



The Merritt Connection

March 7, 2017

Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns, Interim President

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President's Message: Halfway Through the Spring and Looking Toward Graduation



It's March mid-terms time and that means we're halfway through the semester! Please remind students who plan to graduate that they need to complete the petition process with their counselors by March 17 to participate in the beautiful Paramount Theater Commencement on May 24. The Commencement committee, led by Dr. Herbert Kitchen and Margie Rubio, is already hard at work in the planning stages. At another celebration, I was honored to participate in the OPD's fall Police Academy graduation of 24 new Oakland police officers, all accredited through our Administration of Justice Program. And congratulations are also in order for our newly

tenured faculty Jennifer Briffa, Laura Forlin, Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, and Jason Seals, who is profiled in this issue on page 4. Also highlighted in this issue are students from our popular Cybersecurity Program who give their insight into why the program is so successful. At the heels of our successful Black History Month emerged a new annual event: ASMC's Soul Food Dinner with all the fixings, and an impromptu student talent show. Watch for more events on the Master Calendar, and send your news to the *Merritt Connection* Editor Susan May at smay@peralta.edu.



Cybersecurity Program Trains Students To Help Solve Worldwide Staffing Needs

Two years ago **Sho Harris** was working at a warehouse, taking classes at Laney, and trying to figure out what to do with his life when he spotted Merritt's new Cybersecurity Program in the class schedule. Today he has a full-time job at FireEye, one of the top cybersecurity companies in the world. "I was attracted by the chance to learn computer skills and also have a paid internship. It was an intense, fast-paced program with excellent teachers and helpful fellow students which made the process easier. I wake up every day feeling blessed."



It's rare to look at the news today and not see an article about computer hacking. This new high-tech problem has created a dire need for cybersecurity to prevent computers, networks, programs and data from change or destruction. Today there is a desperate search for more than 200,000 skilled cybersecurity employees, and the numbers are growing. Predicting this need more than two years ago, Merritt College, along with a team of security executives from Silicon Valley, created a curriculum to train students in helping with this worldwide problem. The Applications & Infrastructure Security Program, with instructors from industry and with hands-on internships, will have its second graduation in May.

Sho was one of the program's many success stories. Read what others have to say about their experiences.

(continued)

SLOAC Update

More Work to Do on Accreditation and New Faces On Board to Help



Heather Casale

February brought with it the bittersweet news that the ACCJC removed Merritt from “Probation” status, but we did not achieve full-re-affirmation. We are now on “Warning” status because, while we have made significant progress on our assessment of student learning, we have not yet demonstrated proficiency and sustainability. What does this mean? It means we must continue to incorporate assessment of student learning into not only our classrooms and student services, but also our routines and our culture as a college campus. We must commit to ongoing, sustainable, high-quality assessment across the entire campus. The bottom line is that our accreditation is at stake!



We have a new Assessment and Curriculum Specialist on campus, LaShaune Fitch, and a Data Specialist, Todd Barraza. Both have been working diligently to update our assessment stats, learn our systems, and develop new ones. Faculty can find department stats, updated as of Fall 2016, on the Merritt website: <http://www.merritt.edu/wp/slo/>. Additionally, faculty and staff can connect directly with LaShaune or a Division Assessment Coordinator for assistance with completing their work.

Merritt will be submitting a response letter in October, at which time we MUST demonstrate proficiency. This means we have this semester to come into compliance with 100% assessment. All courses taught this semester must have assessment completed. Not sure how to check? Need help with Taskstream? Contact us! Our accreditation is on the line!

You can find the official course SLOs here: <http://www.merritt.edu/wp/slo/slos>

Assessment Specialist - LaShaune Fitch: lfitch@peralta.edu

SLOAC Chair, Div II Assessment Coordinator- Heather Casale: hcasale@peralta.edu

Div I Assessment Coordinator- Ann Elliott: aelliott@peralta.edu

Div I Assessment Coordinator- Susan Andrien: sandrien@peralta.edu

Student Services Assessment Coordinator- Marty Zielke: mzielke@peralta.edu

ILO Assessment Coordinator- Laura Forlin: lforlin@peralta.edu

Merritt Contingent Spends Pre-Valentine’s Day Enjoying David Morales’s Choral Ensemble



A House is Not a Home.” Delectable wines and a scrumptious dessert buffet were offered during intermission.

On Sunday, February 12, several members of the Merritt family enjoyed the annual dessert concert from the Cantare Con Vivo Chamber Ensemble entitled “I’ve Got You Under My Skin.” The Valentine’s Day dessert concert featured an afternoon of beautiful music under the direction of Merritt’s own David Morales, the Founder and Artistic Director for Cantare Con Vivo (“To Sing With Life”). Music selections from a variety of genres with oldies and contemporary music from several eras included, “It Had to Be You; My Romance; Rainy Days and Mondays; and



Cantare Con Vivo is a non-profit intergenerational choral music organization that engages participation from ages 5 to 80 from Alameda and Contra Costa counties. It encompasses two adult choirs, in-school music education, and after-school youth choirs. Additionally, Cantare's children's program provides music education and tuition free choral music residencies to 2,400 underserved Oakland youth. Kudos to Maestro Morales! (To find out more, go to www.cantareconvivo.org). **Pictured: front, Dr. Mia Kelly, Jane Fong, Linda Berry; June Harding; top, David Morales, Fereshteh Mofidi, Stephanie Harding, Christine Olsen.**

—Dr. Mia Kelly