



**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

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ATTACHMENT 3

Date: May 22, 2014

To: State Board of Fire Services

From: Rodney Slaughter, Deputy State Fire Marshal, Specialist III

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

Approval of Merritt College Accreditation

Recommended Actions:

Discussion/Action

Seeking approval for accreditation of Merritt College as an Accredited Regional Training Program

Background Information:

During the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) February 28, 2014 meeting, the committee approved Merritt College for accreditation as an Accredited Regional Training Program.

On February 4, 2014, State Fire Training conducted an accreditation site visit. The site team consisted of Sam Hoffman, STEAC Representative, Jim Connors, Community College Representative, Kevin Conant and Rodney Slaughter as the State Fire Training Representatives. Merritt College provides vocational education targeted toward inner city youth in an area not served conveniently by other Community Colleges. The campus does not intrude upon or compete with other accredited college programs. The campus has the support of the administration and the local area fire chiefs. The campus offers both California Fire Service Training and Education System (CFSTES) and Fire Service Training and Education Program (FSTEP) classes. The fire academy staff is very familiar with State Fire Training business processes and procedures.

The site team asked for and have since received additional documentation; which include the minutes for the Fire Advisory Committee, copies of approved course requests, student rosters, and a written agreement for the use of the Alameda County training facilities.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

The site team met with Dr. Elmer Bugg, Vice President and Dr. Stacy Thomason, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. The college administration is very committed to re-establishing the Fire Academy and Fire Technology programs at Merritt College. A tour of the main campus revealed adequate classrooms and instructional resources for teaching staff and students.

The Accreditation Team met with Chief Jeff Peters of the Livermore/Pleasanton Fire Department and Merritt College Fire Advisor. Chief Peters reiterated that the college is serving the need of under-represented populations with a career path; and at the same time, help local area departments meet diversity objectives in their recruitment and hiring. The Fire Advisory Committee makes recommendations and provides input on the type and number of classes offered through the college.

The site team did not note any deficiencies on the tour of the campus or the training center. The program has an adequate amount of tools, equipment, and props to adequately serve the students and the staff. The site team did not visit the Alameda County training facility, because all of the site team members were familiar with the location and resources available.

The site team noted and would like to acknowledge, as a best practice, the extraordinary commitment the academy staff has toward getting qualified inner city youth into the program. In some cases, the academy has worked to get juvenile criminal records expunged. Life skills classes and counseling are also offered to cadets. To ensure that the cadets are functioning members of a fire department and society, government classes round out the education of Merritt College Fire Cadets.

The site team unanimously agreed that Merritt College meets all the State Fire Training criteria to become an Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP).