

Address to the Board of Governors, November 16, 2015

Good Afternoon Board of Governors, Chancellor and colleagues. I am Kimberly Bligh, faculty member and Director of the Title V grant for advancing completion at Bakersfield College. I am speaking on behalf of the Dean of Engineering and Industrial Technology, Liz Rozell, who also oversees our new Baccalaureate program in Industrial Automation.

In January 2014, from the very beginning, our faculty were in favor of Senate Bill 850 and its promise to the communities of rural Kern. Our campus and community joined in the endeavor as we selected the Baccalaureate program, developed curriculum, secured the commitment from industry partners to help with needed resources then submitted our proposal to you for consideration. Then on January 20th, 2015, you approved BC to be part of the pilot. Thank you!

We have invested significant time and resources to develop curriculum and prepare laboratories and facilities. We have received program approval from the Central/Mother Lode Regional Consortium and submitted our proposal for substantive change to ACCJC. Our college is fully invested in efforts to provide a successful Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Automation to meet the workforce needs of our community and increase our low baccalaureate degree attainment rates in Kern Countt. We recently held several information sessions targeting 100s of interested students. We expect to offer our first set of junior level courses in the fall semester of 2016.

As our faculty were reviewing the Accreditation taskforce report and issues surrounding it, we learned that the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, NACIQI, is in the process of deciding whether to grant accreditation "recognition" for California community colleges with "their first baccalaureate degree by means of a substantive change review." This is on the agenda for NACIQI's December 2015 meeting.

Not only am I here representing Dean Rozell, Bakersfield College staff, faculty, and administrators, our community and industry partners, I also have personal interest in the baccalaureate degree process moving forward as originally slated. My son is currently finishing his prerequisites for the Baccalaureate program so that he can start his Junior level coursework in Fall 2016 and plans to be in the top of his class in our first graduating class in Industrial Automation in spring 2018.

Bakersfield College Administrators, Faculty and Staff request that the Chancellor and the Board of Governors not jeopardize this process in light of the recent Accreditation Taskforce Report.

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