



# Board of Trustees Report



March 26, 2024

Dr. David M. Johnson, President

## Merritt College Culture & Communication

As we continue to seek ways to improve Merritt College culture and communication (particularly as it pertains to race), I am pleased to share that several campus entities have come together to organize the *Black and Brown Men's and Women's Talk*. Scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> in the Newton/Seale Student Lounge, and co-sponsored by Puente, Sankofa, the Learning Center, the Africana Center, the Black Student Union, the Welcome Center, and Phi Theta Kappa, the event will provide a safe space for students to exchange information, resources, and support, in the presence of caring and culturally-competent faculty, administrators, and classified professional members. Our hope is that this event can help us regain the focus and momentum generated from our ONE MERRITT initiative. At the very least, we are confident that the dialogue that will result from open and honest exchanges will lead to greater mutual understanding and collaboration at all levels of the college.



As graduation season approaches, we have some exciting things in the works: California Secretary of State, the Honorable Dr. Shirley N. Weber, has agreed to deliver remarks at the Merritt College Commencement on Monday, May 20, 2024 at Oakland's Paramount Theater. Her remarks will focus on the importance of participating in the political process, and the value of education. Dr. Weber was nominated to serve as California Secretary of State by Governor Gavin Newsom on December 22, 2020 and sworn into office on January 29, 2021. Voters elected her for a full term on November 8, 2022. Weber is California's first Black Secretary of State and only the fifth African American to serve as a state constitutional officer in California's 173-year history. We look forward to welcoming her and listening to her amazing personal journey that is sure to inspire our students!



It is with great pride that I announce that the Regents of the University of California has chosen our very own Isela Santana to serve as a English Instructor Training Coordinator to the statewide *Puente Project*. The selection process for this post was extremely competitive, but

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given Isela's nearly twenty years of experience teaching and working with the Puente Program here at Merritt College, it is not surprising that they tapped her for this role. Some of her responsibilities include coordinating with leads of program institutions throughout the UC System to plan and implement new projects, participating in the creation and implementation of innovative training materials and guidelines, and collaborating with community college coordinators across the state to adjust and align community college training and programming with current data, research, and student needs. The bittersweet aspect of this prestigious appointment is that it requires a three-year commitment, so starting the Fall 2024 term Isela will be away for several semesters. But we will be sure to maintain the strong foundation that she has established for the Learning Center, and the deep and meaningful relationships she has forged with so many of us. Congratulations Isela!



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