

LMC ties teaching program to Western Michigan

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BENTON HARBOR — Students preparing for a teaching career at Lake Michigan College can now transfer to Western Michigan University, without missing a beat.

LMC trustees have approved the new arrangement, part of a new associated in applied science program.

The program will prepare students for a transfer to WMU and completion of a bachelor of science degree with a choice of majoring in early childhood, elementary or special education, said Leslie Kellogg, vice president of academic affairs.

“We created those three tracks that align with the need for teachers in our region,” Kellogg said. “When students complete that associate’s degree program (at LMC), they can transfer to partner programs, with a minimal loss of credits.”

Students who get their degree will then meet state requirements for a Michigan Provisional Teaching Certificate.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the demand for teachers to grow 13 percent by 2018.

That need is expected to be especially strong in Michigan, where nearly 30 percent of its current generation is retiring, “creating available positions for newly certified teachers in all fields,” an LMC board memo states.

One is special education, where last year “100 percent of WMU students who graduated with this degree were hired in the field,” the memo states.

Forty-three percent of LMC’s teacher education students transfer to Western after two years, which is why it seemed like the logical starting point for an agreement, Kellogg said.

LMC is also discussing similar agreements with Central Michigan and Grand Valley State universities, “who are strong transfer partners for our teacher education



Tony Wittkowski / HP staff

Western Michigan University Southwest, located next to Lake Michigan College in Benton Township is pictured Monday. LMC trustees have recently made it easier for teaching students to transfer to WMU.

program,” she said.

In other matters, the board last week approved a new class scheduling that affirms LMC’s commitment to a student-friendly schedule, one based on block scheduling standards, Kellogg said.

“We’ve always tried to develop a student-friendly schedule, but this (policy) tightens that up a little bit,” she said.

For example, the policy requires a 10-minute break for classes that run more than 90 minutes, with a 15-minute break for classes of 180 minutes or longer, a board memo states.

Classes that start after 3 p.m. must end by 6 p.m., except for apprenticeship programs.

A faculty committee reviewed the issue, and came up with roughly a dozen recommendations that made it into the final language, Kellogg said. The relevant academic dean must approve any changes.

LMC commits to ensuring that class times don’t overlap with each other, so students can make higher education part of their lives, said Kellogg, who cited working parents as an example.

“Let’s make sure we’re offering classes after local public schools start, and give that student enough time to get the kids to school, and get to class,” Kellogg said. “The vast majority of our classes are three credit-hour classes, so we focused on that.”