

## President's Report

February 13, 2010

Well, there should be no doubt, it is clearly the winter season! Last week, the snow was impressive, as was our Physical Plant's effort to stay in front of it. We had a tough Wednesday and Thursday with reportedly a "one-day record" snowfall, and our staff didn't miss a beat. During a storm, everyone pitches in, from the custodial staff through the roads and grounds crew. The College was very well attended to by these dedicated men and women. The snow was whisked off parking lots, sidewalks, outdoor steps, and generally anywhere a person might walk. Join me in thanking this dedicated bunch!

We continue to see impressive enrollment for the Spring Semester. Currently we are ahead of last spring's enrollment by about 1,500 students, which represents a 10.5% increase in FTE. In February, we disbursed over \$8.7 million in financial aid, a new record for Harper. We actually have larger increases in headcount and enrollment this spring term than we had in fall. That doesn't happen very often on a college campus. This is good news in a number of ways. First, much of the enrollment increase is in young adults, particularly young men. It is great to see more men returning to the campus. Second, it is very good news with respect to the budget. We are well ahead of the budgeted revenue for tuition this year, and that will greatly assist us in balancing the books at year end, even with the diminution of state support. We could see a favorable year-end balance, rather than the Board-authorized deficit, due to the reductions we made throughout the year, the delayed hiring of a number of vacancies and these unanticipated tuition revenues. The budget is being monitored very carefully, and we will know much more about the year-end projection as we move into the last quarter of the fiscal year.

The College is buzzing with activity, events, and scholarship. Consider the following:

- Students have launched a new "Veterans Club" on campus, with 20 members thus far. We expect this number to grow, as we have over 200 veterans on campus this term; special thanks to Assistant Professor Bobby Summers for leading this effort;
- Through the Student Activities Office, we have brought external experts to speak in the following areas: environmental issues, historical events, politics and economics. These presentations are being infused into the classroom curriculum by our faculty. This month, several classes will be attending a lecture by David Wilson, who has produced a widely known documentary on race in America;
- Many members of the Harper faculty and staff have begun formalizing mentoring groups for African-American students. The "Sister Talk for the Soul" group began in January, and a male group will begin this month;
- Special recognition and kudos to our Wrestling team, as they are currently ranked number 1 in the nation for non-scholarship teams;
- Harper's Nursing Program presented the 4<sup>th</sup> annual "First Aid Merit Badge Day" for five local Boy Scout troops this past month;

- Two of our Hospitality Management students demonstrated delicious dip and salsa recipes on the Harper College YouTube channel just in time for Super Bowl parties. The Board will be introduced to our social media marketing efforts at this month's Board meeting;
- Four more of our faculty, Marjorie Allen (ESL), Marianne Farinas de Leon (DAS), Dr. James Gramlich (SOC), and Daren Patterson (ART) have been chosen to infuse multicultural content into discipline specific courses through our Multicultural Faculty Fellows program;
- Faculty member Elizabeth Minicz, (AED) was named the 2010 recipient of the Elliot Judd Outstanding Teacher Award, established by the Illinois TESOL Bilingual Education program;
- Tom Knoff from the College's Center for Innovative Instruction joined with English faculty member Kurt Hemmer to produce "WOW! Ted Joans Lives!" a thirty-minute documentary on the African Beat Poet Ted Joans. The film will premiere this month, coinciding with Black History Month; and,
- Tom Thompson has been appointed by the IBHE Advisory Board to attend the ICCB/IBHE Postsecondary Education Summit in March.

Special thanks and congratulations to all of these Harper students, faculty and staff who demonstrate our collective talents and achievements throughout the region, state and nation!

Folks in other areas of the College have been active as well:

- Our Grants Office has recently received a \$120,000 grant from the Workforce Board targeted at assisting the unemployed, low income residents and veterans. In addition, three grant proposals were submitted over the last month; two of the proposals, if funded, will enhance our capacity to train Health IT Professionals in our District, as well as infuse Health IT curriculum in our Health Sciences programs; and, we have submitted a letter of intent to the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation to apply for a matching grant of \$60,750 to support LED lighting retrofits to six of our campus buildings;
- The chiller project is being launched in Building P; construction is beginning and the project will be completed over the next several months;
- Our accounting staff processed nearly 30,000 federal documents (W-2s, 1099s and 1098Ts) in January for our employees;
- College staff, faculty and students have submitted over 300 suggestions to me regarding ways in which the College might save money or raise revenue in support of the need to address the diminution of state resources. These suggestions have been sorted, assessed and many are in the process of being implemented. Thanks to all who have taken the time to become involved by sharing their ideas.

As you might expect, an enormous amount of staff energy and expertise has gone into developing tonight's tuition proposal. Student and faculty leadership have been consulted. Revenue projections and cost reductions and avoidance have been considered, and some informed "crystal ball" gazing has gone into enrollment

projections for next year. I'm confident that the tuition proposal is fair, consistent with our commitment to price at an accessible level, and attends to the goal of a balanced budget with comprehensive services to our student community. I will be sending a letter to College faculty, administration and staff following the Board meeting. The letter is offered as an overview of our pricing strategy and on-going commitment to be transparent in our administrative approach to tough problems and difficult decisions. We anticipate support from our students and faculty alike.

Regards,

*Ken*