

## Fall 2019 Dialogue Session Overviews

As the first phase in the development of the next strategic plan, the College engaged in a series of dialogue sessions. The sessions were organized around key constituent groups: students, employers, employees and the community. Dialogue sessions addressed trends and issues related to the role of the community college.

In order to discuss these trends and issues, four dialogue sessions were held:

- [Session One: Professional Growth and Service](#)
- [Session Two: Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)
- [Session Three: The Changing Landscape of Work](#)
- [Session Four: The Changing Landscape of the Community](#)

The dialogue sessions were moderated by external professionals and included expert panelists who responded to questions from the moderator and the audience. Panelists provided unique perspectives on addressing the changes in education, the workforce and the community. Dialogue session participants provided feedback via an online survey. Engagement in the dialogue sessions provided participants with the opportunity to examine and respond to important changes impacting the College and provide input used in the development of the next strategic plan.

## **Session One: Professional Growth and Service**

On Monday, September 9, 2019, the *Professional Growth and Service dialogue session* was held. The session was attended by 177 individuals. This dialogue focused on how the College can ensure all employees continue to grow and learn professionally.

### Moderator:

Mr. Darrell Katz – Adjunct Faculty, Loyola University Chicago

### Panelists:

Ms. Deena Ata – Academic Advisor, Harper College; Mr. David Antonides – Counselor, Harper College; Mr. Samir Desai – Executive Director of the Master's in Learning and Organizational Change Program, Northwestern University; Ms. Jennifer Prowell – Registration Assistant, Harper College

The panelists engaged in a discussion on the importance of professional development, different professional development options and obstacles to professional development. The perspectives shared included:

- As individuals working in a global and diverse society, there is a need to understand the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Education can be used to promote inclusion and faculty/staff can learn to become better leaders of inclusion. Professional development can aid in building knowledge of diversity issues and provide individuals with the skills to respond to these issues.
- Time and cost are the primary barriers to professional development. Organizations can address barriers by providing pathways to professional development for employees. This could include time to participate in opportunities as well as financial support.
- Professional development is important for improving competency and expertise. As educators, a focus on life-long learning is crucial. Expanding expertise benefits the individual, the student, and the College.
- A culture that values professional growth and development is critical for employee retention and organizational well-being.

After the dialogue session individuals had the opportunity to provide feedback via an online survey. Those who were unable to attend the session were able to view the session and complete the survey. Respondents provided feedback on the following question: Based on what was shared at the Strategic Plan dialogue session: *Professional Growth and Service*, what should Harper, as an institution, focus on? Themed results of these feedback forms indicated the following:

- A desire for the College to not only clearly define professional development, but also value and prioritize it.
- Barriers to participating in professional development exist and are most frequently time and cost. Support that addresses these barriers is needed.

The dialogue session provided information on professional growth and service in higher education and elicited a sharing of perspectives on the importance of professional development and the need for a culture that supports and values professional growth.

## **Session Two: Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

On Monday, September 30, 2019, the *Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* dialogue session was held. The session was attended by 156 individuals. This dialogue focused on how Harper can respond to changes in education and in the learners we serve.

### Moderator:

Dr. Mary Fifield – President Emerita, Bunker Hill Community College

### Panelists:

Dr. Cia Verschelden – Author and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Malcolm X College; Mr. Paul Kelly – Principal, Elk Grove High School; Mr. Giancarlo Rivera Moore – Student, Harper College; Dr. Monica Edwards – Professor, Business and Social Sciences, Harper College; Dr. Susanna Calkins – Director, Searle Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning, Northwestern University

The panelists engaged in a discussion on the factors critical to developing an equitable learning environment and building skills needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century society. The perspectives shared included the following:

- Equity gaps continue to be a concern. Faculty professional development that focuses on creating an equitable learning environment is essential.
- Not all students in a classroom possess the same mental bandwidth. Many students are dealing with bandwidth demands resulting from poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and illness. Bandwidth can be enhanced by improving students sense of belonging.
- Critical thinking is a skill essential for an educated individual in the 21st century. Education must encourage analysis and examination and provide opportunities for students to develop this essential skill.
- A review of college policies and procedures, from an equity lens, can identify where unnecessary obstacles exist for students.
- Technology is ever-changing and educators need to continually adapt their technological skills while recognizing that all students may not have access to technology.

After the dialogue session individuals had the opportunity to provide feedback via an online survey. Those who were unable to attend the session were able to view the session and complete the survey. Respondents provided feedback on the following question: Based on what was shared at the Strategic Plan dialogue session: *Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, what should Harper, as an institution, focus on? Themed results of these feedback forms indicated the following:

- The College needs to focus efforts on equity, diversity and inclusion. This can start with adopting an equity agenda and developing a definition of equity.
- Teach the “whole student” with a focus on critical thinking.
- Provide support for faculty including training to address the needs of the diverse student population and professional development around advances in technology.
- Serve students holistically and implement approaches, inside and outside of the classroom, that reduce bandwidth demands.

The dialogue session not only provided attendees with information on the skills required of an educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but also elicited a discussion and sharing of perspectives on equity, bandwidth demands, and how faculty and staff can serve students holistically.

### **Session Three: The Changing Landscape of Work**

On Tuesday, October 8, 2019, the *The Changing Landscape of Work* dialogue session was held. The session was attended by 135 individuals. This dialogue focused on discussing changing expectations in the workplace.

#### Moderator:

Ms. Karin Norington-Reaves – CEO, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

#### Panelists:

Dr. Maria Scott Cormier – Senior Research Associate, Community College Research Center; Mr. Warner Cruz – President, J.C. Restoration, Inc.; Mr. Rafael Malpica – Director of Community and Guest Relations, Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital; Ms. Kathryn Jo Mannes – Vice President, Jobs for the Future; Mr. James Nelson – Vice President of Education and Workforce Policy, Illinois Manufacturers' Association

The panelists engaged in a discussion on changing workplace expectations and shared that the workplace skills needed by 2024, regardless of industry, will not be the same as today. The perspectives shared included the following:

- There is a need to ensure that students have the essential skills, both human and soft, that employers require.
- Diversity training in the workforce is important to ensure that employees are aware of and understand cultural diversities and can shift their perspectives. For students, diversity training is an important part of preparing them for employment in a global economy.
- In the future, the scope of work that employees complete will be different than it is today. There is a need to think about and focus on those things that can only be accomplished by humans. Automation and artificial intelligence are sure to change the workforce skills needed.
- Alignment between the workforce and education is critical to prepare for the future.

After the dialogue session individuals had the opportunity to provide feedback via an online survey. Those unable to attend the session were able to view the session and complete the survey. Respondents provided feedback on the following question: Based on what was shared at the Strategic Plan dialogue session: *The Changing Landscape of Work*, what should Harper, as an institution, focus on? Themed results of these feedback forms indicated the following:

- Teach students non-technical skills such as essential/soft skills and cultural sensitivity.
- Focus on technical skills to stay current in technology trends and offer competency-based assessment for all courses at the skills level.
- Develop partnerships with the business community to listen to concerns and better serve their needs.

The dialogue session not only provided attendees with information on the changing expectations in the workplace but also elicited a discussion and sharing of perspectives on how Harper can respond to these changes.

## **Session Four: The Changing Landscape of the Community**

On Tuesday, October 22, 2019, the *The Changing Landscape of the Community* dialogue session was held. The session was attended by 136 individuals. This dialogue focused on how the College can respond to the changing community.

### Moderator:

Moderator: Dr. Judy Marwick

### Panelists:

Dr. Dan Cates – Superintendent, District 211; Ms. Kathy Gilmer – Past President, Harper College Educational Foundation; Dr. Craig Maki – CEO, Asian Human Services; Ms. Kathy Millin – Executive Director, Partners for Our Communities; Mr. Steve Scogna – CEO, Northwest Community Healthcare;

The panelists engaged in a discussion on the needs of the changing community. The perspectives shared included the following:

- District demographics are changing, including the increase of those with lower income levels. It is becoming increasingly difficult to afford college and life.
- Building partnerships and strengthening communication is of great importance to meeting the College mission. Harper can improve communication related to the benefits of higher education and the offerings the College provides to the community.
- An opportunity exists to increase outreach to the high schools and provide information on career paths, stackable careers, and completion timelines.
- Interest in on-demand and online education is increasing.
- Partnerships with community organizations are essential to reducing barriers to education and addressing student needs.

After the dialogue session individuals had the opportunity to provide feedback via an online survey. Those unable to attend the session were able to view the session and complete the survey. Respondents provided feedback on the following question: Based on what was shared at the Strategic Plan dialogue session: *The Changing Landscape of the Community*, what should Harper, as an institution, focus on? Themed results of these feedback forms indicated the following:

- Enhance outreach and communication efforts. Offer resources to the broader community, not just students. Consider, what resources individuals need in order to attend Harper.
- Partner with businesses to promote what the Harper College has to offer and provide customized training. Encourage employers to use Harper for employee professional development.
- Strengthen communication with schools. Send alumni and students into the schools to share experiences.
- Build stronger relationships with families, employers and school districts.
- Focus on diversity in hiring, equity for students and inclusion for all.

The dialogue session not only provided attendees with information on the district's changing demographics but also elicited a discussion and sharing of perspectives on partnerships, outreach, and communication.