

Returning to the Umoja Village

A community needs a home to thrive and the Umoja Community at Berkeley City College is no different. The return of in-person services has been a boon to the college, and some of the biggest benefactors are the learning communities on campus.

One of the goals of Umoja is to break through the achievement gap for African Americans by providing an alternative academic approach that considers the wholeness of the human being: mind, body, and spirit. The Umoja Village, located in the annex at the corner of Center and Milvia Streets, is one of the ways the community is able to achieve this goal by creating a safe place for students to gather outside of the regular college system.

“We have to create an environment that they would be receptive to, something that is more aligned with us culturally, and that’s where it’s at,” says Umoja Coordinator Shannon Penn. “To have a dedicated space makes a difference because it sends a message that the college sees you, acknowledges you, and honors you by creating a space for you.”

While Umoja has persevered through the pandemic in a virtual setting, many of the students have never stepped foot in the Village. They have only heard rumors of the space that has nurtured so many students before them, helping set them on a path to transfer and academic success. This Spring, the rumors are now a reality as students have returned the place that many before them called home.

“We’ve been down for 2 years. Not one of them (students) have seen this place,” says Penn, “They’ve heard of it because it’s like legend, so when they get into a Zoom space they hear about it. ‘The Village, the Village,’ right? But they’ve never seen it so they’re all excited to check it out.”



There are some adjustments to follow indoor masking rules, the big one being the snack counter serving food and drinks is on hold. But the learning environment, the music, the cultural symbols, the conversation, the energy is still alive and well in the Village.

Students are coming up with ideas to meet safely in person with outdoor activities. One idea is to hold an outdoor yoga class in the park for students to stretch, unwind, and get to know each other. Others are informal with a cultural, familial focus. Mubeenah Wishnoff, a student team leader with Umoja, recently had an aunt visit the Village who brought up their work as a midwife and doula serving the community. The conversation inspired an idea to host a workshop discussing reproductive health for Black and Indigenous women. The Village is the type of space that encourages those conversations.

“It’s dope because it’s a space to develop and organize outside of the classroom.” says Wishnoff. “It’s amazing to have a culturally enriching experience and relevant community that supports you.”

Returning to the Umoja Village (cont.)

Wishnoff is also apart of the leadership committee organizing Umoja Day on February 23rd during college hour. The virtual open house is being held on Zoom and will allow students to experience the Umoja learning community practices first hand. All are welcome.



Guided Pathways Student Focus Groups

Berkeley City College is committed to developing and executing a framework for implementing the Guided Pathways national model. The Success Center for California Community Colleges and members of the Berkeley City College faculty hosted focus groups on Monday, February 14th and Thursday, February 17th to get students input about how to best implement the system to meet their needs. The one and half hour focus groups used a card sorting activity that created buckets to better help students identify which programs available would guide them toward degrees and transfer opportunities. Over a hundred students signed up to take part in the focus groups and a handful were selected from different departments, ages, and ethnicities to help present a diversity of experience. Students in attendance were rewarded with a \$25 gift card for their time and effort. We hope this input will allow Berkeley City College to fundamentally change how our curriculum is presented to students in a digestible and informative way, and easily identify pathways to success.

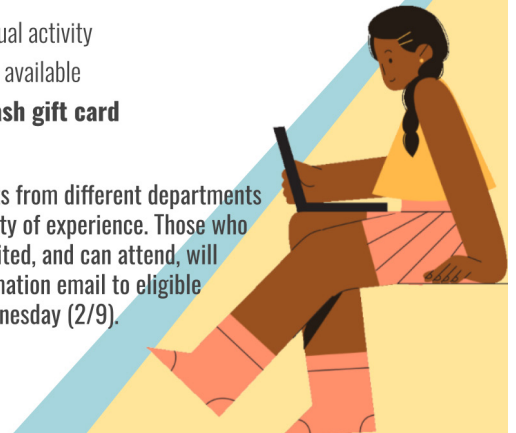
STUDENTS NEEDED FOR FOCUS GROUPS!

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We need students from different departments to ensure diversity of experience. Those who are selected, invited, and can attend, will receive a confirmation email to eligible students by Wednesday (2/9).



BCC Classified Professionals Luncheon



On February 16, 2022, BCC held a Classified Professionals Appreciation Luncheon in the college atrium, in collaboration with the administrative leadership team. The event integrated the Classified Senate meeting with Return to Campus updates on health and safety. The theme was lively with tropical décor, music, and a photo booth for fun.

“This is a pandemic, none of us have had to live through something like this before. We, the administration, the district don’t all know the best solutions going forward,” said President Williams “But I do know if we can maintain a level of communication and respect regarding requests being made to ensure that we all can come to campus and feel a level of safety and security, that’s really all we can do at this point. We’re all in this together.

The College President’s Cabinet Administration team served a buffet style catered lunch for the Classified Professionals. VP of Student Services Stacey Shears even served a homemade rum cake, a family recipe. It was a great opportunity for Classified Professionals to see each other after so many years working away from Campus during the pandemic and for many to meet in person for the first time, as some colleagues have joined BCC since the pandemic started.

Spring 2022 Club Rush at Berkeley City College

Berkeley City College's Campus Life and Student activities hosted Spring 2022 Club Rush on campus and online this week. On Monday and Tuesday, February 14 and 15, students were treated to pizza and music in the campus atrium. The Asian Pacific Islander LEAD club, Black Student Union, the BCC Electronics & Engineering club and more tabled the in-person event, encouraging sign ups. The ASBCC was also present, registering students for student government. ASBCC President Harry Mapodile said it was a fruitful effort, the ASBCC is leading in registration among other colleges in the district. The virtual event was held on Zoom Wednesday, February 16th for all students that were not able to attend the in-person gathering.



This Concludes Our News For The Board

