



Board of Trustees Report

May 13, 2025

Dr. David M. Johnson, President



Merritt College closed out April and capped off California Community Colleges Black Student Success Week (BSSW) with our first ever Sneaker Ball! The purpose of BSSW is to emphasize how institutions are supporting underserved students, (including but not limited to Black and African American students), to ensure their success in community colleges and beyond. Toward that end, faculty, staff, and administrators across the state (including here at Merritt) attended online panel discussions and webinars to deepen our collective understanding of student needs, challenges, and opportunities. And to cap off the week's efforts, Merritt College was selected as a venue for one of several regional Sneaker Ball events taking place across the state. I am pleased to report that we had more attendees than of the other host sites (close

to 100) and that students from across Peralta (and other Bay Area colleges as well) had an amazing time fellowshiping, affirming each other, and showing off their formal attire with sneakers! Moreover, the event heralded our forthcoming to gain formal recognition from the state as a Black Serving Institution, which is now possible as a result of the Senate Bill 1348. More on that to come!!!



I am pleased to share with you all something cool that Professor Boegel recently shared with me! One of our former Natural History and Sustainability (NHS) students, Kate Berlin, was featured recently in *Oaklandside*, for her leadership of the organization called Friends of Sausal Creek. Ms. Berlin is now the Interim Executive Director of Friends (she is pictured left). She earned a Conservation and Resource Management certificate of achievement as part of her process to change careers from a 'fast-fashion' designer at Old Navy to something that aligned with her environmental values. And she has achieved that! We're so proud of her, and proud that our program helped her realize her career goals.

Here is a link to the article: [‘Walk into another world’: Joaquin Miller Park’s iconic redwood forest is being revived](#)



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.

This past Thursday, Merritt College hosted the Alameda County Behavioral Health Department's (ACBHD) Conference titled *Breaking Barriers for a Smooth Re-Entry*. This important event brought together key stakeholders focused on justice impacted in our Merritt College and ACBHD serving all populations within our significant barriers to education highlighted innovative approaches pathways, and workforce formerly incarcerated individuals. inclusivity and social justice partnerships with county agencies. expand opportunities for the re- rates in Alameda County. Special leadership and partnership in



supporting the formerly incarcerated and community. The collaboration between demonstrates our ongoing commitment to community, particularly those facing and employment. The conference to mental health support, educational development specifically designed for Our participation reinforces Merritt's mission while strengthening our I believe these collaborative efforts will entry population and reduce recidivism thanks to Professor Bianca Parazo for her terms of supporting this important event.



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