What caused the College to begin this process now?

Why are you here?

Lake-Sumter Community College is one of the 28 public colleges in Florida. In 2000, the Florida Legislature passed a bill authorizing St. Petersburg Jr. College to award selected “workforce bachelor’s degrees”. Several years later, the legislature passed a bill to include other community colleges in a “pilot project” to determine the future direction of the Florida Community College System (FCCS). Would there be a new middle tier of state colleges with new governance or would there be one system comprised of 2 year and 4 year colleges? Last year, the Legislature chose the latter approach and created the Florida College System to replace the FCCS. Today, almost half of the 28 colleges are either offering one or more four year degrees or have applied to the SBE for authorization to do so. LSCC must evaluate its future place in the new system.

Secondary factors include the fact that LSCC is approaching its 50th anniversary in 2012 and we are currently undergoing our preparation for our 10 year reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). These activities bring about a time of self study and consideration of the future as well.

You might ask, well I read that Seminole Community College has become Seminole State College and Daytona Beach Community College is now Daytona State College … So what’s the big deal and why doesn’t LSCC just get on with it? The answer lies in the commitment of the District Board Of Trustees and Administration to the philosophy that we are not just a community college but we are and should always be “the community’s college”. We have been entrusted with the responsibility to lead the institution in our mission to benefit our students and our community with access to quality higher education opportunities. That cannot be done in a vacuum. It should not be done in isolation with a notion that “we are the experts so we know what’s best for our community”. No, we believe that the quality of our decision making will be maximized by the synergy of our know-how with your perspective on the current and future needs and desires of the community we serve. By listening and learning from each other we can chart a true and steady course for the college. And we believe that if we decide to offer four year degrees it is a big deal and you should be a part of that process because it will change our mission. Yes, we will retain our core mission as a community college, but adding four year degrees sets an institution on a new and different course with new questions and new challenges.

So why are you here? We invited you as a community leader with a unique perspective and knowledge base. We want you to learn more about the college, our community demographics, workforce needs
and trends so that, combined with what you bring from your background, you can help us answer the tough questions:

What does our community need in higher education opportunities?

What should the college’s role be in responding to those needs?

What priority should new programs (including 4 year degrees) have in relation to current programs given the state’s tight fiscal constraints? How do we pay the bill?

How will any change impact the college, the students and the community?

This is truly an exciting time to be a part of a dynamic institution. Our community deserves the best and we want to be the best for you. Working together we can achieve it.

Thank you for being a part of our visioning process.