



Board of Trustees Report



February 22, 2022

Dr. David M. Johnson, President

On Wednesday, February 15, Merritt convened a joint Strategic Enrollment Management/Educational Master Planning Task Force meeting to examine and address some of the prevailing and persistent challenges we face in terms of the recruitment and retention of students. We recognize that COVID-19 has had an obvious impact on our enrollment numbers and the way our institution will need to function going forward (including devoting more attention and resources to support the mental health of our students). But we also concede that some of the challenges were endemic even before the pandemic. It is important for us to acknowledge troubling issues if we ever hope to surmount them... we cannot skip that critical step. With that said, a few of the areas that we will address are:

- Improving our procedures with regard to admission and registration, counseling, and other services by leveraging technology that automates processes and creates a seamless and successful student experience.
- Being intentional and unapologetic about directing resources and support to programs and initiatives that focus on the success of those groups who continue to have incommensurate academic outcomes.
- Reviewing our classified and faculty prioritization, recruitment, and hiring practices to ensure that we bring committed, equity-minded employees into the fold.



I am confident that Merritt College has the will and ability to make these things happen.



Another critical component of increasing student enrollment is having effective outreach. Toward that end, on Wednesday, February 16, two of our Merritt employees decided to (in their words) *Think Over, Beyond, and Outside of the Box*. So what does that look like? In this case, it was Margie Rubio (*NextUp*) and Tauheeda Anderson (*Sankofa*) doing an impromptu drop-in on four OUSD high schools: Castlemont, McClymonds, Oakland High, and Oakland Tech. As you might expect, the students, teachers, and administrators at these respective high schools

were pleasantly surprised to see them walking their halls. They met with counselors, principals, and college liaisons to share program information not only for Merritt, but for our sister schools as well! Given the fact that Margie and Tauheeda are both Oakland natives and Merritt graduates, their message and experiences resonated with our community members and future students. So I am taking this moment to recognize their efforts (and those of Maria Spencer as well in her role of Outreach Coordinator), and commend their commitment.



Merritt College puts students first. Through our rich educational programs, we foster a culture of equity and inclusion that empowers students to achieve their greatest potential and make meaningful contributions to their respective communities and our global society.



Appreciation

In closing, I would like to make everyone aware of the *Merritt Day of Appreciation* that will take place on Tuesday, March 1. We will be providing breakfast from 9am to 10:30am, and lunch from 12:00pm to 1:30pm to every student, classified professional staff member, faculty member, and administrator who stops by. Our aim

is to convey our gratitude for a number of things: the privilege of serving these special students; the occasion to do it at Merritt College; and the opportunity to keep getting better every day. So please join us and we look forward to seeing you there.