

Lawrence Tech lauded as one of 'Best in the Midwest'

University located in Southfield chosen for its excellence in academic programs

By Diana Dillaber Murray
Journal Register News Service

Lawrence Technological University in Southfield is one of five Michigan universities, and the only one in Oakland County, that is listed as among the "Best in the Midwest" for 2010 by The Princeton Review.

The others are Kalamazoo College, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University and University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

The designation is based on Princeton's standards of academic excellence for the region and the results of anonymous student surveys.

Only schools where Princeton could arrange for the online student surveys were eligible, according to the Web site of The Princeton Review, which provides testing preparation services for a variety of higher-education exams.

The 4,500-student Lawrence Technological University offers nearly 100 undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs in the colleges of architecture and design, arts and sciences and engineering and management.

One of the most recent additions to the expanding Southfield campus is the state-of-the-art Taubman Student Services Center, designed to be a one-stop

center that addresses the needs of the whole student - academic, emotional, physical, technological and financial.

It also will utilize the latest in energy-efficient and environmentally friendly designs and technologies, according to the Web site.

The private university, which pioneered evening classes, has a growing number of weekend and online programs at its Southfield campus. Lawrence also offers classes in Detroit, Lansing, Petoskey and Traverse City and partners with others to offer courses in several other countries.

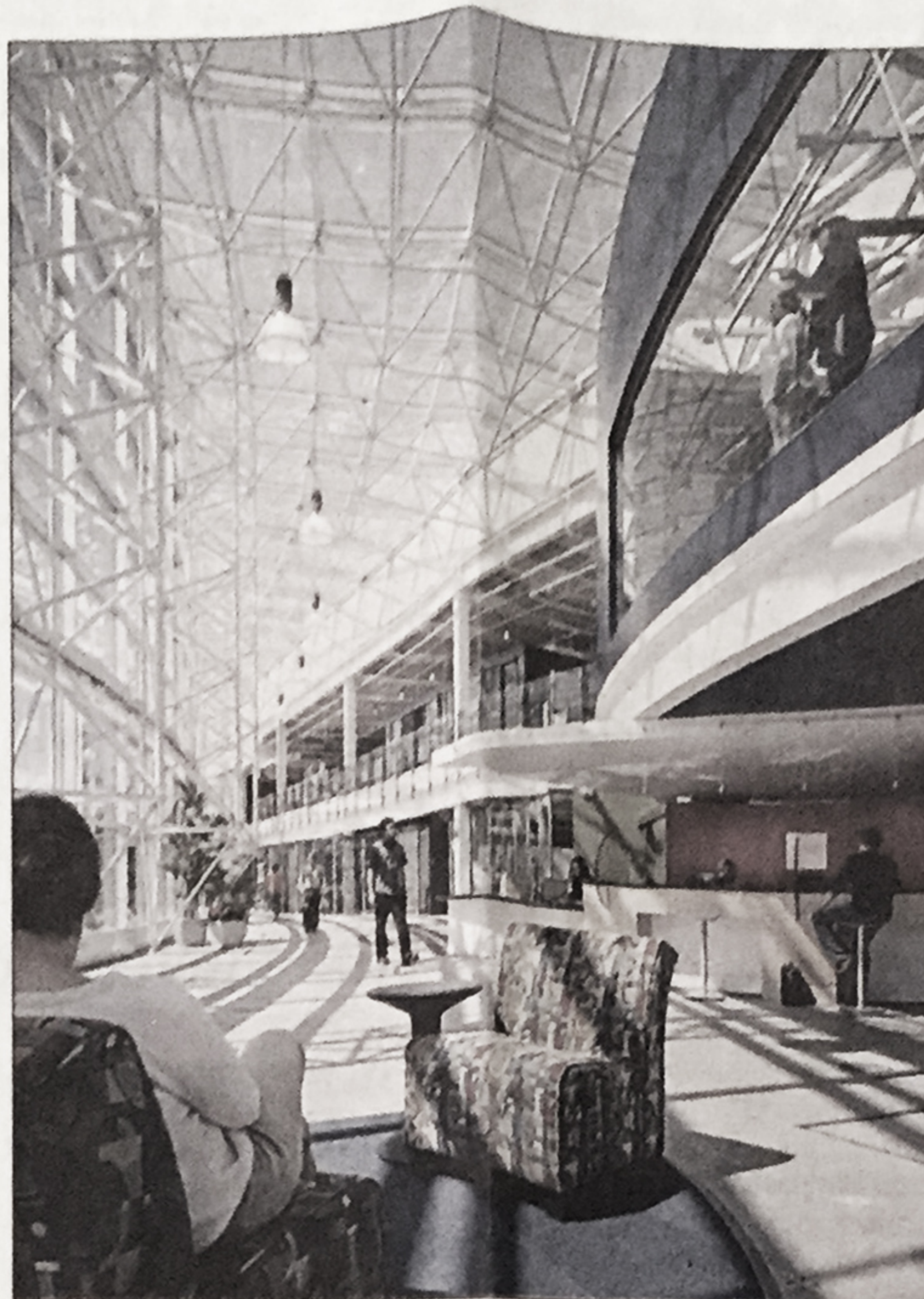
"We chose Lawrence Tech and the other terrific schools we recommend as our 'regional best' colleges primarily for their excellent academic programs," Robert Franek, Princeton Review's vice president of publishing, said in a news release.

The rating categories in the anonymous online student survey included selectivity of admissions criteria, including grade point averages; financial aid; quality of life; and green rating.

Students were asked to rate their own schools on several issues - from the accessibility of their professors to quality of the campus food. They also answered questions about themselves, their fellow students and campus life.

Brian Murray, a 2008 Lawrence Tech graduate was quoted in a press release as saying, "I chose Lawrence Tech because I wanted to work with the best.

"The classes are challenging, but you get a lot of support here.



Submitted photo
The interior of the student center is shown at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield.

The friendly campus made me feel very comfortable," said Murray, who earned a bachelor's degree in computer science.

According to the Princeton Review Web site, the company "avoided using any sort of mathematical calculations or formulas to determine which colleges and universities to include in this feature.

"For each region, we aim to provide an inclusive mix of colleges: large and small, public and private, all-male and all-female, historically black colleges and universities, science and technology-focused institutions, non-traditional colleges, highly selective colleges and those with vir-

tually open-door admissions, great buys and the wildly expensive."

The site recommends readers use the rankings only as a tool in making a selection of college, but recognize that the input "reflects the values and opinions of others" and should be accompanied by information gathered by a parent and student's own investigation, campus visits and other sources.

The company said its staff monitors colleges continuously, annually collects data on more than 2,000 schools nationwide, visit scores of schools annually, and meets with or talks to hundreds of college administrators.

Year-round schools benefit youngsters

By Karen Workman
Journal Register News Service

Of the 29 public school districts within Oakland County and the thousands of schools run by them, there are only two schools in the county that offer a year-round schedule.

"The students experience learning throughout all four seasons," said Dale Phillips, principal of Kurtz Elementary School in Milford.

Kurtz is part of the Huron Valley Schools, serving the communities of Milford, Highland, Commerce and White Lake in southwest Oakland County.

In the county's northeast corner, Lake Orion Community Schools also has a year-round calendar at its Carpenter Elementary School.

In both districts, parents living anywhere within the district's boundaries may opt to enroll their children in the school.

"Carpenter parents really love the calendar," said Kerri Anderson, principal of Carpenter Elementary. "There's always a waiting list."

The school teaches kindergarten through the fifth grade and has a student population of about 450 students.

If there were spots available, there'd be plenty of bodies to fill them.

"We have parents who want their children there even when they have siblings at the middle school," which is on a regular schedule, said Ken Gutman, superintendent of the Lake Orion district.

Enrollment to the school is decided on a lottery basis, and the demand is usually greater than the seats available.

In the beginning, it didn't appear that Orion Township res-

ident Scott Benoot's daughter, Chelsea, would be able to attend the school.

"Chelsea missed out on the lottery and was put on a waiting list," Benoot said. "Then, due to people moving, she was able to get in."

That was in kindergarten and now a fifth-grader, Chelsea has just one more year before going on to the middle school and a normal calendar year.

"She has thrived through the curriculum," Benoot said.

At Carpenter, school began on Aug. 3 and will go through June 18 next year, giving the students a six-week summer break. They will also have week-long breaks called intersessions in November, February and May, and have all the normal holiday breaks as well.

The schedule at Kurtz is a little different, as students' first day of school is after Labor Day like the rest of the district.

Kurtz also has a traditional schedule for about half of the 400 students who attend there. The year-round students, though, get two intersession breaks in November, February and May, and their summer break consists of the month of August.

Like Carpenter, year round students also get all the normal holiday breaks.

"Many people choose (the year-round schedule) because they believe it does reduce summer loss," said Phillips. "There is less review in the beginning of the year."

Neither of the schools' schedules are considered a true year-round calendar, which generally refers to a schedule of 45 days in class followed by 15 days off.

"We're on more of a plan that blends with our traditional school calendar," Phillips said.