

President's Report

May 2015

This report comes two days after a very successful graduation ceremony. The entire event and day were spectacular with over 3,500 degrees and certificates conferred and almost 600 students participating in the ceremony. We had a very impressive number of faculty and staff join us and the day truly felt like an institutional celebration.

Our commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient, Laurie Stone, did a fabulous job! Her remarks to the graduates were grounded in a lifetime of wisdom learned from the many leadership and service activities that shaped her life. I was particularly impressed with the crowd's response to her suggestion to abandon social media for a day and engage in face-to-face conversation. That note touched a nerve, one that we should pay attention to. Often, it seems, that social media promotes some form of perceived anonymity and occasionally promotes remarks that would probably be better said in a face-to-face setting. Personally, I want to encourage more of the latter throughout the College.

Our first summer session began on May 18. Overall, we are still running behind last summer's enrollment numbers, but are slowly catching up and have gained enrollment. A few weeks ago, we were down by 15% and are now experiencing a 6% decline from last year. Our main eight-week session which begins June 8 will provide a better indication of where summer enrollment will land.

Over the past several weeks, there has been a fair amount of unsettledness among the faculty regarding the vetting of the new strategic plan. There have been spirited conversations along with some misinformation that may have caused more confusion than clarity. I want to provide my perspective around the development of the new strategic plan as it undergoes review by the campus community and the shared governance process.

First, there was a good bit of apprehension regarding the strategic planning process. The plan, focusing on Inclusion, Engagement, and Achievement, was perceived by some as emerging without sufficient faculty input. The development of the Strategic Plan followed the same path as our current plan and has included one of our shared governance committees, the Strategic Planning and Accountability Committee (SPA) which includes eight faculty members, one from each Division. Some faculty members have also expressed concern that they were not sufficiently informed of the plan, and the process leading up to the plan. So, to assure buy-in and informed faculty input, we are going to continue the process over the summer months. In September, we will update the Board by reviewing and discussing the wording of the strategic directions and goals as presented for the first reading in the College's shared governance process. We will then request that the Board adopt the final plan either at a special Board meeting in October or during the regular meeting in November. Over the summer, planning

teams with representation from all employee groups, will work together to assure the language of the plan conveys student success strategies we all can support.

The two most contentious aspects of the strategic plan concern the goals related to curriculum and instruction, and guided student pathways. With respect to curriculum and instruction, more clarity is needed with respect to the intended meaning of the goal. The current SPA draft reads: “Adopt faculty directed changes to curriculum and instruction that are responsive to evolving student needs.” Some faculty have expressed apprehension about this goal statement and would like to see more clarity related to the outcomes of the goal. Because this goal directly relates to students’ classroom experiences, we should ensure this shared meaning is jointly developed. The strategies that will shape ways in which the College faculty respond to evolving student needs will ultimately require faculty involvement and direction. Over the summer, a work group will attempt to put more definition to this goal so that faculty will be able to express confidence in the language and support outcomes that this goal suggests.

The other major faculty concern relates to “guided student pathways.” Some faculty believe that if this goal is adopted as currently expressed, students will lose flexibility and free-will in choosing courses. As I have listened to feedback about this goal, I believe there is a lack of clarity about the intent of guided student pathways. We are encouraging faculty who wish to learn more about pathways to read *Redesigning America’s Community Colleges*, the book I recently shared with the Board. The concept of guided pathways has at its core two fundamental outcomes: assuring that degree seeking students know which courses will count towards a degree, and ensuring that their degree prepares them well for employment or allows them to transfer without loss of credits to the institution of their choice. I am encouraging our faculty to join me over the summer in a discussion of this book and the pathways model so that we can learn together how the approach could assist us with student success strategies.

A third major faculty discussion, which is not directly related to the strategic plan, has been taking place in the Division of Academic Enrichment and Engagement. This is the Division led by Dean Kenya Ayers who will be spending next year on another college campus as an ACE Fellow. The faculty in the Division are concerned about an interim organizational design Provost Marwick has announced to provide leadership while Kenya is away. There are three Departments in the Division: Developmental English and Reading, Adult Education and Literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL), which offers developmental reading and writing for second language students. The interim plan calls for Developmental English and Reading along with ESL to report to the Dean of Liberal Arts (the Division that houses one developmental writing course and all credit-bearing English courses). Adult Education will report directly to the Provost who will work closely with the Director of Adult Education. We will also be selecting someone to serve in the role of Associate Dean supporting division operations. The faculty in the Division prefer to have the entire Division report to an Interim Dean. Judy has listened to their concerns and rationale and is considering their input.

The end of an academic year brings pressures to proctor exams, grade final assignments, and post grades. Some of these pressures may have exacerbated the tension around issues of re-organization and the new strategic plan. Ultimately, our goal is to be more successful with more students which means examining new approaches. The discussions we are having around curriculum, instruction and pathways are exactly the ones we should be having. With respect to the organizational design, assuring a structure that provides capable and steady leadership during an interim period is a sound goal, and one I am confident we will provide.

This last month has been a busy one for everyone. Below please find the highlights of the College’s activities.

Student Success

- On May 6 Harper held its annual Honors Convocation. The ceremony was held in the Performing Arts Center and honored Harper's most academically successful students. During the event over 100 students were recognized for their excellence. Several faculty and community members were also honored during the event.
 - The Motorola Solutions Foundation Award for Excellence was presented to Daniel Legut. Daniel was recognized for his outstanding achievements in academics, extracurricular activities, and customer service.
 - The David K. Hill Memorial award was presented to Agnes Mynarska. Agnes was recognized for her commitment to academics, the community, and her strength of character.
 - Ala Hashemi-Haeri received the James T. Brown Memorial Award. Ala was recognized as the most outstanding Honors Student who excelled both in academics and service.
 - Kathi Nevels was named the Motorola Distinguished Faculty Member. Professor Nevels has been a counseling faculty member at Harper for 12 years and has been a part of several successful student success initiatives. Dean Sheryl Otto said of Professor Nevels, "It is challenging to sum up the impact a single individual can have on an institution . . . however, I can say, without hesitation, that Kathi has left her mark in truly measurable, sustainable and transformative ways."
 - Harper Trustee, William "Bill" Kelley, received the Dr. James J. McGrath Award. Bill was recognized for his dedication to Harper College and his strong commitment to community service.
 - Wayne Johnson was recognized with the Professor Powell and Larry Moats Extra Five Minutes Award which honors a faculty member who often offers extra time and assistance to students. Faculty are nominated for the award by students.
- At the International Phi Theta Kappa convention in San Antonio, Texas, held April 16-19, the Phi Phi Chapter at Harper College was named one of the top 100 chapters in the society.
- The Testing Center in collaboration with IT developed a fully automated system for uploading AP test scores, and converting them into college credit. Annually, an average of 1,750 AP exams are submitted by students, and an average 1,500 credit courses are awarded as a result. Manually entering the scores, posting the credits and notifying students would take two weeks. Now with the fully automated system, the whole process from beginning to end will be completed within one business day of receiving the scores. This represents a 90% increase in efficiency in the value-added activity of updating a student's academic record, which benefits both students and counselors in having the most up-to-date view of a student's background to assist in academic planning.
- On April 15, Admissions Outreach along with the Health Careers Division hosted an information session for over 130 prospective students. Those in attendance learned more about program information as well as career and educational opportunities in the health care field.

- Access & Disability Services held the ninth annual Tom Thompson Award ceremony on Tuesday April 21. This award was created as a way of recognizing students with disabilities who had overcome tremendous obstacles to succeed academically at Harper. Eight students were recognized during the 2015 ceremony.
- Each year students with disabilities and the Access and Disabilities Services staff nominate outstanding employees at Harper and community liaisons who have made serving students with disabilities a priority. The Just Desserts award is a way for ADS staff to show appreciation for the dedicated work of individuals who partner with ADS. The 2015 Just Desserts Awardees are: Gabriela Aguilera, Joe Aquilina, Stephanie Burak, Karega Cooper, Karie Frazier, Bo'Lynne Modzelewski, Sue Nowakowski, and Becki Suthers.
- April was Autism Awareness Month. This year the Access and Disability Services Office collaborated with several partners to raise awareness about Autism. ADS partnered with LAND-ERG, Little City, Career Skills Institute, Lutheran Charities and Northwest Behavioral Health Services to provide awareness events. On April 2, the Performing Arts Center was light blue for World Autism Day. With the growing incidence of Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADS was pleased to be able to provide information and awareness on something that probably touches all of our lives.
- On April 16, Access and Disability Services held its Annual Parent/Student Information Night. The purpose of this event is to assist prospective students from our area high schools and their parents with the transition to Harper College and Disability Services. The event consisted of a panel presentation by ADS staff and ADS students, followed by audience questions. After the presentation, the staff was available to answer any individual questions asked by the parents and students. Approximately 175 people were in attendance.
- Harper's 11th Annual Deaf Coed Volleyball Tournament for high school and college teams was a smashing success with 16 teams participating. Approximately 500 fans attended the tournament. The tournament wouldn't have been possible without the 55 volunteers (both deaf adults and ASL/ITP students from four different colleges) and 12 referees (all experienced deaf adults). Harper won the college tournament.
- On May 2, the Public Safety programs held their Public Safety Practicum. This year was the largest practicum event ever held at Harper. The event involved 40 students, 12 faculty members and other support staff from Harper College. Local police and fire departments were also included.
- The Athletic Department completed a successful year and was recognized with a series of 2015 honors:
 - Director of Athletics and Fitness, Doug Spiwak, was elected by the NJCAA Region IV Board of Directors as the Assistant Region Director for Women's Sports.
 - Baseball player Kurt Becker was named Male Athlete of the Year.
 - Volleyball player, Meghan Chartier was named Female Athlete of the Year.
 - The women's softball team finished the season as Region IV DIII Runner-up. They lost to the defending national champion, Rock Valley College. This is their best finish since 2000.

- The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association announced the inaugural NJCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Regional Athletes and Coaches of the Year for the 2015 season. The following Harper students were chosen: Men's Track Athlete of the Year, Juan Barajas; Women's Track Athlete of the Year, Leah Kloss; Men's Coach of the Year in the Central Region, Renee Zellner; and Men and Women's Assistant Coach of the Central Region, Jim Macnider

Facilities Management

- Bidding for the Outdoor Amphitheater and Pedestrian Mall project is complete. A recommendation to award the work will be brought to the May Board of Trustees meeting.
- Construction is scheduled to start shortly for the North Campus Pedestrian Bridge Project. Replacement of the current bridge is necessary due to deterioration from flooding. The new bridge will be installed at a higher elevation and be completed by the start of fall semester.
- In addition to placing our Hospitality project on hold, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) also placed the Harper Professional Center and Learning and Career Center Parking Lot Reconstruction project on hold. The latter is 100% State-funded, but may have to be rebid for completion in the summer of 2016 if not released soon.
- Construction on the new Advanced Manufacturing Lab project has started. The project remains on schedule for an October completion.
- An extensive amount of sidewalk repair work on campus is scheduled to begin shortly. Due to the severe winter of 2013-2014, and a substantial increase in concrete pricing, last year's annual maintenance was postponed. Facilities is planning to bring a second recommendation to the Board later this summer, with the intent of completing more work this fall, to ensure all sidewalks return to an annual maintenance and repair cycle.
- Construction for the Phase I and II improvements at the Learning and Career Center in Prospect Heights is moving along well. Anticipated completion is scheduled for mid-Summer.

Information Technology

- Harper College was selected by The Center for Digital Education (CDE) as a Top Ten Award winner in its National Digital Community Colleges Survey. In its tenth year, the survey analyzes how community colleges use digital technologies to improve services to students, faculty, staff, and the community at large.
- Gloria Plaza and Brian Thomason presented at the annual Association of College and University Telecommunications Administrators (ACUTA) conference. Their presentation addressed the Harper Information Technology's team approach to Business Continuity (BC) planning. They showcased the in-house developed website that is the central portal to the BC plan. This website is used to send alerts, contact vendors, look up inventory, perform an incident assessment, and many other functions that are critical at a time of service impacting incident.
- The Information Technology team completed the implementation of AIM, an Access and Disability Services (ADS) system. AIM provides comprehensive accommodation, appointment, and case management capabilities. The ADS team continues to work on readying the system to use for students.

- The Information Technology team partnered with Enrollment Services to develop systematic capability to award students with credit from their AP scores. The Enrollment Services team developed and implemented changes to the Student Information System, as well as other systems, in order to deliver this new functionality.

Human Resources

- On April 30, Harper celebrated and recognized the efforts of its employees as part of its fourth annual spring recognition event, Spring Fest, with over 350 employees attending. This year's event had a "Kentucky Derby" themed lunch with a sundae bar, which was served to employees by the President's Cabinet. A major part of the event was a clothing and accessories drive, resulting in a significant donation to Women in Need Growing Stronger (WINGS).

Finance and Administrative Services

- The current campus vending agreement for cold beverages, hot beverages, and snacks expires on June 30, 2015. After reviewing several proposals, Sodexo has been selected as best able to meet the vending needs of the College, while also providing the greatest projected financial return of at least \$326,250 over the three years of the contract ending June 30, 2018. In addition to the agreement with Sodexo for vending services, the College is exercising its option to renew the agreement with Pepsi Beverages Company for one year to exclusively sell Pepsi-based drinks on campus. This agreement is projected to provide an additional \$69,000 to the College for the one-year extension.

Advancement

- The Turpin Family was honored with the naming of the Turpin Fashion Design Equipment Room in Building H. Shirley Turpin also received a special tribute award of Harper College Alumni Achievement Award for Lifelong Learning.

The Turpin family has been involved and attended Harper College spanning over an almost fifty year period. Shirley Turpin started at Harper College in 1968 where she received a degree in fashion design. She continued to take classes in theatre, art and speech for the next twenty years.

Following in Shirley's footsteps all three of Shirley and Howard Turpin's children (Robin, Carron and Laurie) attended and graduated from Harper College. In addition, Howard was an adjunct marketing professor. Through the passion for education and their ongoing generosity in supporting student access, the Turpin Family established the Shirley L. and Howard A. Turpin Scholarship for Dreamer. This scholarship allows students who have dreams for the future, regardless of age, to receive support to achieve their goals.

- The Professor Powell and Larry Moats Extra Five Minutes Faculty Award was created in 2012 by Larry Moats, a former member of the Harper College Board of Trustees and a Harper Distinguished Alumni Honoree, in memory of his Harper College mentor, Professor Robert Powell.

Professor Powell was a founding faculty member of Harper College and a beloved English teacher and Dean of Liberal Arts. He passed away at the age of 92 in 2011. Larry created the

endowed award to recognize a faculty member who has inspired students, given them extra time and made a difference in their lives.

Recipients for the Professor Powell and Larry Moats Extra Five Minutes Faculty Award are selected based on the feedback and input from students. This year's recipient is Dr. Wayne Johnson.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- The Career Skills Institute, which offers courses that develop life and work-based skills to adults with intellectual disabilities, held its second graduation ceremony and reception. Students, family members and friends enjoyed a touching ceremony that honored these special students.
- The College hosted a meeting of the Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition (NIWC). Workforce directors and community college staff from seven counties and ten community colleges met to discuss the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as apprenticeships.
- Targeted job fairs have been held throughout the year. In the past, Harper has hosted one large job fair in the gym. Instead, targeted job fairs focus on specific disciplines. Employers come to campus, set up information tables and gather resumes and applications from students. These fairs are held throughout campus—in close proximity to the program of study. The most recent targeted job fair produced wonderful results for our students. Five students in the welding and manufacturing programs were hired by one area company!

Diversity and Inclusion

- Harper College has joined the Minority Male Community College Collaborative (M2C3) National Consortium on College Men of Color. Participation in the M2C3 Consortium will enhance Harper's commitment to improving the success of historically underrepresented and underserved students, including men of color. Our engagement in M2C3 will also enhance professional development for faculty and staff, enable informed interventions for current programs serving men of color, and inspire new initiatives addressing challenges facing these men.
- In the spirit of our Core Values of Collaboration and Excellence, the leaders of our three Employee Resources Groups (ERGs) worked closely with marketing services to develop a joint brochure highlighting the mission and goals of each of the ERGs. These new brochures will be shared with incoming and current employees as a means of demonstrating our commitment to diversity and creating an inclusive working environment.

Communications and Legislative Relations

- On April 30 School Ambassadors hosted Harper information tables at three District 59 schools' portfolio sharing nights. Parents and students received information about Promise, InZone, Inspire U, the Harper Dental Clinic, the Harper Library, and Adult Education Services.
- On May 8 Community Relations hosted 25 4th and 5th graders from Lincoln Elementary School in District 15 for a campus tour. Students participated in activities in chemistry, architecture, nursing and theatre.

- Dr. Kenya Ayers, AEE Division Dean, coordinated an in-school field trip for the kindergarten and 3rd grade classes at Frost Elementary as part the Ambassador program. Students participated in Physical Geography and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) activities developed by ECE faculty member, Tara Mathien and Geography faculty member, Mukila Maitha. Four Early Childhood Education students also attended to help facilitate the activities. Bilingual staff members, Jennifer Brennan, Celina Ocampo and Margie McGowan also supported the event.
- In Springfield, the Illinois Senate passed Senate Bill 806 the Student Transfer Achievement Act. Under the bill, a community college student who graduates with an Associate's degree in a transfer program would be granted junior status at all state public universities. These transfer students, who remain in the same major, would not be required to take more credit hours than a native student in order to earn a bachelor's degree. The bill's chief sponsor in the Senate was Senator Dan Kotowski. Representative Fred Crespo is the bill's chief sponsor in the House.
- News stories about Harper that appeared in the local media included:
 - Laurie's Stone's commencement speech which encouraged graduates to work hard, be optimistic and turn off social media occasionally was featured in the *Daily Herald*. The link is here: <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20150516/submitted/150518960/>
 - The *Daily Herald* also did a feature piece on Laurie's Stone's retirement from the Board of trustees and her work on behalf of Harper over the past 15 years. <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20150508/news/150508856/>
 - A crime scene reenactment organized by Harper's public safety program was covered by the *Daily Herald*. The story was featured in print and online and included a video of fire department divers simulating a search and rescue in Harper's pond. <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20150502/news/150509714/>

This month I will be participating in the Board meeting by teleconference. I was asked by a dear colleague, Dr. Casey Crabill, President of Onondaga Community College in Syracuse NY, to provide an address to her community regarding "the community college of the future." Dr. Crabill provided similar assistance to me while we both served as presidents in New Jersey. Although I do not wish to miss the Board meeting, I felt obligated to support my colleague. Thus, I will join you by phone for our May meeting.

Next week, Cathy and I will be in Virginia for some rest and relaxation and will return to campus on June 2. I hope many of you can join us at the Harper Golf Outing on June 8 as we officially launch the summer season and raise money for student scholarships!

Ken