COVID-19: Ahead of the Curve

In late January, Bakersfield College began closely monitoring the COVID-19 Pandemic, launching a communication and education campaign, releasing a Pandemic Response Plan, and hosting daily forums across campus. Anticipating the likelihood of a closure, BC began transitioning the first wave of 1,000 courses to an online environment in early March while supporting faculty in getting the necessary training to transition all 2,500 courses offered at BC in spring 2020. **By Thursday, March 19, BC had moved 100% of its courses fully online, 100% of its student services and academic support fully online, prepared all employees to work remotely, and closed the physical campus.** Below is a snapshot of BC’s COVID-19 response timeline:

- **January 30**
  - 9,823 cases
  - First COVID-19 Communication from BC Health Center

- **February 27**
  - 83,112 cases
  - Activated Incident Command Center
  - Initiated professional development to move classes online

- **March 2**
  - 93,016 cases
  - Released All-Campus Video Briefing & Renegade Roundup

- **March 6**
  - 102,050 cases
  - All-Campus Meeting in person and via Zoom
  - Canceled travel and large gatherings

- **March 8**
  - 109,991 cases
  - Shifted to policy of mitigation

- **March 9**
  - 114,381 cases
  - Canceled in-person meetings

- **March 12**
  - 134,576 cases
  - Classes and Student Services Moved Online

- **March 13**
  - 145,483 cases
  - Trump declares a National Emergency

- **March 16**
  - 182,490 cases
  - All Services moved fully online

- **March 18**
  - 218,822 cases
  - Delano & BCSW Campus Physical Closures

- **March 19**
  - 244,933 cases
  - Full Physical Closure; Newsom’s Stay at Home Order
  - Deployed BC Health Sciences students to assist medical providers
  - Initiated Back to College Program for displaced workers

- **March 20**
  - 275,550 cases
  - Initiated a Laptop Lending Program

- **March 25**
  - 531,865 cases
  - Public Launch of Back to College Program for displaced workers
  - U.S. becomes #1 in the world in confirmed cases at 85,435

*Ahead of the Curve... Playing where the Puck is Going to be*
COVID-19: Ahead of the Curve

BC is great – not just good – because, as Wayne Gretzky said, we have been playing to where the puck is going to be, rather than where the puck is. Always, ahead of the curve.

BC was ahead of the curve when our Incident Command team began meeting daily starting on February 27, drafting a full pandemic response plan and holding daily Zoom forums.

BC was ahead of the curve when we started in depth professional development for our faculty in February to systematically move courses online. Not one day of preparation, but 3 weeks.

BC was ahead of the curve when we started the approach of cancelling travel and large gatherings and events on March 4, moving to a primarily virtual teaching and support environment in waves to ensure minimal disruption to student learning and success.

BC was ahead of the curve when we instituted a shelter in place strategy by getting our employees off campus and working remotely.

BC was ahead of the curve when we closed our physical campus in the interest of public health hours before the Governor announced his statewide stay at home order.

Flattening the Curve: BC as a Public Health Ambassador

In my virtual forums and Renegade Roundup, I provide near-daily updates on the spread of COVID-19. Closely tracking several dashboards, including the Johns Hopkins University Dashboard and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation Dashboard, Bakersfield College faculty and staff are engaged in examining the data as public health ambassadors, equipped with knowledge of both the exponential growth of the virus and the latest CDC and Kern County Public Health advisories to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community. This snapshot shows the growth of the cases since my first COVID-19 Renegade Roundup update on March 3 to date.

<table>
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<th>March 3</th>
<th>April 8</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>93,016</td>
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<td>309</td>
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Staying in Community Virtually

Even though the 153-acre Bakersfield College campus on the hill at 1801 Panorama Drive has gone quiet over the past four weeks, there is an energetic buzz of activity happening in the new, virtual environment.

To keep us in connected to the Renegade family, I have been hosting almost daily virtual forums on various topics ranging from teaching and learning at a distance to addressing how to organize your workspace to be effective working from home. I start each forum with a short briefing on where BC is given the evolving nature of this epidemic and then move onto the topic of the day.

By maintaining regular communication with faculty and staff, my goal is to ensure BC faculty, staff, and students maintain its sense of community. The Virtual Seminar Series curriculum helps BC faculty, staff, and students stay connected and discuss best practices online, and gives us space to talk about healthy habits, self-care, and wellness.

Averaging over 250 attendees per seminar, the All-Campus Virtual Seminar Series takes place on Zoom. You can see archived recordings of all of the seminars on our website: https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/covid19

Join My Next Virtual Forum

April 13, 2020 at 3 pm
Community Leader Panelists:

Rudy Salas
California State Assembly

Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg
KCCD Trustee

David Bynum
Attorney at Law

Join the Zoom Seminar:
https://cccconfer.zoom.us/j/700274650
Phone: +1 669 900 6833
Meeting ID: 700 274 650
Nursing Students on Healthcare Frontline

On March 19, Bakersfield College initiated a partnership with Kern Medical, Dignity Health Systems, and the Bakersfield Heart Hospital to meet Kern’s local health care needs while ensuring a landing place for BC’s nursing students who are near completion. As a result, BC has worked with these partners to place 69 of BC’s level 4 registered nursing students – senior students in their final semester – into externships alongside registered nurses to provide direct care to a team of patients in the face of COVID-19.

This partnership will not only meet pressing demands in health care during a pandemic on a scale we have never witnessed in our lifetime, it will ensure students who have been working for years toward their goal will not see their achievement put on pause indefinitely just eight weeks before their expected graduation. Be sure to read the Bakersfield Californian’s coverage of this partnership.

Meeting Student Needs

To keep students on path, Bakersfield College has established a laptop loan program with the generous support of Greg and Mary Bynum for students affected by the transition to a fully online environment due to the COVID-19 threat. These 500 Chromebooks will be equipped with the necessary technology to ensure students are able to complete their college-level requirements.

In addition, BC has transitioned to a Drive-Thru Renegade Pantry to ensure student safety.

Back to College

While many organizations are closing their doors to create physical distance in the face of COVID-19, BC understands our responsibility now more than ever to open our doors wider.

In response to rapidly rising unemployment and in anticipation of an increased demand in the coming weeks and months, BC has launched a late-start, five-week semester to bring these individuals Back to College immediately. Check out KGET’s coverage of this news item.

Courses begin Monday, April 13. The program will feature 6, 7, and 13 unit options with financial aid available to cover the cost of courses and materials. Back to College courses will not only support students entering or reentering higher education after experiencing job loss, current BC students who may have withdrawn from a class as they adjusted or are ready to take a higher unit load due to a shift in their personal or work life may benefit, as well.

Data Snippet: Access to Technology

Based on a survey of 972 BC students that ran from March 20-23, there is an acute need to help BC students better access their classes right now.

- 14% say their internet access is inadequate for them to fully participate in their online classes.
- 21% access their classes primarily via their phone
- 23% use their cellular service as their primary internet service

This indicates about one in five BC students would benefit from improved access to technology.