

OCC incumbent says she will rely on her record

On June 12, Oakland voters will elect two people from a field of six to the board of trustees of Oakland Community College, which has about 24,000 students on five campuses. This is one of a series of profiles on the candidates.

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The last six years — when Carol L. Crew was a member of the board of trustees — have been eventful for Oakland Community College.

During that time OCC lobbied voters to get a crucial tax increase approved, changed chancellors, negotiated agreements with contentious labor organization and continued to develop programs to benefit students.

As a trustee, Crew believes she and her colleagues on the board did a good job during that crucial period. So good, she is asking voters to re-elect her on the basis of her performance, including her tenure as an officer of the board. Crew was secretary of the board from 1995 until 1998, when she was elected chair.

Crew points to the partnerships she and her colleagues developed between OCC and businesses, local school districts and neighboring colleges and universities as evidence the college is developing the programs needed in the community. As the policy setting agency of the college, the board plays an important role in establishing and overseeing those programs.

Earlier this month, for example, the board approved an arrangement under which students will get practical experience at William Beaumont Hospital as part of a new surgical technology program. Upon completion, the two-year program enables students to work in operating rooms assisting surgeons and performing other important tasks.

Crew is currently director of nursing services at the Huron Valley Center in Ypsilanti, and she believes the surgical technol-



Incumbent Carol L. Crew

ogy program provides students with a viable career option.

"That's just one of the programs we've developed," said Crew. "We have so many programs. OCC is important to the business community because we provide workers with the training needed for crucial jobs."

"OCC does so much for the community," she said. "As a resource, the school is a treasure. And I feel good about my involvement."

The board, or individual trustees, has on occasion come under fire from critics who claim it lacks cohesion or is somehow divided. Crew believes such criticism is unfounded, or possibly the allegations of candidates looking for campaign issues.

"We have some strong individuals on the board," she said. They're people who ask questions and are committed to OCC and its mission. "But we put differences aside when it comes to the good of OCC," she said. "We're very unified when it counts."

The board is unified, for example, on the need to convince voters next year to renew the property tax that provides more than 18 percent of the OCC operating budget. "We already have a com-

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mitted in place to make our case to voters," she said.

Distance learning — or using television or the Internet to teach classes — has interesting possibilities, according to Crew. It's a good way to conveniently serve students, she said, "but we must never lose the personal touch between faculty and student."

The recent drop in enrollment (down from a peak of about 30,000 in 1991) does not indicate a weakness or structural problem at OCC, Crew insists, "but rather a reflection of the economy."

"People are too busy (working good jobs) to attend classes," she said.

Crew, a 1965 graduate of Cass Tech in Detroit, lives in Waterford Township. She has a bachelor's degree in nursing from what is now the University of Detroit-Mercy and a master's degree in nursing (with a focus on psychiatric mental health) from Wayne State University.

Other candidates for the OCC board are Richard J. Akehurst, Pamela Davis, Athena Dumas-Lawrence, Marjorie Nanian Mugerian and John A. Wangler.

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