



Board of Trustees Report



February 13, 2024

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



Permaculture lab instructor Genesis Hernandez (who also teaches at Ascend school in the Fruitvale) organized the event to inspire education. In short, we wanted the students—most of whom had never been up the hill to our campus—to embrace Merritt College as their own. Despite the stormy weather the students embraced being in the elements, as they started the 30-minute tour of the hillside. They also had the opportunity to see the future site of the state-of-the-art, \$40 million Landscape Horticulture building that is slated to open within the next two years. So, thanks to Molly, Genesis, and the other Ascend faculty and parents who encouraged these students to embrace the educational possibilities in their own backyard.

On Wednesday, January 31, our Landscape Horticulture Coordinator Molly Sealund led a tour of 50 seventh graders from Ascend Middle school. As part of our ongoing effort to make meaningful connections with the community we serve, our these young people to seek out a quality college



As an exhortation to my colleagues, I want to take a moment to note that Merritt College is doing a full-court press this semester with regard to our Zero-Textbook-Cost (ZTC) and Open Educational Resources (OER) efforts. Ranjeeta Lal joined us late last year as the new OER/ZTC Coordinator, and her passion and approach to this work is informed by her experience as a biology instructor for the past decade. She witnessed first hand the financial challenges that students had to surmount in order to obtain textbooks, lab manuals, and online class materials. As educators we should all understand the obligation we have to support students in their academic pursuits, and implementing ZTC is something that we can do that is both immediate and impactful. Currently, there are three collaboration cohorts in Math,

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Communication Studies and Sociology departments that will be participating in the development and implementation of ZTC into our courses. We are confident that the work developed from the initial three collaboration cohorts will be the foundation of more instructors adopting ZTC into their courses. Finally, I would encourage those of you who are committed to our students to participate in the work by reviewing current updates shared on OERI ASCCC sites, helping to plan activities such as campus information sessions and formal FLEX day presentation, and contributing any ideas and recommendations you may have to support this effort and supporting ZTC Grant pathways in process currently. Let's lean in!



UC San Diego

UCSD's contingent will include Admissions, Financial Aid, a Provost from one of our eight colleges, Deans, and Department Chairs from one or more of the academic units. Peralta Counseling Faculty and administrative leadership will be there to engage, pose/answer questions, and promote the transfer of our students to UCSD. We are proud to continue this partnership with UCSD, as this is the second consecutive year that UCSD has visited Merritt College. Last spring, we hosted an event for Bay Area students and their families who had been accepted to the school (several Peralta students were included in that number).

On Thursday, February 15, Merritt College is hosting an event that we are co-sponsoring with our Peralta sister colleges and UC San Diego. Essentially, the goal is for UCSD to meet with their partners at Bay Area community colleges and high schools to learn about our challenges and aspirations. They want to see how they can be of help and share the latest on what they are doing in regard to programming, funding, and admissions.

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