



# THE MERRITT CONNECTION

## President's Message



Welcome to the first issue of our new college newsletter, *The Merritt Connection*. The newsletter was created as a way to promote communication and sharing within the campus community with emphasis on how we are helping our students, better preparing ourselves, and working collaboratively on similar focus areas or projects. We hope you will contribute your ideas for

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### ***The Merritt Connection***

*Merritt College*

*Peralta Community College District*

*Office of the President*

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## Edible Landscaping Class Thrives Along with Snow Peas and Onions

Carrying flats of red leaf lettuce and snow peas they have grown from seed, students in the popular Edible Landscaping class (LANHT 76) listen to instructor Anders Vidstrand (pictured above) explain how to prepare plots and plant the vegetables to assure their success. Though the students come from diverse backgrounds and have different career goals, they also have personal reasons for taking this class among the lush greenery in this 7-1/2-acre classroom on the Merritt campus.

“People want to be intimately connected to the food they eat these days,” says co-instructor Patricia St. Johns, who is also an award-winning landscape designer. “They want to know the best way to grow healthy produce and how to incorporate it into an attractive garden.”

Cynthia Krikorian, owner of Lalime's in Berkeley, initially took the class to find out how to grow herbs in the restaurant's small garden. Now she is thrilled with how much more she has learned—from how to plant vertically to how to make compost. “It's been eye-opening,” she said. “It really makes you rethink how you use your land. It's a very sustainable class. Plus it's a relaxing place to be, kind of like garden therapy.”

Anders and Patricia encourage the campus community to visit the beautiful grounds and watch the edibles as they grow!

## President's Message

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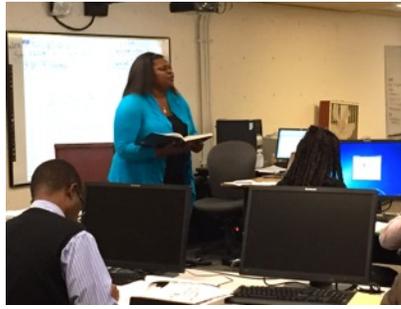
future articles. What is it about your work and/or your programs that make you proud? We are interested in news and events, innovative classes, people profiles, new employees, human interest stories, and awards and recognitions. I'd also like to encourage representatives of college committees to share updates and highlights with the rest of the college. Please contact the newsletter editor, Susan May, [smay@peralta.edu](mailto:smay@peralta.edu), with your ideas.

We are planning to publish the newsletter once again in December and then twice a month beginning in February. But feel free to send Susan your thoughts for upcoming issues at any point.

## Check Out Merritt's New Facebook Page!



Merritt College's new Facebook fanbase is growing every day at [facebook.merrittcollegeofficial](https://facebook.com/merrittcollegeofficial). We'd like to invite you to "like us" and to have your news and events posted by sending an email to [smay@peralta.edu](mailto:smay@peralta.edu). Also "follow" us on Instagram!



## Program Paves Way to Law School for CC Students

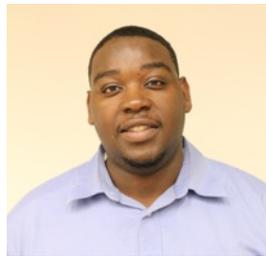
Paralegal student Kyle Frazier, 22, could only dream of going to law school while he was

working in a clerical position at a law firm. So this fall when he heard about the new program that creates a pathway from community college to law school, he refocused his goals. Merritt College is one of 24 California community colleges selected to participate in the Pathway to Law School initiative, a partnership among the colleges, the state bar, and six law schools.

***"This gives everyone a chance to do something great in their lives."  
—Kyle Frazier***

Students who complete the program have a good chance of being admitted to the law schools at the University of Southern California, University of San Francisco, UC Davis, UC Irvine, Santa Clara University, and Loyola.

As part of the program, community college students receive mentoring, financial aid, counseling, preparation for the LSAT, and other educational support.



"Quite a few of my students have been interested in law school," says Paralegal Instructor Linnea Willis (pictured above), who is also an attorney and president-elect of the California Black Lawyers Association. "This pathway provides a chance to get into a high-caliber law school

where they otherwise would not have had the possibility. The hope is that this program will also help to improve diversity in our legal profession."

As for Kyle (pictured above), this is just the chance he was looking for to reach toward a better future. "This gives everyone a chance to do something great in their lives," says Kyle, who is currently taking Criminal Law at Merritt. "It just all depends on whether you choose to take the steps."

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Presidential Awards

Congratulations to Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz for being honored recently with two awards for her contributions and leadership. In October she received the “Spotlight Award” from the Bay Area Business Roundtable, and in September she received a commendation from the County of Alameda in honor of Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month.

### Reception & Dedication

Congresswoman Barbara Lee (below) was the guest of honor and speaker at the District’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grand



Reception and Dedication of Merritt’s Barbara Lee Allied Health and Science Building. The event was held on October 30 in a glitzy rendition of our Student Lounge. She is pictured with Keith Carson, County Supervisor District 5, and Peralta District Chancellor Jose Ortiz.

### Kudos for SFSU Trip!

Thanks to the encouragement and promotional efforts of Marty Zielke, Rosa Perez, and fellow counselors, along with instructors and student workers, the trip to SFSU on November 5 was a big success! Two busloads of 90 students spent a sunny day touring the campus, enjoying lunch, and learning about transfer opportunities for their future educational journey. Great teamwork!

## Student Spotlight

### DSPS Student Makes Plans for Harvard



Alecia Warren-Barnes was born hearing impaired, and the disability increased as she got older. But thanks to the support of her “amazing” mother early on and now to Merritt faculty and staff, she is planning to become a doctor.

Of course she’s done some hard work herself along the way. Using a combination of Real-Time Captioning equipment (operated by Lee McCarthy) and other services arranged for by Disabled Services Coordinator Ron Nelson. Says instructor Nancy Rauch (pictured with Alecia): “Alecia is dedicated, conscientious, and has outstanding grades in my anatomy/physiology course.” She was so impressed that she encouraged Alecia to apply to UC Berkeley’s Bridges Program which could lead to an MD/Ph.D. program at Harvard.

Alecia is grateful for Merritt’s contributions to her success. “The staff and equipment from DSPS has made all the difference in my success, and my instructors have really allowed me to excel,” says Alecia. “I am thankful to be surrounded by people who want me to succeed.”  
*(See full interview with Alecia at the DSPS website.)*

## Employee Spotlight

### Curriculum Specialist Finds His Niche



Clifton Coleman’s first taste of working in higher education was as a student tour guide at UC Berkeley, where he also helped with fundraising as a student leader.

As a mass communications major with a penchant for technology, Clifton enjoyed the interaction with staff and students. So after graduation, he went on to academic positions at several universities. But when he saw the job for a Curriculum and SLO Specialist, he jumped at the chance and went for it.

“This job combines many of my experiences, from curriculum to catalogs to creating new high-tech systems and working with the SLO Committee,” says Clifton. “Also, I enjoy the warm and welcoming feeling of being in this close-knit community.”

Says Dr. Elmer Bugg, Vice President of Instruction, “We are lucky to have Clifton bring his academic expertise to this high-priority role at Merritt. He is doing a great job!”



### Your New Senators

The 2014-15 Classified Senate (above), led by Stefanie Harding, and the Academic Senate, led by Tae-Soon Park, have been hard at work so far this year. They will be sharing highlights in upcoming issues of *The Merritt Connection*.

### Accreditation Update

The Accreditation team, led by VPI Dr. Elmer Bugg, has been preparing for the Self-Evaluation report in support of reaffirmation of accreditation. The first reading of the report by the Board of Trustees is November 18, and the second is scheduled for December 9 for submittal to ACCJC in mid-January.

### New Staff Members

Welcome to the three new employees in Student Services, announced by VPSS Dr. Arnulfo Cedillo: Financial Aid Specialists Kent Nguyen and Phasasha Pharr, and Admissions and Records Technician Dominique Taylor. Stop by and say hello!

### Calendar Call

Do you have events, meetings, lectures, etc., you want to publicize? Help us create a comprehensive calendar on the website by sending submissions to smay@peralta.edu.

## Committee Highlights

### SLOAC Committee Continues to Affect Positive Change in the Classroom

by Jennifer Shanoski  
Chair, SLOAC



The Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee (SLOAC) is hard at work this semester. Notable accomplishments from the current semester include: the establishment of committee goals for the 2014/15 semester, reading through and providing feedback on the accreditation self-study, establishing a new method for the meaningful assessment of Institutional

Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and expanding our committee membership.

We have recently added two new part-time faculty members on the committee: Kaitlin Duffey and Corey Meadows. Kaitlin and Corey will be serving as faculty ambassadors, helping their colleagues understand the assessment cycle and implement it in a way that will effect positive change in the classroom. Kaitlin and Corey have set a goal of each helping at least ten faculty members complete their course assessments.

In other assessment-related news, three departments were recently awarded special funding for projects described in the 2013-2014 Assessment Cycle.

- Child Development was awarded \$500 for their work in CHDEV 52 (Observation of the Young Child); the money will be used to purchase a set of instructional videos for the course.
- Landscape Horticulture was awarded \$2500 for their work in LANHT 34 (Computer-Assisted Landscape Design) to promote the development of “flipped classroom” materials.
- Anthropology was awarded \$2000 for their work in ANTHR 1L (Physical Anthropology Laboratory); the money will be used to purchase a new chimpanzee skeleton.

A special thanks to the president for acknowledging the hard work of these departments and the requirement that we tie our budgeting priorities to student learning.

SLOAC meets on the first and third Friday of each month from 10-11 in the Learning Center conference room. We have two meetings left this semester on November 21 and December 5. All college members are welcome and encouraged to attend!

*College committees are welcome to share their highlights by contacting Susan May at [smay@peralta.edu](mailto:smay@peralta.edu)*