



Board of Trustees Report



September 26, 2023

Dr. David M. Johnson, President

I am pleased to introduce Mr. Jorge Murillo as Merritt College's new Director of Hispanic Serving Institutions Program. Working alongside faculty, classified professional staff members, and administrators, Mr. Murillo will take the lead on building and implementing the College's *Aspira Project*, which will be funded by a five-year, \$2.9M grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Title V Program. The primary objectives of *Aspira* are to:



- Increase the retention of Hispanic/Latinx and low-income students.
- Increase the successful degree, certificate, and transfer completion of Hispanic/Latinx and low-income students.
- Increase the number of career-aligned job placements for students Hispanic/Latinx and low-income students in career or technical programs.
- Provide professional development and learning opportunities for faculty and staff that increase their understanding and sensitivity to serving Hispanic/Latinx and low-income students.

Prior to joining Merritt, Mr. Murillo served as the Program Analyst for two consecutive Title III Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)-STEM Grants at Mission College in the South Bay. We look forward to the amazing work and opportunities ahead for our students.



I am excited to share that Merritt College has agreed to be the home venue for the Oakland Soul Sports Club for their 2024 soccer season. The Oakland Soul have played games here at Merritt for the past two years, and the atmosphere has been electric. Fans and community members make their way to our campus and leave the game impressed by our new soccer field, the competitive play, the enthusiastic crowd, and the amazing panoramic view. Moreover, the athletes on the Oakland Soul are positive role models for the young women in our community, and the revenue from this partnership helps support all students at Merritt. As such, we are grateful that we have been able to solidify this partnership!

Finally, I would like to close by congratulating one of Merritt College's most beloved and amazing classified professionals. After nearly nine years of service to the Peralta District and Merritt College, Ms. Lilian Pires is finally retiring. Lilian joined the Peralta Community College District as a Principal Accounting Technician with District Finance in March of 2015. In that role, she also worked closely with large grants such as Strong Workforce and Adult Ed, establishing critical reports that are still used today.

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 August of 2019, she came to Merritt as a Principal Financial Analyst, and led the Business Office through the pandemic and during a time when the VPAS role was vacant. I can attest first-hand to the impact that Lilian has had on this institution, and the support that she has given me as Merritt President. When we were navigating through very difficult waters trying to maintain sound fiscal planning and operations, she was the ballast that kept us moving in the right direction. In the immediate future she is planning to take some line dancing classes, so we wish her much happiness in her retirement. Thank you, Lilian!