



**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**  
**OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**  
**State Fire Training Division**  
P.O. Box 944246  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460  
(916) 568-2911  
Website: [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)



**Date:** July 10, 2020

**Attachment 18**

**To:** John Binaski, Chairman  
Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee  
c/o State Fire Training

**From:** Caryn Petty, Deputy State Fire Marshal  
State Fire Training

**Subject/Agenda Action Item:**

Merritt College Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) Conditional Accreditation

**Recommended Actions:**

Recommend Merritt College be provided an Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) Conditional Accreditation in the State Fire Training (SFT) system for a period of one (1) year.

**Background Information:**

A Conditional Accreditation Site Evaluation was conducted on June 9, 2020, at Merritt College located at 12500 Campus Drive and the Oakland Fire Department training facility at 250 Victory Court in Oakland, California. The Evaluation was conducted by Supervising Deputy State Fire Marshal Chris Fowler, State Fire Training; Deputy State Fire Marshal Caryn Petty, State Fire Training; STEAC representative Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, Moraga Orinda Fire District; ARTP and ALA representative Deputy Chief Aaron Lacey, Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department; ALA representative Assistant Chief David Sprague, Berkeley Fire Department; and ALA representative Battalion Chief Matt Fenzl, Vallejo Fire Department. College hosts included Dean Marie Amboy, Battalion Chief/Program Director Dr. Demond Simmons, OFD Battalion Chief Tracey Chin, OFD Battalion Chief Erik Logan, and OFD Captain Damon Covington.

A review of the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was discussed, with requirements for supplemental documentation noted and discussed by the Site Evaluation

Team. 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 a site evaluation of all campus classrooms and labs with travel to the Oakland Fire Department training facility to review the facility structure and equipment compliment.

**Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

The Merritt College ARTP Accreditation is proposed as a newly renovated program following the 2018 removal from the SFT system. 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, a site evaluation of the OFD training facility indicated 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.

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.

In compliance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 19, and the *SFT Procedures Manual*, Accreditation Process, Section 3.1.6(E), a one-year Conditional Accreditation may be granted in lieu of a full three-year Initial Accreditation. This will provide for continued growth and development of the Merritt College ARTP and fostering of necessary regional relationships. Merritt College will be revisited in Spring 2021 for ARTP review and consideration for an Initial Accreditation period of three (3) years.

Program coordinators recognize the underserved student and small and mid-sized 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. The College is proactively building cooperative relationships founded on producing strong, well-rounded fire service professionals. It is recommended that Merritt College be granted a one-year ARTP Conditional Accreditation in the State Fire Training system pending reevaluation in 2021.

[Attachment: Merritt College ARTP Conditional Accreditation 2020]



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Per the Merritt College Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) Site Evaluation conducted June 9, 2020, the following document details the requirements of the one-year Conditional Accreditation as set forth by State Fire Training (SFT). A thorough review of the Merritt College Fire Science Technology Program and proposed Fire Fighter 1 Academy served as the basis for the program review.

Conditional Accreditation requires the following items be complete by May 1, 2021, to ensure compliance with State Fire Training regulatory statute and established procedures (California Code of Regulations, Title 19, and the *SFT Procedures Manual*, Accreditation Process, Section 3.1.6(E)).

- ❑ An updated Self-Assessment Report (SAR) shall be drafted and submitted to SFT no later than May 1, 2021, detailing program progress with the items noted during the June 9, 2020, Site Evaluation. This may build upon the previously submitted

SAR but should clearly identify any/all changes, progress, issues, challenges, or other items necessary for complete review of the proposed ARTP.

- ❑ SFT requires a complete list of procured academy program design items including, but not limited to, equipment, apparatus, tools, instructional materials, etc. This shall comply with the Fire Fighter 1 Academy equipment and supplies list(s) in adherence with the *SFT Procedures Manual*, IFSAC/Pro Board, and the CCR, Title 19.
- ❑ Merritt College shall provide SFT with a complete training budget and business plan including current and projected expenditures, allotted program funding, grant funding, etc. The provided documentation shall detail the projected budget for 2021-2024 accreditation cycle as well as the program development funding to date.
- ❑ Merritt College shall provide SFT the complete and finalized ARTP Fire Fighter 1 Academy curriculum. This shall include complete course outlines, student and instructor manuals, and all supplemental student materials.
  - This shall include any/all amendments to the provided 2020 SAR including prerequisite course(s) and application/selection processes.
- ❑ Merritt College shall host or co-host no less than two (2) SFT courses by May 2021. This shall include, at minimum, one (1) California Fire Service Training and Education System (CFSTES) and one (1) Fire Service Training and Education Program (FSTEP). These courses may draw from the larger SFT course catalog and need not be restricted to the entry-level Fire Fighter 1 curriculum. It is proposed that Merritt College coordinate with neighboring ARTPs and agencies to identify curriculum that is needed by the region (Company Officer, Driver/Operator, Instructor 1/2, etc.).
- ❑ Merritt College shall demonstrate active recruitment of diversified Registered Instructors and Lead/Skills Evaluators that is reflective of the region and the College's neighboring fire agencies.
- ❑ Merritt College shall increase its current Confined Space Rescue Awareness (CSRA) Registered Instructor pool from one (1) instructor to three (3).
- ❑ Merritt College shall provide a complete report detailing the staffing and administrative support necessary program success. Any deficiencies shall be identified with a notated plan for correction.
  - Detail appropriate and adequate clerical and administrative personnel necessary to support complete delivery of the Fire Science Technology Program and Fire Fighter 1 Academy. Because the current clerical staff member is assigned to the law enforcement, fire science, and emergency medical services program, the College shall detail the means in which appropriate clerical and administrative support will be attained for the ARTP. Provide details regarding succession planning, hiring of additional support staff, etc.
  - Detail appropriate and adequate full-time Fire Science Technology and Academy coordination personnel. Individual roles and responsibilities shall be identified with information supportive of the complete oversight of the programs. Full-time instructors, interim or adjunct assignments, and/or part-time personnel are not an appropriate means of ARTP oversight.
  - Detail current Fire Science Technology Program instructional staff, full- and part-time. The ARTP will be operating separately from the Fire Science program and appropriate and adequate staffing shall be designated for each. While some crossover is permitted, and encouraged, it is not the intent of the ARTP to serve in multiple College instructional roles.

- Merritt College shall provide a complete list of Fire Fighter 1 Academy instructors and their SFT Registered Instructor qualifications. The list shall identify adequate staffing for Academy curriculum delivery with contingency plans for substitute instructors and/or schedule flexibility should there be an absence, vacancy, etc.
- Merritt College shall provide a complete list of Registered Lead and Skills Evaluators. This list shall designate adequate staffing for capstone IFSAC/Pro Board Fire Fighter 1 test with a contingency plan should there be an absence, vacancy, etc.
- Merritt College shall convene a Fire Advisory Committee meeting bi-annually and provide documented meeting minutes to SFT upon Site Re-Evaluation. This Committee shall be comprised of College administration/management and other appropriate staff, Program staff and instructors, regional entities, and others as appropriate, to identify the training and educational needs within the Fire Science Program, Fire Fighter 1 Academy, and any/all collaborative training ventures.
- Merritt College shall demonstrate active participation in the greater SFT system by maintaining active correspondence with SFT personnel and its designated liaison(s), attend regional training officer and CFTDA quarterly meetings, and work to diligently adhere to the aforementioned requirements.

The Merritt College Fire Science Technology Program and its proposed Accredited Regional Training Program will be recommended for a one-year Conditional Accreditation to the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) in July 2020 and the Statewide Board of Fire Service in August 2020. Upon review and approval by these governing bodies, continued recognition of Merritt College in the SFT system is contingent upon compliance with the requirements. Any failure to comply may result in revocation of the Conditional Accreditation.

Please feel free to contact me direct should you have any questions/concerns.

Thank you,



CARYN R PETTY  
Deputy State Fire Marshal/PM  
State Fire Training, ALA/ARTP Coordinator  
CAL FIRE/Office of the State Fire Marshal