



## PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

October 2020

Dear Harper College Community:

The Illinois Community College Board released its [Fall 2020 Opening Community College Enrollment Survey Results](#) last week reporting that the Illinois community college system is down 13.7% in headcount and 12.5% in FTE from the previous year. Only three community colleges in the state had enrollment increases, while the rest of our sister institutions experienced enrollment declines as much as nearly 30%. As the report notes, "Still, with community colleges being open access institutions and serving a significant number of at-risk students, the pandemic has exacerbated issues for that population ranging from fiscal to technological." We have certainly witnessed our students suffering through challenges caused by the pandemic and it is noted in our enrollment numbers in the report (-5.8% FTE, Comparison of Final Fall 2016-2019 Opening Enrollment with Fall 2020 Preliminary Opening Enrollment, ICCB).

While these numbers are not a surprise, it still speaks to the level of urgency we need for action as we support our students, especially those most vulnerable, during the pandemic to ensure they have access to additional funding, basic needs, and technology. The college leadership team is focused on ramping up current services and supports such as emergency student relief and the technology loaner program, while implementing new opportunities such as the Moving Forward Scholarship for short-term training programs to help our students stay on track with their educational goals. Now is the time to think boldly to help our students, so I welcome your ideas and suggestions as we work to address our enrollment challenges.

### **Campus News . . .**

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During the Week of Engagement, the Strategic Plan was launched and "Snapshot Sessions" were held introducing the strategic plan structure, goals, and goal leaders to the campus. The sessions were well attended with 180 unique individuals joining in to learn about the strategic plan. Volunteers completed interest forms and strategic plan goal teams are currently being formed.

We did receive good news from the state this month as the Capital Development Board informed us that they would be releasing the funds for the Hospitality Program. Like the Canning Center, these long-sought dollars have been part of numerous state budgets but never funded. Now this funding will be added to the Canning Center project allowing us to address the needs of our Hospitality Program.

This month the Illinois Community College Trustees Association announced that our former student trustee David Santafe-Zambrano received the Gigi Campbell Student Trustee Excellence Award for his service to Harper College. The award includes a \$500 scholarship for the fall semester. I observed many outstanding moments in David's time as the student trustee from his passionate advocacy for his fellow students while in Washington, DC, for the National Legislative Summit to his thoughtful participation during board meetings. David is truly deserving of this honor.

## COVID-19 Response Team Update

### *Advancement/Marketing/Communications*

- The Foundation's Scholarship Recipient Orientation was moved to an online format for the fall 2020 semester. Ninety-nine Donor Sponsored Scholarship Recipients registered for a Scholarship Orientation held on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. The session was recorded and emailed for students that were not available during the scheduled times. Students were briefed on their important role in helping thank the donors of their scholarship, and the upcoming activities the Foundation asks them to participate in throughout the year. Recipients also learned about benefits available to the students as Harper alumni.
- To complement the existing dashboard of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases on campus, the Communications team established an ongoing tally of confirmed cases on the external website at the request of ICCB.
- The Communications team worked with the provost, social media and web teams to coordinate the announcement of the spring semester being primarily online. An email was sent to employees and students, an article was posted on the News Bureau, and the announcement was highlighted on both the Advisory Page and Harper's social media channels.

### *Facilities Management*

- Quarantined COVID-19 positive areas in Buildings H, L, X, Y, and Z and had them back in service within 60 hours.

## Student Success

- A new student newsletter, *Harper Happenings*, was rolled out in September to highlight opportunities for students to connect with multiple areas of campus through the work of the Integrated Programming Calendar Team. Each month, this dynamic and information-filled publication is available to students and staff through the Student Involvement Virtual Programming site: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/services/involvement/virtual-programming.php>.
- Student Involvement hosted its annual Hullabaloo event via WebEx this year. Eleven clubs were represented and students who attended were connected with a group that would best suit their interests and allow them the opportunity to connect with peers. Hullabaloo was accompanied by the Board Painting Party, hosted by Erin Graff and Melanie Duchaj, for which 53 students and 29 employees registered.
- Student Engagement kicked off their Hawk Talk Instagram program, which offers a different content topic for students each week connected to the Eight Dimensions of Wellness and the Integrated Programming Calendar. September topics included: A Discussion with Harper Financial Aid, Suicide Prevention Week, How to Get Involved at Harper, and Latinx Heritage Month with Latinos Unidos. Hawk Talk can be found on the Harper Student Involvement Instagram site and on the Harper Wellness YouTube channel.
- Harper Athletics has been meeting with teams each week to discuss topics of interest including general check-ins, conditioning routines, recruitment, academic success, personal goal setting, Harper resources, upcoming virtual student events, and other ways to stay connected.



- For the Day of Service, 46 Harper employees participated in the WINGS Day of Service activity. Employees donated to the WINGS program via Amazon.
- Campus Recreation is supporting kinesiology labs in Building M, offering six free virtual workouts to students and staff each week, and volunteering for screening initiatives on campus.
- Leia Ladios, Marion Bensing, and Maliha Amir presented “Keeping Phi Active in the Age of Covid” at the virtual Phi Theta Kappa Regional Conference.
- The Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) has completed the Department of Veterans Affairs annual audit and also the annual Catalog Review audit. Harper College has received approval for all programs and can continue to certify federal veteran benefits.
- The One Stop processed over 4,700 inbound contacts in September. We received 2,493 phone calls, 1,775 emails, and 434 live chats. We saw a significant increase in live chat and email volume from September of last year due to remote work. Live chats were up by 108%, while emails saw an increase of 193% year-over-year. The phone volume also increased by 51% from last year. The One Stop conducted call campaigns in an effort to increase enrollment, including reminding students of payment dates and completing their requirements for financial aid. We made over 900 calls and reached 42% of students last month.
- ADS Success Club and the Environmental Club co-sponsored an event focusing on conservation and the environment. Paul Watson, founder of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, met with 95 Harper students, faculty, and staff members.
- Agnes Szemborski, transfer coordinator, is partnering with Karen Dailey, associate professor of chemistry, on a Noyce Grant with Elmhurst University to create transfer pathways from students interested in teaching STEM at the Secondary Education level.
- One Million Degrees (OMD) hosted two events in the last month. Harper-OMD returning 2nd and 3rd year scholars (86) attended their first virtual Scholar Development Session (SDS) of the year. Harper-OMD staff also hosted a virtual Meet and Greet event for OMD Coaches (both new and returning). The event was designed to outline the revised program requirements/expectations, “how-to” best practices for supporting their OMD Scholars and concluded with an open forum for questions and answers.
- Counseling referrals are up, and counselors are engaging in proactive outreach to academic advisors and access advocates to provide up-to-date information regarding resources and referrals to division partners. Counselors note that consultations are most often regarding anxiety and stress from students due to COVID-19 and academics.
- The first round of Starfish early alert surveys has been administered to faculty seeking their feedback on monitored students this fall. During the first six weeks of the semester, close to 300 unique faculty members have raised over 3,300 flags of concern, referrals to the Academic Support Centers or ‘kudos’ for positive encouragement. This represents a 10% increase compared to the same time frame from fall 2019. Additionally, the number of students who have received faculty feedback via Starfish has increased by 43% from last fall representing 2,870 unique students receiving encouragement and/or direction for how to connect to other campus resources to help them be successful.
- Professor Sam Giordano, program coordinator for Fire Science Technology, Emergency and Disaster Management, and the 911 Public Safety Dispatcher Programs, was awarded two awards from Kiwanis—the “Presidents Award” for 2020, which is the highest recognition for those who have reached the heights

of excellence as a Kiwanian, and the “Outstanding Member Award” for 2020, which was in recognition of his valuable contributions in fund-raising, outreach, excellent volunteerism, and program development.

- The Law Enforcement and Justice Program is pleased to announce that adjunct faculty member Maria McCarthy was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers in September. The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of the best of the trial bar from the United States and Canada and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in North America.
- In October Adult Education students began receiving limited but essential services at the Learning and Career Center (LCC) in Prospect Heights. Adult Education faculty and staff began curbside services to distribute instructional materials, including Chromebooks, and also initiated appointment-based testing and technology assistance onsite. The LCC traditionally hosts 700 adult students per year in its English Language Acquisition and High School Equivalency classes. Making materials and expertise available locally to this student population can help narrow equity gaps in digital literacy, transportation, and persistence. Many thanks to the departments that collaborated to implement this project, especially Adult Education, Library Services, Facilities Management, Harper Police, and the Learning and Career Center.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

- Latinx Heritage Month began with a collaborative event between Harper College, Elgin Community College, College of Lake County, Waubensee Community College, McHenry County College, and College of DuPage called ¡Ya Es El Tiempo! Students Coming Together to Create Change.
- The Student Involvement DEI Certificate Program, Transform Harper, kicked off with Elephants and Onions. Transform Harper is a cohort-based certificate program focused on educating students on diversity, equity and inclusion work based in the Eight Dimensions of Wellness. Students who complete the program will have the certification placed on their Harper College transcript and will be eligible to receive a scholarship through the Center for Student Involvement.
- The first meeting of the DEI Student Advisory Board was held in September. This student group, consisting of representatives from various identities and student groups, will meet monthly to discuss issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Themes from the first meeting included students seeking an improved online learning experience, especially as it relates to math classes, and faculty compliance with student access and disability accommodations.

## **Finance and Administrative Services**

### *Facilities Management*

- The scope of work for the Building Y Programmable Logic Controller Technology Lab includes renovations to transform room Y120 into a Programmable Logic Controller Technology Lab to support current and future program needs. Construction is substantially complete.
- The scope of work for the Building W Water Infiltration Repairs include the installation of a sub-floor ground water drainage system along the inside of the exterior wall of the amphitheater in Building W to replace the existing underground drainage system that has collapsed. Construction has commenced and is scheduled to be completed in January 2021.

### *Information Technology*



- Information Technology upgraded 100 classroom projectors from bulb projectors to laser projectors. The laser projectors produce a sharper image, have a longer life, and do not require bulb replacements.

## Advancement, Marketing and Communications

### Advancement

- Educational Foundation financials as of September 30, 2020 year to date income is \$2,183,155, which is 140% to the annual goal.
- The HOPE Giving Circle will host a fall event “Tribe of Mentors: A Panel Conversation” on Tuesday, November 5, at 6 p.m. The event will feature a panel of women who share their life experiences by answering a selection of questions from the book *Tribe of Mentors* by Tim Ferris. Mentoring is a cornerstone of the HOPE Giving Circle scholarship program with each scholarship recipient matched with a mentor from HOPE’s membership. For more information please visit [harpercollege.edu/hope](http://harpercollege.edu/hope).
- The Harper Professional Advisors Speaker Series will host the Post-Election Economic Outlook webinar on Thursday, November 12, at 10 am. John Chapman of Clearwater Capital Partners is the keynote speaker.
- Two donors have included the Harper College Educational Foundation in their estate plans with estimated gifts totaling \$770,000. Brenda Knox, a Foundation board member and distinguished alumna, along with her husband Eric Knox, and Mary Gretchen Vancura, a Harper retiree in the nursing program, have made the Foundation a contingent beneficiary of their IRAs.
- October is Distinguished Alumni Month at Harper College. This year’s honorees will be recognized throughout the month on social media, in publications and culminating with the Harper College Distinguished Alumni Awards Virtual Ceremony on Thursday, October 22, at 7 p.m. The virtual ceremony will honor the new class of Distinguished Alumni and the Outstanding Recent Alumni. The 2020 class includes:

#### 2020 Distinguished Alumni Honorees

A.J. Collier  
Director of Operations, The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center - Chicago

Joseph McEnergy  
Lieutenant, Elk Grove Fire Department

Ann Portmann, BSN, RN, CHPN, WCC  
JourneyCare Barrington Care Center Team Manager

Dr. Craig Winkelman  
Assistant Superintendent, K-12 Schools and Operations, Barrington School District 220

#### 2020 Outstanding Recent Alumni Honoree

Scott Lietzow  
Military Talent Senior Consultant, Allstate Insurance

Please visit [harpercollege.edu/distinguishedalumni](http://harpercollege.edu/distinguishedalumni) to RSVP and submit notes of congrats and celebration on each honoree page.



## Marketing Services

- Harper Marketing and Student Engagement kicked off the virtual “Hawk the Vote” campaign to encourage the Harper community to register to vote, consider working at the polls, create a voting plan, and #HawktheVote in the November 3 election. Marketing Services created the #HawkTheVote hashtag and graphic and joined with many college departments and organizations, including Wellness, The David K. Hill Family Library, Campus Recreation, the International Student office, and Student Involvement to raise awareness and share voting information with students and the community across social media channels.
- During the pandemic, FAFSA completion rates have declined nationwide. With the opening of the 2021-2022 FAFSA, Marketing Services has been working with the Financial Aid office and other Enrollment Services colleagues on campaigns to promote the FAFSA and its importance to receiving financial aid.

## Community Relations

- This year’s Experience Day (previously College and Career Expo) has gone virtual. Since the event could not be hosted on campus, the Experience Day committee developed a plan to engage young students and their families virtually. Faculty and staff submitted more than 20 interactive activities in the sciences, math, technology, liberal arts and other fields. Activity instructions are posted every Wednesday in October so young students and their families learn and explore. In addition, 250 kits with the necessary supplies were created. Families were able to register for a kit in advance and pick it up at one of our seven community partner locations. All 250 kits were distributed. Families are also encouraged to share photos of their activities. Since the launch of the virtual event on October 7, the Experience Day web page has received 418 page views.
- Cristina Willard, manager of Continuing Professional Education, attended the Schaumburg Business Association Good Morning Schaumburg virtual event. Cristina shared information about Harper’s new contact tracing program.

## Media Relations

- *Rotary* magazine, the official magazine of Rotary International, ran a feature story on Harper’s partnership with the Rotary Club of Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates and efforts to support adults as they build careers. The article highlighted the Advancing Community Economics (ACE) Grant and Fishing Well Scholarship and included quotes from several Harper students and Lauren Chilvers, manager of scholarship and special projects.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article on Harper’s new Moving Forward Scholarship for short-term training programs. The scholarship will benefit community members who have experienced job loss, require a career change, or have delayed college or employment due to COVID-19.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article on Harper’s annual Experience Day, which is virtual this year. Students could register online to pick up Experience Day kits made by Harper volunteers at area local libraries and elementary schools.
- The *Daily Herald* published an article about Dave Braunschweig being selected the recipient of the Faculty Innovation Award for the American Association of Community Colleges’ 2020 Awards of Excellence for his work with open educational resources, which has saved students more than \$1 million in textbook expenses. The article ran on the *Illinois Community Colleges Trustees Association* listserv.

- *Community College Daily* and the AACC 21st Century Center ran another article on the AACC Awards of Excellence, highlighting the national impact Professor Dave Braunschweig’s work is having in OER.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article about Harper’s efforts to create a culture of kindness and provide a holistic approach to caring for students’ well-being. It highlighted the college partnering with WellTrack, an interactive mental health app that gives students self-service access to online mental health strategies, tools and clinical support.
- *Daily Herald* columnist Burt Constable profiled former adjunct faculty member Rocco Blasi, an 87-year-old Italian immigrant and U.S. Army veteran who recently published his first novel. Of his time at Harper, Blasi said Harper was a special place and that his students clearly wanted to learn and always came prepared. “I loved it. It was just a joy.”

## Strategic Alliances and Innovation

- Through a strategic alliance with Jobs for the Future (JFF), Harper was selected as a “national partner” on a collaborative project with Prologis, a world leader in logistics real estate solutions. Harper will be enrolling students in a workforce learning program focused on logistics management. Harper was selected because of our ability to connect to partners and learners. JFF and Prologis have developed a robust learning platform to support this effort, as all learning in the program will be self-guided and virtual. The program will be managed by the Professional Continuing Education area at Harper.

### Grants Office

- A proposal for a Strengthening Community College grant was submitted in October. This Department of Labor grant focuses on driving innovation through simulation and gaming. Harper’s proposal focuses on four areas: Software Engineering, Automation/Robotics, Cyber/Cloud Computing and Additive Manufacturing/3D Printing. If awarded, this grant will provide \$2 million to the college to build pathways in these programs.

In support of this grant application, Harper secured five letters of support from its federal legislative delegation from Senators Duckworth and Durbin and Representatives Casten, Krishnamoorthi, and Schneider.

## Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

- In September, the Learning Assessment Committee and the Academy for Teaching Excellence held the 12th Annual Harper College Assessment Conference and Share Fair. More than 130 faculty and staff attended the conference that focused on student learning assessment. The keynote address “Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Equity” by Dr. Tia Brown McNair, vice president for diversity, equity, and student success, Association of American Colleges and Universities, engaged attendees to identify challenges and opportunities colleges face as they pursue equitable outcomes for all student groups. Breakout sessions addressed assessment in the online learning environment and Harper’s general education outcomes assessment activities.
- The FY2021 College Plan has been published. This comprehensive document serves as a one-stop resource for information on the planning activities of the college including the President’s Goals, Budget and Capital Plan, Strategic Plan, and Operational Plan.

## Workforce Solutions

- Harper College's Community Education department has partnered with Business and Career Services, Inc. (BCS, Inc.) to administer TABE tests to approximately 70 BCS clients. TABE is a diagnostic test used to determine a person's skill levels and aptitudes in reading, math and English. Many companies use it in hiring, promotions, or for selecting employees for training programs and for skilled positions. Educators use the test for entry into academic programs. The audience being served in this project consists of displaced or underemployed individuals seeking to further their education in a Harper academic program or through another educational provider. The project will run through mid-December of this year.
- The American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) five-year grant of \$2.5 million which began on October 1, 2015, and ended on September 30, 2020, produced the following outcomes:
  - 10 Department of Labor Registered Programs launched
  - 239 total Registered Apprentices hired among 53 apprentice employer partners
  - 116 Completers/Graduates

Although the college no longer has the AAI grant, it has been used to build out phenomenal processes for work-based learning opportunities. The college is leveraging the lessons learned through the AAI grant to further develop apprenticeship programs with area employers. These new models are being tailored specifically for employer workforce needs. Effective January 2021, the college plans to launch a CNA to RN apprenticeship with one of our hospice care employer partners.

- The Illinois SBDC at Harper College had 119 advising sessions in August 2020, up from 43 sessions in August 2019, and also hosted two webinars, "Increase Your Social Media Visibility" with 109 participants and "Instagram Marketing Masterclass" with 93 participants.
- Harper Business Solutions (HBS) supported both the business community and those in career transition by offering free events in September and October. Session topics included Introversions & Extraversions in the Job Search, LinkedIn Profile Development, LinkedIn Training, and Building & Managing Highly Effective Teams Virtually. Sessions have been well attended with 25 or more participants. HBS also provided instructors for the Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce Veterans Bootcamp.