Retired Senator Jean Fuller Partners with Bakersfield College to lead the Early College Program

Senator Jean Fuller is partnering with Bakersfield College to lead the necessary intersegmental collaboration, relationships with business and industry, and connections with national policy organizations to scale up Early College regionally and nationally. The Early College Program is a proven model for quality and cost effective college degree completion, particularly in rural communities with high poverty rates and low educational attainment rates.

Having served in public office from 2006-2018, Jean Fuller brings over 30 years of experience in education to Bakersfield College. Her desire to continue working in education at BC is a direct result of her commitment to working with young people and encouraging them to have the confidence and support to achieve their dreams.

"Bakersfield College is privileged to partner with Senator Fuller, an extraordinary leader who has maintained a career-long commitment to education," said Bakersfield College President, Sonya Christian. "She is a powerhouse with a heart for the students in the central valley and the communities we serve. We are so excited to have her working with us."

Fuller’s passion for education grew out of her own experiences as a child and young adult. Born and raised in the small community of Shafter, higher education was not something that she ever viewed as being for her. Fuller says, “Families didn’t want their kids to go off to college. Mothers and fathers wanted their children to stay close, stay as a family and continue the family tradition.” Today, Fuller credits Bakersfield College with giving her the skills, self-esteem, and strength to pursue a meaningful career which she adds, “isn’t finished yet.”

Named California Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators in 2004-2015, Fuller will now oversee integration and expansion of the existing Early College framework to increase higher education across Kern County.

The Early College program provides a framework for access and efficiency to achieve a college education like never before. By aligning curriculum and adding college level coursework into the high school schedule, every Early College student would have the opportunity to earn a certificate or associate degree by their high school graduation.

“There is a pathway for everyone and it starts at the Home of the Renegades. With Early College under the brilliant and caring leadership of Senator Fuller, we are not just empowering these young students, but also their communities,” said President Sonya Christian. “By bringing college closer to home and integrating it within their high school years, we are doing our institutional best to raise the bar of opportunity and increase access for each and every student.”
As a result of her own experience, Fuller views education as an investment that transforms young people into who they have potential to become, impacting the world around them. She says, “These students belong at Bakersfield College. This is a place for them to feel welcome and a place that they will be successful. We will bring college to them in a way that allows them to succeed in any direction they want with their future career and education at an age which gives them a fantastic head start.”

Last May, Bakersfield College graduated 38 Wonderful Academy Early College high school seniors with an Associate degree in Agriculture Business. Although the Early College program is still under development in rural area high schools, the goal is to align the curriculum and help every high school student obtain a college degree.

Fuller holds a doctorate degree from the UC Santa Barbara, a Master’s degree from CSU Los Angeles, a Bachelor’s Degree from California State University, Fresno, and an Associate’s Degree from Bakersfield College.

Bakersfield College provides opportunities for students from diverse economic, cultural, and educational 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.

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