



2020 Merritt College Commencement News & Information

May 20, 2020 • 5:30 p.m. • Paramount Theater

Congratulations to the Merritt College Class of 2020!



Spring is always an exciting time at Merritt College as we congratulate all of our students who will be earning degrees/certificates or transferring to continue their education. **Merritt College's 65th Annual Commencement Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2020, at Oakland's historic Paramount Theatre.** To make the commencement ceremony a successful event for all, it's important that everyone follow specific procedures. In this newsletter, you will find all you need to know to make this happen. Please read this information carefully, and if you have any questions, contact Doris Hankins, Director of Student Activities and Campus Life, at 510-434-3982, dhankins@peralta.edu. We look forward to proudly watching you walk across the stage to your future!

Mandatory Commencement Information Sessions

All students must attend **ONE** information session in order to get information on guests, regalia, seating, parking, transportation, and tickets. All sessions will take place in the Student Lounge, R-110. The session schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, April 21, 10:00 a.m. SHARP!
Wednesday, April 22, 12:00 p.m. SHARP!
Saturday, April 25, 10:30 a.m. SHARP!
Monday, April 27, 6:00 p.m. SHARP!

Graduates can order their cap and gown, commencement announcements, class rings, honor cords, stalls, and more at the Merritt College Bookstore.

Commencement Tickets

Each graduate will receive six (6) tickets that will be distributed at the mandatory commencement information sessions. All guests will need to produce a ticket in order to enter the Paramount Theater. If there are still tickets remaining up to 48 hours prior to the ceremony (May 18), extra tickets may be available at the Office of Student Activities and Campus Life (R-124) between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. only.

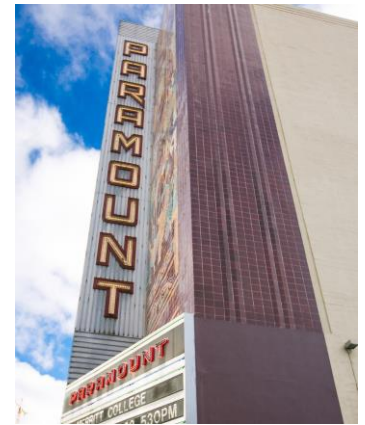
Where and When is Commencement?

Commencement will be held at the Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, on Wednesday, May 20, 2020. Doors will be open to the public at 4:30 p.m. The ceremony lasts about two hours, and a reception will follow after the ceremony. Graduates should arrive no later than 4:00 p.m. on the 21st Street side of the Paramount (between Broadway and Telegraph). At that time, you can change and check in at the registration table and pick up your announcement card. You'll need this card to hand to the announcer when it's time to cross the stage.



Everything You Need to Know About the Paramount Theater

- There are parking garages in the area, and 19th Street BART is steps away from the Paramount. Please tell your guests to allow ample time to find parking and keep in mind possible traffic congestion in the area.
- The Paramount does not allow balloons inside. If you or your guests plan to bring balloons to the ceremony, the Paramount staff will keep balloons in a separate room and they will give you a claim ticket so that you can pick them up upon your departure.
- The Paramount Theatre is wheelchair accessible, and the graduation ceremony will be sign language interpreted. However, disabled seating is limited. Graduates and guests with special seating needs should contact Doris Hankins at dhankins@peralta.edu as she will work with Paramount staff to assist you with all your accommodation needs. Please contact him by noon on Monday, May 18, should you need accommodations



Commencement Speaker

(Information to come...)

Cap and Gown



A cap and gown with a tassel is required for all graduates. The cap and gown will be available for purchase starting Monday, April 6, at the Merritt College Bookstore located in the Student Center, R-101. The cap, gown, and tassel costs \$42, including tax. The cap and gown set that you purchase is yours to keep; it is not a rental. You are encouraged to arrive in your cap and gown since there are no dressing rooms at the Paramount; however, there will be a co-ed staging/dressing area on the 21st Street side of the Paramount.

Honor Students: If you are an academic honor student, your honor cord will be included in your cap and gown set. Please refer to the section of this letter regarding “honors at graduation” to see if you are eligible to receive the honor cord (Honors pertains only to Associate Degree candidates). Your name will be on an honors list at the bookstore. **Note:** The Merritt College Bookstore only accepts cash, credit and debit cards for payment.

Commencement Ceremony Protocol

The ceremony will begin promptly at 5:30 p.m. At approximately 5 p.m., all graduates will be asked to form a line on 21st Street and will be directed to enter the theatre. Merritt staff and Paramount ushers will assist with ceremony procedures - please follow their guidance. Reserved seating for graduates will be in the first several rows of the center section. Upon cue from the ushers, the first graduate in line will enter the first row and proceed left to the end of the center aisle; other graduates will follow. When the first row is filled, subsequent rows will be filled in the same manner. All graduates should remain standing until directed to be seated.



At the point in the ceremony when Degrees and Certificates are awarded, the first row of graduates will be asked to stand. Graduates will follow the guidance of the ushers and proceed toward the front of the stage area in order to form a line in preparation to begin the Degree/Certificate path.

Following the guidance of the ushers, you will then approach the right-hand side of the stage one at a time and give your announcement card to the announcer. As your name is announced, proceed across the stage to be greeted by our Merritt College Administrators, District Trustees, and our Chancellor.

After receiving your congratulatory Degree/Certificate from Merritt Acting President Dr. David Johnson and taking a photo with him, you will walk a few feet backstage and take a solo photo. After that photo, please step down the stairs and return to your original seat.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Associated Students of Merritt College (ASMC) will host a reception immediately following the Commencement ceremony out on the 21st Street side where refreshments will be served. All graduates, family, and friends are welcomed to attend.

Commencement Photos

GradImages will provide professional graduation photography the evening of the ceremony. All graduates will be photographed individually at the ceremony as they receive their congratulatory degree/certificate. GradImages is one of the world's largest commencement photography businesses. For more than 30 years, GradImages has been capturing the accomplishments of over 1.5 million graduates each year. Please visit their website at www.gradimages.com where you will find your photos available to share and order online. You are not obligated to purchase any of the photographs taken by GradImages.



Honors

Associate Degree candidates with the following cumulative grade point averages at the end of the Fall 2019 semester will be recognized at graduation as follows:

- 4.00 - 3.75 - Summa Cum Laude, With Highest Honors**
- 3.74 - 3.50 - Magna Cum Laude, With High Honors**
- 3.49 - 3.25 - Cum Laude, With Honors**

Please remember that this is a cumulative grade point average reflecting all college work through Fall 2019. This includes college work completed both at Peralta and other colleges. Again, Certificate recipients are not eligible for honors. For those students graduating with Associate Degrees in June 2020, your cumulative GPA will be recalculated once grades from Spring 2020 semester are finalized. If at that time you qualify for honors, your transcript will be appropriately noted.

Selection of Valedictorian and Salutatorian



Each year a class valedictorian and salutatorian are chosen from the candidates for the Associate Degree. Certificate candidates are not eligible.

The class valedictorian is the student in the graduating class (June 2019 or December 2019) with the highest cumulative grade point average at the end of the Fall 2019 semester. This individual will be asked to deliver a speech at the Commencement ceremony.

The class salutatorian is the student in the graduating class (June 2019 or December 2019) with the second highest cumulative grade point average at the end of the Fall 2019 semester.

Note: Since Spring 2020 grades do not become final until June 2020, they are not included in the determination of the class valedictorian and salutatorian.

Degrees and Certificates

Degrees and Certificates are currently available in the Admissions and Records Office for Merritt College graduates who have completed all of their requirements as of the end of the Fall 2019 semester. If you are a Spring 2020 graduate, you will receive a letter from our PCCD District Office of Admissions & Records notifying you of the date your Diplomas and/or Certificates will be available for pick up at Merritt's Admissions Office.



**“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs
to those who prepare for it today.”
—Malcolm X**