

Lakeland
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

State of the
COLLEGE

2026

Mission

To provide quality learning opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of the community.

Vision

To be the best in creating quality learning opportunities.

Core Purpose

To impact lives through learning.



Statement of Commitment

- The institution declares that it will educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth.
- The institution declares that its duty is to equip students with the opportunity to develop the intellectual skills they need to reach their own, informed conclusions.
- The institution declares its commitment to not requiring, favoring, disfavoring, or prohibiting speech or lawful assembly.
- The institution declares it is committed to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the autonomy of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and tolerates the differences in opinion that naturally occur in a public higher education community.
- The institution declares that its duty is to treat all faculty, staff, and students as individuals, to hold them to equal standards, and to provide them equality of opportunity, with regard to those individuals' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.



Dear Lakeland Friends,

It is my pleasure to present the 2026 State of the College report. It has been a year marked by continued progress at the Lakeland Community College. That progress is truly the result of teamwork and collaboration, in partnership with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community. I am immensely indebted to the Lakeland community for their dedication and commitment to improving the college.

The following pages highlight the accomplishments during the 2025-2026 academic year:

- **Financial sustainability:** For the first time, the college achieved a score of 2.8 on Senate Bill 6 ratio, a key metric for financial health and sustainability for the State of Ohio. This is a significant achievement. Securing a strong financial future for the college continues to be my top priority, and we are well on our way for even higher SB6 scores in the future.
- **Enrollment stability:** Our enrollment stability continues to be another top priority. Once again this year, we exceeded our KPI target for 2026. From our goal of 4,750, we landed at 4,794. As we recalibrate our programs, we are observing transitory fluctuations but aware of the potential for positive trajectory resulting from new offerings.
- **Academic portfolio:** We have continued to review our programs and courses to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and align offerings with market demands. As a result of this review, and in compliance with Senate Bill 1, we inactivated nearly 40 programs. We are also developing new programs for enrollment growth and market needs.
- **Workforce development:** We set up the office of workforce development and employer relations and have begun to reengage in workforce development, working in partnership with JobsOhio, Team NEO, and area businesses for short-term credentials to assist students and employers.
- **Faculty and staff:** Our faculty and staff continue to reach new heights, as exemplified by the awards and recognitions earned by them as outlined in these pages.
- **Students:** Our students continue to excel in the workplace compared to our peers, as measured by post-graduation employment. Indeed, over one, five, and ten years after graduation, our students earned more on average than students of any other college in Ohio. This is clearly a sign of the quality education we provide and the quality of students we attract.

Looking ahead, 2027 will mark the 60th anniversary for the college. While planning is underway for celebrations throughout the calendar year, campus modernization and beautification will mark major milestones in our 60th year, especially the upgrades to the campus cafeteria and spaces for student recruitment, support, and success. We also look forward to engaging with our alumni as we reset, reshape, and rebuild the college for a bright future. Lakeland remains *Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant*.

In the end, we all want Lakeland to succeed and to remain the crown jewel of Lake County. Toward that end, I value your continued support and well wishes for Lakeland Community College.

With appreciation,

Sunil Ahuja, Ph.D.

President

A Message from the President

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PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

PTK Paragon Award

President Sunil Ahuja, Ph.D. was named a Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Paragon President Honoree. Ahuja was recognized during PTK Catalyst, Phi Theta Kappa's annual international

convention on March 27, 2026. The Phi Theta Kappa Paragon President recognition celebrates college leaders who demonstrate a strong and immediate connection to student success by prioritizing the recognition of high achievement and championing meaningful opportunities for student engagement.

President Ahuja Awarded New Contract

In July, Lakeland Community College's Board of Trustees approved an extension of President Ahuja's contract through June 2030, reaffirming its confidence in his leadership and commitment to the college's long-term success.

Since assuming the presidency, Ahuja has led Lakeland through a period of careful fiscal stewardship, strategic growth, and strengthened community engagement. He became the sixth president in 2024, a time in which the College faced financial challenges and an enrollment slide. In the past two years, Lakeland has advanced initiatives that support student success, workforce development, academic excellence, and regional economic growth.

The contract extension provides continuity as the college advances its strategic priorities, including ensuring access to affordable, high-quality education. Lakeland Community College remains committed to preparing students for success in the classroom, the workforce, and the community while serving as a vital educational and economic resource for the region.

"The Board's decision reflects its confidence in President Ahuja's vision and leadership," says Paul Rupert, chair of the Lakeland Community College Board of Trustees. "His commitment to students, employees, and the community has positioned Lakeland for continued success and impact across Northeast Ohio."

"I am honored by the Board's trust and grateful for the opportunity to continue serving Lakeland Community College," says Ahuja. "Our achievements are the result of the dedication of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners. Together, we will continue building on our momentum and expanding opportunities that transform lives through education."

President Ahuja Featured in Crain's Cleveland Business

Lakeland Community College and President Ahuja were recently featured in Crain's Cleveland Business, highlighting the College's progress during his leadership over the last two years. The article discusses the growth of the College since Ahuja's arrival in 2024. Under Ahuja's leadership, Lakeland has achieved a balanced budget and growing enrollment, milestones that reflect the administration's commitment to fiscal responsibility and student success.



2025-2026 Student Enrollment Highlights

33%
of our students are full-time

67%
of our students are part-time

Serving approximately 67 public and private high schools in Northeast Ohio

56%
students awarded financial aid*
*excludes CCP students

132
Active Scholarships

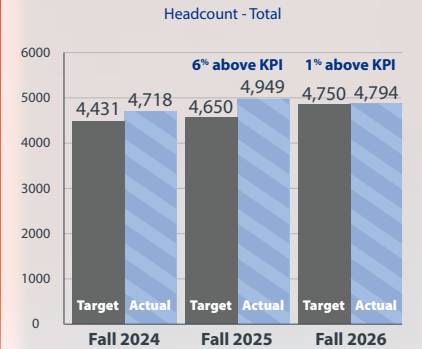
6,791
total students enrolled in credit courses during the 2025-2026 academic year

34%
are high school students earning college credit through the College Credit Plus program.

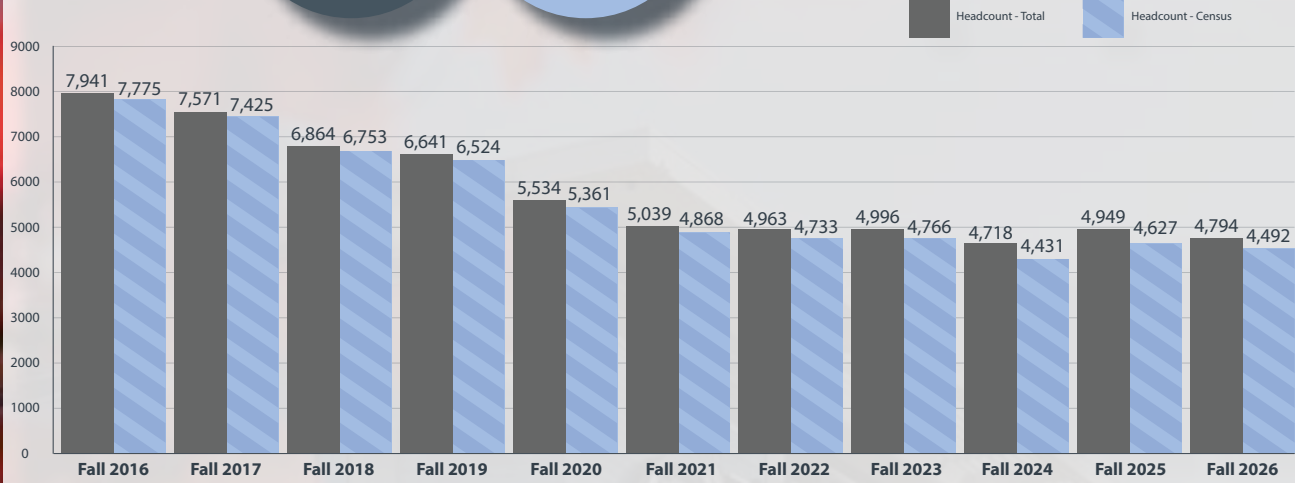
New
First Time Students
1,542

More than **\$1,000,000** given to students annually in state and institutional scholarships and grants

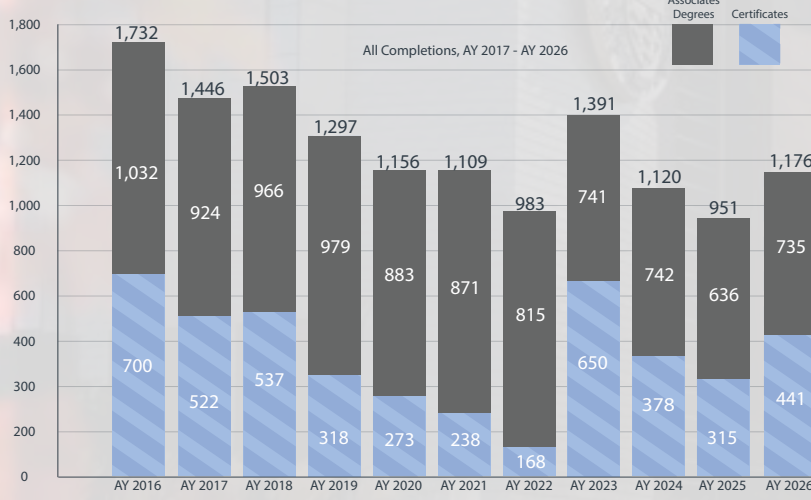
ENROLLMENT KPI



ENROLLMENT



COMPLETION TRENDS



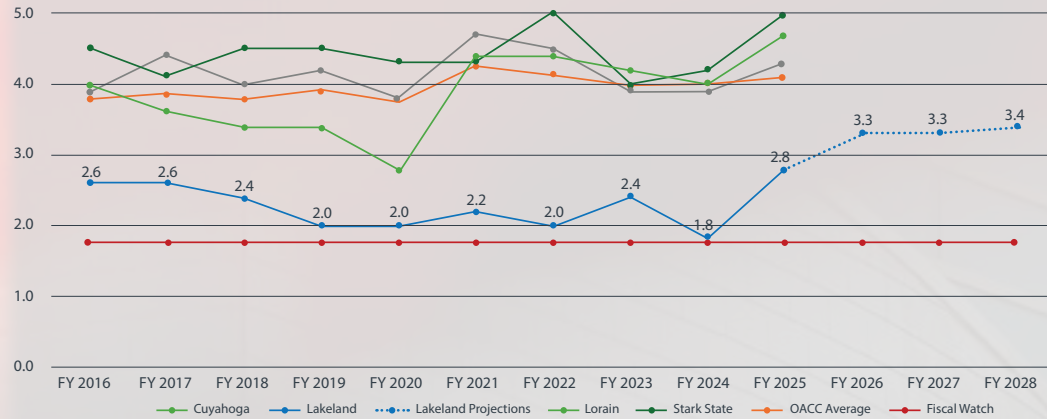
Enrollment and Student Success

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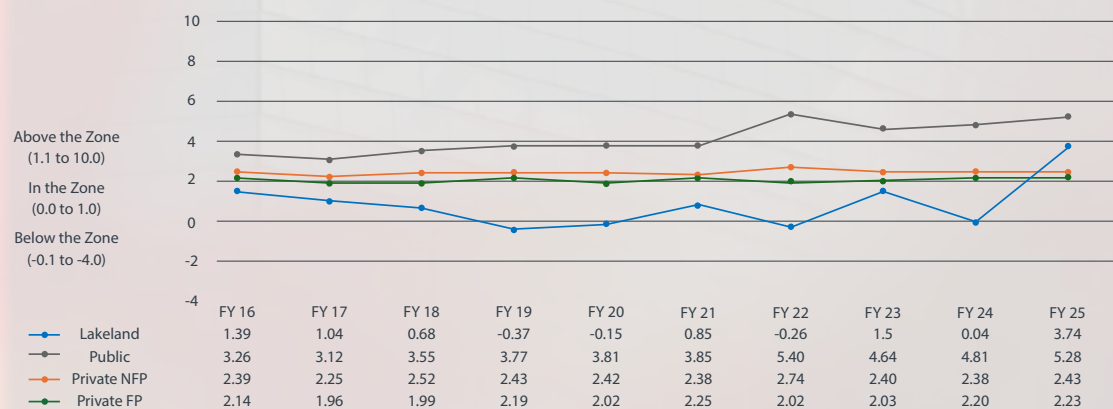
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Senate Bill 6 Scores



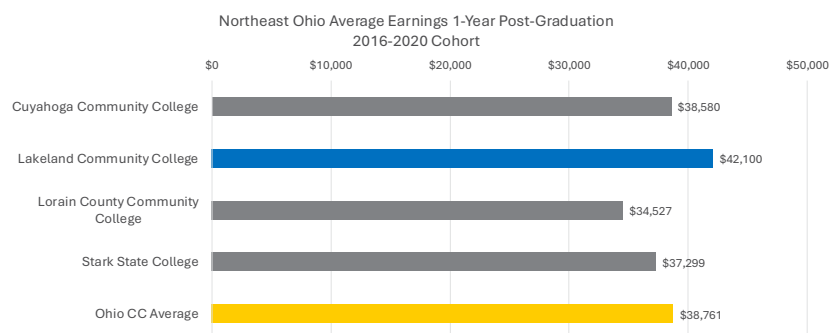
Data Source: Ohio Department of Education Campus Accountability

Higher Learning Commission Composite Financial Index Scores

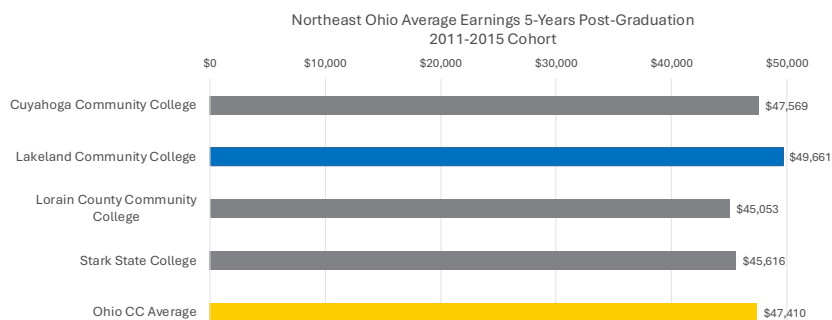


Note: HLC reported; figures exclude the effects of GASB 68.

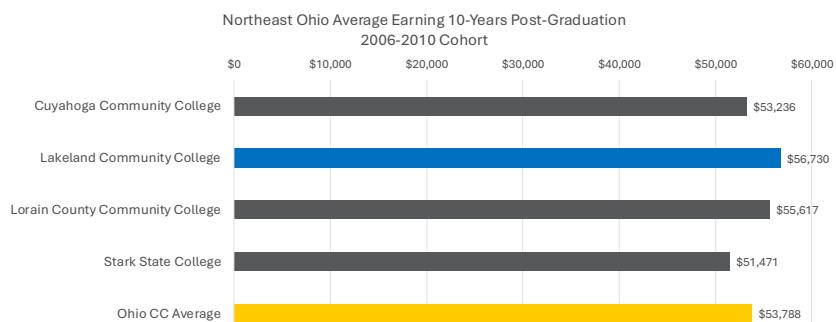
Post-Graduation Employment – 1 Year



Post-Graduation Employment – 5 Years



Post-Graduation Employment – 10 Years



Post-Completion Success



Lakeland Featured on Eli Manning Presents: The Undercovers

Lakeland Community College men's and women's basketball student-athletes and coaches found themselves at the center of a filming of the hit series *Eli Manning Presents: The Undercovers* during a professional development event hosted at Lakeland by the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA). During a segment with the PCA, Lakeland student-athletes were joined by "Peanut Waterloo," an eccentric, older youth basketball coach who engaged with the Lakers in a discussion about basketball. Unbeknownst to the group, "Peanut Waterloo" was actually five-time NBA All-Star Donovan Mitchell in disguise. The episode of *Eli Manning Presents: The Undercovers* is now available for streaming on Prime Video.



WAVE Grand Opening

Lakeland Community College celebrated the grand opening of its new Workforce and Ventures in Entrepreneurship (WAVE) center in April. Designed to connect technology-based entrepreneurs and small tech companies with support services, resources, and funding, WAVE will serve as a hub for accelerating growth in the local tech community.



Robots on Campus

Two new FANUC ER-4iA cert carts containing industrial robots were awarded through Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS) funding.

Just like the giant robots you see moving car parts, Lakeland's FANUC robots function the same way, on a smaller scale. The primary use is for tool and material handling. Students will be able to earn a FANUC certification in Robotic Tool Handling. Lakeland also received a FAUC CRX-5iA R30iB Mate Plus Mini Cert Cart including a collaborative robot.

Collaborative robots are built for direct human interaction, working at slower speeds and with less force for safety.

Along with the robots themselves, the College purchased roboguide software, so students can practice on virtual robots using the same control interfaces. Virtual practice allows users to gain experience without damaging the actual equipment. The control interface can either be on screen or USB-connected versions of the real physical controllers.

Lakeland Affinity Credit Card: Earn Rewards, Support Scholarships



Cardinal Credit Union offers the Lakeland Affinity Credit Card for our college community, including employees.

This card provides a convenient way to manage everyday purchases while automatically giving back to Lakeland Community College. Every dollar you spend contributes 0.5% directly to the Lakeland Foundation, helping fund scholarships, programs, and opportunities for our students.

It's a simple way to support the work we do together. To learn more, visit Cardinal Credit Union on campus or contact Maria Reed at mreed@cardinalcu.com.

Giving Tuesday Success

On Giving Tuesday of last year, Lakeland Community College received more than \$15,000 in donations that support student scholarships. Thank you to all who donated to support our students' success. Your contributions helped to fund student scholarships, athletics, and the CARES Cupboard.



New Library App Launch

In February, the Library and Lakeland Student Government held an app launch party. The library mobile app puts library account information, the Primo search tool, class reading lists, and more right at student's fingertips.

Lincoln Electric Gifts \$38,000 in Equipment

Lincoln Electric made a generous donation to Lakeland's welding program, contributing accessories and related equipment valued at approximately \$38,000 MSRP. This significant gift will enhance our students' hands-on learning experiences and strengthen our partnership with one of the industry's leading manufacturers. Lakeland is grateful to Lincoln Electric for their continued support in advancing both our welding program and the skilled workforce in our community.



Inaugural Fall Commencement

The College hosted its first ever Fall commencement in December and recognized 198 students who completed their studies in the Summer and Fall semesters. Adding a second commencement date to the calendar allowed more Lakeland graduates to share their accomplishments with friends and family.

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Administrative Appointments



Steven Hardy, Ed.D.

*Vice President for Administrative Services
and College Treasurer*



Christina Corsi, Ed.D.

*Interim Vice President for Enrollment
and Retention Management*



Lucy Ott, M.Ed.

*Executive Director for Workforce
Development and Employer Relations*



Jennifer Crissman, Ph.D.

*Interim Dean of Arts, Humanities,
and Social Sciences*

Connie Golden, MBA

*Interim Provost and Vice President
for Academic and Student Affairs*



Nora Stickney, Ed.D.

Assistant Provost



Julie Senita, Ph.D.

Dean of Health Professions



Lakeland Presents Resolution to Phil Roskos

Professor Phil Roskos was honored following one of his final Organic Chemistry classes, where he was presented with a signed and framed Resolution of Appreciation and the formal dedication of the Organic Chemistry Laboratory in his name. The resolution recognizes Roskos' fifty-six years of service to Lakeland and the creativity, curiosity, and academic excellence that he cultivated throughout his career.

Matthew Saunders, Ph.D., Premieres Symphony

The Lakeland Civic Orchestra debuted "Symphony in G, Doxology," in November at the Dr. Wayne L. Rodehorst Performing Arts Center. From 2019 to the summer of 2025, Saunders worked to create the 36-minute symphony specifically for the 60 musicians of the orchestra.

Employee of the Semester

Jennifer Knaus was been named Employee of the Semester for Fall 2025. Knaus was recognized during Coffee with the President's Cabinet for her outstanding contributions to Lakeland. Her dedication, professionalism, and commitment to excellence have made a lasting impact on both her colleagues and the community she serves. Congratulations, Jennifer, on this well-deserved recognition.



Provost's Award
Vincent Vigliotti
Associate of Arts and
Associate of Science
Transferring to
Ohio State University
for Electrical Engineering



Jennifer Brand
Outstanding Health Information
Management Technology
Student



Jill Bucci
Outstanding Respiratory
Therapy Student



Benjamin Burns
Outstanding Information
Technology & Computer
Science Student



Makayla D'Ercole
Outstanding Radiologic
Technology Student



Caden Gragg
Outstanding Accounting
Student



Mikaela Haslett
Outstanding Philosophy
Student



Marcia Jenks
Outstanding Early Childhood
Education Student



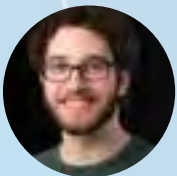
Aliece Johnson
Outstanding Business
Management Student



**Maggie
McEvoy-Hinton**
Outstanding Criminal
Justice Student



Cortney Miller
Outstanding Medical
Assisting Student



John Napier
Outstanding Mathematics
& Physics and Planetary
Sciences Student



Katarina Roditis
Outstanding Dental
Hygiene Student



Ulisses Rodriguez
Outstanding
Chemistry Student



Emmelynne Russ
Outstanding
Nursing Student



Phillip Ryan
Outstanding English
Student



Heikki Talikka
Outstanding Paralegal
Studies Student



Teevi Tasane Champa
Outstanding Surgical
Technology Student

First Lakeland Student Receives SME-USA Internship

Lakeland Community College celebrates Adam Pakeltis as the first student to intern with SME-USA, a civil engineering firm offering development, construction, and consulting services. The College Credit Plus student secured this opportunity through Lakeland's job fair, where he connected with company representatives and arranged an interview. His achievement establishes a new pathway for future students seeking professional experience in their fields.

Lakeland Students Receive WWLCC Scholarship

Lakeland Community College congratulates Emma Veri and Tayjuan Banner on receiving scholarships through the Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce Student Scholarship program, sponsored by Dollar Bank. The program, which has awarded over \$60,000 since 2023, provided each student with financial support and a free checking account with a \$50 deposit.



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Lakeland Community College Receives Showcase Award for E-Building Renovation

In November, the Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce surprised Dr. Ahuja with the WWLCC Annual Awards Showcase Award for Lakeland's state-of-the-art Engineering Technologies Building and its anticipated impact on Lake County. The 2026 WWLCC Annual Awards Luncheon took place in January at the St. Noel Banquet Center.

Lakeland Earns Military Friendly Schools® Designation

Lakeland Community College has been awarded the Military Friendly® Gold and Military Friendly Spouse® designations for 2026–2027, adding to the Collegiate Purple Star designation earned last fall. This recognition reflects the outstanding work of our Veterans Center team, led by S. Rhonda Osagie-Erese and Debra Weber, in supporting our military-connected students and their families.



Goodwill Award Goes to IT

Lakeland Community College's Information Technology & Computer Science (IT&CS) program has been awarded the 2025 Collaborative Partner of the Year by Goodwill Industries of Greater Cleveland & East Central Ohio. The award recognizes an outstanding organization that has provided valuable outreach and services to the community and exemplified the spirit of collaboration.

JumpStart Grant Awarded to Lakeland

Lakeland Community College has been awarded a \$300,000 JumpStart grant over the course of two years to support the Entrepreneurial Services Provider (ESP) Program, aimed at strengthening the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Cathy Walsh Receives Innovation Award

Lakeland's Small Business Development Center team participated in this year's SBDC Statewide Conference, hosted by the Ohio Department of Development. The College is proud to announce that Cathy Walsh, SBDC Director, earned the peer-nominated Innovation Award for strategically offering the SBDC startup business webinar as a on-demand resource. Walsh's approach resulted in an 81% increase in webinar registrations, significantly broadening the program's reach and efficiency. The award brought well-deserved recognition to Lakeland's SBDC program at the statewide gathering.

Former Basketball Coach Terry Bowe Inducted into Lakeland Athletics Hall of Fame

Terry Bowe, Lakeland Community College's longtime men's basketball coach, was inducted into the College's Athletic Hall of Fame on January 24. Over 20 years with the program, Bowe compiled 310 wins, three conference titles, and five national tournament appearances while mentoring countless student athletes. The campus basketball court has been renamed Terry Bowe Court in recognition of his transformative impact on Lakeland Athletics.

New Gymnasium Floor

After 20 years of use, the Lakeland Gymnasium floor received a face lift, adding its new name and updating branding.

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Events

Career Expo

The Career Expo provided job seekers with a direct opportunity to meet representatives from top companies, explore full-time and part-time job openings, and learn about internships across a range of industries. Attendees were encouraged to bring multiple copies of their resume and dress professionally.



Ohio University Signing

Lakeland hosted a signing event in May with Ohio University to celebrate articulation agreements for the following programs:

Bachelor of Science, Communication

**Bachelor of Applied Science,
Customer Service Leadership**

Bachelor of Science, Integrated Healthcare Studies

**Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies,
Organizational Studies**

Bachelor of Science, Project Management

President Sunil Ahuja, Ph.D. and Lori Stewart Gonzalez, Ph.D., President of Ohio University, signed a contract to seal the agreement.

This will allow Lakeland students to make a seamless transfer to Ohio University after completing Lakeland courses.



* Photo by Jaylen Love

President Sunil Ahuja, Ph.D.
and Lori Stewart Gonzalez,
Ph.D., President of Ohio University



VS



Cavaliers vs. Wizards Game

The College gathered in April for the Cleveland Cavaliers vs. Washington Wizards game and an alumni pregame happy hour. Sixty-five individuals had the opportunity to represent the College as we were highlighted at the center court before tip-off.

54th Annual Jazz Festival

The 54th Annual Lakeland Jazz Festival took place in March at the Dr. Wayne L. Rodehorst Performing Arts Center. The festival began with Serving the Schools, a competition in which local middle and high school jazz ensembles perform for adjudication. The event concluded with Big Band Spectacular, a concert featuring Lakeland Jazz Impact and the Lakeland Civic Orchestra.

Annual Employee Service Award

On April 15, Lakeland held its 37th annual Service Awards Ceremony, honoring the outstanding contributions of faculty and staff. The ceremony recognized retirees, celebrated employees reaching years of service milestones, and presented Distinguished Service and Excellence in Teaching awards to deserving honorees. Congratulations to all recipients for their continued dedication to the Lakeland community.

NEOSEF

The College hosted the Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair (NEOSEF). The fair provided an opportunity for 7th-12th grade students to present their science and engineering projects, discuss their research with judges, and compete for more than \$30,000 in prizes. This year marked the first time NEOSEF took place at a community college since its start in 1953.



America 250 Jeopardy:

History knowledge was tested in a week-long Jeopardy-style challenge.

Across the Wide Missouri:

An America 250 themed concert from the Lakeland Civic Chorus.

An Evening with George Washington:

History came to life with re-enactor Dale Fellows.

America 250 Baseball Opener:

The college enjoyed food, games, a dunk tank, and a first pitch from President Ahuja at a Lakeland baseball game.

An American Ode:

A Lakeland Civic Orchestra Concert

America 250 performance and reception hosted by President Ahuja.

Film Screening:

The Chagrin Historical Society and Lake County History Center hosted a film screening of "I'm Goin' Home" and panel discussion after the film.



Events

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Advancing Workforce and Regional Impact

Lakeland continues to strengthen its role as a regional workforce and economic development partner by expanding high-demand training, deepening employer relationships, and aligning academic and workforce programming with the needs of Northeast Ohio.

In the past year, Lakeland increased access to short-term, industry-focused training and stackable credentials in high-demand fields. Several programs were developed in partnership with organizations such as MetroHealth, JobsOhio, and Team NEO.

The workforce development team strengthened data-driven program development and implemented Lightcast software for real-time labor market intelligence to ensure alignment with employer demand. The tool is informing program decisions across areas including digital marketing, biopharmaceutical manufacturing, criminal justice, nursing, and radiologic technology, while also supporting institutional workforce planning.

Lakeland expanded collaboration with Manufacturing Works, JobsOhio, Team NEO, K-12 Career and Technical Education (CTE), colleges and universities, and other economic development partners. Through enhanced employer engagement and the implementation of Handshake, Lakeland established or renewed relationships with more than 100 employers in 2026, while increasing campus tours, employer visits, and other opportunities for direct industry engagement.

The College established a Workforce and Employer Relations Office, adding positions dedicated to CTE and workforce administration. Lakeland also strengthened grant development and administration to maximize state and federal workforce funding and scholarship opportunities.

The College adopted Credly as its digital credentialing platform, with a cross-functional team preparing for a fall launch to formally recognize and validate student and workforce competencies.

Through Workforce and Ventures in Entrepreneurship (WAVE), Lakeland is supporting entrepreneurs, startups, and innovation across Lake and Geauga counties through the Entrepreneurial Service Provider (ESP) Network. The network is backed by Ohio Third Frontier, whose mission is to accelerate startup success and strengthen the innovation ecosystem in Ohio.

With new opportunities for experiential learning, the Fenn Fund of the Cleveland Foundation is providing paid behavioral health internships for students preparing to transfer to four-year institutions and pursue behavioral health careers.

These initiatives position Lakeland to respond more strategically to workforce demand, expand career pathways, strengthen employer partnerships, and contribute to the economic vitality of Northeast Ohio.

Team
neo

JobsOhio





Teaching Learning Center: Supporting Student Success and Workforce Development

The Teaching Learning Center (TLC) at Lakeland is more than an on-campus childcare center—it is a strategic resource that supports student retention, workforce development, and the broader Lake County community. Lakeland is among only 38 percent of public community colleges nationwide that provide on-campus childcare, making the TLC a significant community asset.

Access to affordable childcare is a critical factor in helping student parents enroll, persist, and complete their education. Research from the Community College Research Center found that more than half of parenting community college students who stopped attending said affordable childcare would help them return to college. Lakeland addresses this barrier by offering reduced hourly rates for registered drop-in services for students' children, helping students remain in the classroom and progress toward completion.

The TLC also contributes directly to workforce development by providing experiential learning opportunities for Lakeland students preparing for high-demand careers. Nursing, dental hygiene, and medical technology students engage with children ages 16 months to 5 years, gaining firsthand experience in child development and the needs of the populations they will ultimately serve.

At the same time, the TLC provides a high-quality early learning environment for children, with programming focused on discovery, guided exploration, and play. The center supports the whole child through developmentally appropriate learning that builds social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and life skills.

The TLC currently serves one toddler classroom, two full-time preschool classrooms, and one part-time preschool classroom. Open year-round, the center is actively enrolling while maintaining a wait list.



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1,162 +

Veterans visited Lakeland

15 events

with additional event collaborations with SEAL, Green Group, two of the YMCA's STEM leadership groups, the Black student Union, the Hispanic Club, the Athletics Department, the Lakeland Library, the Kirtland Library, Area High Schools for Career Exploration Days, and military signing days for various Lake County high schools.



96 vets

peer support
group lunches

over **301 vets**
and military-connected students





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** Photography by Wade Gagich*