1- Context: Institutional Goals as Pathway to Higher Education Success

Community colleges are integral to equitable educational attainment. There are more underserved communities, economically disadvantaged, and students of color attending community colleges than any other segment of higher education. Promoting higher education attainment for these demographics is the key to California’s future. This strategic goal is Bakersfield College’s priority and vision driving institutional, instructional and student service policy changes.

Bakersfield College (BC) fundamentally shifted its work with every employee focused on student success to enact changes at every level of the college to enhance student success. Since January 2013 the college has moved away from traditionally slow and highly sequential planning and implementation cycles executed through organizational hierarchy toward a more agile approach creatively responsive and dependent on the campus community—holistically knowledgeable and connected, disciplined, rigorous, and fiscally sustainable. Similar to the so-called “agile” methods of software development that promote a development process based upon adaptive planning, evolutionary development, early delivery, continuous improvement, and rapid and flexible response to change, BC is on an exponential trajectory, gaining power through the connectivity of individuals linked across stakeholders and cross-functional teams.

This sense of a “community on the move” toward increased higher education attainment embraces external educational partners. BC and its partners believe that higher education is essential for Kern County to reverse poverty and high unemployment rates. The time is right. Community leaders are emerging and joining forces to provide the necessary effort to increase Kern’s higher education attainment rate.

- **Goal 1 - Before BC:** Increase the number of high school students prepared for college before they come to Bakersfield College.
- **Goal 2 - Skilling Up:** Increase postsecondary attainment rates by “skilling up” students who arrive at the college underprepared.
- **Goal 3 - Transfer and Completion:** Increase the associate’s degree completion rate, the rate of transfer to four-year baccalaureate degree institutions, and the rate of attainment for baccalaureate degrees.
- **Goal 4 - Equity:** Increase course completion rates, 30-unit completion rates (milestones), and transfer and degree completion rates for specific populations that are disproportionately impacted (as defined by the 80% rule or the proportionality index)
- **Goal 5 - Engaged and Distributed Leadership:** Create a climate of engaged and distributed leadership within the college and across the community, which is aligned, rigorous, and grounded in connectivity, fiscally sustainable, and focused on increasing the levels of educational attainment.

BC has a mature planning and governance system to regularly develop, review, and update strategic goals. In the last two years, BC’s Strategic Plan has come alive through conversations across campus and external community groups1. The result is an elevated level of understanding across campus and the community, as well as clarity to operationalize and implement strategic goals. Institutional documents (Student Success and Support Plan, Equity Plan, Educational Master Plan) show a shared vision and common goals with outcomes identified that move the dial on student achievement and close achievement gaps.

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1 Community Leaders gatherings: [https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/president/community-leaders-at-bc](https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/president/community-leaders-at-bc)