



Board of Trustees Report



April 9, 2024

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



On Wednesday, April 3rd, the Merritt College Puente Program organized a special cultural event to celebrate the legacy of the labor rights icon, Cesar Chavez. The event opened with a heartfelt land acknowledgment, followed by an Aztec dance to acknowledge the four directions. Puente Club officers led the program and gave a compelling presentation about Cesar Chavez’s life and legacy. The keynote speaker was José Corona, Board Chair of the Unity Council, a non-profit Social Equity Development Corporation based in the Fruitvale neighborhood. Mr. Corona gave an inspiring speech about his professional journey and the importance of giving back to the community.

Students also presented the song, “De Colores,” which was routinely sung to close out United Farm Workers Union meetings. The song, along with offerings from the Aztec dancers accompanied by Native musicians grounded the event in cultural traditions. Professors Alejandro Garcia and Isela Santana spoke about the symbolism and cultural significance of Aztec dance as a form of prayer.



This campus-wide, cultural event was a group effort. Each of the 25 members of the Puente Club played a role in the event: creating a custom-made banner for the occasion; decorating the student lounge in red, black, and white, the colors of the United Farm Workers Union; welcoming event attendees into the space; selling t-shirts; and serving food. Special thanks go out to the ASMC and Dr. Lilia Chavez for their support.



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

On March 5th from Jennifer Stanford, the Senior Director of Student Leadership Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK), informed Barbara A. Dimopoulos and Doris Hankins that they are the recipients of Phi Theta Kappa’s 2024 Distinguished Chapter Advisor Team Award. This Hallmark Award was based on nominations by their chapter, Beta Theta Lambda, and Merritt College. These PTK co-advisors are to be



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honored and formally recognized during PTK Catalyst 2024 at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, April 4-6. Barbara and Doris also received the regional award at the Nevada/California Region Spring Convention on March 23, 2024.



This is the first international, first place award that Beta Theta Lambda has garnered since its PTK charter in April 1999. Although a team effort, two PTK officers spear-headed the hallmark entry write-up with an in-depth interview with both advisors. Cassandra Dorscht, current Chapter President, was the primary writer for this award. Armando Castellanos, current Vice President, assisted in gathering information and creating the interview questions. During the write-up, Cassandra was moving and had severe internet issues; her computer eventually crashed. However, she completed the entry and submitted it on time. Cassandra and Armando were present at the convention and

received the regional award with Barbara.

Additionally, Beta Theta Lambda Chapter received the highest ranking of chapter development for 2024, Five Star, only the second time since 1999, and took second place internationally in the Honors in Action Project; Theme 6: Nostalgia as Play.

Last year and currently, all Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society officers have a 4.0 G.P.A. These members have taken on leadership and service positions to provide the opportunity of PTK membership with all its benefits to other eligible students. Our officers exemplify the four hallmarks of Phi Theta Kappa: Scholarship, Leadership, Service and Fellowship.

The Community College League of California announced the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) All-California Academic Honor roll on March 25, 2024. Two Phi Theta Kappans from Merritt College are among the 122 graduating students who will receive this honor.



L-R: Josiah Williams, Past Vice President and Tatiana Haddawy, Past President (Spring 2023 – Fall 2023)

Tatiana Haddawy, Past President and Josiah Williams, Past Vice President of the Beta Theta Lambda Chapter at Merritt College, received this recognition, representing some of the best of the 2 million students enrolled in California's 116 community colleges. Both have been accepted at 4-year universities. Congratulations, Tatiana and Josiah!



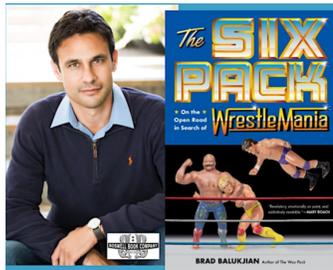
Community Social Services/Substance Abuse (COSER), in collaboration with community partner, HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County (HEPPAC), hosted an Opioid Overdose Prevention and Narcan training at Merritt College on March 21, 2024. Approximately 60 COSER students were in attendance, along with a few of Merritt's Nursing Program students. The training, which

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was open to all students and staff, is part of an ongoing Opioid awareness initiative that COSER started in Spring 2023. It will be implemented every semester. All participants were given Narcan in the event of an overdose emergency. Those interested in scheduling their own overdose prevention and Narcan training, please contact Mike Snow at HEPPAC msnow@heppac.org

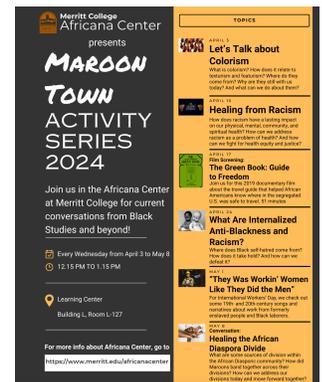


The Street Scholars students are on the move! On Thursday April 4, the Street Scholars attended the Bay Area Systems Impacted Consortium (BASIC) Convening at SFSU in the Cesar Chavez Student Center. They are learning best practices on supporting transitional age youth, how to strengthen alumni support post-graduation and how to best collaborate with existing student services!



Bestselling author and Merritt science professor Brad Balukjian has another book out this month, *The Six Pack: On the Open Road in Search of Wrestlemania*. The book has already been reviewed in the BEST OF Books & Arts in Review section of the Wall Street Journal as “a lively and surprisingly poignant installment of cultural history.” Pick up a copy to put yourself on a 12,525-mile road trip with Brad to learn about the lives of the Iron Sheik and other combatants in the 1983 World Wrestling Federation championship.

The Merritt College Africana Center presents the Maroon Town Activity Series. This is an important educational opportunity with programming that is unique to Merritt College. Films and discussions every Wednesday 12:15pm-1:15pm, beginning April 3, 2024 and continuing through May 8, 2024.



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