

Minority Male Initiative Retreat

From: Yamagata-Noji, Audrey <ayamagata-noji@mtsac.edu>

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To: Sectino Keagan, Giovanni Rodriguez, Clarence Banks, Francisco Dorame, Eric Lara Cuenza-Uvas, Aida, Lance Heard, Ivan Tircuit, Felix Jollevet, Victor Rojas, Rigo Estrada Leslie, Jr., Timothy, James Reed, Sapule Ta'Amilo, Kaitlyn Yrineo, Tarik Ross, Gilbert Alvarado, Betzabel Martinez, Jamie Carranza, Traci Ebue



Dear MMI Family,

I know you are exhausted, but I hope exhilarated and enlightened. Our MMI Retreat was a phenomenal success due to your efforts!! You gave your all, willingly and lovingly, you did every little thing from organizing and cleaning, to checking and counseling, to speaking and leading, and most of all, listening and supporting. Our Mt. SAC men of color had the opportunity of a lifetime, an experience that has touched deep into their hearts, souls and minds. And all because you cared. THANK YOU!!!

To **Tino and Gio** – your leadership knows no bounds. You made all the difference in making this retreat a true success. Your organization, your attention to details, recruiting students, confirming students, confirming presenters, taking care of everything from snacks to shirts, bus transportation to dorm rooms, journals to supplies. But most of all you gave of your hearts. You shared your own experiences, stories. You encouraged, supported, listened, and motivated all of us, especially our students. THANK YOU!!!

To **Rigo, Victor, Tim, James, Tarik, Clarence** – we depended on your leadership, your strength, your wisdom, your contributions and you were always there. You touched our male students with your care, your counsel, and your role modeling. Thank you for all that you did not only for the retreat, but for what you do everyday for all of our students! Your participation in the MMI Retreat was critical to our success!

To **Lance, Ivan, Felix** – as our faculty leadership core, we are so very grateful to you for your many contributions. You stood by these young men. You led, you imparted your wisdom and knowledge in caring, sensitive ways. You demonstrated strength. You showed our male students ways to deal with life, ways to make the most of situations, how to grow, and stretch themselves. It meant so very much to us all to have faculty support. From teaching/coaching about journaling, to sharing your stories and experiences, to interacting 1:1 and in small groups with our students – your involvement and impact was so important.

To **Kaitlyn, Betzabel, Jamie** – as more recently hired support staff, you jumped right in to contribute and we are most grateful. You stepped up to help lead exercises and to share your ideas, experiences, and .

To **Gilbert and Traci** – as adjunct counselors, your participation was also critical. It was important to have counselors a part of what we do and for our students to know they can seek you out.

To **Aida** – thank you for coming by to be present and to be supportive.

To **Francisco/Eric** – thank you for all of your behind the scenes support and work.

To the supervisors/managers who enabled your staff/faculty's participation – THANK YOU also for your support! We will be scheduling a follow-up meeting to debrief and to plan the academic year's activities. We are always open to your feedback and recommendations about the retreat and about other activities and interventions.

A Few Insights ...

We had a diverse group of young men ... from students who had just started Mt. SAC this summer to those who were starting their 4th year ... from age 18 to 49 ...

We had immigrant students still mastering English ...

We had formerly incarcerated, former foster youth, and DREAM students ...

We had students who have never met their fathers ...

We had students who rely solely on public transportation to get around ...

We had students who are artists and musicians and athletes ...

We had students who had been in tragic accidents but are still alive ...

We had students who are coming out of dependency and are still struggling with sobriety ...

We had students who were raised on the streets, jumped into gangs, and lived in the "halls" ...

We had students with "dis"-abilities who were cared for and supported by each other ...

We had students who were afraid and reluctant to come, shy and bashful, that found themselves, openly began participating and expressing themselves ...

We had students whose eyes were opened to things they have been doing as males that are not positive and respectful ...

We had students who now know they belong at Mt. SAC, that they are accepted as they are, and they have new family they can rely on