

LTCC not replacing theater arts instructor

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College no longer has a full time theater arts instructor.

The college board earlier this month accepted the resignation of Susan Boulanger.

In an email to college faculty on Jan. 15, Boulanger wrote, "You know by now that I have decided to leave LTCC. I have given it a lot of thought, and I believe it is time for me to move on, to move forward. I don't know what is next – maybe it will be in So Cal, maybe somewhere else, maybe even Tahoe! I'm open to opportunities and trust that God is going to open the right doors for me."



Susan
Boulanger

Boulanger's job has been tenuous ever since **October 2016** when it became public that the college was thinking of disbanding the department. Public outcry and a community task force salvaged the department. The result included drastic changes to course offerings and the number of theater productions reduced from three to one.

Adjunct faculty are taking over the courses Boulanger was

slated to teach this quarter.

The spring production – the only performance the college was to have put on this academic year – will be overseen by Dave Hamilton, Boulanger's predecessor before she was hired in 2009. It is going to be a series of four one-act plays.

"It is well documented we were having challenges with demand in our theater program," LTCC President Jeff DeFranco told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Part of this was related to enrollment, part because of how the state a few years back changed how many times a person could take the same class.

DeFranco said the college does not intend to replace Boulanger. While it's possible current faculty could teach one of her classes, adjunct instructors are likely to fill the void. He said the college is committed to continuing to offer for credit classes, putting on one production a year, and partnering with the community so the theater is used more often. Examples of the latter include Valhalla staging a play at LTCC last fall and the "Vagina Monologues" coming in February for two nights.

The college looks to fill full time positions based on need instead of filling a vacancy with the same type of instructor. That is why the theater position is going by the wayside.

Last fall the board agreed to hire a full time wilderness education instructor. The hope is that position will be filled in late spring, with the person able to begin teaching in the summer.

There are more students on the wait list for wilderness classes than all other departments combined. That is reason alone to add staff. Plus, a full time person will be able to grow the department through additional classes.

“If we want to be a premier destination community college, let’s move into that direction and provide true destination programs,” DeFranco said. “We are trying to do more things to bring students to campus.”

To that end, the board on Jan. 23 approved expanding the international program to attract more foreign students, as well as an outreach coordinator position.

A reason to target international students is per their visa they must take three in person classes per quarter. This greatly boosts enrollment.

The outreach person will be a recruiter of sorts as well as a liaison to local high schools.

Also on Tuesday night the board approved adding a full time political science/history instructor. That position has been vacant for two years.

Other staff changes include:

- Director of Institutional Effectiveness Jeremy Brown’s last day was Jan. 12.
- Systems Administrator Bill King retired at the end of December.
- Instructional Dean Michelle Sower is scheduled to be on sabbatical in February and March.
- Faculty members Scott Lukas and Sara Pierce will be taking on the role of faculty on special assignment to help fill the leadership gaps on a temporary basis.
- Recruitment is under way for the director of Institutional Effectiveness.
- The administrative assistant to the dean’s position is vacant.

- A program coordinator for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning is being sought; this is a grant-funded position.