



Chancellor's Update

February 1, 2024

Colleagues,

I would like to share a few highlights from December and January from our district office. In this update is information on:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Community Awards Breakfast
- CRC Carbon TerraVault Clean Energy Park Tour at Elk Hills
- Leadership Academy Legislative Conference
- BC Spring Opening Day
- Introduction of new Chancellor
- Introduction of new BC President
- Proposed 2024-25 State Budget

Martin Luther King Jr. Community Awards Breakfast

I had the wonderful privilege of attending the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Awards Breakfast with our acting Bakersfield College President Steven Watkin, Trustees Yovani Jimenez, Romeo Agbalog and Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg, and our State Chancellor Sonya Christian. The event hosted close to 500 people including local dignitaries and was held at the Martin Luther King Center in east Bakersfield. We heard from a variety of speakers as different awards were presented. Our own Steve Watkin was recognized for his local leadership and being the first Black president of Bakersfield College. The event served as a great reminder of the work Dr. King did and his continued inspiration of those carrying on that work in our local communities today.



CRC Carbon TerraVault Clean Energy Park Tour at Elk Hills



On December 12th we toured the California Resource Corporation (CRC) Carbon TerraVault (CTV) Clean Energy Park in Elk Hills. California is leading the way in pursuing innovative technology solutions to achieve its emissions reduction goals and combat climate change. At CRC and CTV, they are committed to the energy transition and decarbonization of our local economies consistent with the state's decarbonization goals. Recognized as a key technology in reducing emissions around the world, carbon capture and storage (CCS) is one of the best solutions to help mitigate climate change by offering both immediate decarbonization benefits and a long-term solution to reach and maintain carbon neutrality.

Leadership Academy Legislative Conference

Each year the current cohort of the Kern CCD Leadership Academy takes a trip to Sacramento to participate in the Community College League of California's Legislative Conference. It's an opportunity for the Academy participants to learn more about how our district works and gives them an opportunity to advocate with legislators on key Community College issues. It's also an opportunity to interact with some of our trustees and campus presidents. I always like to join the academy on the trips to Sacramento which gives me an opportunity to meet some of our aspiring future District/College leaders.



BC Spring Opening Day



I attended the BC Opening Day on January 11th at the BC Events Center. It was fun to welcome back the amazing faculty and staff and to hear from the various constituent groups. There is always a bit of electricity and energy in the air when we begin a new semester. We know this semester is unique for Bakersfield College because it marks the arrival of the new BC president. We appreciate all the work President Steven Watkin has done to keep BC moving and his dedication to our district and Bakersfield College. Here's to a great semester filled with learning, growth, and success!

Introduction of new Chancellor

On Tuesday, January 23rd Kern CCD held the annual Board of Trustees retreat. The new Kern CCD Chancellor, Dr. Steven Bloomberg was able to join us and begin to familiarize himself with the college presidents and District Office teams. Although he does not officially start until March 1st, it was an opportunity to welcome him to our district and give him a taste of the amazing work being done by our colleges. Dr. Bloomberg said in his acceptance comments, "I am honored to build upon the great legacy of the Kern Community College District and look forward to working with faculty, staff, and administration at the colleges and the district office to plan for the future. I am grateful to the Kern CCD Board of Trustees for this opportunity and I am ready to go to work."



Introduction of new BC President



Also joining us at the Board Retreat was the new BC President, Dr. Jerry Fliger. Dr. Fliger will not start with BC until March 11th but it was an opportunity for him to interact with the new chancellor and spend time with the campus presidents and Bakersfield College administrators. "Bakersfield College is at an exciting time in its journey, and I am looking forward to becoming part of this wonderful institution and joining the Bakersfield community," said Dr. Fliger. "Working in partnership with the campus community, I look forward to the many possibilities that await. The Kern Community College District has much to offer and by working in conjunction with the District and our sister colleges, BC will continue striving to realize its mission." Both of these leaders bring new energy and new perspectives to our district. I'm excited to have them on board.

Proposed 2024-25 State Budget

The Governor's proposed budget for 2024-25 should be considered a "win" for community colleges. While there isn't a lot of new money coming into the system, as of yet we aren't having significant reductions like some other agencies. The State is billions of dollar behind in revenues for last year, this year and for the forecasted next couple of years. This may present some funding growth challenges for the next several years, but thanks to the District's reserves, we are well positioned to manage the State decrease in funding and its associated impacts on our students and College/District operations.

That's it for this month. I hope you have a great semester!

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Burke
Chancellor

