NEWSBRIEF

OFFICE OF CORPORATE - HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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New Option Available for ACE/PONSI Reviews

The Office of Corporate-Higher Education Programs is testing a new option for organizations to have courses reviewed that may increase access to ACE/PONSI reviews for smaller organizations, or for larger organizations that have only one or two courses in a particular discipline.

> "We want to provide the access, but not at the risk of jeopardizing the integrity of the program"

A letter recently went out to PONSI sponsor organizations making them aware of the new service. The plan calls for organizations with similar courses to have evaluations at the same time at one location by the same team. Because the expenses are shared, each organization will experience considerable cost savings.

At Thomas Edison, the Office of Corporate-Higher Education Programs is planning its first joint evaluation in early October. At that time, "English Composition" and "Business Communication" courses offered by the Showboat Casino and Hotel, American Institute on Banking/N.J., and the HoHoKus School for Secretarial and Medical Sciences will be evaluated

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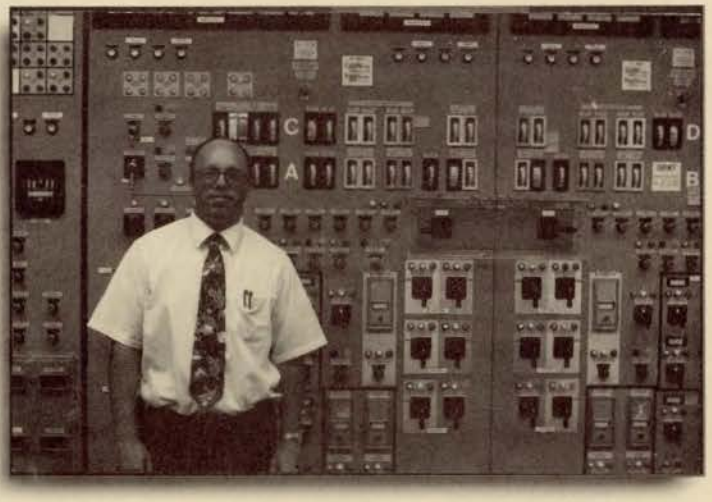
OPPD Partnership Benefits Students



▲ *Michael Sandhoefner, shift supervisor, Omaha Public Power District*

Employees of Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) continue to benefit from the corporate-higher education partnership they have with Thomas Edison State College. In fact, some of the graduates have become our strongest advocates, telling co-workers how well the program worked for them.

OPPD employee Michael Sandhoefner was instrumental in helping to forge a partnership between OPPD and Thomas Edison. Like many of his co-workers, Sandhoefner was trying to earn a college degree, but found that the nature of his work with its rotating schedule made that difficult. Education is such a vital part of their professional experience that nuclear operators typically spend one in seven weeks in the classroom fulfilling Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) requirements for license maintenance. He was attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha and working as a reactor operator. "My mother had read about Thomas Edison in a magazine, and I began researching it," Sandhoefner recalls. He identified scheduling conflicts and shift work as

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THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

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at the Showboat in Atlantic City, N.J.

"In the past, we used to discourage single-subject evaluations because they were costly for the organization. However, by partnering with other organizations that are offering a course in a similar subject area, considerable cost savings can be realized by all who participate," James A. Ratigan, director of the Office of Corporate-Higher Education Programs, pointed out. He added that partnering has other advantages as well, and puts organizations with common areas together. This linkage could benefit all organizations, big and small, as they meet on common ground.

ACE/PONSI in Washington also is testing the waters of this new approach. "It can provide access to mom- and pop-type operations that only have one or two courses," stated Joanne Robinson, deputy director, ACE/PONSI. "We want to provide the access, but not at the risk of jeopardizing the integrity of the program," she explained. There have been a few evaluations conducted in this new format, and Robinson plans to review how things are going at a meeting this fall. "It can work," she believes, but thinks that there may be value in follow-up in each administrative setting, even if the evaluation is not conducted on-site.

PONSI sponsors who would like more information and have suggestions for courses that may be reviewed in this new format are invited to contact Dan Negron in the Office of Corporate-Higher Education Programs. ■

Colloquium Postponed

The Corporate-Higher Education Colloquium, held in the fall each year, has been postponed. Restructuring at the College, and the planning of special offerings to celebrate its 25th anniversary in the upcoming year, have caused postponement as the College continues to re-evaluate its programming. Look for more information in upcoming issues of NEWSBRIEF. ■

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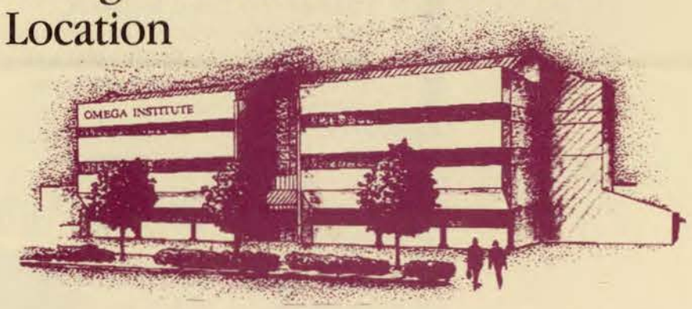
definite roadblocks to completing his degree until he learned about Thomas Edison.

Once he was convinced that he could be successful at Thomas Edison, Sandhoefner set out to convince senior management at OPPD that the program for Nuclear Operators should be supported by the company. The story has a happy ending, since Sandhoefner went on to earn his BSAST from the College with OPPD's support. OPPD continues to support numerous nuclear operators that have followed in Sandhoefner's path.

Since earning his degree, Sandhoefner has been promoted to shift supervisor. He currently is enrolled in an MBA program through the University of Nebraska. "A week doesn't go by when I haven't talked about Thomas Edison State College and recommended it to my colleagues," Sandhoefner stated. OPPD, a certified National Academy for Nuclear Training Center, is one of only a few nuclear training centers in the country that has had its courses evaluated and recommended for college credit by the ACE/PONSI program. OPPD employees are able to use those credit recommendations to directly satisfy a number of degree requirements, and to pursue additional college credits through a wide variety of methods the College has designed to meet the needs of the adult learner. ■

Omega Institute Moves to New Location



The Omega Institute, a PONSI sponsor since 1986, recently moved to a new location at 7050 Route 38 in Pennsauken, N.J., making it easily accessible by all bridges from Philadelphia, as well as by bus routes that regularly stop at its door. The newly converted quarters include a library, computer labs, lecture halls, student lounge, seminar rooms and administrative offices. ■

Sister Ellen Dauwer Appointed Associate Dean

Congratulations to our friend and colleague at the College of Saint Elizabeth, Sister Ellen Dauwer, Ph.D., who was recently appointed associate dean for the Adult Undergraduate Degree Program. Sister Ellen was previously the chairperson of the Department of Business Administration/Economics and associate professor of Computer Information Systems.

The Adult Undergraduate Degree Program was started in 1976 for adults wishing to pursue study or earn one of eight certificates or seven degrees in business administration, computer science, foods and nutrition, English, psychology, communications and international studies. ■

▲ *Sister Ellen Dauwer, associate dean, College of St. Elizabeth*

CENTER UPDATE: Surprising Results

The following article is reprinted with permission from "The Center Update," a newsletter of The Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, American Council on Education. Minor edits have been made. The article reports on the results of a survey of colleges to determine if they accept ACE credit recommendations and includes commentary and reaction:

Total responses were split in half; 50 percent indicated that they did accept the credit recommendations, 50 percent indicated they did not. ACE began a follow-up telephone survey of those officials who responded in the negative and have made some interesting discoveries.

- Some respondents thought ACE/PONSI credit was for experiential learning.
- Others thought there could not be equivalency if the length of an ACE-evaluated course was not equal to the length of semester courses.
- Still others did not know why their institution had the nonacceptance policy, especially since other types of nontraditional learning, i.e., ACE-evaluated military courses, were accepted.

The Center responded with the following information to clarify the ACE/PONSI evaluation process.

- First, a large majority of course evaluations are for courses offered in a conventional classroom setting, although today we are evaluating more distance learning offerings. For each of the courses submitted for evaluation, ACE asks for a curriculum outline and detailed course information including course outcomes, instructional materials and an explanation of the end-of-course assessment process. Information about the qualifications of the faculty also are provided to ACE. The same information is required for distance learning courses. Thus, if you compared the information ACE receives with what is prepared and used by the academic community, you will note many similarities—except the course lengths may vary. That brings us to our second point, the issue of time.

> Total responses were split in half; 50 percent indicated that they did accept the credit recommendations, 50 percent indicated they did not.

- Over the years there have been numerous studies done, including more recent studies concerning self-paced learning, that indicate there is no specific formula that equates time to amount of learning gained. In 1993, D. Bruce Johnstone, chancellor of the State University of New York, indicated in his recommendations for the three-year baccalaureate degree program that "outcomes for a course should be stipulated more clearly. When those outcomes are satisfied, the student should be done with the course, even if that is in the second week in October." (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 10, 1993, p.A33.) Time in class should not be, and is not, the primary or sole determining factor in equating ACE/PONSI-evaluated courses to your institution's courses – the demonstrated attainment of course outcomes should be the determining factor. Also, many of the students taking the ACE/PONSI evaluated courses are applying their newly acquired knowledge and skill almost instantaneously in their work environment.
- Finally, you should review your institution's policy concerning acceptance of ACE/PONSI credit recommendations, especially if your institution does not currently have a written nontraditional credit acceptance policy in place. Sometimes, unilateral decisions are made by an individual within an academic office or division, and once that person leaves, no one reviews the history or wisdom of such a policy, especially if it isn't written down. This may be the time to review that policy.

In 1973, when the ACE/PONSI Program was first designed and developed, the course evaluation process was based on the ACE military courses evaluation process Today, the same procedures are in place. If you currently accept ACE military course credit recommendations, you should certainly accept the ACE/PONSI credit recommendations.

As you may already know, business and industry spend billions of dollars each year on educating and training their workforce; they have a great need for a well-trained workforce in order to compete in the global marketplace. The learning outcomes that are gained in this business environment are as valid as those gained on the campus of academic institutions – and it is in the best interest of the institution as well as the student that such learning be properly recognized. These students bring an added perspective to class discussion that should be valued and appreciated. ■

NEWSBRIEF

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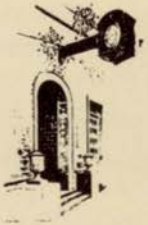

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