

THE SPARK

HARPER FACULTY NEWSLETTER

Number 8 - March 2012 Cook County College Teachers Union ~ American Federation of Teachers Local 1600

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of the most important responsibilities we have as union members is to make sure our voices are heard both collectively and individually. In March everyone has the opportunity to elect members to the tenure committee, at-large senators and the entire senate exec. Some divisions will elect division senators and members of the institutional promotions committee. Please consult the Faculty Senate Election Slate online at <http://www.harperfacultysenate.org/2012-election> or in hard copy in your faculty mail box. Understand that the colleagues you elect represent and should advocate for the faculty. We want every voice to be heard and desire 100% member participation in the election process.

Equally as important; our collective voice needs to be heard in Springfield. Some politicians in Springfield are trying to pass legislation that will severely reduce the pensions of current employees, requiring us to contribute more for the same and in some cases less benefits, all while the state fails to make their contribution year after year. The latest great idea out of Springfield is to shift the burden of pension contributions to the schools. When these issues come up for a vote, Springfield needs to hear our voices. We need to call, email, and visit with our state representative and let them know our views on these issues. We do have the power to influence the legislature if we all speak with one voice. In closing, we need to count on your participation and keep up the excellent work you do for Harper College.

– Tom Dowd, Faculty Senate President

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SB 2862 Will Further Reduce Local Revenue, Harm Students Contact Lawmakers Today!

Senate Bill 2862 would have a far-reaching, negative impact upon already revenue-challenged school districts throughout Illinois. Contact your lawmakers now and urge them to oppose this harmful legislation.

The bill would further tie the hands of tax-capped (PTELL) communities in their abilities to increase local revenue for schools. Under SB 2862, those districts for which the total taxable Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) is less than the previous year would be restricted to a 0% increase in the district's extension, or the rate approved by voters. These tax-capped districts are already limited in their ability to increase local revenue by the amount of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5%, whichever is less.

Students and schools in most tax-capped communities are currently struggling from significant loss of revenue due to cuts in transportation, Title IV and V, General State Aid Hold Harmless provisions, delayed payments from the state and other reductions. If SB 2862 passes, some Illinois districts stand to lose millions of additional dollars. The impact would be devastating, likely resulting in more program cuts and layoffs statewide.

Please contact your lawmakers now and ask them to oppose SB 2862.

KNOW YOUR (WEINGARTEN) RIGHTS

On February 19, 1975 the United States Supreme Court ruled against J. Weingarten, Incorporated, a national retail store operator. The National Labor Relations Board brought charges against the management of J. Weingarten, Inc. for its refusal to allow employees to have a union representative present during disciplinary interrogations. The Supreme Court's decision established what are commonly referred to as Weingarten Rights, the right of an employee to have union representation during investigatory interviews.

It is incumbent on you to assert your rights. Unlike Miranda Rights, officials are not obligated to inform you of these rights before an inquiry begins. The Supreme Court's decision allows you to assert your Weingarten Rights any time you are questioned by a supervisor and you have reasonable belief that possible disciplinary action or a change in your working conditions could result from the interview. If you are being questioned, you should insist that the meeting be rescheduled when you can have union representation present (see below). Once you request representation, supervisors have three choices.

- They can request that you waive your Weingarten Rights, but they cannot use intimidation, threats or pressure to get you to waive your rights. (There is never a good enough reason to waive your Weingarten Rights.)
- They can end all questions and drop the issue.
- They can temporarily stop questioning and reschedule the meeting at a time when you can be represented by the union.

Any other action by supervisors constitutes an unfair labor practice.

There are many reasons to have union representation during any questioning. The representative serves as a witness to ensure accurate reporting of your answers. The representative has the right to give relevant information on the issue, to ask that questions be rephrased or clarified, and to speak privately with you before you answer any questions. However, the representative cannot tell you what to say, nor can you be instructed to "remain silent." Asserting your Weingarten Rights can provide you with critical protection, but you must request representation. Hopefully you will never need to invoke your Weingarten Rights, but if you find yourself in a situation where an administrator is asking you questions and you are worried about possible negative consequences, simply say:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that a union officer be present. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions. This is my legal right."

— David Richmond

2011 Faculty Climate Survey Results

In order to better serve the interests of Harper full-time faculty, the Faculty Senate commissioned a survey of faculty attitudes about institutional climate at Harper College. The first version of the Faculty climate survey was carried out in March 2005. Then in 2007 (with the hard work of a number of faculty) the results of the Faculty survey were included in the Harper Self-Study for the Higher Learning Commission. Subsequently, in order to avoid disputes over methodological issues in the future, Harper College administration and Faculty Senate agreed to carry out their respective surveys of institutional climate in parallel with each and to use the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE) associated with North Carolina State University as the vendor responsible for collecting and compiling the data. In November 2008, the second Faculty Senate climate survey was completed by 61% of full-time faculty. More recently, in September of 2011, 66% of full-time faculty completed the most recent iteration of the Faculty Senate Climate Survey.

Table 1. Overall Climate comparing Administration PACE survey and Faculty Senate Climate Survey

Survey	2008 Mean Climate Score	2011 Mean Climate Score
Admin PACE	3.61	3.86
Faculty Senate	3.24	3.72

Turning to the 2011 Faculty Survey, of the 34 questions, the top five mean scores identified by faculty were:

- 1) The extent to which Harper College programs meet students' educational needs, 4.34
- 2) The extent that I feel safe while at Harper College, 4.32
- 3) The extent that building and grounds of Harper College are well-maintained and conducive to student learning, 4.27
- 4) The extent to which the Faculty Senate represents the faculty on college-wide issues, 4.25
- 5) The extent that the IT department responds promptly with technology-related issues, 4.24

Of these top five mean scores numbers 1 through 4 were also top 5 scores in 2008 (though not in the same rank order).

Of the 34 questions, the bottom five mean scores identified by faculty were:

- 34) The extent that faculty input is considered by administrators when making important decisions for Harper College, 2.83
- 33) The extent that the Board of Trustees understands the needs of faculty when making decisions, 2.92
- 32) The extent that the administration collaborates with faculty when setting the academic vision for Harper College, 2.98
- 31) The extent that the amount of paper work at Harper College is appropriate, 3.01
- 30) The extent that there is open communication between faculty and administration, 3.07

Of these bottom five mean score numbers 34, 33, 32, and 30 were also bottom 5 scores in 2008 (though not in the same order).

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Faculty Senate Climate Survey Results from page 3

The 34-item instrument was organized into five climate factors: (1) Academics, Student Learning and Teaching; (2) Facilities, Grounds and Environment; (3) Administration and Communication; (4) Information Technology; (5) and Faculty Senate. Respondents were asked to rate these factors on a five-point scale. Faculty reported “Academics, Learning and Teaching” as the highest institutional climate factor and rated “Administration and Communication” as the lowest institutional climate factor.

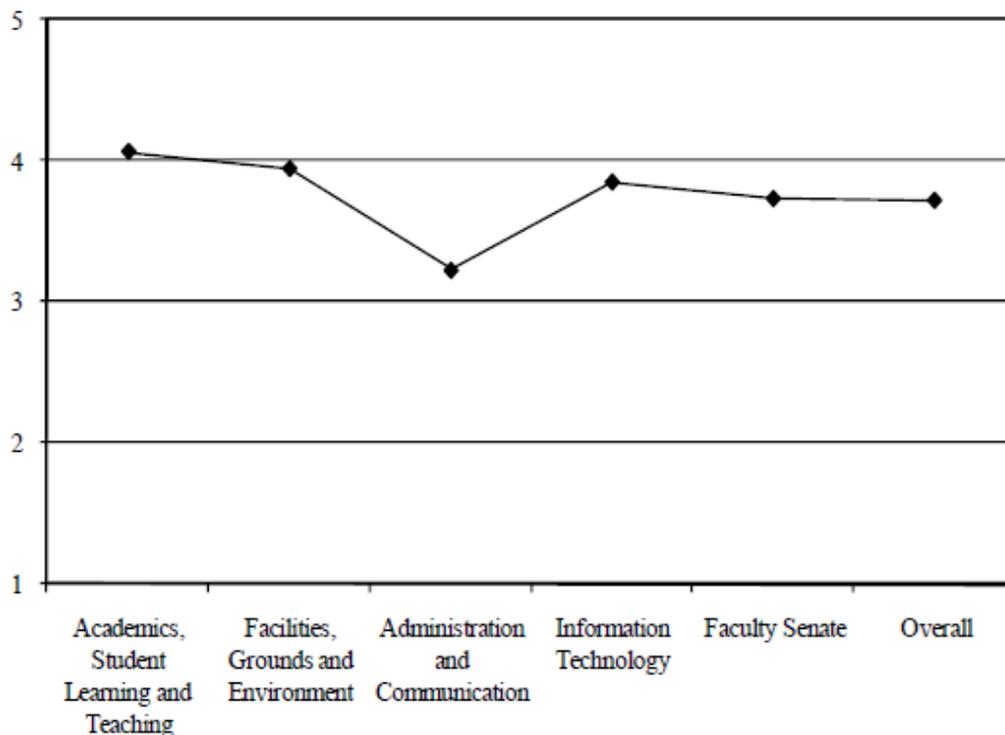


Figure 1. Harper College Climate as rated by full-time faculty

Overall, faculty perceived the strongest aspects of institutional climate to be our work meeting the needs of students, followed by the built environment and infrastructure for learning. Faculty perceived the weakest aspects of institutional climate to be the strained relations with Harper’s Administration in the arenas of decision making, collaboration and communication. The 2011 faculty climate study will serve as the benchmark for comparison with the next faculty climate survey which will be administered in 2014.

Thanks to all who took the time to complete the Faculty Senate Climate Survey.

— Sean Noonan

Digital Library Resources for Online Course Design

Harper librarians work one on one with faculty to select e-resources for online and blended courses. A number of faculty are experimenting with **ebrary ebooks** as supplemental classroom texts. The library ebook initiative relieves some student textbook costs and also introduces students to ebooks before they transfer. The ebrary store—a database of 250,000 ebooks—is easy to use. You select the books for your teaching needs. The library pays for the books. The students get 24/7 simultaneous-user access. Contact Kim Fournier kfournie@harpercollege.edu, ext. 6882, or your library liaison, to gain access to the ebrary store.

**Remember, the Harper library is *your* library;
check out a DVD or audiobook on your way home today!**

“Looking Back...” by David T. Richmond

While going through some old files at the Office of Cook County College Teachers Union (208 West Kinzie Street, Chicago) I ran across a copy of the union newsletter The Voice from October 1978. The headline caught my eye, and I thought the article provided great historical perspective, so I decided to reproduce the article here. Current faculty owe a great debt to an earlier generation of Harper teachers and union leaders...

“Harper Wins First Master Contract”

Negotiations for the Harper College union chapter and the college board reached agreement the morning of September 14 on a comprehensive one-year contract. The new agreement, achieved only after seven months of difficult bargaining, was approved the same afternoon by Harper College Union members 94-57, and by the Harper Board in a unanimous vote that afternoon.

In winning the new agreement the Harper chapter achieved its top priority in negotiations, a comprehensive master contract covering salary, fringe benefits, and working conditions. The new contract provides for the establishment of a step-lane salary schedule and for an across-the-board salary increase of 5.2 percent.

Chief Union Negotiator Mike Bartos said that the inclusion in the contract of working conditions provisions was in itself a major achievement. In previous negotiations, the board had adamantly refused to discuss any matters except salary and fringe benefits.

Bartos said, “We are no longer working under a five-page memorandum of agreement. We now have tenure, academic freedom, and work load provisions as well as grievance and layoff procedures. We are,” he declared, “working under a contract.”

Highlights of the new Harper Contract

Major gains won for the faculty include:

- Step and lane schedule with limited automatic movement.
- Salary increase of at least \$1,030 with many faculty members receiving larger increases. Top salary for Lane V (MA + 60) now goes up to \$29,000.
- Grievance procedures culminating in advisory arbitration.
- Layoff procedure based upon seniority.
- Reduction of regular workload for art, architecture, and engineering teachers from 17-19 contact hours per semester to 15-16 contact hours per semester (maximum of 31 contact hours per academic year).
- Two days personal leave plus improvements in leave policy.

Swenson’s Analysis

Union President Norman Swenson complimented the Harper chapter negotiating team and predicted this year’s breakthrough would have long-range effects. “Each of the working conditions provisions constitutes a basis for improvement of faculty rights and benefits in future negotiations,” Swenson said.

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"Looking Back..." from page 5

Swenson stated that it was not possible to know why the Harper Board was willing to negotiate a master contract at this time, but he noted several possible factors.

1. During 1977 bargaining at Harper, an impasse was ended after the April board elections in which three candidates supported by the union chapter unseated three incumbent trustees.
2. As part of the May 14, 1977 Agreement, the Harper College chapter won the right to represent the faculty in bargaining working conditions.
3. On November 10, 1977 a series of controversies involving Harper College President Robert E. Lahti culminated in his resignation after twelve years as Harper's first and only president. Lahti generally opposed the faculty union.

Swenson concluded, "Whatever developments may have influenced the board's change of attitude, they were secondary to the faculty's determination to win a comprehensive contract."

The Harper chapter's negotiating team included Bartos, chapter chair Bill Miller, CCCTU Treasurer Jay Singelmann, Phil Stewart, and Henry Roepken. The team was advised in planning and at the bargaining table by President Swenson.

- From the Official Publication of Cook County College Teachers Union, Local 1600, AFT, AFL-CIO. Vol. 15, Nos. 2-3, October - November 1978.

\$25,000 in Harper College Technology Grants Available Just for You

Wondering how you can extend your professional learning opportunities without straining your finances? Join your colleagues who have attended conferences, presented papers, received technology tool training and taken courses with monetary assistance provided by these grant funds available to you, Harper College's full-time faculty!

Applications must be for discipline-specific, technology-related professional development projects. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

- information gathering with regard to utilizing technology as a tool in the teaching and learning process (attending conferences or taking related courses)
- learning how to use a technology (seminars or courses)

Your application can be submitted at any time. Applications are reviewed monthly from September through May at Instructional Technology Committee (ITC) meetings. Details about the application and submission process are included in the application form.

- Get your application form at <http://dept.harpercollege.edu/facdev/grants.html>
- A list of Technology Grant Recipients can be read online at: <http://harperitc.blogspot.com/2010/02/technology-grants.html>

Questions about Technology Grants?

Contact Terry Morris, Instructional Technology Committee Co-Chair
Ext. 6818 or email: tmorris@harpercollege.edu

E Pluribus Unum: Out of Many - One Why We Organize and Bargain Collectively

Capitalism is an inherently competitive system where both employers and employees seek to maximize gains and minimize losses. However the field of competition in the labor market is not level. There is an imbalance between a numerically small and powerful group of (in this case community college) employers and the numerically large group of individually weak (community college) employees. For a rough example, there are 1,721 community college employers in the U.S. These 1700 community colleges employ 762,000 employees yielding an employer to employee ratio of 442 employees for every one employer. Community College labor markets are characterized by *Oligopsony* - a semi-monopoly market with many sellers and few buyers where the many sellers are at a disadvantage in competitive negotiation with the few buyers. The power differential between a small number of powerful employers and a large number of weak employees favors employers. Less numerous but more powerful employers are able to compel more numerous and less powerful employees to compete against each other for jobs, compensation, hours, and conditions. If you as an isolated individual seek to improve your wages, hours, or conditions by yourself in relation to your employer you are more likely to be told to accept what the employer already offers, that you have the freedom to “take it or leave it” which is the freedom of “exit.” This freedom of exit in the labor market is a kind of negative freedom, where you are “free” to forego income and work unless you accept what the powerful few decide is the appropriate form of work and appropriate level of compensation for you.

Labor unions are the single most important counterbalance to the inordinate power of employers in labor markets. *Unions* are organizations where employees come together in unity to collectively bargain with management over wages, hours and conditions. The greater power of many people acting in solidarity together improves the negotiating position of the employees.

Unions help employees level the field of competition with employers. Unions practice *collective bargaining* a process of negotiations between employers and the representatives of a unit of employees aimed at reaching agreements that regulate working conditions. Collective bargaining agreements usually set out wage scales, working hours, training, health and safety, overtime, grievance mechanisms and rights to participate in workplace affairs.

Unions provide employees with *Equity* or fairness. Equity includes fairness in things like:

- wages and benefits
- hours of work and overtime
- health and safety standards
- equality of opportunity
- seniority

When measured by state, by sector or by company, unionized workers receive higher wages, better benefits and better conditions than their non-unionized counterparts. Compared to non-unionized employees, workers protected by a collective bargaining agreement make 14% more income. Union women make 11% more. Unionized African Americans make 18% more. Unionized Latino Americans make 22% more. Unionized workers are 58% more likely to have employer-sponsored health care. Union equity also has positive societal effects.

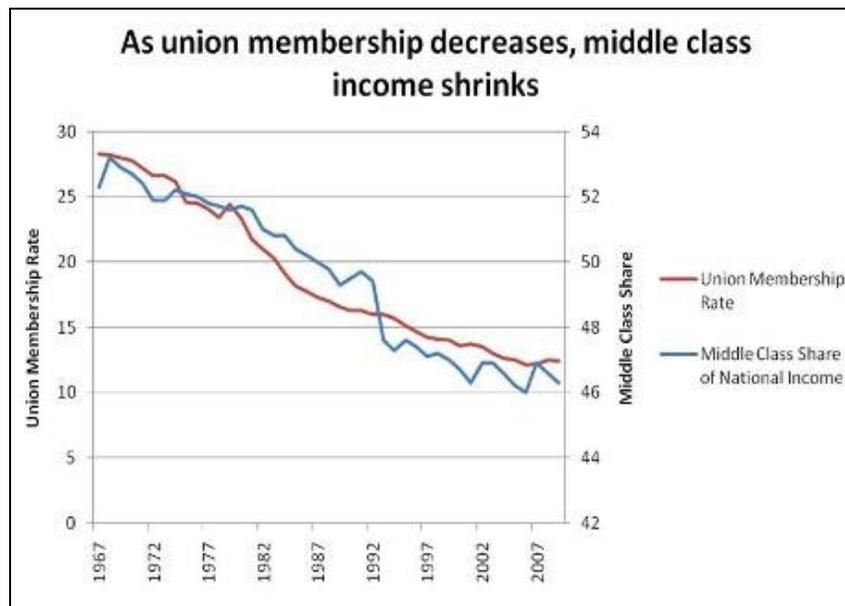
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In addition to equity, unions also provide employees with *Voice* or meaningful participation and input in decision making Union Voice includes:

- due process in discipline
- due process in dismissal (also known as just cause dismissal)
- protection from arbitrary treatment
- ability to contribute ideas and suggestions for improvement in work
- ability to express disagreement without fear of reprisal at work
- increased ability to participate in democratic processes of society

In a wider political context, over the past 75 years high union density rates have been linked to the growth and increasing well-being of the American middle class. From the late 1940s through the late 1970s, union density fell gradually from over 35% down to 23%. Then from the late 1970s until today union density has fallen from 23% to 11%.



As union density has declined in the United States over the past 30 years so has the rate of real growth in family income over the same period. As unionization has declined since the late 1970s the share of total income captured by the top 10% has grown from 33% to just under 50%. When the top 10% capture $\frac{1}{2}$ of all income generated in a given year the middle class is in trouble. Falling union density is bad for the middle class, bad for the economy, bad for the polity and bad for the culture.

Unions provide working people with equity and voice - fair standards, protection against exploitation, and a modicum of meaningful participation in decision making. Unions are instruments in of economic democracy, not only in the workplace but in the wider social formation as a whole. A renewed union movement is a necessary ingredient in the mix of forces necessary to: restore the American middle class, get the economy moving in a productive direction again, and countering the insidious influence that money plays in our political system.

— Sean Noonan

To Protect and Serve: A Closer Look at Peer Evaluation

Protection and service of the public interest is a principle commonly used in law enforcement. A casual observer can readily identify these words on squad cars and patrol vehicles. The idea suggests that the protection of and service to the community is both important and necessary in the effort to maintain law and order, as well as preserve collective and individual freedoms. Such is the case with any public servant: elected officials, social workers, judges, attorneys, and yes, even college professors.

As faculty members, we, too, are called upon to protect and serve the public interest in addition to preserving certain freedoms, in particular, the ability to evaluate our colleagues for the purposes of tenure. Tenure, a distinction given to faculty members who have consistently demonstrated a steadfast commitment to: teaching/counseling, service, and professional development, has faced increasing scrutiny, criticism, and in some cases, ire. Both locally and nationally, educators have gone “on the front lines” to protect and preserve our right to have voice concerning the ways and conditions under which we work and serve. Bearing that in mind, it is essential that we fully understand our obligation when we agree to undertake a role as critical as service on a peer evaluation committee.

At Harper, when asked to serve on a peer committee, the expectation is that we will evaluate the teaching quality of our colleagues, their service to the institution, and identify areas of professional growth and development. If we find that our colleague has met these expectations in a way that mutually benefits the student, the department, and the institution, then our colleague should receive a rating of, “Satisfactory”, indicating that he or she should advance toward tenure. If we find that the opposite is true, or that there are concerns that could potentially or currently compromise the interests of the students, department, or institution, then that colleague should receive a rating of, “Unsatisfactory.”

With only one of two ratings to bestow, one might presume that serving on a peer committee would be a relatively straightforward process; and more times than not, it is. However, there are moments when the dynamics of evaluating a fellow faculty member can become challenging and complex...when we have to reconcile the tensions of making difficult choices and be accountable for them. By bestowing a rating of “Satisfactory,” we are giving an **endorsement**, a stamp of **approval**, and communicating to the faculty body, the president of the college, the board of trustees, and the students we serve, that the faculty member we have evaluated **should receive tenure**.

Better than anyone, we fully realize what a subjective process “grading” can be. Nonetheless, when a peer evaluation committee commits to serve with integrity, maintains open and honest communication, and offers the benefit of their collective expertise to help our non-tenured peers and colleagues, we can be assured that we have acted to protect the privilege of peer evaluation, and served the interests of our college community. Accordingly, when asked to serve on a peer committee, carefully consider the commitment you are being asked to make, the endorsement you are being asked to give, the challenges you may encounter, and your resolve to make decisions that will have a lasting impact.

— Shante’ Bishop

Faculty - your friendly neighborhood HEAT is open and ready for business

Colleagues, welcome to spring semester. After many years of experiencing spring semesters at Harper, I think this is an opportune time to ask - have you ever entered the classroom only to find yourself in an academic Twilight Zone? Are you familiar with the unique and creative student communications one may unexpectedly encounter in the Zone?

Yes, I admit that my assignment is missing, but it's not my fault, because I was abducted by aliens, and there was a long line outside the transporters, so I couldn't get home in time to complete it.

I'm not always late to class, it's just that you always start class on time and that's too early. Besides - I'm hung over, so give me a break! Who do you report to, anyway?

The reason I missed the final is that my boyfriend wanted me to come over, and well, you know, one thing leads to another.... You seem like a nice person. Can we just pretend like I took the final?

While all of us who inhabit classrooms real time or online most likely have some degree of expertise with the Zone, sometimes it can be helpful to have access to resources and tools to help you navigate through particularly thorny Zone experiences. At Harper, we're fortunate to have a pretty sophisticated GPS for classroom navigation. In addition to yourself, your Department Chairs, Coordinators, Deans and colleagues, please remember that the **Harper Early Alert Team (HEAT)** is available to consult with you to help you address problematic student behaviors, concerns and situations. Most importantly, we are your partners in the *prevention* of campus violence.

Because you never know when you are going to need us, **we strongly encourage all faculty to take an online training** to learn about the HEAT and the many ways in which we can support you and your work with students. The training itself takes less than 30 minutes, and can be found on the Employee Portal under "News", on the HEAT website <http://dept.harpercollege.edu/heat/> or you can link directly at: <http://www.harperdoit.net/heat/player.html>

A final thought – the HEAT is here to assist with violence prevention by guiding the campus through intervening when behaviors are still at a lower level. Call 9-1-1 in any cases of imminent safety related emergencies, and please call upon the Harper College Police at x6330 for any safety related concerns that arise during break periods. On behalf of your friendly neighborhood HEAT, we wish you a safe and happy spring semester! — Caryn

The HEAT Team:

Dr. Caryn Levington, Psychologist, Professor, Psychological Services

Paul LeBreck, Deputy Chief of Police

Dr. Eric Rosenthal, Director, Academic Advising and Counseling

Shannon Lengerich, Assistant Dean, CAFE, and Director, Health Services

Laura Bennett, Student Conduct Officer

Barbara Small, Assistant Dean, CAFE, and Director of Allied Health

Scott Friedman, Director, Disability Services, and 504/ADA Compliance Officer

Ten Thousand, Six Hundred and Four

Susan, a Harper College student, stands silently in the front of the class while the rest of the students, also silent in their seats, raise their arms and suddenly, rapidly, flutter their hands. What could possibly be happening? Are they practicing waves for a local parade? Is someone leading them in the Chicken Dance? Batting away flies? Or is it something else? If you guessed ‘something else’, you would be right. In reality, deep-learning, cultural awareness, respect for diversity and maturation of the student were being displayed with this odd chicken dance, fly swatting, parade waving arms in the air.

For the past two years, words such as “data”, “measurement”, or “accountability” have been in our ears, on our tongues and in everything we read. Indeed, the achievement of our strategic plan and goals is reliant upon measurement and data that apparently can only be interpreted by numbers. The Institutional Research department seems to have doubled in size in the last two years all in the name of collecting, disseminating and analyzing data. Columns and rows of numbers are presented at almost every committee meeting, strategic team, and conference with our deans. The numbers in these columns and rows are basis for cutting programs, starting programs and other funding allocation. We compare our numbers with other institutions and against ourselves. We consider our graduation rates against drop outs. A program declines in numbers in a year, and we start to make deep cuts. Numbers. Numbers. Numbers. The other night as I was falling asleep, I counted 10,604 sheep; Dr. Ender would be proud.

As educators and researchers, we know the importance of numbers and baselines. We know that quantitative data can be used to support a theory, a study, or a thesis. Numbers can help us receive funding from local, state, and federal governments. Our nominees for president develop their speeches and campaigns based on numbers. But the numbers do not tell the whole story.

The hand fluttering scene described above took place in a Reading 090 class during the fall semester. Reading 090 is the lowest level reading class into which a student can test. COMPASS scores in reading for students in this class range from 0-64. Many of the numbers presented at meetings and over email relate to students in Reading 090 classes. The numbers tell us that Reading 090 was once one of the most failed classes on campus. The numbers tell us that most (95%) who start in Reading 090 will not graduate. The numbers tell us they won’t be successful. The numbers say they are not learning.

Reading 090 is largely filled with students of color, first-generation students, low-income students, students whose first language is not English, and students with disabilities. The particular class where the arm waving and hand flapping occurred contained five deaf or hard of hearing students.

Before Susan did her presentation, Aaron, another deaf student, had given his. Upon completion, the students clapped in the “hearing world’s” tradition—rhythmically clamoring the palms together. During the applause I said, “Aaron cannot hear you clap. This is how you clap in American Sign Language” and proceeded to wave my arms in the air (like I just didn’t care). Of course, this was all interpreted by one of the three interpreters in the room. The students reluctantly and somewhat uncomfortably practiced the unusual gesture. A few presentations later, it was Susan’s turn.

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10,604 from page 11

Susan passionately gave her presentation through ASL. She loved the nursing field and explained how she would not allow anyone to tell her that just because she is deaf, she can't be a nurse. Her presentation touched every one of us with her determination, her zeal, and her own realization that success was within her grasp. Immediately after completing the presentation, the students--all of the students—put their hands in the air (like they just didn't care) and “clapped” for Susan. They did this without any further prompting from me or the interpreters. And they did it enthusiastically and unabashed.

Some might ask, “So what? So they learned something new and did it a few minutes later. Big deal.”

In addition to the five deaf students in class, there were 7 football players—five of whom were African American who, *by the numbers*, do not succeed or learn on this campus. There were two students with severe disabilities who have trouble understanding basic social cues. The class had four young women who, because of their culture, were very quiet and shy in the classroom. And we had some high-achieving white males and females who initially felt the class was beneath them. At the beginning of the semester, two of these students upon seeing that there were deaf students in the class approached me separately and said, “I don't belong in this class because the disabled students are in here,” and “I am in the wrong class because those deaf students are going to be really slow.” (The conversation I had with them is for another paper). Well, all of those students and more remained in class that semester and put their hands in the air like they.... You get it.

After almost four years at Harper, I have yet to see a student who began in the lowest level developmental reading and writing courses walk across the stage during graduation. To be sure, some have transferred before earning a degree or certificate, but these are not part of the 10,604. I usually see some of the young men described above on campus for 1 or 2 semesters after class and then they are nowhere to be found. But are we so sure that these students failed or otherwise did not learn as the numbers say?

In the face of all of these numbers and measurements that show your students and you are not successful, we faculty—the experts in our field and in classroom dynamics—need to remember something that the numbers can't measure: those times when your students flourished even though the cold, invisible, and silent measurements never tallied them. Remember that for every one student who walks across the stage, there are 10 who succeeded and learned and grew in your class. We know this by their visits to our offices thanking us for changing their lives. We receive small gifts that show their appreciation. We get the emails saying it was because of us they got a job or successfully transferred; we get the requests to write letters of recommendation.

And sometimes we get their hands in the air.

— Marianne Farinas de Leon

Library Instruction: *You Know They Need It!*

Now that the semester is underway, please remember to schedule a library research session for your students. If you have not taken advantage of this service in the past, you are encouraged to try it. An introduction to library research is most effective when attached to an assignment where the students need to obtain something tangible such as books and academic articles. With the library now housing ebooks, ejournals and streaming videos—on top of the traditional print resources—it is important to help our students navigate the terrain.

Contact the library's coordinator of instruction, Amy Kammerman at akammerm@harpercollege.edu, ext. 6555, or use the online form to schedule your research session today! (<http://dept.harpercollege.edu/library/forms/instructional.html>)

Reflections and Self-evaluations in the Classroom

I expect students to enter my classroom ready to learn. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and I find myself looking for ways to better engage my students and help them take responsibility for their behaviors in the classroom. I have found the use of reflection and self-evaluation journals to be a useful tool in the classroom to support student learning in the classroom.

My goal for the end of each class is for students to leave my class “thinking” about the day’s topic. I try to accomplish this by handing out journals at the end of class. These journals serve as a teaching tool to provide students an opportunity to think about the day’s topic and to evaluate their own behavior in the classroom. In my classroom, these journals contain a question that is related to the day’s lesson. Students are given five minutes at the end of class to answer the question based on their understanding of the material presented. Students are also given the opportunity to share their journal with the class, although it is not required. As the semester moves forwards, the numbers of students who are willing to share their answers increase. The journals also help me gain insight at the level of understanding of the topic from my students. Each day I read the journals and am able to gauge how well the students have understood the day’s topic. I can then determine if the topic is well understood, or if certain elements need to be revisited in the classroom.

The second part of the reflection is a participation journal. The purpose of this section is to provide students an opportunity to analyze their classroom behavior and compare it to classroom expectations. In my class, I assign points each day if students meet certain behavioral expectations. These expectations include arriving to class on time, participating in classroom activities, staying off all electronics and staying the duration of class. I find it useful to place the students in the role of their own evaluator in order to have them evaluate their own performance in adhering to the stated classroom behaviors. Students are forced to deduct their own points when they behave in a way that is not consistent with the stated guidelines. What I love about this, is that there are no excuses given for behavior; i.e. if they check their phone for whatever reason, they know the consequences of doing so is a deduction of points. I feel it really helps students take responsibility for their own behavior and own up to the consequences if they choose not to follow the classroom guidelines.

In conclusion, giving students these reflection and participation journals help engage them in the classroom. It allows them a chance to think about the information presented in class and the readings and react to it through this writing activity. The participation section of this journal provides them with the tools to evaluate their own behavior in the classroom and assign themselves points that reflect their adherence to classroom expectations.

— Pardess Mitchell

Join the Harper Softball Team!

Last year, we went by AMP (Absent Minded Professors) and our team played late Sunday afternoons. The team is affiliated with the Palatine Park District. Team members are needed since faculty have to miss games due to travel and events. Interested in playing? e-mail Stephanie Whalen swhalen@harpercollege.edu or David Antonides at dantonid@harpercollege.edu for more information. We’re hoping to have some spring training practices before our first game!

News & Notes

Greg Herriges will be reading and discussing his new book, *The Bay of Marseilles and Other Stories*. When: Monday, March 19, 2012, 12:30 p.m. Where: in the Drama Lab Theatre

Lora Fosberg: Self-Planned Obsolescence and Ten Ways to Combat It

When: Feb 21 - March 15, 2012 - FREE admission
Where: Art Exhibition Space (Building C, Room C200)

35th Annual Harper National Juried Exhibition: Small Works

When: Monday, March 26 - April 19, 2012
Where: Art Exhibition Space (Building C, Room C200)
FREE admission

Comedy Night with Harper's Speech and Debate Team

When: Wednesday, March 21, 7 p.m.
Where: Drama Lab Theatre (Building L, Room L109)
Cost: \$4 Harper students, faculty/staff, seniors; \$5 other students; \$6 general admission

Come play volleyball with your fellow faculty in building M!
March 23, April 13, April 27 and/or May 11, from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Upcoming events in the Music Department:

- **CMC presents: Take Five with The Ken Spurr Jazz Quartet**
When: Saturday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Building A, Room A238
- **Guitar Solos Concert**
When: Tuesday, March 13, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Drama Lab Theatre
- **Harper Symphony Orchestra presents: Connections**
When: Sunday, April 15, 3:00 p.m.
Where: Performing Arts Center

Harper Ensemble Theatre Company presents:

AS YOU LIKE IT
by William Shakespeare
Directed by Kevin Long

March 16-18 and 23-25, 2012
Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.
Sundays, 2 p.m.

(Sundays Only: Enjoy Coffee with the Director before the show)

YOUR AD HERE:

To submit items for the Faculty Union Newsletter, email Sean Noonan, Joe Wachter, and Kim Fournier

Be informed. Join the Harper Faculty Off-Campus Yahoo Group Discussion List.
Visit: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/harper_faculty/



www.harperfacultysenate.org