



# Board of Trustees Report

January 14, 2025

Dr. David M. Johnson, President

**Merritt College**  
**EXPRESS ENROLLMENT**

Merritt College's Two-Day Express Enrollment Event commenced this past weekend. Students were greeted with music, snacks, and most important, services ranging from Admissions and Records support, counseling, and financial aid. This campaign is part of our efforts to encourage students to register early, as we have observed the lag that typically accompanies in-person class enrollment in comparison to online enrollment (the

interesting data point, however, is that by the census date Merritt's in-person enrollment closely matches that of the online courses). For the entire month of January, we will have expanded hours for our student services areas for in-person and virtual support as well. Go Panthers!

We recently learned that three valued and respected members of the Merritt College family will be retiring in February: Patricia Rom, Dale Nabeta, and Vince Ealy. With almost forty years of service to her credit, Patricia has been a consistent presence and consummate professional in her role as Senior College Information Systems Analyst. In just the six years that I have been at Merritt, I have lost count of the number of times that I have relied upon her to get the campus communication systems back up after storm or other outage. Day or night or weekend, she is always ready to take care of the campus so that we can do the important work of serving our students. As our Network Support Services Specialist for the past five years at Merritt, Dale has been Patricia's partner in crime (in the best sense of the term). His broad skill-set and expertise have been invaluable to this campus (and also, I am certain, to the folks at Laney where he worked for five years before coming to Merritt). As his retirement is just a few weeks away, he is looking forward to traveling and spending more time as a musician. And Vince will be missed as well. Always ready to brighten up your day with a morning joke or by telling tales, it is hard to imagine not seeing him riding around campus in his cart as he dispatched his custodial duties. After more than twenty years at the helm, he is ready to enjoy the next chapter. So, congratulations to all three...and I hope that they know that we love and appreciate them!



*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.*



In what is becoming a welcome tradition, I am proud to share that the Merritt College Cybersecurity Team Members did their thing as they recently finished their Fall 2024 season in the National Cyber League (NCL). The NCL is a cyber security skills competition that contains real world cyber security tasks that professionals perform on a daily basis. The objective is to reinforce learning, and help students develop the necessary skills for the workforce. The faculty coach is

Vidya Phalke, and the following students represented Merritt College in the competition:

Cynthia Dueltgen (Team Lead)

Craig Hollow

Eyobe Abay

Connor Cox

Eric Ruiz-Reyna

Out of 1201 teams (drawn from a pool of 10,000 students and 500 colleges/universities), the Merritt College Cybersecurity crew placed 80<sup>th</sup> (or put another way, in the top 6.7% of participants). That placement put in the same placement tier as UC Berkeley, Cal Poly Pomona, Sacramento State, and University of Southern California. So, please join me in congratulating and celebrating these amazing students and our phenomenal faculty members who teach, train, mentor, and support them!

I want to end by reiterating something that I communicated last week through a campus email—and that is our commitment to supporting our undocumented and mixed-status students. As Inauguration Day approaches and we anticipate the enactment of policies endorsed by the incoming presidential administration, it is imperative that we protect the students we serve. Consistent with this commitment, Jorge Murillo, Director of Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Initiatives, will be leading a training on Tuesday, March 11 (College Flex Day). The training will focus on educating Merritt employees on the following:

1. Reporting the presence of immigration enforcement officers should they encounter them on campus/district property.
2. Legal documents (warrants, subpoenas, etc.) that officials might present to gain access to campus or take a student into custody.
3. Appropriate responses (based on maintaining the orderly operating of the colleges or the district) that Peralta employees can provide to law enforcement seeking access to campus for immigration enforcement purposes.



We look forward to the training and providing ongoing resources and support for our students.

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