

LAMAR INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY



## October BIRTHDAYS

October 3, Bryan Neal

October 4, Monica Cardenas

October 5, Shivinder Singh

October 12, Lizzette Rivera-Estronza

October 13, John Randall

October 16, Lori Johnson

October 16, Gail Williams

October 17, Vicki Marshall

October 21, Lori Rogers

October 25, Darrell Grissom

October 25, Melinda White-Davis

October 27, Rhonda Mitchell

October 27, Staci Waldrep

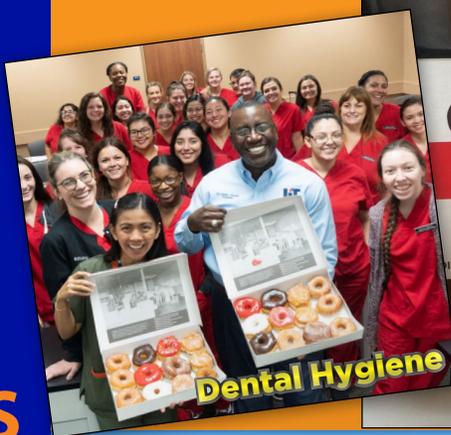
October 30, Walter Harder

# THE PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

October 2019

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## Imelda Aftermath: A Conversation With President Howard



**Chris Elliott, Marketing Director:** Dr. Howard, when the college reopened, why make surprise classroom visits giving out donuts (to the students)?

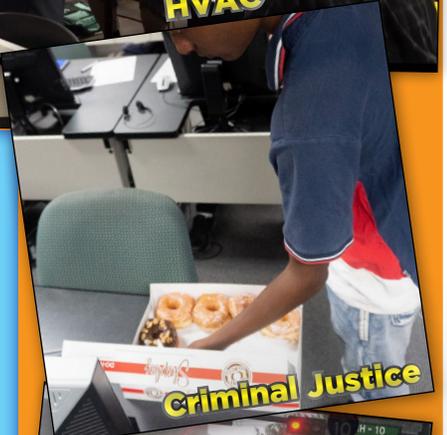
**Dr. Howard:** As the president, I gave out donuts to our students to show my compassion and that LIT really cares. Regarding these classroom visits, this was my way of showing our faculty that I'm 'in the trenches' with them!

**Chris:** How does the LIT Family pick up after Imelda?

**Dr. Howard:** We must recover...and we will recover! Our students need us. I'm proud that 100% of full-time faculty returned to work despite having losses themselves. This is one of the reasons why I gave an across-the-board 3% raise to employees (today, effective October 1).

**Chris:** What can faculty/staff do to continue to help students after Imelda?

**Dr. Howard:** When you factor in the devastation from Imelda plus LIT's 46% increase in Fall enrollments since 2016, helping becomes even more of a challenge. In the short-term, we are addressing students' 'immediate' needs as well as finalizing a long-term institutional plan.



## LIT adds full-time police officer in Sergeant Roberson



Sgt. Thomas Roberson is a 2015 LIT Regional Police Academy graduate and LIT's new Community Policing Officer.

As the enrollment grows and foot traffic increases at the Institute, the need for a larger, LIT-focused police presence has become a necessity. Dr. Howard made the safety of students, faculty and staff a priority, and after entering negotiations with Lamar University Police Department an innovative and cost-efficient solution was found.

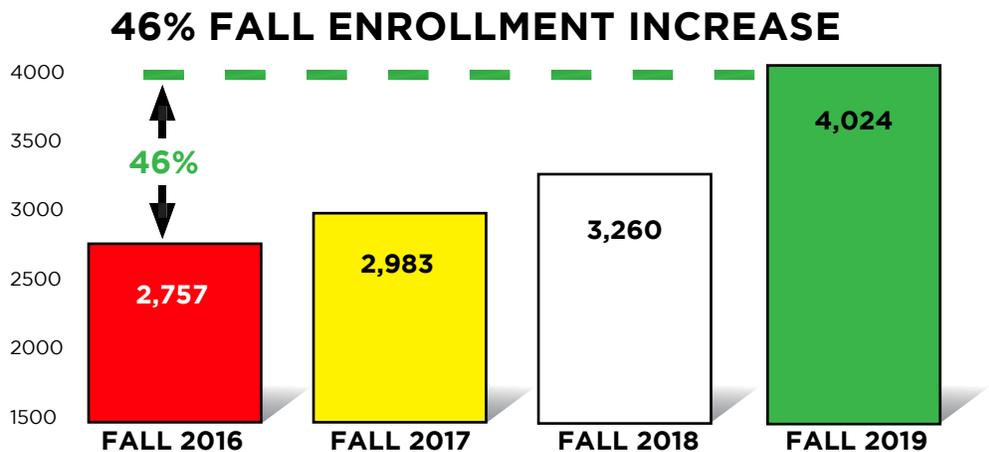
Sergeant Thomas Roberson, a 2010 LIT EMT graduate, worked as an EMT for five years in Port Arthur before graduating from LIT's Regional Police Academy in 2015. He is an LUPD police officer and LIT's first-ever police beat. He intends to make his presence known on campus by staying visible, walking the grounds and meeting people.

"I think (an increased police presence) is a huge deterrent to crime," Roberson said. "It is a strategy we've used at LUPD for years. A lot of people have interactions with officers on campus. By having such a high presence...it helps to keep the students safer. People know that if they don't have anything legitimate to do on campus then they need to leave."

Dr. Howard said he's very excited about Roberson's appointment and thinks this proactive approach to safety translates to a greater sense of well-being for students, faculty and staff. Dr. Howard is also exploring adding cameras and a part-time officer for evening coverage.

## LIT Fall 2019 Credit Enrollment Breaks Record (46%)

LIT has done it again. This time with a record-breaking 46% increase compared to Fall 2016, Fall 2019 credit enrollment is on pace to jump for the third straight year. This continues the trend of enrollment increases every long semester since Dr. Howard's installation. Dr. Howard rewarded faculty and staff who have over two years of service with an LIT polo shirt. Every full-time employee received a customized name tag.



## LIT students weather their own...and others' storms

When Imelda arrived with little warning fast on the heels of Hurricane Harvey, three LIT students immediately knew what they had to do in the midst of the devastation.

Two of the three students were in the process of losing their own homes. One lost his to Harvey, and now, to Imelda. But they all felt compelled to rush into action, selflessly offering the stunned community hours of volunteer service.

In so doing, first-year Instrumentation Technology students Jaron Cooper and Blake Lawrence, and Regional Fire Academy Cadet Taylor Talbert disregarded their own personal losses, and in many cases, safety.

Cooper, 18, of Vidor, said as soon as he saw water quickly surround his house and the feeder roads, he grabbed about nine neighborhood friends and hopped into trucks to help rescue cars that were stuck in fast-moving waters at the underpasses. Later that night, they retrieved a friend's boat.



Some of Imelda's wrath on display on Washington Street in Beaumont, September 20. (Photo courtesy of Twitter and Channel 12 News.)

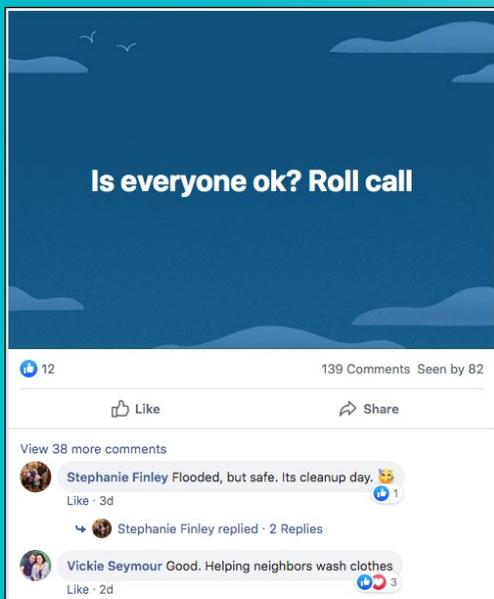


Lawrence (second from left) and Cooper (on the far right) join their friends for a photo (Photo courtesy of Twitter and Channel 12 News).

Cooper, who is a certified lifeguard, "loves that feeling of just being able to help." He estimated they spent 15-20 hours (many without sleep or food) helping about 50 people to safety from Wednesday night through Friday.

Imelda didn't affect his house, but the storms did flood Blake Lawrence's... twice. Lawrence had moved in with his grandmother after Harvey displaced him, and "was a month away from moving back into" his residence, Cooper said. "Blake wanted to get out and do something productive and help people, instead of sitting around worrying."

## Helping Hands, Faculty and Staff Senate Facebook Group, win October's Employees of the Month



### Facebook Group, Helping Hands, checks on its LIT family.

group and its contributors and supporters, should be collectively awarded 'Employee of the Month.'"

LIT's Facebook group brings home the October award, thanks to all its help internally with victims of Imelda. Staff Senate-Faculty Senate Helping Hands was nominated by Instructor Ira Wilsker because of what he called "yeoman service during the recent storm."

The public group came together yet again in this time of crisis to release vital news and resources for staff and faculty, match those in need with those who could help, gather gift cards, cleaning supplies and other necessities, while providing words of comfort for faculty and staff. The group was formed by LIT's Staff-Faculty Senate when Harvey struck.

Wilsker said, because of the group's generous support and spirit, "The creator, several administrators of this

## THE PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

### Marketing Moment



**Lit.edu logged 29,600 users and 71,000 sessions in August 2019.**

The marketing team launched the redesigned website in March 2019 with the intent of making lit.edu easier to find organically (via search engines). In August 2019 lit.edu had 29,600 users and 71,000 sessions, representing 45 and 58 percent increases compared to August 2018. Over 54 percent of those users found the website organically. As of September 23, 2019 lit.edu had 27,000 users, which is a 5.1 percent increase compared to the same point in time the month prior.

## Energy Conservation issue steps to forefront at LIT

Acting upon an urgent request by Governor Greg Abbott that businesses in Texas try and conserve energy, Dr. Howard issued a call to action to all department chairs and program directors. Gov. Abbott said the recent economic boom in Texas has led to higher demand on the power grid and utilities.

Since staff and faculty were mandated to do their part, some of the initiatives implemented at LIT include: dimming and shutting off office lights when not being used, setting computers on energy-save mode and working with office lights turned off.



If you would like your pictures placed on the President's Wall, send selfies, cute pet moments and photos from your vacations.

*Thanks for all you do*

## Featured photo from the President's Wall



Luouida Newbold and Christine Marsh sang Happy Birthday to Dr. Howard on his special day.