

Nicky Damania

From: Helen Acosta
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2018 1:23 PM
To: Sonya Christian; Liz Rozell
Cc: Nicky Damania
Subject: Lavender Pre-Commencement Celebration
Attachments: BC Lavender Graduation Letter of Support from the Center.docx; SAGA letter re Lavender pre commencement celebration.pdf

Sonya and Liz,

I am writing to you today in hopes for your support in a new venture to honor students who identify within the LGBTQIAI+ community at Bakersfield College.

AB 1018 expands the community college equity plan support to our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. This is a new stride to support and recognize our underrepresented community. While I understand there is much more work we need to do, many of us would like to start by hosting a ceremony which is common among many community colleges and universities: Lavender Graduation...or, in our case, Lavender Pre-Commencement Celebration. Similar to the Latinx, Black, and Veteran graduation recognition ceremonies, a group of students, faculty, staff, and community members have come together in hopes of hosting the first BC Lavender Pre-Commencement Celebration.

The tradition of Lavender Graduation began at the University of Michigan in 1995 with just three graduates. Dr. Ronni Sanlo, then Director of the University of Michigan LGBT Campus Resource Center, coordinated the first Lavender Graduation in order to acknowledge the achievements of LGBTQ graduates. By 2001, over 45 institutions were holding Lavender Graduation Ceremonies and the tradition continues to expand to additional colleges and universities across the country.

I've begun working closely with Nicky in Student Life to begin to plan this event. We have brought together support from the Office of Student Life, BCSGA, and SAGA (Sexuality and Gender Acceptance Club). SAGA would host and, in cooperation with Student Government, fund this event for the first year. Nicky and I will ensure that this event matches the integrity and meaning of BC's comparable events. We hope to have this event happen annually in collaboration with a wider variety of LGBTQIAI+ groups in Bakersfield including Bakersfield LGBTQ Pride, the Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity of Bakersfield, PFLAG Bakersfield and the LGBTQ supportive congregations of Bakersfield. This will be another highlight where BC and the community come together to support and recognize our students.

I have attached supporting letters from the BC SAGA club and The Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity.

To conclude, we wanted to run this by you both in support and approval before continuing on.

Peace,

Helen Acosta
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“Don’t be intimidated by what you don’t know. That can be your greatest strength and ensure that you do things differently from everyone else.” -- Sara Blakely, Forbes’ 2014 93rd Most Powerful Woman in the World