**Dr. Siri Brown, Commencement Speaker**

**62nd Merritt College Commencement**

**Wednesday, May 24**

Siri Brown, Ph.D, is currently serving as Interim Dean of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. As a passionate and committed educator, Dr. Brown has been teaching Ethnic Studies and African American Studies for over 17 years full-time at the community college level and as a part-time faculty member at UC Berkeley.

She holds an M.A. in African American Studies and a Ph.D. in U.S. History with an emphasis in Early American, African American and U.S. Women’s History from The Ohio State University. Her research centers on the racialized legal and social resistance to violence against women. She is a 2012 Fulbright recipient of a research project on the African cultural heritage of Salvador Bahia, Brazil, where she focused on the role of African spirituality in the history of resistance to slavery in that region.

Dr. Brown has served as Chair of Ethnic Studies and Social Sciences for 10 years. As Chair, she and the faculty in her department led the growth of enrollments, course offerings, and department expansion of full and part-time faculty. Due to her belief in expanding student experiences she and her colleagues developed an annual study abroad program for diverse and underserved students of color at Merritt and has taken hundreds of students to Jamaica, Ghana, Cuba, and more to learn about the history and culture of the countries and globalize their understanding of the world. To expand in-depth learning experiences, Dr. Brown and her department established the Africana Studies Center at Merritt which holds an original digital and interactive curriculum on African and African American History that is bilingual and exceeds District ADA requirements.

Most importantly, Dr. Brown is the great-great granddaughter of Lula Glaspie Chatham of Carthage, Texas, a skilled midwife who defied racial and gender lines by traveling through the region assisting in the births and healing of both Black and white patrons. Dr. Brown comes from a long, strong family line who believe in fighting for justice and building projects and institutions that express a deep love for Black people. Dr. Brown is also a mother of two sons.