

# For OCC, it's accreditation time again

By Tim Richard  
Staff writer

Two years of preparation came to a head this week for Oakland Community College.

An accreditation team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools spent four days touring OCC's campuses and poring through the records of the 25-year-old community college.

"We're talking to faculty, to board members, to community leaders," said NCA team chair Vernon O. Crowley, president of St. Louis (Mo.) Community College at Forest Park.

Crowley declined to reveal the team's assessments of OCC's "strengths" and "concerns," at least until a written report is handed over to Chancellor R. Stephen Nicholson.

Nevertheless, OCC is expected to win accreditation again, as it did in 1981 for a seven-year period.

ACCREDITATION is a system for recognizing institutions for their levels of performance and quality.

More than a mark of confidence for educators, accreditation is also a sign to students that courses are worthwhile and credits transferable, and to employers that graduates are qualified.

And in order for a college to receive federal aid, it's legally necessary for it to be accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. secretary of education.

"In most countries, a central government bureau does accreditation," said OCC's Nicholson. "In the U.S., the system is more decentralized." There are three types of accredi-

tations: 1) for an entire institution, such as OCC is undergoing; 2) for a particular service, such as OCC recently won for its counseling department; and 3) for graduate programs.

NONE OF the accrediting team can be an OCC graduate or a recent employee of the college, under NCA rules.

All must be from out of state. Of the eight members who visited this week, five are men and three are women; three are presidents, four are top-level administrators, and one is a department head.

They hail from two-year colleges in Warrensville Township, Ohio; Des Moines; Greeley and Westminster, Colo.; Des Plaines, Ill.; Omaha; and Kansas City, Mo.

NCA covers 19 states, including most Great Lakes states, and its jurisdiction stretches from West Virginia to Arizona. Headquarters is in Chicago.

NICHOLSON SAID the accreditation process has evolved over the years. Rather than making mechanical counts of library books and facilities, accreditation teams today look at an institution's goals, study how it targets its service area, check how resources are matched to the tasks, and evaluate whether its success is likely to continue.

Crowley said the final NCA report may take weeks to write. It will cover 13 areas.

NCA looks for a statement of mission; programs consistent with the mission; degrees and certificates awarded; financial resources; enlightening descriptions of programs

for prospective students; and the authorities of the chief executive and governing board.

THE 1980 NCA report listed Michigan's shaky finances as a "concern." "The state has undergone a strong economic recovery," said OCC in its lengthy self-study books. "In Oakland County alone, four major commercial complexes have been developed, each of which directly affects

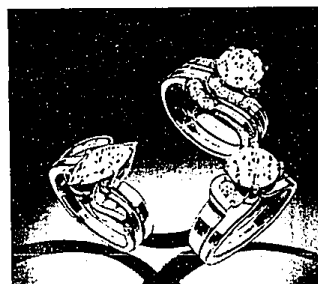
the college." It cited the tech park in Auburn Hills, many large corporate headquarters in Southfield, the 12 Mile Road corridor and Northwestern Highway.

New OCC programs "of particular interest," according to the self study, are computer-aided design and manufacturing, nursing curriculum revision (emphasizing non-hospital care), and food service/hospitality programs.

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## Grand Valley, Mercy recruiting

Two colleges will recruit in the area next week.

Grand Valley State will host an informal "get acquainted" reception for area high school and community college students Monday, Nov. 9, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Michigan Inn on J.L. Hudson Dr., Southfield.

Hosts will include faculty and students from Grand Valley's most frequently requested professional, career and liberal arts programs, as well as representatives from admissions, financial aid, placement, housing and athletics.

Mercy College of Detroit will hold its annual "College For a Day" program Friday, Nov. 13. The campus is

at 8200 W. Outer Drive. It will begin at 8:30 a.m. with registration and end at 2:50 p.m. There is a break for lunch.

To make reservations, call the Mercy College Admissions Office at 592-6020.

Students will be able to choose special classes from 15 curriculums offered by Mercy's faculty, including accounting, anatomy, nursing, pre-law, psychology, computer science and child development.

A session designed for the undecided student and a parents session are also planned. Participants can also find out about financial aid and career planning at the event.

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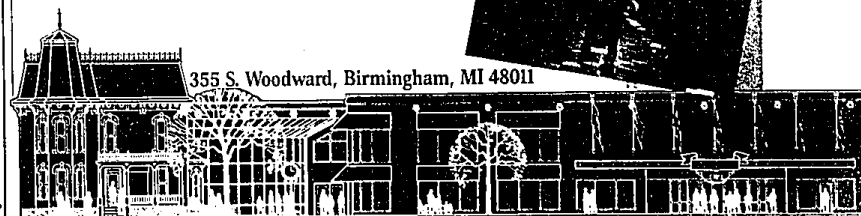
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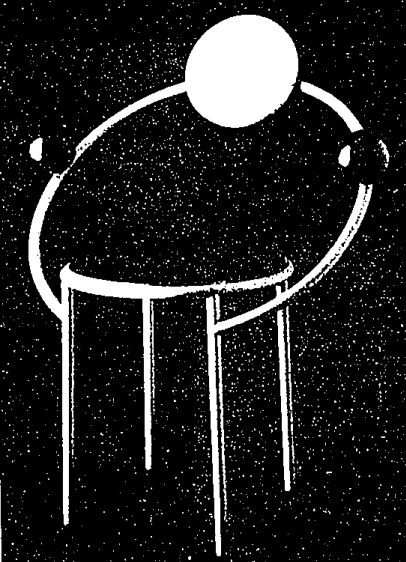
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