

## AUDREY TROTTER - May 2016

### Audrey Trotter to Retire, But Passion for Community Colleges Will Never Disappear



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

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, administrator, a faculty member, and the lead in major projects that have moved the District forward, both through grants she administered and multiple accreditations she 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 it 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, enjoy life, 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 worked out.”

—*Susan May*