



CORONAVIRUS

# Bakersfield College launching five-week Back to College program to help displaced workers



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Bakersfield College is announcing a Back to College program aimed at bringing displaced workers back into the workforce with new skills.

In response to rising unemployment due to the coronavirus and in anticipation of an increased need in the coming weeks and months, Bakersfield College will support the local community and economy with a late-start five-week semester to bring students back to college.

“Now that Bakersfield College has been 100 percent online for instruction and student services, we are turning our attention to how we can help our larger community,” said President Sonya Christian. “Our faculty and counselors created a five-week program to help transition members of our community back into the workforce during these uncertain times. The entirety of this program – all of the courses, enrollment, our student and academic support – will take place online.”

Dean Jessica Wojtysiak said the college is looking to have a cohort of 20 to 30 students in the program, but will make room for others if needed.

The Back to College program will feature three options of six, seven or 13 units, with financial aid available to help cover the cost of courses as well as other expenses.

Wojtysiak said full-time students can get more than \$1,000 in financial support on top of their tuition being paid off. Part-time students will have access to a few hundred dollars, with the amount depending on how many units they're taking.

"We're going to work with you and coordinate very closely with financial aid so that for those who qualify, we're going to pay for your tuition and also provide a short-term solution to unemployment by helping you to access the financial resources that are available," Wojtysiak said.

The courses will start students on a pathway that would allow them to complete a degree at Bakersfield College or transfer to a four-year institution, the college said.

"I am excited about the program. I think it addresses, for individuals who are facing unemployment, a few different ways to solve that problem," Wojtysiak said. This is both a long-term solution and a short-term one."

Academic Support Services, including virtual tutoring and writing center sessions, will be available for all courses, according to BC. The college is also assigning a counseling team to work with the students, as well as a financial aid advisor and an admissions and records advisor.

Online sessions to guide students through the enrollment process will take place next week, starting March 30. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/2wDcXdl>.

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