2019 DR. JOHN W. RICE AWARD NOMINATION

BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE

April 16, 2019

Prepared by:
Lesley Bonds, Director of Student Success & Equity
Since beginning its Guided Pathways (GP) implementation in 2014, Bakersfield College (BC) has seen universal growth and improvement across virtually every metric at the college. To get more students to complete and/or transfer – on time and without excess units – BC has intentionally designed an innovative, formal structure through which cross-functional teams of faculty and staff are responsible for advancing four key research-based momentum points. The goals have become our college’s mantra and the aligned activities our practice. They include:

- Attempting 15+ units in the first term
- Completion of transfer-level math and English in the first year
- Attempting 30+ units in the first year
- Completion of 9 core pathway units in the first year

Bakersfield College’s GP implementation has required a whole college effort to redesign existing structures in order to advance equitable access and completion. This formal structure includes 10 Completion Coaching Communities, organized by meta-major, with an additional eight Affinity-Based Completion Coaching Communities. Each of the Completion Coaching Communities has a designated Data Coach. This organization of BC faculty, staff, and administrators ensures each student is actively helped to pursue the most direct path to his or her educational goal and illuminates barriers to facilitate a swift and at scale response to remove those barriers.

How have you integrated the student voice as a campus/district/program/employee to your implementation of Guided Pathways?

In our GP implementation, student voice has been essential to gaining campus support and identifying priorities for action. In the early stages of our exploration, BC hosted book discussions with students through which groups of students read each chapter of Redesigning America’s Community Colleges and shared their thoughts with faculty and staff as a panel.

Bakersfield College also organized focus group interviews to solicit feedback and gain insight about the challenges students face as they navigate the terrain at our institution. The GP Implementation Team organized a series of video interviews with students about their experiences to show at our all-campus Opening Day and in various professional development settings, such as our biannual institutes. The videos are online: Introduction, Clarify, Enter, Stay, and Learn.

What measurable advances or progress have been achieved in the last twelve months as a direct result of the nominated activity, program, or person with the implementation of Guided Pathways?

Bakersfield College’s Completion Coaching Community structure has led to whole-college gains in our guided pathways momentum points in the past 12 months. The college has seen the most substantial gains over the 24-month period the Completion Coaching Communities have been active in cohort management with the support of their Data Coaches using a high-tech, high-touch strategy.

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Notably, BC has made significant progress in our *equity agenda* using the GP framework:

- Closed transfer-level English completion gap for African American Students: from 14% to 44%. African American now students exceed overall rate of 39% for this metric.
- Closed Latinx Gap in Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) attainment: from 61.6% to 67.4% of all ADT earners in two years
- Improved completion rates for Latinx students from 26.8% to 38.6%
- Improved completion rates for African American students from 32% to 39.8%

### What partnerships have you fostered or created internally and externally in order to implement Guided Pathways?

In addition to integrating our internal structures, BC has strengthened the alignment from 9th grade to the baccalaureate. Since 2014-15, BC has grown from fewer than 500 dual enrollments to over 10,000 annually across 56 high schools and has developed [Early College pathways](#) through which high school students earn certificates and degrees while in school. Ninety percent of enrollees are students of color and they see an approximate 90% course success rate.

Bakersfield College has also led the charge to advance transfer alignment and baccalaureate attainment through the [Kern Promise Finish in 4 Project](#). Faculty leaders from BC and CSU Bakersfield developed a joint Memorandum of Understanding to map and publish four-year pathways with [guaranteed admission](#) in the [Program Pathways Mapper tool](#).

### If you could give one piece of advice to a college or district who is new to implementing Guided Pathways, what would it be?

(Feel free to share either positive or negative learning experiences)

Bakersfield College’s success in our GP implementation has not been without its setbacks. However, three key elements have been critical in establishing and maintaining momentum, creating an institutional resiliency in times of difficulty, and forward, action-oriented movement:

- **Embrace iteration**: Having an agile-mindset and a willingness to navigate ambiguity is essential in institutional redesign. BC has had tried on several versions of its meta-majors and Completion Coaching Communities.
- **Reject perfection paralysis**: Do not stifle momentum by following a one-size-fits-all guide to implementation. Identify areas of excitement and energy, and build on those. BC’s design of Completion Community Structure came from input from those closest to the students.
- **Commit to transparency and trust building**: Leadership should communicate often and broadly. Publish drafts and progress of your work and decision-making on an accessible website. BC’s biannual institutes helped the college be transparent and built trust.
April 17, 2019

Rosa Estrada
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
1102 Q Street Suite 4400
Sacramento, CA 95811

Dear Ms. Estrada:

It is my pleasure to endorse Bakersfield College's nomination for the 2019 Dr. John W. Rice Award. As the Bakersfield College Student Government Association (BCSGA) President, I have seen first-hand the impact of the college’s Guided Pathways implementation to advance student outcomes. As a student leader, I see the value the Completion Coaching Communities have brought to the college in creating streamlined pathways for my peers from high school to baccalaureate completion.

I found my way to Bakersfield College through my high school counselors and Bakersfield College coming to my high school. Through my discussions with my high school and college counselors, I discovered that a Political Science major was the most fitting for me. By exposing me to the college early in my career, I was able to make a smooth transition from high school to college. While attending Bakersfield College, my advisor Dr. Nicky Damania encouraged me to get involved with the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC), where I got to work alongside the Chancellor’s Office and among many student leaders across California Community Colleges as a student advocate. This helped me to better understand what is happening statewide, so that I am able to support my college and student government with current updated information.

As a representative of the student body, I am a listening ear to students struggling to navigate higher education. However, I am also the liaison to the BC administration. For instance, I have worked to advocate for transfer alignment with California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB). Thanks to the work, the faculty at both institutions did to create the Finish in 4 Project. Additionally, I worked and advocated with BC administration to secure a physical co-location of BC on the CSUB campus. This is both a programmatic and physical guided pathway to bachelor's degrees for my peers.

While I was not at BC when the college began its guided pathways implementation, I know BCSGA and the other student organizations have been heavily involved in the development of reforms related to outreach, onboarding, placement, academic supports, and transfer mapping. Not only do BCSGA student officers serve on campus and district-wide committees and have the opportunity to provide input on the college's work, faculty and staff often join our student meetings. For example, the staff have recently visited BCSGA Student Senate to solicit feedback on AB 705 and Early College.
My peers and I spoke at a Kern Community College District Board of Trustees meeting about our experiences with the four pillars of guided pathways and were honored to be invited later on to present our experiences to 20 community college leaders at one of the California Guided Pathways institutes. This is a testament to the power of the student voice in guided pathways at BC and statewide.

Acknowledging Bakersfield College’s efforts to advance equitable student outcomes with the Dr. John W. Rice Award would not only honor the work of the faculty and staff, but also honor the contributions of BC students in creating the rigorous and supportive learning environment our mission.

Sincerely,

Ashley Harp
President, Bakersfield College Student Government Association
RE: 2019 Dr. John W. Rice Award

Dear Selection Committee:

I am honored and proud to submit a letter of support for Bakersfield College to receive the 2019 Dr. John W. Rice Award.

Bakersfield College has been a strong partner for CSU Bakersfield in the efforts to improve transfer student success within the Kern County area. As partner institutions, we have an ambitious goal of exponentially increasing the number of students earning an Associate’s Degree for Transfer (ADT) at Bakersfield College and enrolling at CSU Bakersfield to earn their Baccalaureate degree.

Kern County was recently classified as an “educational desert” due to the low educational attainment rates in the region. Partnering with Bakersfield College has allowed us to work towards increasing the attainment of Associate’s as well as Baccalaureate degrees to further improve the quality of life in the county.

As a part of the partnership, faculty from both institutions, from over 25 departments, came together to develop a seamless pathway allowing students to earn their ADT in two years and their Baccalaureate degree in 2 years for a total of 4 years. The program, Finish in 4, is becoming a state-wide model and has been awarded numerous grants from the College Futures Foundation to further the work already done.

I can unequivocally say that Bakersfield College’s leadership, engagement, mission, and vision, have a lasting impact on student success and equity in Kern County.

If you have any questions, or need further information, please feel free to contact me via email at vlakhani@csub.edu or via phone at (661) 654-3271.

Sincerely,

Vikash Lakhani
Assistant Vice President, Student Success
April 17, 2019

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