

# BC stands with Standing Rock

By Jessica Wiegandt  
Arts & Life Editor

Brevard College committed to divest from the use of fossil fuels in February of 2015, becoming the first school in the southeast of the U.S. to make the commitment. On Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2016 the Student Government Association furthered the school statement by approving to donate at least \$1,000 to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. However, the donation could not officially move forward into action because SGA fund donations have to be approved unanimously by the entire student body.

The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) has been proposed by the Dakota Access, LLC, which is owned overall by Energy Transfer Crude Oil Company, LLC. On Energy Transfer's website, the pipeline is stated as being utilized "to transport crude oil from the Bakken/Three Forks play in North Dakota to a terminus in Illinois with additional potential points of destination along the pipeline route."

The pipeline is scheduled to be completed and functional by the end of 2016. However, protests have broken out, especially in Standing Rock, N.D., because the pipeline route enters the Sioux preservation, breaking U.S. agreements with the Native Americans.

The tribe has been publicly stating for weeks that the DAPL directly affects the natives as it snakes through sacred grounds. Not only does the pipeline disturb burial grounds but also cuts under drinking access points for the tribe.

Further along the path, the DAPL is scheduled to be constructed under the Mississippi River, where a mishap or explosion in the pipeline

would release tons of oil directly into a river that thousands of U.S. citizens rely upon for commerce and transport.

At the SGA meeting on Nov. 9, members of the student body gathered and listened to a presentation on the Standing Rock protests and how the community of BC could help.

"This is an issue worth getting involved with," Ben Saettel, SGA senator and presenter said. "Our school is about serving and helping those in need. These protesters need our help and we can give it to them."

After Saettel's presentation, SGA president Lauren Fowler delivered the proposal. SGA had allotted \$1,000 to the Recycling Committee at the beginning of the school year, which was an unused and unneeded amount, according to committee members. Fowler and Saettel utilized this excess money in the budget and proposed all of it be donated to the Sioux Tribe of Standing Rock.

Immediately students began asking questions about how the tribe could utilize the money and how quickly it could be accessed for the DAPL protest. The main question, however, was not whether or not the students would approve the money but how much they would approve.

The students voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 to the cause of protesting DAPL.

"I had so many people coming to me before the election asking how we could contribute to Standing Rock as a campus community," Fowler said. "Then I ran into a lady in the community who was looking for help from us to gather donations because she's going out to Standing Rock soon."

According to Fowler, SGA funds come from a fee that all students pay, with a premise that

it will be used to "better campus and student life." This means the money cannot be directly deposited to the PayPal account being used on the Sioux website. Instead, Fowler and other students will use the approved money to back a community fundraiser effort.

Fowler said a BC alumnus, Harmony Blue, plans to attend the protests in Standing Rock and has recruited the help of the college. Fowler has gathered a crew of at least 40 BC students who have volunteered to organize a campus fundraiser.

"The Travers Brotherhood band has agreed to put on a show here [on campus] and the admission fee to get in will be a donation, either monetary, clothing or food for the protestors and members of the tribe," Fowler said. "We will also be putting out jars around the community to gather change for Standing Rock and boxes with lists of what is needed. I believe this community is going to come together and we can really make a difference."

Fowler and Saettel will be hosting a town hall style meeting tonight at 6:30 p.m. for students interested in helping. It will take place in MG 232 and will include time spent making banners and discussing the fundraiser and future actions with community members.

"This is right along the lines of what we believe in as a school," Fowler said. "We already made a commitment to divest from fossil fuels, which means we as a school have already said we don't condone this pipeline. Now we've decided to back up what we say with some action. Together we can make a difference... So let's do it."