

President's Report

May 2010

I have often remarked that if a President cannot feel good about serving as a College President in May, then that individual should get out of the profession! The events I have experienced already this month provide ample evidence of Harper's continuing excellence. Just last week, we conducted the Academic Convocation and the Student Leadership Awards Banquet. The weekend before, Cathy and I hosted 50 student leaders at our home for a picnic. Every setting was punctuated with student success stories and "the Harper experience." Parents we encountered at the Leadership Banquet and the Convocation were full of Harper stories. They shared with me that Harper has made a significant difference in the life of their son or daughter. These special moments make the challenging days wash away in the glow of realizing what a profound difference a community college makes in the fabric of a life and a community. What a wonderful institution that we are each privileged to serve!

The really special day is just around the corner! Commencement this year promises to be exciting. We have brought commencement back to our campus. And, from the positive feedback and attendance expected, holding commencement at Harper again appears to be a decision that has resonated well with students and faculty alike. We have had more student and faculty confirmations for attendance than we have seen in many years. I am sure that the Governor's presence has helped draw attention to the event. However, people have also shared with me that moving the commencement to campus, on a Sunday afternoon, has been an influencing factor on their decision to attend.

Even as we prepare for commencement, we are preparing for the next two terms, summer and fall, and wrapping up our enrollment reports for the current spring term. FTE enrollment for spring 2010 was up 8.7% compared to last year. This increase represents 435 additional new FTEs, a substantial number of new students to absorb by a faculty and staff not increasing in size. Our summer pre-enrollments are strong, with a current increase of 15% over last year. And, as we prepare for fall, we have already registered 1,000 new students for our summer orientation program.

We have also completed numerous Financial Aid information sessions at Harper and at our area high schools. As a result, more students are applying for aid earlier, which

increases their chances of accessing funds. Clearly, as the quality of community college education continues to be recognized, along with a dramatically affordable price point (compared to other public sector options), we can expect these increases to continue.

As we complete this academic year, I want to recognize some outstanding student and faculty achievements over the past year:

Recognitions

- One hundred student leaders were honored at the annual banquet on May 14 for their accomplishments and leadership in the 50-plus student clubs and organizations on campus.
- Three members of the Harper Harbinger newspaper staff have been recognized for their work by the Illinois Community College Journalism Association (ICCJA) at its spring conference. News Editor Andrea Azzo received second place in the Features category for her article on Balloon Artist Jason Hackenwerth's Harper exhibit; Photo Editor Tiffany Whisler received honorable mention for her Photo Spread of the Installation of President Ender; and Editor-in-Chief Blaire Kleeman received honorable mention in the Opinion category for her article on the movies based on the "Twilight" books.
- Notable awards/presentations for this academic year:
 - Harper Speech & Debate Team won the National Community College championship in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Fifteen of Harper's twenty-seven speeches won awards.
 - The Student Senate won the Illinois Community College Student Activities Association's "Ed Snyder Merit Book Award." It is the 10th consecutive year Harper's Student Senate has won the award. No other school in the state has won the award more than five times.
 - Sheryl Otto, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, won the Distinguished Service to the Profession Award from NASPA Region IV-East.
 - Tom L. Thompson won the AHEAD Honor for Meritorious Contribution award from the Association on Higher Education and Disability.
 - Twelve faculty, staff and administrators in Student Affairs have made 14 presentations at local, regional and national conferences.
- Athletic Highlights 2009-2010
 - Wrestling – National Champions/Coach of the Year, District Champions, 7 All-Americans
 - Men's Soccer – Region IV Runner-up, 3 All Conference Players
 - Women's Soccer – Region IV Runner-Up, 7 All Conference Players

- Volleyball – 2 All Conference Players, 1 All-American, NJCAA Player of the Week NJCAA Leaders for Life Award Winner
- Men's Cross Country – Region IV Runner-up, 1 All-American
- Women's Cross Country – Region IV Champions/Coach of the Year, 6th in Nation
- Men's Basketball – 1 All Conference Player
- Women's Basketball – Season Record 19-10, 1 All Conference Player, 1 All-American
- Men's Track and Field – Region IV Champions/Coach of the Year, 3rd in Nation, 1 All-American
- Women's Track and Field – Region IV Champions/Coach of the Year, 4th in Nation, 2 All Americans
- Softball – 2 All Conference Players
- Baseball – 2 All Conference Players (season is still in progress)

Two outstanding student-athletes were named Harper's Athletes of the Year: Wrestling's Jordan Bakley and Basketball's Peggy Parhas. Bakley had also been named the most valuable player for the Hawks, received the NJCAA's All American recognition, the NJCAA's Leaders for Life Award, and the Athletic Academic Award given to Harper athletes who have completed two years with a 3.0 cumulative GPA or better. Parhas had previously been honored as MVP for her team, received honorable mention in the NJCAA's All-American category, and received the Athletic Academic Award. Harper's Athlete of the Year Award is presented at the annual Student Activities Banquet to two athletes who excelled both in the classroom and in athletics.

The College also saw a number of special accomplishments in the academic affairs division. Dr. Skold and her staff are commended for the following:

- Completed agreement with NIU to offer a bachelor's degree program in Public Safety;
- Initiated northern Illinois community colleges articulation conversations with NIU;
- Completed two memos of understanding with the Faculty Senate:
 1. Created dual credentialing opportunity for faculty.
 2. Automated routine promotions represented by seniority and professional development;
- Implemented the annual schedule of classes, thereby reducing workload and increasing information to students;
- Started "Weekend Advantage" program, allowing students to complete AA degrees by attending weekend classes, if they choose;
- Initiated two new AAS programs: Health Information Technology and Human Services;

- Joined the Illinois Community College Sustainability Network;
- Opened the Simulated Hospital wing in the Avanté Center;
- Served over 2000 unemployed and underemployed adults through Career Stimulus and the Professional Advancement and Learning Center.

As the academic year draws to a close, we say goodbye to many students who have become very special to the College community. Notably, Carl Evans will be graduating this year, and he will be missed. Carl has been an extremely effective Student Senate President and has served the student body and the College well.

We also bid farewell to J. Michael Thomson, our ACE Fellow. J. Michael returns to Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) and prepares to assume the position of leading the new CCC West Shore campus. It has been an honor working with J. Michael this year, and we thank him for choosing Harper as a host institution. He has set a very high standard for the next ACE Fellow who may choose to work with us.

I hope to see many of our Board members and colleagues at the reception Cathy and I are hosting at the house after graduation. Also, I wish to alert the Board that we will be taking a little holiday May 30 – June 6. I will be back on campus on June 7.

Regards,

Ken