



# L A K E E R I E

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# C O L L E G E

Strategic Directions 2010-2013

Presented to the Board of Directors  
February 2010

# Introduction

## Where We've Come From

Originally founded in 1856 as a women's college, today Lake Erie College (LEC) is a co-educational, not-for-profit, private, dynamic and progressive institution of higher education offering 33 undergraduate majors and 23 undergraduate minors, as well as Master's programs in Business Administration and Education. Grounded in the liberal arts, Lake Erie enrolls over 1,100 students of all ages and is nationally recognized as a College of Distinction. Located in Painesville, Ohio, 30 miles east of Cleveland, LEC's historic campus is comprised of 60 acres and 18 buildings. The George M. Humphrey Equestrian Center, located five miles south of campus in Concord Township, is comprised of 85 acres, barns that accommodate up to 100 horses, a 1,000-seat arena and a newly constructed learning center housing three state-of-the-art classrooms and a lab. LEC is moving towards recognition as a leading comprehensive institution in the region.

As part of the dynamic change occurring at LEC the College embarked upon a strategic sports initiative which incorporated the addition of 11 sports teams, including football. This initiative was begun as part of the overall efforts to increase undergraduate enrollment and gender equity on campus. Evidence of our commitment to the greater community is shown through the creation of a Center for Entrepreneurship which was developed with the help of the Kauffman and Morgan foundations. The entrepreneurial spirit is a common thread woven throughout the LEC curriculum as well as a variety of opportunities for our students to engage with entrepreneurs, both locally and nationally. Our newly chosen path of Division II NCAA sports programs, and acceptance into the GLIAC, also contribute to the "real change" experienced on campus.

This dynamic change has led to major enrollment growth over the past three years, accompanied by an increase in the average GPA of students entering our undergraduate programs. LEC has grown from 680 undergraduate students to a current average of over 915, representing 18 states and six countries. Niche majors such as sports management, nursing, allied health, and a special education concentration have also supported enrollment growth which will assist in attaining our overall goal of 1500 undergraduate students by 2015. Another 200 students are enrolled in graduate level courses and many more take advantage of professional development courses. The addition of Montessori Studies to our Education offerings is a spring-board for growth among graduate programs as well. LEC has focused on increasing enrollment in its graduate programs through the use of cohort groups at local businesses and is also embarking on on-line delivery platform to compliment classroom courses. During the next 5 years, the creation of additional masters programs, including a physician assistant degree, will bring our total graduate degree offerings to five masters' degrees.

Growth in student numbers is not the only evidence of significant change on campus. Our faculty has grown from 32 full time members to a current level of 50 full time and 43 part time and adjunct faculty on campus. In addition, staff support in all other areas of the college has grown from 80 to 130 since the beginning of President Victor's tenure in May 2006.

Remaining true to our liberal arts tradition, with more than half of our undergraduate students now living in campus housing, the LEC community strives to embody our recently revised institutional Mission, a product of our first AQIP action project:

**“In the context of a long liberal arts tradition, Lake Erie College provides distinctive undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare students to meet career and life challenges as educated and responsible citizens of local, national and international communities”.**

In order to actualize our institutional Mission, we have reflected as a community and have identified six institutional characteristics which express our Mission and which provide us with a collective Vision to direct our individual efforts:

- Academic Excellence
- Academic Dynamism
- Internationalism
- Commitment to Diversity
- Beneficial Interpersonal Relationships
- Caring Attitude

These characteristics help to further define the college’s commitment to Excellence, Tradition and Service.

LEC has also executed a successful marketing plan during the past four years which has brought national attention and recognition to the campus. Early completion of the capital fundraising campaign has allowed the College to move forward with new construction projects, including complete renovation of Austin Science and reacquisition of Garfield Center.

During the course of the past two years, the college community began the process of developing a strategic plan to guide the college through the next three years. While designed to be an “on-going process,” the strategic vision of the institution can be expressed in the words of President Victor during his inaugural address to the community:

**“Lake Erie College is, at its very core, an idea – a wonderful, bold, noble and powerful idea.”**

## Looking Forward

The next three years, from 2010 to 2013 will be a time of opportunity and continued change for LEC, as it seeks to fulfill its commitment to meet the needs of students and community in a changing economic and demographic landscape. In order to meet institutional objects for LEC, the College operates within the framework of a liberal arts institution to prepare students to meet both career and life challenges. A wide range of experiential and enrichment opportunities are afforded students through inter-collegiate

athletics, student services, and campus culture. The College also strives to instill global citizenship by providing students exposure to the cultures and values of their own and other societies in preparation for responsible citizenship in local, national and international communities. Experiential and enrichment opportunities are provided through international study programs, community service and partnership programs and campus speaker series.

The Strategic Planning Team embarked on a SWOC analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the college while also discovering opportunities and challenges we face. These identifiers helped to shape the strategic directions that follow.

## Trends in Post-Secondary Education

As our nation takes a look at students enrolling in post-secondary education, the persona of higher education has changed. Without fail, every sector of the United States is seeing an increased number of students over the age of 25, or “non-traditional students”; women outnumber men in terms of total enrollments at an average of 57%; and with the economic crisis of the past 18 months, the number of part-time students has also increased. In Ohio, the number of students graduating from high school is projected to decrease by 8% over the next 5 years, with only a 4% recovery during the following 5 years. At the same time, the number of adults in Ohio who have not completed a bachelor’s degree has risen to nearly 73%.

The U.S. Department of Labor has predicted that over the next decade, the labor force will see a shortage in the areas of educational services, public administration, transportation, health services, K-12 educators, college and university instructors, financial analysts and registered nurses. A post-secondary education is an entry-level requirement for an increasing number of professions, with two out of three new jobs expected to demand such credentials.

In June 2009 Part One of a three part report being issued by the Chronicle of Higher Education was completed and recently made public. Part One of the report is entitled “The College of 2020: Students” and paints a picture of what higher education will look like in the year 2020. Based on reviews of research and data on trends in higher education, interviews with experts who are shaping the future of colleges as well as survey results, this section of the report outlines the expectations of students 10 years into the future. Today, these students are in first grade. Some of the key indicators are:

- Colleges will need to quickly expand their online programs
- Conversion to more convenience for students will multiply over the next decade
- Colleges will need to offer a variety of delivery mechanisms, provide them simultaneously and be flexible enough to adapt to market changes
- The average age of students will continue to trend higher
- Students will move in and out of college courses, while expectations for additional credentials to advance careers will increase
- While regional differences will occur, the total number of high-school graduates will be virtually unchanged from 2010 to 2020
- Around 2020, or just after, minority students will outnumber whites on college campuses for the first time

# Building on Our Strengths

Our stakeholders tell us among LEC's strengths, they find an entrepreneurship program that impacts students academically and with real-world experiences; a niche major in the Equine Studies with concentrations in all fields within the industry; and a strong science program. Building on these strengths our Strategic Directions for 2010-2013 are:

- ❖ To create and foster an intellectually supportive and safe learning-centered environment to serve students in problem-based learning that demonstrates growth.
- ❖ To implement continuous improvement processes that provide meaningful feedback to achieve excellence.
- ❖ To create real-world experiences through collaboration between students, the global community and LEC faculty, staff and alumni.
- ❖ To serve our diverse students, staff and community through continual identification and assessment of learning needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- ❖ To continue to increase utilization of technology in the classroom and as an administrative tool designed to provide information to inform decisions.
- ❖ To develop a system of shared governance that provides a voice for all constituents while offering a clear framework for guiding the institution.
- ❖ To develop a system for effectively managing institutional resources to support strategic initiatives.

As we embark on the journey that will take in us in these strategic directions, we keep in mind the words of author Alvin Toffler:

**“The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”**

## Strategic Direction #1

To create and foster an intellectually supportive and safe learning-centered environment to serve students in problem-based learning that demonstrates growth.

### Goal

Increase the recruitment, retention and graduation of qualified students by developing an integrated system of programming that will improve the overall perception of the value of the total Lake Erie College educational experience.

### Recruiting

- Objective 1:** Attract and matriculate qualified students that create a balanced atmosphere and campus culture, with emphasis placed on Business, Science/Math and Education.
- Objective 2:** Increase the number of transfer students that have earned an Associate's degree.
- Objective 3:** Increase the number of out-of-state traditional freshmen students in an effort to increase campus diversity and meet enrollment goals.
- Objective 4:** Increase enrollment in the graduate programs, with emphasis placed on the MEd program.
- Objective 5:** Increase campus involvement in the recruitment process.

### Retaining

- Objective 6:** Increase retention of students by targeting a 5% increase over the next three years (2010, 2011 and 2012).

### Graduating

- Objective 7:** Increase the number of graduates by establishing a system of semi-annual benchmarks that guide our students to reach their full academic potential and prepare them to meet the challenges in today's job market or in future educational endeavors.

## Strategic Direction #2

To implement continuous improvement processes that provide meaningful feedback to achieve excellence.

### Goal

Utilizing the current AQIP action project on assessment as a framework, develop a campus wide system of assessment that includes specific plans for each department by July 1, 2011.

- Objective 1:** Provide an introduction of assessment to college constituents that explores best practices and facilitates/trains all College constituencies in assessment methodologies.
- Objective 2:** Conduct audit of current practices through collection of data and evaluation of various forms of assessment throughout the college in an effort to develop a uniform method of assessment.
- Objective 3:** Develop departmental assessment plans and set targets.

## Strategic Direction #3

To create real-world experiences through collaboration between students, the global community and LEC faculty, staff and alumni.

### Goal

Provide a variety of services through collaborative partnerships that respond to the ongoing and emerging needs of our local region, as well as internationally, while showcasing our programs, faculty, staff and students.

- Objective 1:** Increase collaborative relationships with local, regional and international public, private and non-profit institutions and organizations.
- Objective 2:** Establish annual meetings with new and continuing collaborative partners and utilize the Executive Directors, Directors, Deans and Associate Deans as facilitators.
- Objective 3:** Provide a variety of services which impact positively on the challenges faced locally, regionally and internationally.
- Objective 4:** Promote relationships through public relations to strengthen existing partnerships while nurturing new opportunities.

**Objective 5:** Foster life long relationships with alumni through the implementation of cultural events, athletic events, equine demonstrations and competitions and career related networking events.

## Strategic Direction #4

To serve our diverse students, staff and community through continual identification and assessment of learning needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Goal

Provide quality educational opportunities that respond to the intellectual and professional needs of present and future students within the context of the LEC Mission statement. This will include a re-affirmation of successful program offerings, development of new programs where appropriate, and promotion of an exemplary system of educational delivery and scholarship.

**Objective 1:** Systematically assess established academic programs within the context of the College and its Mission statement and available resources.

**Objective 2:** Assess proposed new programs within the context of the College and its Mission statement and available resources.

**Objective 3:** Develop and implement a comprehensive program of performance evaluation and development for all faculty (e.g. tenured, non-tenured and adjunct).

**Objective 4:** Create a learning environment which fosters and embraces a diverse student population.

**Objective 5:** Ensure that appropriate professional development opportunities are available to all faculty members.

**Objective 6:** Enhance classroom, continuing/distance education through innovative uses of technology as a comprehensive teaching and learning tool.

## Strategic Direction #5

To continue to increase utilization of technology in the classroom and as an administrative tool designed to provide information to inform decisions.

### Goal

Provide technological planning and development through the identification of innovative and appropriate technologies to ensure access to electronic and technological resources that support the curriculum and administrative processes.

- Objective 1:** Implement a computer replacement plan.
- Objective 2:** Evaluate and implement desktop virtualization.
- Objective 3:** Implement SMART (Shared Multi-Media Access to Resources for Shared Teaching) Classrooms.
- Objective 4:** Streamline data delivery and technology to faculty, staff, students and other constituents of LEC.
- Objective 5:** Seamlessly integrate technology into everyday processes at LEC.
- Objective 6:** Ensure that technology supports mission critical systems including database, website, marketing and admissions initiatives.

## Strategic Direction #6

To develop a system of shared governance that provides a voice for all College constituents and a clear framework for guiding the institution.

### Goal

To foster a campus culture that supports: 1) responsive and transparent College-wide governance, 2) comprehensive involvement of the campus community, and 3) leadership development.

- Objective 1:** Assess the existing structure of institutional governance to determine the areas where improvements are necessary. More specifically, taking steps to ensure that the process of decision-making at all levels is inclusive, informed, thoughtful and timely.

**Objective 2:** Ensure that all planning processes: 1) are data-driven, broad-based and offer opportunities for effective input by appropriate constituencies, 2) are allocated the necessary resources for deliberation and completion, and 3) lead to the improvement of institutional effectiveness.

**Objective 3:** Provide opportunities for the development of leadership/management skills for faculty, administration, staff and students.

## Strategic Direction # 7

To develop a system for effectively managing institutional resources to support strategic initiatives.

### Goal

Establish a resource allocation plan that ensures strategic directions are successful while at the same time continues support of the mission of the College.

**Objective 1:** Define the process thru which planning, budgeting, resource allocation and assessment are integrated.

**Objective 2:** Establish fundraising initiatives to support scholarships, academic program development, general operations and infrastructure needs.

**Objective 3:** Review and modify the budget and management policies to promote efficiency, effectiveness and growth and to ensure support of strategic directions.

**Objective 4:** Embark on development of a master facilities plan that reaches well beyond current needs to address future requirements of higher education.