Press Release - President's All-Campus Virtual Seminar Series - 4/6/20

Bakersfield College President Continues Campus Conversations through Virtual Seminar Series

Even though the 153-acre Bakersfield College campus on the hill at 1801 Panorama Drive has gone quiet over the past four weeks, there is an energetic buzz of activity happening in the new, virtual environment.

Since beginning her tenure as Bakersfield College's tenth president in 2013, President Sonya Christian has always invested in the development of a diverse, well-connected community, united in the work to support students. The president’s belief that diverse perspectives contribute to a vibrant learning environment has led to skyrocketing student performance outcomes over the past eight years.

In this same spirit of collegiality and camaraderie that has proven essential to BC's rise as a high-performance institution of higher education, President Christian kept communication and connectedness at the core as BC went online. Through her All-Campus Virtual Seminar Series, Renegade Roundup newsletter, and Letters from BC updates, President Sonya Christian aims to ensure BC faculty, staff, and students maintain its sense of community.

President Christian described her Virtual Seminar Series, saying “My curriculum helps us stay connected and discuss best practices online, and give us space to talk about healthy habits, self-care, and wellness.”

Virtual forum participants include faculty, staff, students, and community members. Bakersfield College faculty have been particularly engaged as they navigate the transition to teaching at a distance. Astronomy faculty and Director of the BC Planetarium, Dr. Nick Strobel, notes the forums have created community among faculty and staff. “My department chair has followed President Christian’s example and has been hosting weekly meetings for the department faculty to share their questions, get answers from their colleagues, as well as helping each other get through this time with some humor. Instruction has been continuing as we figure out how to create as enriching an environment for learning as we can over the internet while also working with the realities of the digital divide that still exists for some of our students.” In the physical sciences, faculty have gotten particularly creative with the support of other departments on campus, Strobel said. “The chemistry wet labs and physics labs have been the most challenging to implement but between President Christian's virtual seminars, huge support from the Academic Technology department, and my department’s weekly meetings, we’re figuring it out.”

“Physically distancing during the pandemic does not mean socially distancing,” said President Sonya Christian, adding that “the only way I know to do work is through dialog and in community. As we face our current challenges I have learned so much from our faculty and staff panelists’ creativity, dedication and hard work in making the transition supporting students online. Our
students are outstanding; they show so much grit dealing with difficulties, so much compassion, and yet, they bring a sense of humor and fun in this very difficult time.”

Averaging over 250 attendees per seminar, the All-Campus Virtual Seminar Series takes place on Zoom with panelists who represent BC’s faculty, staff, students, and leadership team sharing their experiences and strategies as they transition to an online environment.

Samantha Pulido, BC Student Government Association President, has attended each virtual forum. She said, “This complete shift to online has been very difficult for us students academically, emotionally, and financially. The information President Christian includes in these forums helps us all keep up to date on accurate information about the pandemic. With the panelists she invited, it also helps to give us the needed community support and academic resource connections to push through this transition. Overall, I look forward to the forums each week for a sense of calmness and hope. It has been reassuring to know the BC President is so committed to keeping the Renegade family informed and connected.”

“I commend President Christian, and the faculty and staff at Bakersfield College for showing leadership, innovation, and acting decisively in a bold, collaborative, and systemic way amid the current COVID-19 pandemic to continue meeting the needs of students and our community while safeguarding public health, said Kern Community College District Trustee Romeo Agbalog. “In addition to moving BC’s entire course work to an online platform over a month ago, President Christian continues to foster innovation through a series of Virtual Seminars and online updates designed to provide student and staff support, as well as share valuable information to help the BC family navigate through these difficult times,” Agbalog said.
Attached is a list of some of the activities related to the COVID-19 epidemic. All videos and newsletters are archived on the Bakersfield College website and updated daily: [https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 30 Thursday</td>
<td><strong>First email communication</strong> regarding the novel Coronavirus from the BC Student Health Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 27 Thursday</td>
<td>Initiated the Incident Command Center and the development of a <a href="https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19">Pandemic Response Plan</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2 Monday</td>
<td><strong>Coronavirus Update Video</strong> with me, Cindy Collier, Steven Holmes, and Samantha Pullido was developed to update the campus on the COVID-19 virus, including symptoms, promising precautions to prevent the spread of infectious disease, and introduce the community to BC's Incident Command Center team</td>
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<td>March 3 Tuesday</td>
<td><a href="https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19">Renegade Roundup</a>: Update &amp; Advice on Avoiding Illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 5 Thursday</td>
<td><a href="https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19">Renegade Roundup</a>: State of Emergency Declared March 4 in California Published the <a href="https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19">Pandemic Response Plan</a></td>
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<td>March 6 Friday</td>
<td>Hosted the <a href="https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19">all-campus virtual briefing</a> #2 regarding BC's response to COVID-19</td>
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<td>March 8 Sunday</td>
<td><a href="https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19">Renegade Roundup</a>: Begin Planning for Online Instruction.</td>
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| March 9 Monday | [Renegade Roundup](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19): Moving from “Containment” to “Mitigation;” Cancel Non-Essential Travel  
The COVID-19 Advisory Team, led by Dr. Nicky Damania, Cindy Collier, and Shelley Castaneda, held their first [campus-wide Zoom Update](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19) meeting from the BC Panorama campus |
| March 10 Tuesday | [Renegade Roundup](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19): Meetings Move Virtual; Cancel Non-Essential Large Gatherings  
The COVID-19 Advisory Team, led by Dr. Nicky Damania, Cindy Collier, and Shelley Castaneda held their second [campus-wide Zoom Update](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19) meeting from the BC Delano Campus with Executive Director Abel Guzman |
| March 11 Wednesday | The COVID-19 Advisory Team, led by Dr. Nicky Damania, Cindy Collier, and Shelley Castaneda, held their third [campus-wide Zoom Update](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19) meeting from the BC SouthWest campus with Dean Jessica Wojtysiak |
### March 12
**Renegade Roundup: Invitation to All-Campus Meeting**

Launched the first wave of nearly 800 courses moving from face-to-face to a fully-online or virtual environment.

President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #3 to update the campus on the institution’s response and answered questions for 472 attendees. Speakers included:
- Steve Holmes, Academic Senate President
- Samantha Pulido, BCSGA President
- Billie Jo Rice, VP of Instruction
- Zav Dadabhoy, VP of Student Affairs
- Mike Giacomini, VP of Finance & Administrative Services

### March 13
**Renegade Roundup: Invitation to Virtual Forum**

President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #4 with 162 attendees. Panelists included:
- Michael Korcok, Communication Faculty
- Chris Cruz Boone, Communication Faculty
- Jennifer Jett, English Faculty
- Michelle Hart, Education Faculty
- Michael Muhme, Communication Faculty

### March 14
**Renegade Roundup: First Academic Technology Open House; Nationwide Social Distancing Measures**

President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #5 with 102 attendees. Panelists included:
- Kathleen Rush, Mathematics Faculty
- Olivia Garcia, History Faculty
- LeAnn Riley, Agriculture Faculty
- Jennifer Grohol, History Faculty

Academic Technology held an Open House from 8am-2pm. Over 100 attended for 1:1 support in transitioning their courses to an online/virtual environment.

### March 15
**Renegade Roundup: Importance of Flattening the Curve; Academic Technology Professional Development Sessions**

President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #6 with 201 attendees. Panelists included:
- Marisa Marquez, Director of Counseling
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| March 16   | **Renegade Roundup:** Tips to move Courses Online; Department Operation Changes     | ● **Victor Diaz**, Counseling Department Chair  
● **Imelda Valdez**, Director of EOP&S  
● **Kim Arbolante**, Writing Center Lead  
Academic Technology held day 2 of their [Open House](#) from 11am-5pm. Over 100 attended the second day for 1:1 support in transitioning their courses to an online/virtual environment

March 16 Monday | **Renegade Roundup:** Tips to move Courses Online; Department Operation Changes | ● **Victor Diaz**, Counseling Department Chair  
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Academic Technology held day 2 of their [Open House](#) from 11am-5pm. Over 100 attended the second day for 1:1 support in transitioning their courses to an online/virtual environment

March 16 Monday | **Renegade Roundup:** Tips to move Courses Online; Department Operation Changes | President Christian hosted the [all-campus virtual seminar #7](#) with 173 attendees. Panelists included:  
● **Sondra Keckley**, Librarian  
● **Nick Strobel**, Astronomy Faculty  
● **Jennifer Achan**, Financial Aid  
● **Jason Stratton**, History Faculty  

March 16 Monday | **Renegade Roundup:** Tips to move Courses Online; Department Operation Changes | Released a campus-wide video message update:  
● **Sonya Christian**, President  
● **Samantha Pulido**, BC Student Government Association President  
● **Steven Holmes**, BC Academic Senate President

March 17 Tuesday | **Renegade Roundup:** BC SouthWest Physical Closure; Departments and Operations Shift | President Christian hosted the [all-campus virtual seminar #8](#) with 231 attendees. Panelists included:  
● **Sondra Keckley**, Librarian  
● **Nick Strobel**, Astronomy Faculty  
● **Jennifer Achan**, Financial Aid  
● **Jason Stratton**, History Faculty  

March 17 Tuesday | **Renegade Roundup:** BC SouthWest Physical Closure; Departments and Operations Shift |

March 18 Wednesday | **Renegade Roundup:** More BC Facilities Close; Renegade Pantry Goes Drive-Thru | President Christian hosted the [all-campus virtual seminar #9](#) with 277 attendees. Panelists included:  
● **Sondra Keckley**, Librarian  
● **Nick Strobel**, Astronomy Faculty  
● **Jennifer Achan**, Financial Aid  
● **Jason Stratton**, History Faculty  

March 18 Wednesday | **Renegade Roundup:** More BC Facilities Close; Renegade Pantry Goes Drive-Thru |

March 19 Thursday | **Renegade Roundup:** Physical Campus Closure; BC & Statewide Shelter-in-Place | President Christian hosted the [all-campus virtual seminar #10](#) with 277 attendees. Panelists included:  
● **Sondra Keckley**, Librarian  
● **Nick Strobel**, Astronomy Faculty  
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<td>Renegade Roundup: Reflecting on the Physical Closure &amp; Looking Ahead</td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #11 with 248 attendees. Panelists included: Samantha Pulido, Computer Science Major, Josiah Diaz, Biology Major, Robin Van Dyke, Registered Nursing Major, Catherine Johnston, History Major</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>Renegade Roundup: Tips from BC Student Panel</td>
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<td>March 25</td>
<td>President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #12 with 255 attendees. Panelists included: Cindy Collier, Nursing faculty, Sandi Taylor, Athletic Director, Fabiola Johnson, Counseling Faculty, David Riess, Sociology Faculty Released a video message from BC faculty and staff to students.</td>
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<td>March 26</td>
<td>Renegade Roundup: Student Surveys on Online Learning</td>
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<td>March 27</td>
<td>Letters from BC: Too Big to be Real</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>Renegade Roundup: BC Athletics virtual Health &amp; Wellness Program</td>
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<td>March 30</td>
<td>Renegade Roundup: Back to College Program virtual sessions begin</td>
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| March 31   | President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #14 with 213 attendees. Panelists included:  
| Tuesday    | - Karen Cid Ibanez, Sociology Major  
|            | - Gian Gayatao, Business Major  
|            | - Emma McNellis, Political Science Major  
|            | - Maria Jaimes, Sociology Major                                                                                                                                         |
| April 2    | President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #15 with 208 attendees. Panelists included:  
| Thursday   | - Abel Guzman, Executive Director of Rural Initiatives  
|            | - Diane Allen, Counseling Faculty - DSPS  
|            | - Jackie Lau, Manager - Enrollment Services  
|            | - Matt Jones, Academic Technology Faculty                                                                                                                              |
| April 6    | Letters from BC: In Community  
| Monday     | President Christian hosted the all-campus virtual seminar #16 with 251 attendees. Panelists included:  
|            | - Vince Fong, California State Assemblymember  
|            | - Jean Fuller, Retired California State Senator  
|            | - Richard Chapman, CEO of the Kern Economic Development Corporation  
|            | - Romeo Agbalog, Kern Citizens for Sustainable Government                                                                                                               |
| April 7    | President Christian will host the all-campus virtual seminar #17. Student panelists include:  
| Tuesday    | - Shantelle Rubio – Nursing major  
|            | - Sara Navidad – Sociology major  
|            | - Krissy Coggshall – Computer Science major  
|            | - Izzy Foster – Commercial Music major                                                                                                                                       |