

PRESIDENT'S *UPDATE*



June 2020

Dear Harper College Community:

The year 2020 has compelled us to face new and not-so-new challenges with the pandemic and the social unrests related to systemic racism, police brutality, and injustices. As I pen this report, I am saddened to see that yet another African-American man, Rayshard Brooks, has been killed in Atlanta amidst the global outcry for humane treatment of black lives. Closer to home, our Black Student Union students and African-American employees used their voices to share very personal and hurtful experiences last week. Peaceful protests continue all over the globe.

Listening to your voices in multiple settings last summer and fall, I recognized that we needed to continue diversity and inclusion efforts and elevate our focus on equity to address our organizational climate and fulfill our mission. I am also grateful for your participation in this month's Virtual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Lunch and Learn Series. These were powerful conversations that provided us an opportunity to listen, learn from each other, and support those who are hurting or trying to understand what brought us here. Thank you to all of the panelists who took care in championing these efforts in difficult and necessary conversations. We must face the truth of these harsh realities to emerge as a stronger and transformed community.

This week the Supreme Court affirmed that our country's anti-discrimination laws do indeed protect the sexual orientation and transgender status of employees. This much anticipated decision is an important milestone to recognize as we celebrate Pride Month in June.

With your help, I remain hopeful that we can bring change at Harper for all students and employees to be affirmed in their identities and to feel welcomed and respected.

Please continue, or begin, to participate in our intentional DEI dialogues with the aim of applying learned strategies in our daily lives and throughout our college community. As I shared before, we will stand together to build on previous efforts and use our voices to shape our strategies to make Harper a more empathetic, diverse, equitable and inclusive community.

On Monday, I shared with you the [changes](#) I will be making to our leadership structure effective July 1 pending Board approval at the June Board meeting. I am enthusiastic about the leadership team and its role in creating opportunities for input, collaboration and excellence across units. These are exciting times to be at the college as we embark on a new strategic plan, build on our successful academic programs and initiatives, and prepare Harper for the future.

I am extremely pleased with the summer semester enrollment which has increased 13.9% from last summer (as of 6/11/2020). Registration is open for the fall 2020 semester and we hope this trend continues.

This week, I announced additional information for reopening the campus to support student completion of spring labs. This plan aligns with Governor Pritzker's [Restore Illinois](#) effort, maximizes the health and safety of our campus community and follows the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This has been a collaborative effort between our faculty and staff to ensure a safe and healthy experience for everyone as we keep our students on track to completion. Further, I want to thank those of you who responded

to the Return to Campus Employee Survey. Your feedback is valuable and will be used as we continue to plan for our phased return to campus.

As you know, we placed calls to all of our students during the spring semester to see how they were doing as we transitioned to the remote learning environment. As promised, we are conducting a similar call campaign to our employees. Our leaders in Management Council along with other volunteers are calling every employee at the college to see how they are doing in our remote work environment and to make sure they are aware of our resources on the Harper Intranet Portal. I have enjoyed speaking with employees, hearing how they are doing at home and commiserating about the “new normal.” I look forward to seeing you back on campus as soon as it is safe to do so.

Student Success

- Despite the shifts that occurred during spring 2020 as a result of Covid-19, the use of the Starfish student success system to support students and connect those who comprise a student’s ‘Network of Success’ continued to be strong. There was a seven percent increase in the number of flags raised (3,745) that require advisors to follow-up with students to provide support and guidance. Additionally, the overall number of Kudos, or positive encouragement, issued by faculty to their students increased by 596 or 25% as compared to spring 2019. These Kudos were issued by 220 unique faculty members, representing a nine percent increase in participation. *Source: Starfish System*
- Enrollment Services has successfully transitioned to working remotely by providing students different ways to communicate their needs and concerns to our departments. We have ramped up our live chat to give them a different platform to connect with the One Stop and Admission Outreach. We were able to process over 1,400 conversations in our Live Help Now chat system in May, a 65% increase from March. We have also seen a 139% increase in our email volume in our Service Desk Plus system since our transition. Enrollment Services and IT continue to partner to improve our processes to provide a better experience for students. We are testing a new Cisco app that will offer more functionalities to our remote phone system, including transferring calls to different departments.

Finance and Administrative Services

Facilities Management

- The scope of work for the development of the Campus Master Plan will capture the spirit and character of the college while addressing the complexities of the evolving enrollment and educational programs. The principal goal of the Master Plan is to guide the future development of the campus in a planned and orderly manner to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan, the College Mission Statement, and Vision Statement while expressing the Core Values. The contract negotiations are complete and a recommendation is being made to award a contract to DLR Group.
- The scope of work for the Building X Nutrition Lab Remodeling Project will include the remodeling of the Nutrition Lab, X229 to support programmatic needs. The project started in May 2020 and will be completed in August 2020.
- The scope of work for the Building Y Electrical Lab Remodeling Project will include remodeling of classroom X120 in Building Y into a Programmable Logic Controller Technology Lab to support current and future electrical program needs. Construction started in May 2020 and will be completed in August 2020.

- The scope of work for the Palatine Roselle/Euclid Road Multi-Use Path Project included the construction of an asphalt path along the east side of Roselle Road between Algonquin Road and Euclid Avenue and the south side of Euclid Road between Roselle Road and Shire Circle. This path connects two existing paths improving pedestrian and bicycle use in the area. Construction is complete and the path is open for use.

Information Technology

- Due to the current remote working environment at Harper, Information Technology has increased the remote access security posture. This includes enabling multi-factor authentication for system access and the implementation of advanced Geo-fencing.

Accounting

- The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded the college its 21st consecutive Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019. The GFOA established the Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program to encourage government entities to prepare budget documents of the highest quality that reflect both the guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting and the GFOA's best practices on budgeting, and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

Advancement, Marketing and Communications

Advancement

- The HOPE Giving Circle has awarded four \$10,000 scholarships for the 2020-21 academic year to Harper students Yunyang Shi, Nicole Weber, Amanda Mirczuk, and Keely McEnery. The HOPE Scholarship is awarded to female students entering their final year at Harper College, who plan on transferring to a four-year institution to continue their education. Students must have a 3.0 GPA or higher, have demonstrated exemplary academic performance, have defined career and educational goals and have shown leadership through extracurricular activities and community service to their communities. To date the HOPE Giving Circle has awarded \$140,000 in scholarships to 14 students since its inception in 2016.
- The Scholarship and Awards Committee is reviewing nine student applications for the David K. Hill Memorial Scholarship (\$7,855) and Motorola Solutions Foundation Award for Excellence (two awards of \$5,000) Scholarships.
- Over \$82,000 in donations has been received for the Harper College Student Emergency Relief Fund. In total nearly \$265,000 has been made available for Harper students in need. As of June 9, nearly 575 students had received support from the Emergency Fund. Students thanked Harper College and the donors for their support.
 - “Thank you so much for your generosity during such a stressful and overwhelming time. With this money, I will not have to worry about missing rent, and I'll have some money for grocery shopping as well. Again, thank you so much.”
 - “Thank you so much for the emergency grant! It helped my family tremendously and lifted a big weight off our shoulders!”

- The Harper Professional Advisors Speaker Series will host its inaugural webinar, Mid-Year Economic Outlook 2020: Dark Clouds and Silver Linings: Investing and Economy After the Pandemic on Wednesday, June 24, at 10 am.

Marketing Services

- Graduation 2020 Overview
 - On May 16, 11 a.m., there were 2,222 total views to the graduation livestream. Viewers visited from 54 cities in Illinois, 34 states outside of Illinois, and 21 countries.
 - 3,065 messages of congratulations were shared on graduate profiles.
 - From May 11-17, there were 35,181 pageviews to graduation web pages, with 12,125 views to harpercollege.edu/graduation on graduation day (May 16).
 - Harper graduation social media generated 558,148 impressions and 21,124 engagements.
- Harper College Exclusive Sponsor for WGN-TV Congrats to Grads
 - As part of Marketing's continuing brand awareness campaign, Harper College is the exclusive sponsor of WGN-TV's "Congrats to Grads" promotion. Graduates throughout Chicagoland can submit their photo for the chance to appear on TV. Harper will receive 60 sponsorship announcements, many in news programming and prime time, through the end of June.

Grants Office

- In May, the college received a grant award of \$2,763,258 from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) through the U.S. Department of Education. This second award is the institutional portion of the CARES Act funding. The Act allows Harper to cover institutional costs associated with significant changes to the delivery of instruction due to the coronavirus incurred after March 13, 2020.
- The Grants Office has been working with all grant funding agencies and organizations to make adjustments, modifications, and amendments as needed, for grants currently awarded to Harper and the Educational Foundation.
- In May, Harper was notified that all state-funded grants awarded by the Illinois Community College Board will be extended from June 30, 2020 to June 30, 2021. These extensions are in response to grantees modifying their operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's stay-at-home order.

Community Relations

- The students at Euclid Elementary were disappointed that they couldn't visit campus and talk with Harper students this May. Working with the 4th grade teachers we created a virtual experience for them. To support college and career week, teachers created a virtual visit project where students would visit Harper's website to learn about the history of the college, the Promise scholarship and take our virtual campus tour. To support the virtual visit, Amie Granger and two recent Harper graduates joined the classes via Zoom to talk about college and career readiness and answer questions about Harper and what it's like to be a college student. Students wrapped up the week by completing a career exploration survey and researching different career clusters.



- In May, Harper participated in the Elk Grove Village Rotary food drive. As a member of the Elk Grove Village Rotary, Amie Granger volunteered with other rotary members and members of the Elk Grove Village Lions club to collect food and hygiene products. The donations supported five different food banks in the Elk Grove Village area.

Legislative Affairs

- The 101st General Assembly ended its season with a special session in late May, passing a FY2021 budget that keeps funding flat at current-year levels for community colleges and the MAP grant program. Harper's capital projects were also re-appropriated. Additional legislation that passed include a property tax relief bill, which allows counties to waive fees and penalties for late property tax payments for up to 120 days; an expanded vote-by-mail program; and a bill that allows essential workers in Illinois to qualify for workers' compensation if they contract COVID-19 on the job while allowing organizations to rebut claims if they followed public health guidance.
- Illinois is borrowing \$1.2 billion to offset FY2020 revenue losses related to the pandemic, part of the Federal Reserve's \$500 billion targeted for local governments. This initial borrowing is in addition to the \$5 billion of borrowing outlined in the state's FY2021 budget.
- All regions in Illinois have moved to Phase 3 of the governor's Restore Illinois plan. Governor Pritzker signed an executive order allowing schools to open for limited in-person educational purposes. The governor also issued a disaster proclamation in Cook County and others to help expedite the use of state resources, personnel and equipment to help municipalities respond to recent protests.

Media Relations

- The *Chicago Tribune*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Barrington Courier-Review* and *Patch* ran articles on Harper's announcement that instruction will take place primarily online during the fall 2020 semester. WBBM and WGN radio also ran short segments on the announcement. *Community College Daily* highlighted the Tribune article and the *Illinois Community College Trustees Association* distributed the article on its listserv.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article on how Harper College honored its students with a virtual commencement ceremony and other graduation festivities.
- *CASE* ran an article on virtual commencement celebrations and the unique way various colleges honored their graduates. Harper was noted as having a commencement website where friends, family, faculty and staff could leave shout-outs.
- *The Hill* ran an article on the CARES Act and mentioned Harper as having moved to expeditiously award funding for students.
- A *Daily Herald* article about a recent peaceful protest mentioned the involvement of a Harper student who read the names of some of those who have died in police-related deaths.
- Several articles in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Daily Herald* and *Journal and Topics* have featured Harper students and employees who have helped organize and take part in recent protests.



- *EvoLLLution*, an online higher education publication related to Destiny Solutions software, published an article featuring insights by Mark Mrozinski about using technology to deliver a high-quality learning experience.
- *Journal and Topics* ran an article about Nelson Gord taking over as the new baseball coach.

Internal Communications

- Donated Emergency Funds Help Fill Short-Term Financial Gap for Harper Students

The ripple effect of COVID-19 impacted not only the way college students learned as they made the rapid transition to online classes, but it tossed them into unanticipated financial instability. Without the immediate support provided by the Harper Student Emergency Relief Fund, some students feared losing the roof over their heads.

Silvia Astudillo, a 19-year-old student in her second year at Harper College, lives in Palatine with her mother, older sister and younger brother. When the stay-at-home orders were issued, her mother lost her job. Her sister, who had been working two jobs, was cut down to one, and Silvia, who was working 30 hours per week while going to school full-time, found herself without a paycheck.

"With almost no income coming in, life was getting scary. My sister and I were panicking. We were trying to find ways to make money," said Silvia. [Continue reading...](#)

Student Communications

- In collaboration with enrollment services, we designed and executed a summer enrollment outreach to students who may have available financial aid. As of late May, the outreach resulted in 133 students enrolling in 720 credit hours.
- The Communication CARES Team continues to review feedback from the recent student survey to ensure we are best serving our students as we continue in the remote learning environment. Changes, including possibly onboarding new communication channels, are being discussed and evaluated.

Institutional Planning and Strategic Alliances

- All full- and part-time employees were invited to provide feedback on the campus climate through the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) administered by the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness at North Carolina State University. More than 650 employees representing all areas of the college completed the survey. This represents an overall response rate of 47%. The PACE survey provides data that can be used to facilitate open and constructive campus conversations around climate and provides a snapshot of how the institution is performing, highlights areas for growth and identifies opportunities for improvement. Additionally, the survey is to ascertain employee perspectives about the organizational climate in the areas of institutional structure, supervisory relationships, teamwork, and student focus. In the PACE model, the leadership of an institution motivates each of these climate factors toward an outcome of student success and institutional effectiveness. The PACE Survey results will be discussed by college leadership and used in the implementation of strategic plan work to **"Implement practices that address Harper's core values of respect, integrity, collaboration and excellence."**

- To gauge student satisfaction with Harper College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and with Harper's success in moving to an online platform for learning, a survey was administered by the college on May 11, 2020. The survey asked students to share their thoughts, concerns, and current issues they are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 virus and transitioning to online learning. More than 450 students completed the survey.

Workforce Solutions

- Business Solutions has continued to offer complimentary webinars to the business community addressing issues facing business professionals during these turbulent times. A recent LinkedIn webinar offered for displaced workers attracted over 100 participants.
- Harper's Small Business Development Center continues to provide support to small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Highlights include an updated Paycheck Protection Program Forgiveness webinar with 91 participants and a Search Engine Optimization for Small Business webinar with 63 participants.
- The Job Placement Resource Center sent 1,600 surveys to Harper graduates to determine their job search needs. Follow-up response to the surveys is ongoing. Additionally, the center created virtual recruiting opportunities for employers and collaborated with Student Development on a Virtual Career Workshop.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The Office of DEI has been busy addressing the racial climate in America through statements to the Employee Resource Groups, directly to the Black Student Union to show support during these challenging times and also to our Management Council asking for compassion for their diverse employees.
- The Office of DEI has hosted five Virtual Lunch and Learn sessions and one Employee Solidarity meeting ranging from topics of trans-phobia, equity in the classroom, white fragility, racism in America, being an ally and more. Attendance has ranged from 45 to 220 attendees and has created many opportunities to continue with difficult dialogues that will eventually help improve climate at Harper.
- The Office of DEI and International Education have successfully selected the third cohort of the Social Justice Leadership Certificate for next year.
- The Office of DEI has conducted and completed all listening sessions from the DEI consultants in order to learn how to improve efforts at Harper. A full report will be available in late June.