

# Bakersfield College & CSUB College Futures Research Proposal

## Summary DRAFT (9/8/2018)

### INTRODUCTION

This proposal seeks to advance understanding of how two Bakersfield campuses have successfully worked together to promote transfer and bachelor's degree attainment among Kern County students. The project will include 1) developing a system to identify, track and support community college students intending to transfer; 2) developing a prospect database for tracking and supporting transfer students; 3) creating clear program pathways with aligned high-quality instruction; and 4) providing tailored transfer student support and advising with strong transfer partnerships.

### SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

#### Project Goals

1. **Increase the two- and four-year graduation rates by improving students' pathway through regional high schools (KHSD), BC and CSU Bakersfield**
2. **Strengthen curriculum alignment from High School through Associate Degrees for Transfer and Baccalaureate attainment**
3. **Provide student support systems to ensure that students stay on their paths towards degree completion (e.g., ADT Degree Completion Support Team)**
4. **Work collaboratively to create major-specific program maps**
5. **Minimize institutional barriers associated with a seamless advancement through the educational institutions on the way to a baccalaureate degree.**

Through the collaborative efforts between CSUB and BC we have developed the **FINISH IN 4** project to encourage students to complete their transfer and baccalaureate degree in four years. This unprecedented partnership between higher education institutions focuses on benefits to the students, and ultimately the community, and is a model for other higher education institutions. Over the last year faculty have collaboratively discussed and clarified pathways to facilitate and boost college transfers and increase 4-year college completion. The faculty have developed 27 fully transferable semester roadmaps which align coursework from BC ADT (or AA/AS) through the CSU Bakersfield baccalaureate and guarantees transfer of all of their credits and entry to CSUB at the junior-standing level. The collaborative **FINISH IN 4** initiative unveiling event between CSUB and BC took place on May 8, 2018. Our college's mutual goal is to move students with intentionality through each stage of their educational and career goals in a more efficient and impactful way. With just 22% of Kern County residents 25 years of age and older holding an Associate's Degree or higher, compared with California's average of 39%, this initiative is an excellent way to decreasing time to completion, closing attainment gaps and aiding in student success.

#### Outcome Metrics

The transfer student outcome metrics (i.e., whether students actually succeed in earning bachelor's degrees) proposed are the following:

1. Transfer-out rate – the number of BC's degree-seeking students transfer to CSUB
2. Transfer with an ADT rate - the number of BC's transfer students earn an ADT before transferring to CSUB
3. Credit completion rates and Transfer GPA

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4. Transfer-out Bachelor's completion rate - the number of BC's transfer students who transfer to CSUB complete a bachelor's degree within four years of entering.
5. Degree completion by Program/Major
6. Student transfer access and degree attainment by race/ethnicity and gender
7. Reasons students admissible from high school who opt out of pursuing ADT (e.g., financial)
8. Availability and sequence of courses needed for on-time transfer (BC and CSUB)

Students are identified as **FINISH IN 4** participants if they meet the following conditions: 1) chose one of the **FINISH IN 4** transferable semester roadmaps; 2) meet with a ADT Completion Team specialist; and 3) agree to enroll in 15 CSU transferable units each semester or 30/year. The tracking period is 4 years from entry at BC.

The long term expected changes resulting from this project will be that at the point BC student apply via *CCC Apply*, we will collect data from those that intend to transfer with an AS-T or AA-T degree and a developed tracking system will feed this data back as a process of early identification of prospective CSUB-bound students. This community college information will provide the university an opportunity to:

- Establish a communication plan to reach out to transfer-ready applicants and request transcripts via eTranscript California on behalf of the applicant once he or she applies via Cal State Apply
- Receive timely information on the intent and readiness to transfer with an ADT degree
- Facilitate graduation processes at the community college

The team will also conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of having a single application that would allow students to apply to both campuses at the same time. This would greatly reduce the additional steps needed when a student is ready to transfer to CSUB.

Included in the implementation plan are two technology platforms that will clarify student pathways and enhance student engagement and guidance: 1) Pathways Program Mapper and 2) Starfish® Enterprise Success Platform™ This enhanced intervention effort will keep prospective students steadily on track with courses and officially validate completion early as they apply for graduation. \*It should be noted that lack of timely General Education certification, course substitutions and degree verification have been identified as significant institutional barriers which must be corrected for seamless transfer.

To better assess the alignment of transfer practices between BC and CSUB and to further strengthen transfer paths to a bachelor's degree, during the Fall 2018 semester, the team will administer the *Tools for Assessing Progress Toward Adoption of Essential Transfer Practices for Two and Four-Year Colleges* published in May 2016 by the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program and the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College. These practices were identified through research on two- and four-year institutional partnerships that have achieved exceptional transfer and baccalaureate completion rates for students who start at community colleges based on analysis of National Student Clearinghouse data (.Joshua Wyner, KC Deane, Davis Jenkins & John Fink, Community College Research Center, May 2016).

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**Course Development:** Both campuses will jointly explore the feasibility of offering a transitioning course to **FINISH IN 4** participants.

**Need for Marketing:** A marketing plan will be implemented because key findings of the California Community College Associate Degree for Transfer Annual Campaign Report (June 2018) reported:

- Half of prospective students and parents haven't heard of the Associate Degree for Transfer program.
- Less than half of those aware of the program can accurately explain it.
- Word-of-mouth from friends, teachers and counselors drives awareness.
- Two-thirds of prospective students and three-quarters of parents would consider or recommend the program.
- Affordability, graduating in four years and preparation are key drivers.
- Affordability, program guarantee and financial aid are most important decision-making factors.
- A Degree with a Guarantee can refer to different kinds of guarantees, such as a guaranteed job, guaranteed graduation or guaranteed transfer.

**Materials:** brochures and flyers to explain the benefits of completing 15 transferable units per term, or 30 per year, in order to obtain an ADT and bachelor's degree in four years.

**Completion incentives** include the following:

- Guaranteed admission to CSUB
- Guaranteed pathway to CSUB
- Clear roadmap of courses needed to graduate
- Dedicated **FINISH IN 4** BC/CSUB academic and advising support team
- Joint directory of **FINISH IN 4** BC/CSUB contacts for counselors and advisors
- Live chat/Student support hotline
- **Priority registration**
- Financial benefits for participation in the program
- Career and job opportunities

### **FINISH IN 4 Convenings and Strategic Goals**

Bakersfield College and California State University, Bakersfield will host two partnership convening's each year. The goals are the following:

1. Host collaborative events to promote and inform the significance of Transfer Pathways for prospective and current participants, to all stakeholders (BC, CSUB, KHSD, and community).
2. Expand the understanding of alignment with the aid of articulation between general education and major/program course requirements, as well as the acceptance of transfer credit and degrees from both colleges.
3. Maintain continual communication between both colleges to develop solutions to eliminate barriers preventing students from degree completion and transferring to the University.

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4. Partner to coordinate and advertise streamline resources, activities, and services across BC and CSUB that enhance and simplify the transfer process.
5. Explore and discuss key metrics for student transfer success.

In the fall, the Academic Support Team Convening, consisting of representatives from admissions, financial aid, support programs, academic advisors and counselors will discuss and formulate new practices to better serve our students.

In the spring, department deans, chairs and faculty will discuss best practices focused on enhancing and developing the educational pathways between the two campuses. Spring gatherings are considered the most critical to maintaining the **FINISH IN 4** program, as faculty, faculty chairs and deans on both colleges are responsible for program and course updates and/or revisions. Any changes in program or course curriculum will effect transfer agreements, and therefore must be recorded and updated in the respective transfer pathway.

Each fall, we will host a workshop at Kern College Night. This event is for prospective college students and their parents, guardians, etc. to meet with college representatives, learn about admission requirements, financial aid and to connect earlier with their college(s) of choice. This opportunity reaches students as early as freshman year in high school through to college entry, stimulating and fostering interest for **FINISH IN 4** participation.

To increase awareness surrounding the colleges' program in the state, two one-day **FINISH IN 4** workshops will be provided at the Spring 2019 Transfer Summit (Northern and Southern California). The purpose of these events is to share information to promote programs that are vital to student success and completion. Consideration will also be given to creating a webinar as a communication tool for sharing this information. The aim is to support and strengthen, collectively, the culture of transfer by building a stronger, better trained and highly knowledgeable transfer community and to share best practices for ongoing collaborative relationships within and with universities.

During the fall of 2018, a professional development plan will be implemented for KHSD faculty, staff, and administrators so that they are all aware of the **FINISH IN 4** program. **FINISH IN 4** staff from BC and CSUB will attend regular all-counselor meetings in the Kern High School District as well as meetings of all the Assistant Principals of Instruction.

Peer mentors will also be hired to assist with the program.

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