

ONE MERRITT FOCUS GROUP

Merritt Community,

The ONE MERRITT Focus Group meetings will be held on **Monday, March 20, 2023** via zoom. Students, Classified Professionals, Faculty and Administrators are encouraged to attend.

Below you will find the time and registration link for each focus group. To learn more about ONE MERRITT and/or to review the bios of the facilitators, please review the email below sent out by President Johnson on 3/10.

TIME	FOCUS GROUP	REGISTRATION LINK
10:00AM – 11:00AM	Classified Professionals	https://peralta-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlcO-ppjwrHtOwzCIFmgMYIISIVXzZpaz-
11:00AM – 12:00PM	Administrators	https://peralta-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcsdO2vqT0qG9et9QhbgkRoiE6NP1gXsXdP
12:30PM – 1:30PM	Faculty	https://peralta-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMldu2vqjwuH9HmbcfuvM7CZ8GIIDb2b7xl

1:30PM – 2:30PM	Students	https://peralta-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrdeqqqTwqEtCIKNf9oSKFSoNsN6D_JEo3

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of the President at (510) 436-2500.

Merritt College puts students first. Through our rich educational programs, we foster a culture of equity and inclusion that empowers students to achieve their greatest potential and make meaningful contributions to their respective communities and our global society.

Subject: ONE MERRITT Focus Group Meetings--First Meeting is March 20th

Good afternoon, Merritt Community.

I am writing to let you know that we will hold the first of our ONE MERRITT Focus Group meetings on Monday, March 20th. We have enlisted the services of *Hotep Consultants* to facilitate these important conversations, and it is critical that we commit as a college to fully engage in these discussions and the work to come. So please plan to participate (we can accommodate changes in your work schedule if necessary), and encourage your colleagues to do the same. We will send out the Zoom link information early next week (these initial conferences will be virtual) so that you can plan accordingly.

The first set of meetings will focus on our stakeholder groups: **Students, Faculty, Classified Professionals, and Administrators**. These sessions are designed to identify salient themes in the perceptions and experiences of the members within particular groups at Merritt College. We anticipate that each of those four meetings will last one hour, and there will be an in-person follow up meeting a few weeks later.

For more context regarding the purpose of this initiative and to get a better sense of our partners, please read the following from *Hotep Consultants*:

PURPOSE:

As with all organizations, our colleges are consistently impacted by demographic shifts. Demographic shifts in students and colleagues can serve as a destabilizing force to the climate and culture of a college. Organizations have choices in the face of destabilization: allow it to fester and seep into the culture or identify it and develop strategies to facilitate inclusive change. One of the contributing factors to the transformative change taking place at our institutions is the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The demographics of Merritt College has changed significantly over the past few decades. Once considered as a predominantly Black institution the numbers of Chicanx/Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander and White students have increased significantly. These demographic realities have not only impacted the student experience but also the relationships between faculty, classified professionals and administrators. It is necessary to examine all of these new realities within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Hotep Consultants* will engage the Merritt College community in a series of focus groups to help Merritt College gain a better understanding of the nature of both the climate and culture of the institution.

A report will be produced containing the findings and recommendations at the conclusion of the focus group experiences. *Hotep Consultants* will coordinate with Merritt College leadership to plan an in-person campus wide presentation of the findings and recommendations. During this presentation the Hotep Consultants team will facilitate a townhall conversation with the Merritt College Community. Following the facilitated campus wide forum there will be a survey distributed to focus groups participants. There will be questions addressing the impact of COVID-19 to get a better understanding of the pandemic's impact on the culture and climate of the college. The survey will focus on post-dialogue attitudes and thoughts on the recommended interventions that come from the focus groups and campus wide conversation.

BIOS:

Lasana Hotep has served at the pre k-12, community college, and research university levels as a classroom teacher, racial justice advocate, and equity-advancing administrator for more than twenty years. Most notably, Mr. Hotep is the co-founder of the African American Men of Arizona State University (AAMASU) Program, the founding program coordinator for ASU's Center for the Study of Race and Democracy (CSR), and the founding Executive Director of the Equity Institute at Skyline College where he established the Equity Summit, Equity Academies and award winning Equity Training Series (ETS). Hotep is a highly sought after thought partner with expertise in supporting organizations in developing antiracist and antisexist policies, practices, and procedures. He has lectured at hundreds of nonprofit organizations, corporations and educational institutions across the United States and abroad (Beijing, China and Accra, Ghana). Currently, Lasana serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) at the University of California, Berkeley.

Michelle Y. Batista is proud to be a founder of COLEGAS (California Community College Organización de Latinx Empowerment, Guidance, Advocacy for Success). COLEGAS was established in 2018 as a statewide organization for Latinx professionals who, through intentional advocacy and coalition building, lead and influence transformative, systemic change within the California Community College system. She is also a founder and tri-chair for The Coalition, an association of three higher education organizations (A2MEND, APAHE and COLEGAS) that work in solidarity to address conditions of inequity within the California Community College system. Michelle is a Latina, first generation college graduate, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and a Master of Arts in School Counseling with a Pupil Personnel Services Credential from Saint Mary's College of California. She will earn her Doctorate in Educational Leadership with a focus in Equity and Social Justice from San Francisco State University in May 2023.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have questions or concerns.

Best.

David M. Johnson, Ph.D.

President

Merritt College

(510) 436-2501