President’s Remarks
Closing Day 2019
May 10, 2019

Opening Remarks

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate another phenomenal year at BC. This year, we celebrate student success with the Strong Workforce Gold Star Recognition and an incredible year of Renegade athletics, as well as our creative and talented students in our arts and music programs performing across the state, such as our championship-winning Drumline.

If I spent all morning recapping in details all that YOU have accomplished, we would be here all day... and today is one where we have SO MUCH to celebrate.

I would like to personally invite each of you to celebrate at our 105 th Commencement Ceremony at Rabobank Arena. It will be a night to remember, with our largest group of eligible candidates in BC history, as well as our 13 baccalaureate graduates, our graduating class from the Wonderful Academy, and the first group of students who have completed the Kern Promise.

Before I get started with the President’s Awards, I wanted to recognize the team that is putting together this year’s Closing Day. Up in the bird’s nest, we have Aricia Leighton, Chris Blackmore, Kevin Ganger and Norma Rojas-Mora; Catherine Rangel is leading our team of ushers this morning; our interpreters are Natasha Bailey and Emily Lopez; to my left, Tamara Baker is running the script; our photographers are Earl Parsons, Dylan Wang and Eric Carrillo; thank you to Maintenance and Operations and Food Services for cleaning up the Indoor Theater and providing us with food, respectively; finally, the co-managers of this event are Chris Glaser and Tarina Perry, with Monika Scott and Jennifer Serratt participating in the Planning Team.

President’s Awards

As is the tradition at BC, even prior to my time, at Closing Day, the college president recognizes individuals and groups who have played a leadership role in the preceding year. As I prepared my remarks today to introduce to you the recipients of this year’s President’s Leadership Awards, I found myself reflecting on what makes Bakersfield College one of the best in this country.

How is it that in just six short years, we have grown nearly 50 percent and expanded our reach in to the high schools, prisons, and our rural communities? How did we convince this community to vote Yes on Measure J, which brought us a $500 million investment in our facilities and infrastructure? How is it that we increased student success, doubling our completion rates?

It is because of our people – our faculty, our staff, our administrators, and most importantly, students.

At Bakersfield College, we are effective because we embrace leadership and the attributes that come with the terrain of leadership – commitment to purpose, hard work and a genuine interest to work with the community. We believe that leadership transcends position or title, that it is less about our spheres of influence and more the embodiment of our mission.
When I sit down every spring to finalize this recognition, I start with a long list, signifying that leadership, courage and a call to action are part of the fabric and culture of Bakersfield College.

It takes a great deal of effort on my part to narrow down the list that will be recognized today. But before I get to recognitions for the 2018-19 academic year, let me review the list from the previous 6 years.

2013
- Facilities
- FCDC
- Accreditation Steering Committee
- Registration Rocks Team
- C6 Grant
- Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg

2014
- FCDC
- Centennial Celebration Steering Committee
- Conference Planning Team
- Billie Jo Rice and John Carpenter
- David Koeth
- Shannon, Manny and Kristin
- Cindy Collier
- Nick Strobel

2015
- Bachelor of Science Team: Liz Rozell, Cindy Collier, Michele Bresso, Jason Dixon, Sean Caras, Klint Rigby, Mindy Wilmot, Sue Vaughn, Kate Pluta, Anthony Culpepper
- Janet Fulks and the MIH Team: Kimberly Bligh, Evette Lara, Sue Vaughn, Jo Ann Acosta, Erin Miller
- Steve Watkin and Outreach: Alice Desilagua, Evette Lara, Juan Estrada, Josie Guillen
- BC Equity TV Team: Amber Chiang, Francis Mayer, Odella Johnson, Corny Rodriguez, Lisa Kent, Paul Beckworth, Tina Mendoza, Primavera Arvizu
- Dena Rhoades and Human Resources
- Rich McCrow and the Rural Initiatives Team
- Kate Pluta
- Bryan Hirayama

2016
- Athletics, Health and Physical Education Department
- Agriculture Department
- Oliver Rosales and CHAP
- Nicky Damania and Lesley Bonds
- Budget Committee
- Academic Senate
- Ramon Puga
- Executive Office
In some ways, conversations that have been with us the longest are the hardest to make progress on. Student Learning Outcomes have been around now for decades. It is an old conversation, but at Bakersfield College, the Assessment Committee has brought new meaning and life to assessment.

They have done the hardest thing and created a culture of being grounding in using SLOs and assessment to understand and profile learning while breaking the barrier between the theory and practice of current assessment work. It is deeper, it is richer, and it is more meaningful.

One notable change brought about by the Assessment Committee is the wise use of technology to release faculty members from what had once been tedious record-keeping to the higher-level work of analyzing the learning that has occurred and identifying the appropriate improvements to advance learning.
To the 36-member Assessment Committee thank you for your leadership and service to Bakersfield College.

Billie Jo Rice, Brent Wilson, Edie Nelson, Linda Allday, Stephen Waller, Maria Wright, Amber Hroch, Lori Pesante, Greg Cluff, Kellie Smith, Darrin Ekern, Dana Heins-Gelder, Milena Lilles, Rudy Menjivar, Helen Acosta, Teresa McAllister, Denise Mitchell, Michael Westwood, Justin Flint, Lily Pimental, Jana Richardson, Pam Davis, Tina Cummings, Robert Steward, Faith Bradham, Isaac Vannasone, Debbie Kennedy, Brian Sivesind, Peter LeGrant, Ximena Da Silva Tavares, Olivia Garcia, Jordan Rude, Malissa Buggs, Pearl Urena, Samantha Pulido, and Ashley Harp.

**Business Completion Coaching Community**

As a Guided Pathways college, our Completion Coaching structure is how we intentionally come together to advance student success and completion. Each year, from now on, I will recognize one team from our ten meta-major pathways who have demonstrated exceptional service to our students in three broad categories:

*Cohesion and visibility as a cross-functional team:*

The Business Completion Coaching Community has truly embraced its role this year, meeting bi-weekly and sometimes even more frequently to discuss student progress on momentum points, to organize meaningful engagement opportunities for students in their pathway, and to identify and tackle barriers to student success.

*Innovation which leads to institutional excellence:*

With energetic leadership at all levels, team members developed their own mission statement, organized their first Pathway Summit event, a professional etiquette workshop and a career expo with industry partners. These innovations created opportunities for BC to support students in class and outside the classroom.

*Success in advancing our institutional momentum points:*

This team has significantly advanced student momentum points between Fall 2014 and Fall 2018, increasing the number of students who attempt 15 units from 11.3% to 17% and the number of students who attempt 30 units from 8.2% to 15.4%, as well as increasing the number of student who take transfer-level English in their first term from 11.3% to 21.9% and the number of students who take transfer-level math in the first term from 4.1% to 10.8%.

Please join in congratulating the 11-member Business Completion Coaching Team.

Dylan Wang and Eric Carillo

The Marketing and Public Relations team is a powerhouse that is hidden in plain sight. Students, staff, faculty, administration, and community members are all touched by their creations, yet the creative work happens mostly behind the scenes and out of sight.

It's particularly gratifying to recognize and make visible the work of two award recipients who make this magic happen – the talent behind the design.

For over 16 years, Eric Carillo has been a steadfast talent at BC, working through multiple teams and transitions around him. The BC community has for many years benefited from Eric’s creative and dedicated talent. In fact, take time to visit the choir room and you'll see a montage of all Eric’s programs he has designed for the Chamber Singers over the years.

Dylan Wang has been a pillar of support for many of us at BC and has the uncanny gift of converting 20 minutes of freeform “talk” into graphics that brilliantly capture the essence what was being discussed. With kindness, talent, a contagious laugh, Dylan makes what we say and do even better than we might have hoped.

Friends, the creative engines of the MPR machine – Dylan Wang and Eric Carillo.

Accessibility Team

At Bakersfield College, we hold our core values near to our hearts. They are central to our planning processes, evident in every part of our work, and always present in our daily service to our students. Our value of diversity reads, in part, “we insist that diversity be valued and promoted, recognizing that multiple perspectives lead to a better education and knowledge of the world.”

The recipients of this award go even further, demonstrating a level of commitment to the diversity we sometimes to not all see, and that without their help and leadership might not otherwise fully embrace.

Please join me in thanking these award recipients for enriching our campus, making it more accessible to all students.

Terri Goldstein, Aricia Leighton, Todd Coston and Nicky Damania.

McFarland Early College Team

We have all been immersed in the phrase “dual enrollment” for a long time. Research shows that this is a successful strategy to improve not only college-going rates, but also completing a college certificate or degree.
In 2014, the Wonderful Academy in Delano set out to demonstrate to the world that a cohort of about 30 students, most of them first-generation, could be capable of completing an Associate’s Degree at the end of four years of study, at the same time that they completed their high school diploma requirements. Last year in 2018, we saw them graduate.

In 2015, another cohort in Wonderful started, and a first cohort in Wasco followed the same journey. At this evening’s Commencement, we will be graduating 94 students with an Associate’s Degree the same year they receive their high school diploma.

Now imagine if an entire class entering high school this year, not just a select cohort, would be on a pathway toward certificate or degree completion. This is the work that a BC team under the leadership of Abel Guzman, Kylie Swanson, Raquel Lopez, and Jesse Oropeza have been collaborating on with McFarland High School.

In fall of 2019, all 280 incoming ninth-graders at McFarland High will also be BC students making progress on a certificate, CTE or transfer pathway. The vision is grand and transformative, but the work has been intense, demanding deep coordination and collaboration with our McFarland partners. Over the past year, this team has joined together with unity of effort for the benefit of our students.

Thank you Abel Guzman, Kylie Swanson, Raquel Lopez, and Jesse Oropeza for your leadership of the McFarland Early College project.

**Admissions and Records Staff**

In 2014, we had Bakersfield College at the Panorama Campus, BC at the Timmons Campus in Delano, and BC at the Weill Institute. We also offered some online classes and a few courses at Centennial High School.

In a few years, BC has grown its enrollment by nearly 50 percent. We now have 75 percent more sections at the Delano campus, 135 percent growth in Arvin, and growth surges in McFarland, Wasco, and Shafter. We also have phenomenal growth in our inmate education program, as well as exponential growth at BC SouthWest and dual and concurrent enrollment.

All this work creates new demands in application, registration, posting grades, transcription – demands that converge on our Admissions and Records Department.

Whether it’s growing our student population, expanding the sites we serve, implementing technology projects and integration with Banner, or in the case of our prison programs, making it happen without technology, the demands on Admission and Records have never been greater. Yet, with creativity and dedication for students, they flourish.
Let us all thank the 16-member staff of A&R, our unsung heroes:


Paul Beckworth and Armando Trujillo

We have so many different initiatives and ideas throughout the campus, but bright ideas and a vision are just dreams unless someone is willing to doggedly work toward that vision.

That, my friends, is service and true leadership. Our Veteran Services Department started as a club, then it became a “lounge”, then it was an “occupy an extended lounge”, and eventually, we saw a program emerge that refused to be stopped, and just kept growing.

In about six months, this program is moving into the first building being constructed form the Measure J funds. History faculty member Paul Beckworth, a veteran himself, gets to see his vision become a reality once the Vernon Valenzuela Veterans Resource Center is completed.

Our veteran students are one of our most vulnerable student populations. These are heroes who have served our nation and risked their lives for our country. When these heroes return home from their tour of duty, it is always a time of tremendous transition for these students. Paul Beckworth and Armando Trujillo stand unwavering in their dedication to serve them.

Together, this power duo delicately navigate the shift from soldier to student, always mindful of the complexities they are experiencing and respectfully channeling their very own experiences as veterans. The result is a growing veteran student population, over $200,000 in grant funding, and a state-of-the-art Veterans Resource Center under construction.

We salute you, Paul and Armando!

Helen Acosta

This recipient exemplifies the role of the Department Chair in a Guided Pathways college. If you look at any institutional initiative, whether it’s dual enrollment, early college, inmate education, or BC SouthWest, this recipient consistently demonstrates a high level of skill in positioning her department to implement the college’s strategic priorities.

From considering momentum points in her enrollment management and faculty scheduling strategy, to working on student success, Helen Acosta has worked tirelessly to create the
conditions that support the faculty in her department to meaningfully engage students in their general education requirements while completing certificates and degrees in their program of study.

You know Helen for her willingness to dive into tough conversations, to ask difficult questions, and to relentlessly pursue answers on behalf of her students. You also know her for her compassion for our underserved students, her commitment to bring the experiences of students who have drifted or been pushed to the margins back to the center, and to provide these formerly marginalized students spaces where they truly feel accepted and supported at Bakersfield College.

Her ability to navigate the complexities of a department chair assignment while at the same time fully embracing the ways of a compassionate educator gives her the unique opportunity to transform the lives of her students.

All this and more makes Helen Acosta a fitting recipient of the year’s president’s leadership award!

Liz Rozell

On May 6, as I walked into my office, I was greeted by the word “alacrity” from my officemate, seated at the corner of the office and hidden behind her dual computer screens. I stopped midway to my desk burdened with my laptop, handbag, a soy latte in one hand and a regular coffee for Chris Glaser in the other. With a brilliant smile, Liz’s face emerges saying “cheerful readiness – that is the meaning of alacrity.”

And while the exchange was unusual - coming from an engineer who usually uses words like “regression analysis” or who is known to do basic math calculations from a Texas Instrument calculator rather than using the calculator on her smart phone – I got to thinking that the word “alacrity” truly describes what Liz has always given to her students, faculty, deans, colleagues and other members of this college.

Whether it was her fierce engagement in making our BC SouthWest campus a reality for our students, publishing public letters and making public remarks at Board of Trustees meetings, or working diligently behind the scenes on the finer details, she always brings an energy, a cheerful readiness, and that smile.

Take accreditation – who else can take something like accreditation and turn it into an opportunity to hop on the back of a motorcycle for a team photo?

That would be Liz. She engaged with every fiber of her being to bring BC’s story to light through the peer review process and made sure we all had fun along the way. Liz Rozell embodies bold vision, contagious energy and unrivaled work ethic.
Colleagues, let’s celebrate Liz Rozell!