
2014 SWOT Analysis

Report Presented By:

Strategic Planning and Accountability Committee

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Overview

In preparation for the development of a new strategic plan, Harper College is investing significant time and energy in conducting an assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses as well as an external review of opportunities and threats – a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis provides an evaluation that can focus institutional attention and inform planning processes. The analysis began with the identification and critical review of key institutional data. These key data sources included:

- College Plan
- Accountability Report
- Fact Book
- Student Success Report
- Environmental Scan
- Community Survey
- Sightlines Facilities Benchmarking
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) results
- National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP)
- Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) results
- Graduate employment data
- Recent task force reports

As a result of the review of these documents the College's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats began to surface. The analysis identified the current state of affairs, while highlighting areas in which Harper is strong as well as those that need our focused attention. Further research was conducted to gather additional data on external forces influencing Harper as opportunities or threats. Items that surfaced were evaluated using three criteria:

- Institutional Level - The item is at the institutional level, not one relating solely to a particular division, department or program.
- Data Driven - Once the institutional criterion was met, the item was reviewed to determine if its data are documentable and measurable.
- Peer Review - If applicable, the data was reviewed to see how Harper compares to similar institutions.

An initial draft document was created and reviewed by the Strategic Planning and Accountability (SPA) Committee. The second draft was presented to the campus community as part of the fall 2014 Friday Dialog Series during which faculty and staff had the opportunity to provide additional feedback.

STRENGTHS

(A strength is a positive internal institutional attribute.)

Strength 1: Increasing Levels of Student Degree Completion/Credentials Earned

Item Description:

Completion rates and credentials awarded have been increasing since the implementation of strategies associated with the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. While the current rate itself has not reached the desired level the dramatic growth in both overall graduation rate and number of credentials conferred are positive outcomes and a strength of the College.

Supporting Comments:

The College's three-year Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) graduation rate has increased by 10.22% over the last four years. Harper's graduation rate was well above the peer group average for 2011 and 2012. The peer group average has ranged from 15.40% to 16.90%. While many colleges in the peer group have seen increases in graduation rates, the rate of increase is higher for Harper than for the peers.

Graduation Rate*				
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Harper	13.90%	19.00%	20.40%	24.12%
Peer Average	15.40%	15.80%	16.90%	Not yet available

*Graduation rate as measured by IPEDS is the percent of full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking students who completed a degree or certificate within three years of initial enrollment.

President Obama has challenged community colleges to produce five million additional completions by 2020. Additionally, the Association for Community College Trustees (ACCT), the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE), the League for Innovation in the Community College, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society set as their goal to confer 50% more high-quality degrees and certificates by 2020.¹ In support of this national initiative, Harper has committed to realizing 10,604 additional degrees and/or certificates earned by 2020. At the end of FY2014 the College is well ahead of schedule; 67% to the 2020 goal of 10,604 additional degrees and certificates.

Harper Degrees and Certificates Awarded				
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
2,552	3,838	4,487	3,930	3,743

Strategies to increase the number of completions have impacted the growth in graduation rate and completions.

- Implemented a "completion pledge" in partnership with Phi Theta Kappa, which students sign indicating their commitment to working toward completing a Harper credential, and outlining the College's pledge of its own efforts to help them succeed.

¹ McPhail, C. J. (2011). The completion agenda: A call to action. American Association of Community Colleges p. 2 http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/CompletionAgenda_report.pdf

- Increased focus on dual degree agreements that not only allow students to transfer from the two-year institution to a four-year, but also facilitate the exchange of student data in both directions, as a result, students who transfer prior to completing a Harper credential can reverse their credits back to Harper to finish here, as well.
- Updated the College website to allow students to self-audit progress toward a credential each term and connect them more easily with resources to help them finish.
- Created a completion concierge position which is responsible for:
 - Identifying students who are close to completing degree requirements
 - Organizing the preparation of information needed for graduation evaluations
 - Utilizing the degree audit module and communicating results with the student population
 - Tracking student progress as they continue through successful completion of a degree or certificate program
 - Working with academic counselors to ensure proper course placement.

Strength 2: National Model for Addressing Workforce Gaps

Item Description:

Harper is focused on building new partnerships as a strategic direction in the current strategic plan. Its first major partnership to develop from this focus was the statewide manufacturing alliance of community colleges to address the shortage of manufacturing technicians in the state. Harper College's ability to develop and sustain this type of model serves the institution and the region.

Supporting Comments:

The revitalized manufacturing program is a state wide program that has been regarded as a national model by the Department of Labor, the White House and the Manufacturing Institute. This partnership model is currently being replicated in Minnesota, Michigan and Ohio. There are four primary advantages with this type of model.

- Strong statewide higher education collaboration
 - Harper College led a consortium of 21 geographically-dispersed Illinois community colleges called the Illinois Network for Advanced Manufacturing (INAM).
 - INAM has created a project with an overarching goal to "Expand and improve the delivery of education and career training programs leading to industry-recognized certificates or associate degrees that can be completed in two years or less and prepare Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)-eligible and other workers for employment in high-wage, high-skill advanced manufacturing occupations."²
- Development of a replicable model
 - Specific target population - The project, Earn and Learn Advanced Manufacturing Career Lattice Program, specifically targets TAA workers, veterans, incumbent workers, the unemployed and others who seek additional training to secure and/or maintain employment within the manufacturing sector.
 - Credential realignment - The Earn and Learn Program allows participants to earn stackable, portable certificates and degrees that lead to high paying jobs within advanced manufacturing while simultaneously working in the industry. These industry-recognized credentials obtained through the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC), the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) and American Welding Society (AWS); provide quality assurance that employees possess the necessary skills and competencies to pursue various positions within advanced manufacturing. This partnership received a \$13 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant from the Department of Labor.
- Functional business partnerships
 - This partnership also includes 75 local manufacturers offering paid internships.
 - Additionally, the College is beginning a partnership in the supply chain industry through another TAACCCT grant from the Department of Labor.
- National model recognition
 - Harper was select by Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker and the White House to represent community colleges in the national Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (AMP) as one of only two community colleges in the country. The group is comprised of university and college presidents, chief executive officers from the nation's most successful manufacturing firms, labor leaders and policymakers across the federal government.

² INAM, 2014. Mission. <http://inam.net/>

- The Aspen Institute is featuring this model in their workforce partnership section of their upcoming community college Best Practices Guide publication.³ The partnership has also been designated by the Manufacturing Institute as an M-List School. The M-List recognizes high schools, community colleges, technical schools, and universities that are teaching manufacturing students to industry standards.⁴ Only 79 institutions achieved this national standing.⁵

³ Aspen, 2014 – Planned Publication Early 2015

⁴ <http://blog.stemconnector.org/manufacturing-institute-launches-m-list-one-source-skills>

⁵ Manufacturing Institute, 2013 <http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Skills-Certification/M-List/M-List.aspx>

Strength 3: Partnerships with Sender High Schools

Item Description:

Harper College has created a nationally recognized model for high school community college partnerships that includes program alignment, increased college readiness, integrated college credit and the ability to earn college scholarships.

Supporting Comments:

The Northwest Educational Council for Student Success (NECSS) is a partnership between Harper and our sender high schools. This unique partnership focuses on student success and was developed based on the approval of the Harper Board as well as the boards of our three sender high school districts. The purpose of NECSS is to “develop programs, share talent and data, and leverage joint resources to ensure that every elementary, high school and college graduate will have the opportunity to be prepared for a global society, 21st century careers, and postsecondary readiness/success.”⁶

The NECSS organizational structure contains five committees, one Council and one Board, each with the authority to create initiative, project, and/or program subcommittees. The five committees can request funds to explore, plan and implement initiatives, projects, and/or programs from the Council. The Council can also request funds from the Board for activities they would like to pursue. The Board will approve the activity and the funding. Activities should specifically address student learning and support efforts that increase college and career readiness and decrease the number of students placing into developmental education. Activities include those that:

- Increase the number of first-generation students who aspire to achieve postsecondary degrees;
- Increase the number of students of color who aspire to and achieve postsecondary degrees;
- Increase the number of males who achieve postsecondary degrees;
- Increase overall graduation rates and reduce attrition;
- Decrease student achievement gaps.⁷

An example of an initiative of NECSS is found in the cross-district approach to increasing college readiness in math. The partners are currently:

- Testing high school juniors using the COMPASS test.
- Promoting high school seniors to take math their senior year (Illinois only requires three years of math).
- Offering a new Algebra 3 course that is the equivalent to Harper’s MTH080. High school students in this course, who meet the threshold of the commonly developed (high school and college faculty) final exam, are deemed college ready in math and do not need to retest.
- For those high school students who are college ready and do not want to pursue the calculus track, we offer a dual credit College statistics course at the high schools.

⁶ Guiding Document for NECSS, p. 2, http://www.necsspartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/Guiding_Document.pdf

⁷ Guiding Document for NECSS, p. 2, http://www.necsspartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/Guiding_Document.pdf

This program has been offered to over 2,000 high school students and has resulted in a 21% increase in the percentage of recent high school graduates beginning in college math.⁸ NECSS is also in the process of developing an English alignment program, a Promise Program, and the Power of 15 Program.

The Daily Herald, in its editorial of October 10, 2010, called this partnership a “groundbreaking alliance”.⁹ The partnership was also highlighted in a spotlight session at the American Association of Community Colleges Annual conference as an exemplary partnership.¹⁰ The Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois P-20 Council requested a presentation on NECSS and concluded it was a model for the state.¹¹ The Aspen Institute has identified this partnership to be featured in the high school partnership section of their upcoming community college Best Practices Guide publication.¹²

The NECSS model is being replicated in New Mexico and at Illinois Valley Community College in Illinois. The New Mexico project is being highlighted at the 2014 American Community College Trustees Association Conference. The College has been asked to present this model by the American Association of Community Colleges, American Community College Trustees Association, the School Superintendents Association and Achieving the Dream. The model was also noted by the White House in the publications that resulted from the White House Summit on Community Colleges.¹³

⁸ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14 p. 2

⁹ Daily Herald, October 10, 2010, p. 14

¹⁰ AACC 2014 Conference Program guide Spotlight Session

¹¹ IBHE, combined Board Meeting – P-20 Council Meeting, July 25, 2012

¹² Aspen, 2014 – Planned Publication Early 2015

¹³ The White House. *Commitments to Action on College Opportunity*. January 2014. p. 25

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/college_opportunity_commitments_1-16-2014_final.pdf

Strength 4: Support for Professional Development

Item Description:

Harper College provides employees with institutional support and encouragement to pursue opportunities for professional development. The support, both monetary and programmatic, for professional development provided by the College is a strength of the institution.

Supporting Comments:

Employees across the College have professional development and training opportunities; this is an essential component of employee and program evaluation.

- Expended \$550 per FTE employee in FY2012, ranking above the 75th percentile among 171 public community colleges as reported in the 2013 National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP).¹⁴
- Expended over \$548,000 in employee professional development in FY2014.
- Provided professional development workshops to further develop faculty teaching skills. In FY2014, 83 workshops on 67 different topics were offered with a total enrollment of 1,287.
- Expanded employee technical skills with training provided by Information Technology. In FY2014, 194 technical skills training classes were held with 397 employees attending.
- Established the Harper Leadership Institute, which is designed to enhance professional effectiveness and provide a pathway to future leadership opportunities. The first cohort comprised of 29 employees representing diverse employee groups and varying levels of leadership completed the year-long program in FY2014. A total of 30 employees were selected to participate in the second-year of the program.
- Created the Center for Adjunct Faculty Engagement which promotes student success by providing instructional support, resources, and professional development for adjunct faculty.
- Instituted the Academy for Teaching Excellence which takes an integrated approach to faculty development that aligns with the College goals and strategic initiatives. The Academy develops original professional development opportunities and forms partnerships with all areas of the campus that provide professional development in order to create one clearinghouse for all faculty professional development.
- Established the Harper Academy for Research and Teaching Excellence (HARTE) Fellowship. The HARTE Fellowship was designed to provide faculty and staff with an opportunity to engage in scholarly research to inform the planning and implementation of the College's strategic initiatives by providing an opportunity for doctoral study. Fellows will research topics directly related to the strategic goals and share their research with the College to inform our practice.
- Created the Staff Professional Enrichment Training Series. The goal of the training is to combine the managers "needs" for specific skills for their staff with the training "wants" of employees. The program offers a series of three and a half hour long courses offered through Development Dimensions International. Participation rates in 2013 included 74 supervisors/managers and 122 staff.

¹⁴ 2013 National Community College Benchmark Project, Report of National Aggregate Data

Strength 5: Community Awareness/Participation

Item Description:

District residents have a high awareness of Harper College as their community college and high rates of participation in both credit coursework and cultural activities.

Supporting Comments:

Community survey results continue to demonstrate that awareness of Harper is an institutional strength. Results of the most recent community surveys, conducted in 2010 and 2013, indicate that Harper had the highest unaided recall (first mention) with the residents in the district. According to the survey administrators, the most accurate assessment of awareness is an assessment of unaided recall.¹⁵

- In 2010 and 2013, 33% of the district residents mentioned Harper College first when inquiring about local area colleges. This awareness rate is approximately 10% higher than the rate for other colleges of similar size.¹⁶
- Harper, with an unaided awareness rate of 33%, is well above the other 2013 responses: 14% Northwestern University; 7% University of Illinois; 6% Northern Illinois University; 5% Oakton Community College; 5% University of Chicago; 4% Elgin Community College; 4% DePaul University; 4% Roosevelt University; 3% College of DuPage; and 2% Loyola University.¹⁷
- In the 2013 responses, Harper College was the most frequently recalled college or university with 58% of survey respondents mentioning Harper when asked about local area colleges.¹⁸
- In 2013, Harper has high overall familiarity rates with 69% recognizing Harper as their community college.¹⁹

Harper College ranks high in community participation, according to data from the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), as compared to over 200 other community colleges.^{20 21}

- Community participation in cultural activities was at the 94th percentile in 2012 and 92nd percentile in 2013.
- Students from our district high schools attend Harper at high rates. Harper was at the 90th percentile for high school penetration rate in 2012 and the 78th percentile in 2013.
- Overall credit student penetration rate is high compared to our peers; at the 82nd percentile in 2012 and the 81st percentile in 2013.

Learning Resources Network (LERN) is the premier association in continuing education and lifelong learning.²²

- For academic year 2014-15, Harper College's Continuing education program is one of the top five online providers in the LERN association.
- Harper College has been LERN Certified since 2003 and at the time of certification we had earned the highest rating of any program in the nation.

¹⁵ Community Survey 2013, p. 7

¹⁶ Clarus email, September 2014

¹⁷ Community Survey 2013, p. 8

¹⁸ Community Survey 2013, p. 10

¹⁹ Community Survey 2013, p. 13

²⁰ 2012 National Community College Benchmark Project, Report of National Aggregate Data

²¹ 2013 National Community College Benchmark Project, Report of National Aggregate Data

²² Email communication with Mark Mrozinski, 12/4/14; LERN web address: www.lern.org

WEAKNESSES

(A weakness is an institutional attribute requiring improvement.)

Weakness 1: Stagnant Student Persistence Rates

Item Description:

Although both the graduation rate and the number of credentials conferred are increasing, Harper College is experiencing a decline in student persistence rates. Due largely to lack of persistence, the student advancement rate which represents the percentage of students who graduate, transfer or continue to enroll at the College within three years of initial enrollment is not showing progress. Despite efforts to improve student success and overall student progress, student persistence and the advancement rate are not steadily increasing.

Supporting Comments:

Student persistence rates have declined in recent years. Although efforts to increase the persistence of Harper students have been implemented, the fall to spring and fall to fall persistence rates are not improving. While persistence rates remain above the peer group average, the decrease in rates in conjunction with the increased efforts to retain students is an area of weakness for the College.

Persistence Rate: Fall to Spring ²³				
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
70.48%	76.23%	76.96%	73.46%	73.94%

Persistence Rate: Fall to Fall ²⁴				
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
49.88%	50.77%	57.78%	53.16%	49.84%

Student advancement rate is a comprehensive measure of student progress. Harper’s student advancement rate decreased steadily from 2010 to 2012 and increased slightly in 2013. The student advancement rate is well below the Harper target rate of 77-78%.

Student Advancement Rate ²⁵				
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Harper	69.86%	65.43%	62.92%	65.01%
Peer Average	68.32%	61.42%	63.20%	Not yet available

²³ Harper College *Institutional Accountability Report*, 2013-14. p. 7

²⁴ Harper College *Institutional Accountability Report*, 2013-14. p. 8

²⁵ Harper College *Institutional Accountability Report*, 2013-14. p. 9

Weakness 2: Insufficient Employee Diversity

Item Description:

The ethnic diversity of the Harper College faculty and staff is not representative of the community it serves. While attention has been placed on increasing the diversity of both faculty and staff, Harper College is struggling to achieve a level of employee diversity that reflects the increasingly diverse student body and district populations.

Supporting Comments:

A racially and culturally diverse faculty and staff offer significant advantages to community college students and to the College as a whole. A diverse employee base increases the likelihood of students having a successful experience while in school.²⁶

Recent studies of institutions of higher education have concluded that minority students can benefit from faculty and staff who can serve as personal mentors and role models, and all students benefit from faculty who can offer diverse backgrounds and perspectives.²⁷

There are numerous sources that highlight the need to improve Harper's employee diversity. The most recent Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs) show that district diversity has increased from 31.4% in 2010 to 32.4% in 2013, while the percentage of diverse new hires has decreased from 29.85% in 2010 to 21.82% in 2013. Additionally, the underrepresented employee separation rate has increased from 7.48% in 2010 to 9.44% in 2013. Data shared by the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion show the percentage of full-time diverse employees by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) group in 2013:

Percentage of Full-Time Diverse Employees, Fall 2013

	Total Harper ²⁸	Harper District (2010) ²⁹
African American	2.9%	2.4%
Asian	4.6%	12.1%
Hispanic	5.3%	16.3%

Percentage Diverse Faculty to Students, Fall 2013

	Harper Faculty ³⁰	Harper Credit Students ³¹
African American	1.6%	4.6%
Asian	3.7%	10.3%
Hispanic	2.8%	20.1%

As indicated by the data above, a large gap exists between the diversity of our employee population and that of those we serve.

²⁶ Jacobson, Jennifer "Scaling the Ivory Tower," AFT On Campus, Jan-Feb 2008, p. 10-11

²⁷ Umbach, Paul D. "The Contribution of Faculty of Color to Undergraduate Education" Research in Higher Education, Vol 47, No. 3, May 2006, p. 317-345, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j776638797607x11/>

Cole, Darnell, "Do Interracial Interactions Matter? An Examination of Student-Faculty Contact and Intellectual Self-Concept," Journal of Higher Education, Vol 78, No. 3, May-June 2007, p. 249-281

²⁸ Source: ICCB C1 Files, 2013

²⁹ Source: American Community Survey Estimates

³⁰ Source: ICCB C1 Files, 2013

³¹ Source: ICCB E1 Files, 2013

Weakness 3: Inadequate Levels of Student Engagement

Item Description:

Student engagement with the learning process is directly related to student persistence in higher education.³² Harper College uses the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to assess student engagement as a key indicator of learning and engagement. The survey is comprised of items that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and student retention.

Supporting Comments:

In 2012, 2013 and 2014 approximately 438,756 students at 684 colleges in 48 states, the District of Columbia, three Canadian provinces, plus Bermuda, Micronesia, and the Northern Marianas participated in CCSSE.³³ Based on these survey results, the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) determined that student engagement is critical to student success and noted that “Promoting student engagement is the overarching feature of successful program design, and all other features support it. In design and implementation of the collegiate experience, colleges must make engagement inescapable for their students.”³⁴

CCSSE has been conducted at Harper every three years since 2006. Harper College has consistently scored below or at average with most of the CCSSE defined benchmarks tracking student academic engagement. In addition, according to the most recent administration, Harper College student scores have fallen at or below the 25th percentile for three of the five benchmarks. Finally, percentile ranks for four out of five benchmarks have decreased from the 2008-09 administration to the 2011-12 administration.³⁵

CCSSE Benchmarks \ Definitions	2008-09 Administration			2011-12 Administration			Change in Rank
	Score	Rank	Median	Score	Rank	Median	
Active & Collaborative Learning The extent to which students participate in class, interact with other students, and extend learning outside of the classroom.	46.2	16%	49.6	45.6	10%	49.2	-6%
Student Effort Time on task, preparation, and use of student services.	48.4	32%	50.0	47.6	27%	49.8	-5%
Academic Challenge The extent to which students engage in challenging mental activities, such as evaluation and synthesis, as well as the quantity and rigor of their academic work.	50.3	62%	49.7	49.6	50%	49.6	-12%
Student-Faculty Interaction The extent to which students and faculty communicate about academic performance, career plans, and course content, etc.	47.9	16%	50.8	48.0	17%	50.2	1%
Support for Learners Students’ perceptions of their college and their use of advising and counseling services.	49.2	43%	49.5	47.7	24%	50.1	-19%

Blue shading indicates at or below the 25th percentile.

³² Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition, 2nd edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

³³ Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2014. National College Characteristics. <http://www.ccsse.org/survey/national.cfm>

³⁴ Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2012). *A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success (A First Look)*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program

³⁵ NCCBP Benchmarking tool; <http://www.nccbp.org/content/benchmarks>

Weakness 4: Student Achievement Gaps

Item Description:

Although Harper College has increased success and completion rates for many students, that success is not shared equally across student groups. Some demographic groups continue to underperform when compared with their peers. These student achievement gaps are an area of concern for the College, independent of similar gaps that may be seen within peer institutions. Continued efforts to decrease gaps based on race/ethnicity, gender and age are essential to providing equitable opportunities for students.

Supporting Comments:

Student achievement gaps exist in the areas of persistence, developmental course success, college-level course success, and completion and transfer:

Persistence: Black and Hispanic students and students age 20 and over persist at rates below the College's overall persistence rates.

- In the 2011 cohort, black student fall to fall persistence (28.7%) and Hispanic student fall to fall persistence (52.8%) were below the overall Harper persistence rate (56.9%).³⁶
- Students age 20 and over had average fall to fall persistence rates 14.7-16.6% lower than the overall Harper persistence rate.³⁷

Developmental courses: Black students and male students do not perform as well as their peers in developmental math, reading, and English.

- Black student developmental course completion falls approximately 20% below the Harper average in all three subjects.³⁸
- Male students consistently underperform in developmental courses in comparison to females, with success rates 2.4-6.1% below the college average for the 2010 cohort.³⁹

College-level courses: Black, Hispanic, and male students also underperform in relation to their peers in gatekeeper courses.

- Success rates for black students ranged from 8.7% (math) to 13.0% (English) below the Harper average for the 2010 cohort. Hispanic students consistently performed below the Harper average in gatekeeper English (3.0%) for the 2010 cohort.⁴⁰
- Males also consistently underperform in gatekeeper courses, with rates 3.5-5.7% lower than the Harper average for the 2010 cohort.⁴¹

Completion and Transfer: Completion rates remain low for male, black, and Hispanic students, in addition to students age 20-24. Additionally, Hispanic students and students age 25 and over tend to have low transfer rates in comparison to their peers.

- Male students complete credentials at lower rates relative to female students. For the 2010 cohort, the male completion rate (15.3%) was 11.5% lower than the female completion rate (26.8%).⁴²

³⁶ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 36

³⁷ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 39

³⁸ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 43, 49, 55

³⁹ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 42, 48, 54

⁴⁰ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 91, 98

⁴¹ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 90, 97

⁴² Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 125

- Although the overall Harper completion rate was 21.2% for the 2010 AtD cohort, black students completed at a rate of 14.2% and Hispanic students completed at a rate of 18.2%. Additionally, the Hispanic transfer rate (28.7%) was 7.4% below the Harper average (36.1%).⁴³
- Students age 30 and over outperform their peers in completion (26.1%), but students age 20-24 complete at lower rates than any other age group (16.5%). For the 2010 cohort, the overall Harper transfer rate was 36.1% but students age 25-29 transferred at 28.5% and students age 30 and over transferred at 20.9%.⁴⁴

⁴³ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 126, 134

⁴⁴ Harper College *Student Success Report*, 2013-14, p. 129, 136

Weakness 5: Employee Climate Concerns Regarding Communication and Advancement

Item Description:

Although the results of the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) revealed that “the overall results from the 2013 administration of the PACE instrument indicate a healthy campus climate, yielding an overall 3.78 mean score or high Consultative System,”⁴⁵ two areas have been identified as needing improvement: internal communication and a supportive environment with opportunities for advancement. The results of the Harper Cultural Values Assessment are consistent with these concerns.⁴⁶

Supporting Comments:

From the 2011 and 2013 administrations of the PACE instrument, the following items were rated the lowest across the majority of employee groups surveyed:

- Internal Communication
 - Information is shared within the institution.
 - Open and ethical communication is practiced at this institution.
 - My work is guided by clearly defined administrative processes.
- Supportive Environment with Opportunities for Advancement
 - Decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution.
 - I am able to appropriately influence the direction of this institution.
 - This institution has been successful in positively motivating my performance.
 - A spirit of cooperation exists at this institution.
 - This institution is appropriately organized.
 - I have the opportunity for advancement within this institution.

From the spring 2013 Harper Cultural Values Assessment the following issues were revealed:

- Internal Communication
 - There is a lack of clear and open communication, and people may feel as if they are working against one another at times.
- Supportive Environment with Opportunities for Advancement
 - Participants are feeling overworked and faced with navigating rigid internal structures, systems and processes in their efforts to get the job done.
 - Budget restrictions may be compromising quality or sustainability, and causing employees to be concerned for their future employment.
 - There may be a lack of empowerment and hesitation to embrace new ideas.
 - Some people may be given unfair advantage while others may be made to feel inadequate or criticized.

⁴⁵ Personal Assessment of College Environment. Harper College Results Report. October 2013, p. 2

⁴⁶ Harper College Cultural Values Assessment, February, 2013

Weakness 6: Physical Plant and Infrastructure

Item Description:

Although Harper College is outperforming its peers in many aspects of its physical environment, the current age of many campus buildings remains an institutional concern.

Supporting Comments:

The following factors make the current state of the physical plant a College concern:

- Fifty-five percent of Harper's campus is between 25-50 years of age. According to Sightlines, "The balanced campus profile will see a shift in the next 5-7 years into higher risk categories, requiring strategic investments into new and old space with different operational demands." Ensuring renovations in line with the Master Plan (including Buildings M, F, A, D and H) will move the College to a more balanced age profile by FY2018, with 26% of space between 25-50 years of age.⁴⁷
- Although the College has made improvements in planned maintenance (PM) to preserve the quality of campus space, the College lags behind best practices in this area. According to Sightlines, "Best practice institutions invest 10-12% of their budget on PM; Harper is investing 5%."⁴⁸
- Harper College has 4.5% of its space dedicated to study space, which is lower than local peers: College of Lake County (6.9%), Oakton Community College (6.2%), College of DuPage (6.1%) and Elgin Community College (5.9%).⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Sightlines FY2013 ROPA Presentation to the Harper College Board of Trustees, August 2014. Slide 3

⁴⁸ Sightlines FY2013 ROPA Presentation to the Harper College Board of Trustees, August 2014. Slide 8

⁴⁹ Illinois Community College Board, 2013 Data and Characteristics of the Illinois Public Community College System, Table V-4 - Total Net Assignable Square Footage by Room Use Classification

OPPORTUNITIES

(An opportunity is an external situation outside of Harper’s control that has no negative impact if not acted upon.)

Opportunity 1: Alternate Methods for Earning College Credit

Item Description:

In many accredited public and private universities across the United States, credit may be given for adequately documented and validated experiential equivalent learning of a postsecondary nature. Examples are: credit for business experience, achievements in a related profession, competency-based learning, military training or other postsecondary-level equivalent experience.

Supporting Comments:

Providing alternative means for students to earn college credit would make enrollment at Harper College advantageous over other programs in the area and decrease both the cost and time for obtaining a degree or certificate.

Credit for prior learning is the granting of college credit for what an individual has learned through life or work experiences.⁵⁰

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of colleges that award credit for life experience has increased 35% from 2004 to 2010 to more than 2,000 schools.⁵¹
- Students are finding that many higher education institutions are open to granting college credit for documented life and work experiences. In 2006, the Council on Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL) conducted a study on the assessment of prior learning as a means of earning college credit. Results indicated that 70% of responding institutions accepted credit for corporate or military training, and 66% developed provisions for faculty evaluation of student portfolios indicative of prior learning (Klein-Collins & Hein, 2009).⁵²

Competency-based learning provides a method for earning college credit in an adaptive way, allowing the student to progress as mastery of learning is demonstrated.

- Competency-based learning often incorporates credit for prior experience by granting students the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or skill acquired through these prior experiences.
- In addition to increasing efficiency and reducing cost, “competency-based systems also create multiple pathways to graduation, make better use of technology, support new staffing patterns that utilize teacher skills and interests differently, take advantage of learning opportunities outside of school hours and walls, and help identify opportunities to target interventions to meet the specific learning needs of students”.⁵³
- Competency-based learning is an unexplored methodology at Harper College.

⁵⁰ <http://goforward.harpercollege.edu/careerpaths/#glos9>

⁵¹ http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide/blog/credit_for_life.php

⁵² Klein-Collins, B & Hein, P. (2009). Prior learning assessment: How institutions use portfolio assessments. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 57, 187-189

⁵³ <http://www.ed.gov/oii-news/competency-based-learning-or-personalized-learning>

Opportunity 2: Workforce Partnerships with Business and Industry

Item Description:

The White House, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, the American Association of Community Colleges, and The Aspen Institute have all focused on the importance of community colleges and business and industry partnerships over the last several years. Grant money, excellence awards and white papers have all documented the importance and impact of integrated workforce systems that include community colleges, regional employers and workforce systems.

Supporting Comments:

In 2010, the White House published a report calling on business leaders and community college boards to focus on community partnerships to increase opportunity for individuals and grow local economies. This report identifies steps that employers, business leaders and community college boards can take to promote community colleges as a way to raise the level of skill in the American workforce, including partnering in the development of curriculum and training programs.⁵⁴ The report notes that “as employers and business leaders get more involved in workforce development, they must link with strong faculty and administrators to build effective partnerships with community colleges. Community college boards must stand fully behind this important work. The board must create the conditions in which partnerships can thrive.”⁵⁵

The Aspen Institute notes that “for millions of Americans, community colleges provide an essential pathway to well-paying jobs and continuing higher education. The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence honors institutions that strive for and achieve exceptional levels of success for all students, while they are in college and after they graduate.”⁵⁶ The measures for the prize include both student success and workforce outcomes.

Federal grants are increasingly addressing workforce-based educational opportunities and partnerships, giving priority to projects that include business partners – if not outright requiring them. The White House and federal agencies are promoting the inclusion of workforce outcomes in the growing performance-based funding movement for community colleges. The White House report encouraged community college boards to “Advocate at the state level for aggressive performance funding that offers incentives for workforce and job placement outcomes—not funding based solely on number of enrollments.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ White House Summit on Community Colleges: A Call to Action for Employers and Community College Boards: How to Create High-Impact Partnerships for Jobs & Economic Vitality in the U.S. 2010

<http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/71%20Bus%20Champions%202010.pdf>

⁵⁵ White House Summit on Community Colleges: A Call to Action for Employers and Community College Boards: How to Create High-Impact Partnerships for Jobs & Economic Vitality in the U.S. 2010, p. 11

<http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/71%20Bus%20Champions%202010.pdf>

⁵⁶ The Aspen Institute. 2013. The 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, p. 1

⁵⁷ White House Summit on Community Colleges: A Call to Action for Employers and Community College Boards: How to Create High-Impact Partnerships for Jobs & Economic Vitality in the U.S. 2010, p. 12

Opportunity 3: Underserved District Populations

Item Description:

Student demographics suggest that segments of the district population are currently underserved by Harper College. These underserved populations are adult students age 25 and over, first-generation immigrants, and commuters who live outside of the district but work within district boundaries. Opportunities exist for the College to focus greater attention on these markets, which would allow Harper to increase enrollment and enhance service to community members and local businesses.

Supporting Comments:

Adult residents, first-generation immigrants, and individuals who commute to the Harper district for employment are areas of potential market growth. Harper has the opportunity to fully develop these student pipelines to increase enrollment and provide better service to the community.

- Adult students: Approximately 46% of district residents over the age of 25 have less than an associate’s degree. In contrast, since fall 2009 only 38% of credit enrollments were attributed to adult students ages 25 and over indicating that there is a large population of adults in the district that might benefit from enrolling at the College. Nationally, 38% of those enrolled in higher education are over the age of 25, and 25% are over the age of 30. The share of all students who are over age 25 is projected to increase another 23% by 2019.⁵⁸

Educational Attainment ⁵⁹	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+	Total
Less than 9th grade	0.07%	0.55%	0.92%	1.26%	1.30%	4.10%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	0.77%	0.67%	0.58%	0.86%	1.38%	4.25%
High school graduate, GED, or alternative	2.19%	2.52%	3.15%	8.33%	7.19%	23.37%
Some college, no degree	3.57%	2.77%	2.91%	7.47%	4.05%	20.76%
Associate's degree	0.65%	1.16%	1.47%	3.51%	0.94%	7.74%
Bachelor's degree	1.75%	6.28%	5.79%	10.14%	2.75%	26.71%
Graduate or professional degree	0.18%	3.19%	3.18%	5.20%	1.31%	13.07%
Total	9.17%	17.14%	18.00%	36.76%	18.92%	100.00%

Source: American Community Survey, 2012

- First-generation immigrants: First-generation immigrants account for an estimated 25.6% of the Harper district population, much greater than the statewide proportion of 14.3%.⁶⁰
- Commuters: “About 27% of the 335,725 jobs in the Harper district are filled by residents with the remainder filled by commuters into the district.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/09/old-school-colleges-most-important-trend-is-on-the-rise-of-the-adult-student/245823>

⁵⁹ American Community Survey, 2012

⁶⁰ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 28

⁶¹ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 10

Opportunity 4: Responding to the Region’s Skills Gap

Item Description:

Many employers in Harper’s region are unable to find skilled workers to fill open positions. Although the College offers degrees and certificates in many high-growth occupations, there may be opportunities to expand programming by increasing capacity, developing new programs, and partnering with other post-secondary institutions.

Supporting Comments:

According to the Center on Education and the Workforce, “The United States has been under-producing college-going workers since 1980. Supply has failed to keep pace with growing demand, and as a result, income inequality has grown precipitously.”⁶² Over the next decade, U.S. jobs requiring some level of postsecondary education are expected to grow to 63%. By 2018, the United States is projected to need 22 million new college degrees and over 4.7 million additional workers with postsecondary certificates, but will fall short of these needs by over 3 million post-secondary credentials.⁶³

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that 60% of the top 10 fastest-growing occupations between 2004 and 2014 will require at least a completed certificate.⁶⁴ Community colleges must develop new and strengthen existing career programs to meet the growing industry need.

- Although total employment in the Chicago metropolitan area shrank by 4% from 2007 to 2012, some industries have experienced shortages of qualified workers.⁶⁵ Many of these areas are expected to grow in the next three to five years, providing opportunities in health care, social assistance and management.
- The table below displays the occupations for which at least some college is required and are predicted to realize the greatest rate of growth in Illinois by 2020.⁶⁶

Occupation	2010	2020	Change	#Change
Registered Nurses*	124100	140750	13%	16650
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	60470	65430	8%	4960
Computer Support Specialists	22890	25890	13%	3000
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	12860	15610	21%	2750
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	23410	25630	10%	2220
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	10000	12170	22%	2170
Dental Assistants	12430	14300	15%	1870
Dental Hygienists	8670	10500	21%	1830
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	13720	15340	12%	1620
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	6850	8180	20%	1330
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	8460	9630	14%	1170
Firefighters	15970	17020	7%	1050

Note: *Registered Nurses include Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners.

⁶² Carnevale & Rose, 2011, p. 3. Carnevale, A., & Rose, S. (2011). *The undereducated American*. Center on Education and the Workforce. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/undereducated/>

⁶³ Carnevale, A., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2010). *Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018*. Center on Education and the Workforce. <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/ursjbxaym2np1v8mgrv7>

⁶⁴ *The Future of U.S. Workforce* report (2012)

⁶⁵ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 6

⁶⁶ Career One-Stop Database (February, 2014)

Partnerships with other post-secondary institutions could provide the additional credentials needed to meet the job market demands. According to the Career One Stop database, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, there are a number of fast growing occupations in Illinois for which a bachelor’s degree is required.

- The table below displays the occupations for which at least a bachelor’s degree is required and are predicted to realize high demand in Illinois by 2020. ⁶⁷

Occupation	2010	2020	Change	#Change
General and Operations Managers	91660	100910	10%	9250
Management Analysts	31220	38030	22%	6810
Software Developers, Applications	25460	31860	25%	6400
Accountants and Auditors	48010	53620	12%	5610
Computer Systems Analysts	18090	22860	26%	4770
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	15090	19730	31%	4640
Software Developers, Systems Software	15230	18860	24%	3630
Computer Programmers	21640	24560	14%	2920
Personal Financial Advisors	11140	13750	23%	2610
Human Resources Specialists	15370	17500	14%	2130
Computer and Information Systems Managers	13730	15810	15%	2080

- Current partnerships with Eastern Illinois University, DePaul University, Governors State University, Rasmussen College, and Roosevelt University could be used as models for additional partnerships or for expansion of current offerings.

⁶⁷ Career One-Stop Database (February, 2014)

THREATS

(A threat is an external situation outside of Harper's control that has a possible negative impact if not acted upon.)

Threat 1: Response to District Demographic Changes

Item Description:

Significant demographic changes require a response from the College to examine and address the needs and desires of the changing district population. District changes include declining enrollments in elementary schools, increasing racial and ethnic diversity, and decreases in household income. As the college of the community, Harper has a responsibility to respond to these changes and attend to the needs of the changing district population.

Supporting Comments:

The Harper College district population is becoming more diverse in race, ethnicity, primary language spoken in the home, and birth place.⁶⁸ The Hispanic population is the largest minority in Harper's district at 16.3%.⁶⁹ Along with these district demographic changes, lower birth rates and an aging population have caused a decrease in primary school enrollments; there were nearly 1,200 fewer kindergarten than 12th grade enrollments in the Harper region in 2013. However, increases in district immigration have led to an increase in the number of Hispanic and Asian students in district schools.⁷⁰

Median household income is decreasing and low income populations are increasing within the district and across Illinois. Within the district, 91% of communities saw a decrease in median household income between 2008 and 2013. According to the fall 2013 enrollment counts, approximately 25% of schools in the Harper district had percentages of low income students that were higher than the statewide average of 49.9%.

Despite these changes, the student population enrolled at Harper from fall 2009 to fall 2013 has remained consistent across race/ethnicity, gender, and age groups. The district has shifted, but those shifts have not been reflected in the Harper student body. Thus, Harper should adapt its policies and practices to better meet the needs of changing district demographics.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has shared several challenges regarding the conditions that current community college policies and practices place on students—conditions which disproportionately affect Hispanic, black, Native American, and low-income students.⁷¹ These conditions include credits that do not lead to completion or transfer, students who do not have goals or an understanding of how to reach their goals, students with difficulties completing developmental sequences, a lack of coherence across student services, and difficulty transitioning from high school to college or college to the workforce. Thus, the AACC argues that colleges should redefine policies and practices that are barriers to success and completion. Colleges should also improve services to help students successfully transition from high school to college and from college to the workforce as

⁶⁸ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 10

⁶⁹ Harper College *Fact Book*, 2013, Exhibit 1.3

⁷⁰ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 26

⁷¹ American Association of Community Colleges. (2012). *Reclaiming the American Dream: A report from the 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges*. Washington, DC. Available at www.aacc21stcenturycenter.org

well as increase faculty engagement in the development of “experiences that lead to improved learning outcomes and success for a student population that is increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, learning styles, level of academic preparedness, and life experiences.”⁷² Attention to the changes in district demographics through a redesign of Harper’s policies and practices will be vital for Harper’s ability to effectively serve its student and district populations.

Colleges that have devoted significant attention to designing services for underrepresented and low-income students have enabled important improvements in student access and success. Walla Walla Community College has implemented enrollment and retention efforts that include required visits to academic advisors. In 2011, new graduates earned \$41,548 on average—nearly twice the amount of other new hires in the region.⁷³ At Kingsborough Community College, 61% of students receive Pell Grants, and 47% of students are from underrepresented minority groups. Kingsborough has adopted a variety of approaches that address the developmental and financial needs of students, including a center to provide students with services such as transportation assistance and welfare applications. Kingsborough achieves a transfer rate to four-year institutions of 60%.⁷⁴

⁷² American Association of Community Colleges. (2014). *Empowering community colleges to build the nation’s future: An implementation guide*. Washington, DC. Available at www.aacc21stcenturycenter.org

⁷³ Aspen Institute. (2013.) The 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Washington, DC. http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/upload/AspenPrize_2013FINAL.pdf

⁷⁴ Aspen Institute. (2013.) The 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Washington, DC. http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/upload/AspenPrize_2013FINAL.pdf

Threat 2: Higher Education in an Increasingly Competitive Environment

Item Description:

The public increasingly sees education as a competitive commodity. To remain competitive in this landscape, Harper must be able to adopt new pedagogical models and new technologies to meeting the demands and learning styles of modern students.

Supporting Comments:

Harper College's 2014 Environmental Scan points to over 100 education providers within 25 miles of Harper's main campus, offering over 1,000 degree, certificate, or other training programs.⁷⁵ Additionally, because of the availability of websites such as the College Navigator, provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics, students can more easily compare educational institutions.

Additional evidence of the need to attend to new technologies and related pedagogical models includes:

- The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) estimates 30% of all enrollments are in online courses an increase from only 10% in 2002. SCUP expects the global e-learning market to reach \$107 billion by 2015.⁷⁶
- Harper's distance education credit hours and credit sections both rank below the 25th percentile as reported by the 2013 National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) Aggregate Report. Blue shading in the following table indicates areas where Harper is at or below the 25th percentile. A low percentile ranking indicates that the College offers fewer distance education opportunities when compared to the other community colleges that reported this measure to NCCBP.⁷⁷

Distance Learning	2010		2013		Change in Rank
	%	Rank	%	Rank	
Credit Hours	5.36%	19%	7.43%	17%	-2%
Total Credit Sections	9.13%	40%	8.00%	20%	-20%

- Faculty will be challenged to stay ahead of students in use of technology in the classroom. In a 2012 survey conducted by CDW-G approximately half of faculty reported a transformation away from the traditional lecture. Additionally, students reported a preference for hands-on, independent study, distance or virtual learning and individual tutoring as opposed to traditional lecture.⁷⁸
- Increasingly, students are using, and expecting to use, new technologies such as mobile apps in the classroom,⁷⁹ and colleges are beginning to respond with new technologies to promote students success.⁸⁰
- The College serves a community with diverse backgrounds and ages, and these differences may be reflected in individual communication and learning styles as well as comfort with technology in and out of the classroom.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 94

⁷⁶ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 39

⁷⁷ NCCBP Benchmarking tool; <http://www.nccbp.org/content/benchmarks>

⁷⁸ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 39

⁷⁹ <http://www.ccdaily.com/Pages/Technology/How-mobile-learning-devices-are-changing-the-face-of-higher-ed.aspx>

⁸⁰ <http://www.ccdaily.com/Pages/Technology/Colleges-use-technology-to-promote-student-success.aspx>

⁸¹ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 29

- Additional use of online technology will also present data security as an increasing liability for higher education.⁸²
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) may change the way students earn a degree. In the future, it is expected that entirely free MOOC-based programs of study will lead to degrees from accredited institutions. These changes have the potential to undermine or completely replace college and universities' traditional business models.⁸³
- The University of Denver Strategic Issues Panel on Higher Education noted that "...disruptive technologies and pedagogical innovation can create alternatives to traditional models of education. The combination of these conditions...has the potential to redefine the landscape of higher education and expand the number and nature of the educational competitors."⁸⁴

⁸² Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 7

⁸³ Source The MOOC Model: Challenging Traditional Education, EDUCAUSE Review Online (January/February 2013), <http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/mooc-model-challenging-traditional-education>

⁸⁴ Unsettling Times: Higher Education in an Era of Change, Strategic Questions for College and University Leaders; Report of the University of Denver Strategic Issues Panel on Higher Education, September 2014

Threat 3: Educational Funding

Item Description:

Funding for the financing of postsecondary education is inadequate to meet the need, increasing pressure to identify alternative revenue sources. These funding challenges impact both the institutions that provide education and the individuals seeking postsecondary education opportunities.

Supporting Comments:

State support for community colleges has been reduced over time, and local tax revenue cannot completely close the resulting gap. As tax supports decrease, Harper College must increase its reliance on other funding sources such as tuition.

- Across the country state support for higher education dropped 7.6% in FY2012.⁸⁵
- Illinois funding for community colleges has not kept pace with inflation and is lower in FY2015 at \$345 million than it was in FY2002 at \$368 million. FY2015 state funding for the College is \$1.1 million lower than in FY2002.
- Federal support for Adult Education and Career and Technical Education remains lower than FY2002 levels.
- Property taxes, which are Harper's primary source of local funding, are limited by the tax-cap laws. In addition, tax appeals have resulted in an \$18.3 million loss since FY2002.
- Unfunded state mandates for veterans' programs cost the College close to \$0.5 million per year.⁸⁶
- In Illinois, the gap is widening between those who are eligible for grants and those who receive grant funding.⁸⁷ Household incomes are declining, resulting in increased eligibility for grants at the same time as the number of available grants is decreasing.
- State-level cutbacks in financial aid are occurring at the same time tuition and fees are increasing to make up for shortfalls in institutional revenues. The result is increased cost of higher education for students.
- Lower levels of state support have resulted in a strain on campus infrastructure. In order to complete renovations according to the Campus Master Plan, the College will need to pursue alternate funding sources such as a building referendum and partnerships with community businesses and other organizations.

⁸⁵ Society for College and University Planning, Planning for Higher Education Journal, 2012&2013

⁸⁶ Received from Laurie Dietz, at the direction of Bret Bonnstetter, in an email dated August 15, 2014

⁸⁷ Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Table 2.4c of the 2012 ISAC Data Book for Public 2-Year Institutions

Threat 4: Pension Liability

Item Description:

The lack of a long-term solution for the underfunding of the Illinois pension systems has affected higher education and resulted in the downgrading of the Illinois bond ratings.⁸⁸ Additionally, the implementation of the most recent pension legislation has been postponed due to litigation regarding Public Act 98-599, the pension reform law passed December 5, 2013.⁸⁹ Although the overall impact of the pension issue is unclear, increased borrowing costs and pension liabilities divert both funding and attention away from higher education priorities.

Supporting Comments:

- Although Illinois increased support for higher education 15.6% from 2007 to 2012, the increase was in pension payments not educational services.⁹⁰
- In 2012, Illinois had the 11th highest tax burden of all states in the United States, translating to fewer discretionary funds to pay for higher education.⁹¹
- Forty-seven percent of Harper College SURS eligible employees participate in the Self-Managed Plan (SMP) which has been offered since 1998. In recent years, an increasing number of new employees who do not have previous SURS credit have selected the SMP, which is partially attributed to the addition of a “Tier II” SURS-annuitant designation.⁹²
- Pensions vs. schools: Higher education which examines pension costs compared to higher education spending, states that:
 - Higher education retirement costs will continue to increase.
 - The jump in pension payments will continue to cause higher education retirement expenditures to eclipse other state support.
 - In the five-year period from 2005 to 2010, approximately 80% of all new state funding for higher education has gone toward retirement expenditures.⁹³

⁸⁸ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 11

⁸⁹ <http://www.surs.com/news-article/072314/judge-halts-implementation-pa-98-599>

⁹⁰ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 11

⁹¹ Harper College *Environmental Scan*, 2014, p. 11

⁹² Roger Spayer, Chief Human Resources Officer, email dated September 9, 2014

⁹³ Illinois Policy Institute, <http://www.illinoispolicy.org/simplereport/pensions-vs-schools-chicago-public-schools/>

Threat 5: Increasing Call for Accountability

Item Description:

Harper College engages in mandatory reporting to several oversight organizations, including the U.S. Department of Education (through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, or IPEDS), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The amount of mandatory reporting to each of these organizations has increased in recent years, in part due to state and national budget constraints that have resulted in additional pressure to ensure the production of quality education with fewer resources.⁹⁴ National discussions around education reform consistently reference the need for greater transparency and accountability, improved student achievement and better use of public funds.

Supporting Comments:

Accountability requirements for Harper College include:

- To ensure Harper College continues to receive Title IV funds (federal financial aid) for its students information is submitted to state and federal governmental agencies. Over the past five years, these reporting requirements have increased in both the types of information and the amount of information required on an annual basis.
 - ICCB requires multiple submissions of student's unit record data, as well as information about employees and facilities on an annual basis.
 - National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) through IPEDS requires annual summary submissions about student demographics, credit hour production, and student success indicators.
 - U.S. Department of Education requires annual submission about program completion and post-graduation outcomes for many of Harper College's career programs.
- Many states, including Illinois, have legislated performance-based funding in higher education that would grant funds based on completion and other student success factors rather than enrollment.
- Beginning in 2011, the U.S. Department of Education began requiring colleges to disclose certain information for any financial aid eligible program that "prepare[s] students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation."⁹⁵ These requirements include program costs; completion rates, debt to income ratio, occupational profiles and job placement data.
- The College's regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, has endorsed the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability's quality guidelines for both assessment and accountability, published by the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability. The guidelines help colleges and universities improve the quality of a college degree by asking them to set clear goals for student achievement, regularly gather and use evidence that measures performance against those goals, report evidence of student learning, and continuously work to improve results.
- The U.S. Department of Education requires accrediting bodies to assure that all its member institutions comply with the expectations of specific regulations. HLC must enforce these regulations as a part of their federal recognition. HLC is also required to review the institution's compliance with Title IV

⁹⁴ Zarkesh, M., & Beas, A.M. (2004). UCLA Community College Review: Performance indicators and performance based-funding in community colleges. *Community College Review*, 31 (4), 62-76.

⁹⁵ Hamilton, J. (2011). Obama Administration Announces New Steps to Protect Students from Ineffective Career College Programs. <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/gainful-employment-regulations>

program responsibilities.⁹⁶

- The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 increased the amount of statutory requirements that HLC must ensure its accredited institutions meet. The Department of Education defines and implements these requirements through regulations that are frequently updated. Such requirements have increased the compliance reporting required by the institution.⁹⁷
- The College's governing board, as well as members of the local and state community, has expectations for transparency and accountability. Data detailing the effective use of tax dollars for educational programs, the quality of those programs, and overall student outcomes are accountability requests of the public.
- Although not mandated, the College can improve its position for funding and grant opportunities through participation in certain voluntary accountability initiatives. For example, Harper's status as an Achieving the Dream Leader College demonstrates sustained student success improvement that may open additional grant opportunities for the institution.

⁹⁶ Higher Learning Commission, Federal Compliance Program Packet (2014). <https://www.ncahlc.org/Policies/federal-compliance-program.html>

⁹⁷ Higher Learning Commission, Federal Compliance Program Packet (2014). <https://www.ncahlc.org/Policies/federal-compliance-program.html>

Threat 6: Lack of Employment Data

Item Description:

Community colleges are increasingly held accountable for post-graduate employment outcomes. Although employment and wages information is collected via graduates self-report, access to federal and state employment record databases is very limited in scope. Harper College's ability to remain competitive and be accountable to its students is dependent on reliable access to employment data.

Supporting Comments:

Access to employment data that is linked directly with students in specific programs is critical if Harper expects to be accountable at multiple levels—at the College and in the community, as well as statewide and nationally.

- Employment data is needed to ensure that current programing at Harper is current and relevant. The College needs to confirm that career graduates are employable and that jobs exist in each field. This information is currently collected using alumni surveys. Although these self-reported data provide some information, it is not enough to meet our accountability needs.
- Federal financial aid regulations require disclosure of placement data to continue to secure Title IV aid for our career and technical certificate programs.
- The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence includes employment and earnings as one of its four success measures: "Labor Market Outcomes: Institutional practices and policies aligned with labor market needs and student labor market success, resulting in high rates of employment and earnings for graduates."⁹⁸ Additionally, the Governing Institute on Student Success, in which our Board was trained, advises that colleges "ensure that metrics for institutional performance and student success incorporate employment and wage data for college graduates."⁹⁹
- Future participation in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability will require us to report:
 - The percentage of Career and Technical Education (CTE) students that complete program (both credit and noncredit) or earned 90 contact hours and are employed with a livable wage.
 - The median wage growth of CTE students.¹⁰⁰

Despite efforts made in recent years, Harper College has not been able to secure access to consistent employment data about its graduates at the level of individual programs and across various student demographics.

- The Illinois Community College Board and the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University partnered in the fall of 2013 to develop the Career Tech Education Analysis Portal. The portal provides employment and retention data for all public two-year colleges in Illinois. While this is a valuable resource there are a number of limitations.
 - The information is dated (approximately 2-year time lag) and the update cycle has not been defined.
 - Full-time versus part-time employment is not differentiated.
 - Employment in general rather than employment in the student's field of study is reported.
- Illinois Department of Employment Security reports various statistics, but these data are based on communities rather than linked to Harper College's graduates.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/college-excellence/selection/selection-criteria>

⁹⁹ <http://www.governance-institute.org/policy-agenda-a-call-to-action>

¹⁰⁰ <http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/Documents/VFABrochureLowResolution.pdf>

¹⁰¹ http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/Data_Statistics.aspx