



PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

January 2022

Dear Harper College Community:

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a safe and healthy Winter Break. While we always appreciate the opportunity to rest and recharge, we are excited and ready to begin our spring 2022 semester serving our students and uplifting our community. As we open the first week of classes reflecting on the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I am reminded of his words, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" Well, I am proud of our efforts to serve our community in new ways despite the challenges of the pandemic. Our strategic priorities to advance our student success and equity agenda are grounded with our three pillars of equity: removing barriers, closing equity gaps and deploying focused solutions to achieve greater success on several measures, be it course success, completion outcomes, career placements or transfer success. While we will begin the first two weeks of our spring semester online in response to the surge in cases from the omicron variant, we will continue to fulfill our mission serving in meeting our students where they are and supporting them to achieve their educational and career goals. Throughout this difficult time period, we have made our decisions prioritizing the science and the health and safety of our students and employees. I am grateful we were able to have the entire fall 2021 semester on campus, our first since the start of the pandemic, and I am confident we will be back on campus as soon as it is safe to do so and meet our goal of rebuilding a vibrant and connected community on-campus.

Spring 2022 enrollment continues to be a struggle with total FTE approximately 7.4% lower than last spring and headcount showing a decrease of approximately 6.7%. The enrollment management, retention and marketing teams are working diligently to address the situation with a multitude of efforts geared at reaching current and prospective students including personal touches via call campaigns. There are some bright spots in the data, as we continue to see growth in the new high school and transfer student populations, and the new adult population being a highlight with a 30% increase in FTE being reported earlier this month. Our adult students continue to be an area of focus and the efforts of adult education development team are to be commended as we are up 13.7% in that area over the prior year and 7.2% over two years ago.

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Serving working adults well means that we must continue to evaluate our modes of instruction and optimize our services. To that end, our faculty and staff are currently discussing a HyFlex pilot over the next academic year with summer/fall and fall/spring offerings. Over 40 faculty have already participated in some professional development on HyFlex (hybrid flexible) - course formats which combine face-to-face and online learning in both synchronous and asynchronous formats. As such, our Distance Learning teams and the Academy for Teaching Excellence are preparing to support faculty who would like to explore this modality and study success outcomes compared to control groups. I look forward to the additional professional learning and growth this pilot will bring.

We recently learned that the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded Harper with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. We take great pride in receiving this award from a credible third party as a testament to our fiscal responsibility and stewardship with the financial resources entrusted to the college. Per the judges, our report meets “the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive spirit of full disclosure to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.” Kudos to our finance team for their excellent work!

Finally, we are pleased to have completed negotiations and have two collective bargaining agreements ratified by our custodial maintenance and adjunct faculty unions. Congratulations to the negotiating teams involved in crossing the finish line despite the difficulties of working on these agreements during a pandemic.

Student Success

Office of International Education

- Harper College and the Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica (UNA) have submitted a grant proposal to 100,000 Strong in the Americas for a project that will focus on innovation in teaching and training, and intercultural exchange. Entitled Global Learning through Online Virtual Exchange (GLOVE): Transforming Teaching and Training through Immersive International Education Experiences, the grant proposal has three goals: 1) to develop a sustainable long-term academic exchange between Harper College and UNA-Sarapiquí, 2) to enhance students’ global awareness, intercultural competencies, and college and career readiness through virtual education and study abroad opportunities, and 3) to expand access to intercultural, linguistic, and technical skills training for students underrepresented in traditional study abroad programs. An announcement of the grant awardees is scheduled for later this month.

Student Engagement

- The Hawks Care Resource Center staff ensured that Harper students were well prepared for winter break by contacting all students who have been connected to the Center at one point throughout the semester to register for a winter break package. The package included three-weeks’ worth of groceries and personal supplies, and a \$150 Walmart gift card to address basic needs insecurities while the College was closed for Winter Break. Forty-two students registered and picked up packages. Additionally, shelf-stable food bags were prepared and housed in the Health and Recreation Center, which remained open during Winter Break, just in case a student needed immediate services.
- Harper Wellness, in collaboration with the Campus Well-Being Collective team, set up two refueling stations on December 9 and December 14 for students to grab snacks and other light refreshments in order to help them better prepare for finals week. In addition, students were provided with information about the Hawks Care Resource Center. The Harper Wellness team also walked around campus to find students studying and handed them free snacks and Starbucks gift cards. Over 200 students were provided with free refueling snacks throughout the last two weeks of the semester.
- Approximately 150 Finals Week Survival Kits were provided to students. Students could pick up kits on-campus or have them mailed to their home residence in order to accommodate students taking virtual classes. The Finals Week Survival Kits contained a variety of items to help assist students throughout finals week including Harper College resources, tea packets, granola bars, personalized keychains, coloring pages, mental health resources and Chapstick, among other items. This effort was in collaboration with Harper Wellness, Library, Hawks Care, Academic Advising & Student Engagement.

Interdisciplinary Programs

- For spring 2022, the cost of tuition for First Year Seminar (FYS 101) will be covered by the Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund.
 - Students will only be responsible for the cost of fees.
 - The goal is to encourage more students to be in compliance with Harper's Start Smart.
 - We have six sections running in spring.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is excited to welcome our two new coordinators – Esmeralda Guerrero-Lopez and Monica Shirley. Esmeralda joins us from Harper's Academic Advising team. She is a Harper alum and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Master of Arts in Educational Leadership. Monica Shirley joins us from Harper's Health Careers Division. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, a Master of Arts in Adult Education and a Juris Doctorate. Our new additions to the DEI team will focus on providing specialized services, programs and resources to underrepresented students and support our goals of closing equity gaps.

SJLC (Social Justice Leadership Certificate) Program

- Nine staff members in the 2021-2022 Social Justice Leadership cohort have successfully completed the first half of the year-long program. Thus far, the cohort has constructed a knowledge foundation of social justice theory and applied it to practical project proposals presented to the advisory board. We are excited for the project implementation phase this spring semester. The call for applications for the 2022-2023 cohort will be announced in February.

Finance and Administrative Services

Facilities Management

- The schematic design for the Canning Center has begun and is scheduled to be completed in August 2022.
- The scope of work for the Campus HVAC Improvement Project will include the replacement of HVAC systems in Building V, condensate stations and flash tanks in Buildings A, B, H, I, M and V, rerouting of the condensate line from Building I to Building H and replacement of condensate pumps in Buildings I, L, P, R, W, and Z. The program analysis and schematic design is complete. The construction documents will begin in February and are scheduled to be completed in September 2022.

Information Technology

- On December 9, a major security vulnerability that impacted companies worldwide was identified, log4j. The vulnerability allows a bad actor to gain full control over a system allowing them to steal information, launch ransomware, and conduct other malicious activities.

In response to this vulnerability the IT team analyzed, assessed, and remediated systems and applications that were impacted. Daily conference calls were held during the initial days including the weekends, after-hours, and holiday break. The mitigation efforts are still ongoing.

- Over the winter break Harper IT successfully migrated the Student Information System, Banner, to Oracle's Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) culminating an over 12-month effort which began in earnest when Oracle informed Harper of the cost to continue to license on premise Oracle databases now that EBS was no longer licensed.

Moving the Student Information System to OCI provides several benefits for Harper students and employees: primarily, no longer being reliant on Harper datacenters. Students interact mainly with Banner from off campus locations to register for classes, check course availability etc. Being in the cloud allows this access to occur from anywhere without reliance on access to the Harper network or datacenter. Oracle cloud also offers a myriad of tools to support their database including ease of testing new releases and patching. Lastly, the move of the Banner environment to OCI is projected to bring significant savings to the college.

Advancement, Marketing and Communications

Advancement

- The Foundation's calendar year end direct mail campaign was a success, raising over \$41,000 (118% of goal) in support of student scholarships and program support from alumni, retirees, friends and volunteers.
- Two new scholarships were established in December: the Frank and Minerva Solano Scholarship for First Generation Latino Students and the Fred and Janine Pfeiffer Endowed Scholarship (for adult students).
- This month The HOPE Giving Circle and the Harper Professional Advisors Series partnered to host "Financial Wellness at All Ages." The event featured an all-female panel discussion highlighting the important information you need to know about having financial wellness at all stages of your life.

Community Relations

- This is the second year that Harper Promise, Fishing Well and ACE scholarship students shared messages of happiness and hope with retirement communities, senior citizen organizations and first responders in the Harper district. More than 50 students filled out cards that were sent to organizations throughout the community.
- In December, Community Relations participated in Barrington Giving Day. The annual event supports families in Barrington School District 220. Families received toys, food, winter clothes, hygiene products and information for community resources.

Marketing Services

- The new PASO direct mail postcard with detachable magnet will promote the [program's spring topics](#).





Media Relations

- The *Elgin Courier-News* did a feature article on Harper's Career Skills Institute (CSI) and recent graduate Eric Hiller, who works at an Ace Hardware in Bartlett. CSI serves young adults with mild intellectual disabilities and helps them gain academic and employability skills.
- The *Chicago Tribune* and *Daily Herald* ran an article on Pascuala Herrera, professor emeritus, about her efforts to develop equitable and inclusive classrooms. She recently authored a book that won the inaugural Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project competition for Spanish-language books.
- In an article about Norman Mailer's legacy, the *Los Angeles Times* quoted Harper Professor Maggie McKinley, who edited the anthology "Norman Mailer in Context" published by Cambridge University Press.
- Harper Professor Brian Cremins provided insight on the politics of the funnies, or comic pages in newspapers, in the podcast *Imaginary Worlds*.
- The *Daily Herald* ran a front-page article on how area colleges such as Harper are working to meet the increased demand for truck drivers.
- The *Daily Herald*, *Journal and Topics* and *Patch* ran an article promoting Harper's dental hygiene clinic and the valuable patient care it provides the community.
- In an article about how manufacturers are developing scalable digital training, the *Uptake* blog highlights Harper's efforts to partner with local schools to create a talent pipeline.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article about Harper's efforts to partner with organizations such as the Ela Area Public Library to make 3D-printed toys.
- *MSN* ran its list of the best community colleges in each state and Harper was listed as the top in Illinois.

Legislative Affairs

- The Illinois General Assembly began its Spring 2022 term with the omicron variant looming large as it held only one in-person day with the rest of the week's session canceled. Several committees in both the House and the Senate are scheduled to meet while the in-person session for January 18-20 is canceled.
- The 2022 election cycle is getting underway with petition circulation. Several of Harper's elected officials announced their intentions this week.



- Representative Mark Walker is seeking reelection in the 53rd House District.
- Representative Tom Morrison announced his retirement effective at the completion of his current legislative term, which concludes in January 2023.
- The state redistricting plan adopted earlier this year was upheld by a judicial appellate panel ruling that the approved boundaries “neither violate the Voting Rights Act nor the Constitution.” The new districts will be contested during the November 2022 election and be in effect in January 2023.

Strategic Alliances and Innovation

Grants Office

- In December/January, Harper received the following grant awards:
 - Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) - This grant award of \$200,000 will support the implementation of three career pathways at the Learning and Career Center (LCC) and development of 10 Adult Ed, Community Education, and Continuing Professional Education courses, including industry-contextualized courses and individualized instruction to address individual skills gaps identified with assessments.
 - The 2022 NBT Summer Manufacturing Camp Grant program - Harper received seven grant awards totaling \$14,500 for summer camps that will be held in summer 2022. Camps include Arduino Programming for Girls; Artificial Intelligence: The Mind in the Machine; Design and Build Open-Source 3D Printers; Design, Build, and Code a Rover with Raspberry Pi; Entrepreneurial Maker; Exploring the World of Manufacturing; and Girls in Engineering.
- Last month a grant application for \$20,000 was submitted to the American Association of Community Colleges for its Cyber Skills for All: Community Colleges Lead the Way program, funded by Microsoft. AACC will select 14 community colleges to join the community of practice. This initiative includes technical assistance provided by AACC to assist colleges in building their program capacity to increase cybersecurity skills for all, with particular focus on students from groups that have historically been underrepresented in the technology and cybersecurity industry.
- The Grants Office is administering the student portion of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants from the U.S. Department of Education and managing the disbursement of \$19.4 million in emergency aid grants to students.
 - The emergency aid application period for Harper students enrolled in fall 2021 opened on July 23, 2021, to provide students with financial assistance to support their continued enrollment. In fall 2021, \$4,891,900 in emergency aid was awarded to 3,961 students.
 - The emergency aid application for students enrolled in spring 2022 opened on January 3, 2022.

Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- The Office of Institutional Research has enhanced the SOAR Momentum Report (an interactive report designed to promote understanding of the student lifecycle at Harper). This report uses the Search-Onboard-Advance-Realize (SOAR) framework to explore student milestones met and outcomes achieved for each phase. It initially reported outcomes for degree-seeking students (Title III) and has been upgraded

to include all credential-seeking students (IPEDS cohorts) as well as additional metrics. All measures can be disaggregated along multiple student characteristics.

- In collaboration with Student Affairs, Institutional Research has developed a predictive model to help identify students' likelihood to persist. This model provides just-in-time information to advisors to help students stay on track for persistence and completion of goals. The model and associated interactive tool were piloted in the fall and will be rolled out to all advisors in spring 2022.

Workforce Solutions

- In CY 2021, the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Harper College provided over 1,500 hours of business advising to local area businesses (a 26% increase over CY 2020). In addition, Harper's SBDC helped business owners receive over \$4.5M in debt and equity financing.