



***Imagine: Over the next 10 years, Kern County will advance our education attainment rates, increase the health of our community, engage our youth, and decrease poverty.***

***Our Vision*** | In Kern County, one in four residents live in poverty, 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%. In the next ten years, more than six out of ten jobs will require employees to have more than a high school diploma. Today, only 40% of U.S. adults ages 25–64 are adequately prepared for the workforce.

Education is the key to equity, social mobility, and economic prosperity. This drives the work of educators throughout Kern County, and been the foundation for envisioned and implemented institutional, instructional, and student service policy changes locally and statewide in recent years.

With a critical lens on issues of equitable educational attainment, Kern County educators and industry leaders have been working to provide opportunities for applied learning through internships with business and industry partners, to embed academic support services for first generation and low-income students throughout the students' pathways, and create pathways for success. Albeit a grand vision, the community is committed and inspired to usher in this vision, the promise of a college opportunity: ***The Kern Promise***.



A College Promise is not a new concept in higher education; many states have embraced various iterations of the model. In 2015, BC conducted a literature review of unique promise programs nationwide and developed a pilot ***Renegade Promise*** program for fall 2016. BC targeted just under 400 incoming, college-ready seniors from nearly 50 high schools with a declared Associate Degree for Transfer pathway and provided priority registration, an ***assigned mentor-counselor*** to ensure timely completion through comprehensive educational planning and intrusive support.

***Our Promise*** | The Kern Promise is characterized by a targeted effort to engage students in a holistic experience through a shared responsibility model where students commit to uphold academic standards while the colleges commit to provide quality support. The Promise is focused on two primary goals: Timely Completion and Financial Assistance.

***Timely Completion:*** The timely completion component of The Kern Promise will ensure that students complete their transfer degrees in 60 units, engaging BC faculty and staff in a campus-wide coaching strategy. This strategy ensures each incoming student is placed into a cohort with a ***Completion Coach*** who case manages student progress, ensuring timely interventions and referrals. With Completion Coaching Communities, students within a cohort become more visible as coaches employ multiple touches using high-level technology to target communication to the unique cohort based on their needs and milestones.

**Financial Assistance:** Bakersfield College will offer financial assistance using three strategies: 1) distribution of the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGW) for eligible students, 2) maximizing federal financial aid dollars and on-campus employment opportunities, and 3) expansion of scholarships for textbooks and other supplies.

In California, state leaders have embraced a commitment to keep college affordable and accessible at \$46/unit and by offering the *Board of Governor's Fee Waiver* for qualifying students. In an analysis of student records, the BC Office of Financial Aid determined awarded the BOGW valued at \$1,288 to 53% of fall 2016 new students. Yet, the total cost of attendance for books, supplies, and fees after the BOGW is applied is **\$3,079**.

Remaining fees may still restrict a student's ability to afford and attend college. To address these remaining financial challenges, BC intends to *offer financial assistance* in coordination with the BC Foundation working collaboratively with other local foundations.

A defining feature of The Kern Promise is the reduction of excess unit accumulation. The average student at BC graduates with 85 college-level units. The estimated cost of the extra 25 units is approximately \$1,150 in tuition/fees + \$2,300 in books and living expenses for a total of \$3,450. By addressing college readiness, pathway clarity, and adequate support for timely completion, BC will substantially reduce the cost to completion for participants in the Promise.

With The Kern Promise is a multi-partner, **multi-phase strategy** designed to serve the estimated 10,000 students expected to graduate from the Kern High School District in 2020. This year, just over 8,600 students will be graduating from a school in the KHSD.

**Our Outcomes** | The Kern Promise seeks to deepen the efforts of educational partners county-wide in order to improve equitable student outcomes. As such, BC will implement intentional and systemic strategies to address the following needs:



- Increase college attendance directly from high school
- Increase college-ready placement in Math and English
- Improve Associate's degree and certificate attainment
- Improve transfer rates
- Increase Bachelor's degree attainment

The Kern Promise is not yet another initiative; rather, it is a large-scale, community-wide rethinking of how we approach the business of student success. Bakersfield College is laser-focused on improving outcomes for students across the educational spectrum, having invested substantial resources in improved placement practices, restructured support, and alignment with high school and university partners. Without the collaboration of education and industry partners, these successes will not be possible.



**BAKERSFIELD  
COLLEGE**

