

LMC plots hands-on engineering program

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BENTON TOWNSHIP — Lake Michigan College is starting a two-year program for students interested in the hands-on business of engineering.

The program will give students skills to succeed in product design and manufacturing processes, LMC President Jennifer Spielvogel said.

“This is a program that will focus on things that support engineering research, (or) R&D (research and development) activities that are going on ... so they’ll have the skills and technique in all areas

of engineering,” she said.

Students who complete the program — which LMC board members approved last week — will get an associates degree in applied science in engineering technology. LMC will start the program this fall with 20 students.

The idea grew from a January 2014 forum with local employers, said Leslie Kellogg, LMC’s vice president of academic services, career and work force education.

“From their (employers’) perspective, they have individuals who are in their work force that have an aptitude for applied engineering. not

theoretical engineering,” Kellogg said. “But there’s no local program option for them to get that engineering tech academic credential. So they really wanted to see us develop a local program.”

Further research convinced the college of the need, Kellogg said.

“There’s two tracks in engineering. There’s the theoretical engineer, that places like Whirlpool recruit from all over the world. There’s another track in engineering that we’re going to offer, which is engineering technology, which is really hands-on work through R&D projects. and that kind of

thing,” she said.

The program will be in the planned Hanson Technology Center at the Napier Avenue campus, where the college will house all its manufacturing technology classes.

Long-term, LMC plans to develop the program into a baccalaureate degree, with a focus on controls and mechanical engineering, according to an outline prepared for the board.

Once the plan is in place, students will have an opportunity for a “3+1” option that allows them to earn a bachelor’s degree locally, Kellogg said.