



NEWS FOR THE BOARD

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BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE

June 10, 2025

Denise Richardson, Ed.D., President

BCC Celebrates Graduates “Blooming in Resilience” at 2025 Commencement



Over 150 graduates of Berkeley City College’s Class of 2025 gathered with family, friends, faculty, and staff on a warm Spring day at the Laney College football field to celebrate this year’s commencement ceremony themed “Blooming in Resilience.”

The ceremony was headlined by keynote speaker and Berkeley **Mayor Adena Ishii**, a proud alumna of Berkeley City College. Mayor Ishii encouraged graduates to face the future with courage and self-belief.

“What I want you all to take away from today is to have some bravery in this journey that you’re on,” she said. “You all have so many opportunities that are available to you. Always keep your eyes on the prize, stick to your dreams, and don’t let people limit you.”

Valedictorian Valerie Simashkevich, an international student from Belarus, gave voice to the transformative power of education. After living in Poland and the Czech Republic, she found her academic home at BCC, majoring in Economics and leading initiatives to support refugees and women in tech.

Salutatorian Parsa Faraji shared his story as a first-generation student and immigrant who found belonging and purpose at BCC. “This journey has meant more than academics,” he said. “It’s been about finding my voice, my people, and a sense of purpose.”

Three students, **Moamina Asghar**, **Shaun Williams**, and **Ashley Campuzano** were recognized with the Blooming in Resilience Award symbolizing the embodiment of the commencement theme by overcoming personal, academic, or systemic challenges on their path to graduation

Himali KC, President of the Associated Students of Berkeley City College, Academic Senate representative **Tim Rose** and Classified Senate representative **Ramona Butler** spoke in encouragement and commemoration of the graduating class.

At the close of her opening remarks, **President Denise Richardson** said “I implore you to use your ambition, your passion, and your vision to ignite positive change and to eradicate hate, discrimination, and the most dangerous of them all—indifference. BCC is richer because of you, and we stand beside you now and for the rest of your journey, cheering you on and anticipating your success and your impact on the world.”

Congratulations to the Class of 2025! We look forward to cheering you on for years to come.





Community Health Worker Apprenticeship Graduation

Berkeley City College honored 19 graduates of its Community Health Worker apprenticeship program on May 22nd at BCC. The program led off with keynote addresses from East Bay Innovations Exec. Director Tom Heinz and Crisis Support Services of Alameda County counselor manager T. Yang – representatives of BCC’s apprenticeship partners that offered graduates paid on the job training while they completed their certifications. Congratulations to the graduates, and thank you to the HUSV Faculty Christina Tam, Yamini Oseguera-Bhatnagar, and Sonja Herbert for their work and Project Manager Midhun Joseph, Dean Mozell Person, and Interim VPI Chris Lewis for supporting these students.



MESA Celebrates First Graduating Cohort

BCC’s Math Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program celebrated graduates from its first cohort at a luncheon at Bua Thai restaurant on Tuesday, June 3rd. 10 of the 14 graduates attended and were treated to lunch, speeches, and wishes of good luck in their next chapters!

“It was a nice, intimate celebration of our first graduating MESA class!” said Director Armando Franco. “Thanks to all who attended this proud moment for our college!”



BCC Honors Employees and Retirees at End of Semester Celebration

On Friday, May 2, Berkeley City College hosted its End of Spring Semester Celebration in the college atrium. The event brought together BCC employees for a shared lunch and a moment of reflection as the 2024–25 academic year came to a close.

President Denise Richardson took the opportunity to recognize this year’s Annual President’s Awards recipients:

- **Faculty Award:** Kelly Pernell
- **Classified Professional Award:** Natalia Fedorova
- **Administrator Award:** Lissette Flores

In addition, President Richardson honored Ramona Butler, EOPS Coordinator, who is retiring after more than 20 years of dedicated service to the Peralta Community College District. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Ramona and wish her all the best in this exciting new chapter of her life.



BCC and State Leaders Tour West Campus Jobsite



Berkeley City College administrators, faculty, and classified professionals toured the BCC West Campus on May 13. Members of the XL Construction, Kitchell and AECOM led the tour to all floors of the building, showing the locations of classrooms, labs, offices, the new Learning Resources Center, and the rooftop patio area.

On May 2, PCCD Chancellor Tammeil Gilkerson joined a tour of the new campus jobsite with State Senator Tim Grayson.

We are looking forward to continuing to monitor progress on this exciting extension of BCC's campus up to its scheduled opening in Fall 2026!

Shared Governance Retreat

On May 23, 2025, Berkeley City College held its annual Shared Governance Retreat, bringing together chairs and co-chairs from governance committees, senates, and standing committees to strengthen collaboration and institutional planning. The retreat started with President Denise Richardson introducing BCC's proposed Integrated Planning Model and Shared Governance flow charts, followed by a review of governance self-evaluations led by Sr. Research & Planning

Analyst Phoumy Sayavong, Academic Senate President Matt Freeman, and Classified Senate President Tom Rizza. VPSS Stacey Shears and President Freeman. Sessions also included community commitments led by VPSS Stacey Shears and President Freeman and practical guidance brainstorm for new committee chairs. Thanks to all the BCC shared governance leaders for attending and collaborating to build equitable and transparent decision making at our college.



Remembering BCC Faculty Linda King and Dylan Eret

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.

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 world 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

A promotional poster for Berkeley City College's 2025 Commencement. The background is a deep teal with a pattern of small, light-colored dots. On the left, a male and a female graduate in black gowns and caps hold a green banner with the Berkeley City College logo and the year 1974. The male graduate is waving, and the female is giving a thumbs up. On the right, the text "BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT 2025" is displayed in large, bold, yellow letters. Below this, the theme "BLOOMING IN RESILIENCE" is written in smaller yellow letters. A stylized owl logo with the words "ENVISION", "ENGAGE", and "EXCEL" is positioned below the theme. At the bottom right, the date and time "THURSDAY, MAY 22 10:00AM" and the location "LANEY COLLEGE FOOTBALL FIELD" are listed in yellow.

BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE
COMMENCEMENT
2025
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