

President's Report

January 2013

The holiday break went by quickly! It's hard to believe we are welcoming students back to Harper for the spring term this week. Normally, classes begin immediately after the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. However, that holiday occurs late in January this year, so we will begin classes a week sooner.

Faculty and staff attended our traditional President's All Campus Meeting last week. The main highlight of the event was a keynote address by Dr. Diana Oblinger, who edited the book *Game Changers* and authored Chapter 3 which focuses on the impact of IT in higher education. This book, along with watching youngsters use technology, has made me acutely aware that the landscape of higher education will change in the future, perhaps dramatically. In her address, which was delivered remotely to Harper, Dr. Oblinger articulated how information technology has created the "connected age." Themes such as do-it-yourself learning through platforms such as MOOCs (massive open online courses), student empowerment, predictive analytics, credits and credentials conferred based on competencies, and new value chains where private entities are offering courses at reasonable rates were highlighted. This address provides a base of information that we will dive into in more detail in March when Dr. Oblinger visits the campus.

In addition to the keynote address, we welcomed new employees and honored those who will be retiring. We were treated to a detailed update on the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force by Dr. Kenya Ayers and Dr. Trygve Thoreson who are leading this effort. Kenya and Trygve explained that a campus-wide survey is being launched to examine culture on campus. This Cultural Values Assessment is being conducted by an outside organization to ensure complete anonymity. After the data has been gathered, staff and faculty will have the opportunity to see the results and engage in conversations with each other about how we can move forward as a community to co-create a culture that truly reflects diversity and inclusion. The survey is available in both English and Spanish. The College was also briefed on the upcoming launch of the Harper Leadership Institute. The Board will hear a presentation of the Institute during the January meeting. Harper staff and faculty then heard a construction update by Tom Crylen. Finally, we were treated to a video highlighting Harper students—which is the traditional way we end the President's All Campus Meeting.

We continue to monitor enrollment. Currently, we are experiencing a 1.7% decrease when compared to spring 2012. We believe that when dual enrollment is added, we will finish flat for our spring semester enrollment. We have taken measures that will ensure the College will meet its budget for the year, in spite of this enrollment decline. In fact, we are anticipating a savings of \$4.5 million in salaries because of conservative hiring practices. The enrollment trend continues

to show that despite the fact that we continue to draw a large percentage of high school graduates, we struggle to engage and sustain enrollment from adult students. This trend provides evidence that the concepts presented by Dr. Oblinger need to be examined and taken very seriously.

Below are highlights of key activities that are taking place around Harper.

Student Success

- The Harper College Testing Center was selected for a field analysis by American College Test (ACT). Representatives from ACT, and the company ACT has contracted with to build the new COMPASS platform, visited the Testing Center on November 14. While here, they interviewed supervisors, technical experts, front-line staff and students in order to better understand first-hand how the COMPASS product is used in a “real” environment. The feedback they took away from this visit will influence the redesign of the product scheduled for release in fall 2013.
- Student Activities coordinated the Student Leader & Alumni Luncheon/Panel in collaboration with Harper College Alumni Relations on Tuesday, December 4. Former Student Activities Director, Michael Nejman, facilitated the panel discussion with three Harper College alumni and eight students.
- Dr. Craig Stettner, professor of Biology, just returned on January 12th from Costa Rica where he provided 17 students with an opportunity to study tropical ecosystems on site. The students researched primary and secondary rainforests, tropical seasonal forests, and mangrove communities. This is the second time that Dr. Stettner has taught this field biology course in Costa Rica during winter break as part of the International Studies program. He has created a model for short term study abroad with a high quality educational experience and strong student involvement.
- On Saturday, December 1, the Harper College Ethics Bowl Club participated in the 7th Annual Upper Midwest Regional Ethics Bowl, a qualifying event for the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl (IEB) Championship. Harper College was the only two-year college represented at the event and placed fourth, ahead of prominent national and local universities such as the University of Michigan, Dominican University, Illinois Institute of Technology, and Northeastern Illinois University, to earn a qualifying bid to the IEB.
- Faculty member Sam Giordano in the Fire Science program reports that he has been assisting the Village of Schaumburg with both their Firefighter and Police Officer testing for about seven years. In return, each semester Schaumburg accepts Harper Fire Science and Emergency Management interns.

Information Technology

- The Technical Services Desktop, Servers and Network teams performed a significant number of upgrades in December. Taking advantage of the college closure between December 22 and January 2, many staff members worked throughout the break to update and upgrade various systems on campus. Operating system upgrades were

performed on 106 servers. And 110 wireless network access points and controllers had their internal software updated. Other infrastructure updates and system improvements included increased student data storage for the Graphic Arts program, updates to the Banner Student Information System, Oracle Database systems updates, and installing a new version of the Information Technology Service Desk System (SDP). ESKO, a new state of the art packaging and printing solution, was installed for use by students in the Graphic Arts program. Our Exchange Email system was updated to include redundant server systems to keep email flowing in the event of a failure in one of our data centers. Lastly, preventative maintenance was performed on the battery backup power systems (UPS) in both data centers. This work involved several hundred hours, with staff working extended days during the holidays, in addition to the regular monitoring of systems 24 hours every day.

- Telecommunication work completed over break:
 - Installed Windows patches/upgrades on the InformaCast Server and the Attendant Console servers.
 - Completed Software upgrades on the Call Manager environment, IPCC server, and Unity (voicemail) servers.
 - Installed, configured, and activated user authentication on the VoIP infrastructure switches and routers.
 - Tested ATT inbound Voice Circuits to ensure proper prioritization after changes were made by ATT.
- Completed the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics, a replacement system for Telemagic, Harper College for Businesses' ERP/CRM system.
- Information Technology, in our annual drive to support community members in need, collected a record amount of items in December for four charitable organizations. The gift wishes of 36 residents were fulfilled by IT team members for Little City. IT staff donated 30 coats for One Warm Coat, who asks for gently used coats for the homeless. Over 100 lbs. of non-perishable grocery items were collected for WINGS, a local woman's shelter. Five large boxes of food, toys, and beds for dogs and cats were donated by the IT team for Hope Pet Rescue.

Physical Plant

- Harper submitted an application for a rebate to offset a portion of the costs to install the new Electric Vehicle charging units. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is providing the rebates, which can be up to \$7,500.

Human Resources

- On December 7, the Human Resources department celebrated the holidays with a charitable event. Each member of the Human Resources department chose a fellow HR team member and bought a toy that reminded them of that co-worker. The gifts were then delivered to the Community Crisis Center of Elgin which provides services to individual and families dealing with economic crisis, domestic violence or sexual assault.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- The Illinois Network for Advanced Manufacturing (iNAM) area convened a two-day meeting at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield of all community colleges in the consortium. Work teams were formed and budgets were reviewed.

Legislative Update

Veto Session: The Illinois General Assembly failed to pass a pension reform bill during last week's veto session. The inaction will have a major impact on the State's budget. The State's annual pension fund payment is expected to increase by about \$1 billion, to nearly \$7 billion, in the next fiscal year. According the *Chicago Tribune*, pension payments now make up more than **16 percent of the State's general funds budget, up from 6 percent in 2008**. The increase in pension payments will likely mean budget cuts across the board including higher education and scholarships. The new General Assembly was sworn in last week. The spring legislative session runs from January 30 - May 31.

Media Relations

The College placed 51 stories in local and national media including several major stories on the opening of Studio V. Other major placements included Harper professor emeritus Sharon Alter appearing on *ABC7-TV* commenting on the recent election, an article in *Community College Times* on our manufacturing program, a feature article in *Quintessential Barrington Magazine* on our Women's Program and several articles in the *Daily Herald* (manufacturing program, Ethics Bowl, Mobile App classes.)

Community Relations

- Dr. Ender will be a guest reader at the Paddock Elementary School Reading Night on Thursday, January 17. One of the classrooms at Paddock "adopted" Harper College this year, and we are also supplying that class with Harper t-shirts.
- Professor Jeff Przybylo will offer tips and tricks for effective public speaking at a Palatine Library presentation on January 17. This request came through our Community Relations Speakers Bureau.
- Ten Harper guests, including Dr. Ender and several Trustees, will represent the College at the 12th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance and Celebration Dinner in Hoffman Estates on Friday, January 18.
- Harper College has been nominated for the "Public Sector Partner of the Year" award through the Hoffman Estates Chamber of Commerce, and we will have a presence (five people) at the Thursday, January 24 Celebration of Excellence dinner.

- The Harper College InZone program will be represented at a January 30 after-school program at Kimball Hill Elementary School. An InZone martial arts instructor will be among the community partners presenting a mini-course for the kids.
- We will be kicking off our 2013 elementary and middle school field trip season with a visit from 120 fifth-graders on Friday, January 25. We have six more field trips scheduled so far for spring semester, and we anticipate more requests coming in soon. We're aiming to make this year's field trips even more engaging – with interactive sessions with faculty and staff across campus that we hope will further inspire the students to pursue higher education.

I want to mention that we will continue to take all threats made to the College and its personnel very seriously. We had such a threat at the end of the fall term and I was extremely pleased with the way the staff responded. Whether delivered in person or via social media, all threats will be thoroughly investigated and any person involved will go through a rigorous disciplinary process, including legal prosecution.

Finally, although it's January, and we have been blessed by fairly mild weather, the spring semester will surely fly by as we continue to work on key initiatives and our strategic plan!

Cathy and I wish you a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2013.

Ken