

LMC Board selects new president

Cleveland woman picked; contract must be reached

By RALPH HEIBUTZKI
HP Correspondent

BENTON TWP. — Lake Michigan College board members have chosen a Cleveland, Ohio, community college vice president to be the institution's next leader.

LMC board members unanimously voted during a special meeting Tuesday to start contract negotiations with Dr. Jennifer Spielvogel, vice president of evidence and inquiry at Cuyahoga Community College. The board hopes to have her in place by Jan. 1.

Spielvogel's leadership skills and

decision-making approach made her the top choice for the job, said LMC Board Chairman Mary Jo Tomasini.

"Even after months of rigorous reviews, assessments, interviews, background checks and hundreds of letters and phone calls from employees and community members, it was still a tough decision because we had such excellent candidates," said Tomasini in a prepared statement. "Each brought a unique set of skills, experience and perspective. Dr. Spielvogel stood for her vast experience, strong background in strategic leadership and data-driven approach to decision making."

Spielvogel is to succeed LMC President Bob Harrison, who's retiring in December after 16 years

with the college. He has led LMC since 2009. He announced plans to retire in March.

The board chose Spielvogel over Robert Spohr, vice president of student affairs at Montcalm Community College.

"Honestly, it was a very difficult decision — they were both highly qualified, and both would have made an outstanding president of Lake Michigan College. But we selected her because of her analytical skills, and her overall leadership skills," Tomasini said Tuesday night. "She's very innovative, and creative, and we think that she'll be



SPIELVOGEL

able to finish the projects that we've started, and lead us into the future."

LMC's vice president of student affairs, Clinton Gabbard, was the third finalist.

However, Gabbard withdrew his application before Tuesday's special meeting to focus on his candidacy for the presidency of McHenry County College, in Illinois, where he's also a finalist, the release stated.

Gabbard, who withdrew his application last Friday, would also have been a top-tier candidate if he'd stayed in the search, Tomasini said.

"He's an outstanding individual, and if he does decide to leave the college, he has definitely been an influencer in our success and

growth," Tomasini said. "He's been an outstanding vice president of student services — this has been a tough year. We've lost a couple of students, we've had an employee with a significant medical issue. He's had all kinds of things he's had to negotiate, and he's done a stellar job. If this (McHenry) is where his heart is, we want to honor that."

The college received more than 70 applications and resumes for the post. A 19-member search committee — also led by Tomasini — began paring down in September to its three finalists.

"Ultimately, we must choose the right leader for the right time in this particular point in the college's

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history,” Tomasini said. “LMC is considered a leader among Michigan community colleges. We’re in a strong position, and we believe Dr. Spielvogel is an outstanding individual who will help us continue to grow and evolve.

while respecting and maintaining the culture that makes the college special.”

She brings more than 25 years of higher education experience from both two-year, and four-year institutions, including Lewis University (in Illinois), the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the University of Michigan. Bowling

Green State University and Georgetown University, the released stated.

Spielvogel also worked for The Gallup Organization as a senior research director in its government and education division. She holds a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Michigan.