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TALON

LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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THE TALON

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on the cover

Blood moon visible through the Blue Arches on the LCCC campus.

Photo: Michael Smith

Homecoming bonfire, October 2015

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LOOK CLOSER...

Thanks to grants, teamwork and a special collaboration, LCCC's biology program can offer students something that even graduate school students won't often get to experience.

It's easy to assume that a community college won't have the same opportunities found at large four-year universities. At LCCC however, two faculty members are working hard to prove how wrong that misconception is. ▶▶▶



Ami Wangeline and Zac Roehrs, instructors in the biology program at LCCC, collaborated on a grant with a team from the University of Northern Colorado, to provide that school with a new electron microscope to replace the one they had. Their current model was still fully operational, but UNC wanted to try for a larger option. The grant was approved through the National Science Foundation.

"The previous microscope was no longer being used, so we asked about the possibility of donating it to us," Wangeline shared. "They agreed, and we happily brought it up here."

Not only does a gesture like that build goodwill between the two institutions, it also helps bridge scientific opportunities for faculty, students and research.

As both instructors acknowledge, this type of equipment is exceedingly rare for a community college to possess. Though several big

universities have that equipment, that doesn't necessarily translate to students having access to the microscope.

"In those situations, you would prepare the sample and give it to a technician to run," Roehrs said. "We can actually teach students how to use this. Doctoral candidates don't even get to really work on it this way."

That kind of access not only helps draw students to the program, but it also gives them a leg up when they transfer to schools to finish their bachelor's degrees. For example, students in Biology of Plants and Fungi were some of the first to fully immerse into an SEM project as a class, collecting samples and taking images. It went so well that the hope is to expand this opportunity to additional students through courses going forward.

To many people, science can be slightly intimidating. Without instructors or context to help give meaning to the lesson, there often is little value to the learner. Wangeline and Roehrs are both aware of

that and give tremendous energy to what they teach.

For instance, most people have probably used dissecting or compound microscopes, which use light to help magnify the images, up to 1,500X in a best-case scenario. This certainly can help with instruction, but also has limitations as to the depths of discovery.

A scanning electron microscope (SEM), however, uses a beam of electrons in a vacuum that bounce off the object with magnification of up to 200,000X, giving such intricate details as the surface of a cell or extraordinarily tiny organisms living on other tiny organisms.

Preparing the specimens for viewing is an extensive and time-consuming process. Additionally, because there is no light, the images can't be conveyed in color. However, it is common practice to add distinctive coloring to the image after the fact.

The microscope itself is an unassuming piece of equipment, found in a relatively

non-descript imaging room in the Science Building. What it does though, is simply amazing to see.

"We undersell the experience of using something like this," Roehrs said.

In fact, the SEM is being used by more than just LCCC students. In building a collaborative research environment, both Wangeline and Roehrs welcome the idea of bridging opportunities with other schools. Just as LCCC is welcome to use equipment at UNC, a student from Colorado State University was able to use LCCC's microscopy and in particular the personnel who supported it.

"Regional schools have open doors to share resources, and we reciprocate," Wangeline noted.

Roehrs added, "If you work in science, it's all about collaboration."

It's that kind of regional collaboration that has helped a

trio of students take research to exciting places.

Three former LCCC students who went on to UW were able to use the SEM, which also functions as an X-ray scanner, to determine the composition of crystals produced by fungus in the area. That research is being prepared for publication in "Fungal Biology," a peer-reviewed science journal.

These three students are making tremendous strides as they advance in their fields: two are completing graduate school in Idaho and Texas, the third has finished an advanced degree in molecular biology and will soon be going to medical school.

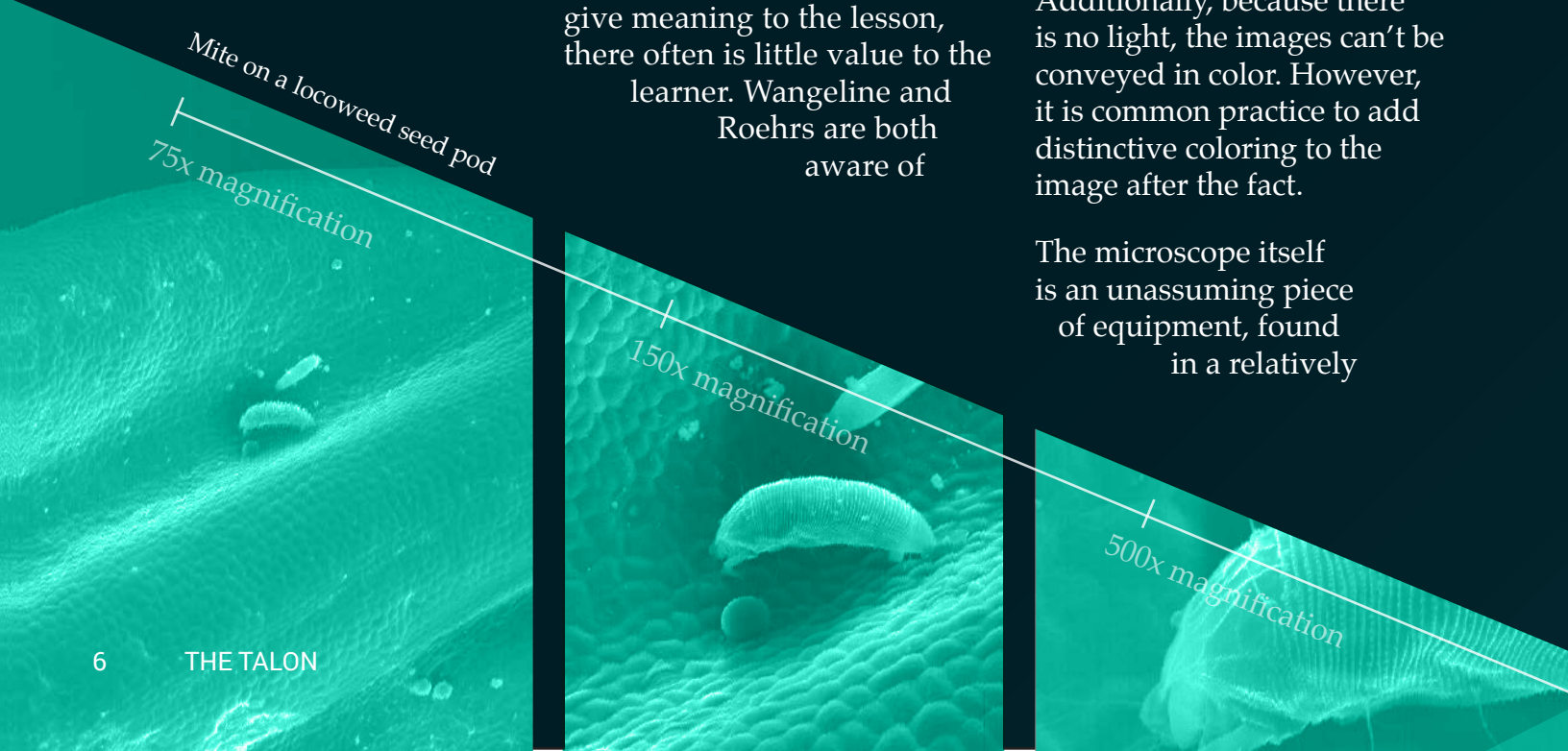
Wangeline and Roehrs find the collaborative environment beneficial to schools and

to students, in addition to giving credibility to LCCC.

"It works both ways. We can direct students to those schools. There are so many fields in biology. We want to help guide students into the parts that they're interested in. The more people we can connect with, the better we can help them find schools that would be the best fit," Roehrs said.

Like much of the rest of the college, these instructors work hard to ensure that going to LCCC is not perceived as a lesser opportunity. They also know that several students come from relatively rural

Zac Roehrs and Ami Wangeline



areas where high schools may have had limited access to high-tech equipment.

“We want to break down that barrier immediately,” Wangeline said. “One of the great things is that we can get the students hands-on scientific skills early on. It gives them confidence and keeps them engaged.”

Molly Loetscher, a general science major at LCCC with an emphasis in biology, is thrilled to have experience with the SEM.


“The opportunity is phenomenal. It opens up a whole other world. Something so small, that you see every day, looks completely different under this microscope,” she said.

As a research student, she has done extensive field work while at LCCC and even presented papers based on her findings. Loetscher plans

to continue her education after she graduates in May. Already, she knows she has an advantage compared to other students.

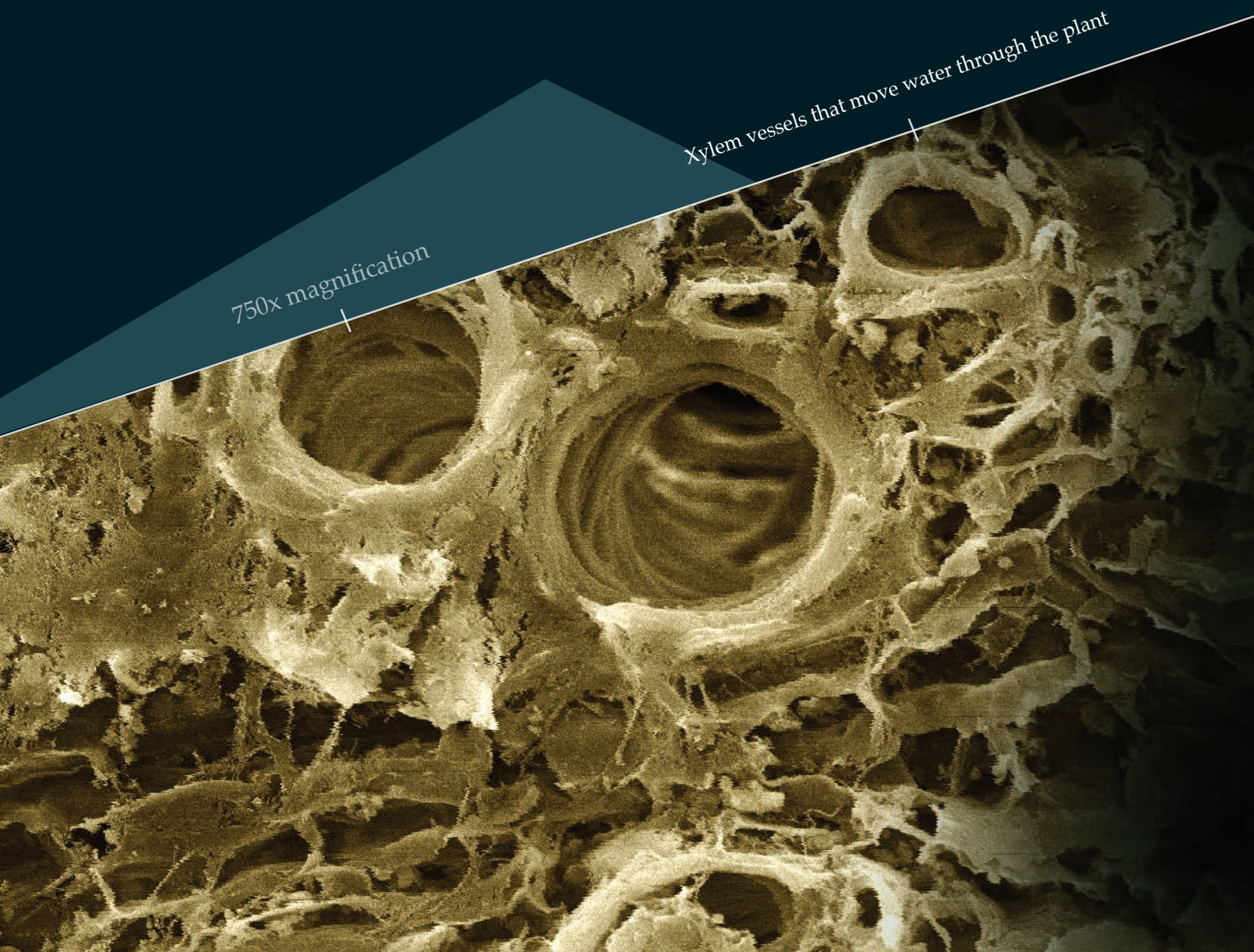
“When applying for lab positions, they get a lot of applications. When they see you have experience with SEM, it puts you at the top of the list and opens up a lot of positions.”

Ultimately, the benefit of obtaining equipment like this and incorporating it into curriculum is to give more opportunities to LCCC students.

“Our central goal with any of this research is student-centered,” Roehrs said. “If they go into science, it’s important for them to have experience. Even if they walk away learning that they don’t want a career in science, then I’m excited they figured that out about themselves. That’s important.” 

Xylem vessels that move water through the plant

750x magnification



YELLOWSTONE

up close & personal

Instead of simply reading about geological features in a textbook, students at LCCC had the chance to actually see them firsthand.

During a week-long class in May, students visited Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks for an immersive instructional excursion. ▶▶▶



LCCC has offered “Geology of Yellowstone National Park” for the past few years. The class gives students the opportunity to visit Old Faithful, the Tetons, and other geological features such as landslides, glacial deposits and various rock formations.

“I loved taking this class,” said student Vycktoryja Selves. “It was very hands-on, and we were able to apply what the instructors taught with what we experienced in the field.”

This intensive class is designed for students who have some earth sciences background or those who have an interest in this area.

With the help of a trusty van, the students set off on their trek where Trent Morell, geosciences instructor, and Maggie Swanger, librarian and geology adjunct instructor, shared insights and pointed out geological features.

“You’re learning how the different features developed. We’re spending time at the Tetons and learning what caused them. We’re visiting landslide locations and talking about hydrothermal activity,” Swanger said.

At each stop, students observed the environment and hiked to several locations. They then used a field book to take notes and sketch the different features. The group even explored geology while rafting on the Snake River.

“The class was phenomenal,” anthropology major Steven Le Blanc shared. “Maggie and Trent are personable, intelligent and leave students with a sense of self confidence. Not only was this class unique because of the field experiences, but because of the teachers and how they taught that geology and geography are also interdisciplinary. I don’t think I would have had an experience like that anywhere else.” 🐾

Photography provided by:
Greg Flores and Vycktoryja Selves



“ I loved taking this class. It was very hands-on, and we were able to apply what the instructors taught with what we experienced in the field. ”

– Vycktoryja Selves
LCCC Student

Kim Withers

More than Meets the Eye

Imagine you're a young mother. Your life is incredibly hectic. Free time seems like a far-off memory. The idea of college could seem like some unattainable dream.

But then imagine you're Kim Withers.

Kim, the CEO for Meridian Trust Federal Credit Union, began her educational path by taking telecourses at LCCC, which she would watch on the weekends. It started with a history class on Saturday mornings, which allowed her the flexibility to still be an attentive mom.

After earning an associate degree in accounting, she obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration from Chapman University, a master's degree in management from Lesley College, and a Ph.D. in banking and finance from Preston University.

"I ended up having a ton of educational degrees, but the one from LCCC ignited something even bigger inside of me," Kim noted. "Learning is challenging, but there are abundant rewards. From learning, you do. From doing, you choose. From choosing, you influence. From influencing, you create."

Kim continues that journey to this day. She is also a beekeeper, a hobby she picked up after attending Wyoming Bee College. She's fascinated when exploring the intricacies of the colony structure or tracking her hives, which she names

after cities, since she considers each hive to be a distinct bee city.

"For example, it's fun to recall which jar of honey came from Nashville."

And this doesn't even touch on her involvement in hobby farming, fly fishing, running half-marathons, or planning intricate light and music shows for her house's exterior during the Christmas season.

Working at Meridian Trust for 24 years, Kim has guided the organization into a leader in the financial arena, with eight locations in two states and more than 23,000 members.

"The people of this organization come from all walks of life," she said. "It's been absolutely invigorating to work with them."

Her work has garnered some serious recognition. She was named Credit Union Executive Society's Executive of the Year and inducted into that organization's Hall of Fame. In 2013, Kim received the first "Wyoming Women of Influence" award for banking and finance.

"That was the coolest award I've ever received," said by a woman who knows the value of positively influencing not just her employees, but her community as well.

And it all started at LCCC. 



HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU in something?

LCCC alum Troy Vincent is making it as a professional actor



He started with a role in a class play at Rossman Elementary. Now he's appearing in some of the biggest shows on television.

Though Troy Vincent knew acting to be a tough field, he opted for a more carefree approach. "My high school guidance counselor talked me into applying for some scholarships at LCCC, so I applied and was able to get my first year taken care of."

Troy graduated from LCCC in 1990 with an associate degree in drama. "I was one of just two theatre majors," he recalls. "Chuck Thompson, who was running the department, was really a mentor – guiding, pushing and encouraging me."

While a student, Troy was involved in some way with every LCCC theatre production. He acted in *The American Dream*, *Our Town*, *Antigone*, *True West*, *A Walk in the Woods*, and several others.

"There was even a Christmas play where we made our own puppets," he laughingly recalls.

With a reputation as a highly gifted actor, Troy decided to take the next step. He moved to Denver, but found it challenging to get on-camera work. He took positions behind the scenes on such shows as *The Laramie Project* and *The Shining*. All the while, he continued to hone his craft at theatres.

"But I'd gotten comfortable being the big fish in the small pond and realized that 'someday I'll go to L.A.' may be passing. So in 2003, I made the move."

Troy calls acting professionally challenging, rewarding, and surreal. "The tough part is going into an audition, nailing it, and then not hearing anything. You just have to look at it realistically. But there are just so many factors out of your control as to whether you get the part."

He learned quickly to truly enjoy the craft of acting and not simply the idea of being famous. He's experienced the exasperation of finding his scene or his lines were cut when a show aired. Troy is also

fully aware that it takes significant time to build your career.

"Actors always want the next thing. It's not a bad thing to want to keep moving up the ladder, but it can frustrate you. I meet people here all the time that moved here to be an actor and ended up doing something else. So I try to be thankful for any acting opportunity."

It's these lessons that stick with him: love acting, be grateful, and treat people well.

"You never know if the person pulling the curtain today is going to be the director of tomorrow. A guy in my first acting class was a film student at CU Boulder and, because of that relationship, cast me in one of his films," Troy said. His co-star in that film? Trey Parker, who later went on to become the co-creator of *South Park* and *The Book of Mormon*.

Though he doesn't have the time to devote to the theatre as he once did, Troy strives to keep some roots there. He studied at Second City, which led to him being part of several improv groups. He's also active with the Sacred Fools Theatre Company.

A self-proclaimed terrible waiter, he feels lucky to have regular work that allows flexibility to audition and perform. He's currently a story coordinator on *The Bachelor* franchise, and he's worked on these shows since 2008.

Ultimately, he's proud of the journey from Cheyenne to Los Angeles.

"I did a commercial as an elf for Frontier Mall. A few years ago, I got directed by Clint Eastwood. Onward and upward!" 🦋

TROY'S SELECTED FILM AND TELEVISION APPEARANCES

2015

Pocket Listing*
True Detective
Episodes

2014

Brooklyn Nine-Nine
American Sniper*
Trophy Wife
Modern Family

2013

Mob City
True Blood
Days of Our Lives
Ray Donovan
Dose of Reality*
Enlightened
Scandal
The Young and the Restless

2012

Vegas

2011

Prime Suspect

2010

Private Practice
Funny or Die Presents...
Men of a Certain Age
Lost

2009

Mad Men

*feature film



Life has its way of bringing ups and downs – it can throw you around to the point where getting up just doesn't seem worth it. If you ride horses, that's the feeling of getting bucked off hard. Laramie County Community College rodeo student-athlete, Syerra "CY" Christensen, knows a bit about having life buck you over.

CY is a hardworking cowgirl who grew up on a ranch near Kennebec, South Dakota. Riding horses and roping was a part of her upbringing, and she got dang good at it. She became a bit of a rodeo star in high school, including winning the South Dakota State High School Rodeo Championship in breakaway roping as a freshman and a three-time national qualifier. Her accomplishments go on and on. The bottom line? She's good.

CY came to LCCC in the fall of 2013.

"I just love it here. I do," CY said. "If I could stay here the rest of my life, I might."

CY will graduate in May, but this past year, she already hit her goal of making it to the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) by beating out the competition from the surrounding colleges and universities, becoming this year's Central Rocky Mountain Region Breakaway Roping Champion.

BUCKIN' CANCER

“Well it was my goal last year, but that didn’t go good.” CY chuckled. “No, this year I had a different mindset coming in. I kinda was like, well heck with it. I might as well go for it now.”

She maintains an incredibly upbeat, positive and easy-going personality. That attitude seems to stem from her appreciation of life.

“It could be worse, life could be worse than missing a calf,” she said.

CY knows that all too well. When she was young, she had Wilms’ tumor, a rare form of kidney cancer. CY had to have her kidney removed when she was three years old and went through several months of chemotherapy. Things stayed clear for about a year, but more spots showed up on her lungs when she was five. After a couple years of more chemo, things seemed to be looking up.

Her cancer stayed clear until they found more spots on her lung during a routine appointment when she was nine. In the process of removing them, they discovered a new problem: she now had thyroid cancer. CY said she couldn’t recall much from the treatments when she was younger, but she remembers the latest treatments all too well.

“Yeah, I was pretty scared,” she said. “I was like, ‘not again. No. I don’t want to do this.’ That was probably the hardest one on me.”

She had to go through consistent chemo treatments and have her thyroid removed. But for CY, the hardest part was that she wasn’t allowed to do what she loved most – ride. She couldn’t even be out with her family on the ranch and rope. Even at such an early age, that was her passion.

“The only thing that slowed me down was the doctors told me that I couldn’t get dirty,” she remembered. “I couldn’t be outside.”

That passion is what helped her stay strong and push through the hardship. She didn’t let cancer get in the way, which really means nothing ever would. She clearly demonstrated this in her successes to this point. CY finished 27th at the CNFR, which is right in the middle of the pack. She had a no score in her first go, 12 seconds in the second, and 3.5 seconds in the third. There’s no doubt that won’t hold her back, in fact it will probably motivate her more to go for it all again.

“I can’t just fall off and not get back on,” she said. “That’s just pathetic.” 🐾



“CY is very talented in the arena. When they call her name to compete, that top spot is always on her mind.”

—David Browder
LCCC Rodeo Coach



HAND-CRAFTED EDUCATION

With the help of Jared Long and Altitude Chophouse & Brewery, LCCC is brewing up a fresh batch of outreach courses

Let's be honest: Beer is ubiquitous in our culture. But the creation of each beer is a more than just a simple beverage found in a bottle; it's also a study in science, in innovation, in flavor. Now, LCCC has a new set of outreach classes "on tap" for the Laramie community to explore. ▶▶▶



LCCC's Albany County Campus has incorporated "Introduction to Brewing Science" into the Outreach & Workforce Development class schedule for a few semesters now, and it's been a tremendous hit.

James Malm, associate vice president of ACC, got the ball rolling. Before he arrived at LCCC, he designed a similar program with a retired professor who happened to be a principal at a brewing company in Colorado Springs. "I brought those experiences with me to LCCC, then to Jared at Altitude. He picked up the concept and ran with it."

When you first meet Jared Long, the head brewer at Altitude Chophouse & Brewery in Laramie, you see why people want to take his class. He has the spirit of a teacher, someone who makes you want to learn. He hails from the northwest, and he exudes that area's distinct low-key comfort and friendliness with a cultured urban appeal. Sporting a collection of tattoos, it's clear from head to toe that he has a passion about what he does and is happy to engage customers – and students.

It only makes sense that Long is leading this class in the community. He started as an educator, teaching sixth grade for a number of years, but realized when he was in a Ph.D. program in geography that the path wasn't for him. Gradually moving toward brewing science, he now has a role that fills his two passions of brewing and education.

Craft beers, which many people used to call "microbrews," continue to grow in popularity in Wyoming and across the region. These small-batch brews allow for ingenuity in the process and creativity in flavors that aren't viable in mass-produced beers.

"I'm just fascinated by the art of crafting," Long says with a smile that stays on his face any time he talks about his job. "I just keep trying to learn, to experiment, to improve the entire process."

And the process is incredibly involved. While it allows for creativity, science and methodology are crucial to the success of each beer. Yes, there is definitely math involved in brewing.

At Altitude, they make seven-barrel batches. Each batch produces 14 full size kegs, which amounts to around 250 gallons of beer. With five different vessels, they can have five beers fermenting simultaneously.

Like a good chef, he tastes the product throughout the process to ensure there are no "off" flavors. He's discovered that it's wise to do a small, serious taste in the morning when his palette is at its best.

While he learned a great deal from mentors and other brewers, he also had to learn a great deal on the job, including the scientific components. It's this hands-on research that serves him well with students, since he often has immediate firsthand knowledge about what will and won't work in the creation of a craft beer.

"It's an empirical science, so you get better each time just by doing." He mentions that the palette is one of the best tools a brewer can use. "How did you do on your recipe? Is there a flavor that shouldn't be there? How did it get there? How can you fix it next time?"

The LCCC course allows him flexibility, but much work is involved. Contrary to the expectations of some, it isn't just sitting and drinking beer all day. This is a culinary craft.



Jared Long



Usually the maximum class size is around 12 students. As a group project, the class creates a single beer, with the most recent one being a “smoked malt” selection. Long had never worked with that type of malt before, so it allowed for a fresh experience for teacher and students. When it’s ready, the beer is available on tap at the brewery.

“This is not a common class a person would take,” said Christie Goertel, the program manager for life enrichment at LCCC. “We’re interested in offering courses that provide the community with as many different experiences as we can.”

Students in the course may be hobbyists, some who make just a few batches each year, others who are serious home brewers or beer enthusiasts.

“Brewing has such a distinguished history, and people may not fully realize all that goes into brewing a craft beer. This class gives students an understanding of why different types of beer appeal to different people,” Goertel added.

“All the students share a common scholarly interest: beer,” Malm said.


Long knows that community is key to the program’s success, and he works hard to ensure that he and Altitude remain connected to Albany County.

“The town really fosters a culture of learning and supporting businesses,” he shared, acknowledging that a partnership opportunity like this with LCCC wouldn’t be possible in larger areas.

The future for classes like these looks bright. The Albany County Campus also offered “Flavors of Beer,” which gave students a chance to explore the intricacies of beer tasting and articulate the various qualities they find in each product, much like how people already do with wine. Further classes include similar topics such as distilling, and there’s hope to add courses in Cheyenne.

In fact, Malm would like to explore the idea with LCCC administration of the possibility of a fermentation science program at the credit certificate or degree level, which would go beyond the realms of just brewing.

Long calls the partnership “awesome” and loves that he’s been able to improve the course each time he’s taught it.

“I love how tangible it is. At the end of the day – with the class and with the brewery – I can see what I did. This is really the best of both worlds.” 

ONE OF THE BEST IN THE COUNTRY

Erin Elder
Sophomore
Defender

LCCC women’s soccer proved again to be one of the best teams in the nation. After winning the Region IX tournament this season, the team advanced to the NJCAA National Women’s Soccer in

Melbourne, Florida. In pool play, the Golden Eagles lost to Iowa Central but toppled Lewis & Clark Community College. Unfortunately, it wasn’t enough to allow them to advance to the semifinal round.

However, this is the sixth time in the last 11 years that the women’s soccer team, coached by Jim Gardner, has qualified for the national tournament – including a third place finish in 2013. GO EAGLES!



Don't miss a second of Golden Eagles basketball in 2016!

For the season's complete schedule and related information, visit lccc.wy.edu/athletics/mensbasketball



Gavin Peppers,
Sophomore
Point Guard

TAKE THE LEAD



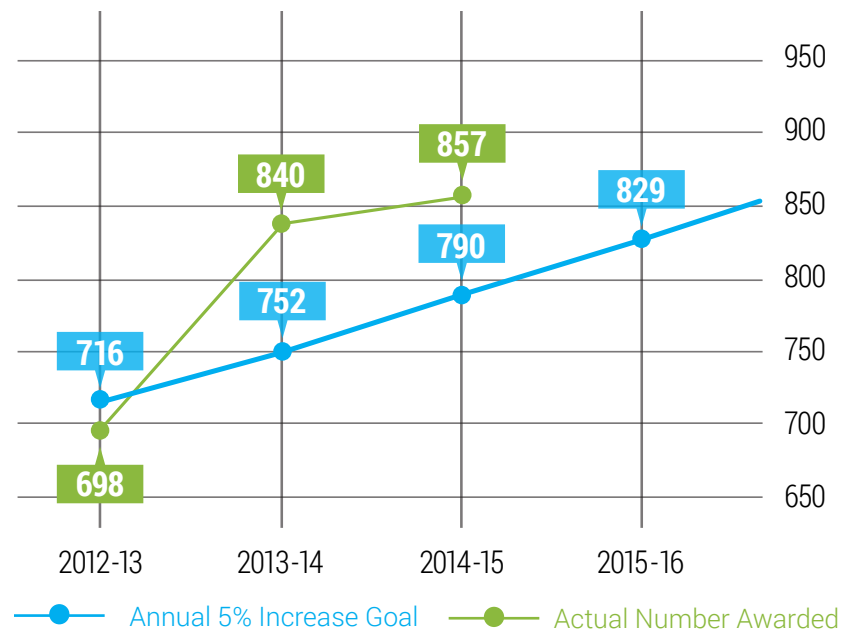
2014 - 2015

ANNUAL REPORT

at a glance ►

DEGREES & CERTIFICATES AWARDED

As part of the Completion Agenda for the 21st Century, LCCC has a goal to increase the number of students earning high-value credentials by 5% annually.



285 ASSOCIATE OF ARTS

115 ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE

240 ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

217 CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

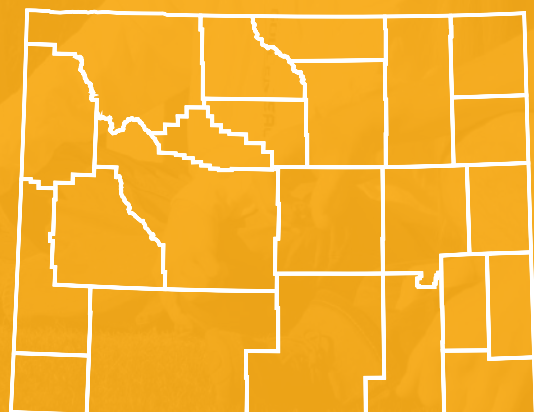
In 2014-15, more students earned their credentials at LCCC than ever before.

ANNUALIZED ENROLLMENT

ACADEMIC/TRANSFER		CAREER/TECHNICAL		UNDECLARED	
full-time	1243	full-time	496	full-time	43
part-time	1241	part-time	507	part-time	1731

5261 Total Enrollment

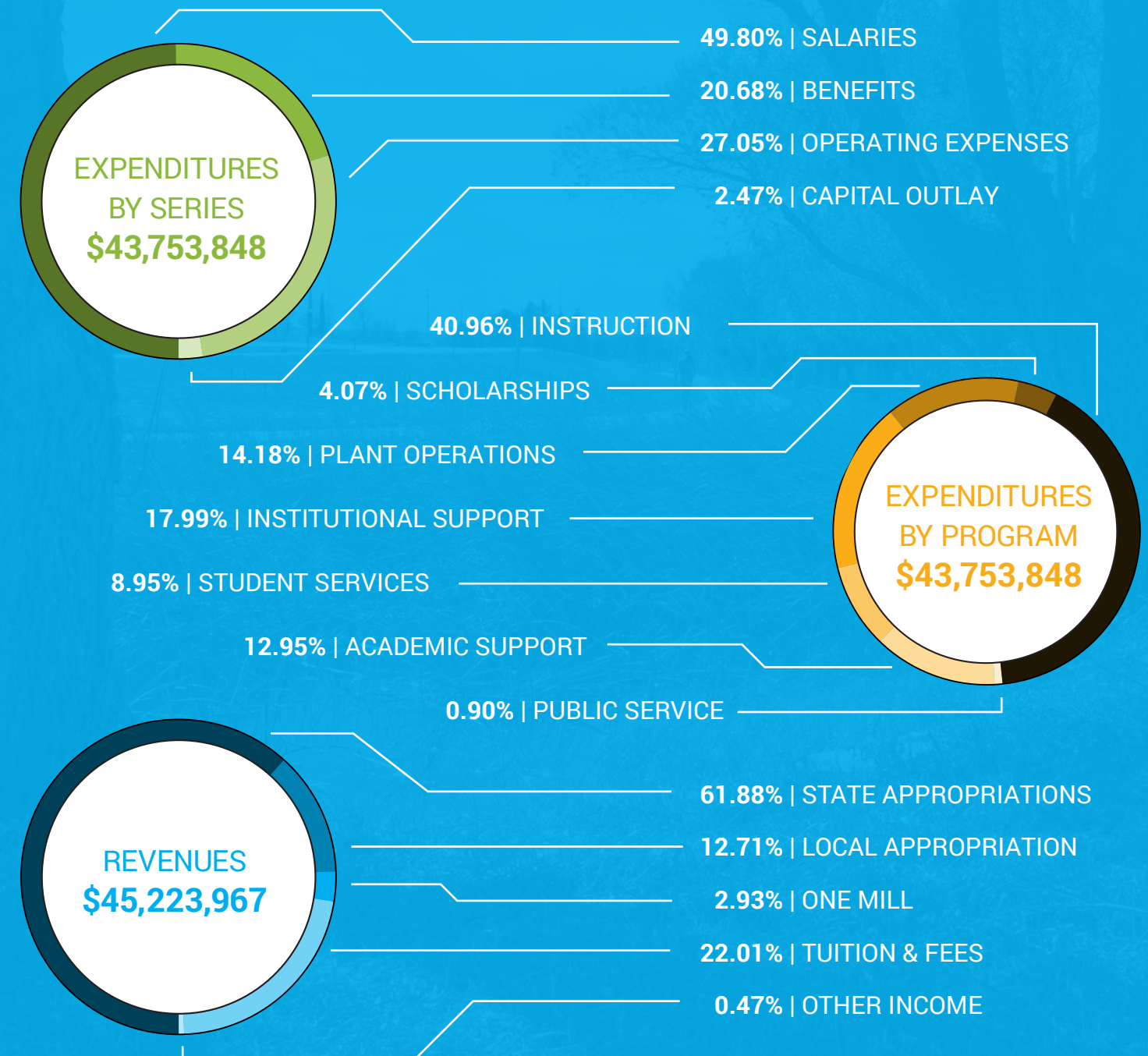
59/41 Female/Male Ratio



FROM WHERE?

laramie county	3122
albany county	890
other wy counties	479
out-of-state	714
international	56

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN



MORE NUMBERS

67 Academic Programs
365 Benefited Employees
114 Full-time Faculty
213 Part-time Faculty

25 Career Programs
 – Offering Certificates of Completion
57 Clubs & Teams
 – Including NJCAA Sports

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

report card

Overall Grade

C C B

2012-13 2013-14 2014-15

KEY EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

A. Student Participation and Achievement	C	C	C
B. Academic Preparation	C	C	C
C. Transfer Preparation	B	B	B
D. Workforce Development	B	B	B
E. Community Development	B	B	B

KEY EFFICIENCY INDICATORS

F. Instructional Productivity	B	B	B
G. Fiscal Stewardship	D	C	B
H. College Affordability	B	C	B
I. Campus Climate	B	C	C

LCCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

George McIlvaine

July 21, 1939 – October 3, 2015

The LCCC family lost a great friend and a powerful advocate with the passing of George McIlvaine. Known throughout the community and the state for his commitment to the greater good, he traveled the world to help so many achieve so much. He served on the LCCC Board of Trustees as well as the LCCC Foundation Board; at the time of his passing, he was chair of that entity. He leaves a void in our hearts, and our thoughts are with all those who knew and loved him, particularly his wife and our friend, Mary.

When I think of George, I will think of two things. What can I do to make the world a better place and how can I help the person next to me? I aspire to live by those simple words: "If you have the means to help someone without hurting yourself, do it." I hope you will do the same.

—Billie Addleman
LCCC Foundation
Board Member





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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Cowboy *Ethics*

Mark your calendars! Jim Owen, bestselling author of *Cowboy Ethics*, will speak at Laramie County Community College on the inspiration he found in the American cowboy and share his thoughts on achieving success in life and the workplace.

For more information, contact the LCCC Foundation at 307.778.1285 or office@lcccfoundation.edu.

April 14, 2016

7 p.m. - LCCC Center for
Conferences and Institutes
Free and open to the public

