

Report of a Visit
to
Oakland Community College
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
April 6, 7, 8, 1998
for the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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Introduction

This is a report of a Comprehensive Visit for the Continued Accreditation of Oakland Community College by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The report contains four parts. The first part includes an introduction to the College and information relating to its establishment and accreditation history. The second part of the report addresses the evaluation for affiliation with special emphasis on the General Institutional Requirements and the Criteria for Accreditation. Advice and suggestions from the visiting team comprise the third portion of the report. These should be clearly understood as advisory and have no direct impact on the accreditation of Oakland Community College. The final section of the report includes the recommendations and rationale of the visiting team and concludes with the Worksheet for Statement of Affiliation Status form.

History

Oakland Community College was established through passage of a Districtwide ballot proposal on June 8, 1964, which authorized the College to levy a property tax of one mill in perpetuity to support operations. A Board of Trustees was elected at large by the residents of the District via nonpartisan ballot. The College began classes in September 1965 in buildings at two newly purchased sites: the Auburn Hills Campus and the Highland Lakes Campus. The College set a national record for community college enrollment with an opening enrollment of 3,760 students. By the Fall of 1970, enrollment

had risen to 15,142.

In 1964, the College purchased a tract in Farmington Hills and began construction on the site which opened as the Orchard Ridge Campus in September 1967. Property was then acquired in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, to build a separate administrative center now called the District Office.

In the 1970's, student population and physical plant both experienced rapid growth. At the Auburn Hills Campus seven major structures were completed including a classroom building, administrative center, library, and student center. At the Highland Lakes Campus there were three new structures which included a physical education facility, a student center, and a science building. The Orchard Ridge Campus added a large community activity building featuring an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Student growth led the College to lease properties in the cities of Oak Park and Royal Oak to better serve the communities of the southeast quadrant which is the most populous portion of Oakland County. From the beginning these two sites were administered as a single unit first named the Southeast Campus Center and becoming the College's fourth campus. By the late 1970's, student enrollment had grown to 22, 431 for the day and evening classes at five College sites, as well as a number of extension centers.

The most recent construction phase of the College was in the 1980's with the opening of a business science and art building, a criminal justice building, and an advanced technology center at the Auburn Hills Campus. The Highland Lakes Campus completed construction of an additional classroom building, and the Orchard Ridge Campus converted its outdoor amphitheater into a 450-seat performing arts center. At the Southeast Campus Center operations were transferred from Oak Park Campus to a new building constructed on property purchased in the City of Southfield. The Southeast Campus Center building program was completed in 1982 with the opening of a large enclosed campus in downtown Royal Oak containing classrooms, administrative offices, a

library, a theater, and extensive facilities for art instruction. In 1987 a center was established in leased facilities in downtown Pontiac, Michigan.

In the Fall of 1990, the student population increased to 28,667 making the College the largest of Michigan's 28 community colleges. Although the College has experienced enormous growth over the last three decades on the strength of revenue generated by the single mill authorized at the time of its establishment, the original charter mill has been effectively reduced by 20 percent because of State tax limitation measures enacted in the mid 1980's. The College began a millage campaign in 1994 which on the second attempt was endorsed by voters in June of 1995 permitting the College to levy an additional eight-tenths (.8) mill limited to seven years.

Accreditation History

The College was granted Candidacy Status in 1968 by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The College was granted accreditation in 1971 for three operationally separate campuses: Auburn Hills Campus, Highland Lakes Campus, and Orchard Ridge Campus. The College was granted continued accreditation in 1976 for all four campuses at the associate degree-granting level.

The College had a North Central Association reevaluation in 1980-1981 which recommended Continued Accreditation and set the next Comprehensive Evaluation Visit for 1987-1988. The 1987-1988 Comprehensive Evaluation Visit continued accreditation of the College through 1997-1998 with the stipulation that a Focus Visit be scheduled for 1990-1991 to check progress on the development of a comprehensive institutional master plan.

This report is part of the Comprehensive Visit which took place in 1997-1998. Team members reviewed the Self-Study Report, the appendices to the report, the College catalog, the Basic Institutional Data forms, and other related information prior to the visit. The

resource rooms at the sites contained additional materials including plans, minutes, studies, and the like.

Team members met individually and in small groups with students, staff, faculty, administration, and Foundation Board members. In addition, open meetings were held for students, staff, faculty, and administration. A forum for members of advisory committees and the public-at-large was conducted. Finally, the visiting team had a dinner meeting with the Board of Trustees.

General Institutional Requirements

In order to determine if the College meets the 24 General Institutional Requirements, team members interviewed appropriate personnel, examined College records, minutes, students records, faculty credentials, and supplemental materials in the resources room as well as the institution's response to the General Institutional Requirements in the Self-Study Report. After examining each General Institutional Requirement, it is the visiting team's opinion that all requirements have been met by the College.

CRITERION ONE THE INSTITUTION HAS CLEAR AND PUBLICLY-STATED PURPOSES CONSISTENT WITH ITS MISSION AND APPROPRIATE TO AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The College's mission statement, institutional purposes, and values as stated in the Self-Study Report (page 54) and the College catalog (page 6) are appropriate to an institution of higher education and strongly exhibit a commitment to the role of a comprehensive community college. The mission and purposes were adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 21, 1996, and the team found that the Board understood and fully supported the College's mission and purposes statement. Interviews with faculty, staff, and students confirm that there is a general understanding of the mission and purposes of the institution. The institutional and educational goals which provide ongoing direction

for the institution are referenced in general terms in the Self-Study Report Addendum (page 4).

In an effort to strengthen two-way communication, the Chancellor has initiated a Business and Community Alliance initiative involving leaders from various constituencies. This initiative has resulted in greater support from the business community. During the community meeting, the visiting team found that within the business community there exists an understanding of the mission and purposes and support for the College in addressing the needs of Oakland County.

In interviews with faculty and staff, the visiting team found that decision-making processes to support the institutional mission were unclear. The role of various councils, e.g. College Planning Council (CPC), College Academic Senate (CAS), College Academic and Student Services Council (CASSC), are not generally understood among faculty and staff. The overall score on the Personnel Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) was generally positive with a mean score of 3.51.

The mission and purposes of the College are generally well understood both internally and externally and are documented in the Self-Study Report. The visiting team found that the College meets Criterion One.

CRITERION TWO

THE INSTITUTION HAS EFFECTIVELY ORGANIZED THE HUMAN, FINANCIAL, AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSE

Governance and Administration

The College is one of 28 public community colleges in the State of Michigan. The College is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees elected at large from the community through a nonpartisan election. The trustees serve without compensation. Since 1993, the Board of Trustees has also had a Student Representative participating in Board meetings. The Student Representative is selected through an interview process and

has no voting privileges.

Members of the Board of Trustees demonstrate an understanding of the role of the College and individually express a sincere commitment to the institution's success. The Board's recognition of the need to improve their collaborative interaction and to strengthen their collective effectiveness, as evidenced by recent work with an external consultant, will set the stage for the Board to become even more effective as an institutional governing body.

Organization

The College's organizational structure provides for appropriate leadership and management responsibilities within the institution. The organization consists of a District Office supporting five campuses and the Pontiac Center. The Auburn Hills Campus, Highland Lakes Campus, and Orchard Hills Campus are each served by a campus President and Deans managing the traditional areas of academic services, student services, and campus services. The Royal Oak Campus and Southfield Campus are served by one President with Deans and Directors managing the traditional functions. The Pontiac Center facility is primarily a training facility for workforce preparation services, job placement, adult career counseling, and staff development.

Since the 1987 North Central Association visit, the College has had three different Chancellors each with a different management style, organizational structure, and strategic and operational planning process. As noted in the Self-Study Report, the College moved from plan to plan as a consequence of the political hegemony of the current Chancellor and on guts and instinct. The College also failed to communicate in meaningful effective ways why it was curtailing certain planning initiatives and beginning new ones. This lack of communication and specific direction has also contributed to confusion and low morale of the College staff.

College personnel reported that there is a perceived “organizational instability” due to a strong dependence upon employees serving in key administrative positions on an interim basis. A review of the records indicated that there have been 16 interim appointments across the College as of April 1998. Employees are also concerned about the number of contractual personnel that are replacing fulltime personnel especially in the Information and Technology Department.

The College has organized its shared governance around a council structure consisting of the following:

- o The Chancellor’s Council concentrates on the development and revision of policy and the development of the goals for the institution and serves as a final point of decision for issues to be resolved on the management of the College.
- o The College Administrative Services Council deals with issues relating to fiscal integrity, maintenance of health and safety, standards for staffing levels, long-term maintenance of buildings and equipment, staff development, purchasing, and contract standards.
- o The College Planning Council is charged with developing a strategic plan for the College, coordinating the planning process, reviewing campus plans for consistency, and identifying the ends for which the planning of the College will be directed.
- o The College Academic and Student Services Council provides direction on credit and noncredit offerings, assessment of learning, benchmarks standards for levels of service relating to the instructional program.
- o The President’s Cabinet functions as a final decision-making body relative to contractual issues, services, facilities, contract training, or programs relating to the operational aspect of all the campuses.

In addition to the councils at the Districtwide level, there is a College Academic Senate which operates at the College level representing all employees and students. There are also Campus Academic Senate Councils on each campus, a District Office Academic Senate Council and a College Academic Senate Council comprised of all the site Senate Councils. The membership on each of these councils is identified and the function of each of the councils is outlined. Nonetheless, there is confusion among the staff, however,

regarding duplication or overlapping and confusion about the relationship between the College Planning Council and the other councils identified above. The November 1996 PACE indicated that the following areas had the lowest mean score for each of the employee groups:

- o The extent to which decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution -
- o The extent to which the institution is effectively organized -
- o The extent to which a spirit of cooperation exists at this institution -

Human Resources

The College maintains a centralized Human Resources Department under the direction of a Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and College Communications. The College is served by staff members who are categorized into seven employee groups and the number in each group as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1) Administration | 41 |
| 2) Management | 109 |
| 3) Faculty | 297 |
| 4) Classified | 232 |
| 5) Operating Engineers | 10 |
| 6) Maintenance | 103 |
| 7) Safety Officers | 17 |

Each of these employee groups is represented by a union, the most recent being the administrative and management staff being represented by Teamsters Local No. 214 since 1996. These two groups are currently working without a contract. Fifteen administrators and 18 management staff included in the above numbers are considered Exempt Staff and therefore are not members of this bargaining unit. The only other employee group, Adjunct Faculty, is not eligible to join the College Faculty Association.

The Human Resources Department maintains centralized personnel files. A sample review of personnel files indicates appropriate documentation in the form of applications and transcripts showing appropriate degrees for teaching faculty. The College maintains a job classification structure with salary grades for all classified staff and a complete listing of job descriptions for all categories of employees. Each employee also receives an employee handbook as evidenced by a signed statement in the personnel files. Evaluation procedures for clerical and maintenance staff consist only of an evaluation during the probationary period or if an employee changes jobs within the institutions. Faculty evaluation procedures are spelled out in the contract and those evaluations are maintained by the department chairs. Management and administrative staff do not have a formal evaluation process, but do identify annual goals and objectives which are reviewed with their supervisor on an annual basis.

The former performance assessment development system is no longer in use at the College. The College should implement a more formal and consistent evaluation system for all employee groups which could improve the communication between employee and supervisor as well as identify staff development needs for each employee. The evaluation session may also identify how the individual employee can contribute to the achievement of the vision, mission, and strategic plans of the institution.

The College has appropriate grievance procedures spelled out in the contracts and an affirmative action plan exists that details the minority groups in the workforce pool compared to the employee groups at the College.

There is an employee information group which meets monthly to share information on such items as Board policies, staff development, finance and budget, enrollment and general College information. A representative from each employee group except faculty, attends this meeting and is expected to take information back to each of its employee

groups. The Faculty Relations Committee meets monthly with the Chancellor for an informal discussion of College concerns and reports back to the faculty.

Faculty

The College has 297 fulltime faculty of which 92 percent have a master's degree or higher, 4.3 percent have bachelor's degrees, 2.3 percent have associate degrees, and 1 percent with no degree. The College employs approximately 556 adjunct faculty of which approximately 74 percent have a master's degrees or higher, 13.6 percent hold bachelor degrees, 5.22 percent have associate degrees, and 7.19 percent no degree. The base teaching load for fulltime faculty is 30 instructional credit hours per year. Adjunct faculty are limited to no more than 8 credit hours during a full semester or 4 credit hours during a spring or summer session. The College goal is to limit the annual percentage of instructional credit hours taught by adjunct faculty to 35 percent. The average age of fulltime faculty is 51.8 years with almost 1/3 of the fulltime faculty being 60 years of age or older. This data indicates that there will be a significant number of fulltime faculty retirees over the next several years. Fulltime faculty may earn up to 60 percent of their base salary in overloads consisting of additional classes or additional students over a designated full class or other overload assignments.

Fiscal year 1997-1998 data shows 650 FTE instructional faculty comprised of 251 fulltime faculty, 251 adjunct faculty, and 148 overload faculty. This illustrates that almost 100 percent of instructional fulltime faculty carry the maximum overloads. In addition there were 27 FTE librarians and 51 FTE counseling faculty for a total of 728 FTE faculty. There were 14,306 FYES in 1996-1997, which equates to a total student-faculty ratio of 19.65 to 1. The student-instructional faculty ratio is 22 to 1.

A review of the fulltime staffing analysis indicates that the total number of staff is 807 for fiscal year 1998, which is approximately the same level of staffing in 1991-1992

when the College enrolled 17,164 FYES compared to 13,613 FYES in 1998. The information technology plan and the reengineering efforts need to identify improved efficiencies in the College's operations and utilization of staff. The College plans to reduce personnel costs by replacing retiring faculty with less expensive new hires and by restructuring the workforce by "defunding" some 50 positions within the institution.

Enrollment

The College's enrollment on a fiscal year equated student basis reached a high of 17,165 in 1991-1992, however, has declined to approximately 13,613 FYES in FY 1998, a 21 percent decrease in enrollment. The College believes that the enrollment decline has leveled off and is budgeting level enrollment for fiscal year 1998-1999. Approximately 87 percent of the students are in-district, 11 percent out-of-district, and 2 percent out-of-state. The College is projecting an enrollment increase of 1 percent per year beginning in fiscal year 2000 in the Five-Year Financial Plan. The College has also identified and staffed a new position, Executive Director of Marketing, to address the enrollment issue.

Finance

The College Board of Trustees and executive leadership are commended for their innovative approach to securing additional local funding for the institution in June of 1995 with voter approval of a .8 millage increase in the property tax. The increased revenue that will be provided through the seven-year property tax increase will have a very positive impact on the physical plant and infrastructure of the institution. College personnel who were instrumental in the passage of the property tax increase expressed their desire that progress reports to the community should be provided on a regular basis showing how this additional levy is being utilized. The institution's ability to deliver on the promised improvements and the public perception of the institutional stewardship of this additional tax money will be instrumental in maintaining public support for the institution.

Prior to the passage of the levy, the College received approximately \$26.5 million in local taxes. Since 1995, the College will receive an additional \$25-\$30 million per year for the next seven years to be used for renovation, upgrades in improvements in facilities, scholarships, technology, new programs, and stabilization of tuition costs. Support of general operating cost was not a part of the 1995 millage campaign. There was a great need for these funds to bring the facilities up to standard. The College has a significant backlog of deferred maintenance projects in the form of roof repairs, lighting, parking lots, fire alarms, security systems, sidewalk repairs, and carpet replacements. The College does not have a preventive maintenance program or an equipment replacement program to address these issues and extend the useful life of the buildings and equipment. The College has identified through a Facilities Master Plan, over \$80 million of facility renovation, upgrades, and improvements to the physical facilities on the campuses. The plan also addresses issues of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance to meet the needs of disabled staff and students. The College has hired a Director of Facilities to oversee all of these construction projects. The Director of Facilities is working with a contract management consultant as well as architects, engineers, and designers on these projects. There is a need for improved participation of the Directors of Campus Services and the Operating Engineers in working with the Director of Facilities, architect/engineers, and the Contract Management Consultant. Improved communication throughout the process will result in better facilities to serve the needs of students and staff.

The College has developed a five-year information technology budget plan totalling over \$35 million and is currently working with a technology alliance partner, SCT on the specifics such as academic planning, network expansion, application software and equipment to improve technology throughout the College. The institutional commitment to provide access to technology in the classroom and the workplace is evidenced by this budget plan. The Institutional Technology Plan, dated April 1997, states that the vision is

to "provide a technology-based infrastructure which consistently facilitates a learner - centered environment using a set of delivery tools which share a common framework and insures data integration with continuous process." This is an excellent beginning to fulfill the institutional commitment to its students and community. College staff reported that the absence of an academic master plan continues to be problematic in the full development of a technology plan.

A ten-year review of revenue sources for the College indicates that the property taxes represent approximately 35 percent of the revenue through 1994-1995 which then jumped to approximately 55 percent of the total revenue of the institution. State appropriations over that same time period fell from 25-26 percent of the revenue down to 19 percent. Tuition and fee revenues which represented 35-37 percent of the general fund budget have been reduced to approximately 24 percent due primarily to the enrollment decline. Over the past ten years, the College has generally operated with a balanced budget. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1997, the College had a general fund balance of \$11,682,000 which is approximately 11 percent of the annual revenue in the general fund. The target fund balance level for the College is 12 to 15 percent of general fund revenue. The five-year budget model project contributes to this fund balance of approximately \$1.7 million per year, however, the projected shortfall limits that fund balance increase. The College plans to build the fund balance to a higher level by the year 2003 given the uncertainty of the outcome of the .8 mill renewal request.

A review of the expenditure side of the budget indicates that personnel costs are 86.5 percent of the general fund budget excluding the additional revenues from the .8 mill tax rate. Without any increase in personnel, personnel costs as a percent of the total general fund revenues to 2003 will be 100 percent of the total general fund revenue not including the .8 mill tax. A portion of the .8 mill tax revenue is being allocated to recurring expenses which will present a serious financial concern in 2003 if the renewal millage is

not approved. On this basis, the College is encouraged to follow through on the reengineering and reorganization plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and to meet the strategic goal of keeping personnel costs within 80 percent of the general fund budget.

Physical Resources

The College physical facilities consists of 1,645,500 square feet of buildings at seven locations throughout the District and approximately 490 acres of land. A major strength of the College is the level of funding through the .8 mill rate to improve, renovate, or expand laboratories, instructional areas, and student service areas.

The learning resources at the campuses offer a wide variety of books, periodicals, video tapes, and access to the internet.

Each campus has a Public Safety Office staffed with trained officers deputized by Oakland County. The officers are on-duty when the campuses are open.

The College facilities are attractive and provide a safe, student-friendly environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

Budget Process

The executive leadership of the College has expressed the intent to implement a budgeting process that directly translates the institutional plans into operational budgets. Based upon interviews with College employees, the visiting team concludes that the potential change to a planning driven model is perceived to be very positive by the faculty and staff. The visiting team found, however, that the current system is based upon incremental or percentage change in individual budgets determined by the central office. There was some skepticism expressed by staff that adequate progress was being made to develop the necessary processes and/or tools to implement a change in the budgeting process. In addition, the middle management of the College appears to be unclear

concerning the status of their budget position at any point during a given operating year. The revised planning process and budgeting process should include periodic reports to all areas of the College regarding the College plans and expenditures.

Audits

The College financial statements are audited annually by an independent public accounting firm. The firm of Deloitte and Touche has consistently expressed an unqualified audit opinion from fiscal years 1995 to the present. The auditors' management letters did identify some concerns that should be taken into account in the development of the technology plan. The auditors indicate that the College should have a comprehensive business continuity plan that documents the action necessary to restore central business operations in the event of a major disaster especially the restoration of critical data-processing capabilities. The auditors also suggested that the College establish security policies and procedures regarding access to information resources, data or programs that may be modified without authorization. The information security policy should define expectations from management regarding confidentiality and the proprietary nature of College information.

Endowment Funds

The College has established an endowment with funds received from the sale of several acres of land to the City of Auburn Hills and the sale of 67 acres of land to UAW - GM Skilled Development and Training Administrative Center. The value of the endowment as of June 30, 1997, was \$17,229,737. The earnings from these funds are allocated 80 percent to scholarships and 20 percent is added to the principle portion of the fund to combat erosion of principle due to inflation.

The Oakland Community College Foundation was formed in 1979 and currently has assets totalling \$670,000. The Foundation is a separate entity with its own Governing

Board and financial statements. It would appear that given the demographics of the College District, the Foundation would have great potential in securing donations of equipment and other funds to assist the College.

Based upon the visiting team's review as outlined above, the College meets the requirement of Criterion Two.

CRITERION THREE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PURPOSES

Educational Programs

The College, consistent with its six stated purposes, offers educational programs, student services, and instructional support services to accomplish these purposes and fulfill the mission of the College.

Career Programs

The College has established career programs at each of the five campuses which are unique to that campus with the exception of accounting, business, and business information systems which are found on all campuses. Each career program has an advisory committee which meets at least once a year with some meeting almost on a monthly basis. A review of minutes reveals that advisory committees share information on such items as job prospects, career opportunities, and information on curriculum content. New career programs do require that advisory committees be formed and that members participate in the development, and to a lesser extent, design of the curriculum. Career or technical program advisory committee participation seems appropriate to the mission of the College. In general the advisory committees are a good resource for the programs.

A graduate guarantee is in place for all Associate in Applied Science Degree Program graduates. This program has been in place for four years and according to various deans no graduate has returned to the College for further skill-training.

Available data indicates that students are finding employment in the disciplines for which they are graduating. Records reviewed also point to program success in such areas as licensure examinations, certification or registration examination, job placement, and employer satisfaction with program graduates.

A concern that was expressed to the visiting team was that in some of the low enrollment career programs, courses in the second year of the program are not always offered due to low enrollment. Thus, students are unable to graduate from the program or course substitutions are made that are questionable. The College is encouraged to develop a plan and to advertise it to students in low enrollment programs detailing the frequency in which courses are offered so that students can plan their schedules. The College also needs to consider the need to offer a course even though the minimum 12 students are not enrolled or consider the need for discontinuation of the program.

Enrollment at the College has been in a steady decline for the past five years. Drops in enrollments have taken place in both the parttime and fulltime student ranks. The drops in enrollment have resulted in approximately a 7.5 percent fulltime student equivalent loss over a three-year period. The College has been losing students from both daytime and evening offerings. Over the past three years approximately 23 programs experienced drops in completion rates, although an equal number of programs saw no change in enrollment patterns or some slight improvements in completion rates. While it was somewhat difficult to determine from the available data, it appears that several programs offered by the College had no program graduates in 1997. It also appears that 34 programs had 10 or fewer graduates over a three-year period.

Evening enrollment in courses still accounts for the majority of the College enrollment. Now that the College has put in place a program review process that tracks actual program performance over a select period of time, it may be able to selectively look at long-term program reductions based on trend analysis. In the same vein, it may also be

able to put in place well structured marketing tools to help the programs grow enrollments, given that overall graduate placement rates appear to be very good on a program-by-program basis.

Because of decreasing enrollment there are plans to drop the following programs effective this Fall:

Computer Integrated Manufacturing -
Quality Assurance Technology -
Vehicle Body Technology
Fluid Power Technology -

However, some of the courses in the programs will be maintained.

Facilities and equipment in the business, computer information systems, and technology areas are good. In some of the computer laboratories, attention to ergonomic factors should be given. Attention needs to be given primarily to keyboard height, chairs, and lighting.

One of the greatest challenges expressed to the visiting team by deans and faculty in career areas is keeping up with technology and the integration of technology in the classroom. It appears there is not a technology plan for the replacement of computer hardware and software in the business area. This is especially important since the business area is found on all campuses and similar hardware and software should be in place to support the courses in the programs. Technical assistance for academic computing also appears to be lacking institutionwide. Faculty is responsible for loading software and maintaining the computers.

The College is to be complimented on its cooperative arrangement with area industries to provide the required related instruction for apprenticeships. Students receive a certificate upon completion and then have the opportunity to continue their education to earn an Associate Degree in Applied Science with specialization in their training area. Approximately 200 students are enrolled in the Cooperative Education programs.

Restricted or tailored degree programs have also been developed for DANA Corporation, General Motors, and Chrysler Corporation and are found in the College catalog. In discussions with staff, it was mentioned that students want to enroll in the programs but are told that the programs are unavailable to them. Consideration should be given to removing these programs from the catalog since they are not open to the general public.

At the Auburn Hills Campus, continuing education courses are offered in the Public Services Division in the areas of law enforcement and emergency medical training. The Southfield Campus offers noncredit courses in fire science. The Manufacturing and Technological Services at Auburn Hills Campus provides noncredit customized training.

Transfer and General Education

The College has articulation agreements with several four-year colleges. In addition to the articulation agreements, there are lists of course equivalencies with various colleges and universities online and readily accessible to counselors and students. These are updated regularly. Trend data has not been available for several years. The State of Michigan's institutions of higher education are autonomous and there is not a mandatory data collection and distribution process in place. Several voluntary data exchange consortia are being organized but it is unlikely that they will have the same impact as a State-mandated collaboration.

New courses may be added in the transfer division, however, the process is not well understood or communicated throughout the District. There appears to be some reluctance to add new courses due to concerns regarding their impact on workloads. These issues may be addressed through the College's reengineering process.

Currently, the College is engaged in discussions of the major components of its general education philosophy. A Collegewide committee is in place and considerable

work has been done to identify attributes and to develop models that may be utilized to assess student success in the completion of general education goals. This phase of the process should be completed by the Fall of 1998 and the implementation phase should begin.

GIR 16-General Education states that there should be coherent general education components in degree and certificate programs. Upon review of the College catalog and discussions with administration, it was confirmed that the College has no guidelines for general education in career programs which are one-year in length. In order to be in compliance with the GIR, the College needs to take steps to incorporate general education in all one-year career programs.

Transcript analysis is done by hand which causes a tremendous backlog and has a negative impact on student progress.

Faculty

The faculty has the required credentials, education, and experience to deliver the educational programs necessary to support the mission. There is no consistent instrument for the evaluation of faculty across the District. In some divisions, evaluations have not taken place in recent years due to the lack of consistency in administrative leadership. Faculty and staff morale is impacted throughout the District and it is the opinion of many that this is due to high turnover, lack of pay raises, "defunded" positions, unfilled positions, and numerous interim appointments.

Student course-opinion surveys suggest that faculty is doing a very good job in the classroom and that faculty go out of their way to help students achieve academic success. Students participating in the open sessions with the consultant evaluators also made these comments. In general, the faculty is very well qualified to teach the subject matter to which they are assigned.

The College offers a variety of inservice programs for any faculty who wishes to partake of the activity. There is no distinction made between faculty teaching technical programs and those engaged in general studies, so opportunities exist for all faculty members. Fulltime faculty are also provided with funds to cover part of the cost of attending professional development activities, workshops, and other types of conferences and meetings. The College also offers a very generous number of faculty sabbatical leaves.

Like many other institutions across the country, the College is attempting to bring its faculty up to currency in the area of computer literacy, instructional design, and application of instructional media. Much to the credit of the faculty, many of them have enrolled for courses being offered by the College in the area of computing technology and software applications.

Discussions with faculty both at the group level and with individuals, reveal that faculty are generally satisfied with the status quo. Discussions with students reveal that they feel good about the quality of the education they are receiving and about their access to faculty. There is a feeling among the student body that faculty are very helpful and willing to assist them to achieve their educational goals. Morale, however, among the academic administration of the College could be improved. High turnover rates, unfilled positions, and lack of a union contract with these individuals all appear to contribute to a negative climate for academic middle management staff.

In discussions with faculty and deans, in programs that are Districtwide, it was mentioned that students frequently take courses on different campuses. There is some coordination as to scheduling of classes, especially in advanced courses. A more coordinated effort should be made to continued this practice for all courses.

Faculty is obligated to update course outlines on a regular basis. The procedures for accomplishing this task are well outlined in the Self-Study Report. A review of multiple course syllabi however, reveals a lack of uniform application of the procedures as outlined

in the Self-Study Report. Courses with multiple sections, taught by different faculty, often did not contain the same content or for that matter the same course expectations. Much to the credit of the institution, however, it is trying to deal with this situation through the student outcomes assessment process.

Tech Prep

Within the College service area there are four tech centers and 40 high schools. Articulation agreements are signed in several of the vocational areas. Tech Prep activities are not centrally coordinated for the institution and there does not seem to be a general understanding as to what agreements are in place and how new agreements are signed. However, at each campus a counselor is designated to work with students who articulate high school courses. The process the student has to go through for accepting articulated credit appears to be cumbersome and discouraging. The College is encouraged to explore ways to streamline the process. According to the registrar, there are currently 88 students at the College who have taken advantage of articulated courses. The College is encouraged to consider centralizing the coordination of Tech Prep and to use Tech Prep as a way to recruit students into College career programs.

Assessment

The College presented its Student Outcomes Assessment Plan to the North Central Association in 1994. The plan covered:

- Collegewide Assessment -
- Campus/Site Assessment -
- Program Assessment -
- Discipline Assessment -
- Assessment of Administrative and Support Services

The model included a matrix with cells for student outcomes assessment activity, person responsible, results distributed to, time schedule and current status. Analysis of

each student outcome was to be reported to the Collegewide Student Outcomes Assessment Committee.

A revised Student Outcomes Assessment Plan prepared by the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs and the College Academic Senate Student Outcomes Assessment Committee was published on March 13, 1998. This plan was intended to simplify the process for staff, consolidate some areas and include a staff development plan. The areas covered in this plan are institutional, program, course, and out-of-classroom assessment. The matrix covers student outcomes, assessment and use of results.

A review of the Self-Study Report, the original plan, the revised plan, various reports including the reports on cohorts one and two, and faculty generated matrices was conducted to ascertain the College's progress on Student Outcomes Assessment Plan. In addition, interviews (face-to-face and via telephone) were held with College administration, faculty and staff to determine the impression of the effectiveness of the student outcomes assessment program. To get a view of the process and its implementation, it was necessary to talk to several different individuals in several different locations. There does not appear to be a centralized depository for student outcomes assessment. Bits and pieces were found in various offices throughout the District.

With respect to the five areas identified by the College in its plan, progress has been sporadic and inconsistent from campus to campus and discipline to discipline. At the institutional level, the College has tracked two student groups of 800 students and published information on the results. At present, recommendations from this study have not been implemented. At the program level, there is still much to be done. General education is an example. Although the College has identified attributes students are to experience, the first cohort group to be followed will not begin until the Fall Semester of 1998.

At the course-level, all faculty have been asked to create and incorporate within their course syllabi assessment activities for each of their courses. Although most faculty have completed the required matrix for most of their courses, there is no consistent evidence of inclusion in syllabi or implementation within the classroom.

A subcommittee addressing out-of-classroom assessment has developed strategies and a matrix for use in assessing identified outcomes. Information sessions are being held, but the first cohort study is not scheduled until Fall.

There is considerable activity at the College in the area of assessment. Several committees are working hard with planning, information sharing, and launching the program. However, at this time there does not appear to be a centralized storage of reports that indicate how feedback from analyzed data has been used to improve student learning, a North Central Association expectation. Therefore, it is the opinion of the visiting team that the College has not demonstrated satisfactory progress towards establishing a centralized storage of reports that indicate that meaningful and useful information is being provided to the planning process as well as to students, faculty, staff, and administration as a result of the student outcomes assessment program.

Library and Individualized Instruction Center

The College provides full library services at all campus sites except the Southfield Campus. The library provides a full range of services to students, faculty, staff, and the community. The combined collection exceeds 120,000 book and media titles and 1,600 periodical titles. The College is a member of the Detroit Area Library Network (DALNET) an automated library network which includes 22 tri-county libraries. Through the Library Users Information System (LUIS), students have dial-up access to catalogs of 16 tri-county area libraries, 11 electronic periodical indexes and the catalogs of: The University of

Michigan, Michigan State University, Eastern Michigan University, and Western Michigan University.

Utilizing funds from the millage campaign, the libraries are installing 100 networked PCs and CD-ROM servers. In 1995-1996, the LRCs spent about \$400,000 on equipment and license fees with \$285,000 from the general fund and the balance from campus library capital money.

Although the Southfield Campus has expressed a need for a full-service library, the College has determined that there is not sufficient space or resources. At present, services are provided in the Electronic Resource Center which houses a small reference and circulating collection of about 600 volumes and computer workstations that enable students, faculty, and staff to access LUIS and DALNET.

The learning resource centers earn high satisfactory rating from users. In the most recent survey, 74 percent of first-time students and 80 percent of students applying for graduation rated services excellent or good. It appears that the libraries with their circulating volumes and electronic capabilities are providing the support needed for student, faculty, and staff success.

The Individualized Instruction Centers (IIC) are strengths of the District. The centers facilitate student success by offering computer-supported instruction, reading improvement programs, campus tutors, English-as-a-Second Language Program, testing, (including ASSET, writing assessment, and make-up tests), success skills courses, and peer mentors (supplemental instruction or student-led study groups). The Orchard Ridge Campus has the largest IIC and is in the process of expanding. Some concern was expressed relative to perceived differences in resource allocations within the District.

Developmental Education and Adult Basic Education

The College catalog describes the purpose of the Developmental Education Program. The Self-Study Report and interviews with faculty, however, confirm that there is no Collegewide standard definition of developmental education courses. The faculty master agreement identified developmental classes as ENG 105, ENG 106, and SPE 100; the 1996-1997 ACS course taxonomy identifies yet a different set of 17 courses as developmental; certain associate degrees apply developmental to courses not permitted as electives; and courses numbered below 100 are also designated as developmental. Data reported by the Literacy Committee show that for the Fall of 1995, 55 percent of first-time entering students who took the ASSET test placed below college level on reading and writing and that 23 percent of first-time entering students were enrolled in some kind of developmental class. This lack of consistency in definition, along with a growing number of students enrolling in developmental courses, led to the academic literacy initiative at the College. This new program, to be implemented in Autumn of 1998, appears to begin to address the issue of a standard college definition of developmental education courses. Seven existing English courses will be consolidated into two academic literacy courses. The principles and objectives developed for the courses appear to be well defined. The new program does not, however, include mathematics. Students self-select their initial mathematics course based on College guidelines. No evaluative data were available to track the success of students in these self-selected mathematics courses.

Several levels of adult education courses designed to help students with basis skills are available at the Auburn Hills Campus. Program offerings include:

The Avondale Academy -
(no-nonsense adult alternative high school for students of ages 16 to 19)

Adult Basic Education -
(ABE) (reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics for students 20 years of age)

GED Preparation Classes -

(students 18 years of age)

High School Completion Classes -
(to meet requirements for a high school diploma for students 16 years of age)

English-as-a-Second-Language Program

The College offers a wide variety of courses and programs to help the fast-growing number of non-native speakers in developing competency in English. Each campus has an English-as-a-Second-Language Program (ESL) program, and advisor to assist students with admission, orientation, immigration concerns, and ESL tutoring services. The change of ESL courses from noncredit to credit status permits eligible students access to financial aid and foreign language credit. To support accurate assessment of English skills for placement in college classes, the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency is also administered at each campus. A newsletter for F-1 students, the F-1 International News, and an active International Student Club serve as communication, support, and information resources for these students. The newsletter offers timely information on subjects such as F-1 status, regulations, travel requirements, health care options, and extracurricular activities.

Continuing Education

Each campus defines continuing education and each structures continuing education differently. Coordination of continuing education varies among sites and includes assistance being provided by support, management, and administrative staff depending on location. There are indications that planning and coordination in regards to continuing education across the campuses is undefined. For example, the overall mission and purpose of continuing education is unclear and thereby provides undefined direction for each campus. There is not a communication link between campuses and organizational structure is informal or in a transitional state. It is unclear how the Business Technology

Center and Workforce/Resource Development areas are to be linked or coordinated. There is insufficient data and analysis or a needs assessment, enrollment trends, and cost effectiveness reporting for specific programs. Marketing is not coordinated and duplication across the College occurs. This is apparent with the credit ESL and the International Center.

There are indications that planning and coordination in regards to Resource/Workforce Development across the campuses is unclear. For example, a bridge does not exist between Workforce/Resource Development and the Business Technology Center at the Orchard Ridge Campus. There is duplication in marketing brochures across the District.

With declining enrollments, duplication of efforts, deficit costs, and competition there is a need to define a Continuing Education mission that is responsive to community needs. In addition, an infrastructure needs to be developed to support the mission and coordinate planning, marketing and evaluation which focuses on uniqueness of each campus and augments the strengths of each campus while facilitating meaningful coordination in the District Office.

Resource/Workforce Development

Workforce/Resource Development (Pontiac Center) consists of workforce preparation services, foundation, business and professional services, and manufacturing and technological services (Auburn Hills Campus).

The mission is to meet workforce training needs for businesses and the community and to assist in economic development. Training occurs regionally as well as around the world. After four years, Workforce/Resource Development is in the process of consolidation. The staff consists of 20 fulltime professional and classified staff, 20 parttime

credit faculty and over 100 adjunct faculty from the business sector. Two outside companies coordinate two grants.

The budget is in an auxiliary account. The goal is to cover direct costs and the College subsidizes space and facilities and any deficits. The budget is \$4 million and \$2 million in grants. Twenty-thousand students are involved in contract training each year and 5,000 students attend seminars on campus.

There are 100 strategic partnerships which include Chrysler, General Motors, DANA, EDS, Kelly Services, and K-Mart. Workforce/Resource Development is housed at the Advanced Technology Center at Auburn Hills Campus, on the third floor at the Pontiac Center, and on the first floor of the Guest House. The Advanced Technology Center has one auditorium, four high technology laboratories, and two seminar rooms. Most of the programming is customized. Open enrollment classes exist and 30 courses are generally publicized. There is noncredit as well as credit training which is provided in a nontraditional format. Most businesses involved in contract training are in manufacturing or headquarter retailers.

This area supports economic development activities by administering \$1.6 million in economic development grants as well as assisting business relocation, coordinating international partnerships, and co-hosting events. The College is one of the top 25 employers in the county and in 1992 the direct impact on the economy of Oakland County was \$145 million.

The Community and Business Alliance Initiative was formed last year which provides advice to the administration. Thirty sectors are represented and they meet quarterly. Other evaluation efforts include input from the consortium of suppliers and employer-employee input at the end of training. The staff participate in county, school District, professional association, high tech groups, and business and educational consortium activities.

The Workforce Development Forum which consists of the three sites meets every other week for two hours to share information and solve problems. There is an intent to integrate continuing professional education and to have more of a presence at each campus.

Student Services

Functional responsibilities for Students Services fall within ten major categories including:

- Enrollment (Recruitment, Admissions, Registration, Records) -
- Assessment/Orientation -
- Financial Assistance -
- Counseling -
- Programs for Academic Support Services (PASS) -
- Athletics -
- Job Placement -
- Child Care -
- Health Services -
- Student Activities -

Administrative authority for these components is distributed among the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs, the Registrar, and the Director of Financial Assistance and Scholarships at the District-level; the Deans of Academic and Student Services, Enrollment Managers, Counselors, Financial Aid Officers, Coordinators of Support Services, Child Care Coordinators, and other support staff at most campuses. Despite the atypical organizational structure, most Student Services components appear to operate effectively since open and continuous communication is fostered at all levels. The District offers a comprehensive array of support services which caters to the needs of its diverse student body. Although evaluative data was sparse, student survey respondents who utilized services rated them generally "excellent" and "good." It appears, however, that a significant portion of the student-body was not aware of all services. The Student Services employees are well trained and, in general, are a student-centered group of staff members.

Enrollment Managers who are housed at four campus sites (with royal Oak and Southfield served by one manager) supervise recruitment, admissions, registration and the records office.

The Recruitment Office at the four campus sites is staffed by one management staff recruiter who typically employs such recruitment strategies as school visits, recruitment fairs, and direct mailing. In view of the concern about declining enrollments, an Executive Director of Marketing was recently hired to coordinate Districtwide recruitment efforts.

The Admissions Office is staffed by one Admissions Specialist, and a classified employees. This office handles typical admissions functions such as application processing, residency determination, and general information dissemination.

The Registration Office at each of the four campus sites is staffed by a Registration Specialist who coordinates all registration functions. The registration process, which is conducted by touch-tone telephone, mail, fax, or in-person, appears to be efficient and well-managed. Concern, however, was expressed by several staff members that a system of course-prerequisite checking, to coincide with touch-tone telephone registration, had not yet been instituted to the satisfaction of faculty members. Thus, it is possible that a student can enroll via touch-tone telephone into classes for which prerequisites have not been met.

The Records Office is staffed by a classified employee, Records Specialist, who maintains student records at each of the four campus sites. A review of a random sample of student records confirmed that the records, including transcripts, conform to acceptable national standards.

The Registrar, based at the District Office, monitors all services related to the registration process, record maintenance, transcript evaluation, and statistical reporting. The Central Office serves as the repository for all student records. Transcript evaluation for all students is conducted in the Central Office. Concern was expressed that a significant

backlog in transcript evaluations was currently being experienced and could impact special program admissions and graduation applicants. The District Office is taking immediate steps to address this problem, however, a permanent solution needs to be instituted.

Responsibility for basic skills assessment/orientation varies from campus to campus with either the Enrollment Manager and/or the Counseling components being the focal points. New students are required to participate in this assessment (ASSET), unless certain requirements for exemptions are met. Although course placement is not mandatory at present, students are encouraged to use test results for this purpose. The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) is also utilized to assess the English skills of students whose native language is not English.

The Director of Financial Assistance and Scholarships, housed at the District Office, provides leadership for the four campus Financial Aid Officers. Each Financial Aid Officer with the support of clerical staff, handles the constantly increasing flow of applicants seeking financial assistance through Federal, State, and local sources. Currently, approximately 38 percent of the College student-body receive some form of financial assistance. A sampling of student financial aid records indicated that the Financial Aid Office applies consistent standards and are thorough with record management and maintenance. Despite the complexity of Federal rules and regulations, the Financial Aid Office demonstrates proficiency in their daily operations as evidenced by maintaining a loan default rate lower than the national average. Recent State and Federal audits have yielded no significant audit exceptions. Concern was expressed by some students that there was no deferred-tuition payment plan. Further investigation by visiting team members revealed that this plan is not in operation because within the District there is no accounts receivable process, essential for tracking tuition payments. Students, however, are encouraged to use credit cards.

The visiting team concurs with the recommendation expressed in the Self-Study Report that the Office of Financial Assistance and Scholarship (OFAS) as well as other areas within Student Services, lacks up-to-date technology that streamlines the complexity of operations and procedures.

Counseling

The visiting team met with counselors at all locations. A qualified, student-centered counseling faculty exists on each campus. In addition, adjunct counselors most of whom are counselors at local high schools, are used to provide expanded hours and services to College students while acting as liaisons to the community. Clearly, counselors are seen as essential partners in the academic enterprise.

Counseling Services are adequate. Although the counselor to student ratio of 900:1 has increased from the original 440:1 ratio, the ratio is being benchmarked against other colleges. This ratio is of concern because of the increase in at-risk students in programs requiring individual counseling plans, since counselors are also responsible for orientation and for career and educational counseling courses, Career Centers, and advising tech prep students, currently a cumbersome process. In addition, two counselors have half-time duties in the College Transfer Center, which serves all campuses from one location. Another challenge facing the College counselors is the use of technology. The verified counseling records project is underway but counselors are split over the utility of the current networking configuration and over the implications such technology will have for counseling practices and student confidentiality.

The notification and enforcement of the academic probation/suspension policy has typically been the responsibility of the Deans of Academic and Student Services, the counseling components, and enrollment departments. The variation from campus to campus as to who is ultimately responsible for enforcement of the policy and how this

process occurs poses a concern. Interviews with staff members reveals that confusion and inconsistency about interpretation and enforcement of this policy do exist.

Planning and evaluation of Counseling Services are unclear. Counselors, as all student services personnel, report through a Dean of Academic and Student Services at each campus to the campus President. At the District-level a Vice Chancellor also has responsibilities for quality Counseling Services. Planning initiatives at the District-level have centered on a reengineering effort which emphasizes standardized functions and hours for student-centered services, while at the campuses, planning initiatives are underway to implement this reengineering through quite different structures. Consistency of student advising already is challenged by student ability to move between campuses, programs, and counselors during their time at the College.

Student use of and satisfaction with Counseling Services is the only evaluation currently being performed, but use of this information is unclear in reformulating Counseling Services or in forming planning processes at either the campus or College-level. Student needs and Counseling process analysis are at best at a germinal stage.

Programs for Academic Support Services (PASS)

The Student Services Division has made a concerted effort to provide supplemental services to individuals in special populations. Programs for Academic Support Services located at each campus site and staffed by a coordinator and other support staff, provide accommodations and/or services to those students who demonstrate a need for special assistance in order to succeed in the classroom such as students who are at-risk, who have a documented disability, or who use English as a second language. A sample of services includes free tutorials, sign language interpreters, readers, notetakers, etc. The visiting team commends the College for having PASS named as an exemplary College support program by the Michigan Department of Education for two successive years.

Athletics

The College offers a wide range of intercollegiate athletic programs. Sports are offered on a Collegewide basis to all students. In a number of programs, scholarships and size of budget exceed standards for compliance with Title IX. The Athletic Program is well run and meets all National Junior College Athletic Association guidelines. The Athletic Program mission is consistent with the College mission. Retention rates for student athletes are low, but the ability of athletes to transfer to senior institution after one year of community college attendance must be taken into account.

At the same time, the visiting team had some concerns. While athletics represent a significant general fund budget expenditure, only 70 students of approximately 24,000 students are direct participants. Fitness and intramurals are available to some students, but facilities, budget and directions are inconsistent across the campuses. In addition, while each campus is within 25 minutes of another campus, the distance could be prohibitive for a student taking a full-load at a campus at some distance from the one offering a particular sport, and only three of the four campuses are sports sites.

Job Placement

Centralized coordination of Job Placement functions is administered from the Auburn Hills Campus. The Director and two co-op Coordinators, based at Auburn Hills Campus and Orchard Ridge Campus respectively, provide services to students and alumni who are seeking fulltime employment after graduation or parttime work during the academic year. The Director has worked diligently to maintain community contacts with potential employers and to keep students informed of employment opportunities. The computerized job placement network, which supplies current job listings to each campus, is one of the most successful projects within Student Services and continues to be highly utilized.

Child Care Center

Child Care Centers at the College are licensed and on-site, staffed by child-centered professionals in the field. Developmentally appropriate activities are provided for the children. Child Care Center budgets are borne by the College, providing a form of financial assistance to adult students since only a minimal charge is assessed. While the Child Care Centers are adequate, several show age and could benefit from refurbishing. The Child Care Centers could serve as training and observation sites for the Early Childhood Development Program, but faculty utilization is limited at some sites, thus decreasing potential student-staff augmentation. Closer relationships between the center and the academic program need to be explored.

Health Services

As indicated in the Self-Study Report the focus of health services has shifted from a student-centered emphasis to a campuswide function of environmental health and safety of employees and students. Staffed by a registered nurse who coordinates services for the District from the Royal Oak Campus, the Health Service Office is responsible for Collegewide compliance with MIOSHA, Federal mandates, and conducting health and safety training. In view of current reorganization issues, it is not clear whether this unit should be aligned with Administrative Services from which it was previously administered or with the Student Services Division where minimal services are delivered to students.

Student Activities

Student Activities at the College are available in different degrees at each campus. The College recognizes the lack of consistency regarding student activity practices throughout the College and has formed a task force to develop a plan. There are exemplary programs such as the Women's Center, the International Student Club open to American as well as international student membership, and Phi Theta Kappa. A unique

partnership with a local business has led to the development of a coffeehouse on College property, which has become a hub of student life on its campus. However, student opportunities for leadership development are limited, and student input in College decision-making appears to be lacking. No Student Government Office exists. Student representation on College councils and task forces is spotty, although there is a nonvoting Student Representative on the College Board of Trustees. In addition, students expressed the need for a more formal and frequent communication tool such as a student newsletter. Moreover, student lounge and recreational space is disproportionate across the campuses, and many of the spaces are not conducive to student connections to the campus as a whole. Finally, student activities except for the arts, are not integrated with the rest of Student Services nor with the academic offerings of the College. In fact, even the staff of the exemplary programs said they sometimes suffer from a benign neglect on the part of their campus and College administrators.

Auxiliary Support Services

Bookstores are maintained at all campus sites with the exception of the Southfield Campus which shares services with the Royal Oak Campus. Bookstores are operated by the College District and contribute revenues to the general operating fund. Cafeterias, which are managed by a private contractor, fall within enterprise operations. General satisfaction with services was expressed by a sample of students interviewed at various sites. The visiting team found that the College meets Criterion Three.

CRITERION FOUR
CAN THE INSTITUTION CONTINUE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSES

Planning

The College has been in the mode of “planning to plan” for over a decade engaging in a number of episodic, sporadic planning efforts, all administratively driven. In the Self-Study Report the College candidly acknowledges its inability to develop and sustain a cohesive planning process that is meaningful, regular, linked with budget, or understood throughout the institution. For example, the Self-Study Report states that the College moved from plan to plan as the consequence of the political hegemony of the current Chancellor--and on guts and instinct. The College also failed, ...to communicate in meaningful, effective ways...about why it was curtailing certain planning initiatives or beginning new ones.

In its reaccreditation visit in 1987, the North Central Association consultant-evaluator team noted in their summary list of concerns that, “A systemic, institutionwide master plan should be designed and implemented. In explanation, staff, students, the Board of Trustees, and the community should participate actively in master plan creation and thorough communication should widely occur throughout both the design and implementation phases” (1987 North Central Association team report, page 45). The visiting team recommended an evaluation take place in 1990-1991, focused on “the development and implementation of a comprehensive institutional master plan” (1987 North Central Team Report, Worksheet for Statement of Affiliation Status, page 2).

A two-person North Central Association team visited the College in March 1991, to conduct that Focus Visit. By the time of this visit, the College had launched a new planning process in December 1988, under the leadership of then-President Richard Saunders and had already begun to replace it with yet another planning process, this one conceived by the new Chancellor, Patsy Fulton-Calkins. The North Central Association

team was impressed with what they learned about planning at the College in 1991. In their conclusion they stated:

“...the visiting team is convinced that the institution has developed a plan and is in the process of implementing it. Under the leadership of the new Chancellor, many people at the College are hopeful that the dreams they have as individuals for the institution are dreams that they can share and work together to build.” (1991 Evaluation Team Report, pages 13-14)

The 1991 strategic planning process was complex. Intended to integrate strategic planning, program review, and budgeting, the process was to occur in four phases:

Environmental scanning -
Strategic planning -
Operational planning and budgeting -
Evaluation -

It was evident in the 1998 Self-Study Report, documents in the resource room, and conversations with numerous College personnel, that the Fulton-Calkins model was never actually implemented though certain parts of it, e.g., environmental scanning, were begun.

Under the present Chancellor, Richard Thompson, the College planning process has again been reformulated. The new approach relies on a College Planning Council (CPC), one of several new or reconfigured councils under the Chancellor's governance structure. The CPC members are primarily administrators and faculty with just two staff members, both added recently to the council and one student.

The CPC meets regularly and publishes minutes of its meetings. Within the past several months the Council has:

- o Published and disseminated in writing and at several meetings, ten strategic goals for the College. The goals cover approximately the next five years and are an amalgam of existing goals articulated elsewhere and goals of the Chancellor. The list represents the first compilation in one place of these goals. Goals were presented to the Board of Trustees in an executive session, but Board members were not involved in developing them. However,

because the goals either already had been articulated in other forums or were explicit goals of the Chancellor, Board members may already have been familiar with and implicitly in agreement with them. (See addendum, Self-Study Report 1998, page 22 for the list of goals).

- o Reviewed plan or project recommendations from other councils. For example, the College Planning Council will be continuously updated on plans emanating from the Technology Roundtable Project, and the CPC will serve as a broad oversight body for the technology plan.

- o Begun to review budget requests for fiscal year 1999 to assess their fit with Collegewide priorities of technology, physical plan renovation, and reengineering. For the first time, departments were asked by the Chancellor to identify budget requests in four specific categories: realignment to values, technology, general staff development, and capital (nontechnology). The CPC considered budget plans that support the Collegewide priorities as “Tier 1” requests to be given priority, and those that are more local in nature to be “Tier 2” requests. The council will be clarifying and identifying priorities for “Tier 2” requests. Apparently CPC recommendations about fiscal year 1999 budget allocations will be used by administrators as they put together the budget, but the process is so new it is difficult to determine whether or not this is an accurate statement either in theory or in fact.

The College does have a five-year financial projection model, a College physical facilities plan, and the technology plan noted above. The technology plan is heavily dependent on the work of outside consultants to guide the process of identifying desired technology initiatives and the necessary supports to bring them into reality. The College

has also embarked on a reengineering project for several functional areas, the first of which is acquiring and retaining students.

The current governance structure of the College is based on a number of Collegewide councils, as well as campus groups that concentrate on programs and plans for the individual sites. This new structure is still evolving as councils meet, engage in discussions to clarify and improve understanding of their respective roles, and work on specific projects or plans.

The new structure holds promise, but there is ambiguity and uncertainty about the ways in which each group will engage in planning and more importantly, the relationship between the College Planning Council and other councils. For example, the College Academic and Student Services Council is developing an academic master plan for the institution. The CASSC reports both to the College Academic Senate and to the Chancellor's Council. In addition, it is responsible to the College Planning Council for the academic master plan. What will happen if the CPC and the Chancellor's Council disagree about the academic master plan? What happens if a particular campus refuses or resists supporting an element of the academic master plan or another plan endorsed by the CPC? What if, at the campus-level, a new initiative is developed mid-year and leaders at that campus want to devote resources to the new initiative rather than to projects encompassed in the Collegewide plan for that year? Moreover, the relationship of the CPC developing, recommending, or approving the five-year financial projection model and the College physical facilities plan are unclear.

The College was successful in campaigning for and securing voter approval of additional millage for the College through the year 2002. The additional revenue of \$28 to \$30 million per year is to be allocated to facility and maintenance projects, technology projects, capital equipment, and contributions to the fund balance. A portion of that additional revenue is also being allocated to recurring costs in the form of new programs. If

the levy is not continued or is reduced beyond the year 2002, the loss of projected revenue may be as high as \$33 million per year. The College must have in place plans to increase revenues from other sources and to reduce expenditures should the millage not be renewed or should it be sharply reduced.

The College's capacity for institutional research and the desire of institutional research staff and key administrators to improve the collection, distribution, and use of data and information for planning and decision-making provide good support for planning at all levels. One of the Colleges's challenges over the next several years will be to make effective use of pertinent data and information, much of which is already available.

In many ways the status of planning at the College in 1998 is the same as it was in 1987 and in 1991, when previous North Central Association evaluations occurred. There continues to be a recurring pattern of failure in developing, implementing, and sustaining a planning process that is linked with budgeting and encompasses all major aspects of the institution including technology, physical facilities, academic and support service programs, professional development and training, and organization/staffing. The College was prone in the past to design cumbersome planning processes that were associated with whomever was the Chancellor. With high Chancellor turnover, it is no wonder that every few years a new planning process was installed. It is also no wonder that because no process was retained over time, the College employees felt little regard for the importance of planning across the institution. It was easy to assume that if one only held out a couple of years, whatever planning and plans had been in place would no longer matter and a whole new set of processes and plans would be installed. Planning was simply discredited.

The College is commended for recognizing it must develop and sustain a simple planning process perceived as part and parcel of the regular processes of the College, regardless of who is the Chancellor. What is not evident in the Self-Study Report, other documents, or conversations during the 1998 team visit is acknowledgement by the

College that planning decisions not only identify what goals will be pursued, but also those that will not. This is a frequently unspoken, but nonetheless, critical aspect of planning, and needs to be communicated gently but clearly.

The new planning process holds promise and can be successful if the planning roles and responsibilities of the various councils and campus-level bodies are delineated and articulated, if budget decisions really are driven by plans, if the process remains as simple as possible, and if it is regularly and routinely used over time. The plan should identify institutional priorities, expected outcomes, resources required to achieve those outcomes, and a process for annual feedback reporting to the College community on the progress toward achieving those outcomes.

The visiting team, in short, concluded that the College meets Criterion Four, but planning efforts are critical to continue to meet this criterion. The institution should continue to have the human, financial, and physical resources needed for the future of the College.

CRITERION FIVE INTEGRITY IN PRACTICES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Criterion Five which states that the institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships is based on the premise that all North Central Association member institutions have a body of ethics and values to which it subscribes and which inform institutional policies and procedures and guide their institutional practices and relationships per the Handbook of Accreditation.

The criterion entails an audit of such matters as academic honesty, nondiscrimination, affirmative action, harassment, professional ethics and conduct, and fair grievance processes.

In looking at matters of integrity, members of the visiting team interviewed students, faculty, and staff of the College and reviewed written documents.

College Documents

The College provides evidence of integrity in its practices and relationships. Official College policies and procedures are clearly described in numerous publications (e.g. student handbook, College catalog, fulltime faculty handbook, parttime faculty handbook, labor contracts, schedule of classes, Board of Trustees Policies and Procedures Manual, search process handbooks, and employee handbooks). Formal grievance procedures are explicitly described for students in the Student Handbook, and for employees via union contracts. Students' rights and responsibilities, appeal processes, code of an athlete, equal opportunity/sexual harassment procedures, and rights of privacy are some examples of the comprehensive scope of information for students that is published in the Student Handbook. The College also has excellent documents and processes in place to define institutional standards for producing College publications.

Internal and External Relationships

Numerous campus committees and councils are in place at the campus and institutional levels that provide opportunity for employee participation. Function, guiding principle, reporting relationship, and membership are specified and published for each committee/council. In 1996-1997, the PACE survey on the work environment at the College was administered to employees. Survey results indicate some employee concerns in several areas, e.g., evaluation and promotion processes, union contract issues for management and administrators, leadership and decision-making accountability, and a perception that the College does not extend ethical behavior to all of its employees. In response to the negative survey results, the Chancellor initiated a "Realignment to Values," the charge to assess and redesign all College processes to assure that the College is a student-centered institution. In January 1998, a report entitled "Reengineering Report: Acquiring and Retaining Students," was published that details the College

reengineering process. The College's response to the PACE survey is a commendable initiative to improve internal relationships with its employees and students.

A number of employees used the word "integrity" when they spoke of their perceptions that revenues from the millage were supposed to be devoted to staff salaries, but were being used for other purposes instead. Regardless of the accuracy of this perception, it appears that some at the College believe the Board of Trustees and/or administration is not acting with integrity because promises alleged to have been made, are not being kept. Some employees feel they worked very hard for the millage, but won't do so again because they cannot trust that revenues will actually be used for the purposes espoused during the millage campaign. There appears to be a great deal of contradictory or missing information about what projects the millage was targeted to support. The College might consider producing a simple explanation to be widely disseminated in-house. Employees may not like what they hear, but at least there would be a single record.

Some employees also expressed concern that the administration was not negotiating certain union contracts with integrity, namely, the management and administration staff group. Some members of this group expressed dissatisfaction to the visiting team regarding the lack of progress in contract negotiations with the administration. Although structures are in place designed to support shared governance with union participation, i.e., the Employees' Information Group and the Faculty Relations Committee, the College appears to be challenged with a trust issue that may be affecting the health of the institution.

The College has developed a number of partnerships with external organizations and institutions to accomplish its mission and purposes. Strong collaborative agreements exist with area business, industry, and other public institutions to provide residents advanced training and educational opportunities. Survey data on partnership satisfaction with the College show that the College is demonstrating integrity in its external relationships.

The team found numerous examples of the College commitment to equity, diversity, and access. Examples include the diversity of the students, faculty, and staff, active Collegewide and campus-level diversity committees, an International Center, and a Women's Center. Procedures in hiring and student recruitment evidence commitment to diversity and access. As an example, the College Search Process Handbook clearly flowcharts and details processes for filling vacant positions that identify candidates from diverse and underrepresented populations. A second example is shown by the number of African-American students at the College. This population of students is 50 percent greater than Oakland County's African-American population. College publications, policies, and procedures also delineate the College's support for equity, diversity, and assess.

Federal Higher Education Reauthorization Act

While the catalog states that the College is accredited by the North Central Association, the Catalog fails to include the names, address, and telephone number of the North Central Association, a requirement of NCA reflecting compliance with the Federal Higher Education Reauthorization Act. In the area of program accreditation, the annual report submitted to the Commission states that no accrediting agency has applied sanctions or withdrawn accreditation in the last year. The visiting team reviewed examples of letters and materials from program-specific accrediting agencies and found the College to be in compliance with Federal regulations.

In response to the 1992 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the Commission included the requirement that institutions seeking accreditation must solicit third-party comment about institutions being evaluated for accreditation. Oakland Community College complied with this requirement by sending press releases and informational mailings throughout their service area in nearly an exhaustive manner. The visiting team found the College to be in compliance with Federal regulations. All third-

party comments received by the Commission were favorable and supported continued accreditation of Oakland Community College.

The visiting team concludes that the College meets the requirements of Criterion Five.

Strengths

1. The libraries, media centers, and individualized instruction centers provide an exemplary range of instructional materials, reference, and tutorial support, as well as technology for students, faculty, and staff.
2. The College endeavors to provide a supportive environment for ESL and international students.
3. The business community is extremely supportive of the College's programs.
4. The visiting team commends the College for being named by the Michigan Department of Education as having an exemplary College support services program (PASS) which supplies support services for disabled students.
5. The College has significant funds available to address the capital needs of the institution.
6. The faculty, administration, and staff are dedicated to the institution, its community, and are committed to student success.
7. The Board recognizes the need to strengthen collaboration and has begun to work with an outside consultant to achieve this goal.
8. The College Foundation is committed to the institution and actively works on its behalf.

Concerns

1. The College has not demonstrated satisfactory progress on student outcomes assessment, as it relates to collecting and analyzing data and using the results to improve student learning.
2. There is a need to define a continuing education mission that is responsive to community needs and to establish an infrastructure which coordinates planning, marketing, and evaluation.
3. Students in low enrollment career programs have difficulty completing the program due to class cancellations.
4. The lengthy transcript evaluation process is negatively impacting student progress.
5. Student development and leadership opportunities are limited.
6. The academic suspension/probation policy is not applied consistently among the campuses.
7. The College lacks consistent faculty and staff evaluation processes.

8. There is a lack of organizational effectiveness as evidenced by defunded positions, unfilled positions, and interim appointments.
9. There is a recurring pattern of failure to develop, implement, and sustain a planning process that encompasses the major aspects of the institution.
10. Multiple councils and campus-level groups are involved in planning, but there is no clear delineation or understanding of the role of each group with respect to approving and implementing plans and projects.
11. There is not a consistent integration of General Education competencies in the certificate, one-year programs.
12. The College does not identify clearly in its catalog, class schedules, and other publications that it is accredited by the North Central Association, nor does the College include the address and telephone number of the Association.

Advice and Suggestions

This portion of the team report is advisory and includes advice and suggestions from members of the visiting team. These do not have any direct impact on the accreditation of Oakland Community College.

1. The College should consider developing a model for student input into decision making that includes a variety of approaches to accomplish this goal.
2. There appears to be a vast difference among the campuses in terms of adequacy of student lounge and recreational space. Consider evaluating how these differences impact the recruitment and retention of students at the various campuses.
3. Students expressed the need for formal and more frequent communication, such as a campus or College student newsletter.
4. The College should consider mandatory testing and placement policy.
5. The College should consider establishing measurable educational and institutional goals which delineate areas of responsibilities and timelines.
6. The College should consider additional ways to strengthen communications among the various internal and external constituencies.
7. The College should continue to emphasize its relationship with the Oakland Community College Foundation and the Foundation's role in assisting in enhancing the quality of education at the institution.

8. With increased advising responsibilities, the Counseling components may want to investigate a computerized degree-audit system which would provide a means of tracking degree and certificate requirements for both students and faculty.
9. To monitor student satisfaction and gauge institutional effectiveness, an evaluation plan to provide formative and summative data on all Student Services areas might be designed and administered on a regularly scheduled basis to both graduating and currently enrolled students.
10. The student services components should investigate the inclusion of software to eliminate many job functions currently performed manually within the Enrollment and Financial Aid areas.
11. The College should develop a standard form or forms to ensure that assessment results and improvement efforts are reported in a consistent way across the District.
12. The College should identify and maintain a central depository for assessment reports.
13. The College is encouraged to develop a plan outlining the frequency in which courses are offered and to advertise it to students in low enrollment programs so that they may plan their schedules.
14. A more coordinated effort should be made in scheduling of courses which are found on multiple campuses to provide greater opportunities for students.
15. The College is encouraged to consider centralizing the coordination of Tech Prep and to use Tech Prep as a way to recruit students into College career programs.
16. The College should consider providing fulltime technical assistance for academic computing.
17. In some of the computer laboratories, attention to ergonomic factors should be given.
18. The College should explore ways to streamline the processing of high school articulated courses.
19. The College should consider including mathematics in the academic literacy program.
20. The approval process for curriculum and course additions or changes is perceived to be long, cumbersome, and a deterrent to developing new or updated programs and courses. The College might review the process to streamline and simplify it.
21. A challenge for the College is to capitalize on the institutional research resources already present at the College.
22. The College is likely to experience a significant number of faculty retirements over the next five or more years and may profit by initiating conversations about how and what kinds of new faculty should be hired to replace retirees.

23. The College should thoroughly assess the use of interim assignments and where warranted, seek to make continued assignments to organizational positions.
24. The institution should provide an indepth staff development program for College personnel focusing on the planning and budgeting process.
25. The College should implement an equipment replacement schedule with life expectancy and replacement cost information and incorporate this into the financial planning model.
26. The College should implement a preventive maintenance program to maintain and prolong the life of mechanical equipment systems on all of the campuses.
27. The College should follow-through with the reengineering and reorganization plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and to assist in meeting the goal of personnel cost being 80% or less of the operating budget.
28. The College should develop a Human Resources Procedure Manual where all standards and procedures are defined, published, and communicated to all staff and applied consistently through the College.
29. The College should consider a reengineering of the Council structure to reduce the perceived duplication and inefficiency and improve open communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility.
30. The College should develop security policies and procedures for information and telecommunication systems and communicate them to all end users.
31. The College should consider conducting a periodic community needs assessment to determine the unmet educational needs of the community and the perceptions of the community regarding the College.
32. The College should clarify the relationships of the College Planning Council endorsements or recommendations regarding the budget, and the actual development of the budget for each fiscal year.
33. The College should consider preparing and disseminating a statement about the proposed and actual allocation of revenues resulting from the 1995 millage.
34. The College should intensify efforts to make effective use of pertinent data and information about student enrollments and academics, a great deal of which is already available.

Recommendations and Rationale

The visiting team's recommendation for action, including its recommendation to continue the accreditation of Oakland Community College, is shown in the attached Worksheet for Statement of Affiliation Status form.

The visiting team's reasons for its recommendations are that Oakland Community College has demonstrated throughout the Self-Study Report that it is satisfactorily meeting the General Institutional Requirements and the Criteria for Accreditation as reflected in the team report. This was reinforced during the team visit as a result of meetings and discussions with the Board of Trustees, the Board of the Foundation, citizens in a special citizens' meeting, representatives of the administration, management, faculty, staff, and student body. The additional materials in the various resource rooms also support this conclusion.

The three areas identified by the team for a focus visit are: assessment of student academic achievement, institutional planning, and administrative stability. As reflected in the team report, Oakland Community College has not demonstrated satisfactory progress on student outcomes assessment, as it relates to collecting and analyzing data and using the results to improve student learning. In short, the plan for the College approved by the Commission must be implemented.

The College, as noted in the most recent focus visit and the last comprehensive visit, has a recurring pattern of failure to develop, implement, and sustain a planning process that encompasses the major aspects of the institution. The cycle of planning to plan must result in a comprehensive planning document for Oakland Community College.

While the administrative stability is impacted by the College having three different Chancellors in a ten-year period, it is also reflected in defunded positions, unfilled positions, interim positions, and the resulting lack of sustained leadership both at the campuses and District Office. While there will always be some change of personnel at any institution, the

norm should not be that of change and the resulting lack of management and administrative continuity for the continuing development of the institution to meet its mission and purposes.

The team is unanimous that while Oakland Community College has areas of concern to address, it can continue to accomplish its mission and purposes. The College has a solid history of service and commitment to its citizens and resulting support from these citizens as evidenced in the recent millage vote. While the hallmark of the College continues to be its personnel, the financial position of the College and the facilities, especially in light of the millage vote, are impressive.

The team recommends that the next comprehensive evaluation take place in ten years, during the 2007-2008 academic year.

AWD/cg

WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION: OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
2480 Opdyke Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304-2266

TYPE OF REVIEW: Continued Accreditation

DATE OF THIS REVIEW: April 6 - 8, 1998

COMMISSION ACTION:

STATUS: *Accredited (1971- .)*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED: *Associate's.*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

MOST RECENT ACTION: *August 9, 1991.*

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: *None.*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

NEW DEGREE

SITES: *Prior Commission approval required.*

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

PROGRESS REPORTS

REQUIRED: *None.*

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

MONITORING REPORTS

REQUIRED: *None.*

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

CONTINGENCY REPORTS

REQUIRED: *None.*

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

OTHER VISITS

REQUIRED: *None.*

Team *Recommended Wording:* 2002-03; A focused visit on administrative stability, institutional planning, and assessment of student academic achievement.

LAST COMPREHENSIVE

EVALUATION: 1987-88.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

NEXT COMPREHENSIVE

EVALUATION: 1997-98.

Team *Recommended Wording:* 2007-08.