



Chancellor's Update

December 4, 2023

Colleagues,

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

- **CCLC Presentations**
- **BC Stories of Hope and Redemption Seminar**
- **KEDC Energy Summit**
- **Cerro Coso Honors Professor Lucila Gonzalez-Cirre**
- **BC Agriculture Science Ground Breaking**
- **Delano Regenerative Farm CREL Demonstration Project**
- **Update on Chancellor Search**
- **Chancellor's Cabinet Retreat**

CCLC Presentations

Community College League of California held their annual conference in Palm Springs this month. I had the opportunity to present in two different sessions representing Kern CCD. The first session was titled, "**Central Valley Transfer Project Going Statewide**" The sessions description said, "*This project*



bean with the goal of increasing Central Valley CC transfer to UC Merced. Today the project also includes partnerships with CSU Bakersfield, CSU Stanislaus and 12 Central Valley CC's. The success of the project is going statewide with new partners in a regional effort to expand to Southern California" In this session I presented with retired Bakersfield College faculty member Jennifer Johnson, as well as peers from other districts.



The second session was titled, “**9th grade to Baccalaureate: Guided Pathways Approach to Student Success**” and the session description said, “*Kern CCD’s three colleges in Central Valley, California have expanded the Guided Pathways framework to promote equitable student success across high schools and universities. By*

providing 9th grade students in feeder high schools with education plans leading to bachelor’s degrees and earning college credits, Kern has achieved higher completion rates.” In this session I presented with Kern CCD Trustees Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg, Yovani Jimenez, Christina Scrivner, and Deputy Chancellors Zav Dadabhoy.

BC Stories of Hope and Redemption Seminar

Bakersfield College held an inspirational event titled “Stories of Hope and Redemption,” a panel conversation with formerly incarcerated business owners and entrepreneurs. This enlightening event featured a panel of successful entrepreneurs who have transcended the barriers of incarceration to establish thriving businesses and redefine their life narratives. The event was hosted by Bakersfield College Acting President, Steven Watkin and took place November 8th.

Panelists shared their remarkable journeys, shedding light on the pivotal role education played in their rehabilitation and subsequent success. Our facilitator for the event was Keith Wolaridge, author, a trustee for the Panama-Buena Vista Union School District, and a full-time Business professor at Bakersfield College.

KEDC Energy Summit

The Kern Economic Development Corporation held its 17th Annual KEDC Energy Summit on November 15th. The event was held at the Bakersfield Marriott and Convention Center. Speakers included a diverse group from local industry, Kern County, local colleges and our very own Sean Hancock, President of Cerro Coso and Dean Steve Waller for Bakersfield College.

Cerro Coso Honors Professor Lucila Gonzalez-Cirre on Dia de los Muertos



Dia de los Muertos is a festival where we celebrate, remember, and honor family and friends who have died. This year, Cerro Coso spent the holiday remembering one of our own.

Lucila Gonzalez-Cirre is an English and Foreign Languages professor who passed away earlier this year. A dedicated member of the Cerro Coso team for more than 20 years, she was named Faculty of the Year in 2022. We will always remember her joy, enthusiasm, and care for her students. *Latinos Unidos*

club has set up this Ofrenda in the library to remember Professor Gonzalez-Cirre, as well as other family, friends, and loved ones.

BC Agriculture Science Ground Breaking

Bakersfield College celebrated a significant milestone with the groundbreaking ceremony for its new Agriculture Sciences building. The event marked the commencement of construction on a cutting edge, 3-story facility that will revolutionize the learning experience for students within the College's top-ranked agriculture program.



Funded by Measure J, a \$502 million bond passed in November 2016, the new Agriculture Sciences building is planned to include an impressive 49,546 square feet of total building area, which includes exterior covered areas. This state-of-the-art learning space will be a hub of innovation, providing students and faculty with cutting-edge resources to advance research and education in agriculture. The building will house food production and sciences facilities, a mechanized agricultural workshop, and a range of agricultural sciences labs, including those for tissue/growth, animal studies, vet tech, horticulture, soils, plant science, and forestry.

Delano Regenerative Farm CREL Demonstration Project

Earlier this month, the BC Agriculture Department and the California Renewable Energy Laboratory unveiled their new Regenerative Agriculture Education Center at the BC Delano Campus. This facility, which was made possible by a generous donation by the Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation, will lead the way in development of sustainable agricultural practices at the community college level statewide. As the Regenerative Agriculture Education Center develops, the farm will include a solar greenhouse, composting and smart irrigation systems, and a demonstration project testing agrivoltaics, which involves growing crops alongside solar panels. As the state chancellor's office urges campuses to adopt sustainability measures as part of Project 2030, BC's Regenerative Agriculture Education Center will help our district stay on the cutting edge of mitigating the effects of climate change.



Update on Chancellor Search

Just a quick update on the chancellor search. The consultants and screening committee have been very busy reviewing candidates and narrowing down the pool for the board to review. The process is still on schedule. The Board of Trustees will review finalists on December 4th. I appreciate the rigor of the process and the dedication of those serving on the committee. The work they are doing is important and critical to finding the next leader of the Kern CCD. The completion of their work also means I get to return to being a retiree!

Chancellor's Cabinet Retreat

On November 29th, Chancellor's Cabinet convened in-person at the district office for a short retreat. The focus of the retreat was reviewing the data related to the Student Centered Funding Formula and to discuss the strategies for moving forward. It was also an opportunity to review the board goals and priorities in preparation for each college to update their Targets and Tactics documents that go to the Board of Trustees for review.

This will be the last newsletter for this year. As we close our Fall semester and prepare to spend time over the winter break with friends and family, I ask that you please find time for yourself to recharge and take a break. This semester has been very busy and the Spring semester looks to be busy as well. Thank you again for the work you do and your commitment to our district. It shows as we continue to be a leader throughout the state on so many initiatives. It is a pleasure serving you and I wish you all a happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Burke
Chancellor

