

## **Oakton's Call Center**

This fall Oakton successfully launched a test Call Center to assist with telephone inquiries which would typically be answered by the offices of Admissions and Enrollment Management, Registration and Records and the Cashier. One of the goals of Oakton's Strategic Plan is to plan and construct one-stop student services centers at the Des Plaines and Skokie campuses by fall 2010. A Call Center is likely to be part of the one stop. The Call Center is student centered and assists the College welcome, inform, support and engage students by providing the level of student service our community expects and deserves. While the one-stop committee developed the Call Center idea, three Oakton employees were instrumental in implementing the Center: Cliff Casey, Manager of the Advising and Counseling Center; Patty Lucas, Manager of Voice Network Telecommunications; and Robin Vivona, Manager of Career Services.

The Call Center was in operation the weeks of August 18 and August 25. The Call Center was staffed in shifts by three to five agents and a supervisor Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Call center agents looked up the answers to callers' questions on the "Call Center Scripts" (an Excel spreadsheet). When the issue was beyond the scope of the Call Center the call was transferred to the appropriate office.

The Call Center committee put out an appeal to current Oakton employees to take part as call center agents. Forty full-time and part-time staff, adjunct faculty, and Oakton retirees acted as call center agents. Fifteen administrators volunteered to act as call center supervisors. Training for all concerned occurred the weeks of August 4 and 11.

The week of August 18 call center agents responded to 3,717 calls. The average wait time was 16 seconds. The service performance rate (calls picked up by agents) was 92.3 %.

The week of August 25 call center agents responded to 2,611 calls. The average wait time was 14 seconds. The service performance rate (calls picked up by agents) was 93.5 %.

The Call Center's peak day was August 25 with 868 calls answered.

While callers were waiting to be served they would have heard a welcome message, music and a few pieces of critical information including: "Classes for the 2008 fall semester begin August 25," "You can view the class schedule, apply, register and pay on line by accessing our website at [www.oakton.edu](http://www.oakton.edu)" and "Payment dates for tuition vary based on the date you registered for classes. Payment for registration made after August 20<sup>th</sup> is due the following business day. You can check your balance on line at [myOakton.edu](http://myOakton.edu)."

All of the offices involved reported that as a result of the Call Center their call volume was substantially decreased. This permitted their staff to spend more time with callers transferred from the Call Center with more complex issues and to meet the needs of the students waiting in line at their offices. An unforeseen benefit was many call center agents, who do not typically work in the Division of Student Affairs, report they learned a great deal about the College and our student services from their Call Center experience.

The "Call Center Scripts" used by the call center agents can be found on the S: drive in OCCSHARE, in a folder titled Call Center: *CallCenterScripts.xls*.