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*Office of*

*Vocational Training & Development*



*Report to the CCC Board of Trustees*

*November 5, 1998*

*Nancy C. DeSombre  
President*



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## HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

### Office of Vocational Training & Development

The Office of Vocational Training & Development (OVTD) was established at Harold Washington College (HWC) in 1993. Its programs originated from the former Chicago City-Wide College's Center for Program Development for the Handicapped in 1979. The Illinois Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Division, has been the funding source for the past 19 years. HWC is the only City College that offers a variety of employment opportunities to the developmentally disabled population.

Services are targeted to reach special education program participants, and referrals are obtained from community agencies serving persons with developmental disabilities. Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Written verification of a developmental disability is required. All students are thoroughly assessed prior to enrollment to determine their individual career goals and service needs. Person-centered planning techniques and individualized service delivery are emphasized to create the desired outcomes for students. After the initial assessment, many students may be eligible for academic classes, vocational training, or job placement. The goal is to provide continuous support towards the accomplishment of competitive employment.

HWC's Vocational Development academic classes include courses designed to enhance students' skills in reading, writing, and math. Money management, work ethics, and job development are also introduced. The classes run for eight weeks and are in session year-round. OVTD offers over thirty courses which are tailored to meet the students' special needs.

Vocational Training on-site job training serves adults with developmental disabilities. Training can last up to four months or more if needed. Permanent training

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sites, the Hyatt Regency Chicago and the University of Illinois Hospital, provide training in housekeeping, food service, public areas, laundry, stewarding, and materials management. If these two sites do not offer the desired training, staff locates a training site appropriate to the desired goals. And, starting in December, 1998, stipends will be offered to the training students in the program.

Job placement and supported employment job coaching is also provided. Once an individual is placed in a job, OVTD initiates ongoing communication with the employer to regularly check on the individual's progress. If necessary, we will provide on-site job coaching to ensure that the employer is making the appropriate accommodations for the individual with a disability. We will also work to ensure that the newly-hired individual can handle the responsibilities of the position, often shadowing that individual throughout the workday.

Thirteen placements have been made within the last two months. These students are now working at:

Hyatt Regency Chicago  
K-Mart  
University of Chicago Medical Center  
Norwegian American Hospital  
Goldblatts Department Store  
Jewel Food Stores  
Breakers at Edgewater Beach  
Dominicks  
Taco Bell  
Auburn Animal Hospital



*Gale Hall, Educational Specialist, registering new student, Caroline Ochoa, accompanied by her mother, into the training program.*

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## Chicago Public Schools Initiative

The department is reaching out to identify new students in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools Transition Division. On April 16, 1998, OVTD participated in the *Friends of Special Education Community Resource Fair*. And, following the Chancellor's lead to develop stronger relationships with the Chicago Public Schools, members of the Office of Vocational Training & Development met with Ms. Delores Freeman, Coordinator, Special Education Transition Team, and several of her Transition Team members in May, 1998. During that meeting, six schools were identified for initial contacts:

Steinmetz High School  
Vaughn Occupational High School  
Bowen High School  
Ray Graham Training Center  
Phillips Academy  
Urban Youth Vocational High School



*Pam Toles, Ieda Sisler, Shane Tratechaud, and Louise Lundgren discussing partnership with Steinmetz High School.*

Meetings are being arranged with principals and special educational teachers and counselors to open up dialogues to ensure that information about the opportunities provided by HWC's OVTD is distributed among appropriate students.

Through this partnership and the excellent work of the OVTD staff, a total of 51 students enrolled in phase one of the fall semester, of which 29 were recruited from the CPS schools. And, in phase two of the fall semester, we enjoyed an increase of 50%, with 75 students enrolled, of which 60 were from the CPS schools.

Other outreach efforts to CPS included a luncheon to showcase our services and highlight to those interested the changes we have made to the program. On September 22, 1998, CPS principals, special education teachers, and counselors learned more about the vocational program we offer at HWC for adults with developmental

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disabilities. Many CPS transition counselors and staff attended the luncheon from:

Crane High School  
Curie High School  
Englewood High School  
Gage Park High School  
Hirsch High School  
Kelly High School  
Kennedy High School  
Las Casas High School  
Lincoln Park High School  
Lindblom High School  
Manley High School  
Mather High School  
Schurz High School  
Senn High School  
Sullivan High School  
Vaughn Occupational High School  
Washington High School  
Westinghouse High School



*Karen Meyer, Disability Reporter for WLS-TV delivering keynote address at OVTD luncheon.*

Since September, several Chicago Public Schools have requested presentations at their schools to those students who might benefit from our services.

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Over thirty juniors and seniors and two special education teachers from Englewood High School visited Harold Washington College in October. And, presentations were made at the following high schools during October:

Vaughn Occupational High School

Forest Academy Noble Square

Sullivan High School

Phillips Academy

Ray Graham Training Center

Steinmetz High School

Bowen High School

The following schools will benefit from an OVTD visit in November:

Carver High School

Lindblom High School

Earlier identification of prospective students means improved training, job placement, and educational services for these students.



*Alicia Bearden, Assessment Coordinator, giving an orientation to new OVTD students.*

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## Goals for the Future of OVTD

In order to better serve persons with developmental disabilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Office of Vocational Training & Development plans to enter the new millennium with a person-centered approach, expanding business partnerships and working closely with community organizations.

A new case-management approach has been implemented to ensure that each client receives the most appropriate services to achieve his/her goals.

New relationships are being forged with private industry such as Dominicks Finer Foods to place students. A new recruitment video has been developed. Ongoing training sites and internships are being identified in order to provide students with as many options and skills necessary to *obtain* and *retain* entry-level positions within industry, local businesses, community agencies and the academic community.



*David Golden, Assistant Guest Services Manager of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, exchanges information with Zakiyyah Wahid of The Institution of Disability & Human Development at the OVTD luncheon.*