

News

COLLEGE NOTEBOOK: CSUB, BC gear up for 2020-21 academic year

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President Lynnette Zelezny leads CSUB into an unprecedented moment in the history of higher education, with distance learning becoming the norm across the country.

- Alex Horvath / The Californian



Bakersfield College President Sonya Christian called the start of the new year and welcoming students back to BC's academic culture one of her favorite annual events.

- Photo courtesy Bakersfield College Facebook page

With Cal State Bakersfield and Bakersfield College kicking off the 2020-21 academic year on Monday, here are some highlights from each school entering the new year.

AT CSUB

President Lynnette Zelezny began Thursday's 2020-21 University Day celebration by addressing the CSUB community touched by the educational revolution currently taking place nationwide, the demand for social justice in the United States and the challenges facing society as a whole.

"We, as 'Runners, have seized the moment. We are 'Runners United for Change. We will work together this year and the next and the next until we are the university we know we can be and should be," she said.

To review the Zelezny's address, follow this link: <https://bit.ly/32kuQtA>.

On the Sunday before the first day of the academic term, CSUB traditionally welcomes new students.

For many families, it can be an unfamiliar time. During Sunday's Convocation Ceremony, CSUB will look to break down barriers for first-time students and families, while summoning the anticipation of new beginnings.

In a newsletter email from the school this week, CSUB said the highpoint Sunday will be the pinning ceremony that engages entire families in this well-earned life passage. CSUB asks community members to join the university in the celebration surrounding first-year students embarking on their college journey.

Join the virtual Convocation Sunday morning by following this link: <https://bit.ly/3hhUyoA>.

When CSUB begins the 2020-21 academic term, students will begin or continue a journey toward their degrees during a revolutionary time for education. History is being made as students, teachers and administrators transition to distance learning and entirely new ways of delivering remote instruction.

As of last week, 11,694 students had enrolled at CSUB, and that number is likely to increase by the third week of the semester, according to an emailed memo from the university. Of that total, 8,052 are returning students, the largest number of continuing students to register for classes in school history. Some 643 graduate students have enrolled, which exceeds last year's number as well, the memo stated.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships has disbursed \$39,514,241 to 7,024 students, an increase of \$2.3 million over last year, according to CSUB. More aid will continue to be delivered to students who have completed the FAFSA for fall 2020.

“All of our work to communicate and support students through the enrollment process has shifted exclusively to virtual means with little preparation due to the pandemic,” said Dr. Dwayne Cantrell, associate vice president for enrollment management. “For areas like

admissions, financial aid and academic advising, students are accustomed to, and comforted by, meeting with staff members in person. This has been a daunting task for staff, yet they have risen to the challenge of meeting students' needs.”

AT BC

According to Bakersfield College President Sonya Christian’s blog, the school recently held a discussion on how BC plans to transition into the fall semester. Taking part in the discussion was Bill Potter, executive director of facilities and planning; Cindy Collier, interim director of BC’s Health Center; Heather Baltis, faculty member in BC's agriculture department; and Alisha Loken, faculty member in BC's nursing department.

For those who could not attend, a replay of the discussion can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3l7RWMn>.

BC held a virtual New Student Convocation event of its own Tuesday, with all students invited to the festivities. Christian called the event “a coming together.”

“Beyond welcoming students to the community, students will also learn critical information about navigating college life, the importance of getting involved on campus, and strategies for being successful,” she wrote.

She called it one of her favorite annual events.

BC’s president also took time to recognize a “significant financial gift” from the Clifford and Patricia Mettler estate, which will help support the 120 students enrolled in BC’s Agriculture Pathways Early College program.

From the gift, students will have access to instructional materials and programming support that will allow them to earn associate degrees in agriculture as they complete their high school coursework.

“We are tremendously grateful for the generous gift offered through the Mettlers’ estate,” Christian said in a news release. “This gift comes at a time when our community is experiencing uncertainty in many respects. Knowing that future generations of our rural Early College Renegades will be provided the support to pursue their educational dreams is certainly a ray of light for the future of our agricultural community.”