



Office of the President Sunil Ahuja, Ph.D.

Dear LCC Community,

As you know, over the past year, we have been working under guidance and recommendations provided in the Auditor of State's special audit and more recently in the Higher Learning Commission's mid-cycle team report regarding resources and personnel at Lakeland Community College. In my messages and presentations earlier this year, I have conveyed a declining pattern of enrollment (down by nearly half) and a declining pattern of enrollment-driven revenues (down by nearly quarter) at the College over the last decade. In light of these considerations, I write to note the following reduction in force actions concerning faculty at the College following today's Board of Trustees meeting.

We began this academic year with 117 full-time faculty, relatively unchanged from 116 full-time faculty in Fall 2015. We will have 14 voluntary retirements this year. Due to cohort enrollment numbers and classroom enrollment sizes of fewer than 12 since 2017, several health programs must be closed and five full-time faculty positions affected by those programs must be eliminated. Additionally, after careful consideration, we will eliminate five positions in areas with enrollment declines. These actions will result a net cost reduction of about \$2.315 million.

At the same time, we will immediately invest in the hiring of three full-time faculty this fall or next spring in manufacturing, welding, and electrical engineering related to programs in the newly renovated E-building. The E-building will fully reopen by the start of the fall semester and lacks faculty to properly staff programs related to workforce development. As I have mentioned before, workforce development must be one of our key priorities at the College, and this action allows us to rebalance some of our resources toward areas of greatest needs. We are allocating about \$225,000 toward these hires.

The net cost reduction from these actions prior to entering the next fiscal year will be about \$2.1 million. Much of this cost reduction will go toward producing a balanced budget for FY26, a must-have College priority, along with adding to reserves and other strategic investments related to the College's growth. Lastly, we anticipate at least six voluntary retirements next academic year, resulting in a cost reduction of another approximately \$800,000.

These decisions have been very difficult, but they are made in light of the College's enrollment and financial realities and positioning the College for a financially sustainable future. They are also made in light of careful reviews and responses by the academic deans, with thoughtful input from faculty, regarding the College's and programmatic operational needs. Barring unforeseen circumstances or as a consequence of external mandates, I anticipate these actions to be the last round of layoffs at Lakeland Community College. I am confident that these decisions will allow us to reposition the College for a strong future.

With best regards,

Sunil Ahuja, Ph.D.
President