, faculty and staff, and community members filled the Student Lounge on March 9 to hear Miguel Fraga, the first Secretary of the newly established Cuban Embassy, to speak on "Has U.S. Policy Really Changed?" Merritt was one of only six locations chosen to host him, thanks to the influence of Dr. Siri Brown who has visited Cuba more than 10 times with student and faculty groups.

Along with a comprehensive PowerPoint, Fragas discussed and then answered questions about recent changes to travel restrictions, communications, and the new opportunity for business between the two countries. “Right now there’s a lot of interest in learning more about Cuba, and I think there is a lot of misinformation that exists,” said Fragas. “However, almost all opinion polls in the U.S. show that most Americans support the reconciliation between our two countries.” To obtain a copy of the PowerPoint, email smay@peralta.edu. **Pictured: Secretary Miguel Fraga meets with President Ambriz-Galaviz, Dr. Siri Brown, and other administrators, faculty, and staff at a reception following the talk**

The Popular Africana Center Has Its Grand Opening on March 30. All Are Welcome!



Come to the Grand Opening of the new Africana Studies Community Research Center on March 30 and experience the originally designed interactive curriculum to be used on computers, iPads, and other electronic devices to learn about African-American history. The event will be from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in L-127. “We really wanted to create something that shows that you can learn not just by listening to lectures and reading incredible textbooks but also by interacting with more modern kind of platforms,” says Dr. Siri Brown, whose ideas took several years to become a reality, including the carefully chosen interior colors, artwork, and comfortable furniture.

Merritt student Delise Monroe, who works in the ADA-compliant Center, says it’s a wonderful opportunity for the students. “Students come thinking they are going to just do their homework and then they don’t want to leave. There’s so much knowledge at their fingertips. Many students don’t know that this is where the Black Panthers were founded and that Merritt College was the first college to have an African-American Studies Department.”

Former Merritt staff member Dera Williams is the Center’s part-time Family Research Specialist and helps students with their genealogy. “They learn where they came from and it gives them a sense of pride – their family, their culture, their traditions – and to find out what their families contributed to society.”

Dr. Brown will also be opening the Center up to high schools and community groups to share this important information. “When you create something that is a permanent lasting exhibit, then it means it’s something the can’t go away. So we are happy to institutionalize the learning and studying about Africa and African American history here at Merritt College. **Pictured: Dr. Siri Brown with students; Center artwork.**



–Susan May



Mark your Calendar for This Year’s Mardi-Gras Themed Celebration

The Merritt College 7th Annual Achievement Awards Celebration will be held at Scott’s Restaurant on Friday, April 29, from 5:30 p.m....till it’s over. In addition to honoring recipients of the President’s Excellence Awards, giving years of service mementos, recognizing retirees, and acknowledging our colleagues in memoriam, we will also award one Leadership Award and one Institutional Award in each of the college units.



This year the theme is Mardi Gras! Rock your favorite mask and then enjoy a special menu of N’awlins

favorites, including marinated Cajun Chicken, Blackened Salmon, Red Beans and Dirty Rice. There will be prizes for the best masks, a live/silent auction and raffle prizes, then dancing into the night with great music. Stay tuned, more information is forthcoming. Doris Hankins and I are coordinating the event.

–Dr. Mia Kelly

Barbara Lee's Oakland and Washington D.C. Staff Get a Tour of the New Science Building



A tour of Barbara Lee's 16th Congressional District by her staff members from the Oakland and D.C. offices included Merritt College on March 7, where I gave them a tour of the building they were excited to see for the first time. The staff was impressed with the state-of-the-art facility and the amazing resources available to Merritt College students, staff and faculty. I also took them to the Office of the President because they wanted to see the portrait of the Congresswoman that was painted by a local artist and presented to her at the Grand Opening in November. It was the first visit to Merritt for several of the staff and they were in awe of our amazing view of the Bay Area and the beauty of the campus. Their visit came the day before the Official Campaign Kick-off Breakfast at Scott's Seafood Restaurant in Jack London Square.

–Romeo Garcia

Merritt Hosts Successful Seminar for 120+ Nutritionists Including Graduates and Interns

On Friday, March 4, Merritt College hosted a continuing education seminar for more than 120 Registered Dietitians and Certified Dietary Managers working in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Participants included Merritt nutrition student interns who learned about the latest information on health care food safety and nutrition standards. Over one-third of the seminar participants were proud graduates of Merritt College, and many former students happily visited and networked.



A seminar highlight was a panel of Merritt College graduates discussing creative approaches to patient-centered care. Speakers and participants alike commented on the quality of the graduates of Merritt College, and they noted that Merritt College grads were in demand in the field. Evaluations were almost universally positive, and many people appreciated the lovely space, healthy lunch, and the helpful and friendly staff and student intern volunteers. Pictured: *Merritt College Nutrition student interns*

–Mary Louise Zernicke

Assessment Update: BIG Checks and Workshop Attendees



SLOAC started the Spring Semester with some BIG checks. Six faculty were honored at the January Flex Day activities for their assessment work: Lilia Dosalmas (Athletics), Laura Forlin (Landscape Horticulture), Clytia Curley (Biology), Julieta Zuniga (Spanish), Martha Berthelsen (Environmental Management). The Division Deans provided requests through the assessment process. To get more information or assistance with tying budget requests to your assessment data, please contact one of the assessment coordinators or email mer-sloac@peralta.edu.

In addition to handing out some big checks, SLOAC was able to plan out the assessment of a number of programs at the college. Working with the assessment coordinators, faculty worked out plans to assess at least one of their program outcomes this semester. Participating programs were English, business,

psychology, natural sciences, health science and landscape horticulture to name a few. If your program has not yet developed a plan to complete your PLO assessment, let your assessment coordinator know.

Also, Dean Tina Vasconcello reports that she and five others attended the ACCJC's "Taking Assessment to the Program Level" Workshop in Burlingame. The Merritt team learned about the definition of instructional programs per the ACCJC standards, strategies to assess Program Learning Outcomes, Program Assessment rubrics, and curriculum mapping. Dean Vasconcellos says the workshop was especially timely given our focus on accelerating Program Assessment this semester. The team shared the information with the SLOAC and will incorporate it in working with faculty. **Pictured, top left: Clytia Curley proudly displays her giant check; bottom right: the Merritt team at the ACCJC Assessment Workshop: Ann Elliott, Susan Andrien, Clifton Coleman, Tina Vasconcellos, and Samantha Knappenberger.**



Nursing Class President Explains Age-Old Pinning Tradition and Fundraising Efforts

The Merritt College Nursing Class of 2016 will be celebrating its commencement with a traditional pinning ceremony at 10 a.m. on May 26 in the Student Lounge. This pinning ceremony is a tradition unique to the profession of nursing. It is an intimate gathering of faculty, students, and family honoring the graduates who've spent the last several years of their lives preparing for a career to serve the sick and injured. In honor of the modern founder of our profession, we light lamps that represent Florence Nightingale's nighttime quests for the wounded, and recite the Nightingale Oath, our version of the Hippocratic Oath.



This year, the reception will be held on the upstairs patio of the new Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center for the 31 graduates. This area features a gorgeous view of the San Francisco Bay, and on a clear day you can see past the city to the Pacific. We will show our families where we've spent every Monday for the past two years, studied for every exam, spent countless hours in skills lab, and where we've learned how to be professional, caring, individuals. We plan to invite Congresswoman Lee to our graduation to thank her in person for her generous contribution to our campus and our learning.

Our class is holding a fundraiser to help with the expenses of the pinning ceremony by selling t-shirts (\$20) and sweatshirts (\$35). We appreciate any help from the Merritt community in our efforts with purchase of the clothing or would be grateful for a donation. We hope to be selling them on Mondays from 3-5 and Tuesdays from 4-5 in the science building or contact me at 10899679@cc.peralta.edu.

Pictured: Nursing students Jenny Lo, David Kodur, and Casimira Kamnikar.

–David Kodur, Nursing President, Class of 2016

Tell Your Students: Strong-Start Scholarships Still Available through March 31

Jessica Myers is a proud re-entry student, a single mother, a volunteer/leader in her community and, like many of Merritt's students, has overcome tremendous obstacles in her life. Last year she was awarded one of the Faculty Senate's Strong Start Scholarships, and it has helped change her life. She is currently an EOPS Peer Advisor and has been admitted to Holy Names University for Fall 2016.



I recently spoke to Jessica about the scholarship, and she said, "Winning the scholarship made me realize that working as hard as I do is worth it. Being able to put the certificate on my wall served as a constant reminder of what I've accomplished and a reminder of the recognition I received from the faculty. I put the

certificate up where I could see it every day, and it has kept me focused.”

Once again this year, nine scholarships are being offered for students who have completed at least 9 units and no more than 30 units with at least a 2.75 GPA. Applications for the 2016 Faculty Senate Scholarships are **due on March 31**. Please help spread the word to our students and/or write letters of recommendation for our applicants. To find a copy of the application, go to www.facultysenatesscholarships.org. If you would like to make a one-time donation or enroll in the monthly payroll deduction for the Faculty Senate Scholarships, please contact Faculty Senate Treasurer, Marty Zielke at mzielke@peralta.edu.

–Tanya Harde

Increasing and Retaining Enrollment Can Start By Offering Students a Friendly Welcome

Since I’ve been asked to help Merritt overcome the challenge of increasing student enrollment, I’ve been working with many good people to discuss working with me on some very specific objectives and strategies to meet this challenge. Along with several technically oriented objectives and specific events, we will be targeting, there are general ways we can all help with this effort on an everyday basis.

Our overall purpose should be to show students, both new and current, who we are and what we have to offer and convincing them that we can help them achieve their educational goals. Therefore, one of the critical aspects of success to which we all can contribute is a willingness to engage our students in sincere ways that let them know they are the focus of our professional effort. When you are walking the campus, going from room to room or building to building, offer a friendly welcome to those students you pass. Engage them with your name and relationship to the college, and ask them how things are going for them. Offer them encouragement, as we all know what that can mean. Our success rests with each of us doing our part.

–*David Morales*

Announcements & Events

- Wed., March 16, 12:30-2 p.m., Student Lounge – Student Appreciation Day
- Wed., March 30, 5:30-7:30 p.m., L-127 – Grand Opening of Merritt’s Africana Center. All are welcome!
- March 21-27 – Spring Break
- Tues., March 29, 7:30-9:30 a.m. – “The People’s Breakfast Honoring Cesar Chavez” at College of Alameda
- Wed., March 30, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. – “United We Still Stand,” Event to Honor Cesar Chavez
- Thurs., March 31 – Holiday Observance – Cesar Chavez Day
- Sat., April 9 – Track & Field Annual Home Game (see season schedule at merritt.edu/wp/track/schedule)

Share Your News with the Merritt Community

Please send your suggested ideas, articles and/or photos to Merritt Connection Editor Susan May at smay@peralta.edu. Articles should be 1-3 paragraphs and may be edited for space or held for future publications. Photos must be high-quality and have permission of the people in it to be published. If others outside of Merritt-FAS want to be on the newsletter distribution list, please send their emails.

Suggested topics for sharing:

Announcements or Reviews of Events
Awards and Achievements
Division and Department News
Community Outreach Activities
Community Partnerships/Internships
Committee Highlights
Innovative Class Projects

Alumni News
New Employee Announcements
Campus Visitors
Student Achievements/Highlights
Student Activities
Sports News/Highlights
Travel/Conference News

Deadline for contributions for the March 31 edition is: **Monday, March 28**



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April 19, 2016

Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, President

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President's News & Notes



DHTI Forum Strategizes on Bringing Immigrants into the HealthCare Workforce

Dr. Rosemary Delia, Dr. Tina Vasconcellos, and I attended the Diversity Health Training Institute's workforce policy forum, "Reimagining CA's Healthcare Delivery System Using a Health Equity Framework: Multi-sector Actions for Immigrants in the Healthcare Workforce," on April 8 at the Jack London Aquatic Center in Oakland. The forum brought high-level policy people and educators to discuss developing a workforce that meets the needs of the underserved and provides services in marginalized communities.

Assemblymember Rob Bonta joined the group in the last hour for a candid conversation on ways policy advocacy on the State level can support local and regional workforce strategies.

Pictured: Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz and Dr. Tina Vasconcellos



Welcome To Our New Administrators!

Vice President of Instruction: Dr. Jeffrey Lamb



Dr. Jeffrey Lamb has been named Vice President of Instruction at Merritt College, effective May 2. Prior to his new position, he served as Dean of the School of English and Foreign Languages at City College of San Francisco. Before CCSF, he was the Interim Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and the Dean of Academic Success and Learning Resources at Solano Community College. For more than 18 years he taught Spanish at public, private, and international institutions and led several study abroad trips. As faculty, he served as the Academic Senate President and as the Teaching and Learning Center Coordinator.

Dr. Lamb holds a doctorate in 20th Century Latin American Literature from UCLA, a master's degree in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from San Diego State University, and a bachelor's degree in Spanish from CSU, Long Beach.

Dean of Special Programs and Grants: Dr. Lilia Chavez



Dr. Lilia Chavez was named Dean of Special Programs, effective April 13. She has been with Merritt since 2014 as Director of Student Activities and Campus Life. Prior to that, she worked at San Francisco State University as Director of the Office of Student Programs and Development Leadership. She is a Chicana/Latina, Social and Spiritual

Activist/Educator who seizes each opportunity to work with underrepresented, underprepared, and underserved communities. Dr. Chavez holds an Associate's Degree from Berkeley City College, a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco, a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling from San Francisco State University, and a doctorate in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco.

17th Annual Show of Merritt Opens with Spectacular Work in a Stunning Setting



With the setting sun glowing into the large, glass-walled room, a crowd of art lovers, curiosity seekers, and passers-by packed the Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center on April 15 to see the beautiful art work created by Merritt students and faculty. It marked the first time the Merritt Show of Art was being held on campus, and for Art Department Chair Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, it was an unknown risk that she ultimately decided to take. In part of her welcoming speech, she eloquently explained why.

"An exhibition at its greatest displays love, courage and profoundly moving truth and beauty, the simple and pure love of the process of making and sharing the results with others. The Show of Merritt has always

been about this kind of love.



"Creating this show was a creative process which meant being open to not knowing how everything would go and or where everything would go. It has emphasized for me again the importance of recognizing and honoring creative process. To promote creativity is something valuable and important because it allows for openness and possibility and for the development of something different, something new. It makes us vulnerable to be in the not knowing of the creative process which fosters participation, new ideas, contribution, and donation. Most importantly it allows for the potential to create something together. This show came together so beautifully because of all of you who dared to contribute work and those of you who were willing and able to volunteer your time and expertise."



Come and see this fabulous show of painting, sculpture, watercolor, 3-D art, pastels, figure drawing, ceramics, botanical drawing – and even handmade musical instruments from Music Appreciation class! The show runs through May 21, Mondays-Saturdays from 12-3 p.m. **Pictured: Sheila Metcalf-Tobin and Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz**

SLOAC Update: Learning a Lesson from a Chemistry Assessment

I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the excellent work that has been done recently by the part-time faculty in my own chemistry department. Chem30A, Introductory General Chemistry, is a course taken mostly by nursing majors here at Merritt College and is taught entirely by dedicated, motivated, creative part-time faculty.



Last year, this group met to discuss an assessment method for the SLO: Clearly explain quantitative concepts and trends. Collectively, they came up with a question about the polarity of bonds and molecules along with a rubric for scoring students. After administering the exam and scoring the results, they met to discuss their findings. Different instructors had different results and so they were able to share teaching strategies, but there were some obvious trends in the aggregated data. It was very clear that while most students had a good understanding of the bonds, many struggled mightily with molecular polarity. It was suggested that this might be due to the lack of molecular model kits so an action plan was written to include a request for five sets of molecular model kits (enough for an entire class).

This assessment example is worth highlighting for a number of reasons: 1) it shows the many advantages to doing a common assessment including the opportunity to dialogue and learn from each other; 2) it shows how to connect assessment results to budgetary requests aimed at improving learning; and 3) it shows that all faculty, full- and part-time alike, have a central role in this process. We hope that this example inspires you to engage in the assessment process in meaningful, insightful ways.

--Jennifer Shanoski

From Jennifer: A recent email from a Merritt faculty member: *"I spent half the night dreaming about assessment!! What have you done to me? I think I had some good ideas, but poof! they're gone."*

--Anonymous

Disability Services Program Hosts Advisory Board and County Behavioral Health Services

(Two articles below by **Mary Ciddio**)

Assuring that Community Needs for Disability Services are Met

In an effort for the Disability Services Program to get input from their community partners to make sure they are meeting the needs of the community, the DSP recently hosted its Advisory Board Meeting. Participants included representatives from all Peralta colleges, from the State Department of Rehabilitation, and from the Alameda County Behavioral Health Services, as well as DSP students, and a variety of faculty and staff.



Discussions focused on new fall programs to serve students who need additional basic skills to bolster their previous education or to prepare them for career pathways, English for Career and Life and Math for Career and Life. Also discussed were changes in Title V regarding how that will affect their data collection to document the student population as well as changes in how they determine if an individual meets the criteria of Learning Disability; and discussion on the State Department of Rehabilitation's focus on Certificate Programs that will result in

employment options for their consumers. Thanks to Disability Coordinator Frances Moy for leading the meeting. We look forward to a new year of growth and development!

Training New County Partners to Enhance Enrollment and Success

Venturing into new partnerships to enhance the enrollment, success, and retention of our students, the Disability Services Program recently provided training for the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services who has launched a new program for individuals with mental health issues to foster success in college.



The Merritt team, led by Mary Ciddio, provided training for 15 country participants that included a comprehensive overview of the disability services offered, as well as a step-by-step guide to assist students in accessing Merritt’s program. Merritt’s Mental Health Therapist Larry Lariosa, MA, MFT, provided an overview of the mental health services he and his intern provide at Merritt but acknowledged that the need for this help is much greater than the part-time services that are available.

Encourage ALL Students to Get Registration Information at “S.W.A.G. Thursday”



Merritt continues to gear up in doing all we can to help students complete their educational goals with us. We have designated April 28 as “S.W.A.G. Thursday” (Success With Academic Guidance). Faculty will be at tables on the quad area walkways to promote their respective disciplines, answering questions and enticing students to register for summer and fall classes immediately. We are also providing students with a free lunch and offering prizes and, of course, swag.

All of us have a part to play in encouraging our students to take the next steps toward academic success. As you know, success is deeply tied to support and perseverance. I am hoping that all of you in Merritt’s family will motivate our students to participate in this event. Bring them there, if possible, so they can see that what we offer is not only the finest education, but also the opportunity to be a part of this compassionate community that reflects who we are becoming.

--David Morales

Be Aware of Student Success Regulations for the BOGG Fee Waiver

Under the Student Success Initiative regulations (SB 1456), California Community College students receiving the BOGG Fee Waiver must meet both income AND minimum academic and progress standards to remain eligible for the BOGG Fee Waiver. If the student does not meet BOGG Academic/Progress Standards for two consecutive primary terms (Fall/Spring), he/she may lose their fee waiver eligibility. For more information, see the flyer on the Merritt homepage.



Sankofa Brings Encouragement and Support to Merritt Students

When student Daron Austin joined Sankofa, a place for students to get encouragement and support toward academic success, he took the organization’s meaning to heart. “Sankofa means ‘to go back and get,” and I want to be the person that goes back and helps people in my community,” says Daron, who is a peer advisor. “Along with helping students with registration and scheduling, I talk with them about their problems at home and about how to balance all of those things.”



In fact, when recently talking to Sankofa’s staff and students, who were in their comfortable space studying, being tutored, or socializing, the desire to help others was a common theme among everyone associated with the program.

Heading the program is Dr. Charity Clay, a sociology instructor with an extensive background in student services and programs for minority populations. “The program is geared toward students of African-American descent since Merritt has such a large population, but I have a vision of something bigger than just tutoring and counseling to serve more students,” says Dr. Clay. “I want students to acknowledge and appreciate their history and also make them aware of the opportunities the college has to offer.

