



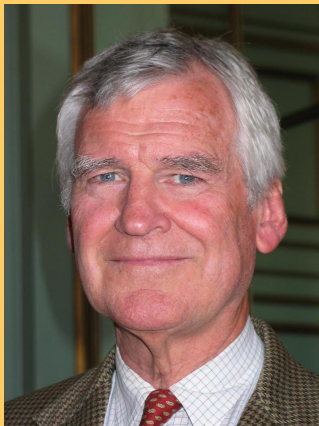
## Connections

Newsletter

### MERITUS GOES GREEN!

Thank you for taking a moment to peruse our first e-Newsletter. By sending this newsletter electronically we are saving paper and the cost of mailing. We want to keep you up-to-date on the wonderful goings-on at Meritus College Fund. We hope you enjoy its contents as much as we enjoy presenting it!

### MERITUS FOUNDER INITIATES PILOT PROGRAM



Dr. Henry Safrit, who in 1996 founded Meritus College Fund, stepped down from the Meritus Board of Directors in November 2008 to refocus his energy on a pilot program to work with young, college-bound African American male high school students in SFUSD. Dr. Safrit stated the following: "Given the statistics that African American males drop out of high school at a much higher rate than any other ethnic group, it is imperative that

Meritus collaborate with the schools and district to develop a program that keeps these young men in school, and one that will help them succeed academically beyond high school. I am resigning from the Board after fourteen of the best years in my life, so that I can continue to develop this new program. Additionally, we have enthusiastic support from the district administration, principals, counselors, teachers, parents and African-American community." The board and staff at Meritus are grateful for his continuing commitment to the organization

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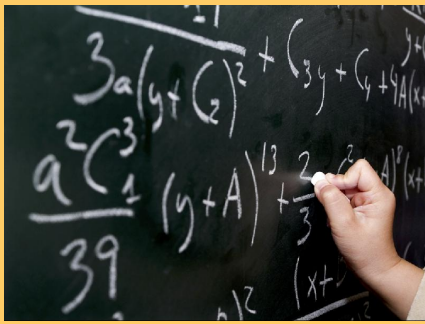
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and appreciate Dr. Safrit's enthusiasm in initiating this new pilot program. Good luck, Henry!

## TUITION COSTS SOAR: CALL TO ACTION!

A faltering economy, rising tuition costs and recent proposals



to cut about \$88-million in the 2009-2010 state budget that is allocated to student aid does not bode well for this year's college-bound, high school seniors. In fact, a report from the U.S. Department of Education shows an increase of 20% more students seeking financial aid in the first

half of 2008 than in the year prior. 2009 will surely prove to be an even greater challenge. Now more than ever your support of our students is critical. Each year we receive upwards of 160 applicants for the scholarships and counseling we provide. Please consider committing to a scholarship for a deserving low-income graduate of San Francisco public high schools. To become a donor, please contact [diana@meritusfund.org](mailto:diana@meritusfund.org) at Meritus College Fund.

## SCHOLAR INSIGHTS

The transitions our scholars make are often only apparent to them when they come home from college for the first time and revisit their old neighborhoods and friends. Academic challenges aside, these moments of insight can cause internal conflicts and also the awareness that the road they chose has lead them down a far different path than what they had previously known. One of our recent scholars captured his observations in a recent donor letter.

" I had forgotten much of what I had come from and how Army Street is. The first thing I noticed was the lack of older gang members, there were very few late teens, there were even less my age. When I got back to the apartment complex I used to live in I went to look for my old trouble friends. I only found one by himself probably intoxicated or on his way to be. When I asked where the others were I got the response dead or in jail for all except a few that were just "gone". I realized the reality of the situation. I had always been told this was how it was but never believed it until now. I realized this could have been me."

Through mentoring and counseling, our scholars can better make sense of these realizations. With better than 90% of Meritus awards recipients completing our four-year program we believe these connections can make a true difference.

## GET INVOLVED!



## Become a Mentor

Meritus scholars are young adults who greatly benefit from the insights they glean from college graduates who have applied their skills and training successfully. As most scholars are the first in their families to go to college, they truly benefit from the guidance and support a mentor can provide.

If you are someone who can take the time to get to know a young person and mentor them as they go through college, please get involved in our mentoring program. Meritus is looking for two kinds of mentors: Adults who can develop a one-on-one relationship with an incoming freshman and help them with the transitions they face during their first two years of college, and professionals who can give their time to meet with our students for informational interviews and share insights into careers and fields.

For more information about the Meritus Mentoring Program, please see our website: [www.meritusfund.org](http://www.meritusfund.org).

## PARTING NOTES

- Meritus monitors the academic standing and courses taken by each of our scholars and reviews each letter that scholars are required to write to their donors. Letters to donors are due every January 15 and June 30. If, for some reason, you have not heard from your scholar, please be sure to let Meritus staff know by calling us at 415-346-8677 or emailing [Shane@meritusfund.org](mailto:Shane@meritusfund.org).
- If you have a summer internship or job opportunity for a current Meritus scholar or a recent graduate, please contact us at [Danielle@meritusfund.org](mailto:Danielle@meritusfund.org). One of our scholars, in fact, is looking for work in the industrial design industry and can use a lead or two. Thanks for your help!
- If you would like to host an event for a group of friends to introduce them to Meritus, please let us provide you with support by contacting [Diana@meritusfund.org](mailto:Diana@meritusfund.org).

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