LTCC-SNC launch 4-year degree partnership

By Kathryn Reed

It's no longer necessary to leave South Lake Tahoe to obtain a four-year college degree – and this has nothing to do with online education.

Lake Tahoe Community College and Sierra Nevada College are partnering to offer a bachelor's degree in global business management.

"Over the last five years they are the No. 1 transfer institution coming to our institution. We have been working with their students for a number of years," SNC Provost Shannon Beets told *Lake Tahoe News.* "We talked about all the issues people face being place-bound – family, work obligations, snow. These are things that keep them from coming to the North Shore."

With business being the No. 1 degree LTCC students seek after leaving the college, it was a natural that this be the first four-year degree offered students.

Sierra Nevada College is a private four-year school based in Incline Village. Instructors will come to LTCC to teach the classes.

The goal is for classes to start Aug. 29, with cross cultural management and international business the first two on the schedule. The limited schedule is because so many LTCC students attend school part time. SNC would like to start with 25 students.

Three open houses have occurred in the last few weeks to familiarize people with the program, with 17 interested

students showing up this week.

Besides being convenient, it will cost less for students to obtain the degree at LTCC than if they were to go to SNC's main campus.

"We were shooting to try to get as close to about $20,000 for a degree in four years. We got it down to about $23,000 for California residents if they come to Lake Tahoe Community College for two years and then transfer to the Sierra Nevada College program here," Kindred Murillo, LTCC president, told *Lake Tahoe News*. It will cost Nevada residents approximately $31,000 for the same degree at LTCC.

That total cost is what some universities charge for one year.

"The shared goal for everyone is access to affordable, high-quality education," Beets said. "We want to be good neighbors and good partners."

The ability to obtain a four-year degree at LTCC was a goal of Murillo's when she first started at the college, and is now in place to be a reality before she leaves in February. (She tendered her **resignation** in January. The notice for her position will go out Aug. 15.)

Plus, offering a bachelor's degree was an overriding desire during a strategic planning session conducted in 2013.

If there aren't enough students to start the program this fall, it will roll out in the spring. Also at that time four-year degrees in education and psychology might begin.

This, though, would just be the start of bachelor programs at LTCC.

"We set the goal to have three different colleges at the university center when it opens in fall 2018. We intend to meet that goal," Murillo said.

Talks are under way with UC Davis and CSU Sacramento to be the other two partners.

Building student housing is one way to potentially draw even more students to LTCC for associate and bachelor programs. The lack of dorms and the expense of housing on the South Shore are roadblocks for some people.

“In the master plan we are looking at about 150 units, possibly expanding it to 200 beds. We’ll know more when the feasibility study is done,” Murillo said. The feasibility study should be completed in November, and the master plan is being worked on with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. “We put $1.5 million for site development in the (facilities) bond (for housing). We are looking for a private developer to own and operate it on our campus. Our preference is not to be in rental business. That seems to be working for a lot of colleges nationally.”

It is penciled to be built between the gym and student center in the forested area. Still to be worked out is whether this would be too close to the South Tahoe PUD plant in terms of odor regulations.

Student housing today is more like a suite of rooms with a shared living and kitchen, as opposed to traditional dormitories.

Murillo said it’s possible the college could request proposals for the student housing in the spring, and then have them ready in 2018 when the university center opens.