



## NEWS FOR THE BOARD

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# BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE

May 13, 2025

Denise Richardson, Ed.D., President

## Berkeley City College Tops Off BCC West Campus



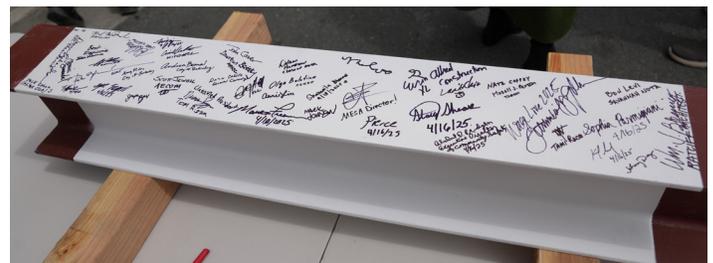
Berkeley City College celebrated a milestone achievement in the construction of its new Berkeley City College West campus. One year after breaking ground on the project, the superstructure of the six-story, 60,000 square foot academic and administration building reached its highest point. To mark the occasion, Berkeley City College and Peralta Community College District leaders, students, faculty, and staff joined its construction partners Kitchell, XL Construction, and Ratcliff, and city leaders and community partners in signing a ceremonial beam.

“This building is a promise crafted in concrete and steel that says to every student you belong here, you matter here, and here is where your dreams take shape,” said **President Denise Richardson, Ed.D.** “Just as much as this moment is about construction progress it’s about people, it’s about the students we serve and their journeys, and it’s a symbol of Berkeley’s innovation, resilience, and its role as a hub of intellectual and cultural vibrancy.”

Berkeley City College West will provide students with expanded access to academic and support services. The new campus will feature 15 new classrooms, additional faculty and staff offices,

a library, student lounge, dedicated spaces for the college’s growing Society of Scholars cultural learning communities, and a wellness center to support student mental health. Not only is it a cutting edge campus, but the conception and realizing of the project itself breaks barriers.

“It’s a proud privilege for the Peralta Community College District on behalf of the Board of Trustees and everyone in the community to celebrate that this is a project led by women,” said **Chancellor Tammeil Gilkerson, Ed.D.** “With only 11% of women in the construction trade and other places, this project is being delivered to the City of Berkeley with a new mayor who is also a woman, a woman college President, and women leaders from our architect, to our construction management team, to our design firms. It is with great pleasure and pride that we’re here today celebrating a milestone.”



Berkeley City College West is scheduled to open to the community in Fall 2026. The project is made possible through the Peralta Community College District’s Bond Program, funded by Measure G, which was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2018. This milestone would have been possible without the generous support of the taxpayers of Northern Alameda County - including the residents of Berkeley, Albany, Alameda, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont - to whom Berkeley City College extends its deepest gratitude.

## Umoja Rites of Passage

On Thursday, May 8, the 2025 BCC Umoja graduates gathered in the village to take part in the cohort's Rites of Passage ceremony. The ceremony opened with Ramona Butler leading a procession of graduates into the village and leading a libation ceremony to honor the students and their loved ones. Umoja counselors Shannon Penn and Skyler Barton then introduced BCC Umoja Alumni who shared a little about where they are in their lives academically and professionally and welcomed the new graduates to the ranks of alumni.

This year's class was made up of 24 Umoja students. Each one of them stood to share words about their academic journey and presented an artifact symbolizing their experience at Umoja and BCC. The artifact included photos, jewelry, and shapeless things like time and words of encouragement. At the conclusion, the floor was opened to a Community Forum, a BCC created special tradition for the Rites of Passage ceremony. It offered an opportunity for family, friends, and Berkeley City College administrators, faculty, and staff to offer words of inspiration and admiration for the students' accomplishments.

Big thanks to Shannon Penn, Skyler Barton, Connie Tran, and Ramona Butler for organizing a great event.



## Gaypril Early Pride Celebrations at BCC



In the month of April, Berkeley City College celebrated GAYPRIL, an early pride month celebration hosted in collaboration LGBTQ+ Club. BCC held events hosted by clubs and the wider BCC community, celebrating love, equality, and diversity. It started with an Out & Proud social media campaign on Instagram highlighting BCC queer staff, faculty & admin to share their stories and welcome queer students into their spaces.

On April 15 & 16, the LGBTQ+ Club hosted a watch party of the 7th Annual California Community Colleges LGBTQ+ Summit. All members of the campus community were invited to participate in the workshops and discussions of the summit to find ideas for ways to promote solidarity and create safe spaces on campus for LGBTQ+ students.

The Out and Proud: BCC Department Tabling event took

place on April 29th during college hour, organized by the BCC LGBTQIA+ student club in collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Taskforce. The event aimed to increase visible support and solidarity from BCC staff and faculty for queer students.

Faculty and staff—both queer and allied—participated by hosting tables that showcased their disciplines, departments, and personal identities. Science department faculty discussed the biology of gender, librarians highlighted queer literature and book bans, and art faculty displayed work by queer artists.



## Career Fair Spring 2025

The Spring 2025 Career Fair at BCC was a great success, drawing over 25 employers and more than 100 student attendees. The event provided students with meaningful opportunities to explore career pathways, connect with industry professionals, and build confidence in their job search.

A highlight of the fair was the Career Corner, which offered on-the-spot Resume Reviews, Mock Interviews, and Professional Headshots—all facilitated by dedicated BCC staff, faculty, and community volunteers. These services were instrumental in preparing students to make a strong first impression with employers.

The event successfully fostered valuable connections between students and employers, many of whom expressed interest in continued collaboration to support student career readiness.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed to the success of this event—especially the students who actively participated, and the employers, staff, faculty, and volunteers who made it all possible.



## BCC Grad Fair

The BCC Grad Fair took place on Wednesday and Thursday May 7 and 8 in the Atrium, offering graduating students an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments together. Students were able to decorate their graduation caps, pick up their tassels, enjoy free pizza, and take photos with their classmates at a photo booth. There was also a backdrop of BCC new mascot “Ollie the Owl” for students to take photos with, along with free Ollie buttons. Thank you to BCC’s Commencement Committee for hosting a fun and joyful event for our graduates!



## Students Decorate Basic Needs Center Tote Bags

The Berkeley City College Basic Needs Center hosted a Custom Tote Bag event on April 28 in the Atrium. Students were able to collect a FREE BNC tote bag and decorate them using up-cycled donated clothes and other art supplies making unique tote bags to help them shop at the weekly BNC food pantry and carry around town! Thanks to BNC student workers Kenny Ko and Khanh Thai for organizing this fun event!



## 6th Solidarity in Mental Health Summit - Joy as Resistance! by Yu Aung



“Joy as Resistance!” emphasizes the celebration of joy as a form of resistance in times of volatile uncertainty. It is in these challenging times that we must stand stronger than ever, in unity. The annual Solidarity in Mental Health Summit this year chose to celebrate mental health, resilience, and joy, bringing together performers, poets, singers, community-serving agencies, and activists to uplift and empower our community.

Dr. Stacey Shears opened the summit with a motivating speech reminding us to remain steadfast in channeling internal joy. The day’s program featured distinguished speakers from Planned Parenthood, Stop Cop Campus, Oakland Rising, SafeSpace, and Village Connect, who inspired with their presentations on how we can actively engage in meaningful activism. Singers, rappers, and poets shared their life journeys and the emotional hardships they faced, conveying their personal stories through art. Salsa at Cal also featured a beautiful performance, dazzling everyone with their exceptional talent. The event concluded with an interactive performance of a drumming circle that brought everyone together. For the entirety of the event, joy, positive energy, and vibrant exchanges filled the atmosphere.

As a Burmese national, the event reminded me of my countrymen who have exhibited extraordinary resilience and

### Defending Public Education in California

BCC Counselor Skyler Barton was invited by colleagues from UC Berkeley to take part in the discussion, Defending Public Education in California on May 3rd at the Berkeley Community Theater. The program was presented by the African American Studies Departments of UC Berkeley and Berkeley High School. He will share insights grounded in a positive, community-centered approach to education through the lens of California Community Colleges—emphasizing the importance of

unity through the pandemic, a military coup, fuel shortage, and a devastating earthquake. In the last decade, many other countries around the world have been facing tumultuous times as well. And yet, we face each day with resolution and tenacity. This spirit of resilience and unity is also beautifully reflected in the symbolism of ‘Pyit Taing Htaung,’ a traditional Myanmar children’s toy that always stands upright after being knocked down. Every tumble and rise of the “Pyit Taing Htaung” doll is a symbol of enduring resilience. Just like the doll, the BCC community came together on this day in solidarity to show that our joy and freedom are fundamentally ours and cannot be stolen.

This summit would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Vice President of Student Services, Dr. Stacey Shears. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Mental Health Specialist, Janine Greer from the Wellness Center for her leadership and mentorship in organizing this event and our co-organizer Viviana Rodriguez Smith for her exceptional outreach effort and pivotal role in integrating Wellness Cove into the summit. We deeply appreciate the Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Ambassadors team for their diligent planning of the event. Thank you to each and every one for all your hard work!



Lastly, we would like to express our appreciation to all our enthusiastic participants who spent their Wednesday with us. We hope you had a joyful time with us and will continue to spread joy in your community. Just like the “Pyit Taing Htaung” doll, in the face of adversity, continue to stand tall, and strong, with unwavering joy as always!

support for all students, addressing opportunity gaps through innovative, student-centered initiatives, and fostering collaboration across institutions. “Community colleges offer opportunities for exploration on top of transfer and career. We’re not only here for graduating high school seniors, but there’s also great opportunity in reaching 12, 11, 9, and even 8th graders and keeping the doors open for returning adult students,” said Barton.

## Remembering BCC Faculty Linda King and Dylan Eret

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*The BCC Community lost two beloved faculty in the month of April. The following messages were shared with the BCC community on Wednesday, April 23rd and Friday, May 2nd in remembrance of Linda King and Dylan Eret.*

It is with great sadness that I share the news of the passing of longtime Adjunct English Instructor Linda King. Linda's passion for education, boundless energy, and unwavering dedication were felt by everyone who had the privilege of knowing her. She mentored countless students, helping them reach their full potential. When she saw a student struggling or falling behind, her instinct was always to invest more time and effort, guiding them toward success.

Linda's journey at Berkeley City College began as a student, exploring a career change. After earning her MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College in 2012, she began teaching English at BCC that same year. Linda was a faculty advisor for the BCC Poetry Club and contributed to the Milvia Street Art and Literary Journal, a publication founded at BCC. She was an active participant in local writing groups and the Bay Area poetry scene, attending and performing at community readings.

In addition to her talents as a writer, Linda was an accomplished singer and guitarist with a soulful blues voice. Her musical gifts, along with her artistic spirit, brought joy and inspiration to everyone she met. Her presence at BCC will be profoundly missed by all.

Berkeley City College faculty will be hosting a celebration of life for Linda King on May 21st at 5:00pm in Room 316, a classroom in which Linda taught for many years. There will be an opportunity to share memories of Linda with music and light refreshments. We hope that all who knew Linda may be able to attend to honor her memory.

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Dylan Eret, long-time Berkeley City College Humanities Instructor, passed away on April 24, 2025.

Dylan started teaching as a full-time Humanities Instructor at College of Alameda in 2008 and transferred to Berkeley City College in 2011. He had an especially careful and generous approach to everything he did at BCC. He regularly taught courses in storytelling and world religions, always getting students out of the classroom to learn through experiences in the everyday world around them.

Donations in Dylan's memory may be made to UCSF's Art for Recovery, a program that brought Dylan much joy in his last months.

*Obituary by Dalu Lingemann*

Dylan was born on November 26, 1972 in Chicago, Illinois, a curious and whimsical child who loved to read and learn. He developed a passion for cross country running in high school that he kept his whole life, always judging the weather by how good a "running day" it was. In college, he first studied math at UC Berkeley and then, in true Dylan fashion, switched his focus entirely using opposite parts of his amazing brain to study Folklore, ultimately receiving his Ph.D. from Penn.

Dylan was quiet and would usually listen to others instead of taking the floor, so people rarely realized that he was a true genius who looked at everything and anything that caught his interest from every angle with curiosity and deep thought. He had an outstanding memory and could learn from just seeing or hearing something once. He was intrigued by mystery in everyday things that most people take at face value, and researched a broad array of topics, like how humor works, the history of the pencil, music and dance across cultures, even death and dying this past year. He shared his love of learning with students most of his adult life, first working for UC Berkeley as a math specialist, then teaching humanities at several community colleges, ending up at Berkeley City College, where he taught for many years.

Dylan met his wife, Dalu, in 2003. They clicked on their first date and in nearly twenty-two years only had two days from the

## Remembering BCC Faculty Linda King and Dylan Eret (cont'd)

day they met that they didn't see each other, call, or text. They lived very happily in a house with a view and a garden in Rodeo, holding hands on walks and sharing the absurdity in the word with love and humor. Dylan really loved cats and spoiled their current two with affection and treats. He loved nurturing people as well and was the by far the favorite fun uncle to his nieces and nephew. He was the man who got up early to make his wife breakfast every workday morning for years so that she could sleep in a few more minutes.

He had never played an instrument, but at age forty-five, he decided he wanted to learn how to play the piano and worked at it until he could play beautifully, he then added learning drums, because as with everything, he needed to know how all the parts worked. He was already amazing at the drums and had just started to learn to play guitar this past year when he became ill.

When he got his cancer diagnosis, he faced it with bravery and determination, fighting for over a year in the face of ever worsening prognosis. He held onto what he called "steely joy" during a torturous final four month long hospital stay, playing drum beats with fruit, reading darkly whimsical stories aloud with his wife, when he could no longer walk, wheeling himself around the cancer ward with his hands and feet, and always treating those around him with kindness despite his personal pain.

The last week of his life, when he knew there was nothing else the doctors could do, he came home and asked for a last party so that he could say goodbye to his family and friends, facing his own death as he had lived, with courage and love for others.

## Upcoming Events & Services



BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE  
COMMENCEMENT  
**2025**  
BLOOMING IN  
RESILIENCE



THURSDAY, MAY 22  
10:00AM  
LANEY COLLEGE  
FOOTBALL FIELD