



# Lake Tahoe Community College Donor Investment Report

Education – A Gift that Lasts a Lifetime!

Fall 2023

## Independent Review of the Promise Program Highlights Positive Outcomes

The UC Davis Wheelhouse Group conducted a thorough review of Lake Tahoe Community College’s Promise program and discovered benefits for participating students. **Promise students are taking more classes, and they passed their courses at better rates than full-time, non-Promise students**, on average completing 82% of all units attempted in their first term, compared to 74% for full-time, non-Promise students.

**Promise students also showed high persistence rates:** 89% enrolled in the second term (e.g., Winter quarter for a student

first entering in Fall), compared to 57% of first-time, full-time, non-Promise students and only 31% of all first-time students who initially enrolled part time. By the end of their first year, Promise students earned over 29 total units compared to only 21 units for first-time, full-time students not in Promise and nine units for non-Promise students who initially enrolled part time.

Interviews with current and alumni scholars revealed **high levels of satisfaction with the financial, social, and academic support of the program.** Students and

alumni described how the program’s financial support reduces their stress, how LTCC’s learning environment is supportive and provides high social connectedness, and how academic (non-financial) supports such as counseling, educational plans, and priority registration help them build confidence.

*“I think the program has done [an] immense job at...helping students who financially struggle and realize their potential to achieve their education.”*

– Nate, current student who started in the Promise Program in Fall 2020



**Again this year, generous donors responded to the increasing costs of earning a degree and provided more scholarship support to a larger number of continuing and transferring students.**

## Meet Two of our Grateful Scholarship Recipients

### Richard Salazar

Richard Salazar participated in LTCC’s Rising Scholars Program and earned his degree while involved with the justice system. While incarcerated, Richard made the decision to prioritize his education, and this spring he earned his AA degree. Richard experienced hardships as a young adult due to the decisions he made, and he is now determined to make better choices. He is the first in his immediate family to go to college. Richard received two awards: the Gene Upshaw Memorial scholarship and the

GOAL scholarship. While he knows balancing work and education won’t be easy, his goal is to obtain his bachelor’s degree to become a social worker and help at-risk youth and those who want a better life. He says “Regardless of how difficult life becomes, my journey continues, and I cannot turn my back on those in need after all that I went through. I know that there is a new generation of young kids at risk of falling into the same trap. So just like I would like to guide my little brother, I will try my hardest to steer others away from the smoke screen and show them education is a better path.”



Richard Salazar at LTCC’s commencement ceremony in June, 2023.

### Spencer Benlien

Spencer graduated from LTCC in June with a GPA of over 3.7. However, it wasn’t without difficulty. This past March, he and his family lost their primary residence and nearly everything in it, which further exacerbated his financial difficulties. From a young age, Spencer developed grit and built his resilience after

being diagnosed with learning difficulties. Spencer has learned to overcome challenges. With the support of his family, community, and professors, he found motivation. Due to his dedication and leadership, Spencer was awarded several scholarships including H.E.R.O., GOAL, Carl Young Memorial Earth Science, Liberty Utilities, and the Tahoe Fund Forestry scholarship that will help manage the costs of continuing his education. Spencer is now

attending the prestigious Rausser College of Natural Resources at the University of California, Berkeley, where he is studying Ecosystem Management and Forestry. He says, “I promise to continue my studies, to return and contribute to my community, and to stand as a beacon of hope for others who face adversity. I want to encourage others who hear my story to remember that our challenges do not define us, but our response to them does.”



Spencer Benlien received a standing ovation after his speech at the June Scholarship Awards Banquet.

### Lake Tahoe Community College Will Celebrate its 50th Anniversary!

This coming March 5, 2024, will mark 50 years since LTCC’s inception, and will kickoff an 18-month campaign through September 2025 (50 years since the opening of LTCC) to honor the college’s history, celebrate its achievements, and look toward the future.

## Student Success Grants

Lake Tahoe Community College staff and faculty can apply for Student Success Grants to fund projects that enhance student learning. Your donations fund these grants that support student access, retention, and successful course completion. The Foundation awarded \$19,000 in the 2022/23 academic year to purchase equipment, software, educational materials, provide experiences, and to fund field trips.

### Biology Students' Hands-On Experience Funded by Student Success Grants

With funds provided from the Student Success Grants, the Biology Department purchased a brand-new microtome. This cutting tool is used to produce extremely thin slices of material and is important in science to prepare samples for observation. Now, students enrolled in biology courses are gaining hands-on experience using the microtome to section

and compare body tissues and observe differences at the cellular level. One student transferring to Oregon to pursue a career as a clinical laboratory technician was particularly excited to use the microtome as it will likely be part of their future curriculum.



Dr. Carl Franz introducing students to the microtome.

### Coyote Career Day Spring 2023 – Preparing Students for Success

This year, 73 students participated in Career Day. Students received resume building tips, had the opportunity to get a professional headshot photo taken, and participated in networking and interviewing events. One workshop helped students to prepare questions to ask local

employer representatives about career pathway options. Students then participated in conversations with employers that helped them to develop confidence in a safe place while building their interview skills and learning more about careers that they may not have previously considered.

the 37 community members from a variety of career fields who volunteered their time. Together, we will continue to ensure LTCC students have the tools and skills needed to ensure their future success.



Students received one-on-one interview coaching at Career Day in the spring.

Students also attended workshops to strengthen their soft skills and learned how to access and optimize the resources available through the college to continue exploring careers. Many LTCC staff and faculty volunteered their time at the event, and special thanks to

#### What is Your LTCC Story?

**Are you an alumni with an LTCC story to share? As part of the recognition of LTCC's 50 years, we will highlight and share alumni stories. Tell us about your experience. How did the college, faculty, staff, or campus activities play a part in shaping your life? To share your story, contact the Foundation office at (530)541-4660 x. 245 or [foundation@ltcc.edu](mailto:foundation@ltcc.edu).**

# Upcoming Events



**10am-2pm in the Lisa Maloff University Center**

Foundation Open House with student updates and opportunities to give in person and online.

**Basic Needs Center Food and Supply Drive** — Accepting perishable and non-perishable foods, hygiene supplies, and school supplies.

**Tuesday, January 23, 2024 3pm in the Duke Theatre**

*The LTCC Foundation with The Friends of the Library, South Lake Tahoe, present a talk by internationally renowned climate scientist: Dr. Katharine Hayhoe.*



**Katharine Hayhoe**

- Author of the best-selling book, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*.
- Her research focuses on understanding the impacts of climate change on people and the planet – and what individuals can do to have an impact.
- Chief Scientist for The Nature Conservancy and a Horn Distinguished Professor and Endowed Professor of Public Policy and Public Law at Texas Tech University.

Dr. Hayhoe’s talk is an ancillary event of Operation Sierra Storm Television Meteorologists’ Conference, organized by the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.



**Mark your calendar for the 2024 Taste of Gold on Saturday, August 10!**

This year’s event raised over \$124,000 to support students!

Thank you to all sponsors, vendors, ticket purchasers and volunteers who made the event a success!

