

## COMMUNITY VOICES: Bridge being built between two higher education leaders

By Jasmen Taylor Oct 24, 2019



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In February 2019, the Kern Community College District Board of Trustees voted to approve a new Bakersfield College southwest location on the Cal State Bakersfield campus. As a student, the announcement about expanding facilities was not only exciting but impactful. The proximity to CSUB and the collaboration between both higher education institutions has the potential to remove transfer barriers, especially to first-generation college students trying to attain a four-year degree.

While BC's main campus on Panorama Drive serves most of its roughly 33,000 students, BC offers classes in many different locations including rural areas in both south and north Kern County, the Weill Institute downtown and BC SouthWest. BC SouthWest is home to more than 1,000 students each semester and offers a wide variety of courses.

I've been attending BC since August 2018. In October 2018, I began working at the southwest location as the receptionist. BC SouthWest is my preferred location because it is closer to my home, and it offers a more intimate environment that has allowed me to establish connections with professors, counselors and other students.

I also asked other BC SouthWest students why they chose to take classes here, and like me, most of them said that location was closer to their home and they enjoyed the quieter laid-back environment compared to the main campus.

Furthermore, BC SouthWest offers a variety of services. Among them, the location has two designated counselors, a tutoring center and a shorter waiting time than the main campus.

There are several perks about the new BC SouthWest location, but the big picture is that having a BC facility inside CSUB's campus is a turning point in Kern County higher education history. The collaboration between both institutions removes barriers of uncertainty, confusion and anxiety all too familiar to college students like me. Students will be able to continue to go to a campus they know, utilize the same public transportation and build an educational network that will accompany them throughout their entire educational journey.

Next time you drive by BC SouthWest's construction on the corner of Camino Media and Roadrunner Drive, remember that besides the buildings, there is a historical bridge being built at the worksite. The collaboration should improve degree completion in four years by providing all of the classes needed in order to achieve a student's degree goal.

*Jasmen Taylor is a student at Bakersfield College and has worked at the southwest location for one year.*