

Dear Editors,

I am Tobin F. Terry, President of the Lakeland Faculty Association and resident of Lake County. Please consider the following letter for publication in the News Herald:

Lakeland Community College stands at a crossroads. The proposed elimination of 30 full-time faculty positions—nearly 25% of our faculty—threatens not just jobs, but the very stability and reputation of our institution.

Budget concerns are real, but cutting faculty is not the solution. The Lakeland Faculty Association (LFA) has already presented a detailed, financially sound alternative that avoids these drastic cuts while protecting students, programs, and the college's future. Ignoring this proposal would be a devastating mistake.

Lakeland's full-time faculty are more than educators—they are mentors, experts, and community leaders. Many hold the highest degrees in their fields, bring real-world experience, and provide critical support beyond the classroom.

History warns us of the consequences. The University of Akron's mass faculty cuts in 2020 led to plummeting enrollment, public distrust, and further instability. Lakeland must not repeat this mistake.

We have a choice: make headlines for mass layoffs and declining quality, or work together to create a sustainable future. The LFA is ready to collaborate on responsible solutions that preserve both financial health and academic excellence.

Colleges aren't corporations. Their success is measured in student achievement, community trust, and long-term growth. Let's stop cutting from the core and start building for the future. Lakeland doesn't need another crisis—it needs a comeback.

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