

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE VISIT

TO

OZARKA COLLEGE

Melbourne, AR 72556

October 16-18, 2000

for the

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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NCA TEAM REPORT
OZARKA COLLEGE
OCTOBER 16 – 18, 2000

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is organized in five sections: 1) the introduction; 2) an evaluation of how the college meets the general institutional requirements and criteria for evaluation; 3) the strengths and challenges of Ozarka College; 4) advice from the consultant-evaluators; and, 5) the team recommendations and rationale for the recommendations.

ACCREDITATION HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION

In 1991, the Arkansas legislature converted several vocational-technical schools, including Ozarka, into technical colleges. The College achieved candidacy status with North Central's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education in 1993 and was authorized by the state to offer the Associate of Applied Science degree. In 1994, the state authorized the awarding of the Associate of Arts degree and Ozarka was granted approval for this degree by NCA. The College underwent a review for continued candidacy in 1995, and based on the recommendations of the visiting team, applied for and was granted initial accreditation, for five years, in January 1996.

STRUCTURE AND SCOPE OF VISIT

Ozarka College was visited on October 16-18, 2000 by a team of four consultant-evaluators.

The team reviewed materials provided both prior to and during the visit, held group meetings **with administration, faculty, staff, students, board of trustees, alumni and community leaders,**

and conducted numerous individual interviews. Facilities and equipment were evaluated; personnel, financial, and curricular records were reviewed. Team members met on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings to discuss findings, ensure that all areas were adequately reviewed, and to prepare materials for the exit interview. The exit interview was conducted on Wednesday, October 18, at 10:00 am, and was open to the entire college community.

AUDIENCE FOR THE REPORT

The audiences for this report are the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students of Ozarka College, NCA staff, and members of The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

SELF-STUDY PROCESS

The College began the self-study process in the spring of 1999 by reviewing and revising the mission statement, purposes, and general education philosophy and appointing the self-study committees. The Vice President for Planning and Assessment was named as the self-study coordinator.

Timelines for gathering and evaluating data were established in the fall, 1999, and an NCA staff liaison visited the campus to provide guidance. Draft reports were completed by the end of the semester and reviewed by the College's Steering Committee. The draft document was refined during the spring semester and a final report was produced at the beginning of the fall 2000 semester.

It appears that the process had widespread ownership among the campus community and

representatives of all groups, including students, served on the self-study committees. The Self Study Report is well written, concise, and factual. It provided team members with appropriate information prior to the visit. The team recommends the document as an outstanding model of a report. Appropriate supporting materials were located in the team room and additional materials were readily made available to the team upon request.

SECTION II: EVALUATION FOR AFFILIATION

RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS CONCERNS/CHALLENGES

- 1. Ozarka Technical College lacks an integrated administrative/student information system and networked academic computers resulting in the inefficient use of human and fiscal resources.*

Since the last visit, Ozarka has purchased and installed SONIS (Scholastic Online Information System) which provides an integrated system for registration, student records, state reporting, financial aid, course and room scheduling, and a multitude of other functions. Other modules are available and will be fully implemented by the college as needed. Links have been constructed between SONIS and MIP (the College's accounting software program), allowing for the integration of student and financial data. The system provides numerous reports, manages student and academic information, and is accessible by all faculty and staff. The system, coupled with the availability of e-mail and Internet access in all offices and the development of a campus Web site, has greatly increased accuracy and efficiency of information retrieval.

The Team feels that Ozarka College has adequately responded to this concern.

- 2. The composition of the faculty, staff, administrators, and students is not representative of the goals established by the Board approved Affirmative Action Plan.*

This concern was modified by the Review Committee to clarify that the concern focused on the

technology, are currently working on their Bachelor's).

3. Clustering or linking computers to share information and better utilize human resources.

All administrative, faculty, and most staff offices are now linked and have access to e-mail, which allows the College to more effectively communicate and share information.

4. Seeking additional funds to assure the growth of the library.

The College has increased the library budget and acquired additional electronic resources for information retrieval. Personnel are also actively pursuing grant funding to provide additional expansion of space and holdings.

5. Additional equipment for Culinary Arts.

The program moved into new facilities with new equipment in the fall of 1999.

6. Pursuing additional shared programming with other institutions using interactive television.

The College continues to host ASU's LPN-to-RN completion program via compressed video. There appear to be a number of opportunities for the college to form partnerships and utilize distance technology to provide additional educational opportunities to the service area.

7. Reproducing and protecting student records.

The College has implemented a program of scanning student records onto CD-ROMs.

8. Clarifying the program evaluation process.

The Self Study indicates that the program evaluation policy had been revised, consistent with changes in the state's policy. However, no evidence was available to the Team to indicate implementation of the new process.

mix of faculty and staff, not the student population. Ozarka College has a defined service area, and the percentage of minority students mirrors the percentage of minorities in the general population.

The College has made efforts to recruit faculty from a national pool; however, efforts to recruit minorities have been unsuccessful. While this team encourages the College to continue its efforts to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff, it is likely that there will not be a great increase in ethnic diversity in the near future. The College is encouraged to continue its attempts to hire faculty with degrees from a broader range of colleges and universities, thus bringing an infusion of new ideas and philosophies to the college and community.

The Team has determined that the College is making good effort to increase diversity and has adequately addressed this concern.

Although not required, the College also chose to respond to the suggestions and advice from the previous team.

1. Hiring faculty and staff outside of the Melbourne area/region and with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

This advice relates to Concern # 2, and has been addressed by the College. Some recent hires hold degrees from other states and/or come from areas outside the immediate service area.

2. Hiring technical instructors with a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

The College currently has only three instructors with less than a Bachelor's degree (nursing, culinary arts and automotive service technology, and two, nursing and automotive service

GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Mission

- 1. It has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board and made public, declaring that it is an institution of higher education.*
- 2. It is a degree-granting institution.*

Authorization

- 3. It has legal authorization to grant its degrees, and it meets all the legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.*
- 4. It has legal documents to confirm its status: not-for-profit, for-profit, or public.*

Governance

- 5. It has a governing board that possesses and exercises necessary legal power to establish and review basic policies that govern the institution.*
- 6. Its governing board includes public members and is sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure the integrity of the institution.*
- 7. It has an executive officer designated by the governing board to provide administrative leadership for the institution.*
- 8. Its governing board authorizes the institution's affiliation with the Commission.*

Faculty

- 9. It employs a faculty that has earned from accredited institutions the degrees appropriate to the level of instruction offered by the institution.*
- 10. A sufficient number of the faculty are full-time employees of the institution.*
- 11. Its faculty has a significant role in developing and evaluating all of the institution's educational programs.*

Educational Program

12. It confers degrees.

13. It has degree programs in operation, with students enrolled in them.

14. Its degree programs are compatible with the institution's mission and are based on recognized fields of study at the higher education level.

15. Its degrees are appropriately named, following practices common to institutions of higher education in terms of both length and content of the programs.

16. Its undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry.

17. It has admission policies and practices that are consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to its educational programs.

18. It provides its students access to those learning resources and support services requisite for its degree programs.

Finances

19. It has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency at least every two years.

20. Its financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocation and use of resources to support its educational programs.

21. Its financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal stability.

Public Information

22. Its catalog or other official documents includes its mission statement along with accurate descriptions of its educational programs and degree requirements; its learning resources;

its admissions policies and practices;

its academic and non-academic policies and procedures directly affecting students;

its charges and refund policies; and

the academic credentials of its faculty and administrators.

23. It accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated.

24. It makes available upon request information that accurately describes its financial condition.

The Team has determined that Ozarka College meets all of the General Institutional Requirements.

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

Criterion One: The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

Ozarka College has a mission statement that is reviewed at appropriate and regular intervals, most recently in 1999. This statement has been formally adopted by the Board of Trustees and is published in the college catalog, board policy and procedures manual, and other college publications. The mission appropriately reflects the legislative authority as enacted by Act 1244, the "Two-Year Postsecondary Education Reorganization Act of 1991." It also addresses GIR 2. The College also meets its legislative purpose of conferring degrees, with 99 conferred in May 2000. Act 1244 further verifies Ozarka's status as a state supported public institution in the Arkansas Technical and Community College System.

The Team agrees that the College fulfills Criterion One.

Criterion Two: The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Ozarka College submits to an annual external audit conducted by the State of Arkansas Division of Legislative Audit. Coincidentally, the auditors were on campus during the NCA visit. They

stated that they believed the financial condition of the College was very good and also disclosed the imminent possibility of forthcoming legislation pertaining to performance based funding. The financial services unit of Ozarka consists of a director (vice president) and a five-member team. Reporting directly to finance are departments of accounting, financial aid, maintenance, and auxiliary operations. The actual accounting and financial aid areas have not evidenced an increase in staff recently, although enrollment has grown from 120 to almost 800 in the past nine years. Many areas are one-person departments. Financial aid, for example, is served by only one individual who sees approximately 80 to 90 percent of all incoming freshmen for financial aid. Other than intermittent work/studies, there is no supporting staff. In addition, this individual manually types 600 to 700 financial aid checks each semester.

Ozarka College receives a legislative appropriation and an actual funding budget, which may differ from the appropriations package. In addition, the College receives Workforce 2000 revenues. These two financial revenues plus tuition account for most financial resources for the College on an annual basis. The current financial resources are managed effectively with an adequate reserve to meet immediate and short-term needs and demonstrate fiscal viability.

The concern of the team centers on widespread information from state representatives, the vice president for finance, and other administrative staff indicating that within the coming legislative session the state will move toward performance based funding. There is also local concern about the diversion of funds from higher education because of the governor's top priority to more fully fund K-12 education. Lastly, there is some team concern about budget projections based on

enrollment projections for the College, which may or may not be realistic. Should any of these situations occur, the team recommends that the College develop a financial contingency plan for addressing the financial impact. This should be reported immediately to NCA following the significant funding change.

Ozarka College currently has a foundation whose purpose is to assist with development and enhancement of programs and facilities. Currently there are three female and eleven male members, representing all counties in the service area. The foundation is relatively new, having been established in 1991. Until recently, the foundation has not been endowed. However, with a recent donation of \$300,000, the Foundation has established an endowment. However, outside of this gift, the foundation has not remained as active in participation or gifting as it has been in the past. The team would suggest working towards strengthening the foundation's role in college finances.

GOVERNANCE

A seven-member board of trustees appointed by the governor is duly authorized to establish policy and procedures for the College. The board meets on a quarterly basis or when necessary. This board functions autonomously to represent the public interest and integrity of Ozarka's service area. Chief among its responsibilities is the appointment of administrative leadership. Douglas Rush continues to serve as president since his appointment in 1992. The board has developed a comprehensive Policy and Procedures Manual consistent with Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board regulations and is representative of the College's organizational

needs. Board minutes are also appropriate and open for public scrutiny.

HUMAN RESOURCES

ADMINISTRATIVE

Ozarka College has an appropriate administrative structure, which consists of the president, three vice presidents, and four additional administrative personnel, who compose the administrative council. Many, in fact most, individuals accept multiple roles and responsibilities. All are extremely dedicated to ensuring student access and success. Team members expressed concern at the apparent diminution of roles and responsibilities traditionally accorded to academic/instructional leadership a assessment of student learning, curriculum development, and program evaluation most noticeably decentralized. In some cases, these areas fall under the primary supervision of a totally independent unit outside of instruction. In other cases, new structures have been established which effectively remove major responsibilities from the direct control of the chief academic officer. While the College currently is perceived to meet its instructional mission, the team feels, strongly that many of these changes are too newly implemented to allow the team to assess the effectiveness and that a visit in two years would be most beneficial to monitor effects of this decentralization on the educational goals and outcomes of the College.

FACULTY

Ozarka faculty are dedicated to their students and the College. A review of the files confirms all faculty have credentials appropriate to their teaching assignment. Adjunct records were also

reviewed and found to be in order and appropriate.

Faculty complimented the administration and the board on the availability of release time and money for professional development. Many faculty have improved credentials through the use of available funds. The college is to be commended for this foresight.

An organizational structure change has occurred this year with the inclusion of three divisions chaired by faculty. The chairs maintain faculty rank and receive three load hours of release time per semester and a 10-month contract rather than the usual nine. While a job description does exist, chairs were unclear as to the exact delineation and scope of their duties.

Ozarka's planned expansion of curriculum in Mountain View, the increase in dual enrollment in the area high schools, and the expected increase in full-time faculty, adjunct faculty and other student services are all part of this paradigm shift. The physical size of the college causes the divisions to be quite diversified such as English and Automotive in the same division. Division chair responsibilities include advisory committees, assessment of programs and departments, textbooks, syllabi, marketing, budgets, full-time and adjunct faculty recruitment, curriculum, student problems, articulation, and scheduling, to name a few.

The division chairs answer to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and are included in the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council maintains five standing committees: Curriculum, Institutional Improvement, Student Affairs, Professional Development and Technology-Enhanced Education. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is an ex-officio member of the

Faculty Council. The team is concerned with the new division chair structure.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Professional staff at Ozarka College are well qualified, experienced, and enthusiastic about the mission of the College. They seem exceptionally dedicated and student centered, totally committed to the success of Ozarka College students. The staff exhibits pride in being part of an organization that is fulfilling a unique role in the region. Good morale was observed in both group and individual interviews with professional staff. Many cited the "family atmosphere" apparent in the College. Ozarka College staff is small and personable but yet professional. Professional staff spoke of having adequate opportunities for professional development, including annual conferences and workshops, seminars, degree (e.g., MBA) programs, and training on campus. Cross training allows them to cover for each other. A core of administrators who seem well qualified leads the staff, each with a distinct set of responsibilities as outlined in the self-study report. The administrators were described as "approachable" in the open interview with professional staff. The Team concluded that the administrative personnel are qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable of their responsibilities in overseeing institutional activities.

Staff are hard working and dedicated, but those attributes do not preclude the College from needing more staff as growth (in students, staff, facilities, programs, etc.) occurs. Staff are now "wearing many hats" to the point that they could be in danger of spreading themselves too thin to maintain the excellent level of service that is so valued at Ozarka College. A new student recruiter position, a financial services position, a financial aid position, kitchen staff, and

maintenance staff are examples of positions that the College should consider adding. The team concurs with the recommendation in the self-study that "...the College should determine whether additional staff members are needed to provide an excellent level of personal service to students."

SUPPORT STAFF

Support staff appreciate the mission of the College and value the student-centered services and education the College delivers. In the open session, they described the management style they have experienced as friendly and personable and noted that communication between support staff and managers is good. Support positions at Ozarka College are among the most prized in the community. Support staff generally have the resources they need to perform their jobs, whether the resources are cleaning supplies or opportunities for professional development. There was evidence of advancement opportunities for support staff. Several staff described how they had advanced into new jobs at the College. Overall, support staff expressed a high level of satisfaction with their roles and jobs at the College. As with professional staff, attention should be given to emerging needs for support staff expansion, especially if facilities are added.

ADVISORY BOARDS

Advisory committees at Ozarka College are defined in board policy and procedure manual, section 4.70. All technical programs, counseling, and library and adult education have active advisory boards. Minutes were found to be appropriate with the exception of the criminal justice

program, which listed only committee members. However, this program is limited to current corrections officers. Committees meet once or twice per year on a regular basis. Resource files provided a comprehensive description of advisory member guidelines. It would be advisable to distribute such guidelines to all advisory committees and new advisory committee members.

STUDENTS

The Ozarka College student body mirrors the socioeconomic characteristics of the region the College serves, as described in the self-study. Many students come from homes that are low income, without a college degree holder in the household, and almost entirely white. Ozarka College serves as the first choice of most students who attend it because it is close to home, low cost, and delivers personalized service from faculty and staff who go out of their way to help students become successful. The self-study claims that without Ozarka College, many students would not pursue post secondary education; the NCA visiting team found nothing to contradict this claim. In fact, the individual stories of the students encountered during the visit confirmed the belief that Ozarka is making a significant difference in the lives of the people in this region-- younger and older. Students were highly satisfied with the education and support services they were receiving, as shown by student satisfaction surveys and personal interviews conducted during the visit.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The College offers the typical array of student support services found at most two-year colleges-- advising, career planning, testing, tutoring, records management, student activities and organizations. The Registrar/Director of Student Services heads these services. Since the last

site visit, Ozarka College has made marked progress in expansion and sophistication of student services. For instance, the College secured a Title IV grant to better serve first-generation, disabled, and low-income students and the grant activities have improved student retention. Part of the activity involves taking the students on visits to four-year colleges to make them more comfortable with new environments in which they will be able to complete their bachelor's degrees after Ozarka. Students like this program, as shown on the 1999 Student Opinion Survey, and as importantly, improved transfer and retention rates have resulted. Staff are optimistic that the grant will continue.

The last NCA team report recommended that Ozarka establish an integrated student record system and the College has since implemented SONIS. The development of a more robust computer services department greatly aided the integration of SONIS into current information systems. Staff are now getting the data they need for federal reporting, evaluating operations/initiatives, assisting individual students, and many other purposes. This situation was credited to the efforts of the computer service staff, who moved SONIS from a "nightmare" to a highly functional, easy-to-use integrated student information system. In addition, registration and textbook ordering became available online in the most recent registration period, eliminating long registration lines. The financial aid check writing procedures appeared to be a remaining service that could benefit from automation so that the financial aid officer could be freed up to work with students. Students and staff, however, were highly satisfied with the services being provided by the financial aid office.

A key finding about student services was the personalized effort the staff makes to serve a group

of students who have little experience with higher education. At every turn, the visiting team found student service staff (and, in fact, all staff) described as "people who care." There was ample evidence that staff do go the extra mile to ensure students' success. As noted above, the addition of a recruiter would be beneficial in maintaining the high level of personal service.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The college campus is located on 40 acres of developable land within the city limits of Melbourne, Arkansas just off of state highway 69. Six buildings are located on the campus including the maintenance shop and a storage facility. The building used for nursing education is the older unit for classes and it is scheduled for renovation along with a new structure being built for nursing this academic year.

The grounds and the facilities were in excellent condition and repair. Roof leaks were observed in the John E. Miller Complex and the Director of Maintenance was aware of the problem and indicated that he had not signed off on the roof project because the problem was not solved.

The Board and the Administration have planned for growth in their present and future construction. The building design and campus layout affords pleasant surrounding and an atmosphere for instruction and student learning. The community backs the College's mission to educate students and supply the needs of the college stakeholders by passing a one-cent sales tax with a 95% majority vote. This one-cent tax is used to pay for infrastructure enhancements.

Ozarka is expanding educational offerings and opportunities in Mountain View—which is

approximately one hour away from the main campus. The college requested funds from the state to purchase facilities in the Mountain View community, received the appropriation and received final approval for acquisition of land and two buildings for expansion. One of the buildings is presently under lease by Ozarka.

The educational equipment appears to be up-to-date and ample for the academic offerings. Faculty indicated that documented requests for equipment had never been turned down because of lack of funding. Technology was present with E-mail and Web access available to all. The library was connected through Proquest as well as having SIRS (Social Issues Resource Services) on CD with all of the updates. Next academic year SIRS access will be on-line. Two-way audio and video was available and utilized for meetings, and course delivery in the district.

The College appears to conform to all ADA requirements from parking and signage to public access. The library has a second floor that is not accessible, however, the space is used for student study and faculty reference materials. Student study space was also available on the first floor and the library staff was available for reference retrieval.

The Team feels that Ozarka College meets Criterion Two.

Criterion Three: The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Ozarka College began as a vocational technical school but has accomplished its growth through transfer education. Ozarka now graduates as many students with AA degrees as it does with

AAS, Technical Certificates and Certificates of Proficiency. The college still manages vocational curriculum and is constantly monitoring its service area for the need for new vocational programs. The college has dropped two technical programs over the past five years. Ten new programs have been added since the 1994-95 catalog. Five of the ten are options to existing programs with three others being Certificates of Proficiency. On the Team's departure, Ozarka received confirmation from the state allowing them to offer Information Science Technology beginning in the Spring of 2001.

Program review as a process was poorly defined. Data collection exists (i.e. number of applicants, number of graduates, number employed, etc.) but no process was available to determine what programs should be started, deleted or changed. The number of graduates in many of the vocational programs was low to zero (P. 185 in the Self-Study, Basic Institutional Data Form F). Interviews with vocational faculty indicated that the demand for the students was high and students were being hired before they could graduate or the student starts in a program but transfers to another program before completing the graduation requirements.

The AA degree in General Studies is the "bread and butter" for Ozarka, presently comprising 70% of the student population. As the college increases its "outreach" activities to other communities this trend will continue.

THE CURRICULUM PROCESS

The College has a curriculum committee that reviews curriculum changes, additions and deletions. However, there is no formalized procedure. The Vice President of Planning &

Assessment prepares and collects information on existing programs and makes this available to the curriculum committee at the committee's request. The March 13-15, 1995 NCA Team stated a concern regarding the lack of a curriculum process. The October 30-November 1, 1995 NCA Team did not address the concern. It is the consensus of this team that the concern still exists.

The college student population has grown from 347 students (1995 Candidacy Review, p. 5) in degree programs in 1994 to over 780 in 2000 (2000 Self-Study, pp. 169-170). This increase in degree seeking students implies course and program changes demand more faculty involvement and control to guarantee quality and transferability.

If the College expects to maintain consistency of curriculum and course competency completion, a procedural process must be in place. New course or program ideas can come from anywhere. They may be good for the College and its mission, or they may not. They may be controlled by a receiving four-year college or a licensing board. The College may be able to fund the addition or change or it may not. Qualified instructors may be available or they may not. The curriculum committee must document the process to avoid student promises or expectations that are unfounded.

A review of syllabi demonstrates the college follows standard syllabi procedures. However, the files are not complete. Some course syllabi are nothing more than the course name and description, the book being used, and the table of contents. As the College continues to grow and the number of sections of the same course increases with different instructors and locations, a master syllabus will be a necessity. Courses taught in the various high schools for dual-credit

need verification and monitoring for consistency. The Vice President of Planning & Assessment prepares and collects information on existing programs and makes this available to the curriculum committee at the committee's request. The March 13-15, 1995 NCA Team stated a concern (P. 30, 2a) on curriculum matters. The October 30-November 1, 1995 NCA Team did not address the concern as to whether the concern was satisfactorily addressed or not. It is the consensus of this team that the concern still exists. The team is concerned with the continued credibility of the curriculum and program evaluation process.

LIBRARY

The library is attractive and currently large enough to support the needs of students and faculty. The library staff have worked to improve their professional credentials, the collection and access to on-line databases and journals. The College is making a commitment to provide resources for students, faculty, and staff.

ADULT & DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Ozarka is well equipped and well staffed to run a successful developmental center. All students are required to take entrance exams before registration. The institution has an open-door admission policy followed by a mandatory placement policy. Students are tested for Mathematics, English and Reading competency. Page 98 of the Self-Study compares the students needing remediation at Ozarka, two-year colleges in Arkansas, and four-year colleges in Arkansas. State law requires all individuals that have completed 45 credits to take the CAAP test. Ozarka students fare above the state average on this exam demonstrating academic gain.

This speaks well of the developmental education program and the faculty.

Arkansas law requires all 17 and 18 year olds to attend school unless they have received a high school diploma or GED. Students not wanting to attend high school can attend Ozarka if they have a high school release. These individuals must attend a minimum of 20 clock hours of developmental work or work on their GED. The developmental center has been successful with these students with many continuing their education to receive a vocational or transfer degree.

The GED and ABE programs are available and successful with a 77% passage rate. Assessment of adult education is required by the state. The Adult Education Center and the Learning Laboratory were in constant use during the visit.

The Team observed that community support of the College appears to be one of its greatest strengths.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Ozarka College has a plan for assessment of student learning, complete with its own mission statement linked to the College's, a general education philosophy, and assessment tools that incorporate direct and indirect measures of student learning. Furthermore, each occupational program, associate of arts, the library, and developmental education has established objectives, outcomes, assessment procedures, and a feedback loop, as shown in the Assessment of Student Learning document. The Vice President of Planning and Assessment directs the assessment plan, with assistance from the Vice President of Academic Affairs who analyzes the results and reports them to various audiences, according to the self-study.

The faculty interviewed individually and in the group faculty session had no trouble giving examples of how assessment results had influenced their instruction or curriculum. They appeared to be not only familiar with the assessment plan, but they had input into the elements associated with their programs. For example, the auto technology instructor cited the performance of his students on the NATEF examination and even had a press clipping about it. A science instructor described how she adjusted instruction to emphasize immune systems after using a pretest/posttest examination. A math instructor, one new to the College, described the performance expected by students on a math test her department plans to administer at the end of the first semester. A social science instructor described qualitative measures—class discussions and essay tests—to assess students' attitudes about racial diversity, the results of which caused him to move from pure lecturing to more interactive teaching. Overall, the team agreed with the self-study assertion that "assessment at Ozarka is more than just the written plan; it is a program with widespread involvement on the campus."

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICES

Ozarka College has distinguished itself as an institution that has made a significant difference in the lives of people within its service areas. From state representatives to local retailers, the community solidly supports the institution. On any given day of the visit, the team noticed school buses carrying local students to the campus and numbers of meetings and activities of the community that were held on the campus. Alumni also testified to the remarkable opportunities that were afforded to them because of Ozarka College. The community, in an extraordinary

show of support, voted with a 95 percent passage rate to allow having a one percent sales tax to fund the brand new John E. Miller Building, housing classrooms, board room, and the 800 seat auditorium, as well as the 150 seat lecture hall. It is an outstanding tribute to the community and to Ozarka's place in that community.

The team observed that community support of the College appears to be one of its greatest strengths.

The Team feels that Ozarka College meets Criterion Three.

Criterion Four: The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

PLANNING

Planning at Ozarka College is conducted through a regular process that begins with a Board/Administrative Council retreat in May. Goals are set, based on information reviewed at the retreat. A planning yearbook is published and distributed to all faculty and staff. Budget dollars are tied to key initiatives by a Budget Review Committee (the president, vice president for finance, the vice president of academic affairs, the accounting supervisor, and division chairs, per the self study, p. 79). Faculty and staff submit budget requests to the Budget Review Committee; thus, planning appears to incorporate a "bottom up" as well as "top down" approach. The planning process has resulted in a vision statement for 2005, long-term enrollment goals, long-term retention goals, and goals related to faculty. The College follows up on how well these goals

are being achieved and uses this information to set new goals. The planning effort has been enhanced by having an integrated information system to produce data and information needed to evaluate and plan initiatives. The Vice President of Planning and Assessment leads the planning process.

Overall, Ozarka College has a strong planning process in place--one capable of assuring its future health, fiscal viability, and ability to accomplish its mission. The NCA visiting team agrees that the College has a "history of planning for its future..." as stated in the self-study (p. 138).

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Ozarka College has a plan for assessing its institutional effectiveness that involves student and staff surveys, program evaluation, and all aspects of the student assessment plan. The College conducts frequent surveys of student and staff satisfaction with its services and operations. The results of these surveys were made available to the visiting team; they lent support to the claim that the College is effectively achieving its mission and purposes.

The program evaluation process appears to consist largely of data collection. The visiting team examined several program evaluation reports, in different formats, and reached this conclusion.

While these reports did a good job of compiling data about specific programs, they seemed lacking in generation of recommendations for program improvement. Therefore, the visiting team recommends developing the program evaluation process further so that solid recommendations are generated from the data that have been compiled. Perhaps the College

would want to explore having local practitioners in the occupations related to the programs make a visit or become active in setting recommendations. Actual recommendations should emerge from the program evaluation process. Follow up on recommendations should occur through the Vice President of Academic Affairs since she is ultimately responsible for academic program quality improvement, although the program evaluation process itself is appropriately managed by the Vice President of Planning and Assessment. While it is clear that programs now are scheduled regularly for evaluations, the College should be getting more from the evaluations than just a set of statistics.

The Team feels that Ozarka College meets Criterion Four.

Criterion Five: The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships

INTEGRITY OF PRACTICE

The College now has a well-developed Board Policies and Procedures Manual, created following the 1993 NCA visit. This manual sets out a code of ethics that includes integrity, quality, performance, leadership, independence, and the individual. The sections of the manual are well described in the self-study (pp. 143-144) with various College practices referenced to manual numbers. Staff satisfaction with input into policy and practice appears adequate, as measured by the most recent (2000) employee survey. The team found no apparent inconsistencies in practice and policies and no evidence of unethical behavior, conflict of interest, or lack of integrity in practices and relationships

Although Ozarka College had been critiqued for its efforts to achieve racial and ethnic diversity

in its staff and students by the October 1995 NCA team, it seems apparent that the College has since made an effort to advertise and attract diverse staff to the College. A proportion of staff has been recruited from outside the immediate service area, lending some degree of diversity to the College. In advertising open positions more widely and in tracking the effects of various initiatives to increase diversity, Ozarka College has made a good faith effort.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH HIGHER EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT

The visiting team found no areas of federal noncompliance.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The College appropriately advertised the NCA visit through several venues, no letters of complaint were received.

The Team feels that the College meets Criterion Five.

SECTION III: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

STRENGTHS

1. Ozarka College enjoys an exceptional level of community support. This support is reflected by individuals representing all sectors of the service area.
2. The College has shown vision and foresight to provide ample space for significant growth in educational and cultural opportunities.
3. The ASTRO Program provides an innovative means for articulating with high school students, teaching leadership and communication, and providing high tech equipment at a modest cost to the college.
4. The entire campus community is exceptionally committed to a student-centered philosophy as evidenced by actions to ensure student success.
5. The College serves as the focal point for community activities.
6. The responsiveness of the Computer Services Department to the needs of the campus and its stakeholders is exemplary.
7. The College President exhibits an astute understanding of the political environment and has translated that understanding into institutional advancement.

CHALLENGES

1. College needs additional staff in critical areas.
2. The team is concerned about the recent decentralization of academic responsibilities and functions. A new divisional chair structure has just been implemented, and several areas, such as assessment and program evaluation are assigned to non-academic areas.
3. Program evaluation must expand beyond data collection to include analysis and recommendations that will result in continuous quality improvement; also, there is little documentation of the existing curriculum process.
4. If changes within the state legislative appropriations occur, such as performance based funding, or if there is diversion of funds from property or sales tax, and/or a decline in enrollment projections, the College should: 1.) initiate plans for financial contingency; 2.) monitor such actions and; 3.) swiftly respond.

SECTION IV: ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The North Central Team would like to offer the following advice to the College in their role as consultants. This section consists of advice only, and the College may choose to follow or disregard the suggestions that follow.

1. Create a faculty advisor orientation process with appropriate updates on four-year college and university requirements and/or changes.
2. The curriculum committee should develop a step-by-step (flow chart) process for curriculum changes, i.e., program development or change, course development or deletion, certificate or degree requirement adjustments, and course waivers or substitutions. While there is a formal curriculum development process, little is documented at this time.
3. Ozarka should re-evaluate its job titles to ensure that they accurately and appropriately reflect the functions of each position.
4. The College should consider making its chief academic officer responsible for the oversight of assessment of student academic achievement as recommended by NCA.
5. The College should add a student recruiter to the staff as soon as possible to assist in

enrollment management.

6. Voice Mail would be a positive addition .
7. The entire administrative council should be actively involved in budget development and decision making.
8. College should consider development of a matrix for long-range additions of human resources.
9. Strengthen the long-range resource development and involvement of the Foundation.

SECTION V: TEAM RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

RECOMMENDATION

The team's recommendations for action including its recommendation to continue the accreditation of Ozarka College are shown below and on the attached worksheet for the statement of affiliation status.

1. The team recommends that Ozarka College's accreditation be extended until 2010-2011.
2. The team recommends a focus visit in October, 2002 to determine the effects of decentralization of academic functions and responsibilities on the operations and programs of the College. This focus visit will evaluate the effectiveness of the new division chair structure and review the curriculum and program evaluation processes.
3. The College must file a contingency report outlining plans to maintain financial stability, if there are changes within the state legislative appropriations, such as performance based funding, or if there is diversion of funds from property tax, and/or a significant decline in enrollment projections.

RATIONALE

The team's rationale for each above mentioned recommendation allows:

1. The College has strong programs, and dedicated faculty and staff who are meeting and exceeding student needs, excellent community and political support, and a strong financial base. Ozarka shows potential for continued growth to meet the needs of the area.

Ozarka College meets all of the GIR's and Criteria for Evaluation. It demonstrates integrity in its practices and publications.

2. The Team found several areas of academic responsibility had recently been transferred to 3 faculty in newly created positions entitled Division Chairs. While this structure is not inconsistent with common practice, particularly at larger institutions, faculty and staff were unable to clarify the scope of responsibilities for these new positions even though a formal job description exists. The division chair structure was created only a short time before the team visit, thus it has not had time to become fully functional. This coupled with the team's perceived need for more academic involvement in program evaluation curriculum process and student assessment raised concerns. Specifically, the team believes that while evidence exists to indicate a strong and supportive working relationship between the Vice President of Assessment and Planning and the Vice President of Academic Affairs, there is possible erosion of control out of instructional affairs unless the Chief Academic Officer provides

leadership for these areas. Therefore the team recommends that a focus visit be conducted in two years to assess the efficacy of the new structure and the progress made in curriculum and program evaluation processes.

3. As documented in the narrative of the report, it appears that Ozarka College may face significant changes at the state and local level that could impact it's financial condition. Should any of the above mentioned scenarios occur, Ozarka will need to readjust its strategic and long-range plans.

WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION: **OZARKA COLLEGE**
 P.O. Box 10
 Melbourne, AR 72556

TYPE OF REVIEW: **Continued Accreditation**

DATE OF THIS REVIEW: **October 16, 2000 — October 18, 2000**

COMMISSION ACTION:

STATUS: **Accredited (1996- .)**

<u>Institution</u>	<i>Recommended Wording:</i>	RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
<u>Team</u>	<i>Recommended Wording:</i>	RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

HIGHEST DEGREE
AWARDED: **Associate's.**

<u>Institution</u>	<i>Recommended Wording:</i>	RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
<u>Team</u>	<i>Recommended Wording:</i>	RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

MOST RECENT
ACTION: **February 26, 1999.**

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

STIPULATIONS ON
AFFILIATION STATUS: **Accreditation at the Associate's level is limited to the A.A.S. degree and the A.A. degree.**

<u>Institution</u>	<i>Recommended Wording:</i>	RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
<u>Team</u>	<i>Recommended Wording:</i>	RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

**NEW DEGREE
SITES:**

Prior Commission approval required.

Institution *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING
Team *Recommended Wording:* RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING

**PROGRESS REPORTS
REQUIRED:**

None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

**MONITORING REPORTS
REQUIRED:**

None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* NONE.

**CONTINGENCY REPORTS
REQUIRED:**

None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* The College must file a contingency report outlining plans to maintain financial stability if there are changes within the state legislative appropriations, such as performance based funding or if there is diversion of funds from property and/or a significant decline in enrollment projections.

**OTHER VISITS
REQUIRED:**

None.

Team *Recommended Wording:* 2002-03 (October): A visit focused to assess the efficacy of the new structure and the progress made in curriculum and program evaluation processes.

**LAST COMPREHENSIVE
EVALUATION:**

1995-96.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

**NEXT COMPREHENSIVE
EVALUATION:**

2000-01.

Team *Recommended Wording:* 2010-11.