

# LMC enrollment up slightly

Dorm at full capacity, officials report

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**BENTON HARBOR** — Lake Michigan College has started off the new year with a student head count slightly ahead of last year's levels.

The fall semester, which began Sept. 6, shows enrollment running at 3,442 students, President Emeritus/Acting CEO Robert Harrison recently told LMC

board members. That's a slight uptick from last year's figures, which showed 3,338 students.

"We have (originally) budgeted for a small drop in enrollment, so we're pleased with that (3,442 figure)," Harrison said.

Those figures also reflect a larger trend statewide, in which LMC is one of seven area community colleges whose enrollment has either stayed flat, or is running slightly above last year's levels, said Doug Schaffer, vice president of

student services.

That snapshot is taken from 27 community colleges that report figures to the state, Schaffer said.

Asked what he takes away from those trends, Harrison said: "I suppose some people might say that the impact of the recession is slowly coming to an end. The differences between the colleges are probably more geographic variances than anything else."

The figure doesn't include high school students taking classes as part of LMC's

dual enrollment program. That tally won't be clear until the end of this month, though Harrison doesn't expect it to drastically change the total enrollment figure.

The college is seeing more older students, for whom enrollment is about 10 percent higher last year and shows people are trying to upgrade their skills for the local job market, Harrison said.

"That's the logical

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assumption,” he said.”  
“They’ve gone back to work now, and starting to position themselves for the next job.”

On a different note, Schaffer reported that LMC’s Beckwith Hall student housing complex is now at full capacity, at 188 students. Beckwith opened at LMC’s main campus on Napier Avenue in July 2014.

LMC already is seeing some interesting geographic variations within Beckwith’s overall enrollment, Schaffer said.

“It’s not just students that come from a long geographic distance,” he said. “We also have local, in-district students that reside there because of the value that it brings to their college experience.”

For example, South Haven is now tied for third place with St. Joseph in numbers of students signing up to live at Beckwith Hall.