

President's Report

April 2016

Spring has finally arrived! Although it is not unusual to have snow this time of year in Chicago, April does bring hope of warmer temperatures, green grass and blooming trees. April is also when the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) holds its annual conference. This year it was held in Chicago and Harper was noted as a "host college" as we had many staff volunteer to work at the conference. Harper was also sprinkled throughout the program book with many notable presentations and participation on panels.

We ended March on a somber note. Due to the continued budget impasse in Springfield, higher education continues to be challenged by a lack of funding. Harper is in much better shape than most; however, we must be diligent in sizing the institution appropriately for the funding that is available from tuition/fees and local property taxes. Unfortunately, we must learn to rely less on the State in these times of uncertainty. Approximately 75% of our budget consists of personnel-related expenses, mainly salaries and benefits. The remaining 25% is attributed to things such as the cost of energy to run the plant, travel, meeting expenses, and supplies. We anticipated the budget shortfall last summer and began holding open positions, filling only critical vacancies. In addition, we held off on meeting expenses by not ordering food at meetings, and travel by asking staff and faculty to use professional development funds when traveling to conferences and meetings. Although these actions helped, further cuts were needed to mitigate the impact of the \$7.5 million that the State has not paid in credit hour reimbursement, and the \$1.5 million in need-based Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants that the College funded for students because again, the State has failed to meet its obligations.

Thus, late in March, 29 staff members were told that their positions were being eliminated effective June 30, 2016. In addition, 57 vacant positions were removed from the FY17 budget. We were able to identify 24 vacant positions that needed to be filled, and are urging the 29 impacted employees to apply for those positions. In fact, the 24 openings will be exclusively available for internal candidates for several weeks and will only be open to external candidates with approval from an Executive Council member. The net of these actions is a reduction of 62 positions which will help close the budget gap for FY17. These actions were not taken lightly and were handled with as much care and dignity as possible.

The work of the College continues. In the correspondence section you will note a Shared Governance recommendation to include "special electives" within all transfer electives for students pursuing AA and AS degrees. This will ensure students will graduate with courses that more readily transfer to four-year colleges and universities. You will also note that Harper has again won the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award which reflects our commitment to meet "the highest principles of governmental budgeting." Kudos to the Budget Office for this wonderful achievement.

We also learned late last week that Harper's Aaa Moody's credit rating was affirmed. Many Illinois community colleges have seen their ratings lowered due to the State budget stalemate. The report does however site caution which reflects the challenges community colleges will continue to face if the State does not pass a budget and meet its obligations. The rating helps to ensure the College will pay lower interest rates when we elect to issue bonds as a means of financing special initiatives and facilities-related projects.

One of our deans, Dr. Mark Mrozinski, has been selected to participate in the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute's Presidential Fellow program. This prestigious program "is preparing the next generation of community college presidents to lead transformational change so that significantly more students earn valuable credentials and go on to well-paying jobs." Forty community college leaders from across the country will participate in this prestigious experience; over 600 applied for the program. Congratulations to Mark!

Below is a summary of activities and recent accolades earned by faculty, staff and students.

Student Success

- Harper College Speech Team competed at Phi Rho Pi, the national community college speech and debate tournament. Out of 64 community colleges that competed at the tournament the team finished in 5th place. The Harper team won gold in three of the 13 speaking events boasting national champions in Impromptu Speaking (Zack Mayo and Kim Jimenez), Extemporaneous Speaking (Zack Mayo) and Speech to Entertain (Arman Raman). Seventeen of Harper's 50 events made final rounds.
- Harper College Speech and Debate was presented with the Mariner Award which is the most prestigious prize in community college speech and debate. The Mariner is presented to the team with the most points over time. Each year, a school's points are added to their previous total. The team at the top wins and then their total is set back to zero. Harper joins an elite group. Only 18 different teams have won this honor over the past 40 years. This milestone speaks to the longevity, consistency and hard work of many people including; Coach Jeff Przybylo (20 years), Coach Margaret Bilos (10 years), Coach Josh Sunderbruch (15 years), Coach Marcia Litrenta (20 Years), countless alumni coaches, hundreds of students, and a supportive administration.
- Speech Coach Margaret Bilos was awarded the 2016 National Coaching Fellowship Award for her dedication, creativity and service over the past 10 years.
- The Office of Student Involvement (OSI) sponsored an inaugural Alternative Spring Break trip for students who wanted to spend their break immersed in direct community service and first-hand experiential education on social justice issues. These students traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio to explore social justice concepts in an urban community setting, while working to build and improve houses, reflect on issues of privilege and oppression, and learn more about each other's perspectives and experiences in their own lives.
- Summer 2016 will mark the introduction of the Harper Summer Scholars program. This program will serve as Harper's premiere bridge program for Harper-bound graduates from high schools in districts 211, 214, and 220. Students who participate in Summer Scholars will be part of a four-week learning community and will be afforded a chance to increase Math, English and Reading skills. At the same time, they will earn college credit through a 1-credit First Year Seminar course. Recruitment for Summer Scholars 2016 is underway.

- The Harper Men's Basketball Team was recognized for their community service in the NJCAA Review magazine. The Harper men's basketball team and the Friends of Jaclyn Foundation partnered for a third straight year to give eight-year-old Hawks' fan Kadeen Alansari an unforgettable night. Kadeen and his family met the 2015-16 men's basketball team prior to the start of their December 15 game. After pregame warm-ups, Kadeen was announced in the starting lineup as the honorary sixth starter for the Hawks. Kadeen spent the rest of the game cheering the team on from the bench with his family. His favorite player and hero is Hawks sophomore point guard Marcus Gatlin.
- Marcus Gatlin, received second team All-Conference honors, completing his second season with the Hawks. Marcus also earned NJCAA National Player of the Week honors for two separate weeks during the 2015-2016 basketball season.
- Fulbright Scholar Jimrex Byamugisha's visit to Harper is mentioned in an article by María de los Ángeles Crummett, Special Guest Editor. "Faculty Led Internationalization: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategic Approaches." *IIE Networker* Spring 2016: pp. 22-23.
- On April 8 the Graphic Arts Department hosted a BOOST event. More than 100 high school students from 10 local area high schools participated in this event. Students worked on projects, learned software and earned prizes at this event.
- Admissions Outreach led several Spanish language workshops at district high schools during the month of February. The workshops were for prospective students and parents and focused on financial aid support services and academic programs for returning adults.
- On February 10, Admissions Outreach and the Health Careers Division hosted an information session for over 80 prospective students. Those in attendance learned more about program information as well as career and educational opportunities in the health care field.
- On February 11, Admissions Outreach represented Harper College at the Future Options Seminar at Conant High School. This was an event for Conant High School juniors and their parents to hear from a panel of representatives from a number of colleges throughout the area.
- Admission Outreach conducted two "Preview Day" events for high school seniors who have already applied to Harper College. At the event, students have an opportunity to receive an overview of the College, learn about financial aid and scholarships, and obtain information on transferring. In total, 175 prospective students attended the two events.
- In March, the Women's Program offered scholarship workshops for participants highlighting Academic Works and the 150+ scholarships available at Harper. The workshops will cover tips for completing a scholarship application and writing a scholarship essay.
- The Fire Science Technology program was awarded recognition and accreditation from the United States Fire Administration thru the National Fire Academy. This recognition certificate is an acknowledgement that Harper College has met and has demonstrated a commitment to the nationally recognized standards.

Facilities Management

- High winds damaged a significant portion of the Building R (Performing Arts Center) roof. It has been temporarily repaired but will require total replacement. The roof is no longer under warranty and has exceeded its life expectancy. A bid package is being prepared.
- Both the Building F and Building M projects are in the design development phase. Each will be presented upon completion to ensure that scope, budget, and schedule have been maintained thus far.
- Planning for temporary relocation associated with occupants of Building F is underway. The actual moves will occur over summer 2016 to minimize disruption to the College. Construction is scheduled to start immediately thereafter.
- Sightlines presented their annual assessment of the College's Facilities Management division. Results were positive regarding overall performance, preventative maintenance and cost reduction efforts – especially since 2011. An emphasis was placed on the need to fund future infrastructure projects to adequately address aging systems.

Information Technology

- The Center for Digital Education (CDE) announced the winners of its 2015-2016 Digital Community Colleges. The CDE analyzes how community colleges use a range of technologies to improve services to students, faculty, staff and the community at large. Harper College finished third in the national rankings.
- The Information Technology team partnered with Institutional Research and Planning to complete the design, development and the implementation of the College's first Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW). The EDW includes an expansive array of database technologies, web-based collaboration, content management and reporting system, as well as statistical analysis capabilities. The EDW provides a single, complete, consistent store of data available to users for decision support. The Phase I implementation includes Institutional and Student Success dashboards.
- The Enterprise Systems team completed the implementation of a Banner Business Continuity project. The project includes the complete replication of the Banner Student Information System, the student portal, and all associated systems into an alternate data center. The College now has a standby, ready-to-use replica of our complete student information system in the event the production system becomes unusable/unavailable for a significant period of time.

Human Resources

- Harper recognized 210 faculty and staff at its annual Affiliation and Service Award presentation/reception on April 5, 2016. In addition to being publically recognized, adjunct members were presented with an etched crystal cube commemorating his/her years of affiliation. Employee Service Award recipients were presented with a commemorative identification card lanyard indicating years of service and a gift certificate. Employees with 25 or more years of service were presented with an Avanté-themed crystal award. Faculty member Renee Zellner was presented with a special award for her 35 years of service. All-in-all, the College recognized over 2,700 years of service.

- Beverly Riley, Employee Relations Manager/Title IX Coordinator, received a certification from the Northwest Center Against Sexual Assault (NWCASA). This training provides the skills necessary to understand and respond to sexual assault trauma victims.
- Roger Spayer, Chief Human Resources Officer, was asked to serve as a member of the 2016 Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy's (IMSA) Admissions Review Committee. IMSA enrolls many of Illinois' talented students in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology. The Committee's task was to assist the Academy in its selection of the IMSA class of 2019. The Admissions Review Committee was composed of educators, scientists, math, science, technology, business, and civic leaders from throughout Illinois, along with representatives from the IMSA faculty and staff to evaluate applicant files.

Finance and Administrative Services

- The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) established the Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program to encourage government entities to prepare budget documents of the highest quality that reflect both the guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting and the GFOA's best practices on budgeting, and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal. The GFOA awarded the College its 17th consecutive Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015.
- The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) established the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to encourage government entities to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles and to prepare Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs) that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure. This is the fifth consecutive year the College has received this GFOA award, which is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting.

Advancement

- As of March 31, 2016, year-to-date the Foundation has received \$2,212,090. This does not include the verbal pledges of \$1,100,000.
- On Saturday, April 23, the Foundation will be hosting its second annual donor recognition breakfast. The new name, Realizing Dreams, embodies what donors help Harper students achieve—the realization of their dreams. Founding scholarship donors and members of the Dean's Circle are the breakfast's guests of honor. All 2015-2016 Harper College Educational Foundation scholarship recipients will also be invited to attend. The program will include remarks from a Foundation donor, scholarship recipient, and Dr. Ender.
- On June 13, the Foundation will be hosting the 28th Annual Golf Open at Inverness Golf Club. Event sponsors include DeFranco Plumbing and Robbin Schwartz.
- The Harper College Distinguished Alumni Awards Program recognizes former Harper students who have distinguished themselves in their careers and in their service to the community. The awards program was launched in 2008, as part of the College's 40th Anniversary. To date, 48 individuals have received this prestigious award. In October 2016, five additional stand-out alumni will join this select group during a celebratory reception and

awards ceremony held on campus. The deadline for nominations is Monday, May 16, 2016 at 5 p.m. CST.

Marketing

- More than 1,000 people attended Harper's sixth annual College and Career Expo on Saturday, April 16. The Expo is designed for students in grades 4-8 and their families. The focus is on inspiring these students to explore future educational and career choices through hands-on activities and experiences. Approximately 100 Harper College faculty, staff and students volunteered for the event along with dozens of community partners, including Northrop Grumman, District 214, area public libraries, and local police, fire, and rescue units. Kudos to Community Relations Manager Amie Granger and the College and Career Expo Committee for organizing a truly outstanding event!
- Harper College launched a new blog focusing on student and alumni stories and revitalized its parents' blog with tips for parents of high school students to help them with college planning for their student.
- The Spring High School Open House was held on Saturday, April 1, 2016; 1,066 students and family members submitted an RSVP for the open house with 593 students and family members attending. Data shows an increased use of web page for participation in this event.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- Harper became a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) sponsor which means the College can assist companies with the compliance aspects of the program. This Department of Labor (DOL) designation is unique for community colleges.
- Dr. Rebecca Lake served as a panelist on a national webinar sponsored by DOL's Office of Apprenticeship, explaining how to become an RA program sponsor. More than 400 individuals participated in the webinar.
- The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Harper is collaborating with the credit entrepreneurship program. The two areas are members of each other's advisory committees. In addition, SBDC staff is presenting in credit classes on the business start-up process. Finally, SBDC staff will judge the business pitch project in the entrepreneurship class.
- Dr. Mark Mrozinski is one of forty community college leaders chosen to participate in the inaugural class of the Aspen Presidential Fellow program. This yearlong series of action-driven seminars and mentoring is focused on developing bold community college leaders. Congratulations Mark!
- The Workforce Certification Lab is traveling to District 214 high schools in April to assist in delivering industry certifications on their campuses.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Inclusive Directions: The Role of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) in Community College Leadership was the title of a workshop session that Michelé Smith presented at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Conference on April 10, 2016. Michelé presented along with two other Diversity practitioners from Community Colleges on the east coast. The session provided an overview of the history, reporting structures and responsibilities of Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) on Community College campuses. Clear connections between initiatives led by CDOs and the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) Standards of Professional Practice were outlined during the session. The session attendees included college presidents, chief diversity officers and leaders looking to establish CDO positions on their campuses. The session has also been accepted for presentation at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) early this summer.

Community and Legislative Relations

- The *Daily Herald* ran a front-page centerpiece about how suburban school districts are seeking ways to decrease the number of students needing developmental courses in college. While the data is alarming – the Illinois State Board of Education reported that 48.7 percent of high school graduates enrolled in community colleges need remediation – the article was an opportunity to show the strides being made in the area thanks to Harper's partnerships with its sender high school districts. The *Daily Herald* reporter appeared on *ABC 7 Chicago's* Sunday morning broadcast to discuss the article.
- The *Chicago Tribune* ran an article on the front page of the business section on the increased attention on apprenticeships by insurance and financial services leaders. The article highlights Harper's partnership with Zurich North America and features student Dane Lyons, who quit his job as in car sales to become an apprentice. Lyons said he never would have pursued his new career if the program didn't combine learning with paid work. "It has been very hands-on, as far as the learning goes, before they let us do it on our own."
- The *American Association of Community Colleges' 21st Century Center* wrote a feature on Harper's involvement in College for America's competency-based education model. Harper is one of seven founding members of a consortium created to enable community colleges to explore the platform and partner with area employers to address workforce shortfalls. Dr. Ender told reporter Sonya Stinson that buy-in from area employers will be key. "Ultimately, it's whether or not the employer community would be willing to exchange value – a paycheck, if you will – for a competency-based transcript."
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article and three photos previewing the sixth annual College and Career Expo. *Reflejos* also ran an article previewing the Expo.
- *USA Today* included Harper's partnership with Zurich North America in an article, "Apprenticeships: 'College without the debt.'"
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article about student Kimberly Jimenez, who overcame a severe speech impediment to become an award-winning orator. She's since become a national champion debater.
- Harper's recent budget reductions have been covered by the *Chicago Tribune*, *Daily Herald*, *Associated Press*, *Business Ledger*, *Arlington Heights Post*, *ABC 7*, *CBS 2*, *NBC5*, *WGN*,

and other outlets.

- Professor emeritus Sharon Alter, in a *Daily Herald* article, weighed in on the upcoming U.S. Senate race between incumbent Mark Kirk and Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article about how initiatives such as REACH led to Achieving the Dream's Leah Meyer Austin Award.
- The *Daily Herald*, *Pioneer Press* and *Patch* previewed the Access and Disability Services event Erasing the Distance, which used theater to explore issues of depression, Asperger's syndrome, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- The *Business Ledger* ran a special executive education section and profiled SBDC Manager Tom Cassell.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article about Harper's call for Distinguished Alumni nominations.
- Harper was mentioned in Gov. Bruce Rauner's editorial encouraging lawmakers to work together to end the budget impasse. The op-ed ran in several publications including the *State Journal-Register* and *Huffington Post*.
- The *Daily Herald* wrote about Harper alum and former "American Idol" contestant Haley Reinhart in an article about the long-running hit show's end.
- Throughout March and April, Community Relations has hosted over 900 students for tours. Participating schools include Tarkington Elementary, Twain Elementary, Whitman Elementary, Field Elementary, Kilmer Elementary, and Frost Elementary from school district 21; Paddock Elementary and Winston Campus Jr. High from school district 15; and Eisenhower Junior High from district 54. Students participated in interactive activities representing over 12 programs and departments.
- On April 5 Harper participated in Immanuel Lutheran School's Maker Night. Harper Sustainability Coordinator Amy Bandman provided information to students about sustainability and conducted a game that helps students learn about what items are recyclable.
- Through Harper's Ambassador School program, Sara Mikula conducted a Career Direction Workshop for 72 fifth graders at Sunny Hill Elementary in district 220. Students identified different skills and interests in order to create their Holland Code. Through interactive activities students were then able to learn about their Holland Code and how it relates to career exploration.

May is approaching quickly. That is the time on a college campus for celebrations and congratulations, mainly focused on our students. I hope you will join us for Academic Convocation, Commencement, and many other activities that acknowledge our students and their accomplishments. After all, that is why we are here: to change lives and enhance the communities we serve. What an honorable mission!

Ken