



The Merritt Connection

May 17, 2016

Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, President

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President's News & Notes



Merritt Hosts Innovation 2.0 East Bay Roundtable Led by Congresswoman Barbara Lee

Merritt College was honored to host the Innovation 2.0 East Bay Roundtable discussion in the Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, along with Representatives Eric Swalwell (CA-15) and Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11), led a forum with leaders from the academic, high-tech, venture capital, biotech, and telecommunications sectors. The discussion focused on only one question: How can America remain a leader in innovation? This question generated an impassioned conversation that kept circling back to the critical role played by education in training our nation's workforce in science, math, engineering and information technology. Thank you to Chancellor Laguerre and Dr. Delia for participating in the discussion. **Pictured: Congresswoman Barbara Lee, President Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, Dean Rosemary Delia, and Chancellor Jowel Laguerre with community leaders.**



CABL President Linnea Willis Honors Congresswoman Barbara Lee at Convention



More than 500 attendees participated in the April 30-May 1 California Association of Black Lawyers (CABL) Convention, which was headed this year by Merritt's Paralegal Instructor Linnea Willis as president. At the awards gala, several dignitaries were honored including Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who was given a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Merritt's own alum (and Linnea's mentor), CABL's co-founder and former VP of PG&E Robert (Bob) Harris, who was introduced by former PCCD Chancellor Elihu Harris. Linnea also hosted a workshop with Governor Brown's Appointment Secretary Mona Pasquil, and received commendations from Congresswoman Lee and from the Governor's office. **(Pictured: Merritt Alum Robert Harris, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, and Linnea Willis)**

From Classroom to Creek: Tomas Rossi's Introductory Biology 10 Class Gets Closer to Nature

In mid April, my Introductory Biology class traveled the three miles from Merritt College campus to the exotic and little-known wilderness of Sausal Creek, located in the center of Oakland. Underneath the canopy of trees that bent and arched overhead, the class split into two groups—one investigated elements of the water quality of the creek and the other gathered samples of the insect species present in the creek. Kathleen Harris, a volunteer with "Friends of Sausal Creek," who served as guide and facilitator for the trip, provided instruction on both data gathering and interpretation. Both the water quality and the particular mix of insect species found suggested that the creek was reasonably healthy at the time. The students found the work both relaxing and exhilarating, as the sound of the flowing water provided a pleasant background. In fact, it was easy to forget that the city was all around, just behind the trees. All in all, the trip was a welcome break from the classroom. **Pictured: Tomas Rossi's class at Sausal Creek. Check out his BIO 10 Fall classes!**



—*Tomas Rossi*

7th Annual Achievement Celebration a Big Success

Celebration was truly a night to remember! Congratulations to all of those who received a well-deserved award. Thanks to the committee who organized the fun Mardi Gras-themed event, and to all who attended, sponsored someone to attend, donated auction items, or donated their time to assist with making this event memorable.

Pictured: The awesome committee headed by Dr. Mia Kelley and Doris Hankins.



PTK Regional Manager Tatiana Ochoa is Recognized at the PTK "Nerd Nation" at D.C. Event

Tatiana Ochoa, Regional Manager for PTK's NV/CA area was recognized for her dedication and commitment at the Nerd Nation International Convention in April. In that role, she attended induction ceremonies as a honored guest, held PTK summits, and provided support to members. For her contributions as a Distinguished Team Leader, she was awarded the prestigious Hallmark Award. "This is an honor as there were only three teams out of the entire organization who are acknowledged and given such an award," said Tatiana. "This is our victory! I never thought it would be possible, but it happened!"



Even beyond her PTK awards, Tatiana has an impressive background at Merritt and is going on to bigger and better things. She's learned a lot as both a senator and vice president of ASMC. She will be graduating this month with an AA in Child Development and transferring to UC Berkeley with a minor in education or public policy and eventually hopes to get a Master's in Public Policy. "I want to have a voice at the decision-making table where sometimes the community and certain individuals are negatively impacted," she says. "I want to be the person who says, "Wait, are we making sure that by making such changes we are not oppressing a community or individuals?" Good luck, Tatiana, we will expect great things from you! **Pictured: Tatiana Ochoa with fellow award recipient from DeAnza College.**

Come to Commencement on May 25 and Join Other Celebrations on Campus



It's that time again to see the results of lots of hard work by walking across the stage of the beautiful Paramount Theater and getting your diploma. This year it will be on May 25 at 5:30 p.m. If you don't have a ticket for yourself, contact Margie Rubio at mrubio@peralta.edu. Everyone is welcome to attend the other ceremonies on campus where individual groups are recognized for their success (see below).

Merritt College 2016 Graduation Celebrations

Date	Time/ Location	Event Details
May 18, 2016	12pm-2pm Student Lounge	Annual EOPS/CARE Student Awards Luncheon
May 19, 2016	9:30am-1pm Student Lounge	FYE IMPACT Graduation Celebration
May 19, 2016	5:30pm-8:00pm Student Lounge	Puente: End of Year Celebration
May 21, 2016	11am-1pm N. Oakland Missionary Baptist Church, 1060 32 nd St., Oakland	8 th Annual Peralta Colleges African/African American Graduation
May 24, 2016	2pm-5pm Student Lounge	Merritt Children's Center Graduation
May 25, 2016	5:30pm Paramount Theater, 2025 Broadway, Oakland	Merritt College Commencement
May 26, 2016	10am-12:30pm Student Lounge	Nursing Dept. Pinning Ceremony
June 1, 2016	6pm-9pm Gymnasium	Fire Academy Graduation

Merritt Students Will Be Heading to China on June 10 for a Two-Week Study Scholarships



The lives of five lucky Merritt students are about to change. On June 10, Myeisha "My" Williams, Ajari McCaster, Michael Lanza, Alicia Castaneda, and Shadie Lee will be leaving for a study trip to China where they will visit three cities, Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai, and attend classes in local universities. The China Scholarship Trip came about as a partnership between the Peralta Community College District and the China-United States Exchange Foundation and

Wanxiang Grup Corporation who were targeting college students from the Congressional Black Caucus-member districts. From all four colleges, 21 students were chosen. During their stay, they will receive

lectures on Chinese history, language, culture, economic development, and other relative topics presented by credentialed Chinese scholars and also get some sightseeing in!

One of the travelers, My Williams, is ecstatic about this opportunity. “It’s been a dream of mine to travel outside of the country,” said My, who is ASMC president and an intern in Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s office, and will be heading to Mills College in the fall to study public policy. “I plan to learn more in-depth information about China’s economic development to translate it into action plans for my marginalized communities. I know that this trip will be an enriching experience and a milestone in my career and development as a leader and a scholar.’



Phi Theta Kappans’ Scholastic Accomplishments Recognized by Merritt College



May 12th, 2016 was a great day for ten recently inducted members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society who received recognition for their scholastic achievements from Merritt College administrators, faculty, staff, families and friends. Inductees honored were: Stephanie Bunn, Darcey Clark, Janelle De La Torre, Latrina Gatison, Mabel Kwarteng, Keona Percelle-Roos, Giorgia Ruscelli, Chico Singh, and Rasheeda Young. They represented the 48 students who accepted membership in fall 2015 and the 33 who accepted membership in spring 2016.

Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, College President, provided a warm and encouraging welcome to members and attendees. “We’ve learned that Phi Theta Kappa is an opportunity for us to be able to recognize your accomplishments,” she said, “[and] for [inductees] to understand the importance of what you have acquired at this point in your life.” She views Phi Theta Kappa as an organization that provides an avenue for students to focus their energy and balance out school and service. Dr. Ambriz-Galaviz also stated the importance of service to one’s community and of continuing in academic excellence.

Our keynote speaker, William “Bill” Dimopoulos, current Treasurer of the Nevada/California Regional Alumni Association (NCRAA), inspired attendees with past accomplishments and words of encouragement and wisdom gleaned from personal experiences and cultural sayings.

Phi Theta Kappa Officers in attendance: Linda Carroll, President; Xaiokai Zheng, Vice-President of Service and Marc Rowland, Inter-Club Council Representative I. We were also honored to have Sheila Burson, President NCRAA and Marissa Nakano, Advisor, Alpha Chi Alpha - College of Alameda.

For more information about Beta Theta Lambda Chapter at Merritt College, go to our website: <http://www.merritt.edu/wp/phi-theta-kappa/> You will find chapter information such as the semester calendar, upcoming events, links to other Phi Theta Kappa organizations and our Shutterfly share site where members can download pictures taken at events.

—*Barbara Dimopoulos*

Audrey Trotter to Retire But Will Always Keep her Passion for Community Colleges

It wasn't until after Audrey Trotter had graduated from college, taught elementary school, and worked in her dad's business for several years that she ever heard of a community college.

But when she finally did, she became so passionate about the community college mission that she would spend the next 36 years studying about community college leadership through the doctoral level, lobbying for community college issues, and serving in multiple capacities in seven community colleges across three regions of the country.



On July 5, Audrey will retire from the Peralta Community College District where she spent the last 17 years as a staff member, an administrator, a faculty member, and the lead in major projects that have moved the District forward, both through grants she has administered and multiple accreditations she has led. But in her journey throughout the system, she had only one goal in mind—the students.

“Throughout all of my opportunities and challenges at community colleges,” she says, “my philosophy and personal mission was driven by the goal of being able to make a difference in the lives of students, impacting the experience of students in the classroom, and influencing positive changes in institutional culture and climate.”

In her 13 years at Merritt College, Audrey not only influenced students' lives as a faculty member in teaching Education and Learning Resources and directing the Learning Center (and coordinating its move and design), but has played so many roles in contributing to the overall welfare of the college that the list fills her multi-page resume. Among her major contributions, she co-authored and led the initial \$2 million Title III Comprehensive Development Grant and its renewals and is currently leading the efforts for Merritt's Accreditation Follow-Up Report.

Audrey is grateful for the mentors she has had along her career and thanks her colleagues at Merritt and throughout the District for their help in her success. “My accomplishments are shared experiences due to the work, collaboration, support, and the many helping hands of people who stepped up to assist and support me along the way,” she says. “Those dedicated colleagues played a significant role in my ability to improve the educational experience of our students.”

Now Audrey is looking forward to her move to Austin, Texas, where she'll enjoy her retirement (and lower cost of living!), focus on her health, read, relax, and move forward to accomplish personal goals and be of continuing service as she's done all of her life. She'll miss her work, but what she'll really miss is her colleagues. “The people at Merritt are my extended family,” she said, confessing that she cried while writing her retirement letter. “It's like leaving home. You can't replace people.”

But, in her heart, she knows it's time to leave. “My life has always been a journey of faith,” she says. “Even when I didn't know how I was going to reach my next goal, I had faith and everything always worked out.”

—*Susan May*

Share Your News

This is the last issue of The Merritt Connection for the year. Please continue to send your items and photos for the August issue to smay@peralta.edu. Thank you for all of your contributions!