BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE PRESIDENT SONYA CHRISTIAN NAMED RECIPIENT OF THE 2019 VERNON STRONG VISIONARY AWARD AT ANNUAL MLK BREAKFAST

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee announced the 2019 award recipients at the Committee Annual Breakfast on Monday morning. The breakfast honors the contributions made by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and recognized the Honorable Judge Stephen D. Schuett as the recipient of the Mayor Harvey Hall Visionaries Award and BC President, Dr. Sonya Christian as the recipient of the Councilman Vernon Strong Visionaries Award.

“On the day we honor Dr. King, we celebrate the diversity in America and the opportunities we have as one united community because of love, harmony, and acceptance,” said Wesley Crawford, chairman of the committee. “This year, we are proud to honor President Christian with the Vernon Strong Visionaries Award because of her leadership and guidance to make Bakersfield College a place where students succeed in reaching their goals. Since her presidency began in 2013, the doors of opportunities have opened for all students including those of color but more so overall for our entire community.”

Dr. Oscar Anthony, Pastor of St. Peter Restoration Community Christian Ministries said “President Christian has revolutionized Bakersfield College. She is always prioritizing all students and the wellbeing of her community.” He added, “She’s an innovative leader with a passion for not only creating quality, efficient, and supportive higher education, but she is investing in each and every student.”

This year, the student success changes at the Home of the Renegades are more apparent than ever before. Bakersfield College has more Black students enrolled than in past years and a 37.5% increase in the number of Black students transferring to four-year universities. These students have also demonstrated a 340% increase in the number of Black students who are completing transfer-level English in their first year.

“The Vernon Strong Visionaries Award is a recognition of the faculty and staff at Bakersfield College who are bold innovators working tirelessly to support all of our students on the Panorama Campus in Bakersfield as well as in Arvin, Lamont, Wasco, McFarland, Delano, and Shafter”, said Sonya Christian, President of Bakersfield College. “Receiving this award at the Martin Luther King breakfast during the 150th-year anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, makes it even more special. The work our faculty and staff do today is in keeping with the values of both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King by fundamentally altering the course towards success for thousands of marginalized students through education,” she added.
Event: Bakersfield College President Sonya Christian Named Recipient of the 2019 Vernon Strong Visionary Award at Annual MLK Breakfast
Day: For Immediate Release:
Contact: Marlene Heise, 661-978-8594

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Committee, Bakersfield is united to promote the economic advancement of Kern County Communities, with a focus on Empowerment and public advocacy to improve the quality of life for children, and adults at the same time as we remember the legacy of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

BC President, Dr. Sonya Christian at the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast, Photo by Carrington Prichett Photography

Vernon Strong and Sonya Christian, Photo by Carrington Prichett Photography

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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