

Preston retiring from LTCC after 20 years

By Anne Knowles

Cynthea Preston, long-time Lake Tahoe Community College faculty member and administrator, is retiring.



Cynthea Preston is retiring after 20 years with LTCC.

Photo/courtesy LTCC

Preston, who has been with LTCC for 20 years, first as a professor of English then as dean of instruction for the last dozen years, is taking an early retirement package offered by the school and leaving LTCC Sept. 21.

“I will miss the students the most and the programs I love,” Preston told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There are so many areas I’ve been intimately involved with.”

That includes the school’s burgeoning culinary arts program, which has grown from 30 students to more than 300 students a year, and its 5-year-old jail program that teaches inmates how to cook and helps them secure jobs on release.

"It's an amazing program," said Preston. "We have a very vibrant culinary arts program."

Preston was also instrumental in developing LTCC's 7-year-old fire academy, which last year graduated 28 cadets, and the school's wilderness education program as well as its business and math programs, although she is quick not to take too much credit.

"A lot of people worked on these things," she said.

And Preston worked with a lot of those people over the years, including many students she taught before becoming an administrator.

"Before becoming dean of instruction, Cynthea was a terrific English instructor. Her classes were thought-provoking, fun and inspiring," said Frances Brady, former student and administrative assistant to the vice president of administrative services.



"I can't describe how much I'll miss her," said Tom Greene, LTCC vice president, academic affairs and student services.

"It's hard to describe how much I am going to miss her," said Tom Greene, vice president, academic affairs and student services at LTCC, after the LTCC Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday. "She has deep roots in this institution and institutional history."

In her 20 years with the school, Preston did witness a lot of change.

"I've seen growth in and the expansion of college," she said. "And the declining budget and its effects on growth and our community and courses."

'Ultimate people person'

"Cynthea is the ultimate people person," former LTCC President Guy Lease told *Lake Tahoe News*. "She really cares about the faculty and staff and the students. She's been there for them."

She was also there for Lease, who was president of the school when Preston was hired and encouraged her to take on the role of Rotary Club president, which she just completed.

"When I'd get too focused on something that needed to happen now, or with the budget," said Lease, "she was always there as sort of a counsel and advisor to keep balance between money and people."

"She's been a big part of the success of LTCC," he said.

Preston said the school has been more than a professional home to her.

"I have four children who went through this college and all have doctorates or law degrees or are teaching," she said.

Preston says she's looking forward to a "permanent vacation," and plans to travel and spend more time with her children and grandchildren, all of whom live in Southern California and

visit Lake Tahoe often.



Ten
employees
of LTCC
have
accepted
early
retirement
packages.
Photo/LTN
file

“My plans are to continue to be involved with the school and community,” she said, “and to spend time with my family and travel.”

Preston is part of a group who accepted an early retirement package as part of the school’s efforts to shave \$500,000 off its 2013 budget. The other retirements accepted at Tuesday’s LTCC Board of Trustees board meeting were Gary Brusco, a full-time custodian; Craig Gasteit, interim maintenance director; Ginger Janssen, graphics arts specialist; Peggy Meyer, library technician II; Bob Roseblade, purchasing technician; and Juan Veneros, accounting assistant. A total of 10 LTCC employees have taken the early retirement package.

During the meeting, several board members expressed their sadness at Preston’s leaving.

“There will a lot of holes on this campus,” said long-time board member Roberta Mason.

