

# BC begins to offer courses for students aiming to get a white-collar warehouse job

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Kern County's third largest industry, behind agriculture and oil, is distribution, and Bakersfield College has just begun offering courses to prepare students for management positions in the field.

"Warehouse Management" is a business administration course now open for registration. It marks the first of five courses that the college plans to offer to students interested in working their way up the management ladder at the many distribution centers in Kern County.

"We're in the right spot, and we want to get them prepared," said Gary Blackburn, a faculty member who will be teaching the course.

Kern County is the midway point between Southern California and Northern California. That makes it an attractive location for many distribution centers that have made their home here, including Ross Stores, Target, IKEA, Dollar General, Walmart, Caterpillar and Amazon. Altogether those centers add up to 35 million square feet of distribution, Blackburn says. He points to a Kern Economic Development Corp. report that puts Kern County within 300 miles of 14 percent of the U.S. population.

These distribution warehouses offer a lot of jobs. Blackburn says these distribution warehouses don't tend to have a problem finding blue-collar workers here, but finding locals who are ready to take on the white-collar opportunities in management can be tougher. But he says there are opportunities for higher-paying jobs with room for

advancement, and Bakersfield College's new courses are aimed at putting them on that track.

"That's our niche," Blackburn says. "That's what this training is going to help them do."

Blackburn says even just a few courses at Bakersfield College will put them in a better position to move up the management ladder, but he says students who want to continue their degree will be able to take courses at CSUB, which has a Supply Chain Logistics program he helped to get off the ground in 2011.

This semester he won't be able to take students on field trips to show them how warehouses operate to give them hands-on experience the way he usually does. But he's hoping that as the COVID-19 outbreak eases, he'll be able to take students on site and have them meet guest speakers in the field for courses like "Operations Management and Lean Principles," "Supply Chain Management," "Purchasing and Contracting," and "Transportation Management." For that last course, he's hoping to take students to the Port of Los Angeles.

This semester "Warehouse Management" will focus on "maximizing value in the modern warehouse, relationships in the supply chain, inbound and outbound product and processes, management systems, and safety."

Registration is open for the 12-week course that begins Sept. 15. Classes are 6 to 8:10 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Registration is available at [www.bakersfieldcollege.edu](http://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu).