

SB 135- Higher Ed. Reform
Senate Workforce & Higher Ed Committee
April 27, 2021

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee, good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to be here today to present testimony on behalf of President Morris W. Beverage, Jr. and Lakeland Community College, in support of Senate Bill 135. On behalf of our students and their families, our taxpayers in Lake County, and on behalf of all who are committed to workforce and economic development at Lakeland, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this important legislation.

Lakeland Community College is a public two-year college in Kirtland, Lake County, Ohio with a mission to provide quality learning opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of our community. For more than 50 years, Lakeland has impacted tens of thousands of lives through learning. Founded in 1967, Lakeland was the first college in Ohio created by a vote of the people. Lakeland is one of only six colleges in Ohio that is supported by a local tax levy. Residents of Lake County support the college through two operating levies, and a capital improvement bond levy passed in 2015 which, along with state capital funds support, funded the expanded health technologies facilities.

True to its mission, the college provides quality learning opportunities to nearly 9,000 students annually to meet the needs of the community at our main campus in Kirtland, and online. Accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, Lakeland offers a high-quality education with more than 130 associate degree and certificate programs that may lead to high-demand careers, or successful transfer to four-year institutions. An educated workforce keeps our local economy strong and improves the quality of life in our community.

We believe that SB 135 will enhance Higher Education in the State of Ohio, as well as offer transparency and accountability to our State and our communities. We are thrilled about new dialogue regarding Higher Education and Workforce Development in Ohio and SB 135 is a great place to start. We also encourage discussion about opportunities of lower cost solutions for students to complete their education.

Lakeland supports improving access to bachelor and graduate degrees through state university and community college partnerships.

In 2011, after listening to the needs of our community to create a partnership center for Lake County area residents to earn a four-year degree close to home, we created the Holden University Center.

The Holden University Center (HUC) provides our residents with convenient access to affordable bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees, along with certificates and endorsements. Students may take their first two to three years of coursework at Lakeland – at

the lower community college tuition rate – and then transfer seamlessly into a university center partnership program. Graduates of the programs receive their degrees from the partner institution.

Our students can save an average of \$20,000 in tuition by taking the first two or more years of courses toward their bachelor's degree at Lakeland, and then simply transferring into a Holden University Center partnership program.

The Holden University Center opened with 7 University partners and 14 programs. Since then, we have grown to 11 partners and 48 programs. The following colleges and universities are partners of the Holden University Center, many offering multiple degree programs: Bowling Green State University, Cleveland State University, Franklin University, Hiram College, John Carroll University, Kent State University, Lake Erie College, Notre Dame College, The University of Akron, Ursuline College and Youngstown State University. The majority of our university partnership programs are in high-demand fields leading to immediate employment. They include opportunities to earn a bachelor's, master's and doctorate degree in nursing to meet the needs of the major health systems in Northeast Ohio.

Since our first partnership graduates completed in 2013, university partners have reported a total of 1,101 students (Undergraduate=667; Graduate=434) that have completed bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees through the Holden University Center.

Thanks in large part to the advanced degree offerings at Lakeland's Holden University Center, the educational attainment of adults in Lake County has increased. In 2020, the percentage of Lake County residents with a bachelor's degree is 17.7%, which is up from 16.6% in 2014. 10.2% have a master's degree, which is up from 8.3% in 2014.

We welcome the opportunity for additional partnerships to make advanced degrees more affordable and convenient for our community.

Lakeland supports creating new degree and certificate programs that align with employer needs and high-demand jobs.

Community colleges play a vital role in workforce. Lakeland is the area's critical provider of job training and education to prepare graduates with the skills local employers need for high-demand jobs. Lake County citizens rely on us to keep our workforce strong.

We take high-demand jobs into account when creating programs and new degrees. Market demand informs and drives program creation based on data gathered from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Burning Glass workforce research tool. Local employers play a key role in determining what new degrees and certificates are created through a critical connection with the college as members of technical program advisory committees.

Occupational education at Lakeland is concerned with the ever-changing employment scene. Educators must provide skills that are salable, and they must keep in regular communication with regional employers. One significant way to do this involves use of our advisory committees. Advisory committee members volunteer their time, talent and experience. Representing the spectrum of employers and their professions, they perform the vital role of placing business and industry at the side of educational planners where they can guard against program obsolescence and help interpret manpower demands.

Lakeland is proud of our partnerships in our community and supports workforce development by fostering collaboration and resource sharing through industry sector partnerships and advisory councils. These alliances serve to expand and accelerate efforts for attracting and developing students and incumbent workers to meet the current and future workforce needs of employers.

Lakeland opened an applied health building in 2018, that is solely focused on high-demand healthcare jobs, with significant input from the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals of Cleveland, MetroHealth, and Lake Health.

We created a welding center of excellence with significant input from Lincoln Electric and local area manufacturers.

The College has recently significantly upgraded its computer integrated manufacturing program, with the invaluable resources of the State capital bill.

Lakeland is an active member of our Northeast Ohio Industry Sector Partner, the Alliance for Working Together (AWT). AWT's mission is "to promote rewarding manufacturing careers through STEM-to-career, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship programs".

Opportunity Lake County (OLC) was formed in 2020 to mobilize resources for achieving collaborative, sustainable solutions to our area's workforce development needs. OLC is made up of Individuals and organizations from education, business, government and non-profit groups in Lake County.

Lakeland is an active member of the business advisory councils for the Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve, serving Lake and Geauga Counties. The goal of these councils is to work with Lake and Geauga employers to develop programs and experiences that add value to students' employability.

Lakeland has always had a great relationship with our K-12 partners in Lake and Geauga Counties. The school districts work with us on a regular basis to be able to provide the most up-to-date information on opportunities regarding careers or fields of interest that require an associate degree or certificates. We support this kind of K-12 school district partnership throughout the state.

But across Ohio, we all continue to look for ways to meet the needs of our communities. As such, there is an ongoing need for stronger support for the non-degree career and technical programs.

Lakeland supports community colleges having the ability to offer a bachelor's degree in nursing to meet the needs of those interested in nursing, but simply cannot afford, or have physical access to, the currently existing programs.

At a time when medical staff are in high demand, this would offer more opportunities for students to enter a nursing program and receive a bachelor's degree at a much more affordable rate, and possibly, at an institution closer to their home.

The Cleveland Clinic is Ohio's largest employer in the 2019 ranking of Ohio's top 100, which is dominated by the health care and retail industries. Nearly half of Ohio's top 100 are in the retail or health fields. The Cleveland MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Areas) which includes Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain and Medina Job Outlook projects Health Care and Social Services job growth by 13.6% along with specific growth in Ambulatory health care services 13.9% Hospitals 14.9%. and Nursing and residential care facilities 5.6%. Furthermore, Ohio's Cleveland MSA projects growth for registered nurses at 15.8%. Consequently, the need for registered nurses outperforms the supply of registered nurses.

From 2010 - 2020 Lakeland has had 1,113 RN graduates. We also have had 293 graduate the BSN program and 47 graduate the MSN program. Lakeland's associate degree nursing program is the largest applied degree program offered at the institution.

The landmark study of the 2010 Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) report on the future of nursing projected to have 80% of practicing RNs with a BSN by 2020. This study has been the hallmark of the rapidly expanding clinical knowledge, mounting complexities in health care, and growing primary provider shortages mandate that professional nurses possess educational preparation commensurate with the diversified responsibilities required of them. Registered nurses (RNs) practice across multiple settings and function to their fullest extent with more complex clinical decision-making through the continuum of care.

Lakeland supports reducing costs to keep higher education affordable while at the same time maintaining the quality of instruction to our students.

Lakeland provides high-quality, affordable higher education to improve lives for local families and future generations. The College has consistently emphasized driving costs down in order to keep tuition affordable. Several examples are:

- Managing the control and purchase of group healthcare in a consortium with 10 other local k-12 school districts;
- Working with other Ohio community colleges to risk manage and control property and casualty insurance;

- Partnering with Laketran, our regional transit authority, to provide a no-cost transportation solution for students of need, and eliminating college capital dollars for shuttle buses; and
- Implementing a comprehensive energy management system that has reduced our energy use by 50% since 2008, and in 2010 was recognized as the best practice for community colleges in North America and received a Bellwether Award Winner in the Planning, Governance and Finance category for improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Lakeland supports programs that further student success. As a community college we recognize the need to support students, including those who need a second chance.

In January of 2020, Lakeland was ranked No. 1 in Ohio, and No. 2 in the nation for students reaching their educational goals among public colleges nationwide based on a combination of three student success measures, according to a report by The Chronicle of Higher Education, the leading publication for the higher education sector. Lakeland is also ranked one of the top 50 Best Community Colleges in the nation for return on investment for graduates in terms of earnings post-graduation according to the College Consensus, 2020.

At Lakeland, we can accommodate greater enrollment and look forward to more students achieving their education dreams thanks to SB 135. This bill is about improving access, reducing costs, and getting more students into programs that will result in high-demand jobs upon completion.

In closing, I want to thank you for your willingness to propose bold steps forward to help Ohioans achieve greater student success and fill our workforce needs. We look forward to opportunities to strengthen relationships between our state's 4-year and 2-year public institutions. Thank you for your time today.

Morris W. Beverage, Jr. EDM