



The Merritt Connection

April 19, 2016

Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, President

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President's News & Notes



DHTI Forum Strategizes on Bringing Immigrants into the HealthCare Workforce

Dr. Rosemary Delia, Dr. Tina Vasconcellos, and I attended the Diversity Health Training Institute's workforce policy forum, "Reimagining CA's Healthcare Delivery System Using a Health Equity Framework: Multi-sector Actions for Immigrants in the Healthcare Workforce," on April 8 at the Jack London Aquatic Center in Oakland. The forum brought high-level policy people and educators to discuss developing a workforce that meets the needs of the underserved and provides services in marginalized communities.



Assemblymember Rob Bonta joined the group in the last hour for a candid conversation on ways policy advocacy on the State level can support local and regional workforce strategies.

Pictured: Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz and Dr. Tina Vasconcellos



Welcome To Our New Administrators!

Vice President of Instruction: Dr. Jeffrey Lamb



Dr. Jeffrey Lamb has been named Vice President of Instruction at Merritt College, effective May 2. Prior to his new position, he served as Dean of the School of English and Foreign Languages at City College of San Francisco. Before CCSF, he was the Interim Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and the Dean of Academic Success and Learning Resources at Solano Community College. For more than 18 years he taught Spanish at public, private, and international institutions and led several study abroad trips. As faculty, he served as the Academic Senate President and as the Teaching and Learning Center Coordinator.

Dr. Lamb holds a doctorate in 20th Century Latin American Literature from UCLA, a master's degree in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from San Diego State University, and a bachelor's degree in Spanish from CSU, Long Beach.

Dean of Special Programs and Grants: Dr. Lilia Chavez



Dr. Lilia Chavez was named Dean of Special Programs, effective April 13. She has been with Merritt since 2014 as Director of Student Activities and Campus Life. Prior to that, she worked at San Francisco State University as Director of the Office of Student Programs and Development Leadership. She is a Chicana/Latina, Social and Spiritual Activist/Educator who seizes each opportunity to work with underrepresented, underprepared, and underserved communities. Dr. Chavez holds an Associate's Degree from Berkeley City College, a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco, a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling from San Francisco State University, and a doctorate in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco.

17th Annual Show of Merritt Opens with Spectacular Work in a Stunning Setting



With the setting sun glowing into the large, glass-walled room, a crowd of art lovers, curiosity seekers, and passers-by packed the Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center on April 15 to see the beautiful art work created by Merritt students and faculty. It marked the first time the Merritt Show of Art was being held on campus, and for Art Department Chair Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, it was an unknown risk that she ultimately decided to take. In part of her welcoming speech, she eloquently explained why.

"An exhibition at its greatest displays love, courage and profoundly moving truth and beauty, the simple and pure love of the process of making and sharing the results with others. The Show of Merritt has always

been about this kind of love.

"Creating this show was a creative process which meant being open to not knowing how everything would go and or where everything would go. It has emphasized for me again the importance of recognizing and honoring creative process. To promote creativity is something valuable and important because it allows for openness and possibility and for the development of something different, something new. It makes us vulnerable to be in the not knowing of the creative process which fosters participation, new ideas, contribution, and donation. Most importantly it allows for the potential to create something together. This show came together so beautifully because of all of you who dared to contribute work and those of you who were willing and able to volunteer your time and expertise."



Come and see this fabulous show of painting, sculpture, watercolor, 3-D art, pastels, figure drawing, ceramics, botanical drawing – and even handmade musical instruments from Music Appreciation class! The show runs through May 21, Mondays-Saturdays from 12-3 p.m.
Pictured: Sheila Metcalf-Tobin and Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz

SLOAC Update: Learning a Lesson from a Chemistry Assessment

I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the excellent work that has been done recently by the part-time faculty in my own chemistry department. Chem30A, Introductory General Chemistry, is a course taken mostly by nursing majors here at Merritt College and is taught entirely by dedicated, motivated, creative part-time faculty.



Last year, this group met to discuss an assessment method for the SLO: Clearly explain quantitative concepts and trends. Collectively, they came up with a question about the polarity of bonds and molecules along with a rubric for scoring students. After administering the exam and scoring the results, they met to discuss their findings. Different instructors had different results and so they were able to share teaching strategies, but there were some obvious trends in the aggregated data. It was very clear that while most students had a good understanding of the bonds, many struggled mightily with molecular polarity. It was suggested that this might be due to the lack of molecular model kits so an action plan was written to include a request for five sets of molecular model kits (enough for an entire class).

This assessment example is worth highlighting for a number of reasons: 1) it shows the many advantages to doing a common assessment including the opportunity to dialogue and learn from each other; 2) it shows how to connect assessment results to budgetary requests aimed at improving learning; and 3) it shows that all faculty, full- and part-time alike, have a central role in this process. We hope that this example inspires you to engage in the assessment process in meaningful, insightful ways.

--Jennifer Shanoski

From Jennifer: A recent email from a Merritt faculty member: *"I spent half the night dreaming about assessment!! What have you done to me? I think I had some good ideas, but poof! they're gone."*

--Anonymous

Disability Services Program Hosts Advisory Board and County Behavioral Health Services (Two articles below by **Mary Ciddio**)

Assuring that Community Needs for Disability Services are Met

In an effort for the Disability Services Program to get input from their community partners to make sure they are meeting the needs of the community, the DSP recently hosted its Advisory Board Meeting. Participants included representatives from all Peralta colleges, from the State Department of Rehabilitation, and from the Alameda County Behavioral Health Services, as well as DSP students, and a variety of faculty and staff.



Discussions focused on new fall programs to serve students who need additional basic skills to bolster their previous education or to prepare them for career pathways, English for Career and Life and Math for Career and Life. Also discussed were changes in Title V regarding how that will affect their data collection to document the student population as well as changes in how they determine if an individual meets the criteria of Learning Disability; and discussion on the State Department of Rehabilitation's focus on Certificate Programs that will result in

employment options for their consumers. Thanks to Disability Coordinator Frances Moy for leading the meeting. We look forward to a new year of growth and development!

Training New County Partners to Enhance Enrollment and Success

Venturing into new partnerships to enhance the enrollment, success, and retention of our students, the Disability Services Program recently provided training for the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services who has launched a new program for individuals with mental health issues to foster success in college.



The Merritt team, led by Mary Ciddio, provided training for 15 country participants that included a comprehensive overview of the disability services offered, as well as a step-by-step guide to assist students in accessing Merritt's program. Merritt's Mental Health Therapist Larry Lariosa, MA, MFT, provided an overview of the mental health services he and his intern provide at Merritt but acknowledged that the need for this help is much greater than the part-time services that are available.

Encourage ALL Students to Get Registration Information at "S.W.A.G. Thursday"

S.W.A.G. THURSDAY
(Success with Academic Guidance)

Thursday, April 28
10:30 to 1:30 PM
Quad Area

Come to this event and get important information and advice
so you can register NOW for Summer & Fall 2016 classes!

- First-hand information from faculty
- List of upcoming Summer & Fall classes
- Degree and Certificate qualifications
- Opportunity to ask specific questions about courses, requirements, class sequences

Free Hot Dogs and Chips Prizes!

Sponsored by
Office of Instruction
Student Activities & Campus Life

Merritt continues to gear up in doing all we can to help students complete their educational goals with us. We have designated April 28 as "S.W.A.G. Thursday" (Success With Academic Guidance). Faculty will be at tables on the quad area walkways to promote their respective disciplines, answering questions and enticing students to register for summer and fall classes immediately. We are also providing students with a free lunch and offering prizes and, of course, swag.

All of us have a part to play in encouraging our students to take the next steps toward academic success. As you know, success is deeply tied to support and perseverance. I am hoping that all of you in Merritt's family will motivate our students to participate in this event. Bring them there, if possible, so they can see that what we offer is not only the finest education, but also the opportunity to be a part of this compassionate community that reflects who we are becoming.

--David Morales

Be Aware of Student Success Regulations for the BOGG Fee Waiver

Under the Student Success Initiative regulations (SB 1456), California Community College students receiving the BOGG Fee Waiver must meet both income AND minimum academic and progress standards to remain eligible for the BOGG Fee Waiver. If the student does not meet BOGG Academic/Progress Standards for two consecutive primary terms (Fall/Spring), he/she may lose their fee waiver eligibility. For more information, see the flyer on the Merritt homepage.

Merritt College
IMPORTANT INFORMATION!
Potential Loss of Board of Governor (BOGG) Fee Waiver - BEGINNING FALL 2016

Avoid losing the BOGG Fee Waiver

Follow these academic and progress steps:

Academic - Maintain a GPA of 2.0 or Higher
Students who do not maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher will be notified by email and must meet with their advisor to discuss options.

Progress - Complete at least 50% of your coursework
Students must complete at least 50% of their coursework each semester to remain eligible for the BOGG Fee Waiver.

Combination of Academic and Progress Standards
Students who do not meet both academic and progress standards will be notified by email and must meet with their advisor to discuss options.

Seek Student Service Support
If you are having difficulty meeting these standards, please contact your advisor or the Student Success Center for assistance.

How to regain eligibility

1. Complete the required coursework and maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher.
2. Complete the required progress standards.
3. Contact your advisor or the Student Success Center for assistance.

Sankofa Brings Encouragement and Support to Merritt Students

When student Daron Austin joined Sankofa, a place for students to get encouragement and support toward academic success, he took the organization's meaning to heart. "Sankofa means 'to go back and get,'" and I want to be the person that goes back and helps people in my community," says Daron, who is a peer advisor. "Along with helping students with registration and scheduling, I talk with them about their problems at home and about how to balance all of those things."



In fact, when recently talking to Sankofa's staff and students, who were in their comfortable space studying, being tutored, or socializing, the desire to help others was a common theme among everyone associated with the program.

Heading the program is Dr. Charity Clay, a sociology instructor with an extensive background in student services and programs for minority populations. "The program is geared toward students of African-American descent since Merritt has such a large population, but I have a vision of something bigger than just tutoring and counseling to serve more students," says Dr. Clay. "I want students to acknowledge and appreciate their history and also make them aware of the opportunities the college has to offer.



Sankofa offers a variety of services to meet its mission to help students succeed, including help with registration, tutoring, counseling, mentorship, workshops, events, courses, jobs, camaraderie and even an upcoming tour of HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Sankofa is also fortunate to have a small but dedicated staff who works with Dr. Clay to fulfill the needs of the students.

An important component of the program is counseling, and the program is lucky to have Derrick Ross, whose experience directly relates to many of Merritt's students. "Along with providing supportive counseling, I can look at life issues beyond academics, from housing to emotional problems, that could impede students from reaching their academic goals," says Ross. "Coming back to Oakland where I grew up, I now have the opportunity to give back and let the student know that no matter what they have been through, education can change their life."



Staff Assistant Linda Brown, who retired from Lawrence Berkeley Labs, is thrilled to have the opportunity "to work with so many bright minds as they push forward to meet their goals," and calls the experience, "really special." Dr. Clay calls Linda "invaluable" to the program. "I teach four classes along with coordinating this program, but I have full confidence that everything is going to get done with Linda here. She has great people skills, interacts well with students, and is great at making suggestions that I may not have considered."

Beyond her small staff, Dr. Clay includes as many others on campus as possible where their expertise may be needed. "We want to include faculty as much as possible, so we are in the process of collaborating with faculty who are willing to incorporate an African-centered curriculum and provide mentoring to students interested in their disciplines," she says. "I also reach out to the campus community and collaborate with student services to seek out those who would like to facilitate workshops by sharing their knowledge in such areas as financial aid, transfer, interview skills, time management, and other important skills that our students need to develop to be successful."

Overall, Dr. Clay wants students to know that there is always a place for them to go to get the support they need to be successful. "We want this to be a refuge for students. We want them to feel comfortable knowing that they are not on this journey alone," she says. "And we want them to know that when they come through those doors, they are going to get respect, compassion, and attention, not just from the staff, but from each other."

Pictured: Dr. Charity Clay, Linda Thompson, and Derrick Ross; and students Caleb Jacks, Marquita Price, Eddie Barnett, and Daron Austin.

--Susan May

What Students Are Saying About Sankofa

Caleb Jacks: *Every time I come into this office, there is a guarantee that I will have my needs met. The goal is to empower us and make sure we know everything that needs to be done to make us more successful.*

Marquita Price: *I appreciate all of the information that we get about scholarships and other updates and that we can go deeper with our counseling and get peer support and tutoring.*

Daron Austin, Peer Advisor: *I came to Sankofa so I could communicate effectively with other students. I wanted to uplift those in my community who need help with school or other problems.*

Eddie Barnett, Tutor: *I love working with Sankofa students and helping them succeed. It has made me stronger personally to be able to reach out to people and build relationships.*

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. The next issue will be May 16. The deadline for contributions is Monday, May 9.