



Board of Trustees Report



February 14, 2023

Dr. David M. Johnson, President

On Wednesday, February 1, Merritt College held the Child Development Center Ground Breaking to mark the first day of construction for our amazing new building. In partnership with the PCCD Department of General Services, the event allowed for our district and community leaders to join us in celebrating this momentous occasion. We were joined by Oakland City Councilmember Kevin Jenkins, Trustees Louis Quindlen and Shewee Yohannes, former Trustees Linda Handy and Bill Riley, and Cesar Macias from the Office of Congresswoman Barbara Lee. The highlight of the morning, however, was the opportunity to honor three pillars of the Child Development Program—Christine Olson, Newt McDonald, and our dear Jenny Briffa (her family was in attendance). To close, Department Chair Michelle St. Germaine gave some moving remarks and shared a replica of the plaque that will be placed in the new CDC Building in recognition of the program's forerunners. We look forward to the grand opening of the building in the next year, and hope to see everyone at the groundbreaking for the Landscape Horticulture Building in a few months.



Having completed the necessary requirements through Merritt College's Administration of Justice program, **nineteen cadets** graduated on Friday, February 3, as part of the Oakland Police Department's 190th Academy. Our *ADJUS 110—Basic Course* provides Peace Operations Specialized Training (POST) certification to students, which is the training standard for police officers, sheriffs, and other peace officers. The curriculum focuses on criminal law, firearms, arrest techniques, first aid, and physical fitness. Department Chair Elaine Wallace and Merritt Instructor Drennon Lindsey (who also serves as Oakland Police Department Deputy Chief) were in attendance, as well as Mayor Sheng Thao (a Merritt College alumna). The prevailing theme at the graduation ceremony was clear: the power to police comes with great responsibility, and officers must never forget the *protect and serve* principle emphasized so forcefully by our POST Academy instructors and trainers. I had the personal honor of presenting Officer Adrian Cuadra-Shomer with the *Academic Achievement Award*, and I was delighted to witness Officer Sandria Bolden deliver the first Valedictorian Speech by a female graduate of the Academy.



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.



Merritt College was proud to REPRESENT at this year's HBCU Caravan, which was held at the Youth Uprising site in East Oakland. Over 22 HBCUs were there and hundreds of Oakland high school students attended the event. Maria Valencia from Student Services VPI Denise Richardson met with students and shared with them the many benefits of attending Merritt before transferring to their choice of an HBCU. Many of them were surprised to find out that we have programs that could, in two years, prepare them to earn a living wage. They were also fascinated to learn

about our exciting Bioscience Programs, Nursing, Business, Cybersecurity, Child Development and many others. While some were already enrolled in dual enrollment classes, other were surprised that they could get many of their core requirements completed before leaving high school. Finally, the most compelling point for many of the students was the amount of money they could save by enrolling at Merritt after graduation. Fifty-six high school students ended up registering through our intake process, and our outreach staff are already at work providing them with enrollment information and support. The best part of the day was the opportunity to engage these students face to face, listening to their goals and aspirations and proudly providing them with them options that could very well change their lives.



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