



Board of Trustees Report



November 15, 2016

Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns, Interim President

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President's Message: Optimistic About ACCJC's Visit and Lots of Fall Activities Ahead



We are all waiting for the ACCJC Team's visit on November 9 to review our progress since their last visit as we have been working to correct their noted deficiencies and to strengthen our systems. We are optimistic that we are well positioned for a successful visit resulting in full affirmation. In preparation for the visit, please be sure to read the Accreditation Follow-Up Report (AFR) and understand the highlights of each recommendation. The team will be selectively interviewing key College constituencies, so if you fit that description, please clear your

calendars now in case you are selected. Thanks to AFR Co-Chairs Dr. Jeff Lamb, Dr. Audrey Trotter, and Dr. Mia Kelly, the core team Nghiem Thai, Dinh Truong, Anita Black, and Maril Bull, and all at Merritt for your contributions.



Aside from the highly anticipated ACCJC visit, we have had many exciting activities going on and planned for the next month. Thanks to Dr. Siri Brown for an excellent line-up of important people and activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Black Panther Party and to Maria Spencer for educating us about the Filipino culture (and food)! Be sure to tell your students about the **STEM and General Career Fair on Nov. 2**. For future events, see our new Master Calendar on the homepage of the Merritt website. If you have events you want posted, send to smay@peralta.edu or merrittmastercal@peralta.edu. Looking forward to an exciting fall season!

Barbara Lee Pays a Visit to Her Namesake Building

On a trip home from Washington, D.C., Barbara Lee paid a visit to the beautiful new building that bears her name on October 18 and brought along an out-of-state friend to show it off to. She took a closer look at the Nursing Skills Lab with Program Director Dawn Williams along with other Allied Health and Science classes and labs. **(Pictured: Congresswoman Lee with Dr. Gisele Giorgi, Dr. Rosemary Delia, Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns, and Dr. Jeff Lamb)**



Meet Our New Neighbors: The Talented Students from COVA High School



If you walk by the D Building these days, you may hear the rhythmic beat of drums. Or the sound of melodic voices. Or a violin concerto floating out of the second floor balcony.

Give a big welcome to the Conservatory of Vocal and Instrumental Arts High School (COVAH), an expansion of the school's K-8 charter school which has been around since 2007 just down the hill. The 60 students take their academic classes in the mornings and their performing arts classes in the afternoons. Many of the students also are taking Merritt College classes concurrently.

"We've been trying to get space at Merritt for the past four years since we heard about your new building going up," says Dr. Valerie

Abad, the school's founder, whose own love of music led her to play 16 instruments and earn a spot in the Walnut Creek Concert Band. "It's very exciting. Merritt's instructors have expressed how nice it is to have our students in their classes and appreciate their participation."

Andrew Sylva, 16, has been at the school since he was in 5th grade. He plays the violin, enjoys drama, sings in the choir, and has performed with other students in such prestigious venues as the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in D.C. "I really like being at Merritt," he says. "I'm taking English 1B and it's always interesting to hear opinions from students of all ages."

Doris Hankins, in Merritt's Vice President of Instruction Office, is pleased to have her son Malique, 15, attending COVAH. "I especially like the collaboration of music with education and the small class size," she says. "It allows the faculty to focus on the individual needs of the students."

From all accounts, having COVAH on the Merritt campus is definitely a win-win relationship. The high school students are in close proximity to classes where they can earn college credits, and the college increases its enrollment and gets to have talented students right on campus.

"We are looking forward to hearing the COVAH students perform," says Merritt President Marie-Elaine Burns. "They will be presenting a holiday concert for us on December 6, and we are talking about other possibilities to add live music to some of our college activities. We're lucky to have them on our campus!"

—Susan May

Merritt College
We change lives!

S.T.E.M. Job/Career Fair
Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics Jobs
Building S (Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Building)

General Jobs/Careers
Food Service, Hotel, Retail, Drivers, Customer Service, Office, and more...
Building R Student Lounge (R-110)

Nov 2, 2016
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Merritt College • 12500 Campus Drive • Oakland, CA 94619



Find a career or a job at Merritt's First Career/Job Fair on Nov 2, 10-4, in the Science Bldg. and in R-110. On Nov 9, celebrate the new Welcome Center, 12-1:30, with guest Mayor Libby Schaff.

Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center Wins Award for Outstanding Project of 2015



Merritt College's newest building, the Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center, was one of two buildings named as Outstanding Project for 2015 by the prestigious Western Council of Construction Consumers at its Excellence Awards Program. The dinner ceremony was held to a packed room on October 27 at the Lafayette Hotel and Spa. In announcing Merritt's award, the Center was said to be "among the most sophisticated community college learning centers in the U.S. and the most advanced community college science centers in California." The building was also one of the few recipients of the night to receive a "Sustainability Excellence Award" for its LEED Gold Certification.

Attending the ceremony and accepting the award for the Center were Derek Labrecque, Partner, and Shawn Percey, BIM Manager from JK Architecture; and Ted Floor, Larry Cabodi, Sean Burnie, and Anna Kennedy from Clark/Sullivan Construction. Also attending the dinner from the District were Peralta Chancellor Jowel Laguerre, Saddiq Ikharo, and Gary Banks, along with Merritt Dean Rosemary Delia.



After the ceremony, architect Derek LaBrecque talked about the honor of receiving the award. "I'm excited that Merritt's building was recognized tonight, partly because the essence of this project was built upon the vision of the college and history of the community. But also because of what will be done in this facility to prepare students with the the skill sets they need to succeed in the 21st century."

—Susan May

New Puente Students Attend Transfer Motivational Conference in Davis

Merritt Puente Program brought 31 students, in their first semester of the program, to the Transfer Motivational Conference at UC Davis, joining with over 1,000 other Puente students and their faculty



teams from 34 community colleges all over Northern California! This annual conference is at the core of the Puente Program, whose mission is to increase the number of educationally underserved students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees and return to their communities as leaders and mentors. The students, along with their Merritt faculty team, Evan Nichols (English),

Isela Gonzales-Santana (English) and José Salceda (Counseling), spent a full day on the university campus, attending workshops on the "Nuts and Bolts of Transfer" led by representatives from a wide-range of UCs, CSUs and private colleges and universities from all over the state. Puente students also chose from an impressive array of afternoon conferences, with topics ranging from social media, scholarships, female empowerment, studying law, becoming a teacher, financial aid and much more!

—Evan Nichols

Counselors Corner



Collaborative Effort and Positive Feedback Mark Successful Transfer Day

More than 300 students attended the annual Transfer Day College Fair on October 13 in the Student Lounge. During the event several students told me that until they met with the representatives, they didn't think it would be possible for them to transfer.

They said they felt very motivated. Our university representatives stayed beyond the end of the event to continue meeting with our students and shared how impressed they were with the types of questions our students asked and how friendly and welcoming Merritt College is. Transfer is an institutional function, and the success of the event was truly a collaborative effort with the Transfer Center, the Counseling Department, instructors who brought students to the college fair or shared the information with students, the Business/Facilities Office who was involved in so many aspects of the event, the Student Activities Office, classified staff like Jamila Saleh and Yesenia Araiza and administrators like our President, Dr. Burns who attended the event and introduced herself to all of the college/university representatives. Thanks to all!



—Tanya Ilarde

Did You Know...?



Develop or Participate in Surveys to Find Info Important to Merritt's Success

Have you ever been asked to complete a survey on campus, receive a link to a survey, or to give a survey out to your students? Surveys are an easy way to gather rich, qualitative information from large groups of people using a series of questions. Individual departments and the campus as a whole use surveys to gather data about services, experiences and satisfaction. Once gathered, this information is used to tell the campus or certain departments what is working and what students or other constituents are happy with, and to identify ways to

improve experiences, services, and student success. In the fall, the campus is planning to survey the faculty and staff, and in the spring, students will be given a similar survey. While participation in these surveys are voluntary, your opinion is essential to making Merritt College better! Responses are always confidential, and results will be shared with the campus community. More details to come!



Does your department or service area want to gather information about your students using a survey? If you need help developing a survey or input on how to administer, collect or analyze your data, please do not hesitate to contact me at skessler@peralta.edu.

—Samantha Kessler, Research & Planning Officer

To recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, , Merritt faculty, staff, students, and administrators joined together, dressed in pink, and walked a mile around the track.



Spotlight on Faculty

Jennifer Briffa: Proud Alumna Dedicated to Giving Back to Merritt by Creating Great Teachers

Jennifer Briffa is currently working on a pilot project that would create a pathway for low-level English speakers interested in child care to earn a certificate and a find a fulfilling career starting with a tuition-free, non-credit class combining Child Development and ESL.

With more than 30 years teaching experience, it one of many creative ideas that the dedicated Child Development instructor, a product of Merritt College herself, has developed to help the diverse population of students in the Bay Area meet their educational goals and find their dreams. “I have always had a passion for the well-being of children and also to educate those who would teach other children, multiplying my impact on children’s lives,” says Jenny. “I believe that many of the problems we face in the world would be less and easier to solve if more people had great early childhood teachers.”



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Born of immigrant parents from Peru who arrived in San Francisco when she was four, Jenny learned English in the school system. She says she was lucky to have parents who valued education and sacrificed so she and her sister could go to good schools. That education included ballet lessons which led to a professional career performing and teaching dance spanning 18 years, the last half dancing with the Oakland Ballet Company. When she stopped dancing, her experience as a student and a teacher led her to Merritt College to find a new career by studying Child Development. It was there that she found the encouragement and support she strives to provide to her own students today.

“My heart is at Merritt because I came here myself and went on to get my bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Mills College because of the instructors who encouraged me, supported me, and believed in me. So what I enjoy is being able to do that for my students. It’s very motivating for students to know that their instructors have gone through some of the same struggles that they are going through.”

Jenny began her career at Merritt as an adjunct instructor teaching Childhood Development classes to Spanish-speaking students (which she also did at College of Marin for 10 years) and it became her expertise and her passion. Since becoming a full-time faculty member in 2014, she has continued to create multiple programs to help with student success. She is most proud of the program she created to support Child Development students at Merritt’s Fruitvale campus by offering classes, enrollment assistance, embedded tutors, counseling, and other services, including the above-mentioned pilot program which will begin this spring.

Her students praise her and follow her to whatever classes she teaches. They say they are very grateful for her support, appreciate her personal help, value her advice on being an effective teacher, are inspired by her encouragement to reach for their goals, and are thankful that some of her classes are taught bilingually.

For Jenny, that appreciation is what makes her chosen career worthwhile. “In Child Development, we try to support our students with bilingual classes, tutors, counseling, advisement, and office support. This makes all the difference in their success rate and is very gratifying for me. It motivates me to try and reach more students who may want to join our program. Merritt gave me a new chance when I began my second career, and I want to serve through the community college system now that I can.”

—*Susan May*

SLOAC Update

Focus on Cultural Awareness and Civic Engagement & Ethics



A giant “thank you” to all the faculty, department chairs and administrators who pushed to complete one or more assessment plans for your course SLOs this semester. Your assessment of student learning in your courses, program and service areas will not only improve the quality of education our students receive, but the robust discussions these assessments produce can lead to meaningful changes to our programs and services.

Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment: Cultural Awareness and Civic Engagement & Ethics

One of SLOAC’s focuses this semester is the assessment of two of our Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs): Cultural Awareness and Civic Engagement & Ethics. These ILOs reflect the skills, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that students are expected to develop during their time at Merritt. Students should be exposed to these throughout their time on campus and through a myriad of courses and educational experiences.

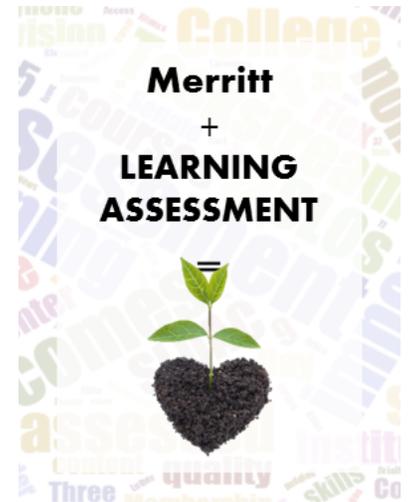
Our ILO coordinator, Laura Forlin, hosted a delicious (and nutritious!) lunch and discussion on October 14th. Here we reviewed the campus wide rubrics and engaged in a rich and meaningful discussion of how we engage our students in these learning outcomes.

While we had crafted a common rubric to assess the outcomes, we realize that this approach may not be the only way to assess these particular ILOs given the breadth of skills, understandings and attitudes they encompass. So, given this, we would like to open up this discussion campus wide and encourage faculty, staff, and administrators to participate in a variety of ways.

While both of these ILOs are always relevant, they are particularly relevant this fall given the election cycle, the many Black Panther celebrations in honor of the 50th anniversary, as well as numerous other cultural awareness celebrations occurring on campus. SLOAC would like to encourage faculty to use opportunities such as these to engage in our ILO assessment. We want your involvement for what has the potential to be a wonderful, engaging dialogue across all disciplines and areas.

An email was sent by Laura Forlin on October 28 outlining additional participation dates and information about stipends available. For additional information, ideas or discussion, please contact Laura (lforlin@peralta.edu). Or send any general assessment questions to: mer-sloac@peralta.edu
Happy assessing everyone!

—*Heather Casale, SLOAC*



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 and a global economy.