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Critical Academic Skills (CAS) workshops will be available at Bakersfield College this fall semester. These workshops will help students learn basic skills that are often expected of college students but not taught in regular classes.

The idea of basic skills workshops came from Butte College, which offers 100 workshops a semester. A group of faculty, including Dean of Instruction Patti Ross and Academic Development faculty member Kimberly Van Horne, decided to take this idea to BC. The group attended a workshop in May and since then has planned the CAS workshops in meetings and through e-mail.

“The process went very quickly because we were highly motivated and excited to get it going right away. We broke down the subject matter and developed the workshops. Patti Ross, our fearless leader, helped put this together,” said Van Horne.

According to Ross, because the workshops are being taught by BC faculty, there was no extensive approval necessary.

“It’s faculty and staff driven. As soon as they said, ‘Let’s do it,’ I said, ‘OK,’ and I got out of the way,” said Ross.

Workshops offered will help students develop various skills, including math and English. One workshop, called “Academic Culture: What ‘Successful’ Students Understand,” will teach students how to be hardworking and motivated.

“The Academic Culture class will help students assimilate to college culture no matter where they are from,” said Van Horne.

Van Horne said the classes will be hands-on and lectures will be minimal, adding that most students retain what they learn better when they hear, see, and do what they are learning.

Teacher referral to the workshops is recommended but not necessary. Those planning the workshops hope teachers will offer class credit or extra credit for attending.

“Referrals get the faculty more involved in what students are working on outside of class,” said Van Horne. To measure the success of the CAS workshops, attendees will be asked to fill out a survey, all of which will be gathered at the end of the pilot semester. BC teachers will also be asked for their input and opinions as well.

“We’ll ask the teachers who teach the workshops what worked and what didn’t. We’ll ask the teachers who referred students how they did in the class after attending the workshops,” said Ross.

Ross hopes to keep developing new workshops to expand the program. They also hope to triple the program by next fall and involve more faculty from across the campus. In addition to the workshops available at BC, the Delano Campus will also offer some of the same workshops including the Academic Culture workshop. The workshop schedules are printed on posters that can be found throughout campus.

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