

## Laredo College, City of Laredo seek out applicants for free skills training

As part of local recovery efforts to stimulate the economy and grow the skilled workforce in our community, Laredo College and the City of Laredo established a partnership this week aimed at helping individuals directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to rejoin the workforce.

The purpose of this initiative is to provide workforce skills training to individuals that have been laid-off, furloughed or underemployed due to the pandemic. Ultimately, the training provided is intended as a pathway for participants to regain meaningful employment.

The City of Laredo is footing the bill for the program with allocated Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding intended to provide economic assistance through small business grants and loans, worker retraining and workforce development. These funds are only available for use until December 31, 2020.

Laredo College will receive \$700,000 that will go toward 18 identified programs and certifications offered through the Laredo College Continuing Education Department and the Laredo College Economic Development Center. These include Truck Driving, Real Estate Sales Agent, Child Development, QuickBooks Certification, Bookkeeping/Payroll Certification, CompTIA Fundamentals, Certified Forklift Operator and Certified Office Manager, among others. Most of these courses will be offered online. Some programs require participants to have a high school diploma/GED.

Approximately 500 people will acquire a new set of skills and job preparation through these free courses. The program will work on a first-come, first-served basis until all the available funding is exhausted. To qualify, participants must self-attest that their employment was impacted by COVID-19, and they must be willing and able to actively look for work upon completing the training.

This partnership would not have been possible without the leadership of Laredo Mayor Pete Saenz and Laredo College President Dr. Ricardo J. Solis.

"During these very trying and uncertain times, the City has reached out to institutions of higher learning to organize a way to provide free essential workforce training for our residents who have been economically affected due to the COVID-19 crisis," said Mayor Pete Saenz. "We are looking out for our citizens and we firmly believe these new free classes from LC will provide Laredoans with opportunities to embark on great local careers."

"We are grateful to our great partners from the City of Laredo for thinking of Laredo College as the place to retrain our community and get them back to work as soon as possible," Dr. Solis added.

"Laredo College's hallmark has always been its short-term, specialized programs and certifications



in high-demand fields. Our hope is that these new skills will facilitate the reintegration into the workforce and allow participants to attain financial security once again."

City of Laredo Economic Development Director Tecló Garcia and Councilwoman Nelly Vielma were also key players in successfully bringing this partnership to fruition.

Spearheading the implementation of this initiative is Laredo College Dean of Community Education Sandra Cortez, who will oversee the application process and registration for the different programs.

"We are very proud to be in partnership with the City of Laredo, in offering industry-recognized programs that will provide the community opportunities to re-enter the workforce with high-demand skills. We look forward to being part of this important initiative."

## Laredo College President recognized by 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team



The Headhunters and Choppin' Companies 3rd Battalion, the 187th Infantry Regiment and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team held its Change of Command Ceremony this month where LC President Ricardo J. Solis was recognized by them for the steadfast support, dedication and commitment to the community and the Army.

Solis said, "It is with great honor that I accepted this recognition as we are bidding farewell to such dedicated commanders and welcoming new and equally talented individuals." He mentioned that the reserve located in our Ft. McIntosh Campus has made a great impact and rejoices the representation of thousands of families that are the true foundation of our Army, our history and our future.

Among Dr. Solis' recognition, there was one more LC executive recognized by the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Michael Gonzalez, Senior Director of Strategic and External Initiatives. He was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for the contributions that enabled soldiers to complete their missions at their highest level.

"To witness this ceremony was moving, however to receive this recognition was truly memorable," Gonzalez said. "We are proud to have witnessed such an amazing ceremony and support these soldiers."

A change of command is a military tradition that represents a formal transfer of authority and responsibility for a unit from one commanding or flag officer to another. The passing of colors, standards or ensigns from an outgoing commander to an incoming one ensures that the unit and its soldiers are never without official leadership.

Laredo College wants to congratulate and feels very honored to have formed part of this memorable ceremony where the newly assigned leaders will continue to demonstrate professionalism, competence, allegiance and trust.

## Laredo College to offer Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Laredo College has been notified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of the approval allowing the institution to offer a Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) Program starting in the fall 2020 semester.

Through continuous dialogue with health care partners, community members and advisory committees, LC identified a need for registered sonographers in our community. College officials identified that the closest DMS degree offered in a higher education institution was approximately 150 miles away. Our college took the initiative to develop the Associate of Arts and Sciences - DMS Program to meet the community's need for this service.

Laredo College President Ricardo J. Solis said, "LC has state-of-the-art facilities and qualified, effective instructors with outstanding knowledge, experience and expertise in the field. The AAS-DMS program at our institution has been designed to embody a coherent course of study and adhere to the guidelines set forth by the State of Texas and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board."

The development of this program was a collaborative effort involving not only the LC Health Sciences Department, but also the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Marisela Rodriguez, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Research Dr. David Arreazola, Assessment & QEP Director Dr. Veronica Martinez and Former Radiologic Technology Director Oscar Gomez.

The program consists of 60 credit hours and a cohort of 12 students will be admitted every fall semester. The first class has been accepted and will begin this August. Classes will utilize face-to-face and clinical-based instructional delivery methods through the sonography lab. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, courses will be held completely online for the fall 2020 semester.

The coursework for the DMS degree will include extensive knowledge in ultrasound physics and instrumentation, use of Doppler imaging, cross-sectional anatomy, and pathophysiology of the abdomen, pelvis, obstetrics, gynecology and superficial structures. Throughout the program, students will have the opportunity to serve in various local medical facilities with experienced sonographers and physicians.

Students seeking a career in sonography at LC will obtain the skills needed to provide images in real-time for patients by completing theoretical courses and assisting physicians in the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of disorders affecting the human body.

Those students who excel may be considered for employment in hospitals, private offices, clinics, mobile ultrasound companies and as sales specialists. According to 2018 data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall employment of diagnostic medical sonographers is projected to grow 17% from 2016 to 2026, which is much faster than the average for all other occupations.

"I am very proud that after many months of dedication, planning and involvement in creating an exciting program, we obtained the approval to begin serving students interested in furthering their career in this field. It is a great opportunity for Laredoans to get prepared for job opportunities in this high-demand career," Diagnostic Imaging Director Hortencia Madrigal said.