

**Long Beach City College  
State of the College Address  
Dr. Reagan F. Romali  
February 2, 2018**

I'd like to start by thanking our Board of Trustees for their leadership and stewardship of this College. And for your support and confidence in choosing me to lead this amazing institution. Thank you, Trustees.

One of our Trustees happens to be celebrating a birthday today. How about a big Viking cheer for Board Vice President Sunny Zia!

Happy Birthday Trustee Zia.

I want to thank my Executive team: Vice President of Human Resources Rose DelGaudio, Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Kathy Scott, and Vice President of Student Services Dr. Kim McGinnis. Let's give them a hand.

No, I didn't forget Executive Vice President Ann-Marie Gabel.

Ann-Marie has been a stellar chief financial officer for this college for more than a decade. She will soon be moving on to a new position as CFO for the South Orange County community college district. So I wanted to take a moment today to acknowledge her.

Ann-Marie, you will be missed, and your legacy is forever a part of this campus.

I believe we have some flowers for Ann-Marie – let's give her a round of applause!

Thank you to our sponsors and the Long Beach City College Foundation, who make this event possible.

To our faculty and staff – thank you for being here and supporting today's event.

Thank you to our union leaders: Janet Hund, Thomas Hamilton and Claudia Ngyuen. Thank you to our Senate Leaders – academic senate president Jorge Ochoa and Anne Engle – president of the newly formed Classified Senate.

Thank you to the State of the College Committee and our media services team.

And thank you to all the servers who are bringing us today's lunch, can we give them a round of applause!

Thank you to our partner cities in the Long Beach Community College District – Long Beach, Lakewood, Signal Hill, and Avalon. You are very important to us and we look forward to building even stronger relationships throughout all of the neighborhoods and communities in our district.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to our students – you are our motivation and our inspiration to give our very best, every day, to help you succeed in college and in life.

Today we are going to do something a little different than past State of the college events.

Are you ready?

In celebration of the fact that we have a record turnout of faculty, staff and administrators here today, we're going to make this even more powerful than just a speech.

We are going to create a classroom - a learning experience.

We are, after all, a top notch learning institution, right?

Today I'm going to tell you about the incredible impact LBCC had on our community this past year, and reveal an exciting new direction for our future.

The work we do has profound economic and societal impact. It reduces crime. It lowers poverty. It provides homes, and economic prosperity. It brings families together. It provides social mobility – in to, and beyond the middle class.

These are issues that we should all be able to agree on.

Never has there been a time in history where our job has been more relevant and necessary.

So today, as a learning experience for our students, I'm asking all of you to engage on social media.

On Tuesday during the State of the Union address, teachers across the nation used the speech as an opportunity for instruction, learning and debate.

To that end, I want to spark a discussion and a debate today.

I want you to weigh in, from your political point of view, on the impacts of the strategies I will be talking about today.

The impact LBCC has on the economy. The impact LBCC has on society. And how our work changes lives.

By seeing different perspectives and reactions to those impacts, we can provide a learning opportunity for our students.

I believe it is critical that students understand how good policies can cut through politics for the benefit of everyone.

Our country is divided on so many issues. But education brings people together.

We are uniquely primed and ready to help solve some of society's most pressing issues – poverty, crime, homelessness.

We have never been in a better position to help solve these issues.

And it is incumbent upon us to try.

So what do you think! Let's make this a classroom today!

We have some of our professors live tweeting today's speech to students, so we'll have students joining in the conversation.

Mayor Garcia, I'm counting on you, as Long Beach's Tweeter in Chief and No. 1 Viking to join in the fun.

Supervisor Hahn, I know you have a lot of opinions about education and you like to Tweet, so I want to hear from you.

I know we have Republicans in the room, Democrats in the room, and some who don't identify with either party. I want to hear from all of you!

Let's make today a great learning experience. Let's generate a conversation that goes viral!

Make sure you use the hashtag L-B-C-C-S-O-C to be part of it!

I think we can show how education is the one thing that crosses the political spectrum and bridges the divide. Whether you're Republican or Democrat I think we can all agree that education changes lives, provides social mobility, and is a unifying element in the United States of America today.

It is incumbent upon us to be the middle ground. To be the pathway to social mobility and success. Real success.

And if you don't think LBCC is the place to be, I have a video that will prove you wrong. Let's roll the video!

VIDEO

Wasn't that great!

Today I'm going to be talking about impacts. How the work we do at this college has impacts far beyond the boundaries of our two campuses.

One is the economy.

As we all know, the economy is changing rapidly. It's more competitive, and more technology driven than ever before.

More workers need to be trained, and retrained, for today's high demand jobs.

Businesses need more skilled and educated employees than our pipelines are producing.

Our young people need education and training beyond high school to ensure that they can succeed.

When they complete their education and training, the impacts are tremendous.

This academic year marks LBCC's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The college held its first classes in 1927, on the campus of what is now Wilson High School.

In those 90 years, LBCC has transformed countless lives for the better. We've educated generations of families in our community.

We've welcomed many traditional students – those age 18 or 19, out of high school, probably supported to some degree by their parents. We all recognize that student, right?

But today we are also serving large numbers of students who don't fit that category.

Students with children. Students experiencing homelessness. Students working full-time, while taking a full load of classes. Students with physical and mental health issues. Students coming out of foster care, or the prison system.

Let me give you an example.

Eugene Sylve SILV attended LBCC in the 1960s, and made a name for himself as a Viking football linebacker. His life took some challenging twists and turns, including time spent in prison.

He has faced many health issues related to diabetes. But he's returned to LBCC at age 74 to continue his education and give back to the community with a degree in Human Services.

Eugene's here with us today – can you please stand? Let's give Eugene a big round of applause!

Eugene reminds us that no matter where we find ourselves, education is the path to a better life.

And it's never too late. Never too late to make an impact.

I always say that Commencement is my favorite day of the year.

I mean it.

Watching graduates come up to collect their diplomas, seeing their smiling faces and their cheering families – these are some of my best memories.

And there were a lot of them in 2017.

Our students earned nearly 1,700 associate degrees. This included about 800 associate degrees for transfer, among the highest in all California community colleges.

We awarded more than 360 certificates of achievement.

About 1,300 students earned enough credits to transfer.

Behind each one of those numbers is a story of hard work and perseverance by our students to get across the finish line wearing a cap and gown.

When I think of the positive impacts that the LBCC education will have on our graduates, and their families and children, it brings tears to my eyes.

Let's hear it for our recent graduates!

None of these impacts would be possible without the support of our community.

Thanks to your support, we have been able to make some incredible strides forward with construction.

LBCC's voter-approved bonds in 2002 and 2008 helped us to start transforming our campuses. The 2016 Measure LB will give us the ability to finish the job.

Last year we celebrated the opening of a new building at the Pacific Coast Campus, a home for our electrical program and senior studies center.

We kicked off the renovation of one of our oldest buildings, Building P, home to our journalism and language arts programs.

The renovation of our science labs are on track to be completed.

These maps behind me will show you the before and after. The improvements started about 15 years ago, with the 2002 bond. By 2041, our campus will have been entirely transformed with state of the art learning facilities to prepare our students for the careers of today, and tomorrow.

One of those high demand careers is in the culinary arts.

If you haven't heard, LBCC is home to the best student culinary facilities of any institution in Southern California. And this includes a student run restaurant. If you haven't been to the Bistro, you must make a reservation soon!

Now, I'd like to share a short video featuring one of our culinary arts students!

VIDEO

In most areas, we want to make a bigger impact. But when it comes to the environment, the opposite is true: we want to reduce our impact.

As we build the campus of the future, we are doing it sustainably.

In recent years we've added solar panels, recycled water systems, and other technologies to reduce our environmental footprint.

Last year we were the first community college to put mobile solar stations into our energy portfolio.

We partnered with DC solar on the project, which is reducing our energy use, cutting pollution and promoting the use of clean energy vehicles.

I'm proud that these efforts were recognized by the Green Education Inc., which named LBCC the Green School of the Year in Long Beach for 2017.

While LBCC must be sustainable, it must also be as safe as possible.

Last year we continued to add new security features. The highlight was the installation of hundreds of video cameras in public areas throughout both campuses to increase safety. We've also added building numbers to our rooftops to assist helicopter crews in the event of an air rescue.

Once again, I want to thank you and the voters of our district for your generous support of our students.

This bond money is an investment in our future.

And I assure you that investment will pay off with a stronger economy, a better educated workforce, and even greater cities of Long Beach, Lakewood, Signal Hill and Avalon.

One place that I really see LBCC making an impact is through our economic and workforce development efforts.

LBCC is the headquarters for the LA regional small business development center network.

Last year this network helped start more than 325 local businesses.



That's nearly one new business a day! Amazing!

In addition, the SBDC helped create 1,400 new local jobs, advised 4,100 clients, and helped small businesses access more than \$142 million in growth capital, the highest amount to date.

2017 was also a great year for Viking athletics.

LBCC earned:

1 state title

6 conference championships

4 MVP awards

and 9 appearances in statewide finals.

5 Viking coaches earned coach of the year awards:

- Chris Oeding in women's water polo
- David Kasa in men's water polo
- Misty May-Treanor in women's volleyball
- Jonathan Charette in Men's Volleyball
- and Casey Crook in baseball.

Let's give them all a round of applause!

I always knew LBCC had exemplary faculty.

When I got here, I got to see it for myself.

Let me share a few highlights from our faculty accomplishments of 2017.

- Learning and Academic Resources instructor Scott Brueckner's Study Skills videos hit 4 million views on YouTube!
- Our astronomy department hosted popular Planetarium Nights events this fall for students and the community that drew standing-room only crowds.

- Our robotics program, led by Professor Scott Fraser, hosted an international robotics competition this June.
- LBCC's counselors were recognized with a prestigious Telly Award for a video promoting counseling services.
- Under the leadership of Journalism Professor Pat McKean, the Viking News won 14 state awards, including General Excellence.

Talk about making an impact!

Let's have a round of applause for our faculty!

I'd love to show off all of our incredible academic departments, but I just don't have time. So here's a quick video showing our computer science program. Let's roll the video!

VIDEO

How about a hand for our computer science department!

Have you ever heard the saying, what got you here is not going to get you there?

It's true of LBCC. We're a great institution, with an amazing 90 year history.

But we have to step up our game.

We know this, and we embrace this.

We have to evolve to meet the changing needs of our economy, our businesses, and our diverse student population.

Fortunately we have a roadmap – the College's strategic plan. The strategic plan outlines our goals and strategies through 2022.

These reforms will help our students get more of the classes they need, reduce the time to graduation, and remove some of the unnecessary barriers that may cause them to drop out.

2022 may seem like a long time from now, but it's not.

We can't wait, because our students need us today.

When I got here in May, my first goal was to listen. I heard what our faculty and staff and other stakeholder groups had to say about the direction of the college.

Now, I'm stepping on the gas!

Here are our priorities and strategies for the coming year:

- Increasing our recruitment efforts to boost enrollment and communicate the value of a college education to everyone in our community.
- Moving registration dates earlier, so that we can be more competitive with our neighboring community colleges.
- Supporting and expanding accelerated learning, so students can succeed in English and Math more quickly.
- Improving class scheduling, so that students can get the courses they need, when they need them.
- Finding and removing barriers to improve student retention and completion.
- Better management of our call center to provide more direct customer service for current and potential students.
- Improving our enrollment, registration and admissions processes, known as matriculation.
- Adding services and features to our student success centers.
- Evaluating and improving our participatory governance system to ensure that all stakeholder voices are heard.

- And, for the first time, a social and emotional wellness team to explore best practices and provide additional support and services.

I'd like to spend a moment talking about one critical reform we are undertaking called Guided Pathways.

Guided Pathways really illustrates the differences between the traditional community college and the innovative community college.

The traditional model is often called the "cafeteria style" community college. Students had a wide selection of classes, but little guidance in what to take, when to take it, and in what order.

Guided pathways provides students with strong roadmaps for their majors.

Guided pathways gives students clear direction and focus, resulting in higher success rates, greater persistence and higher graduation rates.

These reforms aren't just happening in the classroom. To ensure that our students succeed, we need to provide the right kinds of supports.

We've launched a new, mobile-friendly web site that was designed for students, with lots of input from students.

We have a new student technology help desk to assist students with all the computer and digital resources available to them.

Technology is just part of the solution. Sometimes what's needed is a friendly face and someone to talk to. So we've designed new Welcome Centers at both campuses.

The Welcome Centers are just one of many great ideas coming out of our counseling department.

We've started a foster youth center for our students who were in the foster care system, as well as a support network for formerly incarcerated students.

We've expanded lactation rooms to better support our employees and students with nursing babies.

We are launching a more comprehensive student health and wellness center that includes resources for students facing homelessness and food insecurity.

This wellness center includes mental health resources, which, we recognize, is the key to keeping many students on track in their studies.

We are increasing opportunities for students to get involved, with programs like honors, Imoja, Puente, and student clubs, where they can become more engaged in campus and academic life.

We are working to reduce the cost of education. We are aggressively pursuing and embracing free, online education resources so that students don't have to purchase as many expensive textbooks.

We've expanded our Veterans transition program to better assist our returning veterans. Can I ask for all the Veterans in the audience to stand and be recognized? Thank you for your service!

We are increasing the number of counselors so that students can have more guidance and direction. Speaking of counselors, I'd like to give our counseling department a special shout out for the great work they do on the front lines with our students.

I'm very pleased that we have new labor agreements with two of our employee unions, so that ongoing negotiations won't distract us from our core mission.

I think you'll agree -- our mission has never been more critical.

Now, more than ever, education is the key.

Crime...

Racism...

Class and wealth inequality...

Homelessness...

These are all problems education can – and does – solve.

We welcome diversity, rather than attack it.

We strengthen the middle class, rather than weaken it.

We tear down walls, rather than build them.

The responsibility is ours. We must do our part.

Right now you're probably thinking, how can I make an impact?

How can I do more to support LBCC?

I'll tell you!

On your chairs you'll see a card with checkboxes.

Please consider checking one of the boxes as appropriate.

If you can donate today to our Foundation, that's great. If you can offer a student an internship, wonderful. If you can give one of our graduates a full-time job, even better! If you don't know, that's fine, give us your name and number and we can follow up and explore ways to partner.

If you haven't taken a class at LBCC -- there has never been a better time to enroll.

Thank you for being here today.

Thank you for giving back to your community.

And thank you for making an impact.

Go Vikings!