

LAMAR STATE COLLEGE ORANGE

MEMORIES, MILESTONES, **MOMENTUM**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2024-2025



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2024-2025



Lamar State College
— Orange —

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM*



LAMAR STATE COLLEGE ORANGE

OUR VISION

Lamar State College Orange will prepare individuals for a changing world by creating a place **where hope meets opportunity**. Our students will arrive with the hope of a productive future and leave with the knowledge and opportunities for success that a Lamar State College Orange education provides.

OUR MISSION

Lamar State College Orange **transforms lives** and communities through the continual pursuit of academic, professional, and personal excellence. We provide new and unique opportunities for growth and success. We are the bridge connecting those we serve to a bright, Orange future.

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) is an equal opportunity, educational institution and does not discriminate against any person regardless of race, sex, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status, in admissions, educational programs, student activities or employment. For further information about this policy, contact the Accessibility Coordinator at (409) 882-3393.

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PRESIDENT’S REPORT STAFF

The President’s Report 2024–2025 was designed and printed in-house by the following staff members.

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A Message From The Presidents



President Emeritus Johnson

As I close this chapter of my professional life and step into retirement, I find myself filled with overwhelming gratitude for the time I've spent as President of Lamar State College Orange. It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to serve this extraordinary college, and to walk alongside so many dedicated faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members who care deeply about the mission of LSCO.

When I first joined LSCO in 2018, I believed in the power of education to transform lives. Over these past years, I've watched that belief become reality over and over again. We have grown stronger, more resilient, and more responsive to the needs of our students and our region. We've set enrollment records, launched an incredible amount of new academic and workforce programs, and opened facilities that were once only dreams.

But for me, the most rewarding part of this journey has never been measured in buildings or numbers. It's been about people. Watching a first-generation student walk across the stage with a degree in hand... seeing our faculty ignite a spark in their students... watching our staff go the extra mile to help someone find their path... and working alongside colleagues who lead with compassion, vision, and grit.

LSCO has become a beacon of hope and opportunity, not just in Orange but across our region and the entire state. I know the college is in good hands and will continue to rise to meet the moment with innovation, empathy, and unwavering commitment to its mission.

Thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your belief in this college. From the bottom of my heart, it has been a privilege to serve you.

Your humble servant,
Thomas A. Johnson, Ed.D.
President Emeritus, Lamar State College Orange

President Elmore

It is an incredible honor to serve as your fifth President of Lamar State College Orange. As someone who has worked alongside the LSCO team for the past several years, I can confidently say this is a special place where bold ideas, hardworking students, and dedicated faculty and staff come together to create life-changing opportunities.

Our mission is clear: transform lives and communities, provide new and unique opportunities for growth and success, and serve as a bridge connecting those we serve to a bright future. That mission drives everything we do here, and it's working. We're seeing record-breaking growth, including our highest enrollment in college history, and we've expanded our footprint across East Texas with new academic centers in Lumberton and Livingston to better serve rural students who might not otherwise have access to college.

At LSCO, we believe that education should be affordable and attainable. With support from the Texas Legislature, we've been able to reduce our tuition by half over the past five years. That kind of progress doesn't just help students, it's transformative for our community, our families, and helps our entire region thrive.

We're also investing in the future with our newly opened Academic Building and Student Success Center. These state-of-the-art spaces are designed to support collaborative learning, hands-on instruction and serve as a hub for student success and support.



Perhaps what excites me most is the way LSCO continues to partner with local industry, state agencies, and four-year universities to build clear, career-ready pathways. From short-term credentials to leadership programs and transfer opportunities, we are committed to meeting students where they are.

To those considering LSCO: I invite you to take that first step. Whether you're returning to college, starting fresh, or exploring a new direction, you belong here. And we're ready to walk alongside you.

Where **YOUR** future is **OUR** focus.

Wendy Elmore, Ed.D.
President, Lamar State College Orange



MEMORIES

MEMORIES MILESTONES MOMENTUM



President Emeritus Johnson

A Legacy of Hope and Opportunity (2018–2025)

The Texas State University System conferred the title of President Emeritus on Dr. Thomas Johnson following his retirement in May 2025. This honor recognized his exceptional contributions to the college and community during his presidency.

Dr. Johnson, a native of Port Arthur, began his academic journey at Angelina Junior College and earned five degrees, including a doctorate from Texas Southern University. His career in higher education followed a distinguished 20-year service in law enforcement with the Houston Police Department, where he discovered his passion for teaching.

Since becoming president of LSCO in 2018, Dr. Johnson had led the college through a transformative period. Under his leadership, LSCO experienced more than a 50 percent increase in enrollment between 2018 and 2024. He oversaw the completion of major projects including the new Academic Building, Electromechanical Technology Buildings, Gatemouth Plaza, the renovation of the historic First Baptist Church into a Student Success Center, and more. Dr. Johnson introduced 33 new academic and workforce programs and established satellite campuses in Lumberton and Livingston. He and his wife, Karen, actively supported local organizations such as United Way, OCARC, and Orange Christian Services.

Dr. Johnson’s tenure was marked by innovative initiatives such as implementing an eight-week class schedule, launching LSCO’s first collegiate sport—bass fishing—introducing the campus mascot, Tilley the Gator, and spearheading numerous other accomplishments aimed at providing opportunities for students to earn certificates and degrees.

The Texas State University System Board of Regents unanimously adopted a resolution honoring Dr. Johnson’s service and conferring upon him the title of President Emeritus. The resolution acknowledged his dynamic vision, dedication to student success, and lasting impact on the institution.

“I’ve made a lot of good decisions in my life, but that one was one of our better decisions,” Regent Stephen Lee said at the time.

“Tom Johnson is a great president, a good human being, a good man, and has become a good friend. I’m so grateful our paths crossed professionally.”

— Brian McCall, Ph.D., Chancellor,
Texas State University System





As LSCO looked forward to welcoming Dr. Wendy Elmore as the next president, the college community extended its heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Johnson for his leadership and service. His legacy was set to continue inspiring and guiding LSCO in its mission to provide accessible, high-quality education and life-changing opportunities.



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"This is the highest honor I've had in my entire lifetime, to serve as president [of LSCO] for the people of the Orange community. I have a wonderful team, and all those stats are because I was smart enough to hire good people, get them what they need, and stay out of their way so I can watch the magic happen."

— Dr. Thomas Johnson, President Emeritus



Dr. Johnson's Accomplishments at Lamar State College Orange
 View all of his accomplishments by scanning the QR code or visit lSCO.edu/about/dr-johnson.php

A Champion for Student Success

On Friday, April 4, 2025, Dr. Thomas Johnson, President of Lamar State College Orange, was honored with the prestigious Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) during the PTK Catalyst 2025 convention in Kansas City, Missouri. This award recognizes college presidents who have demonstrated outstanding support for student success initiatives, leading to enhanced pathways for completion, transfer, and employment. Recipients are nominated by students and are selected based on their active interest in supporting high-achieving students and fostering student leadership on campus.

"Dr. Johnson's unwavering commitment to our students' success has transformed LSCO into a nurturing environment where academic excellence and leadership thrive" said Dr. Wendy Elmore, then Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. "This recognition by Phi Theta Kappa is a testament to his dedication and the positive impact he has made on our campus community."

The Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction is PTK's most prestigious honor for community college presidents and is named after Dr. Shirley B. Gordon, the longest-serving Chair of PTK's Board of Directors and a founder and long-time president of Highline Community College in Washington. To be eligible, college presidents and CEOs must have served in their role for at least five years and can receive the award only once in their career. Dr. Johnson was among 14 college administrators nationwide to receive this honor in 2025

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"Dr. Johnson has been the unwavering champion, the steadfast encourager, and the unconditional supporter of Phi Theta Kappa. We are forever grateful for the dedication, guidance, and belief he has shown in us and our journey with these amazing students."

— Jessica Williams, PTK Advisor & Faculty Senate President



<p>33</p> <p>New Programs Added Since 2019</p>	<p>6</p> <p>New Buildings Opened</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Partnerships with Texas Universities</p>
<p>2</p> <p>New Off-Campus Locations</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Dual-Credit Partnerships</p>	<p>5,139</p> <p>Degrees and Certificates Signed</p>



LSCO’s annual Octoberfest was a fun celebration for all in attendance. The campus hosted many fun activities and was filled with an array of festive Halloween costumes. The evening was made memorable by games, hayrides, face painting, snacks, bounce houses, prizes, and more.



Employee Awards

On Tuesday, May 6, 2025, LSCO Faculty and Staff came together at the annual employee awards luncheon to celebrate the remarkable work each contributes to the success of our institution. The impact of these individuals extends beyond the classroom and our campus to support not only our students but also the community.



2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

- Diane Dotson, *Teaching Excellence Award*
- Dr. Matt McClure, *Professional Excellence Award*
- Stacy DeMontmollin, *President’s Faculty Merit Award*
- Cristy Smith, *Distance Education Award*
- Brenna Wheatley, *President’s Staff Award for Campus & Community Service*
- Alicia Lloyd, *President’s Staff Award for Customer Service*
- Kendra De La Fuente, *Outstanding Staff Award*
- Jacqueline Singleton, *Outstanding Faculty Award*



Signing Nights

LSCO Lumberton Vocational Nursing

The inaugural cohort of seven vocational nursing students at the LSCO Lumberton site signed letters of intent to begin their careers as nurses taking courses at LSCO’s new facility in Lumberton.



West Orange-Stark Early College High School

Lamar State College Orange hosted a signing ceremony for the eighth cohort of the Early College High School Program with West Orange–Stark High School. Twenty-six students signed participation agreements alongside their families and will graduate in 2029 with both a high school diploma and an Associate of Liberal Arts degree from LSCO.

Career and Technical Education / STEM

LSCO’s 5th annual Career and Technical Education/STEM Signing Day was a wonderful celebration of student achievement and community partnership. The event recognizes students who have committed to pursuing careers in technical fields and STEM disciplines. During the ceremony, twenty-six students were awarded with technical scholarships made possible through the generous support of our sponsors.



Campus Visitors

1.

Chancellor Brian McCall: Chancellor Brian McCall met with Dr. Johnson and toured the construction sites of both the Academic Building and Student Success Center.
2.

Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce: The Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce awarded recipients of the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 Student and Employee of the Month.
3.

Dual Credit Leadership Meeting: LSCO brought together educators and counselors from partnering school districts for a collaborative meeting to explore new strategies in support of student academic success.
4.

Dr. Ray Martinez: President and CEO of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, Dr. Ray Martinez, toured Lamar State College Orange for a first-hand look at all the incredible opportunities for students.
5.

Tech Labs: LSCO had the privilege of hosting Tech Labs for an innovative demonstration of the “cobot” robotic welder.
6.

Normandy Group: Dr. Johnson and Dr. Elmore visited with Christine Pellerin, a founding partner from the Normandy Group.
7.

SETX Women in Industry: SETX Women in Industry joined us for Coffee Chats to share insight, advice, and encouragement with our students as they explore career opportunities in skilled trades.
8.

Chamber Breakfast: Steven Prusak, President & Chief Executive Officer of Chevron Phillips Chemical spoke at a Chamber Breakfast at Lamar State College Orange connecting local leaders and residents on the future of Orange County.
9.

Small Business Summit: LSCO had the privilege to host the Governor’s Office Small Business Summit. Dr. Johnson spoke at the summit highlighting our mission to build opportunity through workforce education.
10.

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Teacher Externship: Teachers in the Southeast Texas Workforce Solutions Summer Externship got a introduction to Maritime, Technical, and Health Professions programs.



11.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC): Following a comprehensive review process, the SACSCOC evaluation committee made an on-site visit to the LSCO campus to evaluate the college’s reaccreditation.
12.

Dr. Sylvia Leal: T.L.L. Temple Foundation Senior Program Officer of Education & Economic Mobility, Dr. Sylvia Leal visited and toured TSUS Polk County Center.
13.

Dr. Jeff Pack: Livingston ISD’s new superintendent, Dr. Jeff Pack, made a visit to the TSUS Polk County Center.
14.

U.S. Congressman Randy Weber: Dr. Wendy Elmore had the privilege of welcoming U.S. Congressman Randy Weber to the LSCO Campus.
15.

Commissioner Alberto Treviño III and Matthew Sniadecki: Lamar State College Orange welcomed Texas Workforce Commissioner Alberto Treviño III and Matthew Sniadecki, Program Manager for the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant to campus for a check presentation ceremony. The \$98,799 grant funded a Pyxis medication dispensing system.



R&R Studios – Roberto Behar & Rosario Marquardt, 2024

Stainless steel, cast aluminum, opal glass, and LED light

WE ARE THE LIGHT, located outside of Academic Building, is described by the artists as a “social sculpture.” Consisting of eight custom fabricated light fixtures arranged in a circular pattern, the work is not just an iconic, site-specific sculpture, but a “place of encounter” that breaks down “the barriers between contemporary art and everyday life.”

The lighted art piece was created by R&R Studios. R&R is the collaborative office of artists and architects Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt, whose practice weaves together visual arts, design, architecture, and the city.



Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt, Argentinian-American artist of R&R Studios.



SNOW PLACE LIKE HOME



Campus looked beautiful covered in snow. The Lamar State College Orange campus was closed Tuesday, January 21, 2025 due to winter weather conditions. From late Monday night until early Tuesday morning, roughly 4 inches of snow fell across Southeast Texas. Students were able to delay the first week of school and enjoy an extra week of winter break until the snow was cleared from roadways.





GATORAMA

BOOTS & BOW TIES

LSCO hosted the second annual Gatorama with a 'boots and bowties' theme in honor of President Emeritus Dr. Johnson. The event was made possible by sponsorships from DuGood Federal Credit Union and Neches Federal Credit Union. The Joe Ben Welch Student Center Lawn was filled with games, activities, pizza, ice cream, a photo booth, and more. There were many faculty, staff, and student volunteers who made it a joyful day for the community.

Events That Brought The Gator Community Together

- 1. Tilley's Birthday Party:** During Welcome Week, the Student Activities hosted a birthday party to celebrate our beloved LSCO Mascot, Tilley the Gator.
- 2. First-Gen College Student Day:** Kipp Colvin shared an inspiring message to all of our students about the power of Courageous Leadership for our First Generation Celebration.
- 3. Magic Show:** Student Activities invited Jonathan Burns to perform his fun, funny, and flexible magic show in the Student Center during our Fall Open House.
- 4. Winter Jam:** Students enjoyed some holiday fun at our annual Winter Jam with a hot cocoa bar, cookie decorating, karaoke, and photos with Santa Tilley.
- 5. Comedy Magician Showcase:** Tyler Korso put on an entertaining show full of clever humor and dazzling illusions for all attendees during our Spring Open House.
- 6. Easter Egg Hunt:** SGA hosted a campus-wide egg hunt and spread some Easter cheer with the Tilley Bunny by handing out Easter treats to students, faculty, and staff.





T.V. MARGIE

Christening A New Training Vessel

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) proudly dedicated its newest training vessel, the T.V. Margie, during a special ceremony. The state-of-the-art mobile barge simulator provides hands-on training for students preparing for careers in the maritime industry, reinforcing LSCO's commitment to workforce education.



The T.V. Margie was made possible through a \$500,000 Texas Reskilling and Upskilling Through Education (TRUE) Grant awarded to LSCO. This U.S. Coast Guard-approved training unit can be used across the state, ensuring that students have access to high-quality maritime education in their own communities.

"The T.V. Margie represents a major step forward in providing real-world, industry-relevant training for our students," said LSCO President Emeritus Dr. Thomas Johnson.

"This vessel will not only prepare students for in-demand maritime careers but will also carry forward the legacy of my mother, Margie Louella Johnson, whose resilience, hard work, and determination continue to inspire us all."

— Dr. Thomas Johnson, President Emeritus

The vessel was named in honor of Margie Louella Johnson (1924–2016), mother of LSCO President Emeritus Dr. Thomas Johnson. A Rosie the Riveter during World War II, Margie Johnson played a crucial role in the war effort, working in industrial production at a time when women were stepping into critical workforce positions. She was a lifelong resident of Indian Springs, Texas, the owner of the Johnson Rock Shop, and was married to her husband, Otis, for 71 years.

In keeping with maritime tradition, the event included a blessing of the vessel led by Father Sinclair Oubre, followed by the breaking of a bottle over the bow, officially christening the T.V. Margie.

With this new addition to its maritime training program, LSCO continues to expand its offerings, equipping students with the skills needed to succeed in the growing maritime industry.

LSCO At A Glance

Total Fall Enrollment
for Fall 2024

3,613

Annual Dual Credit
enrollment for 2023-2024

1,889

First generation graduates
for 2024-2025

72%

Average graduate GPA

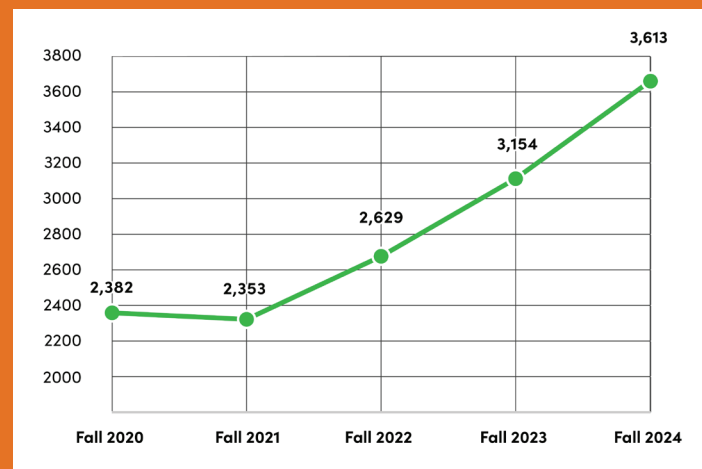
3.39

Degrees and certificates

105+

Enrollment Growth

LSCO has witnessed an **overall increase of 52%** in Fall enrollment from Fall 2020 to Fall 2024. This increase is attributed to the introduction of **33 new programs of study** since 2019 and the opening of satellite locations in Lumberton and Livingston.



Graduation Highlights

Average age of
LSCO graduates

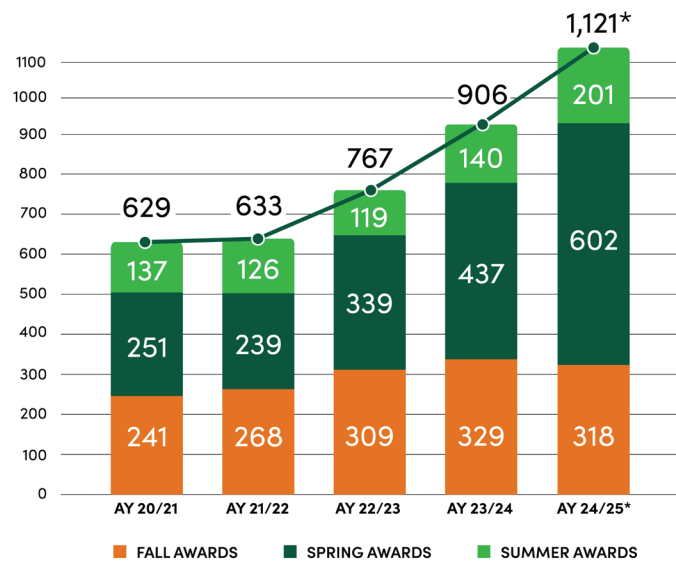
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New programs of study
added in 2025

16



Certificates and Degrees Awarded



4,056 Total degrees and certificates
awarded from 2020 - 2025

498 Largest number of Spring
graduates in LSCO History

3,058 Total Graduates from
2020-2025

1,121* Largest number of degrees
and certificates awarded in
LSCO History (2024-2025)

Total Annual Awards

2020-2021 — 629

2021-2022 — 633

2022-2023 — 767

2023-2024 — 906

2024-2025 — 1,121*

*Preliminary total as of 8/1/2025



MILESTONES

MEMORIES MILESTONES MOMENTUM



Fall Enrollment Record

LSCO Set Record Enrollment for Fall 2024

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) continued its remarkable trajectory of growth into the Fall 2024 semester. As of the initial census, 3,613 students enrolled, representing a 15% increase over the certified headcount for Fall 2023.

The surge in enrollment was attributed to several factors, including the college’s dedication to expanding academic opportunities and strengthening community partnerships. Between 2019 and 2024, LSCO introduced 17 new programs of study. The college also broadened its reach by opening satellite locations in Lumberton and Livingston, providing greater access to students across East and Southeast Texas.

A key aspect of this growth can also be attributed to its commitment to student success, particularly for first-generation students. In the Fall 2024 semester, 75% of the student body was composed of first-generation college students, demonstrating the college’s critical role in providing life-changing educational opportunities. LSCO continually partners with local businesses and organizations to equip students with the skills needed for in-demand careers, cultivating a stronger, more educated workforce in the community.

LSCO remains committed to expanding educational access and providing the resources necessary for students to succeed. With continued growth, new program offerings, emphasis on community partnerships, and new buildings, the institution is poised to continue building a stronger future for its students and the region.

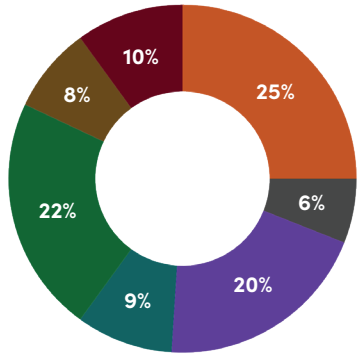
Fall Enrollment

By Year

2020 — 2,382	2023 — 3,154
2021 — 2,353	2024 — 3,613
2022 — 2,629	

By County (2024–2025)

Orange — 53%	Louisiana — 4%
Hardin — 18%	Polk — 4%
Jefferson — 6%	Other — 9%
Jasper — 6%	



By Pathway (2024–2025)

Arts & Humanities — 25%	Public Service — 22%
Business — 6%	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics — 8%
Health Professions — 20%	Trades & Manufacturing — 10%
Industry & Transportation — 9%	



Academic Building

Lamar State College Orange unveiled one of its newest additions to campus on Wednesday, November 6, 2024 with a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony. The 55,000-square-foot Academic Building was designed with students' success and growth at its core. Through funding from the 87th Texas Legislative session, this state-of-the-art facility marks a transformative moment for LSCO, representing an investment not only in modern educational resources but also in the future of the students and the community.

Equipped with 8 advanced lab spaces, 8 flexible classrooms, 2 computer labs, faculty and information technology offices, and multiple student commons areas, the Academic Building is more than just a physical structure. It is a hub where curiosity, creativity, and collaboration can thrive. "This building is for you," LSCO President Emeritus Dr. Thomas Johnson said, emphasizing that the new space was created to support and inspire students' academic journeys. "It's a space where ideas will flourish and where your hard work will continue to elevate this campus."

The thoughtful design of the Academic Building reflects LSCO's commitment to a holistic educational experience. By providing dynamic learning environments that promote critical thinking and hands-on exploration, the college continues to aim at preparing students not only for academic success but for real-world problem solving and innovation. "We strive to cultivate a space where students can learn to

think critically, creatively, and collaboratively," articulated Dr. Wendy Elmore, then Provost and Executive Vice President.

The significance of this facility is deeply felt by the students, who see it as a beacon of opportunity. Joshua Taylor, Student Government Association President, shared how the new building creates an environment where student potential can flourish.

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"It encourages students to take a more active role in their educational experience."

— Joshua Taylor, Student Government Association President



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 For many, the building represents a chance to be part of a community that believes in their aspirations and invests in their dreams.

From its conception to its completion, the Academic Building embodies a promise to continue transforming lives through education. It is a testament to the unwavering dedication of LSCO to provide students with the resources and spaces they need to achieve greatness.



First Beam - November 15, 2023



Last Beam - February 7, 2024



Progress from April 2024



Progress from September 2024



Public Art Installation - October 29, 2024



Grand Opening - November 6, 2024





Student Success Center

Grand opening and ribbon cutting of historic Student Success Center

Lamar State College Orange proudly celebrated the grand opening and ribbon cutting of its new Student Success Center on April 15, 2025, welcoming local officials, college leadership, community partners, and students to a milestone event in the college's growth and service to students.

The Student Success Center, located at 602 Green Avenue, represents the transformation of a historic community landmark. Originally constructed in 1914 as the First Baptist Church of Orange, the building was donated to LSCO by the Stark Foundation in 2021. With funding secured during the 88th Texas Legislative Session, the facility was restored and repurposed to serve as a centralized hub for key student services.

The space now houses Admissions, Advising, Financial Aid, Recruiting, Cashiering, and the Dean of Student Services, bringing these departments together under one roof to streamline the student experience.

"This building stood for over a century as a gathering place for the community, and today it enters a new chapter as a gathering space for learners, dreamers, and future leaders," said LSCO President Emeritus, Dr. Thomas Johnson during the ceremony. "Its purpose may be new, but its commitment to the people of Orange remains the same. We are proud to honor its history while transforming it into a space that will serve generations of Gators to come."

Guests in attendance included Texas State University System Chancellor Dr. Brian McCall, elected officials, and representatives from the Stark Foundation, Hill International, and G&G Enterprises. The event concluded with a ceremonial ribbon cutting and invitation to tour the space. Guests also had the opportunity to participate in a time capsule project, curated by LSCO students and organizations, to commemorate the opening.

The Student Success Center arrived during a time of record growth for the college. In Spring 2025, LSCO reported its highest-ever spring enrollment with 3,543 students, a 20% increase over Spring 2024. The college also experienced a 21% increase in contact hours, driven by its commitment to accessible, high-quality education and its expansion of programs and support services.

The opening of the Student Success Center underscored LSCO's continued mission to serve students and strengthen the future of Southeast Texas through education, innovation, and community partnerships.





“Her dedication, compassion, and tireless work behind the scenes uplift everyone around her. She inspires us all to give more of ourselves and make a difference, just as she does every day.”

— Wendy Elmore, then Provost & Executive Vice President

Rogers’ Community Service Award

Cindy Wyles, Director of Print & Design Services, was honored with the prestigious Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award for 2024. This accolade recognizes her outstanding contributions to both the campus and the broader Orange community.

The Julie & Ben Rogers Community Service Award was established in 1979 to recognize faculty and staff members across the Lamar institutions who make a meaningful impact on the Golden Triangle through exceptional service and volunteer work. The Rogers family created this award to honor those who dedicate their time and talents to the community and to inspire others to do the same. Each year, four recipients are selected among the four colleges of Lamar University, Lamar Institute of Technology, Lamar State College Port Arthur, and Lamar State College Orange. Since its inception, the award has celebrated the contributions of countless individuals who have enriched the region through their dedication.

Ms. Wyles has been an integral part of LSCO since 2001, bringing over two decades of experience in

print and design services. Her educational background includes an Associate of Science in Business (2015) and an Associate of Applied Science in Information Technology Support Specialist (2011), both from LSCO. She also holds multiple certificates in IT support and web design.

“Cindy embodies the true spirit of service, both on our campus and in the Orange community,” said Dr. Wendy Elmore, then Provost & Executive Vice President at Lamar State College Orange.



Beyond her professional role, Ms. Wyles is deeply committed to community service. She has served as the Chairperson for Birthright of Orange, Inc., Back-to-School Orange County Board of Directors for 12 years, and the LSCO Chair of United Way of Orange County for six years demonstrating her dedication to supporting local initiatives. Ms. Wyles has also served as the LSCO Staff Senate President for four years and joined the Leadership of Southeast Texas 2024 Cohort.

On campus, she has been recognized with the President’s Customer Service Award in 2008 and the again in 2022 with the Campus and Community Service award and the NISOD Excellence Award in 2023, highlighting her unwavering commitment to excellence and service. She has also served on many committees through the years including the TSUS Public Art Committee responsible for selecting and showcasing public art on campus.

In addition to her administrative duties, Ms. Wyles shares her expertise as an adjunct instructor in Information Technology, Business and Workforce and Continuing Education at LSCO. She has been instrumental in developing and coordinating courses aimed at enhancing Microsoft Word and Excel skills within the community.

The LSCO community extends heartfelt congratulations to Cindy Wyles on receiving the Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award, celebrating her exceptional dedication and service to both the college and the Orange community.





Spring Commencement Record

On May 16, 2025, Lamar State College Orange honored its largest-ever graduating class during two Spring Commencement ceremonies held at 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the G&G Enterprises Arena at West Orange Stark High School. In Spring 2025, a historic number of 498 students graduated from LSCO, culminating in the conferral of 602 total awards representing a 43% increase from Spring 2024 and a 403% increase since Spring 2018. The momentum is reflective of LSCO’s continued commitment to growth, access, and academic excellence.

“This is more than just a record-breaking graduating class. It’s a testament to the drive, resilience, and determination of our students and our community,” said LSCO President Emeritus Dr. Thomas Johnson. “Each graduate has a story, and together, they represent the future of Southeast Texas.”

Of these graduates, 72% were first-generation college students. Graduates ranged in age from 16 to 62, with an average GPA of 3.42. Dual credit students accounted for over half of the graduates, with 264 students earning 284 awards solidifying LSCO’s strong partnerships with area high schools and its commitment to early college access.

In total, 76% of awards conferred were certificates, highlighting LSCO’s focus on equipping students with job-ready skills for immediate entry into the workforce.

The campus was filled with cheers, smiles, and plenty of proud family members and friends as graduates crossed the stage, each step marking a new chapter of achievement and opportunity.



SACSCOC Reaffirmation

LSCO receives full 10-year reaffirmation

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) has officially received a full 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), marking a significant milestone in the college’s commitment to excellence in higher education.

Following a comprehensive review process, including an on-site visit in October 2024, LSCO received a flawless report from the SACSCOC evaluation committee. The committee issued zero findings for the compliance report and offered no recommendations for its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) marking an exceptional outcome that reflects LSCO’s dedication to academic integrity, continuous improvement, and student success.

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees officially approved the committee’s report and reaffirmed accreditation during its June 2025 meeting.





MOMENTUM

MEMORIES MILESTONES **MOMENTUM**



Dr. Wendy Elmore

*Appointed and Confirmed as President of
Lamar State College Orange*

The Board of Regents of the Texas State University System confirmed Wendy Elmore, Ed.D., as the fifth president of Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) on May 1, 2025. The unanimous vote occurred during the board's quarterly meeting at Texas State University in San Marcos. She officially stepped into office on June 1, 2025.

Dr. Elmore served as LSCO's chief academic officer from 2020 through 2025, where she played a key role in efforts to expand degree and credential offerings, enhance the quality of instructional programs, and open new academic centers in Lumberton and Livingston.

Prior to joining LSCO, Dr. Elmore served as vice president of instruction and chief academic officer, associate vice president of academic affairs, director of distance learning, and director of testing at Trinity Valley Community College. She previously worked as a counselor, district assessment coordinator, and math teacher at Elkhart Independent School District, district assessment coordinator, and math teacher at Elkhart Independent School District.

Dr. Elmore earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Stephen F. Austin State University, a master's degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Tyler, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Lamar University. She succeeds Dr. Thomas Johnson, who retired after serving as president of LSCO since 2018.



President Elmore pictured with President Emeritus Johnson



Dr. Tracy Skopek

Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs

Dr. Tracy Skopek was appointed as LSCO's new Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Dr. Skopek officially began her new role in July 2025, bringing more than two decades of leadership experience in higher education and a strong commitment to student success, academic innovation, and community engagement.

Born in Southeast Texas, Dr. Skopek returns to the region after most recently serving as Vice President of Student Learning, Engagement and Student Success and Chief Academic Officer at Kilgore College. In this role, she led significant initiatives such as the transition to open educational resources, the creation of student wraparound service models, and the development of academic programs tailored to regional workforce needs.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Skopek to the Gator community," said Dr. Wendy Elmore, President of LSCO. "Her deep understanding of two-year college culture, combined with her strategic vision and experience leading innovative academic initiatives, will be an incredible asset to our students, faculty, and staff. I look forward to working alongside her as we continue advancing our mission of access, excellence, and opportunity."

Dr. Skopek holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and a Master of Public Administration from Texas Tech University, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Government from the University of Texas at Austin. Her academic background is matched by an extensive history of leadership roles across institutions in Texas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming, including faculty positions at Tulsa Community College and the University of Wyoming.

Her decision to join LSCO was both personal and professional. "I'm originally from Beaumont, so coming back to this region and serving students and the community feels like coming home," she said. "I've admired the work of both Dr. Johnson and Dr. Elmore, and I'm excited to be part of a team that is so committed to student success."

Kristin Walker

Promoted to Assistant Vice President of Statewide Partnerships

Kristin Walker was promoted from Executive Director of Texas State University System Polk County Center (TSUS-PCC) to Assistant Vice President (AVP) of Statewide Partnerships in May, 2025. As AVP, she provides leadership to the Polk County Center where Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) offers various programs as well as leading LSCO's partnerships with Texas State University, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD).

Walker holds a Master of Education in Student Affairs Administration of Higher Education from Texas A&M University, a Bachelor of Science in Counseling and Guidance from East Texas A&M University and an Associate of Arts from Navarro College.

In her previous position, Walker represented Lamar Institute of Technology, Lamar State College Port Arthur, and Lamar State College Orange throughout Polk County. She kept all three colleges up to date on the needs of the surrounding community and the center and coordinated each college's course schedules. She established a social media presence and branding package for the PCC, helping to ensure students' experiences were of the utmost importance. This is just a small glimpse into all that she accomplished as Executive Director of TSUS-PCC.



"I strive to provide accessible education and opportunities to Lamar State College Orange students no matter their location. [My] focus will be on credentials of value and education that empowers students to achieve success towards sustainable living and careers of the future."

— Kristin Walker, Assistant Vice President of Statewide Partnerships



Patty Collins

Promoted to Assistant Vice President of Operations and Institutional Services

Patty Collins was appointed as the new Assistant Vice President of Operations and Institutional Services. With over 20 years of experience in professional leadership and eight years of service to LSCO, Collins has been an invaluable asset in supporting the college’s President, Provost, and student body throughout her six held positions at the institution. Her extensive experience and dedication to the campus make her an outstanding leader.

Collins’ history with LSCO can be traced back to when she first attended college. She began her collegiate career as a student at Lamar State College Orange where she earned her Associate of Science in Business. From there, she went on to attain her Bachelor of Business Administration at Stephen F. Austin State University and a Master of Science in Organizational Development at Abilene Christian University.

In her previous role, Collins held the title of Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Educational Support, where she was responsible for overseeing the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Institutional Effectiveness Committee, maintaining compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and monitoring dual credit for the campus. As the Dean, she provided measurable data to track the effectiveness of student support programs, academic objectives, and collaborated with LSCO faculty and staff to share findings and support college initiatives.

The AVP of Operations and Institutional Services is responsible for monitoring dual credit partnerships, overseeing institutional research and effectiveness, and



ensuring compliance with SACSCOC and TSUS policies and procedures. Additionally, Collins now oversees the Brown Estate, Gator Café, and Shahan Events Center and will primarily be serving newly appointed LSCO President, Dr. Elmore, in this position.

“Patty Collins is an invaluable asset to Lamar State College Orange,” LSCO President Dr. Elmore said. “Her leadership and experience in higher education allows our college to continue its upward trajectory, impacting even more students each and every day.”

Patty Collins leads with a service-oriented mindset and seeks to contribute to the continual growth of LSCO. She is eager to serve Dr. Elmore and the student body as the AVP of Operations and Institutional Services.

Leanna Odom

Promoted to Vice President for Finance and Operations / Chief Financial Officer

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) is proud to announce the appointment of Leanna Odom as Vice President for Finance and Operations / Chief Financial Officer (CFO). With more than 29 years of experience in her field, Odom brings extensive financial expertise and a deep commitment to higher education. She joined LSCO in April 2023 as Vice President of Business Services, a Texas State University System shared services position, and quickly became a valued part of the LSCO leadership team.

“Her dedication and depth of experience have already made a significant impact on LSCO,” said Dr. Wendy Elmore, LSCO President. “Her commitment to excellence and her passion for serving students made her an outstanding choice for CFO, and I am grateful to have her as part of our leadership team.”

Odom is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Business Administration with a double major in Accounting and Finance in 1995. She went on to earn a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in leadership from Lamar University in 2020 and a Master of Science in Accounting from Texas A&M Commerce in 2024.

“Being promoted to CFO and getting to serve LSCO in this capacity is truly an honor,” Odom said. “Less than nine years ago, I took a leap of faith by leaving public accounting and entering higher education. Being a lover of learning myself, I found my ‘home’ in higher education. Serving as CFO is the culmination of many years of serving in whatever opportunity I was presented. I look forward to continuing to grow and learn just as our students do.”



Odom credits her time at LSCO with shaping her both personally and professionally. “For over two years, I have gotten to know numerous people in the LSCO ‘family,’” she said. “It was obvious to me early on that they strive for excellence in their endeavors, which meant I had found a ‘good fit!’”

Her transition into the CFO role has been a natural progression, thanks to her close work with LSCO’s finance and operations teams in her previous position. “Serving LSCO in this capacity is no easy feat, but it is a challenge that I continue to rise to on a daily basis,” Odom said. “I have a great team to serve with, and the support of my current President, Dr. Elmore, helps me rise to the occasion.”

In addition to her leadership role at LSCO, Odom currently serves as co-chair for the Accounting Principles Committee for the Texas Association of College and University Business Officers (TACUBO).

Partnerships



Texas State University

Lamar State College Orange has partnered with Texas State University (TXST) to create the TXST-LSCO Gateway Program. This program offers an affordable, seamless path to Texas State University. Students can co-enroll at Lamar State College Orange and Texas State’s San Marcos campus, enjoy full student privileges at both schools, save around \$6,600 their first year, and secure guaranteed admission to TXST with no reapplication needed.

Sul Ross State University

The partnership between Lamar State College Orange and Sul Ross State University offers students a seamless transfer experience through the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree programs. Sul Ross commits to accepting 84 completed LSCO credit hours toward these degrees, ensuring that students lose no progress when they transfer. This collaboration is especially impactful for first-generation and rural students, allowing them to stay close to home while advancing their education. By removing barriers and honoring every credit earned, the partnership empowers students to change their lives and the future of their families.



Sam Houston State University

The partnership between Lamar State College Orange and Sam Houston State University supports working paraprofessionals in becoming certified teachers through the ParaPath program. This initiative allows paraprofessionals to earn an Associate of Arts in Teaching from LSCO and a bachelor’s degree in education without leaving the schools and communities they already serve. Designed for accessibility and flexibility, the program meets students where they are both geographically and professionally. With missions centered on student success, LSCO and SHSU are working together to grow the next generation of educators from within.



Lamar University

Lamar University and Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) entered into an innovative partnership that brings leadership courses directly to the LSCO campus. This collaboration makes advanced education more accessible to LSCO students and the surrounding community, enhancing career readiness and providing a meaningful impact within the local community.

Through this partnership, LSCO students can seamlessly continue their education with Lamar University, benefiting from high-quality courses delivered right on the LSCO campus. Additionally, this convenient pathway will count and apply courses taken at LSCO toward an LU bachelor’s degree in leadership (pending THECB and SACSCOC approval), ensuring students make progress without interruption or additional steps.

The collaboration between LSCO and LU reflects a shared commitment to student success and regional growth, enabling students to thrive academically and professionally.



“This initiative is a significant step in building success for Southeast Texas, by preparing future leaders with leadership courses, we’re not just educating students, we’re fostering a stronger, more resilient community.

— Dr. Jaime Taylor, Lamar University President



Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) has partnered with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) to provide college credit opportunities for Juvenile Correctional Officers (JCOs) and other TJJD staff based on their agency training.

Under the agreement, JCOs and direct care staff are eligible to receive college credit for specific technical and on-the-job training completed through TJJD. These credits can be applied toward criminal justice certificates and a variety of associate degree programs at LSCO, many of which are available online or in person at affordable tuition rates for in-state students.

LSCO officials believe the partnership will empower TJJD staff across Texas to further their education, enhance their credentials, and pursue long-term career advancement all while building a stronger workforce in public service and criminal justice.

The agreement was signed May 1, 2025 at Texas State University in San Marcos by LSCO President Emeritus Dr. Thomas Johnson and TJJD Training Director Chris Ellison.



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"TJJD saw an opportunity to add on to the benefits and incentives for employees and from the minute we contacted LSCO they have been fantastic to work with, a great partner in getting this up and running."

— Chris Ellison, TJJD Training Director

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First Off-Site Commencement Ceremony

In a milestone moment for both the college and the community, Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) celebrated 38 dual credit students from Lake Creek, Nacogdoches and Montgomery High Schools as they graduated with their Cosmetology Operator Business Management Certificate on Thursday, May 15 at 6:30 p.m. at the Polk County Commerce Center in Livingston.

This marks the first graduation ceremony LSCO has hosted away from its main campus in Orange, Texas, signifying both a historic first and a deepening of LSCO's commitment to serving students across the East Texas region. The celebration highlighted the college's ongoing partnership with local school districts and its expanded offerings through the Texas State University System (TSUS) Polk County Center (PCC).

The Cosmetology Operator Business Management Certificate equips students with the technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to thrive in the beauty industry. By completing the program through dual credit, students earn their certificate faster and with less financial burden, positioning them to enter the workforce or continue their education immediately after high school.

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"Through our collaboration with the TSUS Polk County Center and our partner high schools, we're providing students with real pathways to success and celebrating them where they are."

— Kristin Walker, Assistant Vice President of Statewide Partnerships



First Graduating Class of FAME Program

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) celebrated the first graduating class of the Golden Triangle Chapter of the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) program. On Friday, May 16, students in this inaugural cohort received their Associate of Applied Science in Electromechanical Technology, marking a major milestone in the college’s partnership with area manufacturers to prepare a new generation of highly skilled workers.

The FAME program, established locally in 2022, is a collaboration between LSCO and leading industry partners in Southeast Texas, including companies such as Cloeren Inc., United Rentals, ISS/Buna Electric Motor Service and Chevron Phillips Chemical among others. Through the FAME model, students gain valuable hands-on experience by alternating between classroom instruction at LSCO and paid, on-site training with a sponsoring employer. Over five semesters, students develop both the technical and professional skills needed to thrive in modern manufacturing environments.

The Golden Triangle Chapter is part of the national FAME USA network originally founded by Toyota and now supported by The Manufacturing Institute. Students accepted into the program go through a competitive selection process and commit to an intensive schedule of coursework and work-based learning.



Leadership

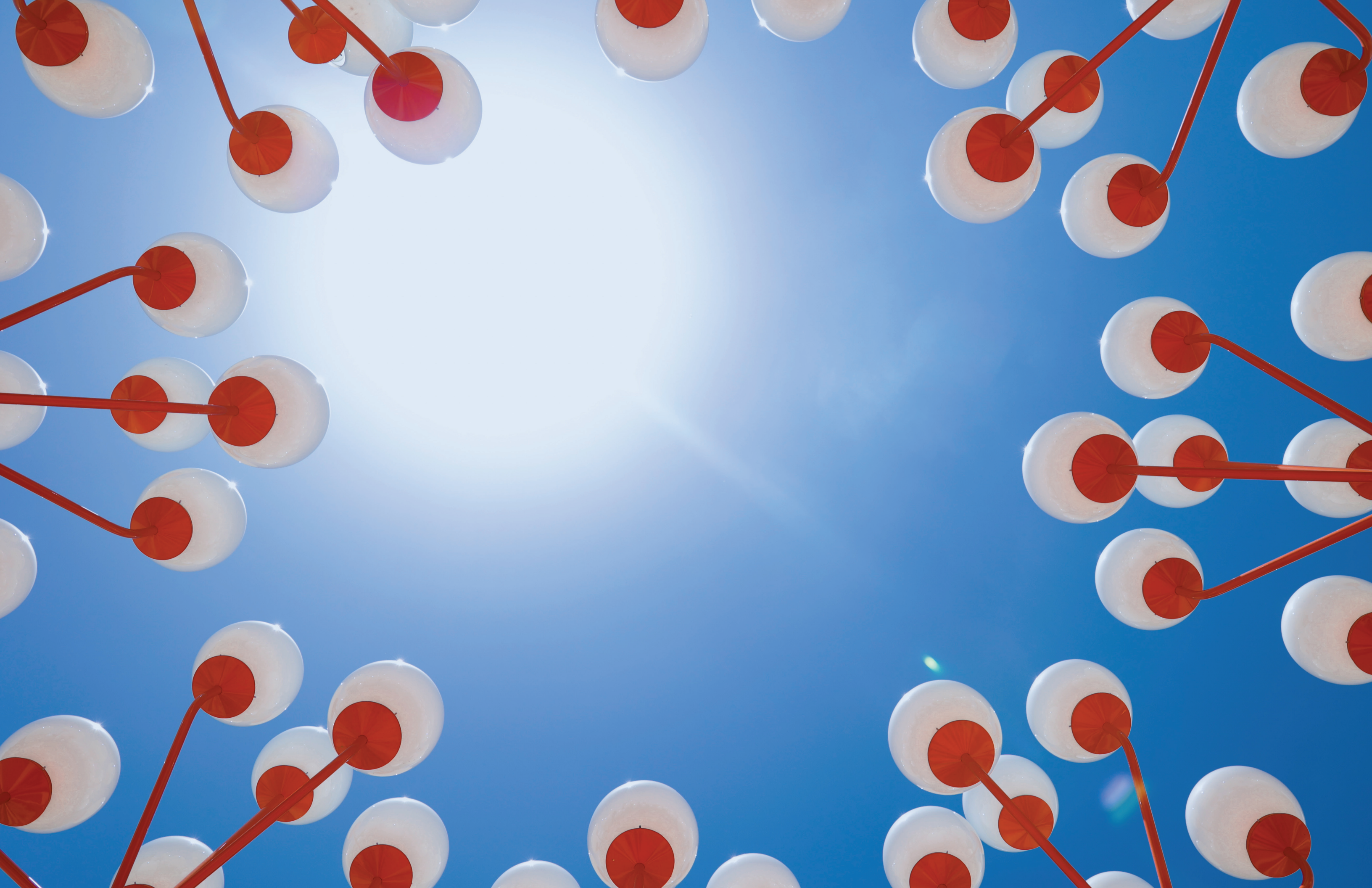
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