Communicating with Students: Best Practices and Syllabus Statements

This guide offers insight into best practices for establishing effective communication with students as well as examples of recommended syllabus statements.

Best Practices for Communicating with Students

Communicating effectively with our students is foundational to our work as educators. To communicate effectively, make sure to:

- Send students a welcome email one week before the beginning of the semester (Bonus points for sending a link to your liquid syllabus!)
- Establish a consistent way to communicate with students and share this with students. Some tools that could be used for communication could be: Remind, Discord, Messages through the Canvas Inbox, Google Voice and/or email. (Bonus points for surveying students for their communication preferences!).
- Guide students on how to set their notifications so they receive alerts from Canvas about Announcements, feedback, and more!
- Use a kind tone. Research (and lived experience) suggests that written communication can lead to misunderstandings and students may interpret our tone more harshly than we had intended. When communicating via writing, be sure to err on the side of kind. (Bonus points for using audio/video for feedback and weekly overview videos!).
- Reach out to students. If students are not responding, be sure to reach out. Students will appreciate your time and attention to their success. (Bonus tips for using results from a survey to send students text messages or calling students when you haven’t heard from them!).

Recommendations for Syllabus Statements

The following is a compilation of recommended syllabus statements from across campus. These were updated and compiled by Nicky Damani in February 2022. For the most recent syllabus statements, be sure to pay attention to your email.

DSPS

Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS) is available to provide accommodations to students with diagnosed learning, mental, physical, and/or health-related disabilities that are either permanent or temporary. Students with disabilities needing accommodations, including those who had an IEP or a 504 plan in high school, should make requests to the DSPS office by contacting the office by phone call, email, or by visiting their Virtual Lobby. All requests for accommodations require appropriate advanced notice to avoid a delay in services. After
completing the intake process with DSPS, please provide your professors with a copy of your DSPS approved accommodation checklist so that we can work together to ensure your access and success at BC. For more information, visit DSPS Website, email dpsdesk@bakersfieldcollege.edu, visit the DSPS Virtual Lobby, or call (661) 395-4334 (Panorama Campus) / (661) 720-2000 (Delano Campus)

Student Health and Wellness

The Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC) is open to all enrolled students in person or via a virtual environment. SHWC services include low-cost basic medical assistance and mental health support services. All appointments with the Health Services Clinicians or mental health professionals are conducted via a private and confidential session. Some over-the-counter health items are available through the Renegade Pantry. All appointments are conducted via a private and confidential session. Call (661) 395-4336 or email BCStudentHealth@bakersfieldcollege.edu to set up a meeting or drop-in, Monday to Thursday 7 am to 5 pm.

Student Organizations

Student Organizations serve a valuable and educational function offering students the opportunity to join in academic or professional, honor, political, service, social, cultural, and/or spiritual groups, and societies. Students involved will assume various leadership roles that provide insight to further the mission of the group and contribute to the personal development and enjoyment of members within the context of the broader teaching, research, and service missions of BC. These opportunities offer students a chance to become more involved with their campus community, adding an experiential component to their educational experience. Bakersfield College offers a variety of student organizations to suit multiple interests. Join or start an organization today by visiting the student organization website.

Renegade Pantry

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Office of Student Life continues to provide food, hygiene products, and clothes items through the Renegade Pantry. There are many resources on the Student Assistance Community Resource webpage.
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity includes cheating, fabricating or falsifying information or sources, improper collaboration, submitting the same paper for different classes without permission, and plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when writers deliberately or unintentionally use another person's language, ideas, or materials and present them as their own without properly acknowledging and citing the source. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism in this course results in one or more of the following consequences: failure of the assignment, referral to the Dean of Instruction, and/or disciplinary actions by the Director Student Life. Cite sources carefully, completely, and meticulously; when in doubt, cite. Familiarize yourself with BC’s Student Code of Conduct and KCCD’s definitions of plagiarism and cheating (KCCD Board Policy 4F7D; pg. 115).

Office of Student Life

The **Office of Student Life** mission is to help students to succeed by providing wrap-around services to college students by connecting them to public benefits, institution and community resources, and addressing non-academic barriers that may hinder a student from achieving academic success.

They are part of the college’s response team and are mandatory reporters. They also are standing members of the Students of Concern (SOC) team who meet weekly with other BC Staff members to discuss issues that may affect a student’s well-being and self-efficacy such as fair and equal access to financial aid services, employment, disability, and health services.

BC Starfish Student Success Tool

Every student has the potential to be successful. Using Starfish faculty identify students who need to overcome challenges that prevent them from completing their coursework successfully, by providing students with connections to services via Starfish. If you receive a “BC Starfish” notification email, it is expected that you seek the assistance of the campus service area outlined in the notification as soon as possible. The notification will also be sent to the **Student Success Team** and campus service area that you are referred to (for example the tutoring center or the Students of Concern Team); therefore, do not be surprised if you receive a message directly from the service area.
**Student Government Association**

Would you like to be part of the Student Government Association which is the governing body that serves and voices students' opinions!? Do you want to be part of a team that hosts phenomenal activities and events for the students!? Then BCSGA is the place for you to impact our community! Email studentlife@bakersfieldcollege.edu for more information.

**TITLE IX**

As an institution of higher learning that receives federal funds, BC is required to abide by Title IX, which states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." BC takes discrimination seriously and is required to report known or suspected acts of sexual harassment including sexual violence as defined by Title IX. While privacy can often, but not always, be maintained, college officials are required to report the following when incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence occur: The (1) nature of the harassment or discrimination, (2) the date (when the incident occurred and when it was reported), (3) the time of the incident, and (4) generally the location of the incident; as well (5) the disposition of the complaint, if known. Other information may need to be reported on a case-by-case basis. Students have access to confidential services through the Student Health and Wellness Center or the Campus advocate (advocate@bakersfieldcollege.edu) within the Office of Student Life. For more information on Title IX, including contact information, go to www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/titleIX.

If you feel that our classroom environment in any way impedes your ability to participate or subjects you to discrimination, or you are experiencing harassment outside of class that disrupts your educational opportunities, please do not hesitate to contact the Dean of Students or the BC Human Resources Manager.

**LGBTQIA Initiatives**

In keeping with Bakersfield College’s commitment to creating a safe campus, the Office of Student Life LGBTQIA initiatives exists to provide a space for members of the college community to explore issues relating to sexual and gender identities, practices, and politics. The Office of Student Life serves to connect you to community members, resources on and off-campus, and opportunities for engagement and advocacy. If you would like your screen name on Canvas changed to reflect your real name, please email the Office of Student Life for more information.
CAMPUS SAFETY INFORMATION
The Department of College Safety facilitates the support of a safe and secure environment in our pursuit to provide educational opportunities and valuable life skills to our students, faculty, and staff. College Safety provides security, safety training, emergency response, and parking enforcement for all of our campus locations. Safety escorts are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, there is no time limit. Call the main office line at 661-395-4554.

In case of a fire alarm: During an emergency evacuation, take your valuables ONLY if it is safe to do so. You could put yourself or someone else at risk by delaying your exit. Plan to return to class once the alarm has stopped. Do not return until you have received an all-clear from somebody "official," the web, or email.

In case of an earthquake: DROP, COVER, and HOLD. Once the shaking stops, take your valuables and leave the building. Do not plan to return for the rest of the day. Do not return to the building until you have received an all-clear from somebody "official," the web or email.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION
BC employees and students are issued a BC email account. College email communications will only be sent to their BC email address. Faculty and staff are not obligated to respond to students using non-BC email accounts. Those who choose to forward their emails to a non-BC email address do so at their own risk. The College is not responsible for any difficulties that may occur in the proper or timely transmission or access of email forwarded to any email address, and any such problems will not absolve employees and students of their responsibility to know and comply with the content of electronic college communications sent to BC email addresses. Responses to email communication differ from one instructor to the next. A typical turnaround time for email correspondence is 36 to 48 hours.

Student Information Desk (SID)
BC opened the Student Information Desk (SID) to help you communicate faster with BC staff from around the campus. SID can help you with enrollment, account holds, academic advice and more. This service is conducted through Zoom and accessed via the homepage on the BC Website. By clicking on the link, students will be greeted and helped by a live BC Staff Member.
**BC Renegade Card ID**

Students may now get their Renegade Card! Every BC student is required to obtain a student identification card. If you purchased the BCSGA/KVC Student Services Sticker, you will receive it along with your Renegade Card. To take your photo and to receive your Renegade Card, visit the Office of Student Life.

**Student Conduct Statement**

Bakersfield College seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, which is protective of free inquiry and serves the educational mission of the College. Similarly, the College seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, intimidation, and sexual misconduct; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the College, and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the College community.

Students are expected at all times to act in a manner consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, which is set forth by the KCCD Board Policy 4F7. The Student Code of Conduct remains in place for all students whether engaging in co-curricular activities or in a course that is offered in-person, online, or remotely. Students shall respect constituted authority, including conformance to federal and state laws, board policy, college protocols, and applicable provisions of civil law. All forms of misconduct may result in one or more of the following consequences: removal from class, referral to the Dean of Instruction, and/or disciplinary actions by the Dean of Students. A student’s failure to act in a manner consistent with the Student Code of Conduct shall constitute good cause for discipline, including but not limited to the removal, suspension, or expulsion.

**STUDENT CONDUCT IN REMOTE LEARNING**

The Student Conduct Code remains in place for all students whether a course is offered in person, online, or remotely. The instructor’s intellectual property rights and the privacy of all course participants must not be violated by students. Students may not share course materials with non-class members without explicit written permission from the course instructor. Harassment or bullying of instructors and students, including via electronic media, the internet, social networks, blogs, cell phones, and text messages, will not be tolerated. Students found responsible for such infractions are subject to disciplinary sanctions. Students may not record any part of a class session without the express consent of the instructor, unless approved as an accommodation. Individual course instructors may record course sessions but only for use by registered class members for instructional purposes. All recordings will be housed on secure
platforms authorized. Unless stated otherwise and highly recommended, web camera and microphones may not be required to be on during course time.

Student Health and Safety Safety/Requirements

BC offers a variety of course options (e.g., in-person, online, and hybrid) to best serve students’ needs. As we continue to provide in-person activities, we are prioritizing the health and safety of the entire campus community. For those attending in-person classes please note that The Kern Community College District has implemented a vaccine requirement that requires all Bakersfield College students, employees, and visitors to be vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they have requested a medical or religious exemption.

Additionally, masks must be worn indoors, and health check-ins will be required each day using the KCCD Campus Pass app. Students should download the app.

All individuals are required to follow safety guidelines and protocols to ensure all members of the community are safe. Understand that the guidelines and protocols are for the safety of everyone in the community, thus disregarding the guidelines and protocols that violate the college's protocols may be cause for disciplinary actions.

It is expected that all individuals adhere to the protocols and guidelines when participating in activities on the physical campus. If students do not confirm their vaccination status or receive an approved exemption before the first day of instruction, they will receive a RED Campus Pass on their KCCD Campus Pass App. Individuals with a RED Campus Pass will not be allowed to access any KCCD campus property, including in-person instruction and student services.

It is illegal to submit fraudulent or counterfeit COVID-19 vaccine cards (see FBI Guidance). It is also illegal to claim an exemption or accommodation on false, misleading, or dishonest grounds. Any student found to have submitted fraudulent or counterfeit records, or false, misleading, or dishonest information about their vaccination status, medical need for an exemption or their sincerely held religious beliefs will be referred to the Dean of Student Life. Consequences may include, but are not limited, to expulsion from the College.

Renegade Hub

The Renegade HUB is a resource for all students who need help with Canvas, App Steam, and any education-related technology. Our accessible and friendly services offer assistance seven days a week (Online Student Resources | Bakersfield College) in various formats: in-person on
the first floor of the Library past the Commons in L 130, via phone (661) 395-4477, and virtually by logging into Starfish Kiosk, selecting the problem they are experiencing, choosing the course that it pertains to, and specifying the preferred contact method. Our team responds promptly and guides students to resolve technical issues they may be experiencing with technology for their classes. For more information and help please connect with the Renegade HUB StarFish Kiosk.