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Lehigh Career & Technical Institute names new director
Thomas J. Rushton to replace Sandra Himes after her retirement

SCHNECKSVILLE, Pa. | Lehigh Career & Technical Institute officials this month named the school’s next executive director.

Thomas J. “Tim” Rushton IV has been tapped to replace Executive Director Sandra Himes, who plans to retire this fall. He currently serves as LCTI’s director of career and technical education and has held that position since 2013.

Rushton, who resides in Mountain Top, Luzerne County with his wife and children, is slated to assume his new role on Oct. 5.

“It is an honor to be named as executive director of the Lehigh Career & Technical Institute. LCTI has a proud tradition of educational excellence and delivering on our mission of workforce development in the Lehigh Valley. The school enjoys fervent support from its Joint Operating Committee and sending school districts,” Rushton said. “I look forward to working with all of LCTI’s stakeholders to provide continuous improvement of our institute and our mission.”

Rushton said he accepted his current post at LCTI with the hope that he’d one day have an opportunity to lead the school. "It’s the largest career and technical school in the state. It’s the pinnacle of career and technical education. As a career and technical administrator, this is as good as it gets," he said.

LCTI’s Joint Operating Committee, composed of representatives from each of Lehigh County’s nine school districts, voted Wednesday (Aug. 26, 2015) to hire Rushton, concluding an executive director search that began in late June following the approval of Himes’ retirement. He was selected from a pool of six qualified applicants.

“I am confident that Tim will continue the tradition of LCTI executive directors and staff in affording students the opportunity to learn and develop skills for successful careers and lifelong learning,” JOC Chairman David M. Kennedy said.

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As executive director, Rushton said his goal will be to provide the highest quality programs at the lowest possible cost. With that in mind, he intends to take a three-pronged approach to leading LCTI in the coming years.

“We’re going to focus on operations, we’re going to focus on instruction and we’re going to focus on recruitment and retention,” Rushton said.

Himes has led LCTI since the February 2012 retirement of her predecessor, Clyde K. Hornberger. Prior to accepting the position of Upper Bucks County Technical School executive director, she spent 15 years in various roles at LCTI.

“This is my 36th year in education and 18 of those have been at LCTI. So, to leave this wonderful institution is going to be very difficult,” Himes said. "I absolutely love the school and certainly wish Tim all the best and expect that he will continue to move the school forward."

Rushton joined LCTI's administration in August 2013 and his knowledge of the school coupled with extensive experience in career and technical education will be an invaluable asset to him, she explained.

"We’re all about options for our sending schools and for our students. That makes us a complicated system," Himes said. "For anybody to come in from the outside and try to take over LCTI, it would be a very difficult thing to do. Tim has spent two years here. He knows the nine districts, he knows the teachers, he knows the programs. Transitioning into the executive director’s position will be much easier for him than it would be for someone who came from the outside."

Immediately before joining LCTI's administration, Rushton spent three years as director of Monroe Career & Technical Institute in Bartonsville. Prior to that he served as principal and then director of Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School in Bloomsburg.

Rushton’s career in education also includes serving as the Alternative Education Center coordinator for Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18, a Wilkes-Barre Area School District teacher and a Pocono Mountain School District assistant principal. He spent nearly a decade working in the pharmaceutical industry before making the switch to education.

Rushton has a doctorate in educational administration from Temple University and a master’s degree in human resource management from the University of Scranton, where he also earned his bachelor’s degree in biology. In addition, he has superintendent, assistant superintendent, vocational director, secondary principal, biology and general science certifications.

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About Lehigh Career & Technical Institute
Lehigh Career & Technical Institute is Pennsylvania’s largest career and technical school. Founded in 1971, LCTI each year provides more than 45 skills-based programs of study, as well as academic instruction for about 2,700 students from 10 of Lehigh County’s public high schools. LCTI also offers industry-relevant training and credentials for adults working in the Lehigh Valley and beyond. The school’s state-of-the-art facilities encompass 450,000 square feet on a 47-acre campus in the Schnecksville section of North Whitehall Township. Visit lcti.org for more information about LCTI.