

Budd, OCC join to design class for managers

By Tim Richard
staff writer

As William J. Graham talks about "a continuous learning culture" and "curriculum design," you'd guess he is a school administrator.

Guess again. Graham works for the Budd Co., a major supplier of automotive and truck components. Headquartered in Troy, Budd has facilities in Rochester, Sterling Heights, Detroit and around the U.S., Canada and abroad.

But there he was, in a classroom on Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills, where he had brought 29 front-line supervisors and managers.

"Training workers is not new," said Graham, corporate manager of employee involvement and training. "But the concept of this Institute is new — bringing people from all segments of the company to one central location."

BUDD IS big — 15,000 employees and 30 facilities — and Graham works out of the big city of Philadelphia. Why, then, train people at this particular two-year college?

Graham dropped the names of two world-class research universities he approached with the Budd Institute idea. Their reaction: "We'll do what you want — our way."

To OCC, Graham outlined Budd's needs, and college officials set up the curriculum around those needs. The company had direct input.

"They're responsive to our needs. They're in tune with current learning theory," he said.

CAROL STENCEL, director of OCC's Business & Professional Institute, put together a place, two college instructors, four Budd instructors and a curriculum. Topics were leadership styles, team building, interpersonal skills, motivation, quality, automation, safety, time management, government affairs and business objectives.

One key idea, to Graham, was "ownership" — teaching management to give workers the feeling of commitment that comes with being an owner. "When was the last time you washed a rented car?" he asked rhetorically.

The managers spent six days

(Sept. 28-Oct. 3) on the OCC campus, earning three hours of transferable college credit. There were tours of the company's robotics center in Sterling Heights and corporate offices in Troy, but most of the 40 hours were in classrooms.

They came from seven states and two Canadian provinces. Some had a generation of seniority; others had been supervisors only six months.

"It's a heterogeneous group," Graham said. "They're basically from manufacturing, quality control, training and accounting."

"They don't create the strategic plan. But they determine whether the strategic plan works."

"A campus is symbolic of learning," he went on. "Using this site accentuates and dramatizes our commitment to developing our people, particularly our supervisory people."

"We had seen work OCC had performed for companies in supplier businesses."

The company plans to hold such institutes quarterly.

FOR OCC, the Budd Institute is a prototype of what it would like to offer other companies.

"In some cases, companies contact us," said Charles Yeramian, dean of student services on the Orchard Ridge Campus. "In other cases, we made the contact. It works both ways."

"Over the years, because we are in the core of an industrial complex, we had to be relevant in our curriculum. The result is that our reputation has reached out to certain businesses and industries."

Mary Lee Webster, a part-time assistant to Stencel, ran down a list of institutions for which OCC's BPI has provided training. "Dana Corp. was the model," she said, adding Michigan Consolidated Gas Co., the city of Farmington, General Motors, Chrysler and Ford Motor to the list.

OCC Chancellor R. Stephen Nicholson is highly conscious of the presence of dozens of Fortune 500 list corporations in Oakland County. Because of programs like the Budd Institute, Nicholson says, American community colleges have a higher enrollment of people with bachelor's degrees than all the graduate schools combined.



C.D. STOUTER/staff photographer



William J. Graham, Budd's corporate manager of employee training, found OCC "very conversant with the needs of industry."

Phil Brown (left) of Budd's Detroit plant shows a stamping which the automotive supplier developed for Ford. Touring the company's world headquarters in Troy were Budd managers studying at Oakland Community College: (from left) Al Emerson of Philadelphia, Glen Dols of Minneapolis, Frank Dawson of Kitchener, Ontario, Linda Bayly, assistant personnel manager in Troy, Duane Sawyer of Phoenixville, Pa., and Len Ginter of Winnipeg.

Elks give scholarships

Students planning to pursue a vocational-technical course in a school or college leading to an associate degree, certificate or diploma are eligible to compete for \$2,000 grants offered by the Elks National Foundation.

Applications are available from the B.P.O. Elks of U.S.A. and financial aid officers at Oakland Community College's four campuses.

Application deadline is Nov. 25. All materials must be submitted to the student's local Elks Lodge. Each state's applications will be judged by

a panel selected by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT).

The foundation has set aside \$498,000 for the 1987-88 and 1988-89 school years.

A total of 249 grants will be awarded, with at least one per state. Each grant is for \$1,000 for each of the two years.

Although graduating high school seniors are eligible to apply, older students who desire training or retraining are encouraged to apply for these grants. A high school diploma or GED is not required.

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