

# STUDENTS

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dents that to be successful as an auto body repair technician — or with any job, really — they must continue to learn new skills and new technology.

"We are all going to have to keep learning. We are all going to have to keep going to school and we have to keep educating ourself. Yesterday's technology dictated the way we repair cars," Driscoll said.

"Today's technology dictates the way we repair cars today and obviously things are going to change tomorrow.

"As the vehicle construction changes, obviously, so is the repair process."

Due to material changes, par-

ticularly with the greater use of various plastics on cars, the repair process has become different from when cold-rolled steel was used on vehicle bodys.

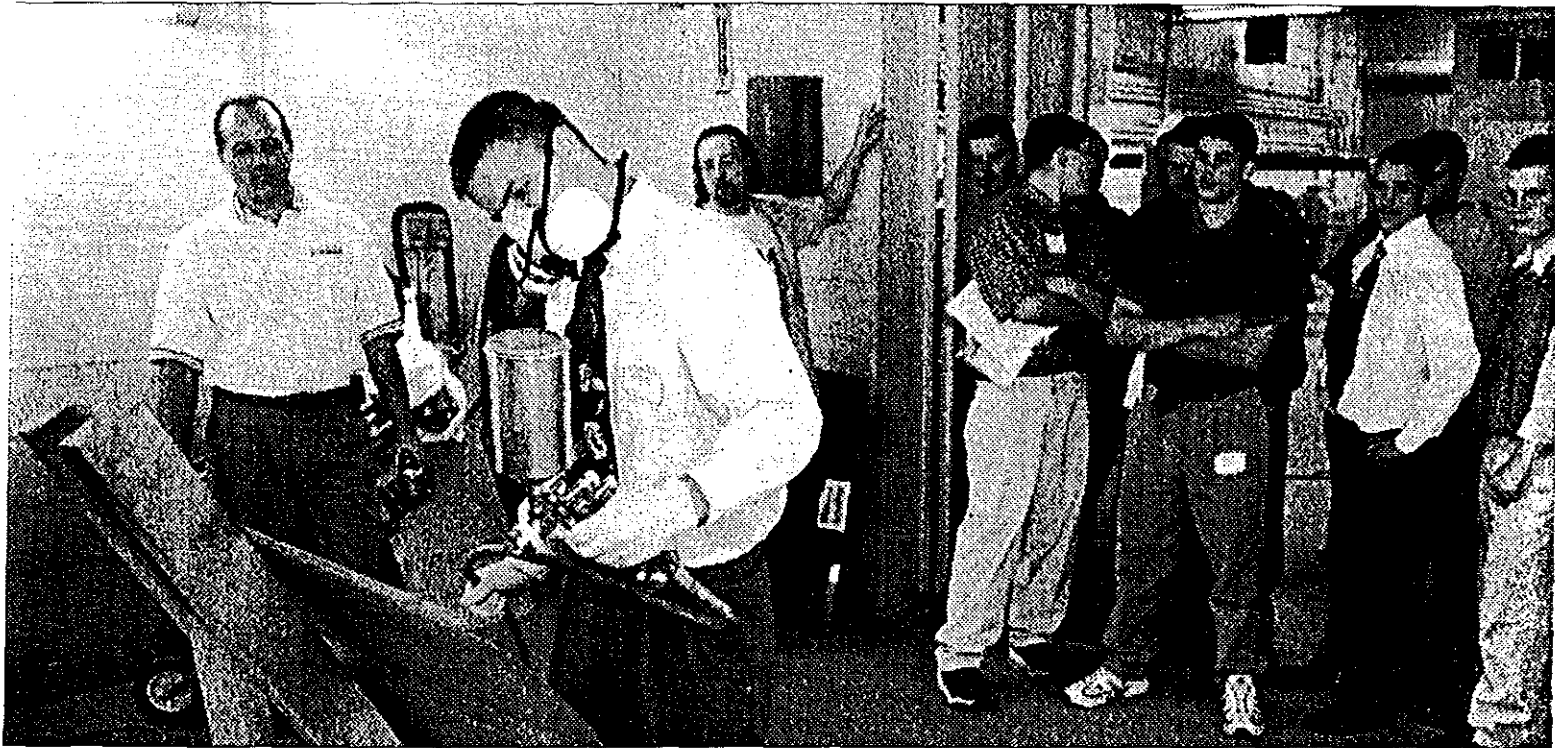
Construction of the vehicles has also changed as the years have progressed, Driscoll said, with today's cars being composed of a unibody construction that give the car "crush zones" and a lighter weight.

Repair technology will also change as the industry begins to build and sell more alternative fuel vehicles, which have design and material considerations of their own.

"Our job as auto body repair technicians is to always restore the car to the pre-accident condition," Driscoll said. "How that vehicle manufacturer designed that car, that's how we have to restore it."

# Oakland Tech News

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JOHN VESPER of Ypsilanti spray paints a body panel during an auto body repair seminar sponsored by Collex on the campus of Oakland Community College. —photo by Bruce A. Pollock

## College Prepares Technicians

By Elizabeth A. Carter  
Staff Writer

Accidents will happen. Despite the development of smart airbags, smart sensors and anything else that you can put the word smart in front of, automobile accidents are still happening by the score. And we still need someone to fix those dings and crunches in a car, right?

Unfortunately, there's a growing shortage of auto body repair technicians to fix life's little fender benders. To combat that shortage and to get young people at the high school level interested in auto body repair, Oakland Community College held its second annual Collex A.C.T.I.V.E. (Auto Body Career and Technical Innovative Vocational Education) Day May 15 at the campus'

Advanced Technology Center.

"This day came about a couple of years ago with a vision my boss, John Gagliano, had as president of Collex Collision. He envisioned us coming together as a way to recognize the auto body instructors in the area," said Paul Rybicki, human resource manager of Collex Collision, headquartered in Clinton Township. "Since that vision came about a couple years ago, we've broadened that vision and what we now have is a cooperative agreement.

"What we are trying to do is close the gap between education and the industry. By working together, putting on programs like this, our aim is to do just that."

Filled with lectures, inspirational speakers and technical sessions, the day provided top vocational students an opportunity

to see where their skills could lead them in the job market of the future.

In 1995, an auto body repair technician made an annual \$32,306, on average, with two years experience in the industry. By comparison, a carpenter with experience in the construction industry will make less than \$31,000 a year; an electronics technician, \$30,300 a year; and a medical lab technician, \$25,800.

"A technician with training earns, on average, \$34,000," Rybicki noted. "A technician who does not continue their education earns on an average of \$25,000, or

\$10,000 less, so education is extremely important in our business.

"Continuing to learn the new materials and the changes and the evolutions that are taking place in our industry are extremely im-

portant to keeping up with what's going on."

OCC offers a Vehicle Body Technology course that Rick Driscoll, an instructor at OCC for the

last 20 years, has had the charge of revising the curriculum.

Driscoll made the point to stu-

**“A technician with training earns, on average, \$34,000.**

**— PAUL RYBICKI**

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Mr. Manthei suggested that we also make contact with the dealers' association. He stated that we must first have a plan and then go and talk to people. We will need to make friends with them, visit them, meet their staff, and develop a relationship, so they can see how our service meets their needs. Then we can introduce the concept of partnership, how they can work with the College in ways that will be mutually beneficial. It takes several months to carry out this process. We must have a business plan and NATEF certification. It is much easier to sell a program that is running than one that isn't.

Mr. Manthei suggested that we will need a group of people who will commit early and serve as the leadership team in the fund-raising effort. They will be people who believe in the concept of the program and are willing to contribute even before it is all in place. Then they can be referenced when donations are solicited from others. It will be hard for the OCC staff to contact people to ask for donations. It should be industry people asking fellow industry people to join them in contributing. Advisory committee members have already done this, either through in-kind service or contributions, so this process is already in place.

Mr. Manthei requested that the advisory committee be kept informed of progress on taking the new curriculum to the curriculum committee. He also requested that they be notified if it would be helpful for advisory committee members to attend Campus and/or College Curriculum Committee meetings to show their interest and support. Mr. Driscoll and Mr. Clancy agreed to let the members know when a meeting with the campus committee has been scheduled.

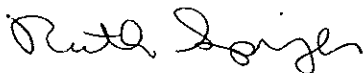
Mr. Rogers and Mr. Manthei offered to work together on fundraising.

In regard to statistics showing the need for the program, Mr. Rybicki suggested that we might want to use the statistics regarding the high school auto body students who attended the recent vocational education day held at OCC. When asked how many wanted information on OCC's program, 90 percent said they would like more information.

Mr. Driscoll showed the group an article that appeared in the *Oakland Tech News* regarding the recent Auto Body Career Day (see attachment).

The group agreed to meet again in October, 1998.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth Springer

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two half-time people to cover the same hours a full-time person would work. One full-time faculty and one paraprofessional are clearly necessary. The full-time clerical position should be dropped from the proposal, as it will raise a red flag for those reading it. Mr. Clancy commented that he wants each Technology Department program to identify their needs individually, as well as what is needed to support them as a group. It might be more feasible to ask for additional clerical help for ten programs than for one.

Mr. Driscoll asked the group to comment on the facilities costs he listed as part of the estimate. Mr. Manthei commented that the millage which was passed to help upgrade facilities should help pay for this. However, Mr. Clancy pointed out that this request is in competition with all the other requests within the College, and this program loses when viewed from the perspective of the classic College measurables because it does not award a large number of degrees. Our business plans will need to define appropriate success measures for these Technology Department programs.

Mr. Manthei believes there is money in the business community which could help supply some of these needs. If we develop a business plan that shows how OCC's program will help to grow the industry, Mr. Manthei believes the business community will listen and respond. He suggested that it might be good to show the need for the equipment items in two or three stages, as they will be required to correspond with the development and offering of the new courses.

Mr. Driscoll agreed that the program has already received lots of equipment through the help of industry. His proposal will show that some of the needed equipment can be supplied through consignment and donation from industry. He will show the equipment prioritized over a three-year phase-in period.

Mr. Irwin suggested that the rack can come in last. Some equipment items involve structural changes, so it might be better to get all those types of things installed at one time, rather than disrupting classes more than once to do construction. It would also be good to have the equipment in place to show to prospective students for marketing purposes.

Mr. Manthei suggested that the equipment be phased in during a two-year cycle, allowing two or three budget years to get it done. That will also allow time to get fund-raising support from industry. Mr. Clancy agreed that the proposal will have a more positive impact when phased in over a couple of budget years and tied to industry support. This strengthens our case in showing that there is a demand and the industry will help us in order to meet that demand.

Mr. Rybicki suggested that we should ask Mr. Liphardt to help get the message out to body shop owners, showing how the program will benefit them. Mr. Clancy asked whether we could do a campaign asking for help from a number of people in smaller amounts. He also suggested that we ask Ms. Cheryl Kozell and the College's Workforce Development and Resource Development staff to become involved.

There is a need for technical upgrades for new processes. Estimators and insurance adjusters also need training, as well as emergency medical technicians and other rescue people who need to know how to dismantle airbags after a collision. All of these areas could become part of the program.

Mr. Clancy mentioned that, for the plastics industry with which he is involved, they created a matrix that shows multiple opportunity career ladders from entry level up to such positions as plant manager and chief engineer. Something like that might be helpful to show the type of career opportunities that are available in this field. Mr. Rogers responded that a lot of that type of information is included in the ICAR video referred to earlier.

Mr. Irwin mentioned that, in this area, there are a number of experimental shops which need people with a variety of skills, such as welding, mechanical, and auto body skills. Knowledgeable sales people and insurance people are also needed.

Mr. Rogers raised a question about the future plans for the use of the space where the Auto Body Lab is currently located. If it is not used for Auto Body in the future, what is the alternative plan? Mr. Clancy responded that there is no alternative plan. There is no plot in the works to subvert the work being done here to improve the Auto Body Program. The problem has been benign neglect, not a conscious attempt to eliminate the program. The Campus President is very aware that all the technical programs have been allowed to slide, and this is unacceptable to her. That is why a full-time Dean of Technology is being hired to focus on these areas.

Mr. Rogers stated that Mr. Driscoll has showed him the paperwork which must be done to take the new curriculum through OCC's curriculum process. There is also a need for a business plan. The College says they want this program to succeed, but it all falls on Mr. Driscoll's shoulders. Why not get someone to help him?

Mr. Clancy responded that he will help Mr. Driscoll with the business plan. One of the things he is supposed to do during his short time at the College is to help each area in the Technology Department get started on creating a strategic business plan. He is trying to get things started and help as much as he can, so when the new dean comes in, things will at least be in motion.

Mr. Driscoll explained the various steps of OCC's curriculum development process. He would like to have the new program in place by the time the old one is closed. However, it could take a little longer than that.

### **Further Discussion of Estimate of Annual Costs and Revenues**

Mr. Clancy stated that the idea of a full-time clerical person will never be approved. He questioned the need for a full-time tool crib attendant, saying that it might be better to request

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people are being hired in southeast Michigan in these areas, in order to substantiate the demand for the program. This information must be included in the proposal provided to the curriculum committee.

Mr. Rybicki responded that they had obtained some of that type of information from an ICAR study. He will look up and provide those numbers for body technicians. There are additional employment areas that should be considered, such as management, support, and estimators. There is an ICAR video which talks about the different segments of the market an auto body program could feed. Perhaps more information could be taken from that video.

Mr. Manthei suggested that the Oakland County Economic Development office might have that kind of information.

Mr. Rybicki reported that in the past month and a half, he has run ads for body technicians and received only one response. Mr. Irwin mentioned that he has 14 students who will be completing his high school program this year. Two are going on to Ferris, and possibly two will be coming to OCC. Mr. Irwin has received enough calls in the past two weeks that he could have gotten them all jobs. He believes he could place 50 kids in a single day just through people he knows in the field.

Mr. Clancy agreed that this is true of any technical program anywhere in the state. Parents and high school counselors have the perception that technical jobs and jobs in manufacturing are dirty, dead-end jobs with no future. Everyone wants their children to go to college.

Mr. Rybicki mentioned a report he heard on the radio today about a study that has just been done which shows that 60 percent of all the jobs paying over \$30,000 a year do not require a college degree.

Mr. Clancy pointed out that many students in the CAD Program are able to get good-paying jobs even before they graduate. The College invests a great deal in that program because college statistics show there are hundreds of people going through the program. They cannot find enough lab space and time to satisfy the demand. The Vehicle Body Program has very few students.

Mr. Morrow suggested that Mr. Dennis Liphardt, President of the Automotive Service Association of Michigan, should have statistics that would help show the demand for this instruction. Mr. Clancy agreed that a letter from Mr. Liphardt saying that a certain amount of people per year could be placed in a particular list of professions would help. Mr. Clancy and Mr. Driscoll will talk more tomorrow about how to get the necessary statistics.

Mr. Manthei pointed out that there is a need for in-service training of new hires as well as long-term employees. People already working in the field need classes to move forward in their career.

could also be held for companies. Mr. Rogers suggested that perhaps afternoon sessions could be offered to companies looking for a place to offer training to their employees.

Questions were raised about the amount of mark-up charged to customers for parts and paint. It was pointed out that any work done at OCC will hurt the outside business environment. A car that is repaired here is a car that is not taken to a professional body shop to have the work done. We need to charge enough so we are not a detriment to other body shop businesses. The group asked how much money Ferris generates through their program. Mr. Rogers responded that we can check with them again to find out.

Mr. Manthei commented that if we get into customer service as a part of our teaching program and recoup the direct cost, that is good. But if we are looking to customer service to help offset the cost of the program, that is not a good idea. Teaching and customer service are not always compatible. You don't want to be so busy serving customers that there is no time to teach. It would be better to maximize the revenue flow from contracting with others who can use the facility when students are not using it.

Mr. Irwin commented that holding ICAR classes here will not generate money for OCC.

Mr. Manthei suggested that there is a need to provide a structure apart from the teaching classes for people who want to work on their cars as a hobby. Perhaps it could be a non-credit class in which you demonstrate how to use the equipment and allow people to bring their cars in and work on them. They would pay accordingly for the direct and indirect costs.

Mr. Clancy reported that there is now a check in the enrollment system which stops students from registering for the same class more than three times. The computer will kick the request out, so students are required to talk to a counselor about why they want to take the same course four or more times.

Mr. Paul Rybicki commented that you do not want to turn the program into a collision shop. You need to figure out how many customers you would need to have in order to train students.

Mr. Rogers asked whether OCC might be able to contact Collex when a particular type of repair needs to be taught. Collex could send over a car they have been given to repair, along with the necessary parts, and the work could be done as a part of OCC's class work. Mr. Rybicki responded that this could be looked at, in particular in regard to insurance stipulations.

### **Demand for Auto Body Training**

Mr. Clancy reminded the group that, at the last meeting, there was discussion about the demand for workers in various auto body related fields. We need to get specific numbers as to how many

Mr. Clancy commented that he has seen the flow chart which shows the curriculum revision process. It is very lengthy and difficult.

Mr. Morrow and Mr. Manthei asked whether it would be appropriate for advisory committee members to attend the curriculum committee meeting and give testimony in favor of the proposed new curriculum. Mr. Clancy responded that we may not have a problem getting curriculum committee approval. The Chancellor and the Campus President are supportive of the new curriculum. The problem appears to be with the structure, the ponderous process we must go through to gain approval.

### **Estimate of Annual Costs and Revenues**

Mr. Driscoll gave the group copies of a proposed Estimate of Annual Costs and Revenues for the Collision Auto Repair Technology (CAR) Program. He requested their help in preparing this estimate which must be presented to the curriculum committee.

Mr. Manthei pointed out that, in the past, this program was thousands of dollars in the red because it was run as a hobby shop with high numbers of students who took the same classes over and over in order to work on their cars. There were also significant numbers of OCC staff who took classes without paying tuition. Now the program is being turned into an instructional program for serious students. Mr. Manthei believes that a legitimate program will generate the necessary revenue.

Mr. Driscoll explained that he included in the estimate the following staffing: faculty, paraprofessional, tool crib clerk, and office support and part ordering person. He referred to the program at Ferris State University, which generates revenue for the program by working on customer cars. They charge the customer for supplies used. It would be difficult for the paraprofessional to do the ordering of parts and other office work because the parapro needs to be on the floor with the students.

Mr. Clancy pointed out that, according to this estimate, the up-front capital expenditures and annual cost of running the program are a great deal higher than the expected revenues. Mr. Driscoll asked for suggestions as to how the estimate could be adjusted.

It was suggested that the expected revenues could be increased by offering more classes. It would be possible to offer both morning and evening classes five days a week. Perhaps some afternoon classes could be offered as well.

Mr. Manthei suggested that perhaps high school students could take some classes at the Oakland Technical Centers and some classes at OCC. He believes the need of industry is such that classes could be run throughout the day as suggested. Perhaps credit and/or non-credit short courses



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one-year contract to get the job done, rather than expecting him to do it on a part-time basis with no assurance of what the future may hold for him or the program. Mr. Irwin agrees with Mr. Morrow that we must move quickly on this. He asked what he might be able to do to help the process along.

Mr. James Rogers complimented Mr. Driscoll on his excellent attitude. He stated that Mr. Driscoll can be out trying to do three things at the same time and still come in smiling. He has a smile and warmth with the students all the time. Mr. Driscoll is working hard to create a new curriculum even though he does not know if he will have a job in the future.

Mr. Irwin expressed the view that the College does not have a lot of vested interest in the Auto Body Program. A lot more money is spent on other programs than is spent on this one. Mr. Irwin currently has three of his high school students who are planning to continue their studies at OCC. He keeps telling them that things are improving here. If he encourages them to come to OCC, he wants to be sure they will be able to complete a two-year program here.

Mr. Clancy stated that, in the short time he has been in his current interim position, he has observed that the College measures of success do not fit the technology programs. Statistics are published showing the number of degrees and certificates awarded in each program area. But no statistics are capturing those taking short courses or people who only need to take two classes to reach their on-the-job goals and do not need a degree or certificate. Many of the customers we are serving are invisible to the ways the College measures success. Mr. Clancy has initiated a strategic process in which each program will try to identify: Where are we? What are our success measures? How can we create a strategic business plan for our program? Right now the Technology Department appears to be made up of a group of individuals who are not working together to achieve collective goals. For several years, no dean has been in charge of just the Technology Department programs. This has resulted in some programs fading away. The Auto Body area is actually in the best shape of the five programs which are being closed because it has someone who cares and is working to improve it.

Mr. Driscoll explained that the new curriculum must first go to the Campus Curriculum Committee, which is made up of a cross section of faculty. They have the authority to say, "Go," "Stop," or "We need more information." Then the curriculum will be submitted to the Technology Department for balloting. Then it goes on to the College Curriculum Committee, then to Chancellor's Council.

Mr. Dan Manthei commented that about two years ago, he and Mr. Morrow had lunch with the Chancellor, who was at the time serving as Acting President of the Auburn Hills Campus. At that meeting, Mr. Thompson expressed himself as being totally committed to this program and to national skill standards for the Auto Body and Automobile Servicing areas. Since then, Mr. Manthei has had occasion to talk with Chancellor Thompson about this and other issues. The Chancellor assures him that he is still committed to this program.

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the efforts being undertaken by Mr. Rick Driscoll and advisory committee members to create a new, more effective Auto Body Program.

Mr. Driscoll mentioned that the advisory committee had been hoping for a commitment that the old program would not be eliminated until the new one was in place. It is clear that that is not going to happen, so we are moving forward. Mr. Driscoll is following the curriculum development procedures to bring about the creation of the new Auto Body Program.

Mr. Clancy pointed out that, in the short term, this does not affect class offerings.

Mr. Driscoll reported that the letter which was sent to Vehicle Body students stated that after Summer 1999, the degree program would no longer be offered. He is now looking ahead to try to get the proposed new program before the Auburn Hills Campus Curriculum Committee in June. This would be a first presentation to the committee to verify that the proposed curriculum is in the proper format. Mr. Driscoll distributed copies of the OCC curriculum development forms. He explained that he is currently preparing the New Program Initial Assessment Form. At this point, the committee will not be looking for detailed course outlines. They will need information about the need for the program, general student learning objectives, and the cost of the program and expected revenues based on projected enrollment.

Mr. Mac Morrow asked how long this process will take. He stated that the Vehicle Body Program has been in a bad situation for many years and asked whether the College is finally going to move ahead and implement this improved program.

Mr. Clancy responded that he does not know enough about the College to say how long it will take. At the meeting with the Chancellor, the Chancellor basically said, "Let's get going on this." The Chancellor wanted the new process for closing programs in place in 30 days and the programs tested through it in 60 or 90 days. Mr. Clancy does not know how often committees meet, but stated that if there is not someone who will shepherd the new curriculum through the process, it will take forever. A new dean is being hired to focus full-time on the Technology Department. That person should be on board by August.

Mr. Scott Irwin asked whether the five programs which are being closed have a full-time faculty who is responsible for them. Mr. Clancy responded that one does, but the others do not. The Vehicle Body Program has Mr. Driscoll, whose job title is Automotive Body Specialist, but he is wearing two hats and doing many of the things faculty members normally do for their programs.

Mr. Irwin pointed out that OCC is expecting Mr. Driscoll to do on a part-time basis a job that really calls for a full-time person. OCC's program must be NATEF certified in order to articulate with high school programs that are NATEF certified. Mr. Irwin applauded Mr. Driscoll for doing all he has done, especially since there is no assurance that, after he has done all this work, the College will actually follow through with it. He suggested that Mr. Driscoll should be given a



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## VEHICLE BODY TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 4, 1998

Present: Michael L. Clancy, Educational Technology Consultant, OCC  
Rick Driscoll, Automotive Body Specialist, OCC  
Scott E. Irwin, Oakland Technical Center - Northwest Campus  
Daniel R. Manthei, Oakland Technical Center - Northwest Campus  
Ron Meyer, Automotive Service Association of Michigan  
Mac Morrow, Retired Former Owner, Morrow Collision, Inc.  
James Rogers, I-CAR  
Paul Rybicki, Collex  
Ruth Springer, Secretary, OCC

### **Welcome and Appreciation**

Mr. Michael Clancy welcomed the group and thanked them for their two years of service on the advisory committee. He presented each member with a certificate of appreciation and a small gift.

### **Status of Vehicle Body Technology Program**

Mr. Clancy reported on the meeting held with Chancellor Richard Thompson to discuss the closing of five Technology Department programs, including the Vehicle Body Program. The Chancellor began the meeting by stating that the five programs are being closed. They have gone through all the procedures that must be followed to close a program, and the decision has been made to close them. The faculty expressed their concern about the procedure that was followed in coming to this decision. The Chancellor responded that the official procedure was followed. This is a procedure which has been in place for many years. More recently, a revised procedure was developed which would get more people involved and strengthen the process. It was agreed upon and went through committees, but the final steps were never taken to make it a part of official College policy. Thus, the old policy was followed, since it was the one still officially in place. The Chancellor asked the group to take the revised procedure through the final step to make it official. It was agreed that the Vehicle Body and a couple other programs would be taken through the revised process as a test of its effectiveness. Although the decision has been made to close the old Vehicle Body Program, the Chancellor made it clear that he is committed to support