

Summer October 2024

## A View from Melrose

Rebecca "Becky" Johnson  
*Linfield University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield\\_magazine](https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine)

---

### Recommended Citation

Johnson, Rebecca "Becky" (2024) "A View from Melrose," *Linfield Magazine*: Vol. 19: No. 2, Article 19.  
Available at: [https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield\\_magazine/vol19/iss2/19](https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol19/iss2/19)

This article is brought to you for free via open access, courtesy of DigitalCommons@Linfield. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@linfield.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@linfield.edu).

# Welcoming optimism, addressing challenges

By Becky Johnson, interim president

I'm thrilled to be leading an institution with such a wonderful history and reputation. Many of you contributed to that, so thank you!

Having just completed my first semester at Linfield University, I'm struck by a number of things:

- People REALLY care about students here.
- The campus is beautiful, even under ice or swamped by rain.
- Faculty find creative ways to teach important subjects, like using poetry, prose and plays to explore what it means to be human, or using Ted Lasso to teach leadership.
- Everyone I meet is friendly – they look you in the eye and say hello.
- There is a lot of traffic between our two campuses.
- We don't lack for wineries around here! (it's a good thing I like wine...)

It's been a whirlwind of learning new systems, meeting new people and getting the pets settled in a new home. But it's all made easier by the great people I get to work with. The one constant that I've heard from everyone I've talked to is that they love Linfield. Whether they're alumni, students, employees, parents or community members, people have a wonderful regard for this university.

We have some challenges in the year ahead, but I'm confident that we can overcome them. The first is growing our enrollment that has been declining for several years. Smaller high school graduating classes across the country have made it more competitive than ever to attract students. Affordability is an issue for many of those students, so our financial aid is extremely important if we're going to provide access to deserving students. Many of you have supported scholarships which are critical in this competitive environment – thank you!



**UNFOLDING LEADERSHIP:** Interim President Becky Johnson has spent her first months in office getting acquainted with Linfield and its people.

The second challenge is right-sizing our staffing, given the drop in enrollment over the years. Our budget office staff has done a good job of being transparent about our situation and developing a strategy to address it.

There are reasons for optimism. Our applications for next fall are up considerably from a year ago. Our faculty and staff have indicated a willingness to jump in and help us address the challenges. The board of trustees is very talented and takes an active leadership role. Our student leaders say that engagement on campus is finally increasing after the fallout from the pandemic. I can sense this growing vibrancy to our campuses similar to the blooming trees and flowers. With all of these factors in play, the future looks great for Linfield. I hope I get a chance to meet many of you over the next year.

[Learn more about President Johnson on page 15.](#)