

LAKE MICHIGAN COLLEGE

And then there were six

LMC settles on
president finalists,
including one on staff

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BENTON TOWNSHIP — Lake Michigan College has settled on six semi-finalists from president, including one from Arizona, one from Pennsylvania, and its vice president of student services, Clinton Gabbard.

Selection committee members expect to begin public interview sessions with the candidates next week by Skype, followed by site visits to the college, and more intense one-on-one sessions, LMC board President Mary Jo Tomasini told her colleagues during Tuesday's meeting.

"Once we do that, we hope to narrow it down to the people that we want to hold further interviews with," Tomasini said after the meeting. "The hope is that we will be able to do those interviews in the middle of November, if we can get them all lined up, and airplane tickets, and that sort of thing."

If that schedule holds, and everything runs smoothly, the board would likely call a special meeting by the end of November to decide on the finalist, Tomasini said.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to introduce someone at the board meeting in December. If that plan goes awry, then we'll come up with a Plan B," she said.

LMC President Bob Harrison is retiring in December, after 16 years with the college, which he's led since 2009.

Gabbard was the only internal candidate to apply for the job.

The other names announced Tuesday include:

- Judith Berry, president and education strategist of Technical Education Services and Training in East Lansing.

- Melissa Denardo, provost and vice president of learning and student success at the Community College of Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

- Russ Rothamer, vice president of academic affairs at Coconino Community College in Flagstaff, Ariz.

- Jennifer Spielvogel, vice president of evidence and inquiry at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland.

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■ Robert Spohr, vice president for student and academic affairs at Montcalm Community College north of Grand Rapids.

The 19-member search committee, which Tomasini chairs, started with 71 applicants, who had until Sept. 14 to declare their interest.

The college's search consultant, Future Management Systems of Beverly, Mass., then whittled down the field to the 11 candidates — strongest from which the final six emerged, Tomasini said.

Future Management will continue to vet the current field with background and reference checks, as well as character and personality assessments, LMC's new release said.

The committee will have a full day planned for the candidates, once they arrive, Tomasini said.

"They will visit the campuses, they will meet with different groups of employees — and at the end of the day, there will be a public interview at six o'clock. They will literally be running around all day long," she said.