

September 21, 2009

The back to school displays are up in Fred Meyer and I've spotted the first orange tinge on some maple leaves. Summer is ending; Linn-Benton Community College's enrollment is strong and soon our classrooms will be full of students. In these days of economic crisis, LBCC is a shining light in our community – helping families get back to work. It's a good time to update the community about how LBCC is doing.

WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR

Even though last year was financially challenging, we continued to make quality improvements to help our students succeed. Here is a partial list of last year's student-focused accomplishments:

- Starting an integrated "First-Term Experience" and redesigning Student Orientation to help our new students succeed;
- Acquiring grants to provide health insurance opportunities and affordable child care for our students;
- Beginning our Mechatronics Program and Wildland Firefighter course;
- Strengthening our advising program to help students plan their academic career;
- Offering our first LBCC Summer Performing Arts Academy;
- Successfully meeting our Miller Match Challenge by raising nearly \$302,000 for scholarships. The \$93,000 match created the Miller Scholar program with funds to be awarded fall term;
- Increasing our international student enrollment to bring diversity into the classroom;
- Offering our summer accelerated welding program. This partnership with the Community Services Consortium (CSC) trained dislocated workers to be job-ready and started them on their one-year Welding Certificate.

In spite of budget belt-tightening, LBCC won a number of awards and grants:

- Our vocal students led by James Reddan won state recognition;
- Greg Mulder's students received national recognition for our Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) project;
- Jenny Strooband's equestrian students brought back a championship from Tennessee;
- Our Diagnostic Imaging Program led by Stacey Mallory earned the prestigious national Bellwether;
- LBCC benefited from \$1.8M in deferred maintenance improvements. These Oregon stimulus funds put local companies to work making improvements that have made our buildings safer, more sustainable and more attractive.
- A \$200,000 grant from the Oregon Health Network will allow us to improve our electronic communication system with the East Linn Center in Lebanon.
- A \$284,000 Hewlett Packard grant will help students pursue degrees in engineering, computer science, information systems and information technology.
- Suzlon, a leading wind power company, donated two nine-ton wind energy turbine blades for our new Mechatronics Program;
- The U.S. Department of Energy, National Energy Technology Laboratory in Albany contributed more than \$179,900 worth of science lab equipment to our new science building.

By being nimble and taking advantage of every opportunity to fulfill our vision, we continued to find creative ways to improve our facilities. We broke ground on Madrone Hall, our new sustainable, LEED-certified science building. We expect to move into the building before the start of winter term, and then begin the remodel of White Oak Hall, our old science building.

In spite of last year's financial challenges, we honored our commitment to assess community training and education needs by surveying the health care industry. The information will help us keep health care programs current.

How did all these wonderful things happen when the financial sky was falling? It all happened because we care deeply for our students, we are creative and we are resilient. We took maximum advantage of every opportunity and we worked collaboratively to minimize painful decisions. We did not just weather a near national economic depression, but we are now poised to aggressively meet the needs our

community has identified. Thank you to everyone in the community who supported us through the constantly changing economic crises.

LOOKING FORWARD

We are beginning the year with a Board-approved balanced budget. The state legislature will re-convene for a special session in February and we may face more reductions in our state appropriation. While that makes us a little apprehensive, we also have high hopes for financial relief coming from Washington, D.C. In a recent visit to D.C. I saw a strong national agenda for investing in community college students to get America back to work, significantly increasing the number of U.S. community college graduates, encouraging the development of new sustainable programs and improving community college instructional facilities and equipment.

Our developing relationship with China will bring opportunities for faculty and student exchanges, enrich our college culture, and open international pathways for our regional business partners. I will present information on our fledgling educational partnership with China on October 14th from 4-5 p.m. in the Boardroom on the Albany campus.

We are developing our vision for an expanded Takena Hall and culinary arts facility in Albany, an exciting Advanced Transportation Technology Center in Lebanon and a health career education facility in partnership with Samaritan Health Services and Western University of Health Sciences.

Linn-Benton Community College is positioned to take advantage of the inevitable economic recovery and to meet the emerging and growing needs of our students, community partners, and citizens. LBCC's standards for excellence in education and compassion for our students make LBCC stellar and a source of great community pride.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rita".