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Bakersfield College's "Making it Happen" Named 2015 Exemplary Program by the Board of Governors of California Community Colleges

(Bakersfield, CA / Sacramento, CA) – Yesterday, the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges awarded Bakersfield College's "Making it Happen" program the 2015 Exemplary Program Award at their monthly meeting. Program founder, Dr. Janet Fulks, Bakersfield College's Interim Dean of Student Success, Bakersfield College Academic Senate President Steven Holmes, Bakersfield College president Dr. Sonya Christian, and Kern Community College District chancellor Sandra Serrano were in Sacramento today to accept the award on behalf of the Bakersfield College team.

Bakersfield College received first place in the 2015 Board of Governors' Exemplary Program Awards, which are sponsored by the Foundation for California Community Colleges, and recognizes outstanding community college programs which place importance on assisting students as they transition from high school to college. Los Angeles Pierce College and Santa Barbara City College received honorable mentions.

Developed by faculty and staff, Bakersfield College's "Making it Happen" program is a mentoring program that began as a holistic approach to better serve first-generation, economically disadvantaged students transitioning from rural high schools to college.

"Bakersfield College's Making it Happen program represents a call to action," said Christian. "Our main goal was to stay connected to the 500 students in the cohort, to ensure that each and every one of them was progressing successfully in the educational pathways. MIH was the coming together of various student success elements to provide the right learning conditions for our first generation students."

To help students in the "Making it Happen" program succeed, mentors are assigned to first-time, first-generation students, and the mentors represent faculty, classified staff, administrators, and Bakersfield College president Sonya Christian herself. The program structure involves the entire college community, and allows Bakersfield College to work collaboratively across departments, and between instruction and student services.

"This program is really only possible because Bakersfield College has an amazing president, Dr. Sonya Christian, who believes in distributed leadership, and an Academic Senate president who honors student success," said Fulks, who presented program details before the California Board of Governors. "Dr. Christian has a mentee assigned to her, and has developed a deep relationship that helps our leadership better understand the challenges of students.

Bakersfield College designed "Making it Happen" from the ground up. The program begins by setting students on a path to success by placing them in the highest appropriate level of coursework, and has increased the number of students placed into higher level courses and shortened basic skills pathways. As a result of this altered strategy, in combination with basic skills curriculum revision, have saved students more than 571 semesters of work and about \$7 million in fees.

"As we developed Making it Happen, we learned the transition of students from high school to college must begin earlier," said Fulks. "Bakersfield College is working, through our partners in

education, to reach students in high schools, even grade schools, and deep within our area's diverse community."

Bakersfield College started "Making it Happen" in Fall 2014 with more than 400 students, and will expand the program to 1,700 students in Fall 2015. Full information on "Making it Happen" and the relevant data and information, is posted on the Bakersfield College website at www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/making-it-happen.

The Exemplary Program Awards were established in 1991 by the Board of Governors to recognize outstanding community college programs. The theme for 2014-14 is "Transitions from High School to College: Assisting Students in Meeting Their Educational Goals." Areas of emphasis included enhanced counseling and mentorship programs, early college and bridge programs, and curriculum alignment programs.

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