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 Integration Tags	
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California Black-Serving Institutions Application

College/University

Berkeley City College

Website

www.berkeleycitycollege.edu

Address

2040 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94704

College/University President

Denise Richardson

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drichardson@peralta.edu

College/University President Phone Number

5109381130

Application Lead Contact Information

First Name

Denise

Last Name

Richardson

Phone

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Position

President

State your institution's commitment to address Black and/or African American student success and explain how your commitment is consistent with your institution's mission.

Berkeley City College is unwavering in its commitment to advancing the success of Black and African American students. Rooted in our mission to transform lives through innovative academic programs and holistic support, this commitment reflects both a moral imperative and a strategic priority. We recognize that systemic inequities have long impacted the educational experiences and outcomes of Black students, and we are dedicated to dismantling these barriers through culturally affirming and strategic actions that support student success. Further, BCC extends this commitment through its seven core institutional values, prioritizing equity and diversity at the forefront. Consistent with BCC's mission to create a dynamic and diverse learning environment, we center the voices, needs, and aspirations of Black and African American students in our institutional planning and decision-making. Our faculty, staff, and administrators actively engage in equity-centered practices that reaffirm Black identity, promote critical inquiry, and cultivate belonging. Through programs like Umoja and A2mend, culturally relevant curriculum, and targeted academic support services, we ensure that Black students are not only supported in earning degrees and certificates but are also empowered to lead, transfer, and thrive in their chosen pathways. To truly transform lives, we must cultivate educational environments where all students, especially those historically underserved, are seen, supported, and celebrated. BCC has diligently worked to fulfill the goals of an educational master plan that is bold, audacious and intentional in its focus on eliminating opportunity gaps in student success and completion for Black students. Recent hires at BCC also reflect the college's steadfast commitment to equity and diversity. Over the past two years, the proportion of Black administrators has increased significantly from 2 out of 10 to 5 out of 9, reflecting intentional efforts to diversify leadership. Notably, two years ago the College also appointed its first Black president. If Berkeley City College is selected for the Black-Serving Institution designation, it would formally recognize the college's ongoing, strategic commitment to advancing the success of Black and African American students.

Please state the percent of the institutions enrolled student population identifying as Black/African American for the current term.

Spring 2025 = 26%

Please state the number of students identifying as Black/African American enrolled at the college or university for the current term.

Spring 2025 = 1,842

Describe the academic goals for the institution to achieve within the five-year period in which the initial designation is awarded. The goals described in this section should outline the institution's plans to improve retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates of Black and African American students.

In alignment with its Educational Master Plan and Equity Plan, Berkeley City College (BCC) has committed to a clear set of equity-focused academic goals aimed at improving outcomes for Black and African American students over a 5-year period. These goals were developed through extensive consultation with campus stakeholders and have been formally affirmed by BCC's shared governance bodies, including the College Roundtable for Planning and Budgeting, the Academic Senate, and the Student Equity and Achievement Committee. This collective endorsement ensures the integrity of the goals and reflects a shared institutional vision grounded in transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. The first goal focuses on increasing enrollment and access for Black and African American students. BCC is expanding outreach through strategic community partnerships, culturally relevant marketing, and recruitment events that speak directly to the Black experience. These efforts aim to close the representation gap between Black students and the broader community demographics the college serves. The second goal is to enhance retention and persistence rates for Black and African American students. BCC is strengthening support systems such as the Umoja Scholars Academy, peer mentoring, and culturally responsive onboarding initiatives. These programs are designed to foster a sense of belonging, provide academic and personal support, and sustain student engagement throughout the college journey. The third goal targets improved transfer and completion rates. Through individualized academic counseling, degree audits, and transfer workshops, BCC supports Black and African American students in navigating their educational pathways efficiently and confidently. The Umoja program plays a critical role in this effort. berkeleycity.umojacommunity.org Additionally, BCC emphasizes learning communities and culturally affirming pedagogy as a key strategy for success. Programs like Umoja are being expanded across disciplines to provide holistic, identity-affirming experiences. berkeleycity.umojacommunity.org Finally, BCC is committed to data-driven decision-making. The college annually analyzes disaggregated student success data to guide equity interventions, ensuring responsiveness to real-time student needs. The program review and strategic plan annual update cycles include a focus on progress in achieving our goals of closing opportunity gaps for Black and African American students. There are also other related These goals reflect BCC's deep institutional commitment to equity and excellence, and through the active engagement of its shared governance bodies, the college is building a coordinated and sustainable approach to closing opportunity gaps and advancing success for Black and African American students.

Describe the academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. Specifically, outline how these goals will improve academic equity gaps in retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates between your Black and African American students and the overall student population. Provide data-driven benchmarks and strategies for achieving these objectives.

Berkeley City College 5-Year Academic Equity Plan as a California Black-Serving Institution Berkeley City College (BCC) has crafted a bold and data-driven five-year academic equity plan to address and eliminate longstanding achievement gaps that impact Black and African American students. As part of its commitment to becoming a formally designated Black-Serving Institution (BSI), BCC is focused on improving outcomes in three critical areas: retention, time-to-degree and certificate completion, and graduation rates. Current institutional data underscore the urgency of this work. A 9-percentage-point gap persists in year-to-year retention, with only 79% of Black students returning compared to 84% of the general student population. The disparity is even more pronounced among part-time students, with Black learners averaging 8.1 years to complete an associate degree—over a year longer than the collegewide average of 6.9 years. Most notably, only 24% of Black students persisted from fall 2022 to fall 2023, signaling systemic barriers that require immediate and sustained institutional action. To address these inequities, Berkeley City College has established clear benchmarks and a comprehensive set of strategies, with the goal of eliminating these gaps by 2030. Goal 1: Increase Retention of Black and African American Students by 25% To foster stronger student engagement and belonging, BCC aims to increase fall-to-fall persistence from 24% to at least 39% by 2030. The college will implement several high-impact, culturally affirming practices. These include the expansion of the Umoja Summer Bridge Program, the introduction of Black Student Welcome events, and the launch of peer mentoring initiatives to build early connections. BCC will also establish a Black Student Completion Team, a cross-functional group of counselors, advisors, and faculty trained in anti-racist and culturally sustaining practices to provide holistic student support. A new early alert system using predictive analytics will help identify students at risk of disengagement and trigger timely interventions such as tutoring, financial aid outreach, and mental health services. Additionally, a newly embedded First-Year College Success Course, housed within Umoja and other learning communities, will focus on academic identity, student empowerment, and campus engagement. Timeline: 2025–2026 Pilot onboarding and mentoring programs. 2026–2027 Implement early alert system campuswide. 2027–2030 Monitor and refine based on student data. Goal 2:

Reduce Time-to-Degree and Certificate Completion The second goal seeks to reduce the average time-to-degree for Black and African American students from 3.8 years to 3.2 years, bringing it in line with the collegewide average. A central component of this strategy is the implementation of comprehensive education planning for all new Black students in their first semester, paired with structured follow-up through dedicated counseling. To ensure efficient academic progress, BCC will roll out block scheduling, guarantee access to high-demand, degree-applicable courses, and align offerings with program maps to avoid delays in course sequencing. The college also plans to expand Zero-Cost Textbook Courses (ZTC) to reduce financial burdens and promote higher completion rates. Academic support will be bolstered through a peer academic coaching program, providing just-in-time guidance from trained student mentors.

Timeline: 2025–2026 Launch education planning and expand ZTC offerings. 2026–2027 Pilot block scheduling; assess coaching impact. 2027–2030 Integrate changes into Program/Career Pathways structures.

Goal 3: Increase Graduation Rates of Black and African American Students by 20% To close the graduation rate gap, BCC aims to increase the three-year graduation rate for Black students by 20%. This will be achieved by expanding access to high-impact practices such as Umoja, A2MEND, and the HBCU Transfer Pilot Program. The college is also committed to embedding culturally relevant pedagogy throughout both general education and major-specific coursework.

Timeline: 2025–2026: Expand Umoja, launch HBCU pilot, begin course redesigns. 2026–2030: Institutionalize completion coaching and evaluate course success data. BCC will undertake instructional redesign of high-attrition courses, incorporating inclusive grading practices, culturally responsive content, and enhanced scaffolding to support student success. A new degree completion coaching initiative will provide focused support for students with 45 or more units, including degree audits, petition assistance, milestone tracking, and graduation workshops, creating a clear and supportive pathway to completion.

Accountability, Monitoring, and Sustainability. To ensure transparency and long-term sustainability, BCC is establishing several accountability structures. A Black Student Equity Dashboard will publicly track disaggregated retention, completion, and graduation metrics in real time, with data reviewed twice annually through shared governance processes. A newly formed Black Student Success Council, co-chaired by a college administrator and a Black faculty member, will oversee implementation of the BSI plan, conduct annual equity audits, and advise on policy and budget decisions aligned with plan goals. All faculty, staff, and administrators will participate in annual equity and anti-racism training, reinforcing a shared institutional culture of inclusion and accountability. In addition, BCC's Wellness Center will continue to play a central role in supporting student mental health through trauma-informed practices and campus-wide wellness initiatives, including annual summits.

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement Year Milestones: 2025–2026 Launch onboarding, coaching, and education planning initiatives. Publish baseline dashboard. 2026–2027 Implement early alert system. Begin course redesign and block scheduling pilots. 2027–2028 Midpoint review of persistence and degree completion data. Adjust programming accordingly. 2028–2029 Expand completion coaching and finalize ZTC scale-up. Conduct full program audit. 2029–2030 Assess full 5-year outcomes. Publish final impact report. Submit proposal for continued BSI funding.

Conclusion Berkeley City College's five-year equity plan represents a strategic, collegewide commitment to fostering equitable outcomes for Black and African American students. Through culturally responsive programming, structural reforms, and robust accountability systems, BCC is positioning itself as a leader in student-centered equity work. By 2030, the college aims not only to eliminate existing achievement gaps, but to ensure that Black students thrive, persist, graduate, and experience a deep sense of belonging throughout their academic journey.

Identify institutional memberships, charters, or affiliations to organizations dedicated to the advancement of Black and or African American Students.

Umoja Community – Funding from State of California A2Mend Community -Supported with State Charter Program funding CCC to HBCU Pilot Program - State Funding for HBCU Transfer Hub

Attach your institution's strategic plan to address the academic goals and academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. The strategic plan should include, but not be limited to, all the following: (A) a mission statement that addresses the applicant's commitment to serve Black and or African American students; (B) outreach services to potential Black and or African American students; (C) existing and/or proposed academic or basic needs support services to assist in the academic success of Black and/or African American students. Support services described in this section may include campus affinity centers, coursework, activities or events; (D) an outline of the planned allocation of resources during the five-year period in which the initial designation awarded; (E) an outline of how the institution is using or will use existing resources to provide culturally relevant professional development for the applicant's faculty and staff in pursuit of Black Serving Institution goals.

1. [637627-143404975-Berkeley-City-College-Five-Year-Strategic-Plan-for-BSI-Designation.docx](#)

4-year College/University applicants submit the following for the previous three academic years: (A) Submit graduation rates for the previous three academic years for all students within the normal time and up to 150 percent of the normal time to degree completion. (B) Submit graduation rates for Black and African American students, within the normal time and up to 150 percent of the normal time to degree completion.

Community College applicants submit the following for the previous three academic years: (A) The number of degree and certificate programs completed by all students, and by Black and or African American students. (B) The number of all students, and of Black and or African American students, who completed degree and certificate programs within normal time and up to 300 percent of normal time to degree completion. (C) The student transfer rates for all students, and for Black and or African American students, to four-year colleges and universities.

[1. 637627-143405137-BCC-Cert_Degrees.pdf](#)

Please Submit a certification, in writing, by the chief administrative officer of the college or university, of the applicant's commitment to address Black and African American student success that is consistent with the applicant's mission.

[1. 637627-146850640-BCC-BSI-Letter-of-Commitment.pdf](#)

Describe the campus resources available to promote equity and inclusion for Black and African American students. Include details on academic support programs, cultural centers, mentorship opportunities, student organizations, financial aid initiatives, and any other institutional efforts designed to foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment.

Berkeley City College: Resources in Support of Black and African American Student Success Berkeley City College (BCC) is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive, affirming environment where Black and African American students can thrive academically, socially, and personally. BCC has intensified its focus on providing culturally relevant support systems that reflect the lived experiences, histories, and aspirations of its Black student community. This institutional effort is driven by the belief that when Black students are fully seen, heard, and supported, their academic outcomes and leadership potential are limitless. At the core of BCC's academic support infrastructure is the Umoja Community Program, a culturally responsive learning community that integrates African American history, literature, identity, and culturally sustaining pedagogy into the student experience. Umoja provides students with proactive counseling, personalized academic advising, and wraparound support services, including priority registration, book assistance, and career and transfer preparation. The program is designed not only to help students navigate college successfully, but also to foster leadership development through regional conferences, community symposia, and mentorship opportunities with Black professionals and alumni. Additional academic support comes from the Learning Resource Center (LRC), which provides tutoring, writing labs, and embedded peer mentoring, all framed by equity-centered instructional strategies. Students also benefit from embedded academic counselors who offer consistent, culturally competent support to historically marginalized populations. To further cultivate a sense of belonging, BCC is developing the Black Cultural Resource Center (BCRC), which will be housed in a newly constructed building on campus. This space will serve as a cultural and academic hub where Black students can access resources, connect with peers, and participate in programming that affirms identity and community. Co-designed by students, staff, and faculty, the BCRC will reflect the heritage and contributions of the African diaspora while offering space for study, peer mentoring, and social justice education. The center will also be home to student-led organizations, such as the Black Student Union and the East African Student Union, which support cultural events, community forums, and advocacy campaigns focused on equity and justice. Intersectional groups like the LGBTQ Student Club also provide opportunities for Black students at the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality to build solidarity and amplify shared experiences. Mentorship and leadership development are foundational to BCC's student success strategy. Programs like Umoja and A2Mend foster intergenerational dialogue and support through faculty and peer mentorship models. In addition, the college is piloting a Black Scholars Mentorship Initiative, which pairs students with Black faculty, alumni, and industry professionals in their fields of interest. These relationships provide academic coaching, career guidance, internship access, and long-term professional development. Black students are also encouraged to take on leadership roles in campus governance through programs like the Associated Students of Berkeley City College (ASBCC) and the Student Ambassador Program. These roles give students the opportunity to shape policy, advocate for equity, and represent their communities in decision-making spaces. Recognizing the financial barriers that disproportionately impact Black students, BCC has prioritized economic support and basic needs services. The college offers emergency microgrants, book vouchers, and transportation subsidies to help alleviate financial strain. Through the Basic Needs Center, students are connected to essential resources such as food, housing, and healthcare support. In partnership with the BCC

Foundation and local community-based organizations, the college also provides scholarships specifically for Black and African American students, including those planning to transfer to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or pursuing degrees in fields where they are underrepresented. The Financial Aid Office offers culturally responsive services, including FAFSA and CADAA support for Umoja students, as well as ongoing programming like Cash 4 College Nights and weekly drop-in workshops. Staff receive additional training on navigating special financial aid cases, such as appeals and dependency overrides, ensuring that BCC's financial aid services are accessible and equitable. This comprehensive support system is backed by institutional infrastructure and accountability. BCC has reactivated its Student Equity Committee with a specialized taskforce focused on advancing equity through data-informed planning and policy. As a designated BSI, the college is strengthening partnerships with Black-led organizations and HBCUs while scaling culturally grounded initiatives across departments. These institutional investments reflect a campus-wide commitment to equity and student transformation. Through this integrated and intentional approach, Berkeley City College affirms that Black student success is central to its mission. As the college continues to evolve, its vision remains rooted in the transformative power of education, and the belief that every Black student deserves not just access to higher education, but the opportunity to excel, lead, and thrive.

Include any additional information that the governing board should consider in evaluating your institution's readiness to be identified as a Black Serving Institution.

A testament to Berkeley City College's sustained commitment to Black and African American student success is the strength and longevity of our Umoja program, which has been serving students for over eight years. Each year, BCC celebrates Umoja graduates at our Rites of Passage ceremony, an event that draws alumni who have gone on to complete graduate degrees and return to support the next generation. These alumni contribute by offering supplemental counseling, mentoring students, and demystifying the transfer process—creating a powerful intergenerational support network rooted in cultural affirmation and academic achievement. This model has had a profound impact on student persistence, transfer rates, and sense of belonging within Umoja. Designation as a California Black-Serving Institution (BSI) would provide the necessary visibility, and structural support to expand this successful model beyond Umoja, ensuring that all Black and African American students at BCC benefit from culturally responsive mentorship, enhanced academic services, and community-rooted support systems. With BSI support, BCC can scale this intergenerational approach collegewide, building on what already works and deepening our institutional capacity to serve Black excellence.

An applicant is eligible for designation if the applicant meets all the following requirements:

- (1) Has at least 10 percent of the college's or university's enrolled student population identifying as Black and or African American students or has at least 1,500 Black and or African American students enrolled at the college or university.
- (2) Submits an initial or renewal application, as applicable, to the Statewide Central Office for the Advancement of Black Student Success on or before the application deadline

[Privacy](#)

Berkeley City College Five-Year Institutional Strategic Plan (2025–2030)

Supporting Black and African American Student Success In Pursuit of California Black-Serving Institution Designation

A Bold Commitment to Black Student Success

Berkeley City College (BCC) is proud to present this five-year strategic plan as part of our pursuit of formal designation as a California Black-Serving Institution (BSI). This designation affirms our 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. At BCC, we acknowledge the enduring impacts of systemic racism and educational inequity, and we embrace our responsibility to confront these realities through bold, equity-centered action. 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.

Community-Rooted Outreach and Enrollment Efforts

To support a strong pipeline of Black and African American students into higher education, BCC is reimagining its outreach and recruitment strategies with an emphasis on cultural relevance, community connection, and systemic partnership.

Starting in 2025, BCC will launch “**Black Futures Rising**,” a series of outreach events held in collaboration with local high schools in Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond, Emeryville, and San Leandro. These events will offer workshops for students and families on dual enrollment, CCC-to-HBCU pathways, financial aid, and career planning—all designed with Black youth in mind.

The college will deepen partnerships with key community-based organizations including *Cinnamongirl Inc.*, *The Hidden Genius Project*, and *East Oakland Youth Development Center* to co-sponsor college access events and summer bridge experiences. Outreach will also extend to culturally rooted spaces such as barbershops, churches, and neighborhood coalitions—ensuring that students and families encounter BCC where they already feel seen and supported.

In the first year of implementation, BCC plans to hire a part-time **Black Student Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator** to lead this work. This position will focus on sustaining community partnerships, coordinating peer ambassador involvement, and managing enrollment data from inquiry to matriculation. A companion initiative will focus on **parent and caregiver engagement**, offering culturally responsive orientations and resource fairs in community settings, ensuring families are prepared and empowered as educational partners.

Academic and Wraparound Support Services

To eliminate equity gaps in retention, persistence, and completion, BCC will expand wraparound services that address the academic, financial, emotional, and cultural needs of Black students. These services are designed to foster a sense of belonging and affirm the lived experiences of Black learners.

Over the next five years, BCC will scale its **Umoja Community** and **A2Mend programs**, embedding Umoja-aligned course sections across key disciplines including English, math, sociology, business, and African American studies. These learning communities will offer dedicated embedded counseling, book support, identity-affirming events, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Embedded tutoring will exist within courses to promote success in gateway subjects.

In parallel, the college will implement **Degree Completion Coaching** for students with 45 or more units, providing one-on-one support in navigating graduation petitions, preparing for transfer, and mapping post-college goals.

To meet students' basic needs, BCC will expand access to emergency grants, transportation subsidies, and meal vouchers, prioritizing students engaged in Umoja and A2Mend. In the second year of this plan, BCC will open the **Black Cultural Resource Center (BCRC)**, a dedicated on-campus space for studying, mentoring, cultural programming, and community building. Co-located with the college's Wellness Center, the BCRC will also offer access to mental health counselors trained in racial trauma and culturally responsive care.

Recognizing that student leadership and belonging are essential to academic success, BCC will actively support the development of Black student organizations, host an annual **Black Student Leadership Conference**, and facilitate monthly "**Black Voices Matter**" forums to elevate student perspectives and leadership in college decision-making.

Strategic Resource Allocation for Sustainable Impact

Berkeley City College is committed to the long-term sustainability of this plan through intentional and equitable resource allocation. Using general funds, categorical equity dollars, and presidential discretionary resources, BCC will phase in strategic investments over the five-year period.

In **Years 1–2**, the college will focus on foundational infrastructure. This includes hiring a part-time Black Outreach Coordinator and a culturally responsive part-time mental health counselor, expanding Umoja staffing, and launching the Black Cultural Resource Center with appropriate technology, furnishings, and student support staff.

In **Years 3–4**, resource investment will support programmatic scale. The college will host a **districtwide Black Student Equity Summit**, expand culturally relevant course offerings, and provide faculty stipends to redesign curriculum through an Afrocentric and equity-informed lens. Funds will also support student travel for visits to **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)** and regional transfer fairs.

By **Year 5**, BCC will commission an **independent equity audit** and conduct a summative evaluation of the BSI plan. Findings will be publicly shared to ensure transparency and shape the next phase of strategic planning. Permanent staffing for core initiatives will be secured through shared governance and institutional budget planning.

Professional Learning and Institutional Culture Change

Cultural transformation requires collective learning, reflection, and accountability. To support faculty, staff, and administrators in this work, BCC will invest in robust professional development aligned with Black student success.

Beginning in Year 1, all employees will be invited to participate in an annual **Racial Equity Institute**, which will explore anti-Blackness, institutional bias, and cultural humility. These sessions will be held during FLEX week and embedded into the broader professional development calendar.

The college will also offer a **Black Student Success Certificate Series**, designed to deepen practice in inclusive pedagogy, culturally affirming advising, addressing racial microaggressions, trauma-informed support, and classroom belonging. Participants will be recognized annually at end-of-year ceremonies.

In addition, faculty who teach high-enrollment gateway courses will be invited to join the **Equity Teaching Fellowship**, a cohort-based professional learning community focused on data analysis, curriculum redesign, and peer mentorship. To extend this work across the campus, BCC will host a **Black Excellence Speaker Series**, partnering with Black scholars, educators, and community leaders to facilitate keynotes, dialogues, and interactive learning circles open to all.

Through these initiatives, Berkeley City College will ensure that equity is not just a goal, but a shared daily practice that transforms how we teach, advise, support, and lead.

Conclusion: Leading with Purpose and Accountability

Berkeley City College's Five-Year Strategic Plan represents more than a blueprint for institutional change, it is a declaration of our values and vision. We are committed to building a college where Black students are seen, supported, and celebrated at every stage of their academic journey.

As we pursue designation as a California Black-Serving Institution, we do so with the full weight of our mission and educational masterplan behind us: to be a place where equity is actionable, community is central, and Black student success is not an aspiration, but a reality.

(A) Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Academic Year

Student Group	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024
All Students	965	864	967
Black / African American	219	180	253

(B) Completion Rates by Time to Degree/Certificate

Associate Degrees Awarded (Normal and 300% Time)

Student Group	Normal Time	300% Time
2021–2022		
All Students	2	38
Black / African American	2	38
2022–2023		
All Students	1	34
Black / African American	1	34
2023–2024		
All Students	3	39
Black / African American	3	39

Certificates Awarded (Normal and 300% Time)

Student Group	Normal Time	300% Time
2021–2022		
All Students	23	48
Black / African American	23	48
2022–2023		
All Students	25	42
Black / African American	25	42
2023–2024		
All Students	33	67
Black / African American	33	67

(C) Transfers to Four-Year Institutions

Student Group	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024
All Students	536	446	419
Black / African American	62	47	48



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Berkeley City College BSI CEO Letter of Commitment

June 5, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Berkeley City College, I write in strong and enthusiastic support of our application for the Black Student Initiative (BSI) Designation.

Berkeley City College, as a proud institution within the Peralta Community College District, is deeply committed to advancing access, social justice and meaningful support that increases academic and professional opportunities for every student we serve. Equity is not a peripheral objective at our college, rather, it is foundational to our mission, our strategic planning, and our daily operations. This commitment is evident across our campus, from curriculum development and hiring practices to student services and institutional leadership.

Our college has consistently worked to create an inclusive environment where Black students feel seen, supported, and empowered. We have implemented equity-centered hiring practices, advocated for inclusive policies, and strengthened our leadership and instructional teams to better reflect the diversity of our student population. Through intentional, systemic approaches, Berkeley City College continues to cultivate a culture that values representation, student voice, and community engagement.

Institutional strategies at Berkeley City College are informed by research, data, and collaborative governance. We work across departments and with community partners to design and implement initiatives that are measurable, sustainable, and impactful. Culturally responsible pedagogy, focused support for Black students, and an emphasis on dismantling structural barriers are key components of our equity agenda.

The Black Student Initiative Designation would reinforce and amplify our efforts to serve Black students with excellence. It aligns with our institutional priorities and provides a critical opportunity to deepen our impact through data-informed, community-driven strategies that support academic success and long-term achievement.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of Berkeley City College's application. We look forward to the opportunity to further our efforts through this important designation.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Richardson". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Denise" and last name "Richardson" clearly legible.

Denise Richardson, Ed.D.
President