

LMC

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About 25 percent of U.S. community colleges provide student housing, while LMC will be the seventh in Michigan to do so, he said. Southwestern Michigan College opened student housing last year in Dowagiac.

Harrison said there will be several immediate benefits at LMC.

"The student housing will support our health programs, where we have students traveling from Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and South Bend on a daily basis, to attend school here," he said.

The project will boost LMC's energy production program, "where we'll have students coming from across the country," Harrison said. "We're starting a soccer program here, and the first season will be this fall. We also expect students from the team to take up residence in our hall."

Having the option to live on campus will be a boon to LMC's student athlete population, May-sick said.

"For athletes who come in from out of state, this'll be nice living here, instead of around the neighborhood, somewhere. This'll be their home, and LMC can be a tremendous home," he

said.

Pam McVay, the college's long-time student life director, will also see her own role change dramatically – and she's looking forward to it.

"I've often heard, and used the phrase, 'planning is everything,'" McVay

said. "We're creating a place where students will have a place to meet new people, have quick access to campus facilities, and get involved in campus life – and

truly experience the full college experience."

Tuesday's ceremony caps a lengthy process that began by talking with students, parents and other community colleges around the state, Harrison said.

"As we gathered all that (detail) together, we said, 'This is something that students are interested in, and it's something that will keep students here in Southwest Michigan,'" Harrison said after the ground-breaking. "Without any question, over the last five years, the prospect of student housing has been the most frequent question I've been asked."



McVAY