



PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

July & August 2025

Dear Harper College Community:

As our new and returning students arrive this week, they are being greeted warmly by our staff and faculty and supported by information tables and welcome wagons to guide them around a campus undergoing significant transformation, with three major construction projects currently in progress. While sitework continues for the Canning Student Center and University Center, the four-story Emergency Services Training Center is also rising prominently in Lot 14 along with its accompanying classroom building. For longtime employees, the starkest change to the physical plant is more than likely the demolition of Building J to make way for the new Business and Social Sciences Building. As [chronicled](#) by our Communications team, the Building J Theatre had a storied history hosting such luminaries as Jay Leno, Buddy Guy and Paula Poundstone along with countless stage productions. It's never easy to say goodbye to spaces on campus we hold dear, but we are truly blessed to be able to provide our students and faculty with next generation and innovative classrooms and labs in LEED certified buildings. We cannot thank our community members enough for overwhelmingly supporting the 2018 referendum which is funding part of the Canning Student Center and all of the Business and Social Sciences Building. Reflecting on community support, I want to thank the Rohrman Automotive Group for accepting Dana Tenenbaum's charge to launch the *Rohrman Automotive Group Hawks Care Challenge* with 10 dealerships. As a result of Dana's leadership and Rohrman Automotive Group's engagement, our students will now benefit from over 1200 donated items to Hawks Care!

I am pleased to report we're experiencing continued growth in our enrollment. Our fall enrollment numbers thus far as of August 18 with total FTE (CE and Credit) at 7,001.8, an increase of 0.7% from last fall; tuition-bearing FTE at 6,421.1, an increase of 1.4% from last fall; and headcount at 11,532, an increase of 1.0% from last fall. As we await our off-campus dual credit enrollment, these numbers reflect positive gains in new adults, new transfer students and on-campus dual credit students as well as strong retention numbers. It takes a cross-department collaborative effort across the college to sustain these strong enrollment numbers and I am grateful for everyone who has played a role in supporting our students as they join us or continue along their Path for Success.

During my collegewide meeting, we launched the ***FY26-29 Strategic Plan, Belonging. Thriving. Advancing.*** With amazing performances from our student hip hop dance team Triple H and DJ/music faculty member Dr. Sadie Hochman-Ruiz and a call and response sing along to a portion of an AI-generated song on our strategic plan, we celebrated our yearlong inclusive and collaborative process that resulted in a plan with three strong goals that support our mission. In summary, our new strategic plan is about who we are—a supportive and inclusive community; what we do—innovative and responsive education; and how we do it—through organizational excellence. I am so proud of the work that led to this comprehensive four-year roadmap and I am energized for the work to come. This plan is not about doing more things, but doing things well at scale and with the greatest impact for our students, each other, and our community members. Many thanks to Professor Jim Gramlich, VP Darlene Schlenbecker and the Strategic Planning and Accountability committee for helping us get here.

Finally, I want to conclude my report by letting you know that my Executive Cabinet (EC) and I are continuing to monitor developments at the federal level, including the July 10 Department of Education rescission of a Dear

Colleague on access to federal benefits (PRWORA), the July 29 memorandum from the Department of Justice on “unlawful discrimination” as well as the recent Executive Order on federal grantmaking. We are reviewing, monitoring and working with key stakeholders to assess the potential impacts on our students and employees. Members of EC and I also met this week with the leaders of four Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and the DEI Shared Governance Committee to discuss the current higher education landscape and learn more about their perspectives as we all experience federal policy shifts. I look forward to continuing those dialogues with them and other employees and students throughout the year. As I said in my opening address, we will continue to stay focused on our mission and work collaboratively to serve our students and each other with a Culture of Care.

I wish you a successful, rewarding and engaging fall semester.



Academic Updates

By the Numbers

- Counseling Services
 - In June, Counseling Services facilitated 49 appointments, including 10 first-time student sessions aimed at supporting mental health and promoting academic success. This represents a 40% increase in total appointments compared to the same time last year in June 2024.
 - In July, Counseling Services facilitated 42 appointments, including five first-time student sessions aimed at supporting mental health and promoting academic success. This represents a 35% increase in total appointments compared to the same time last year in July 2024.
- Enrollment Services
 - CRM Data:
 - Phone Calls Logged in CRM: 3,945
 - Walk-in Traffic Tracked: 1,749
 - Outbound Email Campaigns Sent: 14,577
 - Top Campaigns: *Diplomas on the Way Emails, Personalized Video Emails, Financial Aid Notification Emails*
 - Total Cases Resolved through CRM (Emails and Forms): 6,145
 - Event Attendees: 412
 - Total Chats Logged: 1,145; Handled by Chatbot: 647 (57%)
 - Top Chat Topics:
 - *Register for Classes* – 24
 - *Course Schedule* – 104
 - *MyHarper Questions* – 67
 - Financial Aid: 18.2% increase in FAFSAs from 2024 to 2025, 100.7% increase in students packaged with State/Federal grants, and 44.8% increase in the number of students that completed paperwork.
 - 9,832 FAFSAs (2025-2026)
 - 8,319 FAFSAs (2024-2025)
 - Promise Scholarship: 357 new Promise Scholars will join Harper this fall from the high school graduating class of 2025. These students will join 211 Promise Scholars returning for their second year at Harper.
- Hawks Care
 - In the month of May, 231 students accessed the food pantry; 88 students met with staff; four students visited the career closet; 14 students received dinners on-the-go.
 - In June, 137 students accessed the food pantry; 69 students met with staff; four students visited the career closet; three students received dinners on-the-go.
 - In July, 114 students accessed the food pantry; 31 students met with staff; four students visited the career closet; three students received dinners on-the-go.
 - In May, the Harper College Lyft Pass Program served 500 riders with 2,284 rides (\$9.74 average ride, \$22,237.97 total). June saw 263 riders and 1,066 rides (\$9.83 average, \$10,482.87 total). In July, 500 riders took 994 rides (\$9.88 average, \$9,817.17 total).
- Resources for Learning
 - The Academic Support Center had over 2,100 tutoring visits for the summer 2025 semester, which is more than an 11% increase from summer 2024.
 - In July, there was a total library foot traffic of 5,024 people.

Events

- Athletics
 - At the end of July, the Harper Athletics Department hosted a student athlete orientation at the Performing Arts Center. The event, attended by 90 of our athletes, was a success as they learned not only about eligibility and their responsibilities as athletes, but also about campus wellness, engagement, jobs and the recreation center.
- Career and Technical Programs
 - Workforce Career Coordinator Omar Sanchez helped organize scaleLIT's final in-person Systemwide Gathering of FY25 at Harper College in June. ScaleLIT, the One-Stop Operator (OSO) for the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership network, holds quarterly meetings to share American Job Center (AJC) updates, initiatives, and funding opportunities. Manager for Workforce Initiatives and Apprenticeships Besa Sadiku joined a panel showcasing regional apprenticeship programs to over 50 workforce partners.
- Hawks Care
 - In June, we hosted a Student Parent Success Program (SPSP) family event featuring food, families, yoga, and goats. Yep, goats on campus! It was an evening to remember amongst the five SPSP families in attendance.
- Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Grant
 - In July, Financial Literacy Program Coordinator Angelina Bonilla offered two workshops for the Partners for Our Communities (POC) Teen Summer Camp to 21 students.
- Harper Wellness
 - Harper Wellness collaborated with Counseling Services and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to provide a tabling event in honor of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Mental Health Month in July. Participants could engage in a Q & A about BIPOC mental health resources and information for a chance to win a prize. Over 45 students and employees participated in the event.
 - Harper Wellness collaborated with the American Red Cross to host a blood drive in July. Over 40 donors participated in the event.
 - Also in July, Harper Wellness hosted sound meditation facilitator, Jay Taylor, in collaboration with the library. Twenty-five students and employees participated in the event.
- Resources for Learning
 - The library is collaborating with the Box Office again to host student IDs in the library. Beginning August 18 to September 5, students can stop by room F221 (inside the library) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to get their HarperCard.

Division/Program Highlights

- Athletics
 - The National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association (NJCAA) released their academic awards in July. The Hawks had four teams earn All-Academic Team of the Year nominations. The women's cross country had the 4th best GPA in the NJCAA for their sport, the men's cross country had the 6th best, the women's track and field had the 11th best, and the softball team also earned All-Academic Team of the Year. The qualifications were a minimum team GPA of 3.00. The Hawks also had 68 individual nominations.
- Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Grant
 - In July, curriculum development consultant ESCALA visited Harper and offered a two-day train-the-trainer workshop for the Academy of Teaching Excellence staff, and one faculty member, on the three



culturally responsive curriculum modules/strategies developed by the consultant. Training will be made available for faculty in mid-fall.

- Math and Science
 - Harper College, in partnership with Elmhurst University, is part of the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded Noyce PRIDE (Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity in Education) Scholars program, which supports future STEM high school teachers through scholarships and dual degrees. PRIDE emphasizes culturally responsive teaching to better serve diverse communities. Since 2022, Harper has actively promoted the program with the leadership of Karen Dailey (Chemistry) and Bethanie Statler (Biology), with recipients including Julian Gonzalez (Chemistry, 2023), Andrew Fisher (Mathematics, 2024), and now Borislav “Boby” Ivanov (Biology, 2025), who will begin at Elmhurst this August.
 - The 2025 Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) Education Summit was held in July in San Diego, focusing on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in education through sessions, workshops, and networking. Dr. Tong Cheng and Ginger McHugh-Kurtz from the Biology Department presented on behalf of the GIS Community of Practice (CoP), sharing a progress report on integrating GIS into college curricula. Dr. Cheng showcased the use of Story Maps and student-created COVID-19 dashboards, while McHugh-Kurtz highlighted interactive Story Map assignments and tools like drones, Field Maps, and Survey123 for environmental projects. The presentation also featured strategies from other CoP members, including Crystal Peirce, James Edstrom, James Gramlich, Joseph Angermeier, and Mukila Maitha.

Employee Highlights

- Counseling Services
 - In July, Counseling Services welcomed Lucy Renteria, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker), as the newest member of our clinical team. Renteria is an experienced mental health professional who brings a compassionate, student-centered approach to her work. She is also bilingual in English, Spanish, and bicultural, which enhances our ability to provide culturally and linguistically responsive care to our student community. We are thrilled to have her join the Counseling Services team and look forward to the positive impact she will have on our campus!
- Resources for Learning
 - In July, the Resources for Learning Division welcomed the new Dean - Resources for Learning Michelle Harrell. Dean Harrell joins us as we bid farewell to retiring Dean Njambi Kamoche after an amazing 18 years with Harper College!

Student Highlights

- Career and Technical Programs
 - Katsiaryna Piatsevich and Natalia Rojas, two visionary fashion students at Harper College, had their original designs selected by Academia De Lusso for a prestigious runway show at the iconic Spanish Steps in Rome. Their pieces stood out for their innovative blend of modern textures with unique fabrications. On September 10, they will debut their collections to an international audience, marking a milestone in their emerging design careers.

Advancement

- The Foundation awarded nearly \$3.1 million in scholarships, grants and awards to 1,298 students in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- Harper Alumni Relations has launched the seventh annual Distinguished Alumni Virtual Mentoring Program. Harper students are paired with a mentor from Harper’s Distinguished Alumni for a virtual



mentoring experience where they learn from their careers and rich experiences. Since the program's inception in 2019, 34 Distinguished Alumni have mentored Harper students. The program launches September 1 and runs through December 1.

- In July, the Foundation awarded nearly \$50,000 in Community Impact Fund Grants to six organizations. Established in 2022 with funding from the MacKenzie Scott gift, the program has distributed \$240,000 to non-profit organizations and reached over 2,200 individuals within Harper's district. This year's recipients are:
 - Barrington Giving Day for Books Build Futures – Expanding Access to Literacy and Learning
 - Kindred Life Ministries for Empowering Teen Parents Toward Stability through Life Educational Groups
 - Northwest Compass for Supporting Youth (18-24) who are Experiencing Housing Instability and Homelessness program
 - Special Gifts Theatre for Inclusive Musical Theatre Programs
 - Hopeful Beginnings for Mothers Achieving Stability
 - The Bridge Youth and Family Services for The Bridge Youth Mentoring Program
- In August, the HOPE Giving Circle kicked off its 10th anniversary year by awarding \$10,000 scholarships (each) to ten Harper College students. To date, the HOPE Giving Circle raised \$492,000 in support of student scholarships.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is excited to welcome our new LEAD (Leveraging Equity in Academia through Diversity) Faculty Fellows – Danilo Marin (English) and Maritza Recendez (Health Careers)! We also look forward to the continuing contributions of our second year Fellows – Kirby Fellis (Music), Ashley Palmer (English) and Alex Pergams (Biology).
- Harper College is embarking on a formal process to develop an institutional land acknowledgement. This collaborative effort will honor the Indigenous peoples whose lands we occupy and reinforce our ongoing commitment to addressing historical inequities and building a more just future. Coordinated by Dr. Sonnet Gabbard, the process began during Opening Week (O-Week) with a session titled, "Understanding Land Acknowledgements: An Information Session for Inclusive Practices," led by guest speaker Gina Roxas, executive director of the Trickster Cultural Center in Schaumburg.
- In collaboration with Harper's four ERGs, we kicked off the year with the 4th Annual ERG DEI Welcome Back Celebration during O-Week. The event honored the 2024-2025 ERG and DEI Shared Governance leaders and brought the community together to connect over great food, shared purpose and vibrant conversation.
- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Harper Wellness are partnering to make campus more welcoming and accessible for student-parents. Beginning fall 2025, the Cultural Center will extend its hours on Mondays and Wednesdays until 6 p.m., providing more opportunities for parents/guardians to use its resources.
- New to WHCM 88.3 FM, La Estación delivers a vibrant hour of Spanish-language programming every Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Hosted by Gerardo Cruz, Esmeralda Guerrero Lopez, Cristina Lopez, and Jorge Perez, the show features an eclectic mix of Latine music genres. More than just entertainment, La Estación celebrates Latine culture, heritage, and language – creating a welcoming space that inspires pride, connection, and belonging.



Communications

- Communications and Community Relations organized the Fall 2025 Marketplace and President's Collegewide Meeting to help launch the fall semester. The Marketplace featured approximately 40 tables, providing colleagues an opportunity to reconnect and learn about programs and services available to the Harper community. The President's Collegewide Meeting drew more than 500 employees to the Health and Recreation Center gym.
- The Communications team pitched, secured placement and/or helped facilitate 11 articles that appeared in local, national and international media publications. Media mentions include:
 - *Community College Daily* published a feature on Harper's apprenticeship program, which was also the top item in the *CC Daily* newsletter, highlighted in the ICCTA listserv and included in Achieving the Dream's July newsletter.
 - The *Daily Herald*, *Patch*, *Bytes Europe*, Hispanic Business TV and *Europe Says* reported on Harper launching its new Associate of Fine Arts degree in Music Production.
 - *BestColleges.com* reported on degree apprenticeships, featuring Harper's success in this area.
 - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran stories about the legacy of Harper's J Theatre, including an extensive feature with multiple photos in the print edition of the *Herald*.
 - *Trusteeship* magazine, published by the Association of Governing Boards, highlighted how Harper and the Harper College Educational Foundation have made an impact with MacKenzie Scott's 2021 donation.
 - The AACCC's 21st Century Center, *Patch* and the *Daily Herald* featured Harper's PASO program, which helps Latine students navigate the college enrollment process.
 - The *Daily Herald* and *Chicago Defender* included Harper's Juneteenth in the Burbs celebration in coverage of regional Juneteenth events and activities.
 - *Digital Guerrero* and *Diario 21* in Mexico covered a new collaboration agreement between Harper and Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero (UAGro).
 - The EAB blog highlighted Harper's Buddy System approach to combat student loneliness at community colleges.
 - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran stories about the foundation awarding nearly \$50,000 to area nonprofits as part of its Community Impact Fund Grant Program.
 - *Tradeline Inc.* reported that Harper began construction on its new Business and Social Sciences Building.
 - *Patch* reported on Harper's Police Department participating in National Night Out in Hoffman Estates.
 - *Journal & Topics* newspapers reported on trade scholarship winners who plan to attend Harper.
 - The Illinois Community College Trustees Association recognized Harper faculty members, with coverage in the ICCTA listserv.
 - *Sports Business Journal* reported on former Harper Athletics Director Doug Spiwak being inducted into the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Hall of Fame
 - Northern Public Radio covered Harper's Jazz Ensemble performing at the inaugural Rockford Jazz Festival.

Community Relations

- Harper College proudly co-hosted Juneteenth in the Burbs for the second consecutive year, marking the 5th anniversary of this vibrant community celebration. Nearly 600 attendees gathered to honor Black culture, history, and excellence through performances, food, and fellowship.

Highlights of the event included performances by the Harper Jazz Ensemble and the Triple H Dance Crew along with youth talent from Schaumburg School District 54, the 40+ Double Dutch team, and several local

artists. The event also featured Black-owned businesses, community organizations, food vendors, Harper Black Student Union and interactive family-friendly activities.

Thank you to all Harper employees and students who volunteered their time and energy to support this meaningful event. An extra special thanks goes to our Event Services crew, Facilities team, and the staff of the Health and Recreation Center for their outstanding support and collaboration.

This partnership reflects Harper's continued commitment to celebrating diversity and fostering meaningful community connections. We are grateful for the collaboration with iCU Community and the Township of Schaumburg and look forward to continuing our support. Mark your calendars for the 2026 event on Saturday, June 20!

Legislative Affairs

- State Representative Mary Beth Canty visited Harper to meet with Dr. Proctor, Chair Kelley, Provost Ruth Williams and Chief of Staff Jeff Julian to discuss dual credit and ways to further strengthen the partnerships between high schools and colleges.
- State Senator Darby Hills visited Harper for the first time since she was appointed to the role in February 2025. She met with Dr. Proctor, Chair Kelley and Chief of Staff Julian before receiving a tour of the Hawks Care and Health Careers area, including the Center for Interprofessional Simulation and the Surgical Tech Suite.
- Harper College was well represented at the Illinois State Fair as Provost Williams, EVP Craig Duetsch and Gary Percy, aviation faculty member, accompanied the Harper Hawk to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Illinois Community Colleges, which included an address by Governor JB Pritzker.

Marketing

- Publishing and Distribution Services, in collaboration with Communications and Facilities, have been busy making the campus ready for the fall semester by providing wayfinding solutions and signage to guide students, faculty, staff, and visitors around construction. The Web Team has also provided regular construction updates to the online campus map.
- Marketing Services also completed several projects for the opening session and the launch of the strategic plan. This includes the design of the strategic plan mark, the fall video, pull-up banners, and a variety of other communication materials.

Finance and Administrative Services

Facilities Management

- Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC) – Classroom building exterior is complete. Internal building mechanical electrical plumbing work being done. Exterior brick installation on the Burn Tower is underway. Substantial completion in October 2025.
- Canning Student Center and University Center – Infrastructure work complete. Foundation work has begun. Substantial completion October 2026.
- Business and Social Sciences Building - Building J demolition underway. Substantial completion February 2027. Furniture, technology, and move in November 2027.



Harper College Police

- The Harper College Police Department participated in the 42nd Annual National Night Out earlier this month, in collaboration with the Hoffman Estates Police Department.

Human Resources

- The Human Resources team has been getting ready for the fall semester. We are welcoming 16 new faculty members! Last academic year, the department processed 106 new hires, 99 position changes and 87 separations. This does not include adjunct faculty.

Information Technology

- To date, 1,304 computers (99%) have been either upgraded or replaced to transition from Windows 10 to Windows 11.

Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- Launched the FY2026-2029 Strategic Plan during the President's Collegewide Meeting on August 12th. The launch included engaging attendees in table conversations around the three strategic goals, led by members of the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division. Discussion questions prompted participants to share insights, celebrate successes, and explore how their daily work contributes to advancing Harper's strategic plan.
- The Office of Outcomes Assessment has begun analyzing data from the spring 2025 large scale Information Literacy assessment (nearly 600 artifacts) and follow-up Diverse Perspectives and Cultures assessment (nearly 800 artifacts). The results of these assessments will be shared during the fall 2025 semester.
- The FY2025 Accountability Report was completed and posted to the Harper website. The report summarizes the College's efforts related to the Presidential Priorities, Institutional Effectiveness Measures, Strategic Plan, and Operational Plan.

Workforce Solutions and Strategic Alliances

Apprenticeship

- The Apprenticeship Program welcomed S&C Electric employer from Chicago and Palatine as our new employer partner to participate in the CNC Precision Machining Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Earlier this month, the Apprenticeship Office and Job Placement Resource Center (JPRC), hosted an Apprenticeship Orientation to welcome 56 new apprentices to Harper College. These students will begin their programs in fall 2025 across a variety of high-demand industries. The event provided an overview of program expectations and a tour of our beautiful facilities.

Business Development and Event Operations

- Supervisor of the Wojcik Conference Center Dana Tenenbaum identified an opportunity to deepen engagement with our largest rental client, the Rohrman Automotive Group. She developed the *Rohrman Automotive Group Hawks Care Challenge*, a friendly competition among the company's dealerships to collect food items and school supplies for the Hawks Care Resource Center pantry. The challenge was a resounding success, generating over 1,200 donated items from 10 dealerships. Through this initiative,



Rohrman Automotive Group evolved from a major rental client into a true partner and committed stakeholder in supporting student success.

Grants Office

- Harper College will receive \$9,600 of Department of Labor funds from the Jobs for the Future Foundation. This grant award will support up to 12 apprentices in Manufacturing apprenticeships at four regional employers. These funds can be used for on-the-job training costs, employer train-the-trainer expenses and other related expenditures.

Harper Business Solutions

- Sue Mulvey of Harper Business Solutions authored an article in *Illinois Manufacturer*, Third Quarter 2025 entitled Preparing Today's Workforce for Tomorrow's Compliance Landscape.

In Memoriam

- We are saddened to share the passing of Dr. Margaret (Marge) Skold, a valued member of Harper College's leadership. Skold passed away on July 25, 2025, in Omaha, Nebraska. She began her career at Harper in 2002 as the Vice President of Academic Affairs and served in that role until her retirement in 2010. Skold was a thoughtful and dedicated leader whose contributions made a lasting impact. She will be missed. [Read obituary here.](#)