



THE MERRITT CONNECTION

President's Message



Community colleges are at the center of the national scene with President Obama's plan to offer the first two years *free* for millions of students. Similarly, Merritt College will be at the center of the local scene within four weeks. The ACCJC Accreditation Visiting Team will arrive on March 9 to validate our self-assessment report. Many of you will have an opportunity to interact and speak with members of the visiting team. The team will examine our practices from institutional operations, instructional and support services effectiveness, learning resources, facilities, human resources, fiscal management and

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The Merritt Connection
Merritt College
Peralta Community College District
Office of the President
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Histotech Students Fill Demand for Jobs

Changing careers in your mid-30s is a scary prospect. But graphic designer Carlos Brady always had a passion for science and wanted to see where it would take him. He first discovered Merritt College's Microscopy program and then started taking Histotechnology courses when that program started.



Dr. Gisele Giorgi, Carlos Brady, and a histotome.

"It was just what I was looking for," says Carlos, who is finishing his last semester. "The instructors are all great, and the program led me to a full-time job and a very rewarding career."

A histotechnician's job is to prepare very thin slices of human, animal, or plant tissue for microscopic examination. This is an important part of the process used to establish and confirm patient diagnosis. There are few community colleges in the country that have this program. That's precisely why instructor Dr. Gisele Giorgi, started one at Merritt. "We knew this was the next thing to do after microscopy and that there were jobs out there," says Gisele. "So Hank Fabian and I were able to get a grant and create a program. Then we put an ad on Craigslist and got 60 responses!"

One of them was from Montana Horwitz. A single mom with a young daughter, Montana was looking for a stable career. She attended the Open House and signed up. Within a year she was offered an internship at the prestigious Gladstone Labs at UCSF and then a full-time job as a research technologist. She credits all of her instructors and especially Gisele. "She encourages us and empowers us with the knowledge to be successful."

Gisele also established a partnership with Genomic Health, a rapidly expanding biotech company that receives and tests tissue with cancer from all over the world to help the patient and their doctor make better treatment decisions. They had hired one Merritt student and were so impressed they hired five more, including Carlos Brady. "They said 'Do you have more well-trained, hardworking, reliable students who are interested in a long-term future,'" says Gisele. "And I said, 'We sure do!'"

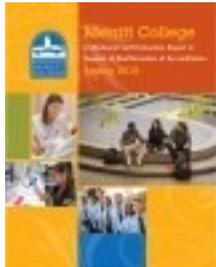
President's Message

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college governance, etc. The expectation is for us to continuously strive to improve on the standards established by ACCJC. The team photos and bios are posted on the Merritt Accreditation webpage for your reference.

A reception will be held on March 9 at 4:30 p.m in the Newton Student Lounge. Please plan to attend and welcome the team to our beautiful college.

Additionally, in preparation for their visit, the college is offering preparation forums on the self-evaluation. The next forum is Wednesday, February 25 at 5:30 p.m.



in the Lounge. We are asking individuals to review the document (on the website homepage) and especially the Standard that you were assigned for the past year. You may recall a year ago, during our Flex Days, we gathered at the Sequoia County Club to begin the process of evidence building and inquiry. It is now time to summarize. What did we find to support the great work that we do to assist our students succeed. You may be surprised with the amount of evidence we found. Merritt truly does change lives!

*Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz
President, Merritt College*

Employee Spotlight

“Merritt is Where My Heart Is.”



Maria Perez was accepted at 10 universities throughout the state after graduating from high school. But she chose Merritt so she could be close to home. Five years later, after earning three degrees, holding temporary positions in Business Services and two

VP's offices, and starting a permanent position, she feels like she is making a difference at her second “home.”

“Merritt is where my heart is,” says Maria. “I know what it feels like to be a student coming up the hill from Oakland, and I've had a lot of experience interacting with the diverse population at Merritt. By identifying with the students, I hope I've been providing the customer service that is needed.”

She brings her wealth of knowledge and service to her new job as Staff Assistant in Division II, where she is also learning the “faculty side” of the college. Says Maria: “It's nice to know I can implement the knowledge, experience, and everything I learned at Merritt into my new position.”

Student Spotlight

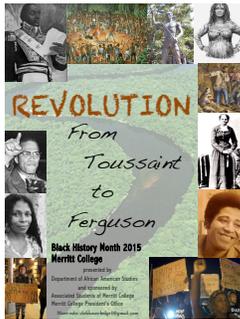
EMT Class Ends with Heroic Rescue



When a driver lost control of his car on Redwood Road and crashed into a tree, **Khadijah Poole-Khatib** had just finished her evening EMT class at Merritt and was heading down the hill. She didn't see the crash happen but she heard it. Her first instinct was to pull over and help. She joined others who did the same. But no one was aiding the man as he lay unconscious in his car with flames coming from under the hood. Would the car become totally engulfed in flames? Would it blow up?

“No one knew what was going to happen, but I knew that I couldn't sit there and watch a man die,” says Khadijah. “I shouted to anyone to help me and one person finally did. We pulled out

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NEWS BRIEFS

Black History Month Activities Continue

After two weeks of exciting events, Black History Month, titled “From Toussaint to Ferguson,” continues with more lectures, films and entertainment depicting African-American history, including a drumming circle and dance event on Feb. 17. Instructors are encouraged to offer their students extra credit for attending these educational events -- or you can bring the whole class! Please see the list of events on the Merritt website. The program is presented by the Department of African-American Studies, sponsored by the Associated Students of Merritt College (ASMC), and coordinated by Peralta instructor Danae Martinez,

See Your Events on Merritt’s Calendar!



Help Merritt create a complete calendar by getting your events onto the website schedule.

Just send to smay@peralta.edu.

EMT Class (continued)

the man who was bloody and still unconscious, and within 20 seconds the whole car went up in flames.” Khadijah took the man’s pulse and held his hand until the police and firefighters arrived. She later found out that the man had nearly died.

As for Khadijah, who is a chiropractor in San Leandro and had taken the class to fulfill a lifelong goal, she hardly even told anyone — but the word got out. “My family was really proud of me, and my instructor (Demond Simmons) told the class and they all applauded,” she says. “I just felt like I did what anyone else would have done.”

Student Services Improve and Thrive

Welcome Center is a Great Addition

On January 20, the first day of the Spring Semester, Merritt’s new Student Ambassadors were ready to help students at the new and growing Welcome Center just outside of the the Counseling area. The Center, created and coordinated by Debra Jacks, assists student with whatever they need to have a successful experience. “We encourage students to use the Welcome Center for assistance with registration as well as information about college programs, support services, tours, and directions.”



Yesenia Araiza and Brenda Perez help a student at the new Welcome Center.



Assembling lunches for Club Rush are Nicole Meredith, Adrian Jackson, Dr. Lilia Chavez, and My Williams.

Club Day Success Brings Energy to Campus Life

With tables lining the busy hallway, 15 student clubs offered information to more than 300 visitors on Club Day on January 27. This was a record for the event, which added numerous new clubs, including Nutrition, Unity, Christian Fellowship, Tobacco-less, and Ability Counts.

Organized by the ASMC and the ICC, participants were offered free lunch if they visited at least three tables—a great incentive! Thanks to Dr. Lilia Chavez, Director of Student Activities and Campus Life, for her dedication in bringing new energy and commitment to the student body