

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

**Oakland Community College
Bloomfield Hills, MI**

March 17-19, 2008

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM:

Dr. Barbara A. Bollmann, Dean of Instruction, Front Range Community College, Front Range Community College 2121 Miller Drive, Longmont, CO 80501

Dr. Marcia D. Clarke-Yapi, Associate Dean, Division of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Milwaukee Area Technical College, North Campus, 5555 West Highland Road, Meqnon, WI 53012

Dr. Mark S. Davis, Vice President for Business and Finance, Oklahoma City Community College, 7777 South May Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK

Dr. Daniel T. DeMarte, Vice President for Learning, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, 2740 West Mason Street, P.O. Box 19042, Green Bay, WI 54307-9042

Dr. Velvie Green, President, Maricopa Community Colleges-Glendale Community College, 6000 West Olive Avenue, Glendale, AZ 85302

Dr. Thomas Hamel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Oakton Community College, 1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016

Dr. Vernon T. Harlan, Professor/Coordinator-Criminal Justice, Saint Louis Community College, St. Louis Community College 5600 Oakland Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110

Dr. Diane M. Ostojic, Vice President of Academic Services, South Suburban College of Cook County, 15800 South State Street, South Holland, IL 60473

Dr. Benjamin F. Young, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, 50 West Fall Creek Parkway North Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46208-7918
(Chairperson)

**Oakland Community College
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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF THE VISIT

A. Purpose of the Visit

The team from The Higher Learning Commission conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Oakland Community College for continued accreditation at the associate degree level.

B. Organizational Context

Oakland Community College established in 1964, operates with a seven member Board of Trustees elected at-large by residents of Oakland County. It began classes in September 1965 and set a national record for a community college's opening semester enrollment of 3,860 students. Today, the college with its five campuses ranks first in enrollment among the state of Michigan's 28 community college districts. The college offers degrees and certificates in more than 130 career fields and is recognized as the largest provider of workforce training programs in the state.

Oakland Community College is located in one of the richest counties in America. The resource base is more than adequate to address staffing and facility needs. The college has carefully and effectively used its millage in the face of declining state appropriations for higher education. The result has been reasonable, affordable tuition rates for county residents.

With respect to the college's management structure, the chancellor serves as the institution's chief operating officer and is the only college official reporting directly to the Board of Trustees. The college operates under a philosophy of shared governance with significant interaction with the faculty leadership. The college currently has six collective bargaining agreements in force, including faculty and junior level management staff. Of significance was the recent appointment of the college's eighth chancellor on January 22, 2008, less than two months before the comprehensive visit.

C. Unique Aspects of the Visit

The team chair conducted a two-day pre-visit to the college October 31-November 2, 2007. The purpose of the pre-visit was to meet college officials, to tour the facilities, and to discuss logistical plans for the visit in March 2008. Due to the team's desire to have ample time to visit each site to visit with the appropriate parties, an ambitious scheduling matrix was

developed. The nine-member evaluation team was divided into sub-teams of three with each sub-team visiting at least three of the five campuses. The entire team was present for the customary meetings: Board of Trustees; opening meeting with college officials and HLC Steering Committee; meeting with community leaders and governmental officials; and exit conference. Given the huge demands on team members' time to meet with college officials and students and to travel to and from sites, less time than normal was spent in the Resource Room. This issue was addressed with the creation of a Virtual Resource Room for the team members; in addition, the team received several discs and a flash drive containing pertinent materials.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

The team visited the following sites: Auburn Hills Campus, Highland Lakes Campus, Orchard Ridge Campus, Royal Oaks Campus, Southfield Campus, George A. Bee Administrative Center, and Professional Development and Training Center in Pontiac. The Rochester Hills Center, which provides leased space for the Information Technology Department, was not visited. Rather, the college's Chief Information Officer was interviewed at the George A. Bee Administrative Center and responded to inquiries regarding off-site data storage specifications.

E. Distance Education Reviewed

The team reviewed programs offered through distance education at the college. The college is a member of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative. The Collaborative offers programs of study at the associate degree level for each of its 22 participating members, via distance learning technologies, for which Oakland Community College is a member. In addition, the team (using usernames and passwords provided by the college) accessed and reviewed student learning objectives, support opportunities, and course methodologies for five Oakland Community College courses offered via Blackboard (BIO 1600 and PSY 2510) and Educator (ENG 2200, BUS 1100, and CIS 1500). Data from an Online Course Demand Survey, administered to the college's Instant Feedback Student Panel, revealed that almost 80 percent of the respondents had never taken an online course at the college. The primary reason given for not taking a course was that the course most needed was not offered. However, over 65 percent indicated they were not averse to taking an online course.

F. Interaction with Institutional Constituencies

Executive Management

- Chancellor
- Acting Chief Strategic Development Officer
- Chief Human Resources Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Dean of Enrollment Services
- Executive Director of Marketing
- Interim Executive Director of Student Services and Executive Director of OCC Foundation
- Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Services
- Oakland Community College Board of Trustees (5)
- President, Auburn Hills Campus
- President, Highland Lakes Campus
- President, Orchard Ridge Campus
- President, Royal Oak/Southfield Campus
- Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services

Faculty

- Academic Support Center Faculty
- Dean, Economic and Workforce Development (college-wide)
- Dean of Nursing (Highland Lakes)
- Dean of Technology (Auburn Hills)
- College Academic Senate Chair
- College Counselors
- Deans, Academic and Student Services (college-wide)
- Faculty, English as Second Language
- Faculty, Auburn Hills
- Faculty, Highland Lakes
- Faculty, Orchard Ridge
- Faculty, Royal Oak
- Faculty, Southfield
- Librarians
- Dean, Libraries

Management and Staff

- Academic Support Center staff
- Administration, Auburn Hills
- Administration, Highland Lakes Campus (4)
- Administration, Royal Oak (5)
- Administrative Specialist – Nursing and Health
- Administrative Specialists – Academic Dean’s office (2)
- Bookstore Manager and Assistant

- Business Manager (Auburn Hills)
- Business Office Specialist
- Business Office Staff member
- Campus Facilities Manager (Auburn Hills)
- Children's Center Coordinators
- College Athletic Director
- Co-op Education & Internships Program Manager
- Coordinator of Student Development (4)
- Director of Academic Technology, IT
- Director of Emergency Services Training (Auburn Hills)
- Director of Employee Relations
- Director of Personnel Services
- Director of Student Services (Auburn Hills)
- Director of Student Services (Highland Lakes)
- Director of Student Services (Royal Oak/Southfield)
- Director, Office of Assessment and Effectiveness (college-wide)
- Director, Office of Institutional Research (college-wide)
- Director, Professional Development and Training Center
- DMS Clerical Coordinator
- Facilities Managers
- Financial Aid Specialists
- Instructional Technologist
- International Student Adviser
- IT Desktop Support Specialists
- Learning Resources Technician
- Library Tech
- Maintenance Employee
- Media Services employee
- Paraprofessionals – Natural Science and Photo Department
- P.A.S.S. Coordinators
- Public Safety employees
- College Registrar
- Research Analyst, Office of Institutional Research
- Coordinator of Performing Arts
- Secretaries – Academic Support, facilities, faculty
- Shipping and Receiving Maintenance
- Recruiters (3)
- Director of Financial Resources/Student Assistance
- Temporary Dean, Academic and Student Services (Auburn Hills)
- Womencenter Coordinator

Students

- Auburn Hills (approximately 20)

- Highland Lakes (approximately 30)
- Royal Oak (approximately 20)
- Southfield (approximately 15)
- Orchard Ridge (approximately 30)

Committees/Task Forces

- Academic Master Planning Committee
- College Planning Council
- Curriculum Review Committee (3 members present)
- Dean's Cabinet
- HLC Steering Committee
- Senate Leadership
- Student Outcomes Assessment Committee
- Vacancy Committee (10 members present)

Others

- Alumni and Union Representatives (39 present)
- Community members (24 present)

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

- 1998 HLC Site Team Report
- 2002 HLC Focused Visit Report for the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative
- 2003 HLC Focused Visit Report on administrative stability, institutional planning, and assessment of student academic achievement
- Academic and Admissions Information Pamphlets
- Academic Master Plan in Action, Auburn Hills
- Academic Master Plan, Auburn Hills 2006-2011: Preparing Our Community for Success through the Innovative Integration of Science, Liberal Arts and Technology
- Academic Support Center Packet, Distributed March 2008
- Adjunct Handbook
- Advisory Committee Guidelines
- OCC Annual Report 2006
- Application for Admission

- Academic Support Center materials from Orchard Ridge campus
- Audited financial statements ending June 30, 2006 and June 30, 2007
- Board Digest – March 17, 2008
- Board minutes
- Board Policies
- Newspaper Article, Oakland Press, October 30, 2007, “OCC Trustees to elect new chancellor from pool of 4”
- Collective Bargaining Agreements (Full-time Faculty, Classified, Public Safety, Teamsters – Administration/Management)
- College Planning Council Environmental Scanning Document: Summary of Relevant Comments at the 2006 Detroit Regional Chamber Policy Conference
- College Planning Council, July 20, 2007 Notes from CPC Retreat
- Coordinator Summary Course Catalog Description Analysis Form
- CRC minutes
- CREST Class Schedule September-December 2007
- Curriculum Program Review Recommendations
- Curriculum/Instruction Committee minutes
- Demographic Comparison between OCC Students, OCC Faculty, and Oakland County
- Developmental Education Plan, September 2007
- Developmental Education Proposal
- Discipline/Program Review Coordinator’s Curriculum Summary Report Form
- Diversity Calendar April 1-30, 2008
- Draft: Highland Lakes Campus Academic Master Plan, 2008-2012
- DVD Highlighting Accomplishments
- Executive Summary of Institution Self-Study (2005)

- Faculty Curriculum Review Self Study Process
- Faculty Search Process Handbook
- Faculty Summary Course Catalog Description Form
- Faculty Summary Syllabi Analysis Form
- Faculty Summary Syllabi Components Form
- Gantt General Education Outcomes
- General Education Course Attribute Proposal Sheet
- Highland Lakes Campus – OCC Organizational chart
- Highland Lakes Campus – Academic Master Plan (2008-2012)
- HLC letter July 20, 2005 regarding acceptance of report through Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative on assessment of the Collaborative effectiveness and the assessment of student learning.
- HLC letter June 13, 2005 regarding acceptance of report on assessment of all programs.
- HLC letter June 27, 2002 regarding status change with distance delivery of Associate degree programs through the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative.
- HLC Progress Report, 2005
- HLC Staff Analysis of Institutional Report of Progress Report on Associate in all Programs (2005)
- HLC Staff Analysis of Institutional Report on Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative regarding Implementation of Strategic Plan (2003)
- HLC Staff Analysis of Institutional Report on Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative regarding Effectiveness and Assessment of Student Learning (2005)
- HLC Team Report of a Focused Visit March 2003
- Individual Faculty General Education Form
- Individual Faculty Instructional Methodology Inventory Form

- Institutional Research Report, Oakland Community College, March 2007
- Library Assessment Improvement Chart – Benchmark ID 1311
- Library Assessment Improvement Chart – Benchmark ID 1312
- Library Project Planning Checklist (2006)
- Mental Health/Social Work
- National Research Council Canada – “Success Story: EBSCO, CISTI and Open URL Linking – a winning combination for Oakland Community College”
- NCA Team Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation April 1998
- Needs Assessment Process binder
- New Faculty Orientation Binder
- Oakland Community College – Executive Summary of Institutional Self Study 2008
- Oakland Community College 2007 Institutional Dashboard Report
- Oakland Community College 2007-2008 Catalog
- Oakland Community College 2008-2012 Strategic Planning Community Forum, January 30, 2008
- Oakland Community College Catalog
- Oakland Community College College Planning Council: 2008-2013 Trends
- Oakland Community College Core Commitments
- Oakland Community College Degree Programs
- Oakland Community College Employee Training – chart with mandatory, highly recommended, and elective workshops
- Oakland Community College Environmental Scan Highlights for Oakland County: Final Report
- Oakland Community College Executive Summary of Institutional Self-Study, The Higher Learning Commission 2008

- Oakland Community College Financial Aid Profile
- Oakland Community College Human Resources Department Full-Time Staffing Analysis, 1995-2007
- Oakland Community College Institutional Dashboard Report
- Oakland Community College Institutional Research Report March 2007
- Oakland Community College Institutional Self-Study, The Higher Learning Commission 2008
- Oakland Community College Instructions for Accessing Documents in the Resource Room
- Oakland Community College Library Strategic Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08
- Oakland Community College New Student Process
- Oakland Community College Ridgewood Café Higher Learning Commission Luncheon Menu, March 18, 2008
- Oakland Community College Self Study, 2008
- Oakland Community College Strategic Plan, 2002-2007
- Oakland Community College Strategic Planning eNewsletter, Volume 4, Issue 1 December 2007
- Oakland Community College Strategic Planning Forum, 2008-2012
- Oakland Community College Strategic Planning Process in the Larger Context, January 19, 2007 College Planning Council Meeting
- Oakland Community College Video/DVD for the Higher Learning Commission
- Oakland Community College, 2006 Institutional Dashboard Report, November 2006
- Oakland Community College, Summer 2008 Schedule of Classes
- OCC 2007-2008 Catalog
- OCC Annual Report 2007
- OCC Organizational Profile

- OCC Statement of Affiliation Status
- Organizational Profile
- PACE (Personal Assessment of the College Environment) Survey, 2006
- PDTC Annual Reports: 1999-2006
- Performing Arts Calendar of Events, September 2007-August 2008
- Personal Assessment of the College Environment: A Report for Oakland Community College, October 2006
- Planning Process to Date, Bottom Up Top Down, 2008-2012
- Political Science
- Population, Oakland Community College Office of Institutional Research, 3/14/2008
- Professional Development & Training Center (PDTC) Annual Report July 1, 2004-June 30, 2005
- Program Assessment Plans OCC Intranet “P” Drive
- Program Dashboards
- Program for Academic Support Services (PASS)
- Program Review binders
- *Putting Students First*, Oakland Community College 2004 Annual Report
- Relationship of BOT Vision to 2008-2012 Strategic Goals
- Report supporting the review of Mathematics
- SAGE (Student Assessment of General Education) Attribute #2 Critical Thinking as assessed by CAAP critical thinking
- SAGE (Student Assessment of General Education) Attribute #7 Scientific Literacy by C-BASE Science
- SOAC meeting minutes from January 17, 2008; November 15, 2007,; October 18, 2007; September 20, 2007; May 17, 2007, June 21, 2007; April 19, 2007, March 15, 2007, February 15, 2007, and January 18, 2007

- Statement of Affiliation Status – last action 7/20/2005
- Strategic Plan Goals
- Strategic Plan Organization Grid Organized by Year, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007
- Strategic Plan Status Implementation Grid
- Strategic Plan Status Implementation Grid by Goal
- Strategic Plan: Putting Students First, 2002-2007
- Strategic Planning Goals Update, 2002-2007
- Strategic Planning Goals, 2008-2012 in OCCurrences Newsletter, January/February 2008
- Student Outcomes Assessment – Credit Programs
- Student Outcomes Assessment Committee, Status of Program Assessment 3/18/2008
- Student Success Seminars, Southfield Campus, Winter 2008 Schedule
- Task Force Planning Recommendations, 2002-2007
- The Economic Contribution of Oakland Community College, CCBenefits, 2005.
- Vacancy Committee minutes
- Various pamphlets/flyers; What is Service Learning?; F-1 International Student Information and Guide; Academic Support Center; Student Life Activity Guide Fall 2007; Student Organization Packet Royal Oak/Southfield Campus 2007-2008; Programs for Academic Support Service (PASS); Transcript Request; Priority Registration Information Winter 2008; Student Success Seminars for Evening Students 2008 Winter; COMPASS Placement Schedule 2008 Winter and Summer; Financial Aid Profile; New Student Orientation OCC Libraries Information;
- Video for the Higher Learning Commission
- Walk-in Tutor Schedule, Academic Support Center, Royal Oak
- Winter 2008 Schedule of Classes
- Yearbooks of Oakland Community College News Articles

- **Electronic Sources**
 - Blackboard: <http://online2.oaklandcc.edu/>
 - College's Intranet: <http://infomart>
 - Educator: <http://occ.ucompass.com/>
 - Highland Lakes Campus Academic Master Plan 2008-2012
 - Instant Feedback (IFS) Panel Newsletter September 2007
 - Oakland Community College Infomart
 - Oakland Community College Reg-O-Meter for 2008/SU, OCC Intranet
 - Oakland Community College Strategic Plan, 2002-2007
 - Oakland Community College Video/DVD for the Higher Learning Commission
 - Oakland Community College, <http://www.oaklandcc.edu/>
 - Quintet 2007 Volume 8, Issue IV (a newsletter for the college)
 - Terminal Services Instructions
 - Various Editions of OCCurrences (a publication for college employees)
 - Virtual Resource Room: HLC Resource Room Folder on the College's Network (P Drive)

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The Self-Study process at Oakland Community College included a great many of the college community, both internal and external. It was extremely participative and collaborative. The process began in 2005 with a straightforward communiqué from the college chancellor stating the college's intent to seek re-accreditation, the involvement of the Board of Trustees, and the opportunity for all parties to shape the document. The Self-Study's goals and committee structure were communicated openly to key stakeholders. The team applauds the college for adopting the well organized and widely accepted steering committee format to address major issues. The Self-Study's timeline was appropriate for gathering and analyzing data and for formulating judgments about the college's adherence to stated Commission criteria and expectations of its member institutions.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The team concludes that the Self-Study report provides an accurate description of the college and a thorough analysis of the pertinent issues related to the criteria for accreditation. The Self-Study report produced by

the college accomplished a key purpose – helped the college identify strengths and challenges. The team examined evidence that the college has already taken affirmative action to address some of its challenges – such as trying to close the gap with its assessment of student learning processes and enhancing student development support structures and activities. Noteworthy in the Self-Study report was the frequent reporting of tensions surfacing from Board of Trustees actions or inactions; this candor lent credibility to the report. The team was extremely pleased with the quality of the Self-Study report as well as the presentation of all of the resource materials delivered via electronic means and in hard copy format.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

Based on the review of the Self-Study documents and interviews with college representatives, the team offers the following responses as to whether or not the college adequately addressed the three challenges from the 1998 comprehensive visit that resulted in a 2003 focused visit.

Administrative Stability

The 1998 team expressed concern about the college’s administrative stability by specifically pointing to three different chancellors in a ten-year period; it also mentioned a high number of defunded or interim appointments. Both factors in the judgment of the 1998 team led to administrative instability at the campus and district office levels. The College has made three changes in administrative leadership since the last comprehensive visit in addition to the use of two interim Chancellors. At the current time, two major college-wide administrative positions are filled with interim appointments: Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Services and Executive Director of Student Services. The only constant has been board leadership. The team concluded that the college has not satisfactorily addressed this previous challenge but there is minimum evidence that the college does intend to focus on this as a priority in the near future.

Institutional Planning

The 1998 team mentioned the college’s failure to develop, implement, and sustain a planning process and to produce a comprehensive planning document. Based on the evidence provided to the 2008 team, it concluded the college has satisfactorily addressed this previous challenge.

Student Academic Assessment

The 1998 team stated that the college had not demonstrated satisfactory progress on student outcomes assessment. Please bear in mind Commission member institutions were required to file their plans with the commission by 1995. The 1998 team stressed that the college's plan submitted to the Commission must be implemented. The 2003 focus team concluded that some progress had been made but more was warranted. This led to a recommendation for a progress report in 2005 on how the college intended to use the data for program improvement and/or student learning. The progress report, submitted to Commission staff in March 2005, was provisionally accepted with a requirement that the college in the 2008 comprehensive visit demonstrate how its improved pedagogy and curriculum had led to increased student learning and understanding. Based on a thorough review of college materials, and several interviews with top level college officials, the team concluded that the college has not satisfactorily addressed this previous challenge. The college continues to make progress under new leadership; this will be addressed later in the team report.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Requirements were fulfilled. The team only received one third-party comment. It was a complimentary note from a retired executive in the government affairs office at Chrysler who provided background information affirming the college as the premier grant manager in the state of Michigan.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team required Title IV, student complaint, professional accreditation, and other consumer information; the college was in compliance.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

A. CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criteria and Core Components

1. Evidence that demonstrates that Core Components are met.

- a. Oakland Community College (OCC) publishes its mission and vision statements, core values and institutional priorities in print in several documents, including the College catalog, hallways, and online on the College website. These statements are appropriate to an institution of higher education, and reviewed annually by the administration and the Board of Trustees. The mission documents are clearly written and articulate publicly the College's commitments to students and the educational process. The College provided an analysis of the meaning of important components of the mission (Self-Study Report, p. 61) that classifies OCC as a student-centered institution which provides high quality learning opportunities and services for individuals, communities, and organizations on an accessible, affordable basis.
- b. The College provided evidence to the team that it has made strong efforts to communicate and reinforce the meaning of its mission to its internal and external stakeholders. Evidence includes the requirement that department and unit mission statements reflect the College mission statement. To reinforce the value of the mission statement, the performance evaluation instrument includes a section that evaluates the employees' adherence to the core values of the institution.
- c. The College has made a strong effort to ensure that all employee groups understand and support its mission. Such efforts include spending the month of February 2008 in campus-wide discussions of the mission. Such conversations were initiated by a self-study criterion committee that developed a list of suggested questions. Besides the effort expended for that activity, the mission statement is posted prominently throughout the campus and in student publications. It was clear from reviewing documents and interviewing staff during the team visit that OCC's priorities and objectives are derived from its mission. The College has taken another step to raise the level of awareness about the mission by creating a five-year master plan model to drive the institutional initiatives and action plan process.

- d. It is evident that Oakland Community College is working to find ways to judge whether they are fulfilling their public commitments. Oakland Community College purpose statements are included in their very public mission documents seen throughout their campuses. The six purpose statements are clear, and they demonstrate Oakland Community College's commitment to student success. To help them monitor their progress toward achieving these six purposes, which are based on predetermined measures, Oakland Community College's Institutional Research Office has developed an Annual Institutional Dashboard. Using this very useful tool, they can immediately determine where more attention is needed and where resources can be directed.
- e. Through its 2008-2012 visioning and planning exercise, the Board of Trustees reaffirmed the College Mission as a 'student-centered institution'. The mission is widely communicated on the College website, in classrooms and hallways, and in major publications such as the catalog and schedule of classes. Evidence that the College fulfills its mission was apparent from conversations with students, faculty, staff, and members of the community.
- f. Curriculum development is a good example of how the College encourages leadership and shared processes. Faculty work with Campus Deans and Associate Deans to update and create new courses and programs. Each campus is represented by faculty and administration on the Curriculum Review and Curriculum Development Committees.
- g. An interview with the members of the College Planning Council revealed that members concur that this structure has opened up communication lines between faculty and administration, and has provided a forum to discuss issues in an open and collegial manner. A review of the minutes of the College Planning Council confirmed that this group identifies problems, solicits input, reviews solutions; and communicates results. In addition, several internal structures are in place that supports a shared governance model. There is broad representation on most committees that conduct the day to day business of the College, including the Board of Trustees, Academic Senate, and College Planning Council. The key instructional committees, Curriculum Review and Assessment, have strong faculty and mid and upper level administrative representation.

- h. Oakland Community College's mission focuses on a student-centered institution with high quality learning opportunities which are accessible and affordable. Conversations with faculty, administrators, staff, and community constituencies validated this clear commitment to the Oakland Community College mission as a caring institution which is focused on students. Formal and informal meetings with students and alumni reinforced Oakland Community College's commitment with students' educational needs at the forefront.
- i. Oakland Community College's record of work, as evidenced by minutes of the Diversity Committee, the annual diversity calendar of events and as witnessed by the HLC team members in speaking with faculty, staff and students, clearly indicates a commitment to diversity. In particular, the college's Developmental Education Plan focuses on all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age or academic preparedness. The Plan coordinates all academic and support services for students, focusing on student learning and student success. In addition, the Workforce Development Center is using an educational program, Power Path, which identifies learning difficulties and allows faculty to design curriculum and learning experiences that meet the needs of various learners. . The college needs a clear process for attracting and retaining faculty of color and faculty who reflect the many faces of Oakland County.
- j. Oakland Community College demonstrates its efforts toward educating the College's employees, students and community about the value of diversity by offering a variety of activities at the college. These activities have been organized by the College-wide Diversity Committee (CDC) and advertised on Diversity posters throughout the campuses. The Chancellor has attempted to heighten the role of this committee by appointing individuals who represented a mixture of opinions, i s s u e s , a n d c o n c e r n s .
- k. The Oakland Community College Office of Institutional Research held focus group sessions with the students, staff and Board of Trustees. This effort concluded that the college's constituencies understand and support the mission of the college. Conversations with students demonstrate they believe

Oakland Community College is conveniently located, provides a high standard of education, and is affordable. Conversations with faculty and staff demonstrate they believe Oakland Community College offers students a highly quality of education, a caring environment, and an opportunity for future employment opportunities. Conversations with the Board of Trustees demonstrate they believe in the strength and commitment of Oakland Community College faculty, staff and administration to student success.

- l. Oakland Community College's mission includes six identified purpose areas: transfer, occupational, community, developmental, workforce development, and general education. Evidence from conversations with faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community representatives indicated a high level of enthusiasm and commitment that pervades the institution and serves as a foundation for fulfilling the stated purposes.
- m. Oakland Community College promotes collaboration of faculty, administrators, and staff in decision-making processes. All five campuses were experiencing renovations that exemplified this collaboration among personnel. It was described in meeting with the personnel groups that these renovations were the collective work of paraprofessionals, faculty, and administrators to reconfigure space in academic and service areas which were functional, aesthetically pleasing, and academically supportive learning environments.
- n. In interviews with community members, it was apparent that they strongly support the mission of the college and report overwhelming appreciation for the many ways the college supports its community. They articulated a respect for Oakland Community College's willingness to offer activities that are consistent with its mission and to meet local needs. Workforce development activities and high school dual credit programs were particularly singled out as effective partnerships between Oakland Community College and local constituents that yield positive results.
- o. The team confirmed that Oakland Community College has procedures and policies in place to ensure due processes for student complaints. Student complaint records were reviewed at the individual campuses to validate the handling of students'

grade concerns, schedule concerns, instructional concerns, faculty concerns, etc. and they were found to be complete and comprehensive. Student complaint procedures are contained in the college catalog and the Student Handbook.

- p. The Mission Statement affirms OCC's commitment to providing "...high quality learning opportunities and services for individuals, communities, and organizations..." Employees, students, and community members revealed awareness of this commitment, affirming that the college regularly evaluates the quality and range of its learning opportunities (e.g., via Program Review, Strategic Planning and Action Plans and services to the diverse communities of the county. From an examination of the results the 2006 Personal Assessment of the college Environment it is clear that faculty and staff understand and support the mission of the College. The two areas regarded most favorably were those elements dealing with the student focuses nature of the College and the positive relationships between employees and supervisors. This was further evidence in the Public Opinion Poll 6 year trends. The community regards the institution as a high quality provider of educational services, as affordable, and as a responsible community partner.
- q. The Vision Statement anchors all goals and activities of Oakland Community College in the dignity and worth of its most important constituency: its students. The college "...puts students first so they reach their highest potential." Furthermore, the various Purpose statements provide the essential venues for these achievements: transfer & career/technical education; community services; Developmental and General Education; and workforce development. In its visionary language, in its staffing, and in its delivery of curriculum and services, the college honors its responsibilities to the citizens of its district.
- r. The College's actions demonstrate support for the student focus and affordability themes of the mission statement. The recent implementation of Datatel Colleague has enhanced the delivery of traditional services to students and has made new services possible. These include online grading by faculty, automatic enforcement of prerequisites for selected course

registrations, online access to the schedule of classes and the College catalog, and automated financial aid award packaging.

- s. From interviews with staff of the Academic Support Service Centers and students utilizing these centers they are clearly student focused. The centers were well equipped with appropriate technology and had individual study/tutoring area. The centers are open, well lit, and well maintained.
- t. From a review of the annual audit report ending June 30, 2007, the civil rights compliance plan, and various other documents Oakland Community College clearly has upheld its integrity and has processes in place to protect that integrity. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights conducted an audit of the College's barrier-free accessibility in 2006. Some suggestions for improvement were a result of that audit and the College presented the Department with a Civil Rights Compliance Plan to address the suggestions. This compliance plan was accepted by the Department. From a review of the plan and the progress made, the College has completed most of the necessary improvements and is progressing with the remaining ones.
- u. The College website, Infomart, and the various employee group contracts the Colleges policies and procedures are available and referenced in the College publications including the employee handbook. Employee grievance procedures are clearly documented in the employee group contracts. From interviews with faculty and representatives of the six bargaining units these grievance procedures are well understood.
- v. The annual audit reports for 2005, 2006, and 2007 were reviewed. Audit findings were few or none at all. From discussions with members of the Board of Trustees this has been consistently true as part of the culture of fiscal accountability. The latest Standard and Poor's bond rating was reviewed. The rating was very good at AA+. As further evidence of the College's commitment to accountability the College's annual reports for 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 were examined. This annual report is available to the public and they provided information on the College's progress toward the goals of its strategic plan.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.

- a. Nowhere in the Vision 2002-2007 statement, or in its Mission or Purpose statements does the college use the word diversity or articulate the dynamic relationship between diversity and the fulfillment of the college's social compact with its increasingly diverse population. Although there are statements that could be construed to imply the commitment to diversity – e.g., "...innovation, high quality service, and professionalism at every level," "...we are a caring college," "a student-centered institution" -- the evidence for a core component for accreditation must be obvious and intrinsic rather than implied or consequential. At the same time, Oakland Community College's Seven Strategic Goals 2002-2007 include the following: "Appreciate and understand diversity" and "Promote a global perspective." In its curricula and services, in many of its hiring practices, and in its professional development activities, OCC has demonstrated fidelity to diversity in its richness and complexities, so the actions of the Board, administrators, faculty, and staff mirror their words. The Self-Study recognizes the significance of "including language about diversity in the Mission Statement," so the college has identified diversity as a priority in its Strategic Planning process and in any revision of the Vision, Mission, or Purpose statements.

Though the percentage of minority students has reached 28% as of the fall semester of 2007, only 8% of the faculty is minority. These percentages have remained constant for the last five years. Faculty search activities could be enhanced in an effort to attract faculty who might have shared experiences, behaviors, and backgrounds with the minority students. Underrepresented faculty might therefore be able to connect with some of the underrepresented students more effectively. Students who form connections to the college are more likely to persist to complete their academic goals.

Though faculty and staff mention diversity as a value, promotional documents do not demonstrate an institutional commitment to diversity. The team saw a large variety of promotional materials. However, the content is predominantly text; inviting images and photos are limited. The promotional

materials should be more inviting and should reach out to students through a mixture of images.

- b. Oakland Community College admits in its self-study that diversity is not mentioned in the institution's mission documents and it has failed to meet employment goals for increasing the number of minority faculty hired. However, the College has committed to revising its mission to include diversity and evidence of the importance of diversity is reflected in the College's various planning structures and processes.
- Clearly, Oakland Community College recognizes the diversity of its learners and other constituents and the greater society it serves; through a comparison of the demographics of Michigan, Oakland County and the staff and student body of the college, OCC not only defines its diversity through statistical profiles found in the self-study and diversity committee documents, the college also maintains an institutional focus on representing its constituents and the greater community. Again, the college acknowledges a lack of progress in hiring minority faculty.
 - OCC's further recognition of the importance of diversity is reflected in the establishment of a College-wide Diversity Committee in 2000. When the Diversity Committee membership moved from a group of volunteers to a Chancellor's 3-year appointment, institutional commitment to diversity was cemented.
 - In fact, OCC diversity commitment moved from raising awareness to mandatory diversity training, co-curricular and curricular activities for the entire community in 2001. Specifically, Oakland Community College has developed curriculum and academic support services that honor the diverse community of learners which it serves: International Student Advisors and the ACCESS program for students with special needs.
 - In conversations with staff at the Orchard Ridge campus, plans were communicated to develop and implement mandatory student orientation and assessment to better

meet the diverse needs of students from the home-schooling, religious, online and ESL communities.

- The college recognizes its open door institution policy, which presents the institution with students who have a wide-range of academic preparation. The Highland Lakes campus is leading an initiative to sequence courses to more appropriately place students in paired general education courses at the appropriate developmental level.
 - Oakland Community College has a fifteen-year old Accord of Cooperation with the State of Oaxaca, Mexico, which supports a student exchange program and development of programming to respond to the diversity of the greater society it serves.
- c. Collaboration and communication between the Curriculum Review and Curriculum/Instruction Committees is unclear, particularly in communicating changes to the college community. For example, Counselors are not aware to the extent that they should be when advising students, about course changes within a program. Also, although Campus Deans have 'new curriculum development' in their job description it is not clear who shares or leads this process for the College.
- d. The team found that the governance and administrative structures are adequate for promoting effective leadership and supporting collaborative processes. However, as the Self-Study Report and interviews with faculty and classified staff clearly demonstrated, there are problems in the way that the Board, administration, faculty, and staff (mid-managers and classified) communicate. The establishment of a College Planning Council was intended to bring about effective communication and institutional planning among four existing bodies: Academic Senate, Business Services, Human Resources, and Student Services. The College Planning Council informed the team that this is the correct structure, and there is great support for its continuation, although it has not been operational long enough to adequately assess its effectiveness. Based on interviews and a review of documents that outline the progress of the College Planning Council in meeting its goals, this team concludes that if the College Planning Council continues to operate as charged, continues to move forward on the development and implementation of the Master Plan, and engages all of its constituents, more effective communication

and better collaboration will occur. To assure that the College Planning Council continues to operate as planned and effectively meet its goals, it is imperative that the membership develop during FY 08, a plan to assess the effectiveness of the Council. The plan should include a means for all faculty and staff to assess the communication plan within the Master Plan, the satisfaction with the ongoing progress of the College Planning Council in meeting its goals, and overall satisfaction with the Council's ability to establish the Master Planning process as the primary vehicle for strategic planning for OCC.

3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components requires Commission follow-up.

- a. The college community and Board itself acknowledge that the Board must make improvements in acting as a responsible policy governance body. Although the Board has insured that the college acts with legal and fiscal integrity and has also insured that the college meets the needs of the county's citizens, Board members and the college community admit that, with sound policy governance leadership, OCC could readily become one of the premier community colleges in the nation. The Board does not plan strategically; only some of its members participate in continuing education; it fails to examine its own effectiveness; as a group it has not set forth its expectations for its new Chancellor; its dabbles in micromanagement (e.g., the seven Board members have discussed taking individual responsibility for each of the seven 2002-2007 Strategic Goals); and Board members have expressed interest in evaluating employees other than the Chancellor. Typically, this goes beyond the scope of the governing board which sets policy, hires the chief operating officer, and secures resources. The day-to-day operation of the institution is entrusted to the chief operating officer. The team encourages Board members to learn how to argue, debate, and disagree intellectually.

4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components are not met and requires Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team:

Criterion is met; Commission follow-up recommended. Monitoring Report on Improved Relationships between the College and its Governing Board by May 1, 2010. If the

Monitoring Report is deemed to be unsatisfactory by Commission staff, the team recommends that the Board relations issue be evaluated again by the team that conducts the focused visit in May 2011.

B. CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion and Core Components

1. Evidence that demonstrates that Core Components are met.

- a. A Vacancy Committee reviews requests for faculty positions semi-annually and other positions monthly and works to bring a consistent institutional perspective to staffing decisions. It relies on varied data sets, and, with the pending establishment of an Academic Master Plan and the next Strategic Plan, it will have the necessary priorities for determining where to allocate human resources for the college's future.
- b. The Professional Training and Development Department provides a wide range of training and continuing education for all employees. Employees at all campuses report that they have the time and encouragement to develop job skills and professional expertise, and the internal resources of Oakland Community College are readily available to them.
- c. Since its Focused Visit in March 2003, Oakland Community College continues to make progress with its planning efforts. The evidence revealed that the major planning components are well defined and in place – environmental scanning, facilities planning, budgeting, academic master plans for each campus, strategic goals, with oversight by the College Planning Council and with Board support. Also, a dashboard is in place to monitor the progress of college-wide and program benchmarks. Evidence suggests that planning efforts are aligned with the mission. There is widespread involvement in the planning process, described as a bottom-up, top-down process culminating in the merging of faculty and staff efforts with

Board priorities. Alignment produces strategic goals which are shared college-wide.

- d. Oakland Community College instituted a process for academic planning on each of its five campuses. Each campus created a five-year Academic Master Plan which the team reviewed. Each plan was goal driven with objectives, strategies, and an action plan. The creation and implementation of this process validates Oakland Community College's academic planning for the future and continuous improvement in academics.
- e. The Academic Planning Committee's design, function, and accomplishments are evidence that the institution has an effective system for collecting, analyzing, and using academic programming information with a linkage to the budgeting process. Members of the Academic Planning Committee explained to the team how their grass roots effort turned into a well-established and accepted operational mode with broader responsibilities and college-wide institutional changes in academic planning.
- f. Oakland Community College streamlined its curriculum review process to include analysis of curriculum/program design, currency, efficacy, efficiency, consistency, and integrity through examination of syllabi, course descriptions, student outcomes assessment plans, and program dashboard information. The process involves a series of steps and review committee checks for a thorough analysis of course and program design. Sample program packet material contained course attribute sheets, assessment approaches, advisory committee information, needs assessment processes, syllabi components and analysis, and a general education form. The newly streamlined curriculum review process supports programs through a formal, standardized review process that promotes dialogue between program/discipline professionals and the larger academic community across campus. The process exemplifies Oakland Community College's continuous improvement process for programs and curricula.
- g. Oakland Community College is working to improve its capacity to develop and maintain trend data as demonstrated by their Institutional Dashboard. The team found that Oakland Community College had developed a valuable Institutional

Dashboard Report in November 2006. This tool is a comprehensive tool which reports how well the College is performing in relation to its publicly stated purposes and strategic goals. In the team's examination of the tool, it was evident that this tool could be used by executive level staff to monitor the College's progress as it relates to critical issues by focusing on the indicators of performance.

- h. Oakland Community College is supported by a solid tax base that allows the college to acquire the funds it needs to fulfill its mission, as evidenced by the self study reports, financial documents and interviews with staff. The availability of public funds enables the College to make quick responses towards meeting the needs of students, area businesses and industries.
- i. Interviews with community members and administration revealed Oakland Community College is responsive to new educational markets by providing customized employee training for a variety of businesses. Several of the community partners, businesses and agencies express their pleasure with Oakland Community College and its responsiveness and flexibility. They cited a number of examples regarding projects on which the College has helped them to achieve a variety of goals.
- j. Interviews with faculty, staff and students, provide evidence of Oakland Community College's commitment to providing access to technology to students for learning, to faculty for instruction and to staff for their work job responsibilities. Faculty report that technicians respond rapidly to repair problems as they may arise. With over 4,300 computers available across the College, students report being able to gain access to computers when needed.
- k. Oakland Community College's commitment to providing continuing opportunities for faculty to improve their teaching is evidenced by their staffing of and equipping the Teaching, Learning and Technology Centers (TLTC), one located on each campus. Faculty members of all levels of ability have access to the TLTC for assistance with technology projects or assistance with the latest software or hardware from a full-time technician.

- l. Oakland Community College has \$600,000 budgeted for staff development which demonstrates its commitment to the continuing development of its staff. During interviews with staff, it was evident that many opportunities are available at Oakland Community College for staff to attend local learning activities. Many of the learning activities are determined by senior staff for advancement of Oakland Community College's strategic staff learning goals.
- m. The Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 clearly demonstrates that the college understands its own capacity for program development, emerging technologies, demographic shifts and globalization. The college has structures in place to ensure effective and efficient program development and review. The Program Planning Model has been piloted with several new and revised programs, resulting in higher student enrollment than in programs that have not yet used the Model. The Curriculum Review Committee uses Program Dashboards in its review process, and while the complete review process has yet to be realized, it is a promising way of work for the college. Additionally, the Office of Assessment and Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research work hand-in-glove to provide the data and interpretation of data to faculty and deans. OIR is the tool and provides the data to faculty, deans and OAE for program development, review, revision and sun setting.
- n. Evidence supporting the ability of the College to maintain and strengthen quality into the future includes the general fund operating budget, the Standard and Poor's bond rating, tuition and fee schedules for the last five years, and the millage annual report since 2004. A review of the annual financial statements and monthly budget reports clearly indicate that the college successfully manages its resources. If necessary the budget is adjusted to maintain a balanced budget throughout the year. The Standard and Poor's bond rating is AA+.
- o. Technology resources are very important to Oakland Community College. They strive to maintain sufficient appropriate technology for instructional and administrative uses which enhances the quality of education and delivery of services to students. Since 1997 the College has maintained a Master Information Technology Plan. This master plan has

within it three other College technology plans; the Academic Technology Plan, the Administrative Technology Plan and the IT Infrastructure/Systems/Services Plan. One of the Teaching Learning, and Technology Centers was toured. A similar center is located at each of the College's campuses. These centers are staffed and contain a variety of equipment such as computers, cameras, printers, scanners, and fax machines. They are for the support of faculty in utilizing technology in instructional delivery.

- p. Evidence exists, including the draft academic master plan for the Highland Lakes Campus, that coordinated planning and budgeting is occurring, and that campus planning is directly connected to the college's strategic plan. The HLC team members spoke with faculty and staff at all campuses, and were told repeatedly that everyone was involved in the planning process. During the community luncheon, HLC team members were told of the college's strong connections to its communities and how well the college responds to changing and emerging community needs. One example is the partnership between OCC and the Detroit Medical Center which provides two additional nursing faculty and all clinical placements for 60 additional nursing students. Additional evidence can be found in the Workforce Development's schedule of courses and workshops, which are designed to meet immediate community training needs.
- q. Through the Offices of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, Oakland Community College has created the critical structure to facilitate a realistic level of preparation for the future. Together, these offices are staffed by 6 Research Analysts and 4 data technicians who work to create data profiles of the curricular, social and economic trends that could assist in college decision-making.
- r. OCC has engaged in multiple levels of planning that will guide and prioritize college goals over the next five years. The Budget and Planning Task Force works to integrate planning activities and to facilitate the development of the college's Academic Master Plan. Besides the college-wide strategic planning activity, each campus also has a strategic planning process which includes community representatives,

administrators and faculty. Other college task forces also engage in planning for technology, facilities and curriculum.

- s. OCC understands the importance of its constituents in planning for the college's future; therefore the OIR annually monitors the perceptions of Oakland County residents through Public Opinion Poll of voters and non-voters 18-64 years of age. Moreover, the college has developed the Instant Feedback Student Panel to make student feedback available to administrators and faculty for short- and long-term planning.
- t. Since the summer of 2006 OCC has obtained access to the Community College Benefit, Inc. projection tool for economic modeling and data reports on students and the region. This subscription provides information on the socio-economic impact of the college on the region and a plethora of projection tools based on data provided by the US Census Bureau and other reputable databases to project future demand for college courses, and future industries and occupations in the region.

2. Evidence that one or more specified core components need organizational attention.

- a. While all of the College's planning components are well-defined and in place, they can be further integrated. For example, budgeting can be more formally integrated into the planning process on each campus, and college-wide. In addition, the dashboard is not widely understood and used; it appears to be in the early stages of adoption. Equally important, there are good practices at some campuses, but not district-wide. For instance, one of the campus presidents requires monthly updates on planning initiatives; however, this does not appear to be a consistent practice among all campus presidents. The College may benefit from documenting its planning process: to institutionalize planning, to make it less dependent on specific individuals, and to orient new employees.
- b. Campus Deans report directly to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs on college-wide planning priorities and to Campus Presidents on campus-based planning priorities. In this matrix structure it remains unclear who decides which priorities take precedence.

- c. Oakland Community College has created the Institutional Dashboard as a plan for ongoing evaluation and assessment. The Institutional Dashboard should provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness if the data is utilized. These materials provide information for administrative decision making but it was unclear and inconsistent in conversations with administrators as to the utilization of this report for continuous improvement. Testimony provided by personnel shows that the newer nature of the Institutional Dashboard may not have it in a full implementation stage as yet.
- d. The Program Dashboard was created by Oakland Community College to provide a consistent, annual review of all curricular offerings. The review contains benchmarks for seven highest priority measures: student target market, benefit to students, industry benefit, occupational conditions, college flexibility, college resource commitment, and competition. Although the Program Dashboard has promise of saving time and resources and could be a good process for determining program effectiveness, not all academic administrators across the five campuses utilize the tool consistently. The implementation of Phase 2, which supplies additional information to faculty and administration, as well as a stronger commitment by personnel to utilize the Program Dashboard information in the decision-making process, should help to secure this piece as an effective instrument for program effectiveness.
- e. During interviews with the campus presidents, it became clear that they do not rely on the Institutional Dashboard Report for planning. Oakland Community College executives could improve the effectiveness of its planning and decision-making by using tools which grant them a birds-eye view of Oakland Community College's progress.
- f. Under the leadership of the College Planning Council and facilitated by the Institutional Advancement division, a long range, college-wide Master Plan is under development. Although the team is encouraged by the processes that have been established for development of the Master Plan, there is no evidence yet that it has been completed, and therefore no evidence that the plan will provide the necessary road map for OCC to continue to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

- g. The process of developing the Master Plan has been inclusive, collegial, and systematic. However, because it is still in the development stages, the team did not have sufficient evidence to judge the comprehensiveness of the Plan, nor can the team conclude that the plan presented the linkage between the mission of the college, budgeting process, and improving teaching and learning through assessment. Because the plan is still in the formative stages, there is no evidence yet on how the outcomes can improve the institutional capacity to better serve the students and the community.
- h. A review of documentation and interviews with faculty and staff reveal clear evidence that the hiring processes at OCC are not efficiently and effectively meeting the current or future needs of the College. Faculty members report that the lengthiness of the hiring process and the rejection of candidates at the administrative level, resulting in a number of unfilled positions, raise concerns about OCC's ability to improve the quality of its education through hiring of qualified faculty. In addition, review of the documents and interviews with staff reveal consistently high turnover rates in administrative positions, resulting in a number of open positions at any given time. It was reported to the team that this instability in administrative positions is detrimental to the College's ability to sustain planning processes.
- i. The college has several groups in place that are concerned with institutional effectiveness; these groups include the Curriculum Review Committee, the Student Outcomes Assessment Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Office of Assessment and Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research. The CRC and OAE have developed a process of curriculum review that is reasonable and could produce positive results. However, there is no evidence to date that the Program Dashboards are being used by either faculty or deans. There is no evidence of program follow up to the CRC's recommendations. There is no evidence that the Board of Trustees is using the Institutional Dashboard reports. While OCC is a data-rich institution, there is little evidence that the data are being used to effect institutional change. The loop has yet to be closed.

- j. Oakland Community College has two Dashboards: an Institutional Dashboard and a Program Dashboard. The Institutional Dashboard contains essential and revealing information about the entire college. It consists of 116 measures. In its third year, the Dashboard itself has been revised, and the process of updating it annually has become operational. Although the team found ample evidence of the construction and revision of the Institutional Dashboard, there was significantly less evidence that administrators use its measures consistently, if at all, or that a review of the Dashboard has been based on practical usage rather than theoretical analyses of its potential effectiveness. The college has created a valuable tool; it now needs to use it systematically and learn from its usage. The Program Dashboards contain seven (7) measures common to all curricula, and these provide critical information about the health of a curriculum. There is somewhat stronger evidence that the 124 OCC programs that currently have assessment plans actually use their Dashboards. Although “not all” academic administrators “have taken advantage of the tool,” there is evidence that some have used it to work with faculty to revise and update curricula. In short, where and when the Program Dashboard has been used, it has proved to be an effective tool. In sum, OCC has developed tools that allow it to meet its stated objectives for institutional effectiveness. However, it has not implemented them systematically, nor, as an institution, has it learned from their implementation.
- k. The Curriculum Review process is data-oriented and committed to intervention and improvement. It relies on the critical seven measures of Program Dashboards, it provides for mentors, and it has follow-up processes to insure timely implementation. Unfortunately, participation in Curriculum Review is voluntary, which thereby significantly compromises its values. Full-time faculty has first access to curriculum review funding, and they have the option of declining to become involved. Part-time faculty can assume responsibilities for Curriculum Review, but limitations on their employment can prevent them from becoming involved. In too many cases, part-time faculty can only bring limited institutional perspectives to the comprehensive Curriculum Review process. In theory, every program should be reviewed once every five years, but “...the process remains voluntary,” and “...”the real

value of this process to enhance student learning has not yet been fully realized.” Oakland Community College has constructed and maintains Program Dashboards and an expert and supportive Curriculum Review committee and process, but it has failed to implement them in a systematic manner. It has sectors of excellence and best practice, but the college as a whole must learn how to learn from them and insure that students in all its curricula and program benefit from effective and up-to-date curricula.

3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.

None noted.

4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team:

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up is recommended.

C. CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criteria and Core Components

1. Evidence that demonstrates Core Components are met.

- a. The Student Outcomes Assessment Committee is well-informed, highly motivated, representative of the faculty and the curricula, and determined to build the culture of assessment. It meets regularly, it documents its work, it has worked tirelessly to educate the faculty about the means and values of assessment, and its members have provided the expertise needed to create effective assessment instruments.

Faculty have the sufficient control and expertise to drive assessment at Oakland Community College.

- b. The Oakland Community College physical resources, buildings, and grounds are well maintained with extensive renovation projects for aesthetics, functionality, and enhancement of the educational environment. The team extensively toured the five campuses and found the facilities to be exceptional in their provision and support of teaching and learning at Oakland Community College. It was evident that Oakland Community College was committed to providing extensive simulated work environments in many of its programs. Oakland Community College incorporates many specialized laboratory resources for students to support teaching and learning. Dental hygiene, nursing, CREST, and radiologic technology programs provide unique, hand-on instructional experiences for Oakland Community College students with the most current equipment in the field. This demonstrates Oakland Community College's commitment and success in ensuring access to supportive learning resources for a complete learning experience.
- c. Oakland Community College's library resources support student learning and provide an assessment process which is inclusive of a feedback loop to determine effectiveness of library instruction. Library staff assessed the success of their research instruction and worked with faculty to incorporate post library instruction activities into classroom requirements for marked improvement in student retention of library research strategies. This assessment activity and collaborative effort between instructional faculty and library resources demonstrates the organization's evaluation of the library resource and positive steps to further enhance student learning in this area.
- d. A review of some of Oakland Community College's on-line courses revealed that they were consistent in their objectives and expected outcomes as traditional face-to-face classes. These courses provide students with clear expectations, learning resources, instructor contact information, discussion boards, and program consistent course content. Faculty for on-line courses surveyed their students as an indirect measure of course effectiveness. The institution is to be commended for

the quality of its on-line courses and resources. Oakland Community College's on-line courses show that the institution is consistent in its course offerings no matter what teaching methodology is utilized.

- e. Oakland Community College values effective teaching and demonstrates this by acknowledging and celebrating the outstanding accomplishments of their faculty. This is done by granting them funds to attend the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and by recognizing them at the annual college-wide Excellence Days.
- f. Oakland Community College employs qualified faculty who are trained in the disciplines in which they teach and develop curriculum. By College policy, all faculty in most disciplines are expected to hold at least a master's degree with substantial educational work in their field of discipline. During the spring of 2007, 93% of their full-time faculty held at least a masters degree and 19% held doctorate degrees.
- g. Interviews with faculty at all five campuses provided clear evidence that OCC values and supports effective teaching. The Pontiac Center provides an annual series of workshops designed to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Because professional development is a part of the faculty contract, both the college and the faculty members are committed to it. Ongoing workshops include communication skills, diversity and cultural awareness, customer service and emerging practices in teaching and learning. Each campus provides professional development activities with faculty as well; topics have included student outcomes assessment, classroom civility and policies to address disruptive students, academic dishonesty and sexual harassment. Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtables were a vital component in implementing new technologies in OCC's instructional environment. In addition, each campus as a Teaching Learning Technology Center, staffed with a technology person who can provide daily services to faculty as they incorporate technologies into the teaching and learning process. The college provides tuition-free OCC classes and tuition-reimbursement for classes taken at neighboring institutions. Support for effective teaching is evident throughout OCC. The college's occupational programs strive to ensure the usefulness

of its curricula offerings by convening business, government, and community leaders to review local, state, and national economic and demographic data and by seeking advice from these leaders about their current and emerging training needs.

- h. Written documentation in the team room and interviews with faculty members revealed that certain assessment methods at the institution, program and course levels are in place and operational. Outcome data have been gathered and analyzed on some courses and programs. Evidence, which was gathered through a review of Assessment Committee, program reviews, and other departmental documents, and through interviews with faculty and administrators, demonstrates that there is collaboration between administration and faculty to promote or to implement new assessment initiatives. However, through this same document review and interview process, the team learned that OCC has not yet completed an entire cycle of assessment using its new assessment planning process. Through discussions with Assessment Committee members and the administrative staff, the team is confident that the assessment process now in place is systematic in nature, and will allow for improvements in the teaching and learning process. The faculty and administration must carefully document its assessment plan and timelines as a part of the OCC Master Plan, and demonstrate that the assessment process flows from the mission of the College, is closely tied to budgeting and planning, and is driven by faculty and supported by administration.
- i. Evidence examined to effectiveness of Oakland Community College's learning environments included the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE), and the Student Services Opinion Survey. The CCSSE was last administered in the 2004-2005 academic year. The College scored slightly below the average for 18 large colleges during the same time period. The result of this survey prompted the College to begin several initiatives aimed at faculty and programs within student life to increase student engagement. The PACE survey was conducted in the summer of 2006. The most positive attributes of the College's environment according to a review of the survey was the student focused nature of the College and the relationship of employees with supervisors.

The least positive areas dealt with the administrative structure and communications within the College. The Student Services Opinion Survey is administered annually. A review of the 2004, 2005, and 2006 survey results showed that student satisfaction with services delivered to students was consistently very high. In addition most area of student services delivery has demonstrated increased satisfaction from 2004 to 2006.

- j. The team visited the Academic Support Center on each campus. The centers were visually pleasing, well staffed, equipped with appropriate technology and equipment, and being utilized by students. Services at the Academic Support Centers include instructional support with accredited Supplemental Instruction and tutors. The centers also have English as a second language tutors and a variety of software. The Centers also administer placement tests to all new students.
- k. Each of the five campuses was visited and toured extensively by the team members. From these tours and interviews with some of the facilities management administrators the campuses are well maintained, monitored for renovations and/or upgrades as needed, had a comfortable lighting and HVAC environment, and were ADA accessible. The millage annual reports for the last three years were reviewed. These documents provided evidence of capital construction planning and attention to renovation needs. The capital construction plan was also reviewed which indicated plans for construction over the next several years by utilizing millage funding.
- l. Oakland Community College with the establishment of the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) shows the high value placed on supporting student learning. The CRC reviews curriculum by discipline and program in 5 year cycles to assess “currency, transferability and employability.” Although the specifics of how these measures are made operational is unclear, the committee is working to more clearly define its processes and protocol and has completed 17 reviews in the 2007-08 academic year and has identified several programs that have not graduated a student in the past 10 years. Similarly, the offices of Institutional Research and Assessment and Effectiveness provide data support for program, discipline and course effectiveness. These offices also gather and

disseminate survey data on indirect measures of student learning through the perceptions of employers and graduate students. Data are made available for faculty to improve teaching.

- m. Physical evidence and interviews with faculty, staff and students make it clear that OCC allocates resources to support student learning and effective teaching. The remodeled nursing and allied health labs, the CREST training facility, the robotics and CAD labs are testament to the college's commitment to allocating resources to teaching and learning. The Pontiac Center provides state of the art training facilities, in addition to a dedicated training room on each campus. The Auburn Hills campus has recently built a new Student Center which is designed around all aspects of student life. The goal is to increase student learning both inside and outside the classroom.
 - n. The Developmental Education Committee is another resource which supports the learning of students whose skills do not yet meet college level expectations. The committee has recommended the pairing of courses to support at risk students as well as processes to maintain strong ESL, Literacy and developmental English and Math course offerings.
 - o. The college-wide Cooperative and Internship Program, supports student learning through innovative opportunities to partner with various agencies where students apply skills taught. Students have won competitive placements nationally and locally.
- 2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**
- a. Oakland Community College has made progress in centralizing the process of student outcomes assessment since 1998. In fact, the matrix on General Education assessment from 2004 to 2015 reflects the use of the Office of Assessment and Effectiveness to centrally archive and coordinate the application both of Standardized tests and other assessment processes to gauge the level of student performance on the 17 dimensions the college

has identified as important indicators of general education, and to gather and disseminate data on the outcomes of program and non-program assessment. As a multi-campus institution, the infrastructure to support the coordination of assessment is very important; just as important are clear goals that make effective assessment possible; the team concluded that the college is grappling with this challenge. Here are some of the concerns noted by the team:

- According to the Self-Study (2008), the college's "robust assessment program" has identified four levels of assessment: applied associates' degree programs, certificate programs, General Education, and non-credit area assessment. However the interaction of these levels is unclear and not evident or reinforced in the assessment plans provided on the internal website.
- All program assessment plans reviewed presented learning outcomes that were stated in non-measurable language, and resembled goal statements more than clearly delineated outcomes. For example, "a basic understanding of development and production of residential drawings" and "graduates will demonstrate knowledge of database concepts" will make measurement difficult and connections to the curriculum impossible.
- Benchmarks are only applicable if they provide specific indication of adjustments necessary to correct the deficit. For example, creating a benchmark that states 85% of students will achieve B- or better and meet industry standards by the end of a specific course in the program does not lead to a specific data based revision. If students were not able to perform at the level identified, it becomes a "stab in the dark" as to how to improve scores. As a result, for those very few programs that completed an assessment, the feedback loop was not closed, but stated "Discipline Day will reveal corrective action." No subsequent action was filed.
- Multiple plans for the same program were on the database and without a date difference or change in text, the utility of the storage and clarity of the plans is reduced. Similar programs were not clustered, nor was the similarity of a

core curriculum acknowledged, for example, Business Administration and Business Administration with an Accounting emphasis.

- Some program assessment plans identified general education outcomes such as communicating clearly or effectively and problem solving as their learning outcomes. As a result, the benchmark then required students to complete an English course at a specific level of competence. With such a learning outcome outside of the program courses, it is unclear just how student performance results impact the curriculum of the program.
 - The assessment plans did not appear to have a set cycle that was enacted each year. There was no evidence that plans were successfully implemented and yielded results that then led to curriculum revision. A few applied benchmarks led to the desire to improve the test or to encourage students to take the test seriously.
- b. While the College has established the Curriculum Review Committee, the Office of Assessment and Effectiveness and the Office of Institution Research in support of using assessment results and other data to improve curriculum and pedagogy, there is little evidence that the results and the data are in actual use. Interviews of faculty indicate little knowledge of or interest in using program dashboards. Faculty are interested in classroom level assessment, and value the assessment days hosted by the college.
- c. Developing and implementing a process for sun setting programs has been an issue for the college. While the Highland Lakes campus has succeeded in sun setting some programs using program dashboard data, this process has yet to be institutionalized.
- d. While the Diversity Committees on each campus provide valuable awareness-building activities, there is no evidence that cultural diversity is being infused into the curriculum.
- 3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

- a. Administrators, faculty and staff have made some progress in developing assessment plans and learning outcomes for programs. As of September 1, 2007, the Office of Assessment and Effectiveness tallied 103 programs required to have assessment plans, of which 21 had failed to file a plan. During the comprehensive visit, on March 18, 2008, the Student Outcomes Assessment Committee tallied 124 programs required to have assessment plans, of which 11 do not. Although there has been considerable progress in the filing of plans, after thirteen years of emphasis, education, and dialogue by the Higher Learning Commission, it is surprising and a concern that the college continues to maintain programs without Assessment plans.

- b. In March, 2003, a Focused Visit Team recommended that a "...progress report be submitted by March 30, 2005, documenting that assessment plans for all programs have been fully implemented, including the collection and analysis of appropriate data and how this data is being used for program improvement and/or student learning... The faculty feels that an assessment culture has been established. However, data collection and the analysis of the data for use in improving programs are still not widely done." HLC staff review of the Progress Report, dated June 13, 2005, noted that "...77% (56) of the academic programs have assessment plans in place leaving 23% (17) programs without assessment plans...The College provided little evidence in this report of the closing of the feedback loop... OCC needs to provide evidence of how improved pedagogy and curricula has led to increased student learning and understanding, during its evaluation visit scheduled in 2007-08." After reviewing paper and electronic resources and interviewing faculty and students, the current team echoes previous concerns about closing the loop. Although there is evidence that some curricula and programs are changing in response to carefully honed assessment plans, there is little systematic evidence that all curricula and all students benefit from these discussions. It is a concern that simple data about the number of programs vary so widely in a few short years: 73 programs in June, 2005; 103 programs in September, 2007; and 124 programs less than seven months later at the time of the comprehensive visit in March, 2008. The team learned that evidence of closing the loop does reside in two computers, one in the office of the Interim Vice

Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, the other in the Office of Assessment and Effectiveness. Thus, there is no systematic, sustained evidence of assessment results being shared widely among members of the college community for the betterment of student learning or for planning and budgeting decision-making throughout the College. The college has not yet built or embraced the culture in which the assessment of student learning is celebrated or in which it is the primary, shared focus of the College.

- c. Many of the components of an effective assessment plan for a curriculum are in place: 1) learning outcomes; 2) benchmarks; 3) strategies for measuring outcomes via direct and indirect measures; and 4) timelines. Being explicit about closing the loop by documenting changes to curricula as a direct result of assessment initiatives would state the obvious reason for doing assessment. Still, before closing the loop can occur, the first four steps must occur systematically. OCC recognizes that “Adherence to this planned process is uneven among the deans...” and that the college “...is still in the process of trying to convince the faculty of the real value of assessment.” As a result, it is not surprising to learn that OCC realizes, “Pedagogical and/or curricular changes as a result of program assessment are few...” These are the same concerns expressed during the 2003 Focus Visit and in the HLC Staff analysis of the 2005 Progress Report. The college has made insufficient progress in implementing the structures it has in place for the assessment of student learning.
- d. As discovered through interviews and review of the Self Study and Assessment documents (most notably the March 13, 2008 Status of Program Assessment), 11 programs at Oakland Community College remain without assessment plans. Longitudinally, the institution has repeatedly had accrediting interventions in the area of assessment by the Commission. Yet, some programs still remain out of the assessment picture entirely.

Resources provided demonstrate that assessment activities are occurring in many areas but results of those efforts were not provided. Minutes from the January 17, 2008, Student Outcomes Assessment Committee (SOAC) capture the essence

of assessment that the team observed during the site visit. In the minutes the following items are stated:

Where we stand:

- In some limited cases, program staff may be afraid of the assessment process due to the fear of sun setting.
- There are those who place assessment low on their priority list.

What needs to be done?

- Link assessment to planning and budgeting.
- Help faculty understand the “value” of assessment and that it is a “core foundation” for teaching.
- Help the college community understand that assessment needs to go beyond busy paperwork; it needs to move to the next level of improvement.

This is what the team observed during the site visit. There appears to be a lack of closure for Oakland Community College in the assessment process as the institution was unable to provide significant evidence that there is a definitive feedback loop to the process with programmatic changes that have occurred due to their assessment efforts.

4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components are not met and requires Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team:

Criterion is met; Commission follow-up is recommended. Focused Visit on the assessment of student learning by May 2011. If the report is deemed unsatisfactory by the evaluation team conducting the focused visit, the date of the next comprehensive visit will be moved forward to 2014-1015.

D. CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion and Core Components

- 1. Evidence that demonstrates the Core Components are met. .**
 - a. Board policies (2.2.4; 3.7.5; 6.2.3) provide the framework for free inquiry. The constitution of the Faculty Senate and the faculty contract subscribe to the American Association of University Professors' statement on Academic Freedom. The college hosts a variety of events that allow students, faculty, staff, and community members to explore, understand, and debate issues political, ethical, governmental, societal, and contemporary issues. A college-wide Student Life Committee, plus Student Life Committees on each campus, has brought back lively exchange to student experiences on the campuses of the college.
 - b. Approximately 70% of the college's annual budgets are devoted to human resources, and a significant portion of that is devoted directly to instructional costs (in 2005-2006, 43.8% of General Fund expenditures were for instruction, while 15.1% went to instructional support). In addition, the college continues to reinvest regularly in updated technologies, expending approximately 10% of its annual budget on facility and technology projects. Similarly, nearly 15% of the 2007-2008 budget has been devoted to Staff Development and operating expenses. In setting its budgetary priorities, the college emphasizes human resources, learning, and development of its employees.
 - c. The team heard widespread testimony about the college's commitment to the professional development of its employees, and the college has multiple processes in place to allow and encourage employees to develop professionally. The Professional Development Training Center provides an array of professional development opportunities, and employees are involved in programming decisions. A Staff Development Day occurs one Friday each autumn, and Teaching Learning Technology Centers anchor technological development on each campus. Over three-quarters of the faculty report that they conduct research in their fields in order to keep their curricula up to date, and they also have access to sabbatical leaves, professional travel, and several leadership academies. Each year, one faculty member from each campus attends the annual

NISOD conference. OCC provides highly satisfactory internal professional development.

- d. Students may select from a variety of co-curricular options in order to extend and apply their learning. The Student Life Program provides ongoing presentations, speeches, and events that move the life of learning beyond the classroom. Students take trips to local sites, such as the Holocaust Memorial and the Charles Wright African-American Museum, while the college also sponsors international experiences to Mexico and Europe. A new development is the commitment to develop Service Learning opportunities. Students can and do use Oakland County and the greater Detroit metropolitan area as laboratories for learning.
- e. A satisfactory process for Curriculum Review has been developed. It consists of a core section in which faculty review essential curricular characteristics and access data gathered by the college. Discipline and Program Reviews are conducted, so that faculty can evaluate transferability of curricula and also survey experts and students in the field. Advisory Board information supplements these review methods.
- f. Since 2000 the College has operated a Professional Development and Training Center (PDTC) in Pontiac, providing all of its employees a variety of personal and professional development opportunities. Opportunities are made available on site in Pontiac, online, and at individual campuses as needed. A schedule of opportunities is shared with all employees on the College Intranet. In addition to the PDTC, each college campus houses a Teaching Learning and Technology Center (TLTC) for faculty and staff to use in incorporating technology into their coursework. The TLTC's are staffed with instructional technology.
- g. Oakland Community College's most recent receipt of a \$1.9 million dollar nanotechnology grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide training for workforce development in this cutting-edge field demonstrates the institution's foresight and leadership in meeting global workforce needs. Community members stated that this direction by Oakland Community College was very important to Oakland County and they applauded Oakland Community College efforts and successes

in meeting changes in technology, workforce preparation, and global market needs.

- h. The creation of simulated work environments throughout the five Oakland Community College campuses demonstrates the institution's commitment to current and relevant courses and programs. In a few instances, it was mentioned that the technology which Oakland Community College's laboratories housed and utilized actually surpassed some smaller, local businesses and Oakland Community College faculty included segments of prior instruction in the older technology so that students could adapt to potential work placement within the community. Their extended experiences with advanced technology places Oakland Community College students at a significant advantage as technology changes within the workforce or they seek employment in other locations which utilize newer technology.
- i. Oakland Community College's commitment to a life of learning is demonstrated by its wide offerings of local learning opportunities. Oakland Community College faculty are required to participate in 10 hours of professional development training per year. Further, the College sponsors faculty participants in the national Galileo Leadership Consortium and provides faculty with opportunities for sabbaticals. The college also expects all of its staff and management to participate in on-going professional development per their labor contract. To assist with costs, Oakland Community College offers tuition reimbursement to those who complete Oakland Community College courses. It also sponsors a new employee orientation for all employees and student-focused learning opportunities in an effort to ensure all staff understand how to assist today's students. Oakland Community College employees and students are also featured in College publications (e.g., *OCCurrences* and *Quintet*) and on the College website.
- j. Through a review of the documents in the team room including the Self-Study report, and interviews with faculty, staff and students, it was evident to the team that OCC demonstrates that it values a life of learning by being responsive to diverse educational needs through the many programs designed

specifically to recruit and educate a diverse population, and by increasing the minority student enrollment population.

- k. OCC invests in the professional development of its faculty by providing varied and well funded professional growth opportunities. A review of the OCC professional development documents reveals that the following opportunities exist for professional development: sabbaticals, conferences, summer projects, paid travel and registration fees for workshops, graduate courses, family tuition benefits, and access to College planned activities. The wide variety of offerings demonstrates that the College values the investment of time and resources in the full-time OCC faculty. Each adjunct faculty member also has access to professional development opportunities. There are employee manuals for each employee category that identify and define the professional development opportunities available for staff and faculty groups. The College provided evidence of participation in professional development activities in the form of a cumulative list of faculty and staff members and the classes, conference and workshops for which they applied and in which they participated.
- l. From codifying the college's commitment to general education in Board policy to the PACE survey (employee satisfaction), evidence indicates the Oakland Community College demonstrates its commitment to integrating general education and co-curricular learning into its various courses and programs. Using several years of SAGE (Student Assessment of General Education) data, the college revised its general education outcomes and the measures of said outcomes. The scaled-down versions allow for greater specificity of assessment of student learning. In addition, a review of the general education goals and selected curriculum confirms that OCC integrates general education into all of its undergraduate degree programs through curricular and experiential offerings that are intentionally created to develop the attitudes and skills requisite for a life of learning in today's society.
- m. The college has a broad program of co-curricular learning including student life activities, diversity programs, guest speakers, art series, field trips and study abroad opportunities. Special mention goes to the Salzburg Seminars and the exchange programs with Oaxaca, Mexico. Service learning is also a component of Oakland Community College's general

education program. While these opportunities are noteworthy and anecdotal evidence points to their efficacy, there is no empirical data to support evidence of increased student learning. However, a review of the Self-Study Report, documents in the resource room, and interviews with staff and students provides evidence that OCC encourages co-curricular activities for its students. Interviews with faculty validate a variety of co-curricular activities that expand student knowledge beyond the classroom through leadership academies, internships, class trips, and a large variety of clubs. Additionally, students have an opportunity to participate in inter-collegiate athletic teams.

- n. A review of the OCC policies and procedures and its Board policy manual, and interviews with Administrators and Student Services staff provide evidence that OCC follows policies and procedures to ensure ethical conduct with respect to copyright law, adherence to FERPA guidelines, and intellectual property rights for faculty.
- o. The Academic Program Review template that OCC uses to assess program effectiveness of career programs has several sections in which to report program demographic information, assessment data, program improvements and program goals. Program Review documents provided evidence that verified that faculty and administration participate in this process, with an ample number of historical program reviews on file. There is commitment to the process and faculty verified that it is a valuable process to monitor program relevance and students are provided support throughout the program in the acquisition and discovery of knowledge.
- p. Oakland Community College has consistently assessed the saliency of technology, global and diversity preparation in its curriculum and has created curriculum development process to precisely meet the needs of students who live and work within a global, diverse and technological society.
 - OCC's Academic Master Plan identified the preparation of students for a global, diverse and technological society as an important curriculum objective.

- The Program Planning Model (PPM) similarly supports this goal by broadening the scope of the data upon which curricular and program development decisions are made. The process examines current curriculum and forecasted needs assessment to prepare students for work in an international, diverse and technological society. Curriculum such as the Sign Language and Culinary Arts that were developed with the use of this process has experienced consistently higher growth than curricula not developed with the benefit of PPM.
- Various external agreements also encourage current application of curriculum and the latest curriculum currency's influence of course-work. Likewise, state-mandated dual enrollment, licensure requirements and grant funded programs also work to ensure the assessment of integration of global, diverse and technological goals.
- OCC's Graduate Follow-up Survey gauges the extent to which students believe their program has prepared them with the necessary skills to attain employment in the technological and diverse workplace. At no charge, graduates who do not feel prepared are allowed to take courses that will give them these skills.
- Advising Boards play a key roll in regular reviews of curriculum and equipment. These area experts in various occupational fields advise faculty on necessary curricular changes. Membership in Oakland County's high-tech Automation Alley consortium assists the college in benchmarking levels of technology application within the college.
- Workforce Development Services provides students with the opportunity to assess their own learning preparation to participate in the new global economy using the WorkKeys System and to address skill deficits in structural learning units.
- OCC also participates in the Emerging Sectors Educational Consortium, aimed at creating an educational environment to attract and support companies in cutting-edge industries with assurance of full access to education and training

resources to create the skilled workforce for high-skilled occupations. To be part of this group, technical training capacity must be evaluated and updated.

2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.

- a. Although the process for Curriculum Reviews is satisfactory, its implementation is optional. Curriculum Review is subject to the availability and interest of the appropriate faculty, and it is unevenly implemented. The college once articulated a goal of evaluating 20% of its curricula per year, but it has not met this goal. It has considered applying the review process only for those “critical areas of concern,” but there is no evidence that these have been carefully or systematically selected. There has been discussion of dropping the review process because of the availability of data in the Program Dashboards, but there is little evidence that these are understood, systematically used, or the source of systemic decision-making. The college has the fundamentals of an effective Curriculum Review process in place, but it has failed to implement them.

3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components are not met and require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team:

The criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

E. CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion and Core Components

- 1. Evidence that demonstrates the Core Components are met.**
 - a. Meetings with community leaders, the Board of Trustees, and internal constituents provided evidence that the Chancellor of OCC demonstrates outstanding community involvement and plays an active and positive role in representing the College in external arenas. Community leaders voiced a deep respect for the Chancellor and appreciation of the responsiveness of the College to community needs.
 - b. Community members and employers who serve on advisory committees reported to the team that OCC is responsive to their needs and provides their businesses with well-educated employees, particularly in the occupational fields. One example that was articulated to the team is the Campus President's Community Outreach Plan, designed to increase OCC interaction with local communities by bringing together local faith-based organizations, mayors, presidents of Chambers of Commerce, other educational leaders, legislators, representatives of business and industry, and other community stakeholders.
 - c. The College connects with its constituents in many ways including, for example, the Business and Community Alliance (BCA) established in 1997. The BCA is a collaborative venture focused on responding to the changing employment needs in Oakland County and the Metropolitan Detroit Area. The BCA has been instrumental in identifying employability skills to be incorporated into the curriculum, and supporting the College in pursuit of new, high-tech training facilities such as the Michigan Technical Education Center (M-TEC) and the Combined Regional Emergency Services Training (CREST) program.
 - d. Oakland Community College incorporates advisory committees in the curricular design and review process. It is evident from conversations with community members that they play an integral part on evaluation of campus programs. Working with these companies is clearly beneficial for the viability of current and future programs. The institution has developed positive relationships with community business partners.

- e. The team, in conversations and interviews with students, confirmed Oakland Community College's assessment that students were more than satisfied with the new campus facilities, classrooms, laboratories, computer areas, learning resources, and student service areas. Alumni commented that their classroom/laboratory/clinical experiences effectively prepared them for employment or transfer to four-year institutions. Business leaders seek out and hire Oakland Community College students in nursing, dental hygiene, radiologic technology, and other program areas which speak highly of Oakland Community College accomplishments in providing a quality educational experience.
- f. Oakland Community College is shaped by its mission and is involved with its community as described in conversations with the members of advisory boards and community partners. The college community engagement and service is positive and ongoing. Advisory committee members praise and support occupational programs.
- g. Oakland Community College uses environmental scanning activities, program dashboards, census data, and the Economic Impact of Oakland Community College Report to gauge the emerging needs of its constituents and communities. This helps them anticipate and plan academic programs and services which will be needed.
- h. Evidence of OCC's commitment to responding to external constituencies is the appointment of its first Dean of Workforce Development in October of 2006. This individual oversees both credit and non-credit activities.
- i. OCC has articulation agreements with twenty-eight Oakland county high schools, a partnership with Oakland County Tech Prep Consortium, more than 100 articulation agreements with 4-year institutions in Michigan, and a full-range of services (Program for Academic Support Services, Attendance Cost Program, Transitions Program, Pontiac Summer Program, etc.) to facilitate transfer and student mobility. It is a fully-engaged citizen and partner in the regional education community.
- j. The Business and Community Alliance brings together OCC employees and business and community leaders quarterly in a

supportive yet innovative format. The Alliance maintains an important line of communication between the college and the communities it serves, and its list of ten core employability skills provides direction to the college. The innovative CREST program, among others, owes part of its genesis and viability to the Business and Community Alliance. This communication model insures that the college listens to and provides for its stakeholders.

- k. Oakland Community College shows a high level of engagement with its constituents and communities. Members of the business community voiced a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by OCC and the training available at the college. Here are several examples:
- OCC's Marketing and Communications departments engage with its constituents through an annual release of 150 press releases and work to maintain a positive relationship with the community and media through the publication of the magazine Career Focus.
 - OCC has engaged its community in multiple ways with Technology Days, CREST open house; pottery shows, culinary festivals, theatrical presentations and dental and nursing clinics.
 - The College's Office of Institutional Research conducts regular public opinion polls and focus groups of students and other constituents. This data is used to assist in programming decisions, such as the decision to increase the level of student engagement with the expansion of Student Life offerings.
 - In 2005 OCC joined the Michigan Campus Compact and developed service learning programming. The Service Learning program engages students, faculty, staff and non-profit organizations in activities that combine community service and academic learning. This alliance has led to partnerships between faculty, students and various community social services and at-risk Oakland County youth.

- OCC has a partnership with Oakland County Tech Prep Consortium which has led to 292 signed articulation agreements with the 28 area high schools. The College's outreach to area high schools is further represented by a Pontiac Summer Program to provide high school students with counseling and academic instruction to exploration career opportunities by enrolling in summer classes on the OCC campus.
 - OCC's Womencenter empowers women of the College and the local community through education and support programming. The center assists women in transitioning to college and making the necessary referrals and connections. Workshops, seminars, peer counseling and cultural and social programming combine to enhance the success of women in the college community.
- l. Evidence from interviews with faculty, staff, students and community members clearly points to the college's ability to engage with its constituencies and communities. Economic and Workforce Development is spearheading these efforts, as this unit is charged with developing nimble and targeted responses to community needs. Evidence suggests that credit programs are now engaging in greater dialogue with their constituents in order to provide relevant programming. Examples include Technology Days and CREST open houses, pottery shows, culinary festivals and the community-serving dental clinic and mobile nursing clinic. In addition, the CIS and Workforce Development departments jointly sponsor CISCO training to the business community, and the CAD department sponsors the regional high school CAD competition each year.
 - m. Since completing their self-study, OCC faculty and staff have been aligning curriculum to meet emerging technologies (nano-tech and bio-medical), increasing partnerships with neighboring universities for seamless transfer, and partnering with neighboring community colleges to leverage resources in high-cost programs (advanced manufacturing and alternative energy.) Interviews with members of the communities served by the college provide clear evidence that OCC is an integral and valued member of Oakland County. OCC provides leadership to the economic and workforce development efforts

of the County, as evidenced by a recent visit to Florida by OCC staff and County leadership to bring an aerospace company to the county. Community members remarked that, “OCC is the best educational value in the county.” “Our partnership with OCC has allowed us to provide better service to our clients than we would have alone.”

- n. Since completing their self-study, OCC faculty and staff have been aligning curriculum to meet emerging technologies (nano-tech and bio-medical), increasing partnerships with neighboring colleges to leverage resources in high-cost programs (advanced manufacturing and alternative energy).

2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.

None noted.

Recommendation of the Team:

The criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status

No change

B. Nature of Organization

- 1. Legal Status: No change
- 2. Degrees Awarded: No change

C. Conditions of Affiliation

- 3. Stipulation on Affiliations Status: No change

4. Approval of Degree Sites: Prior Commission approval required.
5. Approval of Distance Education Degrees: Prior Commission permission required for additional degrees beyond those facilitated by The Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative.
6. Reports Required:
Monitoring Report
Monitoring Report on Improved Relationships between the College and its Governing Board due by May 1, 2010

Rationale and Expectations:

The 1998 HLC evaluation team expressed a concern that the Board needed to improve their collaborative interaction and to strengthen their collective effectiveness. In the report of the focused visit conducted in March 2003, the team expressed concerns about seeing evidence of friction among and between Board members and about the lack of trust among them. This non-collaborative behavior, lack of trust, and evident friction were clearly evident during the visit of the current team. In interviews and conversations throughout the organization, individuals expressed their deep concern about the Board's ineffectiveness and poor behavior.

This team questions the ability of the Board to carry out their responsibilities of a governing body for the District. The Board is encouraged to implement a comprehensive program of Board orientation and continuing development. These activities may include an understanding of the role of each Board member, how they will help build and support a strategic vision for the college, and how Board behavior reflects on the integrity of the College. The Board continuing development needs to support the internal partnerships within the College to enhance communication, cooperation and external partnerships to support community engagement and service.

The team reached the conclusion that the biggest challenge facing the current Board of Trustees is that it does not realize it needs help. The survey conducted by an external firm in October 2006 to gather trustees' perceptions of their roles revealed a serious disconnect in terms of the trustees' perceptions and the evidence presented evaluation team members. For example, the survey findings indicated trustees felt their main responsibility was to hire the chancellor. Yet, during the meeting held with evaluation team members, trustees present could not agree on the slate of expectations they had for the newly appointed Chancellor. Further, in direct violation of Board of Trustees policy, several trustees confessed to a continuing need to communicate directly with college faculty and staff, other than the Chancellor, on a number of college business affairs. The team, having reviewed the College's published board policies and procedures, felt the Board often exceeded its authority as outlined in the policies and procedures.

In addition, during the session with trustees, they exhibited a lack of civility and respect for one another. This type of behavior was referenced by college faculty and staff as a drain on morale and professionally embarrassing. The common description of the current Board of Trustees by many faculty and staff members is dysfunctional. Trustees even acknowledged this perception but offered no suggestions for improving the current state of affairs. As such, the team believes it is in the college's best interest to call for specific plan of action to address this crucial circumstance. The goal is to encourage this elected Board to focus their energies on how it can leverage its role to achieve even greater benefits for the college and the southeast Michigan community.

The team offers the following expectations and outcomes for the Monitoring Report:

First, the Chancellor and entire Board of Trustees are encouraged to attend the summer leadership conference/workshop facilitated by the Association of Community College Trustees. The 2008 Governance Leadership Institute, a two-day leadership institute for trustees and chief operating officers only, will be held June 20-22, 2008 in Washington, DC. Attendees will be exposed to best practices and the Eight Principles of Effective Board Leadership. Key sessions include defining the chair's role, building trust, demonstrating integrity, and handling difficult and controversial issues. The desired outcome is that the College's senior leadership—Board of Trustees and Chancellor—will be able to identify and reach mutual agreement as to its current problems and be able to contemplate possible changes in behavior in a calm, non-threatening setting. Another desired outcome is that all Board members will attend and participant in at least one professional development workshop each year.

Second, since the Board has just hired a new Chancellor, the Board Chair and the Chancellor are encouraged to seek the advice and counsel of an external consultant to help them establish a set of working accommodations. The team took note that both the chair and the Chancellor are fairly new in their respective roles and could benefit from sage advice and counsel. While the College had clearly articulated policies governing trustees' behavior, a different set of objective eyes could bring about improved communications and trust among and between Board members and the Chancellor. The new Chancellor is encouraged to attend the 2008 Executive Leadership Institution, sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College and supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The 2008 Institute will be held December 7-12, 2008 in Tempe, Arizona. Important sessions focus on the role of the community college president and developing successful CEO-Board relationships. The desired outcome is that the new Chancellor and Board Chair will be able to explore common ground in terms of facilitating board meetings and setting communication expectations with the assistance of a sage, external consultant familiar with community college

board relations and governance structures. Another desired outcome is that all Board members will respect the Chancellor-Board Chair relationship and work to improve its effectiveness.

Third, the College is encouraged to consider requesting a customized program for a workshop conducted by a representative of the Association of Community College Trustees. If possible, the team recommends requesting Dr. Narcisa Polonio of ACCT or Dr. Gary Davis from Illinois. Further, the Board of Trustees needs to have a number of professional organizations that they are familiar with whose focus is board development. The desired outcome is that Board of Trustees and the new Chancellor will be able to tailor an on-going professional development programs based on their perceived and real needs. Another desired outcome is that all Board members will participate in the development of such a customized program. A couple of websites are listed below:

- http://www.allianceonline.org/FAQ/board_development
- <http://www.league.org/>

Fourth, the Board of Trustees needs to give consideration to recommending to the Chancellor that the College work itself into position to apply for the Michigan Quality Award. The Michigan Quality Council uses the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The Michigan Quality Leadership Award is the highest recognition of performance excellence in Michigan. As the state's largest community college system, and a Board of Trustees committed to quality, this would be a logical goal. The desired outcome is that the Board of Trustees will be able to focus on how to leverage its work on specific initiatives to achieve greater benefits and recognition for the College in particular and the southeast region of Michigan in general.

Last, the Board of Trustees is encouraged to conduct two climate surveys in October 2008 and October 2009 to determine perceptions of its effectiveness. The entire college community should be asked to evaluate the Board of Trustees (as a collective group, not individually) on a number of pre-determined factors. The Board of Trustees is encouraged to publish the survey outcomes before February 2009 and February 2010 to the college community. The internal goals of the Board need to be the establishment of a benchmark for 2008 and to demonstrate improve on the ratings in 2009. The findings, along with the survey questionnaire and methodology, are asked to be included in the monitoring report due by May 1, 2010. The desired outcome is that the Board of Trustees will be perceived by internal constituents as effective and productive in its role. Another desired outcome is that Board members will relate better to its employees who deliver services to the College's external community.

7. Other Visits Scheduled:

Focused Visit

Focused Visit to review Assessment of Student Learning by May 1, 2011.

Rationale and Expectations:

Although Oakland Community College has broadened its assessment efforts, the institution is limited in its display of complete cycles and modifications from assessment results. Even with several Commission interventions and prior actions, Oakland Community College remains behind in their assessment successes. The institution is still addressing assessment issues (faculty buy-in, assessment as a priority, etc.) which were prevalent during prior Commission visits. A culture of assessment is not evident at this time.

Oakland Community College can provide numerous discrete assessments of individual programs or service departments however; the college does not show systematic evaluative outcome assessments that span departmental silos which evaluate the cumulative effect of many departments on shared institutional purposes and a culture of assessment for improvement.

The focused visit will evaluate the institution's focus on complete cycles for programmatic assessments as well as institutional self-assessment designed to help the college look at itself from a systematic quality perspective, to identify and address areas of potential improvements.

1. The focused visit should ascertain that all areas of the institution have come together, taken stock of the institution, and then clearly addressed the issues that are discovered.
2. The focused team should look for evidence of a culture of assessment with completed assessment cycles inclusive of implemented feedback loops and implemented program modifications due to assessment results.
3. The focused team should look for evidence of assessment plans for the 11 programs which did not have plans as of March 18, 2008. These programs are:
 - CAR.PRT.CA Detailer/Painter Assistant – Certificate of Achievement
 - CIS.SYS.CA CIS System Administration Certificate of Achievement
 - CTL.AAS Control Systems Technology
 - ETT.ELI.AAS Electrical Trades Tech – Industrial Electrical

- ETT.ELS.AAS Electrical Trades Tech – Electromechanical Tech
- ICM.PRE.ALA Pre—International Commerce
- MSM.MMA.AAS Automation Systems Tech – Automation
- MSM.MMP.AAS Automation Systems Tech – Machine Repair
- MSM.MMR.AAS Automation Systems Tech – Robotics
- MSM.MMS.AAS Automation Systems Tech – Industrial Supervision
- MTT.CT Machine Tool Technology Certificate

In summary, the college must incontrovertibly demonstrate that it has implemented assessment plans for *all* existing curricula and programs, including General Education. It must document that faculty gather, analyze, and act upon assessment data at the course, program, and General Education levels in order to make important decisions about teaching and student learning. Administrators must document that judgments about assessment play significant roles in the planning and budgeting throughout the college. OCC must document “closing of the loop” at all levels of assessment – course, program, and institutional – so that it is obvious to students, faculty, staff, and the community that the continuous improvement of student learning is the single most important activity of Oakland Community College.

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

None recommended

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for the next comprehensive visit: 2017-2018 cycle if expectations outlined in the monitoring report and for the focused visit are met. If the evaluation team conducting the focused visit in May 2011 does not find ample progress being made relative to the recommendations in the assessment of student learning that the team recommends, consideration should be given to moving forward the scheduling of the next comprehensive visit to 2014-2015.

Rationale for the recommendation:

The team’s recommendation for continued accreditation (with a monitoring report due by May 2010 and a focused visit due by May 2011) and the projected cycle for the next comprehensive visit are based on the team’s assessment that the College met each of the five criteria and is future-focused. The team, however, registered serious concerns about the College’s ability to satisfactorily address two of the three previous challenges but acknowledges that enough progress has been made to receive re-accreditation. Further, the team believes the College has in place the human, fiscal, and physical resources necessary to meet its mission and stated purposes. The College possesses a strong

faculty, exemplary library and student development support services, and a well-designed strategic planning model. The team is encouraged with the recent hiring of a Chancellor and outstanding leadership exhibited by the current slate of campus presidents and vice chancellors. Hence, continuing accreditation for a ten year period is possible if progress is made on the lingering issues of (1) improving relationships between the College and its Board of Trustees and (2) closing the gap with respect to assessment of student learning.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

A major concern for the evaluation team focused on the turmoil present among and between members of the Board of Trustees. The team witnessed very little civility during its session with the Board. While other issues were considered minor, the Board relations issue must be satisfactorily addressed for the College to move forward.

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

**Oakland Community College
Bloomfield Hills, MI**

March 17-19, 2008

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM:

Dr. Barbara A. Bollmann, Dean of Instruction, Front Range Community College, Front Range Community College 2121 Miller Drive, Longmont, CO 80501

Dr. Marcia D. Clarke-Yapi, Associate Dean, Milwaukee Area Technical College, 700 West State Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dr. Mark S. Davis, Vice President for Business and Finance, Oklahoma City Community College, 7777 South May Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK

Dr. Daniel T. DeMarte, Vice President for Learning, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, 2740 West Mason Street, P.O. Box 19042, Green Bay, WI 54307-9042

Dr. Velvie Green, President, Maricopa Community Colleges-Glendale Community College, 6000 West Olive Avenue, Glendale, AZ 85302

Dr. Thomas Hamel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Oakton Community College, 1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016

Dr. Vernon T. Harlan, Professor/Coordinator-Criminal Justice, Saint Louis Community College, St. Louis Community College 5600 Oakland Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110

Dr. Diane M. Ostojic, Vice President of Academic Services, South Suburban College of Cook County, 15800 South State Street, South Holland, IL 60473

Dr. Benjamin F. Young, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, 50 West Fall Creek Parkway North Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46208-7918
(Chairperson)

**Oakland Community College
Bloomfield Hills, MI**

March 17-19, 2008

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I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

Oakland Community College was established on June 8, 1964 by passage of a district-wide ballot proposal. The boundaries parallel those of Oakland schools coming close to matching the borders of Oakland County. The team concluded that Oakland Community College operates with sound planning and budget allocation processes, is staffed by a competent faculty and staff, is student focused, and is well positioned financially to carry out its assigned mission.

The college benefits from strong alliance throughout the region and state. The Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaboration is a prime example. College officials value the interests of local businesses, governmental agencies, and school corporations and presented a litany of mutually beneficial articulation agreements and memorandum of understandings. The team received numerous testimonials of projects undertaken and successfully carried out responding to external constituents' needs.

The team found all five campuses of Oakland Community College totally committed to serving students. Open meetings with students revealed an overwhelming positive perception by students for the services offered.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

A. Intersections of Curriculum Review, Curriculum Design, and Assessment of Student Learning

OCC has made significant progress in collecting and disseminating data about its various academic programs. The Office of Assessment and Effectiveness (OAE) and Office of Institutional Research (OIR) provide data and data interpretation that have been the impetus for several initiatives. For example, the OAE developed and implemented Program Dashboards which provide data that can be used by faculty and deans for program revision, curriculum development/revision and program sun setting. The Curriculum Committee has developed and implemented processes for faculty to submit new curricular ideas. The Student Outcomes Assessment Committee has developed and implemented processes to gather and disseminate data about student learning.

However, there is no structure or process in place to integrate these various component parts. The CRC does not see SOAC data; the Curriculum Committee does not see CRC program dashboards, nor does the SOAC. While program reviews are sent to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, proposals for new curriculum or new

programs are not. New program proposals go directly to the Chancellor, bypassing the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Services.

We suggest a “meeting of the minds” in order to integrate and use the various data sets available. The “meeting of the minds” would include members of the CRC, Curriculum Committee, SOAC, campus deans, the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, staff from OAE and OIR. We further suggest this meeting be held on an annual basis. The focus would be integrating the work of the CRC, the Curriculum Committee, and the SOAC, using data provided to each by the OAE. Such a “meeting of the minds” might incorporate the following:

- Using the CRC recommendations in the program dashboards to improve student learning, thereby closing that loop;
- Using SOAC data to improve curriculum and develop new curriculum and programs, thereby closing that loop;
- Discussing and forwarding new curriculum and program proposals to the Curriculum Committee for action.

This “meeting of the minds” would require significant time (probably several days) and energy, and would result in an integrated, college-wide approach to assessment of student learning, curriculum review and curriculum development.

B. Diversity in Faculty Ranks

One way to help students, particularly students of color, achieve their academic goals is build a learning environment that reflects, respects and celebrates ALL students’ lives, experiences, behaviors, ways of knowing and history. Student demographics are changing at a significantly higher rate than that of the faculty and staff, creating a growing socio-cultural gap between teachers and students.

College faculty are now retiring at a higher rate than earlier years; however, OCC has not taken advantage of this opportunity to increase the ethnic diversity of its faculty. It is not only important for students of color to learn from individuals who look like them, share their culture, language, and experiences, but it is also important for ALL students to learn from individuals who can share varying perspectives. An ethnically diverse faculty (at least paralleling the student demographics) brings a variety of learning and living experiences to the learning environment, creating an environment that is rich in knowledge, talent, culture and points of view.

OCC should also review its hiring practices to add more diversity to its search/screening committees. Building diverse search/screening committees brings a variety of valuable perspectives to the table. Diverse search/screening committee members are often able to identify talents and

experiences that might not be recognized by a non-diverse committee. No more than three content experts are needed to determine whether the applicant is well-versed in content. A student services specialist can judge the individual's commitment to service of the WHOLE student. The academic administrator responsible for that department can judge the individual's ability to complete his/her administrative responsibilities and commitment to serving the college beyond the classroom. A faculty member from another discipline can assist in judging the individual's teaching ability. Committee members felt this approach works well in that it does not overwhelm the candidate and allows for open discussion and fair and effective deliberation.

The evaluation team recommends that all candidates for teaching positions undergo a teaching demonstration. Due to the nature of faculty work and their importance to the core business of the institution, a budget to transport finalists traveling further than 150 miles away should be established. Finalists should also be given significant information about the college and community, including its proximity to other communities which could offer entertainment, cultural activities, and other points that would be important to applicants.

Resources. It is essential for OCC to actively seek to diversify its pool of applicants for all jobs—especially for faculty positions since the majority of students' time spent in learning is with faculty. Several resources are available to assist OCC in building a plan to entice qualified faculty of color to the applicant pool. A few of those resources are: Factors in the search process that contributes to the recruitment and hiring of faculty of color (Dissertation by Ines Maria Maturana) 2006; Recruitment and retention of faculty of color in Oklahoma (Dissertation by Rodney Lynn Clark), Sept. 1, 2006; Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet success. Turner, Caroline Sotello Viernes, Samuel L. Meyers, Jr. 2000.

National conferences often provide opportunities to post positions and to talk to potential applicants. OCC might send representatives to recruiting day activities often offered by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Tribal Colleges. OCC could also seek to establish relationships with the graduate school placement offices of these same colleges and universities so job postings can be sent to them for possible advertising. Graduate students nearing the end of their academic studies might be interviewed for current faculty or professional openings and potential future openings. OCC might develop an internship program for graduate students without teaching experience—allowing these individuals to gain work experience. The main goal is to entice individuals to apply for positions and thus diversifying the pool of applicants. Once hired, it is essential to connect

the faculty to individuals who can serve as mentors and who can help them transition into the community and into the institution.

Below are web links to a list of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs):

- HBCU's: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historically_black_colleges
- HSI's: <http://www.chci.org/chciyouth/resources/hispanicserving.htm>

It will be necessary to do a little digging to see which of these institutions have graduate programs. Connect with those institutions to determine the best way to get job posting to their graduates.

C. Master Planning

Like many institutions, OCC has struggled to find a planning model that is effective and efficient. No model is perfect, and criticism of the level of communication between and among employee groups is unavoidable. This team believes that the College Planning Council model for planning that has been adopted at OCC has a chance to be successful, and as stated in the Assurance Section, should serve as the cornerstone for shared governance. In order for the Master Plan, as developed by the College Planning Council, to be effective this team recommends the following:

- Continue to clarify the roles of each of the four committees: Academic Senate, Business Services Functional Committee, Human Resources Functional Committee, and Student Services Functional Committee. Clearly document the responsibilities and powers of each of the functional committees, and how information and decisions are communicated both up and down the chain of command. Because the College Planning Council is still fairly new, many members reported that they did not understand the role of the committees, and how those roles coincided with departmental action plan development, and other decision making processes.
- Provide training for new College Planning Council members on the purpose and function of the Council, so that they may immediately begin functioning as effective members.
- Involve many individuals and groups in the development of the plan that will assess the effectiveness of the College Planning Council. While it will take extra time, allowing wide-spread input into identifying the measures by which the Council will be judged is critical to its credibility. While the Council may be satisfied with their progress and communication strategies, input from those that have to implement the decisions is important. Input should be solicited from not only all employee groups, but by students and community members.

- Consider publishing on the campus website a calendar of activities and decisions by the College Planning Council, with links to more in-depth information. It is always difficult to know how much information to provide, and providing a standard summary of actions and timelines for all, with opportunities to access more information on an as-needed basis will help the Council walk the line between too much and too little information.
- While the College Planning Council has excellent internal representation, there appears to be little opportunity for any community perspective in regard to the Master Plan. While it would not be a good use of a community member's time to participate in all College Planning Council meetings, there needs to be some vehicle to gather environmental information for the purposes of future planning. Including community members in an environmental scanning day, or community needs planning session once every few years would open the planning process up, and garner useful information about the needs of the communities and the businesses served by OCC.

D. Distance Education Help Desk

The team noted the multitude of services which OCC provides for its online students. Library research, a 24/7 help desk, campus linkages to student information, etc. were present in the online student materials. OCC is to be commended for its thorough compilation of services for its online students. However, it was found that the online help desk did not respond after two attempts on different days by the site visit team who self identified as an HLC site visitor for information regarding the service. Furthermore, technical staff members from OCC stated when meeting with the site team that the online help desk function was outsourced and handled by an off-campus company. The OCC technical staff also acknowledged that they were aware that there were issues with the service and a lack of response. It is recommended that OCC consider other options for internal or external sources to handle their online help desk function.

E. Assessment (Viewpoint)

Oakland Community College (OCC) has recently re-convened its Assessment Committee to revitalize many of the previously developed assessment activities in programs and disciplines. Assessment programs must be created and managed by faculty; it is the experience of the team that any other method does not create effective results. Ensuring that assessment activities are in place for all programs and courses, and that those activities contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning requires complex organization and communication. Because OCC fell

behind in its assessment efforts for some time, extra effort should be put forth to keep the assessment activities moving forward consistently in all programs and disciplines. It is important to continually stress the importance and value of the assessment process to the students and faculty. To accomplish this, the administration and faculty leadership should allocate time for assessment discussions at faculty meetings, College Council meetings, and other venues. New faculty members should be trained in OCC's assessment process, and experienced faculty members should be invited to these training sessions so that they stay interested and involved in the assessment process. Adjunct faculty members should have an opportunity to become involved in the assessment planning process. Because such a large percentage of class sections are taught by adjuncts, they need to have a voice in the tools they use to assess learning, and have an opportunity to review and discuss assessment results. While it is difficult to find time to bring adjuncts on campus other than for classroom teaching, it would be well worth the time to schedule a couple of evening or Saturday planning sessions for discipline specific assessment activities that adjuncts can attend. Providing dinner or lunch and plenty of opportunity for discussion sometimes is enough of an encouragement to give up an evening or a Saturday.

Like many colleges, OCC still struggles with how to integrate state-mandated program review with institution driven assessment planning. The Assessment Committee, in conjunction with the College Planning Council and Academic Senate should create a flow chart that clearly outlines the timelines, processes, and interconnectedness of the assessment of student academic achievement plan, the state-mandated Academic Program Reviews, and the budget process for allocation of resources for the improvement of teaching and learning. This document should help all parties understand the relationship between the processes, and avoid duplication of effort and data.

F. Assessment (Viewpoint)

The SOAC team has worked hard to raise awareness of general education and program assessment. The specifics of the assessment need strong academic leadership and wider faculty involvement to make the indicators germane to classroom activity.

Much work still needs to be done to create measureable outcomes that connect to classroom activity. If the program learning outcome is for students to communicate effectively or problem-solve, and English or Math could get students to attain this outcome, then what is the value that the program course add? Learning outcomes of the program must then show how they further support the development of such skills or assist with the application of clear communication in the occupational context.

Because so many programs have a similar core curriculum, the consideration of program clusters would provide some curricular integrity and assist in developing a meaningful assessment plan, similar to the concept of discipline assessment. The current OCC general education assessment plan has sixteen competencies or attributes. These are far too many for continuous assessment to impact curricular change. It may be possible to have several faculty discussions beyond the ad hoc group that reviewed the attributes. The faculty discussion should be broad in scope and re-occurring. There are questions about how critical thinking and creative thinking are developed in their course. The likely outcome should be that creative and critical thinking will become one integrated competency.

OCC provided some analysis of the next steps in assessment and suggested the need to have faculty involvement in assessment through the contract and to have deans more involved also. This appears to be a punitive approach. Perhaps the college could also make the information on the assessment database available to departments/programs and faculty. With easy access, instructors are more likely to take ownership and point out ways that the assessment plan does or does not connect to their daily course activity. Perhaps an incentive could be offered for faculty who log-on, review and provide input and suggestions.

Program assessment facilitators, who support assessment in many programs, need assistance from deans and upper administration as the curriculum leaders. They can provide the leadership for faculty to sharpen assessment plans and identify realistic and applicable learning outcomes. Without a clear structure of responsibility and accountability for assessment, it will likely continue to falter and not impact the curriculum. If the institutional organizational structure does not appear to value assessment, faculty will not make assessment a priority not see it as integral to their work.

G. Board Development

The Oakland Community College Board of Trustees needs to undergo a serious examination of its role in light of comments made by external and internal constituents who questioned the Board's effectiveness. Specifically, the evaluation team supports the self-study's statements that the Board tends to micro-manage college affairs, openly and publically voice disagreements, and failure to work effectively with and through the chancellor's office. The general feeling at the college was that the chaos at the Board level had led to instability at the District Office and may filter down to the deans and other key campus personnel.

The bottom line – stemming from a quote at the evaluation team’s meeting with trustees – was the college continues to prosper in spite of the Board. This Board is advised to take seriously the expectations set forth in the Monitoring Report which is due by May 1, 2010.

III. RECOGNITION OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND PRACTICES

A. Pontiac Center

The Pontiac Center (Professional Development and Training Center) is one of the finest we have seen. Developed in 1998 to meet the growing professional development and training needs of OCC employees, the Pontiac Center has offered hundreds of workshops and over 146,900 hours of training. Its state of the art facility in downtown Pontiac is augmented by dedicated training rooms at each of the five OCC campuses. The PDTC provides an annual series of workshops including new employee orientation, “Building Leadership @ OCC,” customer service, diversity and cultural awareness, and emerging practices in teaching and learning. In addition, the PDTC provides customized training to OCC departments on demand, as well on online training opportunities. Staffed by three full-time trainers, 25 in-house facilitators and six external trainers, the PDTC is justifiably proud of having changed faculty and staff perceptions of training from that of punitive to that of true professional development.

B. Academic Support Centers

The Oakland Community College Academic Support Centers are a comprehensive, engaged and integrated environment that offers opportunities for learning that occur in and out of the classroom for the entire college community.

The ASC has a professional and friendly staff and uses an accredited program process to train and certify tutors and better support the success of students in need of peer tutors. The Center also offers courses in student success; Critical Thinking Dialogues on various ethical issues; and a number of workshops on getting the most out of college. The student success materials are now also available online.

The ASC is also an open writing lab; hours are posted and students do not need to set up an appointment. Students with writing challenges can also attend workshops in the ASC that address specific writing challenges, fragments, run-ons and the Modern Language Association style of referencing material.

The ASC has an impressive array of computer resources to assist students to be independent learners and become their personal best. Besides the Supplemental Instruction Program being impressively connected to more than 150 course sections, students have the opportunity to provide feedback on the utility of the support provided. Students are also able to earn extra credit in specific classes by completing a global assignment using the internet through the ASC. Many resources are available for the international students and students learning English as a Second Language that further integrate the in- and out-of-classroom learning activities.

C. CREST

The Combined Regional Emergency Services Training (CREST) program has experienced great success. This program is unique within itself by constructing facilities such as banks, houses, motel, and five-story, live-fire training tower. The program serves police and firefighters communities for training for real life emergencies. This accomplishment is fairly rare, and the faculty and students deserve recognition for this significant accomplishment. The college is to be commended for its successful efforts to address the needs of the emergency services community.

D. Affordability

OCC has a stable financial base that is strengthened by responsible and self-sustaining financial practices. Relative to other state community colleges and universities in Michigan, OCC, demonstrates a high level of sensitivity to student financial limitations by maintaining one of the lowest tuition rates in the state. More than a combination of a healthy fund balance and low tuition; the staff at OCC has leveraged significant external funds to provide programs and services to students.