



# The Merritt Connection

February 29, 2016

Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, President

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(Deadline: March 11)



## President's News & Notes

**A Packed House for Bobby Seale** – An overflow crowd of 400+ (right) welcomed Black Panthers Co-Founder Bobby Seale to campus on Feb. 27 as part of the Barbara Lee and Elihu Harris Lecture Series. Seale's message, which was live streamed, was one of justice and equity transcending racial and ethnic barriers. The origins of the Black Panthers work continues in Oakland.



**Update on Administrator Searches** – The searches for the Vice President of Instruction and the Dean of Special Programs and Grants are on target with interviews being conducted within the next two weeks. Board approval of the finalist should occur by March 22.

**Strategizing Merritt Enrollment** – We have a serious shortfall with our enrollment this year. The summer resulted in spending lots of FTEF and not generating the FTES we were accustomed to in previous summers so we started with a deficit. The Fall was also disappointing; hence this required appointing one key person to lead the development of productive course offerings/schedule. David Morales, former Department Chair and Chair of Chair, volunteered to assist after being asked by Dr. Allen and myself. Please work together to draft the plan required to improve our situation and prevent layoffs. You have all received David Morales' email letting you know how we can all help to meet our FTES goals. Please take his request to heart and do whatever you can as he asks. You will be hearing more about this soon as we get closer to the new semesters.



## College Invited to Budget Forum and Master Plan Town Hall Meeting

In an effort to keep the college informed of our fiscal situation and to become involved in the college's future, two informational sessions were held last week. At the Budget Forum on Feb. 23, attendees learned about the Governor's Budget Proposal for 2016-17 and the current fiscal realities as well as an update on the BAM Task Force. At the Educational Master Plan Town Hall, held on Feb. 26, Dean Tina Vasconcellos invited everyone to contribute to reviewing and revising Merritt's Vision Statement and Core Values and developing the new Master Plan for 2020. (Pictured: *District's Ron Little discusses the proposed budget.*)

## Students to be Selected This Week for China Scholarship Program

Five Merritt students will be selected this week to spend two weeks in China thanks to a partnership between the District and the China-United States Exchange Foundation and Wanxiang Group Corporation. They will visit three cities and attend classes in local university campuses where they will learn about Chinese history, culture, and other topics presented by credentialed Chinese scholars.

## Educator Darrick Smith Returns March 1 to Talk About Minority Student Success

Dr. Darrick Smith, who spoke to the Merritt community during FLEX Day in January, is returning to campus on as a guest speaker at a seminar on Early Intervention to Support Student Success. His talk, "Raising the Bar in Education," will center around three themes: Believe in yourself; Achieve your goals; and Reach your full potential. The seminar will be held on Tuesday, March 1, from 12:30 to 4 p.m. in the Student Lounge. The seminar is sponsored by Merritt's Allied Health Programs.



In conjunction with the seminar topic, there will be three Student Study Workshops for the next three Fridays: Stress Management on March 4; Time Management on March 11; and Whole Wellness on March 18. The free workshops will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the A Building, Room 100.

## Congrats to Radiologic Science for Getting Eight-Year Professional Accreditation

The Merritt College Radiologic Science faculty worked together on its Self-Study last summer, addressing each item in the six "Standards For an Accredited Educational Program in Radiography." The site visitors from the JRCERT (Joint Review Committee on Radiologic Science) arrived in late September and were very impressed with the beautiful new building, wonderful students, faculty, and clinical sites.

But it wasn't until last week that Jennifer Yates got the word.

"We just received our decision letter and are very excited to learn that we were awarded eight-year accreditation which is the maximum," Jennifer said about the professional organization that is considered the "Gold Standard" for educational programs in the imaging sciences. "We really appreciate the support we received from Merritt's administrators, particularly Dr. Ambriz-Galaviz, without which we could not have achieved this level of excellence!" **(Pictured: Radiologic Science students at work.)**



## Music Appreciation Class Gets Creative Thanks to New Music Instructor



Any students who thought they could graze through Music Appreciation class just by showing up and listening has never had a teacher like Monica Ambalal. The first major project she assigned the class was to form groups and create an instrument from material found at home. Though students were a bit wary at first, they all ended up completing the project and proudly presenting their instruments to the class—an Indian flute made from PVC pipe, a drum made from a trash can and duct tape, maracas made from soda bottles, and many more that showed their resourcefulness and creativity.

"I think it's super important to have alternate teaching methods in the classroom," says Monica, who holds a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology and began a recent lesson on Bach by playing a beautiful prelude on the piano. "By doing this project, they were able to see that they have music right in their own homes and they don't even realize it. They are exposed to building materials in their kitchens, their garages, and their back yards. They learned that every time they made a hole in an instrument they were experiencing the timbre of that instrument which connected a connect a creativity aspect to the project."

The students also learned other life lessons beyond music. They used participatory skills by selecting a project coordinator, a historian, and a biographer; critical thinking skills by coming up with a plan; writing skills by completing an assessment; and public speaking skills by presenting to the group. "When I started this class, I knew zero about music," said Nayan Pandey, whose flute-making partner Stephanie Hernandez added, "We love this class!" (***Pictured: Students showing off their creative instruments.***)



## Secretary of the Cuban Embassy to Speak on New U.S./Cuba Relations on March 9



Thanks to Dr. Siri's Brown's strong connections to Cuba stemming from more than 10 student and faculty visits, the first secretary of the newly reestablished Cuban Embassy in Washington D.C. will start an important conversation with the Merritt community and the public.

Miguel Fragas, will discuss "Has U.S. Policy Really Changed," on Wednesday, March 9 at noon in the Student Lounge, and talk about issues including

recent changes to travel restrictions, communications, and the new opportunity for business between the two countries. This will be a unique opportunity for students and the entire community to ask questions about the latest developments in the relations between Cuba and the United States.



Merritt College is one of only six locations Secretary Fragas will be visiting as he tours the Bay Area from March 7 to 11, engaging audiences about the current relations between the U.S. and Cuba. "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 in an interview with the newspaper *El Tecolote*. "However, almost all opinion polls in the U.S. show that most Americans support the reconciliation between our two countries." For more information, contact Dr. Brown at [sbrown@peralta.edu](mailto:sbrown@peralta.edu) or call (510) 434-3935. Pictured: *Secretary Miguel Fragas (left) and Dr. Siri Brown (right).*

## Announcements & Events

**Tues., March 1, 12:3- 4 p.m.** "Raising the Bar in Education: Early Intervention to Support Student Success," Dr. Darrick Smith, University of San Francisco. 12:30-4 p.m., Student Lounge. All welcome.

- **Wed., March 9, 12 Noon** - Talk by Miguel Fraga, First Secretary of the Cuban Embassy, "Has U.S. Policy Toward Cuba Really Changed?" Open to faculty, staff, and students and the public. Student Lounge
- **Wed., March 30** – Grand Opening of Merritt's Africana Center. Details to come!
- **Sat, April 9** – Track & Field Annual Home Game (see season schedule at [merritt.edu/wp/track/schedule](http://merritt.edu/wp/track/schedule))
- **March 21-27** – Spring Break
- **April 29** – 5:30 p.m. - 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Achievement Awards Celebration, Scott's Seafood Restaurant

## 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](mailto: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

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**Deadline for contributions for the next edition: Friday, March 11**

All past issues of *The Merritt Connection* can be found on the Merritt website homepage under Important Links.