State of the Bakersfield College Pathway to Law School (Pre-Law) Initiative

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Drafted: October 3, 2017
Final Revisions: December 21, 2017

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BC Pre-Law Program Mission:
In partnership with the State Bar of California, the Pathway to Law School initiative at Bakersfield College enhances opportunities for education and advancement in the legal profession, especially for diverse and traditionally underrepresented populations.

Program Overview:
On May 1, 2014, Bakersfield College, along with 23 qualifying California Community Colleges, was approved by the State Bar of California to begin offering a specified series of seven (7) courses that comprise the Pre-Law pathway. BC students who meet the eligibility requirements, regardless of major, are invited to participate. Pathway graduates are given priority consideration for transfer and entry to the following six (6) select institutions:
- Loyola Marymount University
- Santa Clara University
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of San Francisco
- University of Southern California

Alignment with BC's Mission:
“Bakersfield College provides opportunities for students from diverse economic, cultural, and education backgrounds to attain Associate and Baccalaureate degrees and certificates, workplace skills, and preparation for transfer. Our rigorous and supportive learning environment fosters students’ abilities to think critically, communicate effectively, and demonstrate competencies and skills in order to engage productively in their communities and the world.”

The BC Pre-Law program supports the mission of Bakersfield College by serving a diversified range of students from various backgrounds in pursuing a legal education upon program completion. Graduates are effectively prepared for transfer to a four-year institution (namely any CSU, UC, or the partner institutions listed above).
Alignment with BC’s Strategic Directions:

BC’s five Strategic Directions include:

- **Student Learning** – A commitment to provide a holistic education that develops curiosity, inquiry, and empowered learners.
- **Student Progression and Completion** – A commitment to eliminate barriers that cause students difficulties in completing their educational goals.
- **Facilities** – A commitment to improve the maintenance of, and secure funding for, college facilities, technology, and infrastructure for the next thirty years.
- **Oversight and Accountability** – A commitment to improve oversight, accountability, sustainability, and transparency in all college processes.
- **Leadership and Engagement** – A commitment to build leadership within the College and engagement with community.

The BC Pre-Law program supports student learning through its rigorous curriculum. Additionally, the Pre-Law program provides academic advising, intentional student services, and directed interventions to promote student progression and completion. Quarterly board meetings with BC’s Pre-Law Advisory Council, comprised of 12 legal professionals throughout the College’s service area, ensures oversight, accountability, and transparency from internal and external constituents. Members of the Advisory Council also provide additional opportunities for community engagement between Bakersfield College and our local constituents.

Pre-Law Curriculum and Alignment with BC’s Institutional Learning Outcomes:

The series of rigorous coursework in BC’s Pre-Law program is intentionally designed to help students acquire relevant knowledge and to develop academic skills that will be required for successfully completing law school. Specifically, the coursework in the program is intended to refine students’ reading, comprehension, writing, critical thinking, communication (public speaking, rhetoric and argumentation), and statistical analysis skills. Additionally, the Pre-Law coursework introduces students to fundamental topics related to the legal field, including studies in government and democratic processes.

Pre-Law students are permitted to select and pursue any major offered at BC. Additionally, Pre-Law students who complete the following sequence of courses are recognized by the State Bar of California’s Council on Access and Fairness (COAF), as well as the California LAW (CaLAW) organization, as ‘California Pre-Law Scholars.’

- POLS B1 – American Government: National, State and Local
- ADMJ B40 – Law and Democracy
- ENGL B1a – Expository Composition
- COMM B4 – Persuasive Communication, or
  - COMM B5 – Rhetoric and Argumentation
- MATH B22 – Elementary Probability and Statistics, or
  - PSYC B5 – Elementary Statistics for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
- ENGL B2 – Advanced Composition and Critical Thinking, or
  - PHIL B9 – Critical Thinking and Advanced Composition
- SPST B49 – Pre-Law Internship (optional)
At the time of acceptance in California’s Pathway to Law School initiative, Bakersfield College offered six (6) of the required courses. In Spring 2014, the curriculum for the only remaining course, ‘ADMJ B40 - Law and Democracy’ was developed specifically for the Pre-Law pathway. Each of the courses in this pathway are reviewed annually to ensure continuous compliance with State curricular standards.

Graduates will demonstrate competency in each of BC’s Institutional Learning Outcomes:
- Think critically (MATH B22, PSYC B5, ENGL B2, and PHIL B9)
- Communicate effectively (COMM B1, COMM B4, COMM B5, and ENGL B1a)
- Demonstrate competency (POLS B1 and ADMJ B40)
- Engage productively (SPST B49)

**Enrollment and Graduates:**
Currently, 37 students are fully-matriculated into BC’s Pre-Law program. The first class of graduates completed the program in Spring 2016. One year later, an additional twelve (12) students graduated. The program continues to garner interest from students, indicating that the program meets an otherwise unmet need among a specific student population.

**Pre-Law Society (Student Organization):**
The mission of the Pre-Law Club is to promote law-related activities for Pre-Law scholars. These activities include law school information sessions, campus visits to law schools, statewide debate competitions, local internship opportunities, BC Law Day, field trips to local court house and law schools in the State of California, and social events with networking opportunities.

The student club is led by five (5) student leaders and two (2) advisors. For 2017-18, Club leadership includes:
- Zach Sullivan. President
- Stephiny Winslow, Vice President
- Trent Marta, CC Representative
- (vacant), Secretary
- (vacant), Treasurer
- Prof. Charles Kim, Faculty Advisor
- Pearl Urena, Staff Advisor

**Recent Student Events:**
In 2016-2017, BC Pre-Law students participated in various campus and local events. A sample of these events includes:
- CSUB Speed Mentoring – an opportunity to receive general advice from various legal professionals in one evening.
- Courtroom and prison visits which were hosted by BC faculty and members of the Pre-Law Advisory Council.
- Writers of Kern Competition – an opportunity for BC and CSUB Pre-Law students to showcase their skills in expository writing and argumentation. Promoted by Hon. Robert Tafoya, this event was co-sponsored by the Writers of Kern organization, CSUB and Bakersfield College.
• Writers of Kern Social – A social event hosted by the Writers of Kern organization to recognize and honor award recipients from the writing competition. The social event was also an opportunity for BC Pre-Law students to meet and network with a wide array of legal professionals throughout Kern County.
• BC Law Day – On April 28, 2017, the 2nd annual BC Law Day drew approximately 250 students from local colleges in the Pathway to Law School consortium, as well as Pre-Law students from CSUB. An invitation was also extended to high school students throughout BC’s service area who might be interested in exploring a career in the legal profession. The event included several panel presentations by legal experts and educators, followed by an Internship Fair and a Law School Fair.

Leadership Team:
BC’s Pre-Law Leadership Team is comprised of faculty, staff and administrators who collaborate to deliver cohesive learning opportunities, counseling, and support services to Pre-Law students. The Pre-Law Leadership Team includes:
• Professor Ed Borgens, Political Science (Faculty Lead)
• Professor Charles Kim, Political Science – Delano (Pre-Law Club Advisor)
• Professor Christian Zoller, Criminal Justice
• Marilynn Sanchez, Political Science (Adjunct)
• Pearl Urena, Counseling (Educational Advisor)
• Abel Guzman, Delano Center
• Emmanuel (Manny) Mourtzanos, Dean (Administrative Lead)

The Leadership Team meets at least monthly to implement programmatic events for students, as well as to resolve operational issues for continued growth.

Advisory Council:
The Pre-Law Advisory Council is comprised of twelve (12) individuals who are active in their respective legal or educational professions throughout Bakersfield College’s service area, including Delano.
• Adeyinka Glover, Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance
• Hon. Steven Katz, Judge, Kern Superior Court
• Jeanine Kraybill, Professor and Pre-Law Coordinator, CSUB
• Cynthia Loo, Commissioner, Kern Superior Court
• Courtney Lewis, Assistant District Attorney, Kern County District Attorney
• Rebecca Murillo, Director of Admissions, University of La Verne
• Bethany Peak, Associate Partner, LeBeau Thelen
• Brett Price, Attorney
• H.A. Sala, Attorney
• Hon. Robert Tafoya, Judge, Kern Superior Court
• David Torres, Attorney
• Alekxia Torres-Stallings, Attorney
Members of the Pre-Law Advisory Council meet quarterly with program staff to discuss opportunities for student engagement in the legal profession, as well as to support students through mentorships and scholarships.

**Robert B. Lambert Pre-Law Scholarship:**
In 2017, the BC Pre-Law program was the recipient of a very generous donation through the BC Foundation from Mr. Robert B. Lambert’s estate to be used exclusively for the disbursement of scholarships to Pre-Law students. The current value of Mr. Lambert’s donation is approximately $496,000. With the accrual of approximately 4% annual interest, the Pre-Law Advisory Council endorses the practice of increasing the principal amount to $500,000, thereby permitting annual student scholarships in the amount of $20,000 (in perpetuity) without affecting the principal amount. The Pre-Law Leadership Team and the Advisory Council will work collaboratively to identify criteria and conditions for disbursement.

**Mentorship Program:**
BC Pre-Law students are afforded the opportunity to be mentored by one of the Advisory Council members. Members of the Council are informed of their requirement to mentor and advise at least two (2) Pre-Law students, pending interest. While not a mandatory criteria for participation in the Pre-Law program, students who have availed themselves of this experience report high satisfaction, as do their mentors. For 2017-18, the BC Pre-Law Leadership Team will strive to assign each of the 37 Pre-Law scholars to a mentor.

**Outreach and Recruitment Plan:**
To increase awareness about the Pre-Law program, as well as to enhance outreach and recruitment throughout the 2017-18 academic year, the Pre-Law Student Club and Leadership Team will implement the following strategies:
- Faculty announcements in Political Science, Criminal Justice, and Business Law courses
- Booth at Student Involvement Fair – Wednesday, August 30, 2017
- Select invitations to the 3rd Annual BC Law Day on Friday, April 27, 2018

**Plans for 2017-18:**
Planned and prospective Pre-Law events for the 2017-18 academic year include:
- Professional Development Series – Session 1 – September 13, 2017
- Multicultural Bar Association and California State Bar’s Council on Access & Fairness social justice event (homelessness) – September 14, 2017
- CSUB Speed Mentoring – September 21, 2017
- 3rd Annual BC Law Day – Friday, April 27, 2018
- Invitations to other ‘Bench & Bar’ socials
- Writers of Kern Competition
- Partnership with Kern County Bar Association – Young Lawyers Section to provide networking and professional development opportunities for BC Pre-Law students.
- Throughout-the-year events calendar (at least two pre-law events per month)


**Additional Program Information:**

More information about Bakersfield College’s Pre-Law program (including biographical information and photos of Pre-Law faculty, staff and Councilmembers) is available online at [www.BakersfieldCollege.edu/PreLaw](http://www.BakersfieldCollege.edu/PreLaw)