



November 16, 2017

Dear Holy Names and Samuel Merritt Communities:

We want to share news with you about a potential collaboration that aims to position our two universities as educational leaders for generations to come. Samuel Merritt University and Holy Names University, two iconic institutions with a combined history of nearly 260 years in Oakland, are engaged in preliminary discussions to form a creative alliance that would improve student opportunities while maintaining each university's distinct identity.

This is not a merger, but an innovative collaboration, the cornerstone of which would be a shared campus on the existing Holy Names site in the Oakland hills. The two universities would jointly expand and modernize the Holy Names campus over a period of several years, and Samuel Merritt would relocate its main campus when the project is completed. The combined site would include new state-of-the-art facilities serving students, faculty and staff of both institutions.

Our shared vision: Two universities. One campus. In Oakland.

While each university would remain separate, with distinct governing boards, faculties, and administrations, Holy Names and Samuel Merritt would look for ways to take advantage of the common campus through complementary programs and resources, opportunities for community service, and shared facilities, such as the library and dining areas. In short, by creating a more vibrant campus community, both universities would seek to expand the intellectual and social opportunities for students, faculty and staff.

We're exploring this collaboration as a way of staying ahead of current trends and an accelerating rate of change in higher education. Both universities are at critical points in their histories. Samuel Merritt University is filled to capacity at its current home and has long sought a new campus in Oakland to carry out its mission of education and community service. For Holy Names, the proposed alliance represents an opportunity to advance its strategic vision, enhance its core strengths and create a campus for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Although one university is secular and the other faith-based, our compatible missions, values, and visions drive the collaboration. Holy Names, founded in 1868 by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, is an inclusive and rigorous academic institution offering a liberal arts and professional education that empowers students for leadership, service, and promoting the common good in an ever-changing world. Since 1909, Samuel Merritt has prepared highly skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals, working to positively transform the experience of healthcare in diverse communities. Both universities embrace the core value of social justice. Additionally, Holy Names and Samuel Merritt share an entrepreneurial spirit and a history of evolutionary change, innovation, and adaptation.

Discussions are in a preliminary phase. Holy Names and Samuel Merritt have signed a non-binding letter of intent. Assuming the project proves feasible, we expect to reach a more formal agreement in 2018. The universities will provide information and opportunities for engagement throughout the planning process.

We welcome comments and questions, which you may send to [officeofthepresident@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:officeofthepresident@samuelmerritt.edu) or [officeofthepresident@hnu.edu](mailto:officeofthepresident@hnu.edu)

Sincerely,

*Jonathan Brown*

Jonathan Brown, Chair  
Board of Regents  
Samuel Merritt University

*Barbara Hood*

Barbara Hood, Chair  
Board of Trustees  
Holy Names University

*Sharon C. Diaz*

Sharon C. Diaz  
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