

Oakland Community College stars in BBC special

By Pat Murphy
Staff writer

The British team that visited Oakland Community College last week was a bit on two levels, according to one student.

"On one level, they were professional and efficient," said Lynn Thomas, a sophomore from Leonard. "On another level, they were a riot. They had a good sense of humor, and they were very flexible... they rolled with the punches. It was fun to talk with them."

Thomas, 29, is a housewife and the mother of three as well as having 30 credit hours toward an associate's degree in applied science.

She was interviewed on three separate occasions by officials from Solihull College of Technology. The first interview, Thursday, lasted about 30 minutes and was filmed by a television crew from the British Broadcasting Corp.

Officials from Solihull, about 100 miles outside of London, visited the Auburn Hills campus of OCC all last week, hoping to learn more about mature students.

"We're hoping to incorporate some of the good parts of your system into ours," explained Derek Jones, senior admissions tutor.

Specifically, Solihull would like to adopt some of the techniques OCC uses to attract mature students and enhance their job skills.

"We also like how the American educational system breaks the curriculum into modules," said Janet Clark, Solihull's manager of women's programs. "In our system, a student who flunks the final exam very often is required to repeat the entire program, rather than just the part on which he or she didn't do well."

"Breaking the curriculum into (interchangeable) credit hours is a splendid system."

Jones noticed a cultural distinction between British and American students. "In England, an education is something you get before you go to work. When it's done, it's done. But American students look at education as something that is ongoing, possibly lifelong."

Jones and Clark described the week at OCC as hectic and demanding, "with very little time for sleep." But it was also enjoyable and informative, they said.

"STUDENTS, FACULTY members and administrators were friendly and cooperative," Clark said. "We thoroughly enjoyed the experience."

The people they encountered were helpful, Clark said. But even more impressive, she said, are the physical facilities at OCC. "The equipment and lab machines are state of the art. That's not the case at many schools."

George Cartsonis, OCC spokesman, was quick to respond. He said OCC's well equipped laboratories and workshops are the result of ongoing partnerships the school has with area industry.

Furthermore, Cartsonis said, not all colleges or universities — American or English — are that lucky. OCC's programs are greatly enhanced by partnerships with companies like IBM, Cross & Trecker Inc., Kennametal Inc., Autodesk Inc., and Rexroth Inc.



photos by JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

BBC cameramen Dave Brush (left) and John Marotzke film counselor Mary Murphy handing

out test scores to a group of OCC students attending a career guidance program.



Janet Clark (left), manager of women's programs at the British college, talks with Kim Culbertson of Rochester Hills about her scores on the career guidance test.

Oakland Chamber updates members on merger plan

The Oakland County Chamber of Commerce invites the business community to attend THE BUSINESS NETWORK 5:30-8 p.m. Wednesday at the Holiday Inn, 1500 Opdyke Road (University at Opdyke), Auburn Hills.

There will be an update on the proposed merger between the Oakland County Chamber and the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce. Members are encouraged to bring questions and concerns to the meeting.

The chamber, in cooperation with Oakland Family Services, will collect new, unwrapped toys at the business network to be distributed to needy children during the holiday season.

Complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be available.

There is no charge for Oakland County Chamber members and \$10 for non-members. Advance reservations may be made by calling 683-4747 or 644-1229.

Dems host ed panel

The Oakland County Democratic Party will host Julius Maddox, president of the Michigan Education Association, Hugh Jarvis, president of the Michigan Federation of Teachers, and David Olmstead of the Detroit Board of Education in a panel discussion on "Educational Reform in Michigan" at 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Board of Commissioners Auditorium in Pontiac (1200 N. Telegraph). Each speaker will have five to 10 minutes to make his presentation and then will field questions from the audience. All interested members of the public and members of the press are encouraged to attend. For additional information, please contact the Oakland County Democratic Party at (313) 455-0444 or (313) 334-0971.

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