

MERRITT COLLEGE STATEMENT OF COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL PLANS

The mission of Merritt College is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society.

Merritt College is a comprehensive, public community college located on a 125-acre site in the hills of East Oakland. Merritt College promotes and enhances the quality of life in the urban area it serves through career technical programs (CTE), courses appropriate for transfer, career and continuing education, basic skills instruction, and comprehensive student services. Merritt's CTE programs include associate degree nursing, radiological science, nutrition and dietetics, medical assistant, chronic care assistant, business, paralegal, real estate, child development, computer information systems, landscape horticulture, administration of justice, EMT, environmental management and technology, and community social services. Merritt also offers college-level and essential skills courses at area high schools, the Fruitvale Education Center, and other locations in the community.

The student population at Merritt is diverse in ethnicity, preparedness, age, physical ability, and educational goals. In Fall 2010, Merritt College enrolled 7,723 students. Roughly 78% of the student body is non-white, and the average age is 32 (based on the fall 2010 demographics). In fall 2010, 85% of Merritt students attended part-time, and 62% of the student body attended day classes (down from 75% in Fall 2009). A majority of the student body – 62% - is female. Due to budget cuts and the state mandated workload reduction, enrollment and ftes generation have dropped approximately 5% from fall 2009 to fall 2010, although the schedule reduction in that same period was 15%.

Educational Planning

Educational planning for the next five years is centered on assessing the transfer, workforce development, and basic skills needs of students and the communities served by Merritt College. In planning, consideration is given to alternatives to the traditional modes of instruction, technological changes, and workplace changes. Merritt College faculty continue to expand the number of courses offered through distance education, and cabling and infrastructure upgrading projects accommodate diverse instructional delivery methodologies and flexible scheduling.

For the next five years, expansion of educational programs will continue to address workforce needs in the healthcare sector, with a continuing increase in enrollments in Biology, Microbiology and Chemistry. The number of students unable to access these courses will likely increase in light of the permanent workload reduction mandated by the State and the continuing pressure to enroll in the college's AD Nursing program (which has a 100% pass rate on the licensure exam).

The college has developed a Chronic Care Assistant program in response to requests from community health clinics, and continues to explore grant opportunities to expand course offerings and programs in healthcare. Internal partnerships can address additional needs, such as

pairing technology in Business and CIS with health services in order to address the mandate of digitized health records by 2014. New curricula in business intelligence and data warehousing can prepare students for careers in computer technology. Grant funds from organizations such as First 5 of Alameda County assist the college in meeting the objective of professionalizing the field of early childhood education.

Enrollments in the new Microscopy and Genomics programs will expand the overall course offerings and career path opportunities for students. Space has been identified in the new Science-Allied Health Center to house the extensive and highly sensitive equipment used for these programs. Similarly, enrollments in Landscape Horticulture will remain strong and may increase substantially when facility upgrades are completed. Student retention and success in Math courses are expected to increase as a result of the college more effectively addressing the needs of its basic skills students through program innovation.

Facility Needs

LIBRARY/LEARNING CENTER

During the next year, the Library and its facilities, services, instruction, and collections will be undergoing significant changes. Currently the Library has moved into a “swing space” while the L Building undergoes a much-needed renovation. This renovation will address infrastructure issues, viz. air conditioning, ventilation, electrical, data, and plumbing/water lines that have limited the full capacities of the existing building. In addition, the current DSA-approved plans provide for reasonable ADA access to the first floor (future location of the Learning Center) through the addition of a first/second story elevator installation. During the Library’s swing space phase, the campus will be more reliant on networked information resources provided through the Library’s database contracts that are part of a system-wide consortia purchase. PCCD Library Chairs are coordinating with District IT and Educational Services to acquire and implement a next generation integrated library system. One component of this system will allow for distance education students to access materials remotely via IP validation. The new ILS will enhance student access to the colleges’ resource materials.

The Learning Center has been modified over the past years to incorporate a math tutorial and math lab area. A new space has been identified in Building L that is currently part of the Building L renovation project. The newly renovated Learning Center space will be configured to accommodate more space for tutoring, a Writing Center, a Math Lab, a Science Center, and a Center for Africana Studies. The reintegration of the Library and Learning Resources Center will provide for a more centralized location for student academic research, materials, and instructional support.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Child Development program is currently located in a converted auto shop facility. A new 11,300 ASF facility is needed to house demonstration, instructional and administrative space for an education program designed to support 60 preschoolers, 26 toddlers and 14 infants. A

permanent structure is needed that will be built on the campus in a location that will allow safe and efficient “direct auto access” for dropping off and picking up the children. The program does need a new facility, so the college continues to document this need.

SMART CLASSROOM PROJECT

Merritt College is currently part of the district-wide smart classroom project, scheduled to be completed by August 2011. Through this project, at least 50 of Merritt’s classrooms have been converted to smart classrooms, which will address the college’s audio-visual staffing deficiencies. Training on these new technologies will be provided in August 2011.

STUDENT SERVICES

The remodel of the R Building/Student Center allowed for all Student Services Offices to be located in one facility. This provides ease of access to services for students, faculty and staff. Initially, the facility lacked multi-media in the Student Lounge which is essential to offering “first-class” rental capabilities to generate revenue and to enhance the educational/instructional utility of the room. Through Measure A funds, this will be rectified this as part of the Smart Classroom project. The R Building also includes new features such as the addition of Peets Coffee in spring 2011, improved signage (in three different languages), and improved seating in the cafeteria, Student Lounge, and student study areas. We are still exploring a food court for the cafeteria and designated space for a student-run copy-center.