

Lee College Vice President Debi Jordan to retire in January 2017

BAYTOWN, TX — When Debi Jordan was given the task of researching self-sustaining training programs at community colleges in 2005, she had no idea where it would end up. Seven years later, Lee College President Dr. Dennis Brown and its Board of Regents gave the go-ahead to launch the Lee College Center for Workforce and Community Development, and after a nationwide search, Jordan was selected to lead.

Now Jordan, the Vice President of Workforce and Corporate Partnerships, is ready to experience another new chapter: retirement. Jordan's daughter is expecting a little girl in December, and she said though the decision was difficult, it became much easier with each ultrasound she saw.

"Being able to watch my daughter becoming a mom to her own daughter — it is coming full circle. I feel so blessed to have had such a great career, and Lee College really is my home," Jordan said. "But this next part of my life feels so natural. With the help of a lot of great people, I believe this center — my third child — is in a great place. The foundation is stable, and under new leadership it's poised to move to the next level. I'm ready to be a BeBe to my sweet Ella Rae, and to watch the center continue to grow."

Over the past four years, the center has hosted 1,710 classes, served 7,694 different students and boasts a total enrollment count of 17,559 thanks to repeat students.

"Lee College is full of great people and Debi definitely shines in that group," said Executive Vice President Dr. Christina Ponce. "She is one of the most professional, dedicated and hard-working individuals I have ever met. She has made such a tremendous difference not only at Lee College's Center for Workforce and Community Development, but the entire community and the college as a whole. She is extremely loved and appreciated in our community for being an incredible civic oriented leader, a friend to all and a pioneer in workforce education. We are indebted to Debi for all she has been able to accomplish."

Jordan helped establish and maintain partnerships with organizations like the Baytown/West Chambers County Economic Development Foundation, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, East Harris County Manufacturers Association, Economic Alliance Houston Port Region and the Greater Houston Partnership, as well as industry partners such as ExxonMobil, Chevron Phillips Chemical, Enterprise Products, Covestro, Shell, Bechtel, and Jacobs.

"ExxonMobil deeply appreciates the support that Debi Jordan has provided our company during her time at Lee College, especially regarding our Community College Petrochemical Initiative (CCPI) workforce development program," said Connie Tilton of ExxonMobil Public and Government Affairs. "CCPI has been recognized across the state and nationally as a premiere program, and Debi's leadership and vision has been the driving force behind it. Our workforce and community are better due to her dedication and hard work. Debi is leaving a legacy at Lee College, and it's been our honor and privilege to work with her."

Pam Warford, Executive Director of the Lee College Foundation, Director of Foundation and Donor Relations and a lifelong friend, described Jordan's contributions to the college as intangible.

“She has increased our reach through relationships with individuals, organizations and consortiums. These relationships have benefited the college in a huge way,” Warford said. “In addition, she has worked hard to bring the types of courses to Lee College that our partners in the industry have asked for — customized, fast-tracked training.”

Jordan helped organize and lead ExxonMobil’s initial \$500,000 grant that established the CCPI. The grant, which has since increased to a total of total of \$1.8 million, funds workforce development for the Houston-area petrochemical industry through nine local community colleges.

“Debi has been a unique asset to Lee College, and though we’re happy for her next chapter, we’re deeply saddened about losing her. Her networking skills, business acumen and passion for improving the lives of those around her will be missed,” Brown said. “We will conduct a national search for her replacement.”

In the interim, leadership of regional workforce initiatives will transition to Ponce. The Center’s leadership, which includes Interim Director of Corporate Services Marsha Tuha, Community Education Director Kimberlee Techeira and Business Operations Manager Delma Garcia, will lead the teams and day-to-day operations of the center under Ponce’s direction.

“I’ve known Debi for 10 years, and we’ve worked together for four years. I was a part of the center’s team when it began, so I’ve had a unique opportunity to witness and be part of the great things she’s done. She’s a special person to work for, because she’s so passionate and skilled at what she does. She isn’t just a boss, she’s a leader with a big heart,” Tuha said. “I’m happy that she’ll be able to spend time with her new grandbaby, but I’m definitely going to miss her. We all are.”

Jordan’s retirement is effective Jan. 1, 2017. She has also been a partner in an independent insurance agency in West Texas for nearly 30 years. She is a licensed agent, and plans on becoming more involved in the business.

Lee College thanks Jordan for her dedication & long-lasting impact in the community and workforce training.