

President's Report

February 2014

Well, we are certainly in “dead of winter” and I for one, hope it ends soon! It’s been a very tough two months for all of us, and particularly those Harper employees charged with our safety on and around campus. Our Roads and Grounds crews, Custodial, Maintenance, and Utilities Departments have had a particularly tough time as they have worked night and day to move snow, keep the buildings warm and clean, and well maintained. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of them. Job well done!

Enrolling new students during this early part of the year has been a challenge. Our Spring enrollment will likely land at a 3% decline. This decline is primarily in the adult market where we continue to focus on strategies that will align adult interest, need, and schedule to Harper courses and programs of their choosing. We will continue with those efforts as we approach the summer and fall sessions.

We have received some good news from the Governor’s office. One Stop Student Center funds have been authorized for release, providing the balance of the State’s funding for that project. We are in the design development stage for the project and these funds will take us to construction.

The great news for this early part of the New Year is that the College has received its first ever million dollar gift. A formal public announcement and reception for the donors is scheduled for March 12 in the Wojcik Conference Center. We invite all Board members to join us as we express thanks to the donors and celebrate this very special moment in the College’s history.

The work of the College’s Community Relations Task Force has concluded and implementation efforts are underway. The community relations function will be led by Phil Burdick and we have authorized the hiring of one position to coordinate our efforts. We anticipate implementing all of the task force recommendations and providing ample opportunity for Trustees and Foundation Board members to be involved in the College’s community relations program.

Following are notable events and accomplishments from the past month.

Student Success

- The benefits of on-line programming were recognized and appreciated by many students who were able to access Harper’s New Student Orientation Preview from their student portal during the weather closures. The online orientation provided students with information and resources to address many pre-advising and orientation questions.

- The Certified Nursing Assistant Program is one of three programs to receive state approval to pilot blended course formats. This course format will allow students greater flexibility in completing the certificate program and in addressing the needs of students' different learning styles. In seeking approval, Elizabeth Pagenkopf, CNA Coordinator, presented to the Illinois Department of Public Health Basic Nursing Assistant Training Program Advisory Board in Springfield on the strength, design and use of technology in Harper's didactic/lab/clinical program.
- Pascuala Herrera and Stacey Watson from Access & Disability Services co-authored the Featured Article for the January Illinois-Iowa Association on Higher Education and Disability newsletter. They shared about their collaborative teaching of FYE101 and how that has positively impacted students with Learning Disabilities/ADHD and students on the Autism Spectrum. Another article authored by Michele DeCanio from Access & Disability Services focused on wellness in the newsletter. She shared about the importance and benefits of introducing meditation to students with disabilities.
- Nursing Program faculty member, Joanne Rothblum, has been appointed as a program evaluator for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. Program evaluators are selected through rigorous criteria established by the Commission.
- The Office of Student Involvement sponsored a "Wild West Welcome Week" where 2,502 students stopped by information tables and 300 students attended a Wild West afternoon, complete with a mechanical bull ride.
- WGN News filmed an on-campus interview with RN-Nursing student, Andrea Zito, which was scheduled to air on Monday, February 17th at 9:00 p.m. Andrea is a returning student working towards a career change after completing her baccalaureate degree. Nursing faculty members Barbara Anderson and Jennifer Smith authored a poster, *Promoting Student Success and Collegiality Through a Peer Mentor Program*, which has been accepted for the 2014 National League of Nursing (NLN) Education Summit in Phoenix, AZ.
- The Office of Student Involvement held a bronze medal ceremony for the 35 students who completed the Harper Leadership Challenge during the Fall 2013 semester. Students, parents, and club advisors attended. Students received a bronze medallion and a t-shirt in recognition of their on-going participation in the program throughout the Fall semester. The Office also issued 31 service awards to students for their contributions to their student club/organization.

Administrative Services

- Follett assumed operations of the HarperStore on July 1, 2013. In addition to hiring all Harper employees working in the HarperStore, Follett continues to hire student workers. With the help of Human Resources, open student positions were posted on the job portal, and Follett has hired 15 Harper students for the Spring semester. Studies have shown that student workers on campus have higher persistence and graduation rates.

Facilities Management

- Despite recent weather-related challenges, work continues on schedule for the Building D, Building H, and Parking Structure projects. Much of the exterior construction for Buildings D and H is near completion, and both projects have temporary heat so that interior finish work is not compromised. Major site and foundation work for the parking structure is continuing and will be ready to accept precast exterior wall panels in March.

- Design is underway for several major infrastructure projects on the west side of campus, including a new regional chiller plant, a regional “critical systems” generator plant, more efficient dock area at Building A, and substantial underground utility improvements. This work is necessary to complement both anticipated Campus Master Plan work including the One Stop/Student Center, and remodeling of outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in several surrounding buildings.

Information Technology

- The Student Systems team, supporting Enrollment Services, developed and implemented an electronic workflow that will allow students to update their program of study from the student portal. The system will route an e-document to the Registrar’s Office, which will review the request and take appropriate action.
- The Business Systems team completed installation of the Raiser’s Edge mobile application for appropriate Advancement team member devices. The mobile application provides access to constituent data and essential services in support of fundraising activities.
- The Enterprises Systems team provided support for changing the systems and processes associated with senior waivers. The effort included coding, testing, and implementing changes to the student information system and appropriate reports.

Human Resources

- Paula Saltzman, Diverse Workforce Recruiter, has been invited to join the Board of the Greater Chicago Midwest-Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (GCM-HERC). GCM-HERC is a non-profit consortium of higher education and affiliated employers whose mission is to advance the efforts of member institutions to recruit and retain outstanding and diverse faculty and staff and to assist dual-career couples.
- Beverly Riley, Employee Relations Manager, has been certified as a Title IX Administrator/Coordinator by the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA). Title IX is a federal law intended to end sex discrimination in all areas of education. The four day course taught participants core competencies necessary to be a Title IX Administrator, including the historical overview of Title IX, interviewing and investigation methods, legal requirements for reporting alleged violations of Title IX, and the ever expanding case law (i.e.: Clery Act, Campus Sexual Assault Victim’s Bill of Rights, VAWA Reauthorization, Campus SaVE). Beverly is Co-Coordinator of the Title IX Program for Harper College with Ashley Knight, Dean of Student Affairs.

Advancement

- The Educational Foundation hosted the “Economic Update and Outlook Breakfast with Jack Ablin” on February 6 in the Wojcik Conference Center. BMO Harris Bank co-sponsored the event and over 200 people registered to attend. Education as a solution to workforce issues and economic challenges was a primary focus of his talk.
- Harper College will celebrate the largest private gift in the College’s 47-year history at a reception on March 12 in the Wojcik Conference Center. We are honored to be the recipient of this wonderful gift. This will be a joyous celebration of the impact of philanthropy. We appreciate the generosity of these donors and are grateful for the thoughtfulness of this gift

for it will surely be transformational in the lives of students at Harper College and provide them an opportunity for a bright future.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- The TAACCCT Office, which manages the large Department of Labor grants, has been invited to present at “The Collaboratory” which is a learning lab sponsored by Dr. Debra Bragg of the University of Illinois. We have been asked to share our best practices in successfully running a consortium of independent community colleges.
- The Fast Track office has successfully launched three cohorts in the following programs: Business Administration AAS degree, Human Resources Certificate, and Supply Chain Certificate.

Communications and Legislative Relations

- The Illinois General Primary Election takes place Tuesday, March 18, 2014. In the race for the Republican nomination for Governor, polls show businessman Bruce Rauner enjoys a commanding lead. A Capitol Fax/We Ask America poll of likely Republican voters shows Rauner with 39 percent, to 11 percent for State Senator Bill Brady, 8 percent for State Senator Kirk Dillard and 8 percent for Illinois Treasurer Dan Rutherford. The results are similar to a *Chicago Tribune* poll taken a few days earlier.
- The Illinois General Assembly will be back in session next week following Governor Quinn’s State of the State Address. The budget continues to be the most pressing issue. The Governor’s Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) projects a \$1.9 billion deficit in FY 2015 with the expiration of State’s income tax increase, which was passed in 2011. Governor Quinn is expected to outline his spending plan during his State Budget Address on March 26.
- U.S. Representatives Tammy Duckworth and Brad Schneider will be holding a joint job fair at the Wojcik Conference Center on Thursday, February 20.
- The Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) released its list of State legislative priorities for this year. They include:
 - Protecting local control of community colleges
 - Leveling or increasing funding for community colleges in FY 2015
 - Increasing funding for MAP grants
 - Restoring the capital construction program for higher education
 - Supporting growth for adult education programs
 - Restoring funding for Illinois Veterans Grants.
- The College held a dinner for participants in the summer and fall community input sessions. The College presented the results of the input sessions and telephone surveys of residents and businesses.
- The Community Relations Task Force put forward nine recommendations for improving community outreach. The recommendations include hiring a full-time Community Relations Manager, the search for which will begin immediately. All of the recommendations of the Community Relations Task Force will be incorporated into the College’s operational plan.
- News articles about Harper that appeared in local media outlets recently include:
 - A *WGN-TV* story about recent college graduates who are unemployed coming to Harper for career training in hot job fields;

- A *Daily Herald* video story on culinary student Marisa Marquez and her goal to become a chef at Disney World;
- A *Daily Herald* story on the passing of long-time administrator Donn Stansbury, who was hired before Harper opened its doors;
- A *TribLocal* story about Harper's new comfort dog handling certificate program;
- *Daily Herald* and the *Business Ledger* stories about the Educational Foundation's economic update breakfast featuring Jack Ablin;
- *Fire Engineering Magazine* ran an article about Fire Science Professor Sam Giordano's innovative new teaching tools;
- *College Planning and Management Magazine* wrote an article about Harper's mobile application development certificate;
- *Daily Herald* reporter Katlyn Smith wrote a light-hearted item for the paper's Inside Northwest column about the quinoa cooking classes offered through Harper's Continuing Education Department;
- The *Daily Herald* previewed the February 4 appearance by the Kenya Safari Acrobats and included a picture.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge the long and exemplary service Dr. Joan Kindle has provided the College. Joan will be leaving us soon to join the Eastern Iowa Community College District as Vice Chancellor. She leaves a legacy of outstanding leadership and service to the College. Joan is a professional in every sense of the word and her contribution will be missed. A very special thanks to Dr. Joan Kindle!

Stay warm.

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