

President's Report

February 2011

We are saddened by the loss of Jeff Butterfield, a good friend and avid supporter of Harper College. We will miss Jeff tremendously....his kind heart, his gentle and professional demeanor and his affection for our College. May he rest in peace.

As I begin writing this report on Saturday morning, February 12, the Wojcik Conference Center is bustling with activity. We are hosting the Illinois Testing Center for a number of college and graduate school exams and every space in the Conference Center is occupied. The College is truly an institution engaged in continuous activity and service to the community.

The College landscape is still covered with mountains of snow. Our physical plant personnel and police officers have worked steadily since the "Ground Hog Day Blizzard" to clear campus lots, sidewalks and building entrances. Please join me in saluting these dedicated employees. Many worked non-stop during the blizzard to ensure the campus would re-open in a timely fashion. We hosted several members of our community on the night the blizzard began as they abandoned their cars on surrounding roadways and sought refuge on our campus. This is a wonderful example of extraordinary service. Photos of the campus during this historic snow storm are included later in this report.

Enrollment for the Spring term is currently flat. We expect to build enrollment during the remainder of the semester, however we will not meet the budgeted enrollment goals for FY 11. As a result, revenues and expenditures are being carefully monitored to ensure a balanced budget at year-end.

Twenty-two faculty and staff, including three high school partners, just returned from an excellent professional development conference in Indianapolis, hosted by the Achieving the Dream network. The group traveled by coach bus, which provided ample opportunity to bond as a professional learning community and develop plans for maximizing our time at the conference. We have returned with fresh ideas and confirmation that "Building Community through Student Success" is well-aligned with the national completion agenda. We also received affirmation that our initiatives and goals for reducing student achievement gaps are sound.

I am very pleased to report to you that our strategic plan has been recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). As a result, we have been invited to present in a "spotlight plenary" session at the upcoming AACC annual convention in late April. Naturally, we are honored by this recognition and believe we are taking an important step in assuring the legacy of William Rainey Harper in defining the 21st century community college.

We are working on two important federal grant opportunities. First, Harper is leading a coalition of northern Illinois community colleges and workforce boards and will submit a grant request to the Department of Labor on their behalf. This is a significant offering; the Department of Labor has announced that \$2 billion in grants is available for serving dislocated workers across our country. We will submit a funding request to assist these individuals in gaining credentials that will lead to employment in high-demand employment sectors in the northern Illinois region. We anticipate submitting a grant request for several million dollars. Second, we have entered into a consortium that encompasses eight states and includes 20 community colleges in the Midwest. Through this group, we plan to submit a grant request that will assist individuals who have been affected by the downsizing in the auto industry. The consortium will request \$20 million and Harper's share is anticipated to be \$725,000. We are hopeful that one or both of these submissions will be authorized by the Department of Labor.

Harper College has been contacted by an educational partnership in Vietnam formed by American investors who live and work in the country. Harper was recommended to them by colleagues at Loyola University, which is establishing educational programs in Vietnam. The partnership is interested in bringing to Vietnam high quality American associate degrees that are taught in English, and have expressed interest in our nursing and hospitality programs. Representatives from Vietnam visited Harper College last week for preliminary discussions. We intend to conduct a feasibility study to determine if we would be able to offer our degrees in Vietnam and the benefit to Harper College for doing so.

Despite the interruption caused by the snowstorm, we have been very busy. Below is a sampling of activities occurring around the College.

Finance

- Aaa Bond Rating - In late January, an overview of the College, including financial performance and management, was presented to Moody's Investor Services. With the Board's leadership and the College's fiscally responsible approach to budgeting and spending, Moody's reaffirmed its highest possible rating of Aaa. This top rating should enable the College to obtain competitive interest rates for the upcoming general obligation funding bond issuance.
- Financial Aid - The College set another record for first day financial aid disbursements in Spring, 2011. A total of \$11 million of Financial Aid was disbursed to 4,000 students on February 7, which represents a 27% increase from last spring.

Professional and Continuing Education

- Dr. Mark Mrozinski recently published an article in *Planning for Higher Education*, a national publication produced by the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP). The article was featured on the cover of the publication and is titled "The Conflicted Realities of Community College Mission Statements."

Blizzard

- On February 1 and 2, 2011, we encountered the third largest snowfall in Chicago's history. Heavy snow coupled with strong winds created blizzard conditions for the entire area. Building L was opened to provide safe refuge for several stranded motorists brought to the campus by the Palatine Police Department. Some Physical Plant employees were on campus for over 34 consecutive hours. The Harper College Police Department's afternoon shift worked 32 hours straight until the midnight shift was able to arrive on campus Wednesday evening. The goal was to safely open the College as soon as was possible. It took approximately 1,400 hours of work for snow removal. The following photos show the effects of the blizzard on Harper's campus and the efforts of College staff in returning the campus to operation.



Information Technology

- Sign Language Lab – The installation of the new sign language lab has been completed. The new software will enable faculty to exploit digitized media, and students are now able to record their signing.
- Modifications to Uploading High School Compass Scores to align with Achieving the Dream Initiative – Work was completed that allows compass scores for high school students to be uploaded into Harper’s Student Information System.

Physical Plant

- J-Theater Renovation – Construction work was completed for the start of the spring semester.
- B-Building Boiler No. 2 Re-Tubing – The contractor has completed tube installation and is running pressure tests. New steel jacket material has been delivered to the site. Completion of the project is expected in March.
- Y-Building Standby Generator – The construction contract has been issued and major equipment has been ordered. Excavation and foundation work will commence in April, weather permitting.
- New Chiller Plant – The contractor has completed the new epoxy flooring and most punch list items. Final balancing of cooling system will occur in the spring.
- HVAC & Roof Replacement at HPC – The general contractor has completed his punch list work. The mechanical contractor is fine-tuning the Building Automation System. Personnel are monitoring system operations from the main campus control room.
- G & H Remodeling Project – Holabird and Root has completed the Design Development revisions identified in the Master Plan. Faculty and staff will be reviewing the Design Development drawings over the next four weeks.
- Elevators – The M and I Building elevators are complete and have passed inspection.
- HPC Fast-track Offices – Fast-track offices are complete at HPC and staff has relocated.
- C Building Toilet Rooms – The construction is underway for the first and second floor toilet rooms. The new toilet rooms will be ADA accessible. In addition to refurbishing the existing toilet rooms, two family bathrooms will be added, along with a legally mandated lactation room. This project is scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2011.

Student Success

- A manuscript describing the College’s counselor training program was submitted by Dr. Eric Rosenthal and subsequently accepted as an Exemplary Practice for inclusion in the 2011 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) monograph. The monograph is scheduled to debut at the NACADA annual conference this fall.

- Fire Science Adjunct Instructor Richard J. Keyworth, who has 40 years of experience in fire investigation, published a book titled *Fires... Accidental or Arson?*
- Jacque Mott has been named Sustainability Teaching and Learning Coordinator for 2011. She will be assisting faculty in infusing sustainability into their curriculum.
- The Music Department presented the ***Sixth Annual Harper Chamber Music Festival*** on January 22 to a large and enthusiastic audience in the Performing Arts Center.
- Vicki Atkinson, Linda Frank and Jennifer Rojek, along with Dr. Kenneth Ender, presented at the 30th Annual National First Year Experience Conference in Atlanta. The session was titled "FYE Programs – No Time to Waste" - a President's Perspective on the Current Importance of Promoting Community College Students' Success.
- Student records were created in Banner for more than 5,600 local high school juniors who will be completing COMPASS math testing in order to determine the need for appropriate remediation prior to high school graduation. Nearly 2,500 students have already tested, and the COMPASS results have been loaded to each Banner student record with a special source flag.
- A new Web application has been launched! This version of the College application is specifically designed for high school students participating in special college credit programs such as dual credit and credit-by-exam. Every admissions category now has a corresponding Web application.
- On January 26, Toni Preckwinkle, President of the Cook County Board, Gregg Goslin, Commissioner for the 14th District, and Senator Matt Murphy visited the Palatine Opportunity Center (POC). GED/Pre-GED Math students had an opportunity to meet these officials. The students expressed a need for additional transportation between the POC and Harper's main campus.
- In a continued effort to promote males to pursue careers in nursing, full-time nursing faculty, along with male nursing students, welcomed more than 40 Boy Scouts from five area troops to the Harper nursing lab to showcase the profession.
- The Tutoring Center has reported that 10,384 student contacts were made in the fall term. Activity in the Tutoring Center has increased 50% in three years.
- Study Tips and Test Taking Tips, two classroom presentations offered through Success Services, were conducted for approximately 500 students last semester.
- Harper's radio station, WHCM 88.3 FM, now collaborates with Campus Police to provide hourly reports on parking and traffic conditions on campus between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., Monday through Thursday.
- Building Community was the theme used as faculty and staff greeted more than 3,200 students at Welcome Week information tables, which were strategically placed throughout the campus.

- “One Book, One Harper” is a collaborative effort scheduled to begin in fall 2011. It encourages students, faculty, staff and others to read a common book and participate in various academic, cultural and social activities. The first book will be *The Ballad of Trenchmouth Taggart*, authored by Harper’s own M. Glenn Taylor.

Institutional Effectiveness

- The first issue of an institutional effectiveness newsletter titled *Assess for Success* was distributed by the Institutional Effectiveness shared governance committee. The newsletter provides information on ongoing efforts to effectively assess student learning

Also included in the Board packet this month is a copy of an article I authored that reinforces the importance of the liberal arts and humanities in all educational fields. The article appeared in the *Presidency*, which is published by the American Council on Education (ACE).

It is during the mid-part of February that we begin thinking and dreaming about spring. Soon, Spring Break will be upon us, followed by a busy April and then graduation in May. There is a great deal of work that needs to be done between now and then. We look forward to this exciting time on our college campus.

Ken