

OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
1991 OCC PUBLIC OPINION POLL  
DEPARTMENT CHARIS PRESENTATION

Topics:

- Why students attend college.
- Why students left OCC.
- General image of OCC.
- Views on millage and tuition.
  
- Reasons for going to school
- Educational institutions best at
- Like and dislike about OCC
- Reasons for leaving OCC
- Scheduling Day/Time of week
- Sources of revenue (p33)
- Position on millage

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A study was conducted for Oakland Community College by Moore & Associates, Inc., a Southfield research firm. The purposes of the study were to evaluate the public image of Oakland Community College among Oakland County residents and to assist in guiding future implementation and change in curriculum and programs. Two similar polls have been conducted, one in 1986 by the Michigan Department of Education and one in 1989 by an independent research firm, to examine the attitudes and opinions of Oakland County residents with regard to the college. This study will continue to measure Oakland Community College's public image, and additionally, will provide support to the college's Strategic Planning, Environmental Scanning, and Critical Success Factor initiatives.

A random-digit-dial telephone survey was conducted among Oakland County residents, 18 years and older. Respondents were randomly selected from within the household. Four hundred and five interviews were conducted between December 11-16, 1991 with an average interview length of 16.1 minutes. Sampling error for a sample size of 405 is  $\pm 4.9\%$  points at the 95% confidence level.

The major findings of the study are the following.

- There is a high level of education and interest in further education among Oakland County residents. More than three-quarters of the sample have ever attended any college and half would consider going to or going back to college. The research suggests that there are three groups interested in further education:
  - individuals in white collar jobs seeking job improvement and personal enrichment
  - individuals in blue collar jobs seeking job advancement
  - young people in the process of furthering their education after high school.

- Those who have attended college and those who would consider acquiring more education at the college level tend to come from higher educational and income groups and higher earning occupations, although there is a substantial proportion of skilled and unskilled laborers among those who would consider additional college.
- Those who would not consider additional college education tend to be older, with less education and income. It is likely that a large proportion of this group is retired.
- The most important reasons people go to school include:
  - personal improvement and enrichment
  - to earn a 4-year degree
  - to prepare for better or different jobs.

■ Attendance at and interest in attending Oakland Community College is also high. A quarter of respondents have ever attended Oakland Community College and almost half would consider attending Oakland Community College in the future. Four percent are currently enrolled in Oakland Community College.

- Exposure to Oakland Community College is noted in a cross-section of the County, among men and women, younger and older people, and more and less affluent people. The profiles of those who have ever attended Oakland Community College, those who would consider Oakland Community College, and those with family or friends who have attended Oakland Community College are similar to sample averages. Respondents who have ever attended any college are of higher socioeconomic standing than the Oakland Community College groups.
- Among the 26% of the sample who have ever attended Oakland Community College, 17% are currently enrolled, half have been enrolled since 1987, and two-thirds have been enrolled since 1981. Twenty-two percent left Oakland Community College via a transfer, 17% graduated and the balance left for a variety of other reasons including financial difficulties and changes in family or job status.

- Among those who would consider Oakland Community College, their program interests are:

Business and Office	42%
Liberal Arts	29%
Industrial and Technology	28%
Arts and Humanities	23%
Environmental Studies	23%
Health Science	18%
Social Science	16%
Public Service	14%
None of these programs	8%
Interested in telecourses	31%.

They would prefer to take classes Monday through Thursday evenings (60%) and Monday through Friday during the day (26%), but substantial proportions would like to attend classes on weekend mornings, afternoons, and evenings.

- Usage of Oakland Community College facilities and services was reported by substantial numbers of respondents. Half of the sample have made use of one or more Oakland Community College facilities and services and half have not. These two groups are demographically similar, with a slight tendency for the users of Oakland Community College facilities and services to be younger, more affluent, and in higher earning occupations than non-users. Their usage of facilities and services as well as their awareness of the child care facilities afforded to Oakland Community College students are shown below:

OCC libraries	24%
OCC sponsored concert, play, or art show	24%
OCC recreational facilities	21%
OCC workshop, short course, or seminars	20%
OCC counseling or job placement services	13%
Aware of OCC child care services for its students	33%.

- The image of Oakland Community College is quite favorable within the county. The school is favored for its many convenient campuses, educational quality, good faculty, variety of classes offered, and affordable tuition. Only a quarter of the sample could name a disliked feature of Oakland Community College.

- A library joint venture was proposed to respondents as follows:

"Oakland Community College is considering a joint venture with a local library in Oakland County in which the library and the college would jointly operate a library on a nearby Oakland Community College campus. The library would move its existing facility into the new on-campus facility. Under this arrangement, both the library and the college would gain access to book collections which the other currently holds. Would you be in favor or opposed to such a joint venture?"

Fully 75% are in favor of such a joint venture, 10% are opposed to it and 15% could not give an opinion. Among those in favor of the joint library venture, their reasons are generally concerned with improved library collections and improved public access to these collections. The reasons of those opposed are concerned with a potential reduction in access to the library facilities because it would be moved away from the community.

- Consistent with the favorable image of Oakland Community College, there is substantial support for a millage increase to increase the school's income. Fifty-six percent are in favor of a one-half mill increase and 50% are in favor of a one mill increase. (Note that the sample is a general population sample and as such includes registered voters and those not registered to vote. Also, the two millage levels were tested using the split sample method. The sampling error for the two half samples is +/-6.9% points at the 95% confidence level.)

- While large differences between those for and against millage increases are not apparent, there is a tendency for those in favor of millage increases to have some contact with higher education and with Oakland Community College and to be in higher socioeconomic groups. They would consider going to or going back to school, they have used Oakland Community College facilities, and they are in higher education and income groups. In contrast, those opposed tend to have less contact with higher education and with Oakland Community College, and are in lower education and income groups. These differences are more evident in the half of the sample who responded to a one mill increase than in the half of the sample who addressed the one-half mill increase.
  - Reasons for favoring the millage were usually stated in terms of respondents' support for education while reasons for opposing the millage were related to an unwillingness to pay higher taxes.
- There are also indications in the research that a tuition increase would not have an adverse affect on attitudes toward Oakland Community College in the county. At \$39 per credit hour, 52% said the tuition cost is just right, 11% said too high, 21% said that the tuition cost is low and a slight increase would be appropriate, and 16% could not offer an opinion. At \$45 per credit hour, these results are 44% just right, 14% too high, 22% low and a slight increase is appropriate, and 20% don't have an opinion. (The two tuition levels were tested using the split sample method. The sampling error for the two halves of the sample is +/-6.9% points at the 95% confidence level.)
- Information about the services of Oakland Community College is less widely known than it might be, given the school's publicity efforts. Fully 60% of respondents said they know little or nothing about the school. Moreover, word-of-mouth sources were mentioned twice as often as Oakland Community College publications, brochures, and flyers.

## INTRODUCTION

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A random-digit-dial telephone survey was conducted among Oakland County residents, 18 years and older. Respondents were randomly selected from within the household. Four hundred and five interviews were conducted between December 11-16, 1991 with an average interview length of 16.1 minutes. Sampling error for a sample size of 405 is +/-4.9% points at the 95% confidence level.

The questionnaire was designed in consultation with college staff. It retained some core content common to the previous studies and included new material needed to address the Critical Success Factors. The following areas were covered:

- Experience with, interest in education
- Evaluation of educational institutions
- Contact with Oakland Community College
- Attitudes toward an Oakland Community College joint library venture
- Fiscal issues
- Information sources

The questionnaire is included in the appendix to this report.

Demographic comparisons for the three polls suggest that the samples are consistent across studies, and, thus, are likely to be representative of the county's population. (Exhibit A)

Exhibit A

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Sample Demographics

<u>Gender</u>				<u>Ethnicity</u>			
	<u>91</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>86</u>		<u>91</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>86</u>
	-----(%)----				-----(%)----		
Male	46	47	40	White	90	84	94
Female	54	53	60	Other	8	11	4
				Refused	2	5	2
<u>Education</u>				<u>Income</u>			
	<u>91</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>86</u>		<u>91</u>	<u>89</u>	
	-----(%)----				--(%)--		
High school graduate or less	22	23	32	Less than \$30,000	20	26	
Some college/vocational	29	35	36	\$30,000 - less than \$50,000	30	27	
College graduate or more	48	41	32	\$50,000 and more	33	28	
Refused	1	1	-	Refused/don't know	17	19	

Number responding: 1991 = 405, 1989 = 400, 1986 = 400.

Note: Income information for 1986 is not available.

For more information regarding demographics and all variables included in the study see detailed crosstabulations in the appendix.



## EXPERIENCE WITH, INTEREST IN EDUCATION

Help in  
Milage  
campaign

Respondents were asked several questions regarding their educational history and their willingness to pursue additional education at the college level. The findings suggest that education levels and interest in further education are quite high in Oakland County.

Of the total sample, 77% have ever attended a community college, junior college, four year college, or university and 16% of the total are currently enrolled in one of these types of educational institutions. Respondents not currently enrolled were asked to indicate whether they would consider going to or going back to school. Among the 84% of the sample not currently enrolled in college, 60% said they would consider going to or going back to school while 40% would not consider it. In terms of the total sample, this equates to 16% now enrolled, half who would consider enrolling and a third with no interest in college at this time. The previous studies did not ask this question in a comparable fashion.

Four college experience/interest groups . . .

- ever attended college
- currently enrolled in college
- not currently enrolled in college and would consider going to or going back to college
- not currently enrolled in college and would not consider going to or going back to college . . .

were examined with respect to their personal characteristics. In general, those who have current or past college experience and those who would consider more education are younger, better educated, and in higher income and higher earning occupation groups than those who would not consider acquiring more schooling. (This analysis is not available from previous research.)

As might be expected, respondents who have ever attended college present a profile of higher than average education and income and report employment in higher earning occupations.

## Any impact on Financial Aid?

Who are we not reaching?

Respondents currently enrolled in college, also as expected, are younger than average, in fact 34% are between 18 and 22, and have less education than average, probably because they are in the process of acquiring their education. Another trait of interest in this group is their tendency to be in the higher income groups. This phenomenon could be a result of their reporting family income rather than personal income and suggests that these current college enrollees come from the same households as those who have ever attended college.

job security?

Among those not currently enrolled, those who would consider and would not consider going to or going back to college can be contrasted. Compared with those who would not consider going to or going back to school, respondents who would consider college are younger with slightly more education and in higher income groups and higher earning occupations. However, a substantial proportion, 27% of those who would consider college, report skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled occupations. Thus, those who would consider more education at the college level are at both ends of the economic continuum.

In contrast, respondents who would not consider going to or going back to school are older, 41% are over 58 years of age, with less education and income and much more likely to be unemployed. It can be assumed that many of these individuals are retired. (Table 1)

## Impact upon proposed Adult Learner Center?

Bonnie George = BPI

Table 1

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Experience with, Interest in Attending College  
by Demographic Factors

	<u>Ever Attended</u> (%)	<u>Currently Enrolled</u> (%)	<u>Would Consider Enrolling</u> (%)	<u>Would not Consider Enrolling</u> (%)	<u>Total</u> (%)
Male	49	48	44	51	46
Female	51	52	56	49	54
Under 40 years	52	77	55	28	49
40 years or over	46	22	42	70	48
Some college or less	38	58	47	53	51
College/post graduate	61	41	51	47	48
Less than \$40,000	30	27	32	41	34
\$40,000 and more	55	53	50	42	48
Professional, technical, manager, owner, proprietor	44	36	42	33	38
Sales, clerical, government	11	11	9	8	9
Skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled	19	20	27	17	22
Unemployed	22	25	19	38	26
Number responding	313	64	202	133	405
% of total sample	77	16	50	33	100

Reasons for acquiring a college education continue to be concerned with personal enrichment and job improvement or change. Respondents currently enrolled (16% of the total) and those who would consider going to or back to school (50% of the total) were asked to indicate their reasons for going to or returning to school. Among those currently enrolled in a college or university, the most frequently mentioned reasons include to earn a four-year bachelor's degree (61%), for personal improvement or enrichment (58%), to move up in one's job or company (45%), and to get a different job (39%). Among respondents who would consider going to or back to school, primary reasons were personal improvement and enrichment (86%), to move up in one's job or company (78%), to get a different job (73%), and to earn a four-year degree (55%). Acquiring a two-year associate's degree or a high school diploma were less frequently mentioned in both groups as reasons for pursuing additional education. (Table 2)

current  
consider  
Mission of  
OCC →

These results are generally consistent with findings from the 1989 and 1986 studies in which personal enrichment, job advancement, and getting a different job were the main reasons for going back to school. Results of the previous two polls are not displayed due to the inconsistent formats of the questions.

Table 2

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

But will they  
↓

Reasons For Going to School

16% of Total

50% of Total

Among those who would  
consider going to/going  
back to school

<u>Reasons for Going to School</u>	<u>Among those enrolled (%)</u>	<u>(%)</u>
1 To earn a four-year bachelor's degree	61	55
2 Personal improvement or enrichment	58	86
3 To move up in my job/company	45	78
4 To get a different job	39	73
5 To earn a two-year associates's degree	20	49
6 To get a high school diploma	16	29
Number responding	64	202

big difference

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Impact  
community

Upon the  
Among the 77% of residents surveyed who indicated that they have ever attended college, Oakland Community College was cited most often as the educational institution ever attended with fully one-third citing it (34%). This is consistent with findings from the 1989 and 1986 polls which also showed Oakland Community College as the most frequently mentioned school. Other institutions frequently named in 1991 include Michigan State University (18%), Wayne State University (16%), Oakland University (13%), and the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (10%). The second most frequently cited community college was Macomb Community College (7%).

OCC > OU

communicate this to Employees,  
12 government, High Schools etc.

Among the 16% of individuals who are currently enrolled, 28% are attending Oakland Community College. Oakland University (11%), Michigan State University (9%), Wayne State University (8%), and Central Michigan University (8%) are other institutions frequently cited. Results from previous studies are not shown here because of inconsistent question and answer formats. (Table 3)

Table 3

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Colleges Attended or Currently Enrolled In

*Impact upon  
the country*

	Colleges Ever Attended (%)	Colleges Currently Enrolled (%)
1. Oakland Community College	34	28
2 Michigan State University	18	9
3 Wayne State University	16	8
4 Oakland University	13	11
5 University of Michigan - Ann Arbor	10	2
6 Macomb Community College	7	6
7 Eastern Michigan University	5	-
8 Central Michigan University	5	8
9 Western Michigan University	4	3
10 University of Detroit	4	2
11 Henry Ford Community College	3	2
12 Schoolcraft Community College	2	-
13 University of Michigan - Dearborn	2	2
14 Highland Park Community College	2	2
15 Lawrence Technological Institute	2	2
16 Detroit College of Business	1	3
Number responding	313	64

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

## Potential Market

Respondents not currently enrolled who would consider going to or going back to school were asked what kind of educational institution they would consider. More than half indicated they would attend a four year college or university (57%) and over one-third said they would choose a community college or junior college (35%).

In the 1989 and 1986 studies, similar results were observed with respondents saying most often that they would choose a four year college or university and secondarily a community college. Findings from these previous studies are not displayed due to differences in question formats. (Table 4)

Table 4  
Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll  
**Kind of School Would Consider**

<u>Kind of School</u>	<u>Kind of schools would consider among those not currently enrolled who would consider going to/going back to school</u> (%)
Four-year college or university	57
Community college or junior college	35
Local vocational school	4
Local high school	1
Other	2
Number responding	202

## EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Respondents were asked to evaluate types of educational institutions based on the instruction, guidance, and training that each provides. Compared with previous research, adult education programs, high schools, and trade schools were selected more often as best at specific educational tasks, community colleges were selected less often, and four-year colleges were cited with similar frequency.

High Schools

Forty-eight percent of respondents felt that high school is best at preparing students to graduate from a four year college (not asked in 1989 and 1986) and nearly one-third felt that it is best at providing remedial instruction in basic skills. In 1989 and 1986, 21% and 22%, respectively, cited high schools as being best at providing remedial instruction.

ABE

Forty-five percent cited adult education programs as best at providing remedial instruction in basic skills. This was similar in 1989 and 1986 when 37% and 39%, respectively, felt this. Eighteen percent of respondents felt that adult education is best at providing career planning and guidance services compared with 16% in 1989 and 17% in 1986.

Trade

A majority (58%) of respondents indicated trade schools as best at providing job training or retraining compared with 37% in 1989 and 44% in 1986. Also, over one-quarter (27%) think trade schools are best at providing training in skills required for today's modern technology.

C.C.'s

Respondents were equally likely to say that community colleges are best at preparing students to graduate from a four year college (27%) and at providing career planning and guidance services (26%), and substantial proportions selected the community college as best at providing training for modern technology (22%) and providing job training and retraining (19%). Despite the propensity of respondents to name the community college more often than the other types of institutions for the education tasks tested in the research, the proportions citing the community college for individual tasks are lower in 1991 than in previous years.

changing image of the <sup>15</sup>community college?



Four-year colleges were cited as best at providing training in skills required for today's modern technology by 38%, similar to 1989 and 1986 results in which 36% and 28%, respectively, thought this. One-fifth indicated that four year colleges are also best at providing career planning and guidance services compared with 19% in 1989 and 15% in 1986. (Table 5)

Table 5

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Educational Institutions Best at . . .

Best at . . .	High School			Adult Education			Trade School			Community College			4-Year College						
	91	89	86	91	89	86	91	89	86	91	89	86	91	89	86				
	-- (%) --			-- (%) --			-- (%) --			-- (%) --			-- (%) --						
Providing remedial instruction in basic skills	up	32	21	22	up	45	37	39	3	1	-	down	14	30	29	4	3	3	
Providing career planning and guidance services	up	15	8	7		18	15	17	16	10	-	down	26	35	35	up	20	19	15
Providing job training or retraining		1	3	4		12	14	11	up	58	37	44	down	19	27	26	7	7	3
Providing training in skills required for today's modern technology		4	2	2		5	12	5	27	19	26	down	22	24	29	up	38	36	28
Preparing students to graduate from a 4-year college		48	NA	NA		2	NA	NA	3	NA	NA		27	NA	NA		15	NA	NA

Number responding: 1991 = 405, 1989 = 400, 1986 = 400

NA - not asked in previous studies.

Respondents were asked specific questions about Oakland Community College which they were free to answer in their own words: what comes to mind at the mention of Oakland Community College, and likes and dislikes about the school. The top of mind reactions to the mention of Oakland Community College are generally favorable. Most frequently mentioned are convenient and nearby locations (14%), many locations (10%), good quality school (10%), and offers basic educational programs (10%). Mentioned by fewer respondents, further my education (6%), offers

a 2-year associate's degree (6%), have friends/relatives who attend (6%), like the classes it offers (6%), the mention of specific Oakland Community College campuses (5%), prepares one for 4-year institution (5%), tuition is inexpensive (5%), and good instructors/faculty/staff (4%). (Table 6)

Table 6

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Oakland Community College Top-of-Mind Recall**

	<u>%</u>	
Campus locations convenient/nearby	14	location
Many different locations/campuses	10	
Good quality/good college	10	
Offers basic educational courses/programs	9	
Furthers my education	6	
Offers a 2-year associate's degree	6	
Have friends/relatives who attend	6	
Like the classes it offers	6	
Specific OCC campuses named	5	
Prepares one for 4-year institution	5	
Tuition is inexpensive	5	
Good instructors/faculty/staff	4	
Don't know	11	
Number responding	405	

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

When asked what they like about Oakland Community College, answers reflected the top-of-mind material in that convenient locations was most frequently mentioned, by 27% of respondents. Also frequently mentioned were good teaching staff (11%), many locations (10%), and many classes offered (9%). Less frequently mentioned, tuition is inexpensive (7%), offers basic educational courses/programs (6%), nice campuses (6%), friendly staff/students (5%), flexible class hours (3%), and good reputation (3%). (Table 7)

\* Almost half of the sample (48%) said there is nothing they dislike about Oakland Community College and no single disliked feature of the school was mentioned by more than 4% of respondents. However, mentions of features of the school which are disliked came most often from current or former students, the group with the most knowledge of the school. (Table 8)

Table 7

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Things Like about Oakland Community College**

	1991 <u>%</u>	1989 <u>%</u>
Campus locations convenient/nearby	27	37
Good instructors/faculty/staff	11	7
Has many campuses/locations	10	7
Many classes offered	9	16
Tuition is inexpensive	7	9
Offers basic educational courses/programs	6	-
Nice campuses	6	6
Friendly staff/students	5	-
Flexible class hours	3	10
Good reputation	3	2
Don't know	20	25
Number responding	405	400

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses. Information for 1986 is not available.

How can OCC charge to improve these?

Table 8

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Things Don't Like About Oakland Community College

walk through  
Teach & Take →  
universal  
schedule  
image

	1991 <u>%</u>	1989 <u>%</u>
Nothing	48	36
Registration is unpleasant	3	1
Not enough parking	3	5
Timing of classes not convenient	2	1
Classes not available on all campuses	2	-
Less cultural diversity than 4-year institution	2	-
Classes are too easy	2	3
Only offers a 2-year associate's degree	2	2
Doesn't offer the classes I need	2	4
Faculty/staff are unqualified	2	4
Don't know	25	35
Numbers responding	405	400

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses. Information for 1986 is not available.

## CONTACT WITH OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Four Oakland Community College contact groups . . .

- ever attended Oakland Community Collage
- now enrolled in Oakland Community College
- would consider going to or going back to Oakland Community College
- have family or friends who have attended Oakland Community College . . .

were examined with respect to their personal characteristics and were compared to the group of respondents who have ever attended college.

The profiles of those who have ever attended Oakland Community College, those who would consider Oakland Community College, and those with family or friends who have attended Oakland Community College are similar to sample averages. Respondents who have ever attended any college are of higher socioeconomic standing than the Oakland Community College groups. (Table 9)

Reasons for and implications of



target populations

Table 9

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Experience with Oakland Community College  
by Demographic Factors

potential market

	Ever attended any College (%)	<u>alum</u> Ever attended OCC (%)	Now Enrolled OCC (%)	Would Consider OCC/would consider OCC again (%)	Family/friend attended OCC (%)	Total (%)
Male	49	54	56	42	46	46
Female	51	46	44	58	54	54
Under 40 years	52	60	72	55	51	49
40 years and over	46	40	28	42	47	48
Some college or less	38	56	72	48	55	51
College/post graduate	61	44	28	51	45	48
Less than \$40,000	30	40	22	39	36	34
\$40,000 and more	55	46	56	42	46	48
Professional, technical, manager, owner, proprietor	44	39	33	41	39	38
Sales, clerical, government	11	12	6	10	10	9
Skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled	19	25	28	26	25	22
Unemployed	22	20	28	20	22	26
Number responding	313	107	18	190	270	405
% of total sample	77	26	4	47	67	100

Respondents were asked whether they had made use of five Oakland Community College facilities and services including:

- libraries
- counseling and job placement
- concert, play, or art show
- workshop, short course, or seminar
- recreational facilities.

The sample was segmented into two groups based on these responses: those who had used one or more of these facilities and services and those who had used none. Half of the sample have made use of one or more Oakland Community College facilities and services and half have not. The two groups are demographically similar, with a slight tendency for the users of Oakland Community College facilities and services to be younger, more affluent, and in higher earning occupations than non-users. (Table 10)

community impact ↑ YUPies

Table 10

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Use of Oakland Community College Facilities and Services  
by Demographic Factors

	<u>One or more (%)</u>	<u>None (%)</u>	<u>Total (%)</u>
Male	46	47	46
Female	54	53	54
Less than 40 years	52	47	49
40 years and older	47	51	48
Some college or less	50	51	51
College graduate and more	50	46	48
Less than \$40,000	34	35	34
\$40,000 and more	50	45	48
Professional, technical, manager owner, proprietor	41	36	38
Sales, clerical, government	9	9	9
Skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled	21	24	22
Unemployed	26	26	26
Number responding	204	201	405
% of total sample	50	50	100

potential market



Regarding the use of individual Oakland Community College facilities and services, nearly one-quarter (24%) said that they or someone in their household have used the Oakland Community College libraries in the past two years. This is similar to previous studies in which 23% in 1989 and 22% in 1986 said this.

Twenty-four percent have attended Oakland Community College sponsored concerts, plays, or art shows. This is an increase from 1989 and 1986 where 15% and 10%, respectively, attended these events.

Oakland Community College recreational facilities have been used by 21% of respondents. Respondents in the two previous studies were not asked to indicate their usage of these facilities.

Twenty percent reported attending a workshop, short course, or seminar, an increase over previous studies, 12% in 1989 and 11% in 1986.

Thirteen percent of respondents said that they have used Oakland Community College counseling or job placement services. This is similar to previous studies in which 13% in 1989 and 11% in 1986 cited use of these services.

In this segment of the questionnaire, respondents were also asked to indicate their awareness of child care services available to Oakland Community College students. One-third were aware of these services compared to one-quarter in 1989. Respondents were not asked to indicate their awareness of these services in 1986. (Table 11)

Community Impact  
in what areas might we want to increase in order  
to:  
a) increase \$ (Strategic Direction #6)  
b) increase awareness of OCC  
c) improve image

Table 11

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Usage/Awareness of Oakland Community College Facilities and Services**

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)	<u>1986</u> (%)
OCC libraries	24	23	22
<del>\$</del> OCC sponsored concert, play, or art show	24	15	10
<del>\$</del> OCC recreational facilities	21	NA	NA
<del>\$</del> OCC workshop, short course, or seminars	20	12	11
OCC counseling or job placement services	13	13	11
Aware of OCC child care services for its students	33	25	NA
Number responding	405	400	400

Among those who have ever attended Oakland Community College, two-thirds have attended since 1981, 68% in the current study and 64% in the 1989 study. (Table 12)

Table 12  
Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Year of Enrollment at Oakland Community College**

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)
Currently enrolled - 1991	17	-
1987-90 (1989 study includes currently enrolled - 1989)	30	32
1981-86	21	32
1976-80	12	23
1971-75	7	3
1965-70	10	9
Before 1965	1	-
Don't recall	2	1
Number responding	107	102

Note: Information for 1986 is not available.

*bench mark?*

Among those who have attended Oakland Community College, 22% in 1991 and 21% in 1989 reported leaving Oakland Community College via a transfer and 17% in both studies said they graduated. Other reasons former Oakland Community College students left the school include financial difficulty (7%), having completed a course (7%), not being interested in further coursework (6%), a change in the family situation (5%), to get a 4-year bachelor's degree (5%), a change in work schedule (5%), and acquisition of a job (4%). This information for the 1986 study is not available. (Table 13)

*transfer*

Table 13

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Reasons for Leaving Oakland Community College

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)
Currently enrolled	17	24
Transferred +	22	21
Graduated +	17	17
Financial difficulty -	7	Other: 32, detail not available
Course completion +	7	
Not interested in taking more classes +	6	
Change in family structure +	5	
To get a 4-year bachelor's degree +	5	
Work schedule changed +	5	
Got a job +	4	
Other	4	
Don't know	1	7
Number responding	107	102

Note: Information for 1986 is not available.

Those who would consider acquiring more education at Oakland Community College were asked what courses of study would interest them, the best times to attend classes, and the method of transportation they would use to get to school. Regarding courses of study, they selected Business and Office most often at 42%. Liberal Arts was selected by 29%, Industrial and Technology by 28%, Arts and Humanities by 23%, Environmental Studies by 23%, Health Science by 18%, Social Science by 16%, and Public Service by 14%. Eight percent said none of these would interest them. Thirty-one percent said they would be interested in telecourses offered on cable television. (Table 14)

Table 14

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll  
**Educational Programs Interested In**

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)	<u>1986</u> (%)
Business and Office	42	37	47
Liberal Arts	up 29	19	NA
Industrial and Technology	up 28	17	16
Arts and Humanities	UP 23	3	-
Environmental Studies	23	NA	NA
Health Science	up 18	12	8
Social Science	16	NA	NA
Public Service	up 14	4	4
None of these programs	8	NA	NA
Interested in telecourses +	31	27	NA
Number responding	206	281	400

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Sixty percent indicated that Monday through Thursday evenings would be the best times for them to attend classes and 26% named Monday through Friday during the day. Mentioned by smaller but substantial proportions are Saturday mornings (16%), Friday evenings (13%), Saturday afternoons (11%), Sunday mornings (7%), Saturday evenings (6%), and Sunday afternoons (6%). This question was asked with a different format in previous studies. (Table 15)

*Steve Goodbird*

Table 15  
Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Best Days and Times to Take Classes at Oakland Community College**

	<u>%</u>
Monday - Thursday, evenings	60
Monday - <u>Friday, days</u>	26
Saturday mornings	16
<u>Friday evenings</u>	13
Saturday afternoons	11
Sunday mornings	7
Saturday evenings	6
Sunday afternoons	6
Number responding	206

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Ninety-five percent of those who would consider Oakland Community College would drive their own cars.

The total sample was asked if there is anyone in their households who needs to study English as a second language. Two percent said yes to this in 1991 and 1% in 1989 but these estimates are almost certainly understated since a non-English speaking household would not be included in the study.

The distribution of respondents in the total sample across the five Oakland Community College campuses is similar in 1991 and 1989. Data for 1986 are not available. (Table 16)

Table 16

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Oakland Community College Campus Live Closest To**

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)
Auburn Hills	30	26
Orchard Ridge	23	21
Royal Oak	22	28
Highland Lakes	15	13
Southfield	7	11
Don't know	3	1
Number responding	405	400

Note: Information for 1986 is not available.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD AN OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOINT LIBRARY VENTURE

---

A library joint venture was proposed to respondents as follows:

"Oakland Community College is considering a joint venture with a local library in Oakland County in which the library and the college would jointly operate a library on a nearby Oakland Community College campus. The library would move its existing facility into the new on-campus facility. Under this arrangement, both the library and the college would gain access to book collections which the other currently holds. Would you be in favor or opposed to such a joint venture?"

Fully 75% are in favor of such a joint venture, 10% are opposed to it and 15% could not give an opinion. Among those in favor of the joint library venture, their reasons are generally concerned with improved library collections and improved public access to these collections. Almost half (49%) said that a joint library would have more books and information than a separate facility. Also mentioned by those in favor are, benefits to the community (13%), it would be open to the public (12%), and it would improve the existing library (10%). The reasons of those opposed are concerned with a potential reduction in access to the library facilities because it would be moved away from the community. (Table 17)

general support for such joint ventures,

- library

- what else?



Table 17

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Why "in Favor" of Joint Venture	<u>%</u>	Why "Opposed" to Joint Venture	<u>%</u>
More books/information than before	49	Prefer separate facilities	42
Would benefit many people in community	13	Library should be near community	17
Open to public	12	Don't need a library in the community	7
Benefits/improves existing library	10	Not convenient access to the public	7
Convenient	7	Prefer to use the community's library	5
Saves money	7	Public library and campus library different	2
Shared resources	6	Will cost taxpayer's money	2
Can get information from OCC library	3		
Library would be larger	3		
Number responding	302	Number responding	41

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

**FISCAL ISSUES**

Three fiscal issues were examined in the research: attitudes toward funding of the college, a millage increase to support Oakland Community College, and attitudes toward tuition cost levels. Responses indicate a willingness to increase support to the school, both through taxes and tuition cost increases, among county residents.

In 1991, 1989, and 1986, more than 60% of respondents said that the school should receive most of its income for operations from state aid and tuition. Respondents cited state aid less often in 1991 compared with previous years and they cited tuition more often in 1991 than in previous years. Approximately 15% named local taxes as the most important source of college income and a similar proportion said a combination of all the sources tested. (Table 18)

Table 18

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Source of Income Which Should Contribute Most  
to Operate Oakland Community College**

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)	<u>1986</u> (%)
State Aid	34	38	37
Tuition	32	24	26
Local taxes	14	15	14
Combination of two or three	14	17	10
Other	-	1	8
Don't know	6	4	5
Refused	-	1	-
Number responding	405	400	400

*public support to  
raise tuition.*

*place > burden on  
the student*

Virtually all respondents said they are not aware of the number of mills which currently go to support Oakland Community College. (Table 19)

Table 19

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Number of Mills Oakland Community College Currently Receives

*communicate to the public \**

	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)
Not aware of number of mills	97	99
Less than one mill	*	*
One mill	1	-
More than 1 but less than 2 mills	1	1
Between 2 and 3 mills	*	-
More than 3 mills	1	-
Number responding	405	400

\* Less than one-half of one percent.

Note: Information for 1986 is not available.

Two levels of millage increase were tested in the research using a split sample method: one-half mill and one mill. With this method, half of the sample was presented with a one-half mill increase and the other half with a one mill tax increase. The millage level presented to individual respondents was randomly assigned. (The sampling error for the two half samples is +/-6.9% points at the 95% confidence level.) In 1989 and 1986, one-half mill was the only increase tested.

There is consistent support for a millage increase for Oakland Community College. Fifty-six percent in 1991, 55% in 1989, and 58% in 1986 said they were in favor of a "one-half mill increase tax proposal", approximately a quarter were opposed, and approximately 15% had not formulated an opinion. Moreover, in 1991 half favor a millage increase of one mill. Fifty percent are in

favor of, 34% are opposed to, and 16% are undecided about a one mill increase. (Note that the sample is general population sample and as such includes registered voters and those not registered to vote.) (Table 20)

Table 20

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Position on a Millage Increase

	<u>1/2 Mill</u>			<u>1 Mill</u>
	<u>1991</u> (%)	<u>1989</u> (%)	<u>1986</u> (%)	<u>1991</u> (%)
For	56	55	58	50
Against	27	24	28	34
Don't know	17	21	11	16
Refused	-	-	3	-
Number responding	199	400	400	206

Tables 21a and 21b examine the characteristics of those with different positions on the millage increase for Oakland Community College at the two levels of increase.

While large differences between those for and against millage increases are not apparent, there is a tendency for those in favor of millage increases to have some contact with higher education and with Oakland Community College and to be in higher socioeconomic groups. They would consider going to or going back to school, they have used Oakland Community College facilities and services, and they are in higher education and income groups.

In contrast, those opposed tend to have less contact with higher education and with Oakland Community College, and are in lower education and income groups.

These differences are more evident in the sample who responded to a one mill increase than in the sample who addressed the one-half mill increase.

Do a mailing to all who have ever attended?

Table 21a

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Would Vote For or Against a 1/2 Mill Increase  
by School Experience and Demographic Factors

	<u>For</u> (%)	<u>Against</u> (%)	<u>Total</u> (%)	
<i>they are already paying taxes</i> ↓ Currently enrolled	10	21	14	
<i>potential market they would benefit most</i> - Would consider going back to school	61	38	50	
<i>little to gain personally</i> - Would not consider going back to school	29	40	34	
<i>interesting</i> {	Ever attended OCC	25	26	26
	Never attended OCC	75	74	74
Use one or more OCC facilities/services	54	40	49	
<i>Has "major" event</i> → Use no OCC facilities/services	46	60	51	
Male	47	45	45	
<i>more females attend OCC</i> - Female	53	55	55	
Under 40 years	51	34	47	
<i>Fixed income</i> - 40 years and over	46	58	49	
<i>exposure</i> <	Some college or less	52	55	52
	College/post graduate	48	40	47
Less than \$40,000	38	36	36	
\$40,000 and more	47	38	45	
Number responding	112	53	199	
% of total split sample	56	27	100	

Table 21b

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Would Vote For or Against a 1 Mill Increase  
by School Experience and Demographic Factors

	<u>For</u> (%)	<u>Against</u> (%)	<u>Total</u> (%)	
<i>opposite of 1/2 mill</i> ↓ Currently enrolled	23	10	18	
<i>would benefit most</i> Would consider going back to school	50	46	49	
<i>nothing to gain</i> — Would not consider going back to school	26	41	32	
<i>interesting</i> {	Ever attended OCC	28	29	27
	Never attended OCC	72	71	73
<i>exposure</i> {	Use one or more OCC facilities/services	64	36	52
	Use no OCC facilities/services	36	64	48
Male	48	47	48	
Female	52	53	52	
Under 40 years	51	46	51	
40 years and over	48	54	47	
Some college or less	45	57	50	
<i>see benefit of education</i> — College/post graduate	54	43	50	
Less than \$40,000	31	37	33	
\$40,000 and more	59	41	50	
Number responding	104	70	206	
% of total split sample	50	34	100	

?  
 Reasons for favoring the millage were usually stated in terms of respondents' support for education and less often in terms of support for Oakland Community College. (Table 22)

Table 22

Oakland Community College  
 Oakland County Public Opinion Poll  
**Reasons Why "For" Millage Increase**

	<u>1/2 Mill</u> (%)	<u>1 Mill</u> (%)
I am a strong supporter of education	56	57
Education is a good cause	13	7
Education is needed for youth	6	8
* OCC is a good school	5	1
Helps the community in general	5	7
* OCC needs \$ to continue operations	5	4
* OCC is needed/not all can afford a 4-year institution	3	7
Number responding	112	104

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Reasons for being opposed to a millage increase were usually stated in terms of respondents' unwillingness to pay more taxes rather than their being unfavorably disposed toward Oakland Community College. (Table 23a)

good  
 to some degree

Table 23a

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Reasons Why "Against" Millage Increase

	<u>1/2 Mill</u> (%)	<u>1 Mill</u> (%)
Pay too much in taxes now/ raises my taxes	57	57
Tuition should cover the costs	13	6
Can't afford it	11	11
* OCC doesn't need any more funding	11	7
* Don't know how it will benefit OCC/community	6	7
I/my family would not benefit from millage	-	4
State Aid should cover costs	4	4
Number responding	53	70

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Respondents were asked what information they would want to have prior to a millage election.

\* Sixty-one percent said they want to know how the funds will be spent by Oakland Community College. In similar responses, 9% call for information about why Oakland Community College needs more money and 6% want to know what programs the additional monies will support.

(Table 23b)

play up on those programs/services that would  
best peak the interest of those who are in favor of millage  
or ~~more about~~ ~~and~~ those who would consider attending OCC.  
- to support weekend college  
- New academic programs  
....



Table 23b

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Information Want Prior to a Millage Election

	<u>1991</u> (%)
How will money be allocated at OCC	61
Why does OCC need to increase	9
What programs will it support	6
How much will instructors get paid	3
How much will taxes increase	3
How much \$ is state providing	3
Does OCC provide quality education	2
Don't know	16
Number responding	405

Note: Totals may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Comparable results are not available for the previous two studies although it is known that in 1989 38% said they would want to know how the money will be spent and 10% that they would like to know why the college needs additional funds.

The last area of fiscal examination in the research was attitudes toward tuition cost levels. Two tuition cost levels were tested using the split sample method: \$39 per credit hour and \$45 per credit hour. Respondents were asked whether the level of tuition presented to them is "too high", "just right", or "low and it would be appropriate to increase it slightly". (The sampling error for the two halves of the sample is +/-6.9% points at the 95% confidence level.)

At \$39 per credit hour, 52% said the tuition cost is just right, 11% said too high, 21% said that the tuition cost is low and a slight increase would be appropriate, and 16% could not offer an opinion. At \$45 per credit hour, these results are 44% just right, 14% too high, 22% low and a slight increase is appropriate, and 20% don't have an opinion. It appears that an increase in the cost of tuition in the range tested in the research would not have an adverse effect on attitudes toward the college. (Table 24)

Table 24

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

Evaluation of Tuition Cost

	<u>\$39 per credit hour</u> (%)	<u>\$45 per credit hour</u> (%)
Too high	11	14
Just right	52	44
Low and it would be appropriate to increase it slightly	21	22
Don't know	16	20
Number responding	198	207

room for increase  
what about Fee's?

**INFORMATION SOURCES**

When asked how much they know about the services and educational opportunities offered by Oakland Community College, 13% said quite a bit, 26% said some, 27% said not very much, and 33% said nothing. These findings are consistent with earlier results in this survey in which large proportions of respondents could not answer questions about the college.

60%

Among the two-thirds of the sample who claimed to have knowledge about Oakland Community College, they indicated that their sources of information are Oakland Community College students (32%), Oakland Community College employees (6%), other word-of-mouth sources (25%), Oakland Community College publications (29%), pamphlets or flyers (4%), personal observation and involvement (27%), and newspapers (20%). Results from earlier studies are not shown because of inconsistent question and answer formats. However, the mention of word-of-mouth sources is similarly high in all three studies. (Table 25)

Table 25

Oakland Community College  
Oakland County Public Opinion Poll

**Information Sources**

	1991 (%)	
OCC students	21	42 = word of mouth
OCC employees	4	
Other word-of-mouth	17	
OCC publications	20	= 22
Pamphlets, flyers	2	
Personal observation	18	= 35%
Newspapers	13	
Know nothing about OCC	33	reduce
Number responding	405	

Note: Total may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

## CONCLUSIONS

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There is a high degree of favorable sentiment among adults in the county toward Oakland Community College. When asked what comes to mind at the mention of Oakland Community College, respondents cited favorable features of the college such as convenient, nearby locations and quality education. Also, most respondents could name something about the college that they like while only a fourth could name something they dislike.

This favorable sentiment is the result of the widespread contact with Oakland Community College among county residents as well as the objective perceived quality of the college's educational and community services. More than a quarter of county adults have ever attended Oakland Community College, almost half would consider attending Oakland Community College, two-thirds have a family member or friend who has attended Oakland Community College, and half have made use of one or more of Oakland Community College's facilities or services.

The good will in the county toward Oakland Community College suggests that the college has considerable latitude in key policy areas. There are indications in the research that both a millage increase and a tuition increase would be tolerated by county residents. Half of the sample (which includes registered voters and those not registered to vote) are in favor of a one mill increase and 56% are in favor of a one half mill increase. Reasons for favoring a millage increase are related to support for education in this county in which 77% of residents say they have ever attended college. Reasons for being opposed to a millage increase are concerned with residents' opposition to paying higher taxes and not with any negative attitudes toward Oakland Community College.

Regarding tuition, only 11% feel a tuition cost of \$39 per credit hour is too high and only 14% feel \$45 per credit hour is too high. Conversely, one in five feel both levels of tuition are "low and it would be appropriate to increase it slightly".

The research also suggests that there are a variety of prospective student groups in the county which Oakland Community College may wish to design programs for including:

- young people continuing their educations post-high school
- white collar workers seeking self-enrichment and job advancement
- blue collar workers seeking job improvement.

Designing programs for these groups requires additional planning and investigation to determine a number of relevant factors such as:

- the cost to the college of developing programs weighed against the anticipated number of students who would attend these programs
- the availability (at similar cost) of such programs elsewhere in the county, in other words, the competition
- ways of reaching new students efficiently, for example, through groups such as labor unions and companies or in cooperation with other educational institutions.

The issue of English as a Second Language (ESL) can be approached similarly. Although only 2% said someone in their household is in need of this service, this is an understatement of the actual need because non-English speaking households would not be included in the research. Planning for ESL would involve an estimate of the actual need from Census or immigration records, an assessment of the alternate availability of services, and the development of referral sources. The college may wish to offer services beyond English training such as job placement and other services which would assist immigrants in becoming integrated into American culture. The college could conserve scarce resources by expanding existing language offerings to encompass the needs of the new non-English speaking students as well as current students studying foreign languages.

**APPENDIX**

**Questionnaire**

**Data Tables**