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**Date:** July 9, 2021

**To:** Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee  
State Board of Fire Services

**From:** Caryn Petty, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Specialist)  
State Fire Training

**Subject/Agenda Action Item:**

Merritt College Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) Initial Conditional

**Recommended Actions:**

Recommend Merritt College provided Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) Initial Accreditation in the State Fire Training (SFT) system for a period of three (3) year.

**Background Information:**

An Initial Accreditation Site Evaluation was conducted on May 22, 2021, with Merritt College at the Oakland Fire Department (OFD) training facility at 250 Victory Court in Oakland, CA. The Evaluation was conducted Deputy State Fire Marshal III Caryn Petty, State Fire Training, with Oakland Fire Department Battalion Chief/Merritt College Program Director Dr. Demond Simmons.

A review of the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was discussed, with requirements for supplemental documentation noted and discussed. Said documentation has since been received and has met the requirements as set forth by State Fire Training policies and procedures. The review of the SAR was followed by an evaluation of the requirements noted in the 2019 and 2020 Conditional Accreditation processes which have been satisfied. The initial Site Team was provided the revised SAR for remote review.

**Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

The Merritt College ARTP Initial Accreditation is proposed as a newly renovated program following the 2018 removal from the SFT system and successful completion of a one-year Conditional Accreditation. The College has revamped the Academy and Fire Technology programs and staff, with an expressed commitment to SFT compliance.

The Merritt College campus indicated sufficient and appropriate classroom spaces equipped with enhanced audio/visual equipment and necessary learning aids. All students will be provided sufficient study materials, devices, and equipment for applicable success within the Academy training. Several Registered Instructors will participate in the Academy delivery with partnered members from Oakland Fire Department complementing the need for Instructors and Evaluators. To supplement the College campus classrooms, the OFD training facility has additional classroom space with a fully functioning training tower. The site possesses all necessary props, tools, equipment, and vehicles to accommodate a fire academy training program supplemented by satellite and partnered training sites. College-specific equipment is provided ample storage with all remaining apparatus, equipment, and tools shared between OFD and Merritt College.

The Merritt College fire academy is to be conducted at various sites in the region with the majority of delivery held at the main campus and off-site at the Oakland Fire Department Training Center. The logistics surrounding student and equipment transport identifies a need for procurement of a college-specific training center to centralize structures, equipment, and apparatus, while providing the region with a single location for enhanced training course availability. A designated College site would allow for the Academy delivery to focus on well-rounded training, student safety, and learning proficiency. The OFD training grounds possess aging structures and props in need of renovation or replacement and lacks appropriate locker rooms, shower facilities, and extractors to accommodate a safe and healthy learning environment. It is recommended that cleansing stations and shower trailers be procured to ensure student safety. It is further recommended that the College begin exploring financial allocation for training grounds renovation and the feasibility of constructing a designated training center to be utilized by the College students and partners nearer, or on, the College campus.

Area(s) of focus for growth and improvement:

- The Oakland Fire Department training site generates extensive use for its region and there exist improvement and renovation need to aged props, apparatus, and structures.
- Although the program has sufficient staff, the current staffing is at its capacity with staff working well beyond the typical work schedule and hours. This condition has tasked existing staff with workloads beyond the Academy delivery that would be offset with additional resources and personnel. It has been identified that there is a need for additional instructional staff and full-time clerical support to lessen the workload of existing staff and enhance the Academy and fire technology course deliveries.
- Consistent Fire Advisory Committee/Board meetings are recommended to improve the Training Division and associated programs. This Committee should include varied members from the region for enhanced networking and partnership opportunities.
- For complete, self-sustained Fire Fighter Academy delivery, procurement of dedicated training apparatus be explored with consideration to covered parking for vehicle longevity and security. This would include, but is not limited to, wildland apparatus.
- To successfully begin compliant delivery of the Fire Fighter 2 (2019) curriculum and Certification Examinations, it is recommended that procurement of a flammable liquids and gas fire prop be explored.
- The OFD site lacks appropriate locker rooms, shower facilities, and extractors to accommodate a safe and healthy learning environment for the College students. It is recommended that cleansing stations and shower trailers be procured to ensure student safety.

Program coordinators recognize the underserved student and small and midsized agency populations in the region and have an expressed desire to bridge the regional fire service training and education gap. This focus on providing education for all students is indicative of the training devotion serving as the foundation of the proposed program. Coordination personnel possess an energetic approach to program development with a strong focus on maintaining diversified student populations while adhering to the standards set forth by State Fire Training.

Merritt College is proactively building cooperative relationships founded on producing strong, well-rounded fire service professionals. The Site Evaluation Team is unanimous in the recommendation of the Merritt College being designated as an Accredited Regional Training Program in the State Fire Training system for an Initial Accreditation period of three (3) years.