

Lane Community College is emerging from the COVID pandemic even stronger, according to new President Stephanie Bulger, who spoke to Springfield City Club on September 15. Dr. bulger took office on July 1, 2022.

She reported several successes for LCC even during the pandemic.

The college one of the area's largest employers, was successful in avoiding large layoffs, funded a federally qualified health center at its auxiliary campus in Cottage Grove, and even began offering some bachelor's degrees. The college continues to move forward with plans to construct two new facilities on the 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue campus – a health professions building and an industry trades education center.

The new buildings will help the college address the changing nature of work in the area. Dr. Bulger pointed out that while a major focus of LCC is career technical education, the nature of CTE has changed. It is no longer just the traditional trades of the past, but also now includes advanced manufacturing and even the arts, particularly graphic design, and animation as well as the more classical art forms. These buildings, funded by a recently approved general obligation bond, will help make LCC a workforce hub for the entire region.

Technological changes had led the college to provide more programs integrating technology in mechanical trades including electronics advanced manufacturing, and fabrication. The new industry trades center will help address that need. The health profession building will accommodate existing programs in nursing and emergency medical services as well as medical assisting and hygiene, which are all parts of the trades of the future.

Attendance, she said, is up overall, although the shift from in person to hybrid or online learning has made it appear that there are fewer people on campus. Fifty-two percent of LCC students are full time, although now the number attending classes in person is a smaller part than the attendance in hybrid or online classes. She said the college has adapted well to being able to offer programs in different modes and that the infrastructure of the college is adequate although the college will be doing a utilization study in the soon to assure that its infrastructure meets future needs.

LCC is also reaching out to establish partnerships with both the community and the K-12 education system. One recent example Dr. Bulger pointed to is a program where LCC has worked the local school districts and the Lane Workforce Partnership to establish a program where high school students work with Lane faculty to develop and construct tiny homes. She also said that LCC is expanding efforts to help assure that all high school seniors complete the federal financial assistance forms before graduation.





In response to a question, Dr. Bulger said LCC is continuing to study how to make the center in downtown Eugene a true community asset. Although its use has changed since it was originally constructed, she believes it remains an important part of the college's assets. As she observed, it is often easier for new students to find their way to the downtown center than it is to get to the 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue campus.

Dr. Bulger said the "great resignation" is really a reshuffling, and increases the value of community colleges, because the change in how work is done arising out of the pandemic has made people look for ways they can restructure their work life into areas that are both more suited to the new ways of working and more satisfying to the workers themselves. This means that more and more people are seeking training or retraining that immediately suits them for a new work experience.