

**Ozarka College**  
**Melbourne, Arkansas**

**RESPONSE TO THE  
REPORT OF A FOCUSED VISIT**

**For the**

Higher Learning Commission  
Of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

February 11, 2003

Douglas W. Rush, President

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ozarka College acknowledges receipt of the report of the Focused Visit on October 28-29, 2002 and agrees with the team's report and recommendation. Therefore, the College prefers the Readers' Panel for review by The Higher Learning Commission. We appreciate the professionalism and hard work this report represents on the part of the evaluation team. We welcome the team's determination that Ozarka College meets the challenges identified by the 2000 visiting team's report recommending a Focused Visit in October 2002 to evaluate the effectiveness of the new division chair structure and to review the curriculum and program evaluation processes. In addition, we appreciate the team's determination that Ozarka's permanent new site in Sharp County be successful. The institution is already at work to address the concerns identified and to implement many of the team's suggestions for improvement.

## RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- 1) *The College must make certain that its assessments of student learning and overall institutional effectiveness extend beyond the main campus to all of its satellite facilities and course sites.*

Students at the Ash Flat and Mountain View Centers have the same opportunity to evaluate instruction as do the students at the Melbourne Campus. The evaluation of instruction extends to all high school sites, as well. The student opinion survey is in the process of revision to accommodate these students more specifically. Each site has ready advising from full-time faculty. Each site has regularly scheduled visits by Student Services to include financial aid, counseling, and tutoring. Additional needs are scheduled by appointment. In December of 2002, Ozarka added a telecommunications system tying all three sites to local lines in order to facilitate the ease of information exchange among all three sites. By the Fall 2003 term, the College anticipates having four desktop Polycom units purchased, installed, and functional to provide additional connectivity and communication among the sites. This connectivity will allow students greater access and direct video/audio communication with essential student support personnel via technology. Ozarka created the position of Distance Learning Specialist to ensure quality at the Ash Flat and Mountain View sites as part of a Strengthening Institutions Title III grant. The position has been very beneficial in ensuring quality at the distant sites and will be institutionalized at the completion of the grant.

All assessment instruments used by the College are planned for review and revision during the Spring 2003 academic semester. Special attention to specific needs of satellite facilities will be included where indicated. The academic subcommittee of the Institutional Assessment Committee began this process by receiving its first instrument for review on January 28, 2003.

- 2) *Until the College either builds new laboratories in Ash Flat or it arranges to make use of the science labs at the local high school, students will have to continue driving to Melbourne in order to fulfill all of their degree requirements. In the evening, and particularly during the winter months, this can be a hazardous drive.*

The science laboratories at both Mountain View High School and Highland High School are well equipped and appropriate for basic Associate of Arts science lab requirements. Superintendents and principals of each high school have been approached to make use of their science laboratories for college students until such time as the College can build science laboratories at the satellite centers. The College plans to effect a cooperative agreement with the high schools for use of their science laboratories beginning in the Fall 2003 academic semester. Moreover, many laboratory experiences make extensive use of computer technology and instrumentation and with slight moderations may be performed in existing computer laboratories at the Mountain View and Ash Flat Centers. As part of Ozarka's long-range goals to have permanent laboratory facilities at each campus, a capital campaign is scheduled for March 17, 2003 to procure funds for a Mountain View science laboratory and the Development Office is in the process of rewriting a grant to seek funds for a science/math building on the Ash Flat campus to include a science laboratory.

- 3) *The College needs to improve its documentation of changes made as a result of the assessment of student learning and overall institution effectiveness.*

Minutes of all Committees of the College provide for better documentation of improvements in student learning, student life, and student communications that have resulted from assessment activities. These improvements are analyzed and monitored by the Academic Subcommittee of the Institutional Assessment Committee and then posted on the Ozarka College Assessment web page in order to enhance student awareness and better communicate with all constituents.

- 4) *The College needs to do a better job of documenting, aggregating, and evaluating assessment results when assessing those General Education outcomes not covered by the CAAP exam.*

Assessment tools are being developed to address those General Education outcomes not measured by CAAP, OPAC, NCLEX, CDA, ASE, or other program standard tests. Examples of those tools currently under development include a rubric for oral and nonverbal communication and a rubric for writing reports, essays, and other written requirements. These rubrics are currently being tested across the curriculum and a process is under development to determine how faculty can quantify and use the resulting information in assessment activities that improve student learning.

- 5) *The College should review and, where appropriate, revise the wording of its General Education outcome statements and insure that:*
- a. *Everyone at the College agrees on exactly what is expected of the students*
  - b. *All of the outcomes are assessable using direct measures.*
  - c. *All students, regardless of their degree program, are taking courses that would allow them to meet all of the intended outcomes.*

In December 2002, the Ozarka faculty began the process of reviewing and revising General Education outcomes with appropriate assessment measures. An ad hoc committee was appointed to ensure that all General Education outcomes were appropriate, clearly stated, measurable, and attainable by all students. The committee's first draft will be brought before the Faculty Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting on March 4, 2003, for discussion. Because of general education requirement variations of different degrees and certificates, the committee will also address the level of depth a student can expect to attain the General Education outcomes based on his or her educational goal. In addition, this committee plans to develop a grid structure to demonstrate where and when General Education outcomes are included in course curricular offerings.