Good Morning dear friends and colleagues,

I am attending the bi-annual accreditation commission meeting in San Diego, but my heart is with you on Opening Day. The two-week winter break was by far one of my very best. I got to spend time with family, catch up on reading, going on long walks with Neo and Bessie (since she was visiting) and cooking some of my mom's favorite recipes for my daughter.

**Welcome to the Home of the Renegades for the beginning of another new semester.**

It's hard to imagine this semester is my 8th year as President of Bakersfield College. I was fortunate to start my tenure as the 10th president of Bakersfield College in 2013, the year that BC turned 100. During BC's first post-century decade, the campus has already been a space of innovation, executing our educational mission with equity, setting all-time performance records with an attitude of infinite optimism, limitless possibilities and boundless fun.

This semester is a continuation of that momentum as we stay the course of innovative work, creating seamless pathways towards successful futures for our students, building bridges among students, faculty, staff, administration, and our community, and continuing our focus on teaching and learning.

Bakersfield College is a place where learning happens both for our community and for us, institutionally. We have seen tremendous growth in the last five years. In the recent State of the College report, posted this last December on our website, BC's enrollment reflects a 42% increase
since 2014-15 peaking at over 37,000 students this year. Of those, BC serves an increasingly diverse student population with regard to first-generation status, Pell Grant eligibility, and AB540 eligibility. In addition, Early College and the Inmate Scholars programs have also grown dramatically.

BC also continues to strengthen its fiscal stability and efficiency in conjunction with compliance and regulatory responsibilities. The college continues to evaluate strategies for long-term fiscal sustainability, as well as creatively develop trailblazing practices to advance equitable outcomes for all students. Through our vision, courageous leadership, and unwavering commitment, BC has earned local, statewide, and national recognition for our leadership, and innovation.

**Don’t forget to mark your calendars for Commencement as the big event returns to Memorial Stadium. Mark your calendars for May 15, 2020.**

It’s New Year. It’s a New decade. Let’s do this...

**Measure J**

It was April 30th, 1953, that Bakersfield College broke ground and began construction on this empty, barren, and dusty 153-acre lot on the Panorama Bluffs. The robust, alive and thriving BC campus that we have today is because forward thinkers had a vision of providing for future generations...for future Renegades. Breaking ground on our beloved campus, overlooking the Kern River oil field was just the beginning of a rich history at 1801 Panorama Drive.

Sixty three years later, on Nov 8, 2016, Kern County voted Yes on J and brought $½ billion dollars to renovate and revitalize a campus that was built in the mid-fifties. What an exciting campaign year! The whole campus and our community were mobilized to get out the vote.
Bakersfield College recently celebrated the first grand opening of new construction made possible by Measure J, The Bakersfield College Vernon Valenzuela Veterans Resource Center.

The construction of the campus center is moving quickly, and it is immensely fulfilling to witness the daily transformation happening with the new structure emerging so dramatically ... I know the pride that President Ralph Prator and the faculty and staff must have felt in the 1950s when the campus arose for the first time.... It is the same pride and joy we are experiencing with the rebirth of our physical campus.

Besides the new buildings, there’s a lot of work happening to modernize our infrastructure, one of those things that we don’t see and we often take for granted, but is fundamental to the use of our beautiful facilities.

Over the break, I saw the most recent Star Wars, Episode IX, The Rise of Skywalker, and was struck by the never-ending list of names credited with the making of the movie. Leaving the theater, we remember Rey, Finn, Poe and Kylo Ren, but they could not do what they did without the critical, behind the scenes work, from hundreds of hands. ....its all infrastructure.

So, let’s roll the credits on some of the work we are doing with infrastructure development at BC:

**Facilities:** Bill Potter and BC’s M&O team are watching out for all the pipes, wiring, water utility, heating and cooling and other infrastructure essentials that we depend on. And as they are replacing and renovating these systems, they are doing it with consideration towards sustainability and preserving our planet. Recently we completed the upgrades to the Energy Management System and repairs to the central plant and chiller tank, providing our campus increased efficiency and control of temperature, water, and energy savings.
A combined project addressing water pressure, sewer, and gas lines across campus is currently underway. The first project on the horizon this semester includes modifications to remove a junk yard on the northeast corner of campus, adding valuable additional parking space. Other projects include storm drain modifications, adding security cameras to the campus, and making improvements to our data and fiber network lines.

**Technology:** On the technology front, Todd Coston and his BC team in collaboration with the district office have been hard at work completing phase 1 of the Wi-Fi project. Our team has provided coverage to all of our internal spaces across locations. Todd Coston tells me that his team continues to make small adjustments and add access points to trouble areas. After all, he tells me that “it’s more of an art than a science.”

Phase 2 of the Wi-Fi project is to provide Wi-Fi coverage in our external spaces. The challenge is to design coverage and capacity while considering the future structures provided by Measure J and how those buildings will impact Wi-Fi coverage. Once the design is complete, installation of access points will take place on existing buildings while we wait for final construction.

**Data Warehouse:** Are you a data coach, or an ed advisor trying to pull momentum point data or a lead faculty in a program wanting to do an analysis of student data ... and have you been frustrated when you tried to access the ODS and it was unavailable? Are you a department chair who has been exasperated with the data accuracy resulting in our IR office being required to troubleshoot post-completion data sets because the initial data pull was inaccurate?

The Research Data Warehouse is designed to address these issues and phase 1 of the new project is complete. Phase 1 included MIS files with student demographics, enrollment, awards, and more, national student clearinghouse data, high school performance, and more.

Phase 2 will expand the warehouse to include more integrated information like data from the Program Mapper, Starfish, Canvas, eLumen, and more. Thank you, Craig Hayward, Amber Hroch working with Bob Ngo and Gary Moser at the district.
Emergency Preparedness:

- Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown Connecticut - Dec 14, 2012 - 28 dead
- Umpqua Community College in Roseburg Oregon - October 1, 2015 - 10 dead
- UCLA in Los Angeles, California – June 16, 2016 – 3 dead
- Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida - February 14, 2018 - 17 dead.
- Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas – May 18, 2018 – 10 dead
- Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, California – November 14, 2019 – 1 dead

Since 2014 there have been 166 school shootings in the United States which resulted in 72 fatalities and 269 injured students, faculty, staff, or parents.

The phenomenon of having an active shooter on a school campus in our country has become part of our national conversation. At BC we are engaged in that conversation in two ways:

(1) Proactive Work: BC actively works to foster community, a sense of belonging combined with an alertness to be able to spot the troubled behaviors that have been associated when profiling active shooters. We have emphasized the importance of valuing “the other,” acknowledging “the other,” of building bridges of inclusivity and care. We must continue to deepen our own skillsets when responding to individuals or situations that we don’t agree with... by not reacting with assumptions that pull down the other but rather engaging fully with care and concern for the other.

(2) Ability to Respond: BC is participating in education and training to respond if a catastrophic situation should occur. We have participated in many tabletop exercises and other training. This spring during the week of Spring Break, on April 8, we will go even further by conducting a full scale, cross-county, multi-agency active shooter campus-wide emergency drill. We take the scouts motto seriously “Be prepared”.
I am proud that Bakersfield College is where our local emergency responders will converge to practice and enhance their skills in the case of a real emergency. Our campus is where learning happens... for our students, for us, and for our partners in the upcoming active shooter drill including:

- Bakersfield Police and Bakersfield Fire departments
- Kern County Sheriff, Kern County Fire department
- Kern County Office of Emergency Services
- Hall Ambulance, Highway Patrol, American Red Cross, Bakersfield Behavioral Health, and more.

I've asked Nicky Damania and Todd Coston, along with the Vice Presidents, to plan for an immersive experience during Spring Opening Day as a precursor to the April 8th large-scale drill. Please participate in this exercise... it may be emotionally intense to experience. If you feel distressed at any time, we will have a team from Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services available to you during this session.

**Conclusion**

**Bakersfield College is a place where learning happens,** it is a place of great commitment, a place of champions, and a place of great accomplishments. Our work is done in community across campus and across locations. Together, many hands, many hearts, and many minds work in unison to create opportunity and futures for our students and on our campus.... every member of our community matters.

Today, I am proud to serve as BC’s 10th President, YOUR president, as we continue our mission to provide quality education, uphold our core values, encourage Renegades to engage productively in their communities and in the world.

Thank you for being here this morning and welcome back to the Home of the Renegades.

After all, we are...

We are BC