



NEWS FOR THE BOARD

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BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE

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Denise Richardson, Ed.D., President

Fall Flex Day Welcomes Back BCC Community and Honors Retirees



Berkeley City College launched the new academic year with its Fall 2025 Flex Day on Friday, August 15, organized by the Professional Development Committee. The day began with a warm breakfast, providing faculty, staff, and administrators an opportunity to reconnect while enjoying a slideshow of summer vacation photos shared by employees. President Denise Richardson officially opened the event with a welcome address and administrative updates, setting the tone for the semester. "This is not just any fall semester," she remarked. "This is Fall 2025—a seminal period in our history that will further define who we are as a college and as leaders in our community."

The morning sessions highlighted Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG) projects on how faculty are using AI in the classroom, featuring insights from **Jenny Yap, Heather Dodge, Maha Jacobs, Zach Darwish, and Svetlana Greenberg**. Meanwhile, Student Services held a parallel meeting led by **Dean Amy Lee, HSI Director Lisette Flores, and Dean Raniyah Johnson**.

Following lunch, the BCC community honored recent retiree **Dr. Joseph Bielanski's 34-year service to BCC (and Vista College!)**, with cake and tributes from Jenny Lowood, Kelly

Pernell, and Academic Senate President Matt Freeman. We wish Dr. Bielanski well in his retirement and thank him for being a tireless advocate for California Community College students and faculty at the college, district, and state levels.

Throughout the day, attendees engaged in sessions designed to strengthen community and student support. Updates from the Undocu Student Taskforce addressed safety and privacy protocols for undocumented students. Another session introduced Handshake, a platform connecting BCC students to employment opportunities on-campus and the community at-large.

Professors **Chris Bernard** and **Ari Krupnick** shared their sabbatical projects in an afternoon session: Bernard's zero-textbook-cost economics courses blending music industry narratives with OER, and Krupnick's successful transition of the PCCD's only Formal Logic course to an online format.

Thank you to **PD Committee Chair Katie Koelle** for leading the organization efforts for a successful Flex Day, and volunteers for helping with setup and clean-up of the event!



BSI Designation Application Affirms BCC's Commitment to Black Student Success



In June, Berkeley City College submitted its application to become a **California Black Serving Institution**. This designation would affirm BCC's unwavering commitment to advancing the academic achievement, cultural affirmation, and holistic well-being of Black and African American students.

This commitment is a natural extension of BCC's mission to transform lives through learning, leadership, and service. Our institutional philosophy is clear: Black students deserve not only access to higher education, but spaces that celebrate their identities, honor their histories, and elevate their future aspirations. As a student-ready institution, we aim to lead by example in creating transformative learning environments where Black excellence is affirmed and amplified.

Berkeley City College Open House Welcomes Community Partners

On August 7, 2025, Berkeley City College hosted a Community Open House for local businesses, non-profits, academic institutions, and political leaders to strengthen community connections. The event featured a welcome from President Denise Richardson and PCCD Chancellor Tammeil Gilkerson, an administrator roundtable, and a feedback session on how BCC can best serve its partners.

Guests joined breakout sessions highlighting the Basic Needs Center, Career and Transfer Center, Veterans Resource Center, and Career Education programs.

BCC Society of Scholars Adds Rising Scholar Program

BCC is proud to welcome the Rising Scholar Program to the Society of Scholars Learning Communities this Fall. With BCC's acceptance to Rising Scholars, each of the PCCD campuses now have a Rising Scholar Program. This reaffirms BCC's commitment to serving all students, including justice-impacted students by creating equitable pathways that support their

The application included a 5-year strategic plan to support Black and African American Student Success. The plan's initiative focuses on four tent-pole strategies to achieve its goal: community-rooted outreach and enrollment efforts, scaling academic and wraparound support services, strategic resource allocation for sustainable impact, and professional learning and institutional culture change.

In alignment with the 5-year strategic plan to support Black and African American Student Success, BCC is proud to welcome the A2Mend Program to the Society of Scholars Learning Communities this Fall. The addition of the A2Mend program along with the thriving Umoja Community at BCC aligns with the strategic goal to scale up academic and wraparound services, offering dedicated embedded counseling, book support, identity-affirming events, leadership development, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Embedded tutoring will exist within courses to promote success in gateway subjects.

BCC's application reaffirms our commitment to building a college where Black students are seen, supported, and celebrated at every stage of their academic journey. [You can view the full application here](#). We look forward to hearing the decision regarding our application in the coming months.



Thank you to all of BCC's community partners who attended the event and exchanged ideas with us on how BCC can enhance our service to their institutions and the community.

BCC Hosts In-Person New Student Orientation

BCC hosted its first New Student Orientation on August 12 focused on introducing its newest students to key campus resources and information to help them have a successful first semester. The event brought nearly 300 students to campus, filling the auditorium and an overflow room where students watched the program on a Zoom livestream.

The event opened with a student services resource fair with representatives from programs including the Basic Needs Center, Wellness Center, Financial Aid, the Library, EOPS, and more. Students also had an opportunity to make a counseling appointment and get their student ID.

The orientation program started at 5:00pm and offered students an opportunity to meet President Richardson, VPI Chris Lewis and the Deans. Students learned how to access and use the Peralta Portal, Canvas, and Cranium Lab to book appointments with counselors and financial aid.

“What an amazing turnout! It’s clear this was something students wanted,” said Dean Kyla Oh.



“From organizing the tabling, updating slides, presenting, printing, emailing students, coordinating student workers, the raffle, and other logistics; arranging food; and just jumping in wherever help was needed, everyone’s contributions made the night a success. A special shout-out to Joe Bay, who came in on his day off to make sure all the AV was set up, thank you!”

Welcome Week Activities Kick Off Fall Semester



Berkeley City College launched the Fall semester with a series of Welcome Week events designed to help students connect, engage, and thrive. Each day at 12:15 PM in the Atrium, students took part in activities introducing them to campus life, resources, food, and swag!

Events began on Monday, August 18 with *Be Present*, featuring a “We Are BCC” photobooth and free Crave sandwiches. On Tuesday, August 19, *Be Engaged* encouraged students to meet

new friends through board games, a silent disco, and karaoke, along with free hotdogs. Wednesday, August 20’s *Be Informed* spotlighted campus programs and resources, paired with free boba. On Thursday, August 21, *Be Connected* introduced students to their ASBCC officers and the Basic Needs Center Food Pantry distribution and BCC swag giveaways. We were thrilled that the PCCD Marketing Team also joined the beginning of the semester festivities, giving away free BCC t-shirts to students and helping to inspire college spirit.

Thank you to **Dean Raniyah Johnson, ASBCC, and the rest of the organizers** for supporting community building during the first week of class!



BCC Awarded Workforce Development Grant

Berkeley City College was awarded a \$120,000 Industry Driven Regional Collaborative (IDRC) grant funding to develop a new biomanufacturing course that will expand our existing biotechnology program. This project will support curriculum development, hands-on student training and preparation, and provide paid internship opportunities in collaboration with industry partners. It received significant support from BCC's MESA program to serve eligible MESA students. The

Bay Area continues to experience strong demand for skilled biomanufacturing workers, and this project directly supports regional workforce needs by preparing students for high-wage, high-growth careers in the biotechnology industry.

Congratulations to **Dean Kyla Oh and MESA Director Armando Franco** for their successful grant application!

BCC Administrator Retreat



This year's BCC Administrator Retreat focused on setting administrative priorities and refining our goals for the 2025–2026 year. Highlights included an insightful budget management presentation by Merritt's VPAS, Marie Amboy; an accreditation update from VPI Chris Lewis; and a fun and engaging "River of Life" exercise that helped us connect and learn more about one another.

Supporting Student Success: Judy Sui Expands Generous Contributions to BCC

Judy Sui has made her second generous donation to Berkeley City College, contributing \$10,000 to augment the \$10,000 endowment she established last academic year, along with an additional \$10,000 to support the BCC Student Emergency Fund, bringing total additional contributions to \$20,000. We

are deeply grateful to Ms. Sui for her continued generosity and unwavering commitment to the success of BCC students.

"My goal is to make it easier for student parents who are struggling to remain in school," Sui shared.

President Richardson Selected to Wheelhouse Cohort



President Richardson was honored to be selected for the 8th Wheelhouse Cohort, joining 13 fellow Community College CEOs for the Institute's first gathering in July. **She described the experience as "one of the richest professional development opportunities of my career,"** and valued the chance to engage in meaningful dialogue on navigating today's evolving educational landscape.