

OCC setting enrollment records

Perhaps it's the gloomy economy. Perhaps it's a thirst for knowledge. But enrollment at Oakland Community College has set an enrollment record for a winter semester, according to figures compiled last week at the close of registration.

A total of 28,247 students — 1,022 more than the record set one year ago — have signed up at one of the five OCC campuses. Chancellor Patsy J. Fulton said Thursday during the regular meeting of the OCC Board of Trustees.

This is the second consecutive attendance record established at OCC,

according to Fulton. Another attendance mark — for a fall semester — was set in September when 29,459 students enrolled. That was 794 students better than the old record set in the fall of 1991.

Fulton noted that OCC has experienced six consecutive years of continuous growth. "I believe that reflects an increased acceptance of the role of community colleges," she said, "particularly among students in their 20s, 30s and 40s."

Trustees said they are pleased with the report. But they differ

about the reasons. "I think it's the economy," said Trustee David Hackett of Rochester Hills. "When times are bad, people go back to school because they're looking for work or because they want more job security."

The newest OCC trustee, Sam Yono, a businessman from Northville, said the weak economy may have something to do with the record enrollment. "But I also believe people have an increased interest in learning."

Here's how the attendance figures

break down for each campus:

- The Auburn Hills campus has 8,958 students this winter semester, compared with 8,845 last year.
- The Highland Lakes campus has 5,194 students, compared with 4,621 in January 1991.
- The Orchard Ridge campus has 6,806 students, down slightly from 6,825 enrolled for the last winter semester.
- The Southfield-Royal Oak campus has 7,279 students, compared with 6,934 last winter semester.

Stagnant economy seen for early '92

The Advance Economic Barometer posted a minor gain in December, rising to a level of 84, said economist David G. Sowerby of Manufacturers National Corp. He predicted a stagnant economy in the first half of 1992.

Since July of 1991, the AEB has been 1.0 or lower, consistent with real GDP growth of 1.5 percent or less.

"Disturbingly, persistent weak-

ness of the AEB through year-end 1991 provides further evidence that the economy will remain stagnant in the first half of 1992, with real GDP growth averaging 1.0 percent to 1.5 percent," he said.

But there is evidence suggesting an improved economy by year end.

Over the past 18 months, money growth has been the weakest component of the AEB. But in Decem-

ber, the rate of decline in real money growth slowed. Sowerby said, "owing to monetary stimulation induced by the Federal Reserve Board."

"Recent interest rate reductions to their lowest levels in 20 years, combined with faster money growth, should escalate real GDP growth to 3.5 percent by year end," Sowerby said. Nevertheless over

the next six to nine months, the AEB is projecting below average economic growth and stable interest rates.

The AEB combines three series into a single, balanced and comprehensive leading indicator: (1) inflation-adjusted money growth, (2) yield-curve spread and (3) Commerce Department's index of leading indicators.

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