



## **Statement to the Press**

**President Sonya Christian**

May 14, 2013. 4:00 p.m.

Good afternoon. Thank you for taking time to be here with us today.

As Amber Chiang has informed you, we received an inquiry from the Southern California Football Association (SCFA) which triggered a thorough investigation by the college, lasting several months. Our investigation revealed a number of infractions of the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) rules and regulations which we then reported to the SCFA. Today we received a letter from Commissioner Sartoris of the SCFA as well as Carlyle Carter, CEO of CCCAA, informing us of the sanctions that are to be imposed for these infractions.

Let me be very clear at the outset – the non-compliance issues reside completely and solely on the shoulders of the institution and are in no way a reflection on the caliber or integrity of our student athletes. Our student athletes did nothing wrong. To this point, we believe that appropriate sanctions would not impact students. Sanctions against the institution are understandable and appropriate, but these student athletes should not be made to bear the consequences of institutional non-compliance issues that go back many years. In every way our football team earned the wins which are now being voided; but these “wins” cannot be taken away from our hearts. They are excellent students and they are champions, and we will continue to celebrate them as such.

BC is first and foremost an institution of higher education; our student athletes are first and foremost students. Our 2012 Bakersfield College football team athletes were not only champions on the field, but champions where it mattered most, in the classroom. Our student scholars in football did very well in their classes with strong GPAs - 25 had a 3.0 or higher GPA - four with a 4.0 grade point average! In fact, the athletic program overall has higher completion and progression rates than the campus – e.g. the program has an 80.5% success rate, a 94.1% retention rate, a 74.5% graduation rate, and a 78.3% transfer rate four-year institutions. (Source: 2010-2011 Program Review)

BC is also an institution of integrity. As unhappy as I was upon learning about the infractions, and as disappointed as I am at the severity of the SCFA and CCCAA sanctions impact on students, I am extremely proud of how we, BC personnel, have handled this. I could not have guessed what we would be dealing with issues of this magnitude with a mere four months into my presidency and heading into our centennial year of celebrations. But I am proud of how our faculty and staff completely cooperated with the investigation and I am proud of our aggressive and immediate actions to correct these infractions.

As we approach a new year of educational and athletic competition, I am confident our nine women's and nine men's sports teams will be out doing what they do best: excelling on and off the field. I am extremely confident that all of our athletic programs including football will be conducted in a manner that is in full compliance with CCCAA rules and regulations.

On behalf of the college and its administration I would like to offer an apology to our community and our students, and express my gratitude for your steadfast support. I am confident that we will execute the steps we have outlined to ensure that these problems never happen again. You can continue to trust this great institution both in our character as we deal with adversity, and in how we serve you in doing what we do with excellence and integrity. You have my word on this.

I thank you for coming out today to hear this unhappy news directly from Bakersfield College. I look forward to closure, to moving past this unfortunate situation. I look forward to a wonderful centennial year and to the greatness that lies ahead.

Thank you.