



Board of Trustees Report



October 11, 2016

Dr. Elaine-Marie Burns, Interim President

President's Message: Thanks for a Great Beginning to the Fall Semester!



Greetings to all! I hope the semester is going well for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. When I walk around campus and talk to students, they appear to be satisfied with the courses they are taking and the services they are receiving. Thanks to the faculty, department chairs, program directors, and division deans for their leadership in building a strong Fall 2016 schedule. And much appreciation to Vice President Lamb for his leadership in managing enrollments through crucial conversations with faculty and chairs to help reach our FTES target while meeting student and program needs. Student Services also deserve a round of applause for providing the support for both new and continuing students to help them reach their goals.



I'm pleased to say that the Merritt College Accreditation Follow-up Report (AFR) was submitted to the District Office and hand carried to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) on September 28. Hooray! We look forward to their site visit this month or in early November. If you have questions about the visit or the AFR, or want to learn how to prepare for the visit, contact Dr. Mia Kelly or Dr. Jeff Lamb.

There are lots of important events coming up for the fall, beginning with the **Chancellor's Fall Open Forum on Thursday, October 6, from 2-4 p.m.** in the Huey P. Newton & Bobby Seale Student Lounge (R-110), that we should all attend. Now you can find all collegewide events, meetings, and activities on the new Master Calendar on the homepage of the website. If you have something to submit, please send it to: merrittmastercal@peralta.edu.

As the semester progresses and the college committees are now meeting, I would like to recognize the commitment and strong contributions that constituent voices will make toward the participatory governance process. Please attend college committee meetings to ensure quorum.

—*Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns*

Welcome to New Employees in Admissions & Records, Library, and to the Interim Associate Dean



Rick Lopez, the new Admissions and Records Technician as of September 26, has worked in higher education and retail banking for the past 15 years. Most recently he served as student support advisor with the National University System and at Bank of America as a Relationship Manager. He earned his MBA from the University of Phoenix and his BA degree in Business Administration from California Coast University. Born in Cuba, he has also spent four years in Taiwan teaching English and Spanish.

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James Gordon, the new Principal Library Technician, has worked around books most of his life, most recently at the UC Berkeley Library for 25 years. He earned a BA in History at UC Berkeley prior to his library career. Previously, he worked at Books Inc., the West's oldest surviving bookstore, for seven years.



Maria Spencer will be serving in the new position of Interim Associate Dean of Educational Success, where she will work toward achieving goals focused on Adult Education and the new Career Center. She also is a participant in the Chancellor's Management Development Leadership Academy. Most recently, Maria served as Merritt's Outreach/Recruiter. She graduated from BCC and UC Davis and is close to completing her Doctorate in Education & Organizational Leadership from Brandman University.

Moving In, Moving Through, Moving On: Fall 2016 Summit Held to Refine Goals

An intrepid group of nearly 50 faculty, staff, students, and administrators gathered in the afternoon of Friday, September 23 to talk about our planning efforts to date at Merritt College. We spent the afternoon reviewing our efforts to improve the student experience, discussing ways to adjust our efforts, and refining our overall goals as a college. Samantha Kessler, Mario Rivas, and I provided a review and explanation of our Strategic Goals and Objectives and helped the audience learn the differences between Institutional Effectiveness Indicators and Institutional Set Standards. Later, Arnulfo Cedillo, Mario Rivas, and I led a discussion of the summer task force results to implement the District Strategic Goals through the lens of "Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving On."



With these broad and student-friendly categories, the goal is to align colleges' planning and resource allocation. Next, Clifton Coleman and Heather Casale presented an Outcomes Assessment and how to create meaningful conversations to lead to improvements in teaching and learning. Finally, the group had a conversation on connecting our assessment and planning efforts into a "continuous loop."

It was a long but productive day. If you want to see more on these important topics, you can visit the [Institutional Effectiveness](#) and the [SLOAC](#) websites under Faculty and Staff on the website.

—**Dr. Jeff Lamb**

Counseling Corner: Our Commitment Shines Through with 3000 Appointments in Four Weeks



Welcome to Merritt College's new Counseling Corner! Each month in *The Merritt Connection* we will highlight one of our counseling programs and services, offer updates, and remind everyone of important deadlines for our students! The primary goal of the Counseling Department is to provide a safe space for students to clarify their personal, academic, and transfer goals and receive professional guidance regarding course sequences and pathways that will help them reach those goals. As an example of our commitment to students' academic success we provided almost 3,000 appointments during the four-week period starting two weeks before the first day of class and two weeks after. We offer many counselor-led or co-led programs. We welcome your comments and feedback which you can send to either one us.

—**Counseling Co-Chairs: Marty Zielke and Angela Khoo**

Black Caucus Attendees Become “Emerging Leaders,” Tour the Capitol, and Meet Barbara Lee



ASMC members Pashael Dorsey and Charlton Williams were among the 10 students sponsored by the Peralta Community College District who proudly attended the 46th Annual Congressional Black Congress Legislative Conference last month in Washington D.C.

They were accompanied by Student Advisor Dr. Herbert Kitchen and Board of Trustee member Linda Handy, who has supported PCCD’s efforts each year to send student leaders to the conference.

With the theme, "Defining the Moment - Building the Movement," the annual event focused on areas of higher education, health and wellness, economics, employment, and mostly focused on this year's election and the importance of voting. The “Emerging Leaders” track, chosen by the Peralta students, was designed to engage them as potential political leaders, corporate executives, community activists, and other young professionals in discussions on the state of affairs in Black America. The students identified strategies to help navigate the political process, influence public policy, and excel in corporate America.

The group was excited to meet Congresswoman Barbara Lee who greeted them at her annual constituents breakfast. After that, they went to her office through an underground tunnel to the U.S. Capitol and had passes to sit in the upper level of the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Conference is the leading agent on policies and issues that impact African Americans and the global Black community by developing leaders, informing policy, and educating the public.

—Dr. Herbert Kitchen

Spotlight on Fire Science: Upcoming Degree and Certificates Offer More Options for Students



Merritt’s Fire Science Program is in the limelight as it has been gaining in popularity for its career opportunities and its anticipated degree and certificate approval by Fall 2017. This will give our students even more options for a career in serving and aiding the community through the Fire Department.

We are excited about the opportunities our Fire Science program offers and even more excited about the committed faculty we have in this area who are dedicated, practicing firefighters. They have been working for years with young people in our community who face many challenges and provide them with mentorship and the kind of "tough love" that makes them excel in personal growth and professional rigor in this career path. As our college president Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns likes to say, “Merritt College is on FIRE!”

—Dr. Siri Brown

Merritt Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Black Panthers Party

It's the 50th anniversary of the Black Panther Party, and Merritt is holding a series of events to celebrate the memorable occasion. All events are free and open to the public. There is also an exhibit of political art by Emory Douglas from Oct. 17-26 in S-352.



- **Tues., Oct. 18, 12:30-2 p.m., L-127** – The BSU is hosting a film showing and discussing the award-winning film, “Merritt College: Home of the Black Panther Party.”
- **Wednesday, Oct. 19, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., R-110** – In honor of BPP members who were wrongly incarcerated as political prisoners: Albert Woodfox, Charlotte O’Neal, and Eddie Conway.
- **Mon., Oct. 24, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., R-110** – Famed BPP leader Kathleen Cleaver speaking on “Engaging in Radical Change.”
- **Wed., Oct. 26, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., S-352** – Emory Douglas speaking on “Art as Social Justice to Move the People.” Special guests: Members of the Polynesian Chapter of the BPP.

New Online Tutoring on the Learning Center Website Offers Audio, Video, Chat, and Whiteboard

Learning Center Director Ann Elliot is pleased to announce that the Center is now offering free online-tutoring 24/7 to all students through Upswing, an online tutoring internet service. She urges everyone to let all students know about the service.

Students can easily access tutors (coaches) through the Upswing link on the Learning Center webpage (www.merritt.edu/wp/learningcenter), where there are simple-to-follow instructions, including a video. In Upswing’s “Interactive Learning Sessions, students experience collaborative learning through real-time audio, video, chat, and a virtual whiteboard. They can quickly upload and share documents before or during sessions. The service prompts both the student and coach for feedback after each session in order to provide insight into student understanding.



Upswing also provides faculty and administrators a Student Retention Analytics Dashboard. Information is continuously collected and analyzed to drive early alerts and trends on student performance over the course of a school year. Merritt will have access to simple and actionable data that will help to address student success issues ahead of time.

Samantha Kessler: Using Her Research Skills for Student Success



Working with data and charts as an institutional researcher at a college in California was not on Samantha Kessler’s radar growing up in a small Pennsylvania farm town and majoring in Spanish at East Stroudsburg University.

But the combination of taking a sociology class as an elective taught by an inspirational professor, going to graduate school, having a mentor give her research opportunities, and attracting an employer who recognized her talents, led to a career where her skilled analysis of those data and charts can affect a college’s future.

“I became interested in sociology as a sophomore because the professor made the topic so interesting,” says Samantha. “She encouraged me to take specialty classes focusing on projects **(continued)**”

like gender in sports and race and ethnicity, and I began looking at life in a different way. I started noticing the big patterns of why things are happening, and I found it fascinating. With her encouragement, I ended up continuing to study sociology in graduate school.”

Armed with a MA in sociology from Lehigh University, she was chosen for her first job as a research associate at a local community college because her employer had been a sociology major, had started his own career as an institutional researcher, and knew she would have the skills to be successful.

“At that point I was realizing that I really liked working with research and working around education and seeing how different things could positively impact education,” says Samantha. “I was thrown into it without very much experience, so it was sink or swim to find my own resources.”

Toward the end of the two years she worked there, she began dreaming of leaving the sleepy farming town where she had lived all of her life and started sending out resumes to find a job in a place with specific requirements: no snow and near a big city. When she was offered a job as an institutional researcher at a small, private online military intelligence university in Santa Clara, California, she grabbed it. Then she had to convince Eric, her boyfriend of two years, to move with her when he finished architecture school in six months. Soon he was helping her pack her car to make the 3,000-mile trip.

It was at Henley-Putnam where she began gaining experience working with program reviews, assessment, and accreditation. But after three years she missed working on a community college campus and was excited to accept the position she found at Merritt College as Research and Planning Officer.

By that time Eric had moved out, they were engaged, and the wedding she had been planning was two months away. “I was starting a new job and planning a wedding at the same time, “ says Samantha. “I’m glad I did it, but I wouldn’t recommend it!” After a weeklong Jamaican honeymoon, she was back at work.

Nearly a year later, Samantha enjoys her job where she collects data about the college, its students, and the community to use for supporting decisions or figuring out where improvements can be made or services can be added that will make a difference. Her work touches the entire campus.

“I use data to help the college plan, make informed decisions, and ultimately improve student success,” she says. “Right now I’m helping the Basic Skills Grant Team with tutoring and research, working with Brock Drazen to look at his athletes’ success, helping Lilia Chavez with a student services survey, and assisting Jeff Lamb with institutional effectiveness and planning. My goal is to help establish a good system of tracking data to teach others so they can be more conscious and data driven and help the college be evidence based and accountable, or even just be able to talk about their success in a quantifiable way. I’m already seeing incremental changes, and I’m getting great feedback.”

—Susan May

Our Mission

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 social and a global economy.