

President's Report

February 2012

As we approach the middle of February, the College is humming with energy. Spring classes are well underway. Students, faculty, and staff continue to be fully engaged in activities supporting the Strategic Plan. Faculty are busy engaging students and assessing their progress in the classroom. The tempo at the College will continue to pick up as we approach midterm.

The highlight of the spring term is graduation and we are in the midst of planning this special event. This year we are moving the venue to the middle of the campus in the quad. The platform party will be covered and seated in front of Building H (formerly Buildings G & H). The space will seat 3,000 which should comfortably accommodate our guests. We are truly honored that *New York Times* columnist David Brooks has accepted our invitation to receive an honorary degree and deliver our commencement address. It should be a very memorable occasion. We are also pleased to share the news that Mr. Brooks has accepted our invitation to attend an on-campus brunch in his honor the morning of graduation. More details and invitations will be shared with you as we get a little closer to the date.

We have received many positive remarks regarding our joint Board of Trustees/Educational Foundation Board dinner and panel discussion event last week. There was a very nice sense of rapport across the groups. Mr. Greg Brown, CEO and Chairman of Motorola Solutions, and Dr. Walter Bumphus, President of the American Association of Community Colleges, did a splendid job underscoring the importance of our combined efforts. I wish to particularly thank Maria Coons and Sheila Quirk-Bailey for their efforts. Sheila and Maria did a terrific job outlining the evening's schedule and supervising a flawless event. Sheila was a wonderful facilitator. They were assisted by Stephanie Gordon, Meg Coney, Evelyn Seiler, and Lori Eschenbaum who attended to details and arrangements. Kudos to all.

A great deal of progress has been made on setting targets for our Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs). In addition, the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) has been working hard to synthesize the data and feedback collected from the financial policy input sessions. The IPC is currently soliciting feedback from the campus community on a draft policy.

We are also moving ahead with the review of the shared governance system. The Steering Committee has been meeting since early January. At the end of the week, we will be attending a retreat with a national expert on the subject of shared governance to begin our work in developing guiding principles and design criteria. The work of the Steering Committee is posted on the College's intranet for all to review.

Below are some highlights of key activities going on around the College.

Institutional Effectiveness/Outcomes Assessment

- The Outcomes Assessment Office held its 3rd annual Recognition Brunch on January 27. Faculty, coordinators, and chairs leading the outcomes assessment process were recognized for their efforts. Dr. Ender, members of the Institutional Outcomes Assessment Committee and members of the academic leadership attended the event to support the faculty who work diligently to ensure positive student outcomes. This annual event, acknowledging faculty commitment to student learning, is essential to the success of Harper College.

Student Success

- In support of the Math partnership, which allows feeder district high school students the opportunity to take the MTH080 department final exam in May 2012, the Testing Center has been working with Information Technology in developing and testing processes to load scores. This loading mechanism will provide a means to notate the passing scores so that juniors who score high enough will be able to enroll in the dual credit MTH101 course in their senior year, and seniors who score high enough (and who also have C's in geometry) will be able to register for any of the math gatekeeper (college-level) courses at Harper the following year.
- In an effort to build community by engaging students, Student Activities coordinated a series of Welcome Week activities from January 17 through 19. Welcome Week Information Tables were staffed on Tuesday and Wednesday, with 1,821 student contacts during the two days, and an additional 394 student contacts during the two evenings. Campus Activities Board sponsored improv comedy group Baby Wants Candy who performed in the Student Center to a crowd of 150 students. These events were a collaborative effort including staff members from Health & Psychological Services, Wellness and Human Performance, and Student Development.
- The Athletics Department and other College offices are proactively assisting the fall 2011 football players with transition issues related to the announcement of the discontinuation of the football program. Fifty-one members out of the 108 on the football team have remained on campus to take spring classes and participate in the spring conditioning program. Others have transferred to their home community college and some others have moved home but are registered in online classes through Harper College and other colleges.
- English Department's Tom Knoff and Kurt Hemmer's film *Keenan* has been selected for the United States Super 8 Film and DV Festival at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ and will be screened at the very end of the first night on February 17.
- Dr. Jessica Walsh, associate professor in English, has had a book of poetry published: *The Division of Standards*, Finishing Line Press, 2012.

Information Technology

- *Student Information System Access for Faculty* – Completed the project to extend access for faculty to the Student Information System (Banner) for a short period after their end-date with the College in order to enter final grades, etc.
- *Speech Classroom Upgrades* – Completed technology upgrades for Speech Rooms L135, L216, and L304. The new technology produces an audio and visual recording of student speeches, which is then used by faculty and students to provide feedback.
- *MySchedule Mobile Application* – Completed the development and release of the first mobile application that provides students access to personalized information in the Student Information System. The MySchedule application allows students to access their course schedule through their mobile devices. As with the Course Search application, this project required the design and implementation of a secure and high performing infrastructure for access to the College's student databases.
- *Semester Start-up Activities* – Software on computers located in computer labs and classrooms was updated; new medical record software was installed for use in the new Health Information Technology program; classroom technology was reconfigured in a number of rooms in J Building; software for the medical diagnostic server was upgraded; a new system to monitor building temperature levels was installed to assist the physical plant staff in monitoring the campus heating and air conditioning systems; and several enhancements to the network security system were implemented to help with password management and improve work flow.

Human Resources

- *Service Awards* – On February 8, the College held a Service Award presentation and reception to recognize 130 Harper employees. In addition to being publically recognized, the honorees were presented with a special lanyard indicating their years of service and anniversary recognition award. Employees with 25 or more years of service were presented with a crystal commemorative.
- *SHRP Newsletter* – Damone Richardson, Human Resources Manager, writes a monthly column in the *Society of Human Resource Professionals' Newsletter*. In the January installment, he wrote about "reverse mentoring," which involves having junior employees mentor more senior employees. He notes that reverse mentoring can positively affect organizations in a number of areas, including: innovation, succession planning, engagement, and recognition.
- *Recruiters and Diversity Leaders in HR Consortium* – Paula Saltzman, Diverse Workforce Recruiter, attended the Recruiters and Diversity Leaders in HR Consortium at Elgin Community College on January 27. The goal of the Consortium is to broaden each member's marketing exposure and increase the diversity of our employee candidate pools. At this meeting, the group discussed social media, diversity issues, and hiring manager training.

Finance

- *Burnidge and Paschen, et al. Settlement* – The final payment for the Burnidge and Paschen, et al. settlement has been received, settling all claims.

Physical Plant

- *One Stop Admissions and Campus/Student Center Project* – We are pleased to report that the Capital Development Board (CDB) has agreed to expedite contract negotiations with Cannon Design for architectural/engineering services related to the One Stop Admissions and Campus/Student Center project. By separating out the programming phase from the balance of the agreement between CDB and Cannon, the project team will be able to proceed as originally scheduled and before many of the needed input groups depart campus for summer break. While this still needs to be approved by the State's Procurement Office, CDB's proactive approach to the project thus far is greatly appreciated.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- A task force that is addressing the need for skilled workers in advanced manufacturing has been meeting at Harper College for the past few months. As a result, new curriculum is being developed by the Career Programs Division. Internships are being pursued with local manufacturers for students who will be entering this new program. In addition, Continuing Education will be offering a new program this summer. *Nuts and Bolts* will offer middle school students the opportunity to engage in activities focused on advanced manufacturing.

In mid- March the College will produce William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Yours truly will have a small speaking role in the play during its first weekend run (March 17, 18, and 19). Kevin Long is to be congratulated for his willingness to cast me in any role in a Shakespeare play! We hope you will attend and enjoy this Harper theatre production.

Over the last couple of weeks I have had the opportunity to visit with our Student Senate, host a luncheon for our Black Student Union leaders, visit with our track and field team, as well as our men's basketball team. I also spent a thoroughly enjoyable hour-and-a-half discussing leadership with 25 of our student club and organization leaders. During each of these occasions I came away feeling energized and excited about our students and their potential, collectively. The students I have spent time with demonstrate commitment, passion, intelligence, wit, and a keen sense of regard for their fellow students. I'm so very proud they are Harper students.

Harper is indeed a special place.

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