

# OCC accredited for 10 years; library weak

**'The college has not adequately supported the libraries for an extended length of time. Only in the last year has the budget for non-salaried items been increased. . . . The collections and services that would assist in the instructional processes have been significantly retarded.'**

— North Central report

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Ten-year accreditation — the maximum — was recommended for Oakland Community College by an evaluation team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

North Central's 44-page report was repeatedly saluted with the word "enthusiastic" which it used to describe the physical plant staff, management, computer center staff and elected trustees.

The team, headed by president Vernon O. Crawley of St. Louis (Mo.) Community College, found morale high in a "very well qualified and competent" faculty of 282 full-timers.

The report was peppered with the word "exemplary," which was applied to OCC's programs in computer integrated manufacturing, culinary arts and ceramic technology, as well as the work of its Business and Professional Institute.

LIBRARIES and the college's marketing program were the chief soft spots found by the North Central team, which visited OCC's five campuses and central office last Nov. 2-4.

Richard T. Thompson, vice president for academic affairs who headed OCC's evaluation effort, told trustees last week that Chancellor R. Stephen Nicholson has been at work on virtually all the "concerns" raised by the North Central team. Thompson said there were "no surprises" in the North Central report. Thompson said he averaged one day a week in preparation for



Richard T. Thompson  
VP found 'no surprises'

the visit, but that effort was "a by-product if that were doing."

Even before the accreditation visit, Nicholson had produced a broad-brush concept to pump more materials and more on-line transmission of information into the libraries.

Previously OCC had been accredited for seven years. The new 10-year accreditation will be interrupted by a third-year "focus visit" for a look at progress toward a comprehensive institutional master plan. "It is the team's judgment that this area is critical to providing direction for the institution and should be assessed within three years, 1989-91," the report said.

TRUSTEES had little comment, but had expressed their strong satisfaction with Nicholson's 1 1/2 years as

chancellor during his annual review last month.

Later in last week's meeting, the board voted to extend his contract another year. It now runs to Oct. 31, 1991.

The board made Nicholson's car allowance part of his salary, which now is \$102,233 and will go up 5.5 percent next year. No pay increase is scheduled the third year, but five personal leave days will be added, according to trustee Edward Pappas, who headed the review committee.

THE NORTH Central team's toughest language was focused on the libraries. It said:

"It was found that the college has not adequately supported the libraries for an extended length of time. Only in the last year has the budget for non-salaried items been increased."

"As a result, the collections and services that would assist in the instructional processes have been significantly retarded. . . . Only 2.8 percent of the overall budget is committed to this instructional support service."

"Since salaries and benefits comprise a major percentage of the monies in the libraries' budgets, the opportunity to maintain a current collection — let alone keep up with the changing technologies in the information field — has not been available."

The team did not recommend what percentage of the budget should go to libraries, but found "encouraging" OCC's own review of its libraries' shortcomings.

It suggested centralizing library acquisitions.

MARKETING and recruitment are dispersed between OCC's campuses, and the North Central team found "no coordinated marketing program" for the entire college.

But it recognized marketing efforts taken in the last two years — identifying community perceptions. It recommended focused research on particular groups to help OCC serve those groups.

Now 22 years old, OCC has about 27,000 students on five campuses — Auburn Hills, Highland Lakes, Orchard Ridge, Royal Oak and Southfield. It grants associate degrees in arts, business, science, applied sciences and general studies, plus shorter certificate programs. It has opened a small center in Pontiac, which the North Central team praised.

The Business and Professional Institute won particular praise, not only for training skilled people for Dana Corp., Budd Co. and other firms, but for generating \$350,000 in income over expenses in three years. It called BPI "an instrument for economic development, high technology advancement and college income."

### OTHER FINDINGS:

• The county's economy is strong, and the college financially well managed. But it offered softly padded criticism of some leaders, including an unnamed trustee, over reticence to ask voters for an increase in the one-mill property tax for operations.

# Dems say exec too 'negative' on transit use

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Democratic county commissioners are dismayed that Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy is so negative on the future of public transportation.

They also say the Republican executive should use growing property tax revenues for tax cuts rather than non spending programs.

"If the executive is negative on transit," said Democratic caucus chairman Larry Pernick of Southfield, "no one is going to be positive. And he's negative in his outlook that no one uses public transportation."

"People will use it," added commissioner Lillian Jaffe of Southfield, citing youngsters and senior citizens. "We have to put transportation on the agenda in a very positive way."



Larry Pernick  
Democratic leader

"The homeless are out there. The economy is bad, but we still have a lot of unemployment," she said.

RIISING PROPERTY tax bills await Oakland residents, predicted commissioner James Doyon, D-Madison Heights.

Doyon, whose district covers part of Troy, pointed to Murphy's remarks about "stable" millage rates in one part of the speech and rising assessments in another.

Murphy departed from his text again to say he wouldn't protest his own 25 percent assessment increase on his Sylvan Lake home. He also said county efforts at economic development are giving Oakland a faster growth rate than any region in Michigan.

"In effect, Oakland County tax bills will go up," said Doyon. "He sprinkles all through his speech new ideas on how to spend money — new buildings, transit."

PERNICK SAID Murphy passed up an opportunity to show leadership on winning new revenues for roads. Murphy said, "I believe that the voters must decide whether or not they wish to pay for a more comprehensive road package." The Oakland County Road Commission is asking the county board to put a vehicle registration fee on the 1988 ballot that could raise as much as \$18 million.

Murphy stopped short of endorsing the idea and said he thought a county-option fuel tax "is the only way to do it." The state Legislature, however, rejected that bill.

Pernick said Murphy also should endorse making the Road Commission bipartisan. Currently, all three members are Republicans.

"He should also have a plan for how to use the money (from the registration fee)," Pernick said.

# O'Brien facing short prison term

John J. O'Brien, suspended Oakland County Probate Judge, will report April 18 for a federal prison sentence that probably will last four months.

O'Brien, 58, of Birmingham was sentenced Monday to two concurrent prison terms of one year for filing false credit applications for credit cards.

A court official said he will be eligible for parole when one-third of the term has been served.

His attorney, Christopher Andreoff, himself a former federal prosecutor, said there's "a concern over the source of income and what he is going to do with the rest of his life."

Sentencing O'Brien was U.S. District Judge George LaPlata, a former Oakland circuit judge.

O'Brien's troubles are many:

• His license to practice law was automatically suspended when he was convicted Jan. 14 by LaPlata after a non-jury trial.

• The Michigan Supreme Court has suspended him without pay.

• The Judicial Tenure Commission last week recommended the Sa-

preme Court remove him from office.

• He filed for personal bankruptcy early in 1985.

• His wife, a substitute teacher, is recuperating from surgery. At age 60, however, O'Brien will be eligible for a pension of nearly \$35,000 — nearly 40 percent of his current \$88,000 salary, according to a pension administrator in the state Department of Management and Budget. Patricia Nichols said pension rights are unaffected by how the judge leaves office.

LaPlata could have sentenced him to two years in prison and fined him \$1,000. Andreoff asked for probation because of the "victimless" nature of the crime.

O'Brien has petitioned for a new trial and is appealing his conviction to the U.S. Sixth Court of Appeals.

A probate judge 13 years, O'Brien was convicted of failing to report more than \$76,000 and \$86,000 in prior debts on two separate loan applications submitted in 1984. Both loans were approved. O'Brien said he did not intentionally cover up the debts.

# C L A I B O R N E

## URBAN attire



Spring for some personal urban renewal.

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