

## **President's Report**

**April 2013**

This time of year is both a pleasure and challenge on a college campus. Certainly, the pleasure comes from experiencing the joys of our students as they complete their programs of study and go on to promising employment opportunities or four-year institutions. We also experience the wonderful accomplishments of our students as they earn transfer scholarships and other awards. The challenges come from managing the many year-end activities and events that provide venues for celebration and acknowledgment. As a community college president, this is the time of year I look forward to the most!

In that regard, a Harper student once again has been awarded the coveted Jack Kent Cooke transfer scholarship—it was been awarded to Elizabeth Erikson. This has occurred for an unprecedented third year in a row! This prestigious scholarship honors excellence by supporting outstanding community college students with financial need as they transfer to and complete their bachelor's degrees at the nation's top four-year colleges and universities. The Foundation selects up to 60 community college transfer students across the nation and awards each scholar up to \$30,000 annually. It is indeed rare that a community college has a Jack Cooke Kent Scholarship awardee. Many thanks go to Dr. Alicia Tomasian for her ongoing support and coaching of students applying for this scholarship. In addition, Stephanie Bemis, a student studying German at Harper, has been awarded the prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Fellowship for Young Professionals sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the German Bundestag (Parliament). CBYX is a year-long fellowship in Germany that includes intensive German language training, education in a student's particular field of study, and an internship with a German organization or company. It is highly competitive and most often awarded to recent university graduates. According to current records, Stephanie is the first student from Harper College to receive this fellowship to Germany. Kudos to these students and our faculty for providing outstanding academics and support.

Like our students, Harper was recently selected for a highly prestigious initiative. We have been selected among the inaugural cohort of seven institutions nationwide to participate in the Breakthrough Models Incubator. The Incubator will engage a small, select group of institutions committed to designing and implementing breakthrough models, with the goal of radically improving both productivity and student outcomes. This initiative is being sponsored by EDUCAUSE and the League for Innovation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (which is funding the program). We are included among an elite group of institutions including: Austin Peay State University, Ball State University, Charter Oak State College, SUNY-Empire State

College, Montgomery County Community College, and the University of Maryland University College. Harper is being recognized in a very public and meaningful way. We will receive \$50,000 to defray travel and other costs during the education, design, and planning period. A follow-up award of \$100,000 will be made to our institution upon completion of certain benchmarks as the Incubator progresses.

In addition to all of our regular activities, we hosted the Aligning Demand, Skills, and Training with Sector Needs Conference, a convening of over 100 community college and business leaders, to learn more about how we can best align programs to the cutting edge needs of businesses today. The business leaders represented high-level human resources professionals from Fortune 500 companies in the following sectors: manufacturing, logistics/transportation, health care, retail and information technology. The impressive group of corporate partners included UPS, The Gap, Baxter, Hospira, McDonald's, US Foods, AT&T, Boeing, Caterpillar, and of course our great local partner Motorola Solutions. Bruce Brda, Senior Vice President from Motorola Solutions, gave a thought provoking keynote regarding the impact technology is having on the skills sets of the current and future workforce. Dr. Bryan Albrecht, President of Gateway Technical College, responded to five skills panels by summarizing the fact that community colleges must remain nimble to meet future needs. He stressed aligning programs of study with the world of work—even as students enter our institutions. A white paper will be developed from the proceedings and findings. The conference was highly successful and will serve as a model for future convening around the country. Harper was a gracious and attentive host institution. Over 25 individuals from the College helped to make this “first of a kind” convening a success. Thank you to all involved!

Several weeks ago, we held our annual strategic planning conference. This day-long meeting provides the opportunity for our goal and strategy leaders to dialog about successes and what should be changed to achieve better results. Our Achieving the Dream coaches joined us and provided their feedback, as well. There was good discussion around equity and how we can best meet the needs of our diverse student population—in terms of race/ethnicity, as well as learning styles, age and the like.

I have been asked to speak at several regional conferences on our good work in the student success agenda. I recently attended a meeting of the College Board policy group where the future of Pell grants was debated and improvements to the system were suggested. This exercise helped me become more proficient and well-versed about Pell grants. This program in particular addresses equity and must be preserved so our neediest students have access and succeed in higher education. I also served as the keynote for Jobs for the Future, a labor market innovators group that Harper belongs to. Dr. Anthony Carnevale also spoke at the meeting and his comments were closely aligned to Harper's ongoing completion agenda particularly in the area of preparing students for middle skill jobs. This was reinforced by a lead researcher from the Federal Reserve of Boston. It has become clear that preparing the workforce for these positions will help to ensure ongoing prosperity in our country.

Our impressive Engineering students participating in the NASA Student Launch Initiative had a successful launch of their rocket! The team traveled to Bragg Farms in Toney, Alabama for the launch. Their rocket and payloads traveled 5,235 feet or 45 feet within the one mile requirement. We are very proud of our “Rocket Students” and will anxiously wait as they write their final report and then learn how they finish in the competition. Many thanks to Assistant Professor Maggie Geppert who continues to coach and mentor the team. More to come!

Following is a summary of activities and accomplishments campus wide.

## **Student Success**

- Harper College has participated in the Upper Midwest Regional Ethics Bowl since 2005, and is the only community college to participate in this regional competition. This past fall Harper placed fourth in the Upper Midwest Regional Ethics Bowl and qualified for the IEB for the first time. We were the only community college represented at the IEB this year. In addition to Harper's performance in these competitions, we have also become an integral part of an initiative to launch an Ethics Bowl Championship that is exclusively for students at two-year colleges. The inaugural Two-Year College Ethics Bowl Championship was held on April 13th, and Harper College went undefeated, winning the championship. Harper will host this event next year. The members of this year's team are Matthew Sandel, Eli Longbottom, and Caitlin Weres. The team is coached by John Garcia and Brett Fulkerson-Smith, who are both Assistant Professors of Philosophy.
- The Harper College Radiologic Technology students placed first in the Illinois State Society of Radiologic Technologist scholar bowl. It was the first time Harper College students won the tournament!
- Harper College has received the National Council of Instructional Administrators (NCIA) Exemplary Initiatives Award for Innovations in Meeting Community and Workforce Needs. Harper was selected for its work in developing Advanced Manufacturing in partnership with and in response to the needs of the area manufacturers. NCIA is an affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and Exemplary Initiatives Awards are awarded each year in six categories from a national pool of applicants.
- The Harper College newspaper, The Harbinger, was awarded third place in the Overall Excellence category for Division I members of the Illinois Community College Journalism Association. Division I is for weekly and bi-weekly publications. Sean Pedersen won a third-place award in the News category for Division I.
- Kelly Coronado, full-time instructor in Harper College's Intensive English Program, took twenty students from Listening and Speaking IV to Patton Elementary School in Arlington Heights to teach second through seventh graders about their home countries and cultures. The Harper students created posters representing their countries including Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Thailand, China, Korea, Poland, Ukraine, Iran, and Kyrgyzstan. It was a great learning exchange experience in which the Harper students practiced English in a natural setting while the Patton School students learned about the world through aspects of culture such as holiday celebrations, myths, martial arts, and games. All of the students were very excited and seemed to greatly enjoy themselves.
- Kathi Nevels and Sheryl Otto, co-leaders of the Project Success/Early Alert strategy team, contributed to an article published online in *University Business* magazine describing Harper's partnership with Starfish Retention Solutions to help students persist to college-level courses. The article nicely depicts our completion agenda and Project Success, an early alert and case management pilot program involving extensive collaboration between faculty and counselors.

- The annual Career Center Spring Job Fair was held on Friday, April 12. There was a 16% increase in both the number of employers (107) who were recruiting and the number of job seekers (1,100 ) who attended.
- The film that Kurt Hemmer and Tom Knoff created, "WOW! Ted Joans Lives!" is being shown the weekend of April 19, 2013 at the 10th Annual Langston Hughes Film Festival in Seattle Washington. Hemmer also participated on the filmmakers' panel.

### ***Physical Plant***

- Power Construction has completed preliminary staging work, and excavation for new foundations and site utilities is underway for the Building D addition. Phase I is on schedule for a fall 2014 completion, barring any unforeseen delays.
- Building H construction is moving forward. All trades have been awarded and a construction "kickoff" meeting was held with the Capital Development Board (CDB) on Friday, April 19. We are hoping that a project start date will be presented shortly.
- Installation of an early warning lightning detection system is nearly complete. Sirens and strobe lights will be placed at three separate locations on the west side of campus with signage that identifies their presence. This system is consistent with the system used by Palatine Park District, and provides us with sufficient notice when lightning is approaching the area.

### ***Information Technology***

- Implementation of Cognos 10, the latest version of IBM's enterprise reporting product has been completed. The new version contains enhanced dashboard reporting capability and powerful tools to more easily develop complex extractions of data from the College's information repositories. The project required six months to complete, and includes process enhancements for maintaining the reliability and integrity of critical data.
- The project to convert College applications operating on the Oracle Application Server middleware to Oracle WebLogic has been completed. WebLogic is Oracle's most current software that performs coordinating functions among the database, web services, and application.

### ***Workforce and Strategic Alliances***

- Participation from community members in the Lifelong Learning Institute continues to grow at an impressive rate. In Spring 2012, 888 community members participated in these programs; in Spring 2013 the number was 1,306. This represents a 47% increase.
- Continuing Education, along with Wellness and Campus Activities and the Child Learning Center have engaged the services of Praesidium to assess risk in our youth programming.

- Presentations on Harper's Earn and Learn Department of Labor grant were provided to three key groups: Women in Manufacturing, the STEM Learning Exchange and the Adult Learners Network.

### ***Planning and Institutional Effectiveness***

- Over 70 Harper College faculty and staff attended the annual Strategic Planning Retreat. The Conference focused on key successes and areas needing further attention. New initiatives were discussed.
- The annual Student Success Report was compiled and published. This is a comprehensive report contains data that is available to all employees. The data can be used to support student-based decisions.
- Strategic Planning Goal Leaders presented their budget proposals for next year at an interactive session with the Champion Team.

### ***Advancement***

- An Ice Cream Social was held to kick off the Employee Campaign. This campaign builds awareness for how employees can contribute to the Harper College Educational Foundation through payroll deduction. These funds are used to support the Resources for Excellence program and other student success initiatives at the College.
- The Foundation hosted the annual Small Works exhibit. This event highlights the work of national artists that are on a "smaller scale." The event was well attended and provides the opportunity to engage current and potential Foundation supporters.
- The Alumni area hosted the Nursing Alumni Symposium which raises money for nursing scholarships. Over 250 nursing alumni attended. It was a great opportunity for these professionals to reconnect and support this important program.

### ***Legislative Relations***

- Four villages in Harper's district have new mayors as after municipal elections were held earlier this month.
  - Arlington Heights - long time village trustee Thomas Hayes replaces Arlene Mulder who retired after leading the village over the past 20 years.
  - Wheeling - Village Board Trustee Dean Argiris defeated incumbent Mayor Judy Abruscato.
  - Des Plaines - Third ward Alderman Matt Bogusz, who is 26 years old, defeated former Mayor Tony Arredia. This was an open seat after former Des Plaines mayor Marty Moylan was elected as a state representative last November.
  - Barrington Hills - Martin McLaughlin defeated two-term Village President Robert Abboud.

## **Media Relations**

- A write-up on the Aligning Demand, Skills, and Training with Sector Needs Conference was posted to the *Community College Times* online, and is slated to run in the *Business Ledger*.
- The *Daily Herald* produced a fantastic video spotlighting Assistant Professor and Theatre Director Kevin Long as part of its "Moving Picture" series.
- Harper stories or experts also appeared in or on the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Daily Herald*, *Barrington Courier-Review*, *Your Teen* magazine, *Inside Arlington Heights* magazine, TribLocal.com, Patch.com and various regional blogs.

## **Community Relations**

- Through our Speakers Bureau, Professor Jim Edstrom provided a history lesson for Sun City residents and Ann Garoon, a Harper career coach, offered job-hunting tips at the Palatine Public.
- Harper was recognized by the Schaumburg Park District with a proclamation honoring educational partners as the district celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Our Hospitality Management Department hosted a group of Schaumburg High School culinary students in March, offering them a tour of our classrooms and serving them lunch in the Harper Dining Room.
- We hosted about 120 students from MacArthur school for a March field trip, and will host a total of 400 elementary and middle-school students during various tours in April. Among these is an extended field trip for Virginia Lake School that will allow students to sit in on special "mini-classes" with actual Harper professors in the areas of Philosophy, CAD and Welding.
- We'll host hundreds of young students and their families in Avanté on Saturday, April 27 for our third annual College & Career Expo. An estimated 800 people attended last year, and we're anticipating more this year. They'll enjoy hands-on activities courtesy of numerous Harper departments as well as outside partners – from making their own slime and testing their DNA to climbing on area fire trucks in our parking lots and flying paper airplanes with help from Northrop Grumman.

In closing let me offer a special congratulations to Vice Chair Rita Canning and John Canning. Next month, they will be receiving the Chicago Chapter of the Association for Fund Raising Professionals' Philanthropic Award. Their generosity and stewardship of many worthy causes is being acknowledged through this prestigious award. In addition, Trustee Laurie Stone has been selected as the winner of the James McGrath Award for Excellence. This highly-coveted Harper award acknowledges community members for their service and leadership. Like our students and Harper College, our Board members excel in many ways!

I encourage everyone to participate in the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing which will be held at the beautiful Inverness Country Club on June 10. This is the major fundraiser for this year for the

Foundation. Monies raised from this event support scholarships for our students. I look forward to seeing everyone there!

As of this writing, we have not yet learned if Harper has been selected by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) for the Outstanding College/Corporate Partnership Award. Harper is one of the five finalists, and although we would love to win the award, being selected as a finalist among an elite group of community colleges has been an honor.

As you can see from this plethora of activities, we have been running on all cylinders for the past few months. Graduation is upon us and once it is concluded, Cathy and I will be taking some time off to tend to the gardens and spend time with family.

I am so very proud of this institution and realize that we are what we are because of the hard work of many. Harper is a gem—and we are being recognized for our accomplishments and vision. Our namesake, Dr. William Rainey Harper, would be duly proud!

Pray and hope for sunshine on May 18!

*Ken*