



PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

November 2025

Dear Harper College Community:

As part of our yearlong student leaders engagement plan, the Executive Cabinet and I held a working lunch with members of our Student Government Association and our student trustee. We had meaningful conversations learning more about the student experience, their personal, professional and leadership goals and ways in which we could collaborate to improve the student experience. Hearing regularly from our students provides powerful insights for our leadership team to continue to build a culture of care and increase the sense of belonging and inclusion at Harper. As a result of this engagement, we are identifying short-term and long-term strategies to address topics that emerged to improve our students' experiences.

It is also important to share our work and learn from each other from local to national levels. Internally, more than 150 faculty actively participated in the All-faculty meeting to discuss SOAR+ (our new student success model), academic programs and Unlocking Opportunity, the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Reaffirmation process and web content accessibility. When we take time to come together and examine our efforts, we can learn more about what is working and the areas in which we can improve. I look forward to how these faculty discussions will contribute to continuous improvements on how we fulfill our mission. Dr. Ruth Williams, Marcia Frank and I also attended the 8th Annual Chicago Quantum Summit to learn more about how we can support talent and program development for quantum and quantum-adjacent careers. We were one of several community colleges in attendance. At the state level, I joined fellow presidents for our annual retreat where some of us participated in a Senate Subject Matter hearing on immigration enforcement legislation during the Veto Session. We also discussed dual credit, funding strategies, our legislative agenda in preparation for the Spring legislative session and more. As the Illinois Council of Community Colleges (ICCCP) Chair, I was proud to attend the November 12th Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) meeting to share about our unified approach to advance our strategic statewide efforts in a rapidly changing landscape, proactively engage with University presidents and K12 Superintendents, and name the 21 Illinois community colleges which were amongst the Top 200 Community Colleges in the nation as recently recognized by the Aspen Institute Community College Excellence program. IBHE board members asked questions about improving transfer processes and commended us on our collaborative efforts to advance student success in the Illinois higher education ecosystem. On the national stage, Harper stood proudly in delivering two presentations to colleagues from across the country. Chair Bill Kelley, Trustee James Meyer, Student Trustee Adekunbi Aransiola, Dr. Ruth Williams, Jeff Julian and I attended the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Leadership Congress in New Orleans in late October. The first presentation detailed our onboarding and orientation process for new trustees. The second presentation reflected on our work to strengthen post-Harper student success outcomes through our participation in the Achieving the Dream Community Vibrancy Cohort. Both of these presentations resulted in lively discussions and multiple requests for more information on our strategies. Additionally, we were invited to attend a discussion led by our AACC and ACCT legislative partners about the implementation of Workforce Pell along with many other sessions and networking opportunities. Each year, we bring back new ideas from this conference that help us advance our mission, strengthen our governance work and foster improved collaboration between the Board and the Administration. I was pleased to contribute to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Redesign Lab at the invitation of Dr. DeRionne Pollard, the new AACC CEO/President as she sets a new

direction for our organization. Lastly, I virtually delivered the keynote address for the American Association of Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC) national conference to share insights about my leadership journey and discuss strategies on how they could advance their LIFT framework – Listen, Include, Foster and Thrive. Through all of these connections, we are contributing to the collective advancement of the community college sector in higher education amidst the headwinds of some voices questioning the value of higher education. The value proposition of what we offer is strong and we must continue to lift up our student and community success stories.

Finally, it is important to support, partner and celebrate our colleagues across higher education. I had the privilege of attending and speaking at the installation of Dr. Joyce Ester, the new president of Governors State University. As a former community college president herself, Dr. Ester understands the promise of the transfer pipeline and pathway. She knows that real partnership requires meaningful collaboration – aligning supports, sharing data and centering the student at every step of the journey. Moments like these reaffirm the strength of our broader higher education community and the value of standing with one another as we advance student success, workforce development, and regional prosperity. Supporting our peers ultimately strengthens the entire ecosystem in which Harper and our partners thrive.



Academic Updates

Events

- Enrollment Services
 - Harper Admissions hosted 150 students and guests during our Striving Toward Educational Prosperity (STEP) Summit in October. Students engaged in workshops about transitioning to college, financial literacy, voter rights, and had the opportunity to connect with their peers during this high-engagement event.
- Harper Wellness
 - Harper Wellness partnered with the Kenneth Young Center, Counseling Services, and Title IX to host a tabling event in honor of National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week in October. Students were able to become a “Certified Wing Person” by visiting the tables and learning about important campus and community resources and information.
 - Harper Wellness hosted, “What’s Your Green Flag?” in collaboration with Counseling Services last month in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Week. Students identified green flags in relationships and learned about resources available to them.
 - Harper Wellness collaborated with the Kenneth Young Center to offer free STI/HIV testing last month.
- Resources for Learning
 - The Academic Support Center celebrated Tutor Appreciation Week from October 6-10. Students left notes of appreciation for tutors, thanking them for their dedication in helping students succeed in their courses.
 - In collaboration with the Campus Well-Being Collective, the Library will be hosting Finals Week activities for students during the last two weeks of the fall semester. From Thrive Kits to comfort dogs to an art activity in the Make Shop, there will be different activities throughout campus for students to de-stress and finish the semester strong.
 - The Library is hosting the following book discussions: *The Stranger in the Woods* by Michael Finkel (11/6), *Day After Night* by Anita Diamant (11/7), and *Mr. Dickens and His Carol* by Samantha Silva (12/5).
- Student Success and Retention – Advising Services
 - Resources to the Rescue Fair – Advising Services and Center for New Students and Orientation
 - In October, the Avanté Concourse was transformed into a hub of connection and discovery for our annual Resources to the Rescue event! This dynamic scavenger-hunt style experience empowered students to explore campus resources in an interactive and fun way. As students visited each table, they learned about valuable services designed to support their success. The more resources they discovered, the more chances they earned to win one of two \$50 Amazon e-gift cards (plus a sweet treat to enjoy along the way!).
 - We welcomed 15 collaborative partners from across Harper, including Hawk’s Care, the Women’s Program, Counseling Services, Job Placement Resource Center (JPRC), the Academic Support Center (ASC), and many others who engaged directly with students and showcased how their services can make a real difference. We were thrilled to see 130 students participate, with over 65 going above and beyond by visiting eight or more resource tables. Events like this remind us of the power of collaboration and the impact we can make when we connect students to the right support at the right time.
- Student Success and Retention – Honors and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)
 - Last month, Harper’s chapter of PTK hosted a second annual “Fun with Faculty” event, which was born out of last year’s College Project, to help bolster communication and community among students and faculty on Harper’s campus.

Division/Program Highlights

- Athletics
 - This fall the Athletic Department has several things to be grateful for! Harper College's men's cross-country team won their 18th National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 4 championship in October. Team members Ryan Golden and Sebastian Welc were both All-Region selections. Women's team member, Kasey Ledinsky, was also selected as All Region.
 - The women's volleyball team has qualified for playoffs with a 31-13 record. They began their playoff competition earlier this month. Team members Phoebe Kim and Jocelyn Erling were awarded 1st team All Region honors for District A with teammate Lauren Ahlstedt garnering Honorable Mention. Kim was also nominated as an All-American which will be announced in December.
 - Men's and women's basketball and men's wrestling started their seasons on November 1.
 - The Athletic Department is hosting a "Friendsgiving" gathering for the student athletes on November 19 at noon to foster a spirit of gratitude and thankfulness. The luncheon will offer an opportunity for the student athletes to share a traditional meal together during the holiday season.
- Business and Social Science
 - Andy Levin (political science) hosted the Illinois Council for the Social Studies for its annual statewide fall conference at Harper College. Through discussion and lectures, nearly 125 educators focused on the important goal of making each social studies classroom a laboratory of civic trust.
- Career and Technical Programs
 - Last month, Professor Nupur Sharma organized a field trip to high-end apparel stores in Chicago for students enrolled in the Fashion Studies program. The trip was a huge success not only because the students were able to learn from professionals at Neiman Marcus, Dior, Chanel, Ksubi and Amiri, but also because they met Harper graduates who are employed at nearly all of these locations. Linda Hernandez, who graduated in 2018 from the fashion program, now works at Neiman Marcus. Renee Cammatra, who graduated recently from the program was excited about her job at Londo Mondo, an upscale boutique on Michigan Avenue. Students were given a private behind-the-scenes tour by Luigi, a Harper graduate at Dior in the Gold Coast area. The trip was truly inspirational since it turned into a Harper alumni success story!
- Counseling Services
 - Earlier this month, Counseling Services welcomed clinical mental health therapist, Thomas Cabrzynski, LCPC, to the team!
 - Counseling Services Manager Carol Trejo Kroeger, LCPC, has been selected to present on *Dual Challenges: Addressing the Intersection of Substance Use and Mental Health on Campus* as part of the Illinois Higher Education Center (IHEC) training series.
- Health Careers
 - The Dental Hygiene Class of 2026 (25 students), led by Associate Professor Maria Prassas, was the only dental hygiene program invited to participate in the Team Smile/Heal Elgin Free Clinic, held last month in Elgin, IL.
 - In collaboration with Midwestern University College of Dental Medicine, the UIC College of Dentistry, and local dental professionals, students provided free dental and dental hygiene care to more than 100 underserved patients.
 - This event served as a model of interprofessional collaborative practice, bringing together dental, medical, and vision care providers to expand access to essential health services for the Elgin community.

- Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI)
 - In September, Swail Landis, the HSI third-party evaluator/consultant for Hawks Care programming, visited Harper to conduct two student-voice-centered sessions. These sessions were designed to share findings with faculty, administrators, and staff regarding students' experiences receiving support through Hawks Care. Through collaboration with Hawks Care and DEI, students shared their thoughts. Final findings and recommendations for their work are to be completed in mid-November 2025.
 - Student engagement and work to increase college-wide awareness of the HSI Program continues. HSI team members participated in various student engagement events during September and October including Harper Fiesta (9/22), Pride Fest (10/8), Fall Fest (10/14), and Resources to the Rescue (10/22).
- Student Success and Retention – Honors and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)
 - In October:
 - Students from Honors and PTK participated in a campus visit to Lake Forest University.
 - Students from Honors and PTK volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Elgin.
 - Members of PTK attended and presented at the Illinois Regional PTK Conference ("Leading Illinois Together") at Illinois Central College in Peoria. The topic of their presentation was "The Evolution of 'Fun with Faculty.'"
 - PTK hosted a reception to welcome new members of Phi Phi.
 - Earlier this month, students from Honors and PTK volunteered at the Deer Grove Forest Preserve, helping to remove invasive species.
 - This fall, Honors and PTK also participated in multiple on-campus events, marketing our organizations to students, collaborating with other groups at Harper, and engaging with the larger community. These events included Hullabaloo, Fall Fest, Resources to the Rescue, and Trunk or Treat.

Employee Highlights

- Academy for Teaching Excellence
 - Congratulations to the 2025 cohort of Level II Adjunct Faculty! These faculty members completed the Reflective Educator graduate equivalency course with the Academy for Teaching Excellence during the summer semester. Each developed a comprehensive ePortfolio documenting their reflective practices, college service and professional development, which was reviewed by a committee of peers.
 - A total of eight adjunct faculty members were recommended for the Level II designation, representing four divisions and seven departments, and pending approval and recognition at the November Board of Trustees meeting. 2025 Level II Adjunct Faculty Cohort:
 - Tom Ciardiello, Accounting
 - Faith Eichhorst, Library
 - Andy Levin, Political Science
 - Amanda Loch, Graphic Arts
 - Hina Majid, Philosophy
 - Levonne Mrozinski, Music
 - Natasha Pilipuf, Humanities
 - Jessica Prus, Library

Congratulations again, and thank you for your commitment to professional development, college service and student success at Harper College.

- Resources for Learning
 - Three Academic Support Center staff members (Erin Higgins, Alex Crawford, and Jim Vitullo) are participating in the first-year cohort of Leading the Harper Way.



Student Highlights

- Business and Social Science
 - Last month, Harper's Accounting Club hosted a Tax Professional Panel, featuring three incredible guest speakers:
 - Domenic D'Andrea, CPA and Harper College alum
 - Matthew Suits, CPA and Harper College alum
 - Li Jun Wang, Vice President of Tax Accounting and Reporting at Zurich American Insurance Company

The speakers shared valuable insights on careers, and our students asked thoughtful, career-focused questions throughout.

- Harper alumna (2022) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Certificate graduate Carolina Szoepé was selected for the Geospatial Professional Network's Vanguard Cabinet (2026–2028), a national advisory group for emerging GIS leaders. The Geospatial Professional Network is a national association of professionals using geospatial technologies to address challenges across all levels of government. The organization recognized Carolina for her leadership and contributions to the field with this appointment. She currently serves as a GIS Project Assistant for the City of Aurora, IL.

Supporting the Strategic Plan

- Student Success and Retention – Center for New Students and Orientation
Provide innovative and responsive education that addresses the evolving needs of students, the workforce, and our community:
 - The Canning Women's Program Biology (BIO) 260 Study Group continues to meet every Wednesday from 2–3:00 p.m. in Room F110 through December 10. The group has maintained steady participation from Women's Program students enrolled in BIO 260, offering them consistent access to the Anatomy Room, additional tutoring support, and a collaborative study environment.
 - To enhance learning, colored diagrams, a course textbook, and a set of flashcards are provided each week. Snacks are also offered to create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. This initiative has been well received and continues to serve as a valuable resource for students preparing for exams and strengthening their course success.

Advancement

- Career Conversations with Harper Alumni, a program that connects Harper College alumni professionals to students to share their career and educational experiences, received a "Best of CASE District V Award" for Alumni Volunteer Engagement. The program, which launched in 2023, invites alumni to participate in discussion panels and the professional leadership dinner with students. Seventy-seven Harper Alumni have volunteered with the program.
- Nearly 120 alumni and friends gathered to honor the 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients earlier this month. Since the launch of the program in 2008, 97 alumni have been selected for this honor. The ceremony also takes the opportunity to announce the Distinguished Alumni Scholarship Recipient. Distinguished Alumni have come together to raise over \$48,000 for the scholarship since 2017.
- As of November 10, the Foundation has awarded \$1,842,802.16 to 991 students this academic year. One hundred forty-one students attended scholarship orientation to learn about the impact of philanthropy, connect with Alumni Relations, and review scholarship requirements.



- Alumni Relations partnered with Zurich North America, Wheels Inc. and ADP to host a Harper @ Work alumni appreciation breakfast at the Zurich Center Campus in October. The event invited Harper alumni from the three respective employers for a morning of connection with the college and each other. Over 50 alumni attended.
- Harper College Alumni Relations and the Harper Professional Advisor Committee co-hosted the free webinar: Building Your Financial Future in October. The webinar shared practical insights into managing finances effectively and covered the essential pillars of financial planning. Forty alumni signed up to attend.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Last month, Harper College celebrated our 26th Annual *Sabor Latino*, a dynamic cultural showcase with 150 in attendance. The event featured vibrant performances, music, and dance, offering students, staff, and community members an immersive experience in Latine culture. In collaboration with Student Engagement and Latinos Unidos, Sabor Latino created a welcoming space for cultural celebration and community connections.
- Harper College celebrated Día de los Muertos with a three-day event in the Rotunda featuring community ofrendas created by seven student organizations and six departments. The celebration included artisanal vendors, “I Stand with Immigrants” tabling, an Immigration History 101 session with Dr. Gonzalez Rivas, and a crown-making activity hosted by Latinos Unidos. The program fostered cultural awareness, creativity, and collaboration while offering the Harper community a meaningful opportunity to honor tradition and strengthen connections.
- In October, Esmeralda Guerrero Lopez participated on the Elk Grove High School’s Latino Professional Panel during Latine Heritage Month. This event connected local students with five Latine professionals who shared their career journeys and insights on cultural identity, education, and representation. The panel inspired the 50+ students in attendance and provided valuable information regarding college resources and pathways, concluding the heritage month programming in a powerful way.
- The Cultural Center hosted Bold and Black Kickback, a new program designed to help students build connections and strengthen their sense of community. Students gathered to enjoy karaoke, activities and snacks in a relaxed environment that encouraged social interaction, friendship, and belonging.
- Kudos are extended to Kirby Fellis, Leveraging Equity in Academia through Diversity (LEAD) Faculty Fellow in the Music Department. He leads Harper’s Jazz ensemble, which recently sold out “Hey Nonny” on a Wednesday evening. This marks the first time the venue has ever sold out a midweek show, and Hey Nonny has already expressed interest in making this a recurring annual event.
- Employee Resource Groups (ERG’s)
 - Last month, Voice of Immigrants Committed to Equity (VOICE) hosted its monthly meeting, featuring a Lotería event led by Esmeralda Guerrero Lopez and Angelina Bonilla. Lotería, often called “Mexican Bingo,” is a traditional Mexican game of chance that uses a deck of 54 cards instead of numbered balls. The 23 members in attendance enjoyed connecting over conversation, pizza, and several lively rounds of Lotería.
 - In October, Learning About Abilities, Not Disabilities (LAND) ERG collaborated with the Access and Disability Services (ADS) Office to welcome back artist John Porcellino for a zine and comics-making workshop in the Cultural Center. Twelve Harper students attended, along with members of LAND, the ADS Office, and the DEI Office. Porcellino is a graduate of Hoffman Estates High School



and of NIU whose graphic novels, including *Perfect Example* and *The Hospital Suite*, focus on issues of mental health and neurodivergence. The event was open to all Harper students, staff, and faculty.

External Affairs

Communications

- The Communications team pitched, secured placement and/or helped facilitate 12 articles and reports that appeared in local, national and international media publications. Media mentions include:
 - The *Daily Herald*, *Patch* and Achieving the Dream's newsletter featured articles about the Job Placement Resource Center.
 - *Chicago Quantum Exchange* and *HPCwire* highlighted Harper's participation in a national summit shaping strategy for quantum workforce development, with quotes and reaction from Dr. Joanne Ivory, dean of career and technical programs.
 - The *Daily Herald*, *Patch* and other media sites ran reports on Harper's new Artificial Intelligence and Cloud Computing degree program.
 - The *Chicago Tribune*, *Daily Herald* and *Patch* previewed the Harper College Theatre Ensemble's production of *She Loves Me*.
 - *The Daily Herald* and *Patch* reported on Harper's selection among the top 200 community colleges nationwide eligible for the 2027 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
 - *The HR Happy Hour* podcast featured Amanda Duval-Norwood, chief human resources officer, discussing Harper's digital transformation in human resources.
 - *WBBM Radio* featured many reports on Harper's fall enrollment increase.
 - *Patch* published a report about this year's HOPE Giving Circle Scholars, as part of the 10 for 10 campaign for the group's 10th anniversary.
 - The NJCAA's website reported on the announcement that longtime Harper coach Jim Macnider will be inducted into its Cross Country Hall of Fame.
 - The ICCTA listserv and *Patch* featured Harper's recognition of founding trustee James J. Hamill for his contributions to the college's early development.
 - *Forbes* and many regional publications posted a list naming Harper among the Best Employers in Illinois for 2025.
 - *Press Release Point* published an announcement by the American Association of Physics Teachers that the Homer L. Dodge Citation for Distinguished Service will be awarded to Raeghan Graessle, associate professor.
 - *Athletech News*, *Gym Owner Monthly* and *Patch* announced Harper's new partnership with Life Fitness/Hammer Strength at the Foglia Foundation Health and Recreation Center.
 - *Patch* previewed Harper's Distinguished Alumni Awards, which celebrated the accomplishments of five graduates earlier this month.
 - *Northwest Indiana Business Magazine* and *The Times of Northwest Indiana* reported on Harper's new articulation agreement with Valparaiso University.
 - *Patch* previewed Harper Experience Day, the college's family-friendly STEAM fair.
 - *The Daily Herald* and *Patch* reported on U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi's announced legislation to rename the Palatine Post Office in honor of 102-year-old Harper alumnus and Ghost Army veteran Bernie Bluestein.
 - *Patch* highlighted Harper's participation in the statewide Feed the Need Food Drive.

Community Relations

- Harper College hosted its 4th annual Trunk or Treat on Friday in October, welcoming more than 2,100 attendees. The event featured decorated vehicles hosted by Harper employees, student organizations, college programs, community partners, community members, and local police departments. A collaborative



effort among Harper College Police, Community Relations, Health Careers, Campus Recreation and Student Engagement expanded this year's offerings to include the highly attended Harper Haunted Hospital and a free community screening of *Hocus Pocus*.

- The annual 2025 Experience Day earlier this month was a great success! More than 600 people attended and explored hands-on activities in science, technology, art, math, fitness, health science, manufacturing, HVAC, graphic design, and more. Harper employees, students, and community partners helped make the day possible by leading activities and volunteering throughout the event.

Legislative Affairs

- The Illinois legislative veto session wrapped up with some significant pieces of legislation moving forward including a transit bill. Harper, working through the Council of Presidents, actively engaged Senator Villa and legislative leaders to revise early bill drafts of an immigration omnibus bill that posed operational and legal challenges. Advocacy secured major changes—including removing notification of activity within a three-mile radius, narrowing civil liability and limiting the definition of campus—leading the system to adopt a neutral position as the bill heads to the Governor.
- Chief of Staff/VP of External Affairs Jeff Julian penned an article on community college advocacy for *CC Daily* that was featured this month. The article offers helpful tips for community colleges on how to engage with their elected officials to better tell their stories and increase support for higher education priorities.

Marketing Services

- The AI Cloud Computing brochure presents a unified message to businesses, community partners, and prospective students, representing all divisions of the College, including Continuing Education (CE), Continuing Professional Education (CPE), and Credit programs. It highlights Harper's integrated educational pathways and the value of tiered credentials that allow students to advance or re-enter at any level to meet career goals. It also highlights the Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) partnerships that ensure career path and skills alignment. Distributed collegewide, the brochure ensures consistent messaging and coordinated outreach, reinforcing Harper's leadership in workforce development and its commitment to preparing students for emerging opportunities in AI and cloud computing. The brochure and related campaigns drive all leads to the AI Cloud cross-college landing page: harpercollege.edu/aicloud

Finance and Administrative Services

Facilities Management

- Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC): Fire props are being installed. Septic sanitary work is occurring. Project is substantially complete.
- Canning Student Center and University Center: Foundation work is complete. Masonry stairwells are being built. Structural steel installation has begun.
- Business and Social Sciences Building: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) permit obtained and storm sewer work has begun. Sanitary work to follow. Building footprint work to start in November.

Human Resources

- The Human Resources office has successfully completed another year of open enrollment. As we prepare for changes in the insurance landscape, the College will actively engage the campus community to gather input. This collaborative approach will help us align our benefits offerings with employee needs as much as possible while maintaining a strong focus on cost containment and long-term sustainability.



- The Human Resources Department honored our veteran employees earlier this month with a recognition celebration and a token of appreciation.

Risk Management

- Annual fire evacuation training was completed last month.
- Annual emergency communications test was completed this month.

Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division led a cohort of eight employees through the *Data Literacy Basics Badge: Develop a Data Mindset*. This hybrid course aims to help participants strengthen their understanding of data and how to use it effectively in their work. Through a combination of self-paced learning and collaborative activities, participants build data literacy skills, learn to navigate college dashboards and reports, and present insights in a final team project.
- The Insights and Decision Support and Institutional Research teams collaborated with the Academy for Teaching Excellence to develop a dashboard supporting the Academy's course, *Data Reimagined: Using Disaggregated Data to Sharpen Your Cultural Teaching Lens*. The dashboard aligns with the course curriculum by enabling users to examine course success rates through an equity lens, fostering deeper insights into student outcomes and inclusive teaching practices.
- The Outcomes Assessment office assisted with a survey to solicit feedback from the college community about possible partnership opportunities with the Chicago Bears football organization. The survey was designed to explore both academic and non-academic opportunities, as well as options related to workforce development, training, and collaborative initiatives that could arise from a partnership. The feedback collected will help guide the College in assessing the potential benefits and areas of focus for collaboration with the Chicago Bears organization,
- From mid-October to mid-November, the Office of Institutional Research, in collaboration with Student Engagement, administered the Trellis Financial Wellness Survey. The response was excellent with nearly 1,500 students sharing their voices. Insights from this survey will help us better understand the financial challenges our students face and guide the development of meaningful programs and initiatives that promote their financial stability and overall success.

Workforce Solutions and Strategic Alliances

Apprenticeship

- The Apprenticeship Office continued hosting its monthly Apprentice Information Session in October. Approximately 20 candidates attended to learn more about apprenticeship opportunities and the benefits of participating in the program.
- Besa Sadiku, manager of workforce initiatives, attended the German American Chamber of Commerce GALA fundraising event in October. This event supports apprenticeship programs and strengthens relationships with employer partners.



Events Services

- In October, the Performing Arts Center hosted several Harper events, including the Music Convocation, Steel Band Concert, Sabor Latino, and the Harper Symphony Orchestra, drawing audiences ranging from 30 to 175 attendees. The Drama Lab featured the Guitar Solos Concert with 27 attendees, and the Performing Arts Center (PAC) also welcomed an external rental event: the Worsham College of Mortuary Science Graduation Ceremony with 75 guests.

Grants Office

- Rivers Casino Charitable Foundation Grant Award
 - The Rivers Casino Charitable Foundation awarded \$100,000 to the Harper College Educational Foundation, in continued support for the Veteran and Military Connected Students Scholarship. Originally established in 2020 with a Rivers Casino Charitable Foundation grant, this funding will assist up to 62 veteran and military-connected students, both full- and part-time, with scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per semester for tuition, books, fees, and supplies. By easing financial burdens, this scholarship honors their military service while supporting their academic success.

Strategic Alliances and Innovation Department

- Harper College AI Educators Consortium
 - Harper College is launching an AI Educators Consortium to bring together educators and leaders from regional high school districts to collaboratively navigate AI's expanding role in education. This initiative will connect regional NECSS schools and Harper College to share innovative practices, align strategies, address common challenges around implementation and policies, and strengthen students' readiness for college and careers—creating a collaborative community shaping the future of AI in education.

Wojcik Conference Center

- The Wojcik Conference Center hosted 32 events this month, showing steady year-over-year activity. Ten external clients included returning groups such as Berkshire Hathaway, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, and the Turkish American Society of Chicago, along with a new financial services client. Sixteen internal events were held, highlighting strong campus use through programs like the STEP Teen Summit and Career Conversations with Harper Alumni.

