

LETTER to the EDITOR

Campus in need of community, love

Brevard College has a wonderful community, filled with love and spirit. However, during hard times, it's easy to forget we can rely on each other. We fear that we'll be deemed a burden instead of trusting that we can lean on our peers, faculty and staff for support. We need to remember we can always reach out when we need a hand and when we feel alone and need to be seen.

Sharad Creaseman, our very wise campus minister, once said "People are always watching." When we hear this, it's easy to think that means eyes are always on us and that adds more pressure on us, however I believe instead of meaning all eyes are on us to see when we'll fail, it actually means all eyes are on us to see we need help.

I propose that as a college community and campus we come together and lift each other up. I believe we should be kinder and be willing to love on each other just a little bit more. I believe we need to be willing to not just wait to see if someone needs our help or needs a shoulder to

cry on, but we should freely offer it.

I've often seen people sit alone, hoping someone will see them and either sit with them or invite them to sit with a group of people, however it never happens. I want to challenge the campus to sit with someone you don't know, someone you only know of or someone you're in class with in the cafeteria, at least once a week.

Sometimes, you never know just how much something small can impact someone in a positive way. I want people on campus to know that they are loved, and they are seen. There is no struggle too small or too large to be shared among those who are willing to help others through their struggles. The struggle may seem impossible to face and it may even appear to be a mountain, but by coming together as a family, we can prove that mountains can be moved.

— Hope Jackson, '21

Sakai sucks...

BC's primary LMS is causing major problems

By Chloe McGee, Arts & Life Editor and
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Fellow Brevard College students and faculty members, we hope that the statements made in this article accurately reflect universal opinions regarding Sakai.

As all of us should know, Sakai- LAMP Consortium is currently Brevard College's primary Learning Management System (LMS).

Although the open-source platform is designed to be multifunctional and interactive, it is simply not functional and, therefore, its ability to be interactive is hindered as well.

Even if you were to use Sakai precisely the way the software engineers intended, the program would maybe suffice as tolerable. Brevard College should not settle for mere tolerability, and yet we do because it's much more affordable than superior LMS alternatives.

While many of our professors often reference Sakai and urge their students to take advantage of its resources, they fall short on their end of the bargain by not reliably updating information such as grades, attendance and assignments. However, they are not to blame because we too, as students, recognize that Sakai's user interface design is unnecessarily complex.

BC Senior Shannon Kerr says that she has witnessed first-hand, as a TA, the burden of managing Sakai from a professor's account. She continued to describe the prolonged and tiresome process it often took to complete seemingly easy tasks using Sakai.

In general, for students and professors, Sakai lacks accessibility as the website is both difficult to browse and does not provide a mobile application for its users. It seems that many of Sakai's features are disposable, cluttering the website, and making it nearly impossible to stay organized and utilize tools that would otherwise be quite helpful.

Unfortunately, the chaos extends beyond the website as Sakai regularly

spams our email accounts with confusing, encrypted code-like messages.

As recent studies have found, email continues to be the leading communicative preference among college students. However, this data only holds weight if emails are effective or, at the very least, legible.

After interviewing members of the student body, we found that the most frequent recommendation to enhance Sakai's user experience was the addition of a mobile application; more explicitly, one that is "not like BC Radar."

"An app would definitely be helpful," said BC sophomore Reese Finnie. Finnie believes that having such resource would improve efficiency by consolidating redundant emails and website messages into singular notifications via a mobile application.

The ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology found that "students are increasingly using their mobile devices and apps for learning purposes. In 2012, 32 percent of students said they used mobile apps to complete an assignment at least once a week. In 2014, 69 percent said they used mobile apps for learning at least once a week."

The standardized use of mobile apps in academia is quickly rising and is proving itself to be one of the most efficient ways to stay connected and engaged online.

According to the ECAR survey, in 2017, 99% of respondents owned a smartphone while only 30% owned both a phone and a laptop.

"I'm on my phone more than my computer, so it would be way more accessible," said BC sophomore Sidney Robinson.

Switching to a new system, specifically one that included an app, is critical and would increase students' online involvement and quite possibly their overall academic productivity as well.