Merritt College continues to focus on growing our enrollment while also providing the support and resources necessary to retain the students that are currently registered. In late April, Merritt College hosted the virtual Counselor’s Breakfast, where our counseling staff connected with their counterparts in the Oakland Unified School District to strengthen and expand our high school dual enrollment program. This served as the kickoff for OUSD Enrollment Week, which was a collaboration involving the Counseling Office, Financial Aid Department, Admissions and Records, and Outreach/Welcome Center Staff to assist OUSD students with enrollment and registration support. Our team completed thirty student enrollment plans—another example of how we are working toward the goal of providing every student with clear guidance on how to update information on their accounts for a seamless transition to Merritt. And in support of our students who are currently enrolled, Merritt College’s Special Programs and Learning Communities (EOPS/CARE, CalWORKs, NextUp, Puente, and Sankofa) have now held three Grab and Go events this term. In addition to providing PPE and program information, to date we have served over 600 meals to our students.

On Saturday, May 1, Merritt College had the honor of co-sponsoring with Humboldt State University the 10th Annual Conference of the California Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education. The theme of the conference was Abolishing the Colonial Project. The presentations and workshops challenged the nearly 100 educators and students in attendance to interrogate the ways in which our educational institutions can and have reinforced patterns and systems of inequity and disfranchisement. Being intentional and employing strategies (pedagogical, organizational, etc.) to ensure that every student has the support, resources, and direction to be successful was the focus, and I believe that most attendees left the day feeling more hopeful. One highlight was surely the spoken word presentation by Merritt Student Aminah Adcock. Titled I Can BREATHE, it was a powerful piece that articulated the pain, hope, and resilience of the community, and the ongoing fight for justice. Our own Vice President of Student Services, Dr. Lilia Chavez, closed out the program with a dialogue circle focused on spiritual empowerment. Reflecting on her experience in that space, one student noted “I hope to continue our conversation and to learn from you and your team as much as I can moving forward. I am also inspired to enter a doctorate program, as I was labeled as a student who was ‘off track’ and I have learned through my mentors, spiritual awakening, and trust in the universe that I am capable of anything I set my mind to.”

The mission of Merritt College is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society and a global economy.
Merritt College’s 67th Virtual Commencement Celebration will be held May 28, 2021, at 1:00 PM. The Ceremony will include student performances, student speeches, and words of encouragement from:

Dr. Cynthia Napoli-Abella Reiss, PCCD Board of Trustees President
Dr. Jannett Jackson, Interim Chancellor
Dr. David M. Johnson, College President
Dr. Denise Richardson, Vice President of Instruction
Dr. Lilia Chavez, Vice President of Student Services

We are particularly excited to share that Dr. Eloy Ortiz Oakley, California Community College Chancellor, has agreed to provide remarks to our graduates as well.

I want to note that several of our Merritt College student leaders are graduating, and by all accounts they are off to do some incredible things.

- Sable Harbison, ASMC Associated Vice President, will be attending Rutgers University, School of Public Policy
- Corey “Buddy” Mast, ASMC Vice President of Participatory Governance, will be graduating and continuing his education in the field of public policy.
- Maya Henderson, ASMC Vice President of Finance, was accepted to Texas Southern University.
- Jasmine Bledsoe, ASMC Vice President of Inter-Club Council, was accepted to San Francisco State.
- Stephanie Mutialu, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society President, was accepted to UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, and UC Davis. She ultimately decided, however, to attend UC Berkeley and become a Golden Bear!

Congratulations to our leadership and to all of our Merritt Grads!!