



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 Ilarde

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