

O'Banion, Terry. *A Learning College for the 21st Century.* Phoenix, Ariz.: Onyx Pr. (American Council on Education/ Onyx Press Series on Higher Education), 1997. 260p. \$27.50, alk. paper (ISBN 1-57356-113-4). LC 97-008299.

Terry O'Banion's new book has the endorsement of the American Association of Community Colleges. The foreword by K. Patricia Cross, David Pierput Gardner Professor of Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley, reflects the book's overall tone in her statement that "this work provides an exciting model for community colleges of the future."

O'Banion is the well-known and respected president and CEO of the League for Innovation in the Community College, a consortium of leading community colleges in the United States and Canada dedicated to experimentation and innovation. The premise of this volume is that higher education must focus its attention on student learning and the creation of a "learning college" if it is to survive into the twenty-first century. This argument addresses both the rapid growth in community colleges in the 1960s and the growing criticism and educational reform movement in higher education triggered by publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. O'Banion and his colleagues' thesis is that there has been little or no increase in learning among the nation's students.

The learning college model's strength is the principle that by focusing attention on how student learning takes place, educators will be able to develop a more effective education in the future. Institutional organization and college operation are defined by this principle. In the learning college, "the faculty moves away from furnishing information to students and become designers of learning environments, working cooperatively with other faculty, staff and administrators. They guide more than teach and through the process, they also learn." The new paradigm that community colleges are learning, not teaching, institutions is highlighted by a review of the efforts of six

community colleges in establishing learning colleges: Sinclair Community College (Ohio), Jackson Community College (Mich.), Lane Community College (Ore.), College System of Maricopa (Ariz.), Palomar College (Calif.), and Community College of Denver (Colo.). Each case study provides a candid description of how the institution grappled with changes leading toward more learner-centered institutions. The CEOs of the institutions, the primary authors of the case studies, describe the environment of the college and the early developmental phases of the learning college concept. These are heartfelt descriptions of institutions in transition and provide models of what other community colleges can expect on the journey to becoming a learner-centered organization.

In the last chapters, O'Banion offers a practical guide and blueprint for community colleges interested in launching a learning college initiative of their own. He concludes: "Colleges that change their basic systems to focus on learning by expanding learning options for students, by engaging students as full partners in the learning process, by designing educational structures to meet learner needs, and by defining the roles of learning facilitators based on the needs of learners, will create an educational enterprise that will help students make passionate connections to learning, one whose accomplishments will be worth great celebration in the institution and throughout society."

Although this volume is of great importance to community colleges and their learning resource centers and libraries, it should also be of importance to four-year institutions and libraries that will compete for students through their academic and distance education programs in the twenty-first century. A Web site (<http://www.pbs.org/learn/als/revolution/person/listserve.htm>) hosted by the PBS Adult Learning Service online provides additional information on creating a learning college.—*Paul E. Dumont, Dallas County Community College District.*