

President's Report July 2009

July has been a big month for the College. A new President arrived! Over the course of the last several weeks, we have all been working hard to determine how best to align our schedules, work products, decision making and leadership in ways that reflect the development of a new team and a new era at Harper. It's a work in progress!

Also in July, we have been busy formulating goals, finalizing budgets and building enrollments. With respect to enrollments, our summer enrollment is up significantly. Our current FTE is 3,102 or up a little over 7.5%. Our fall enrollment is currently running a little over 6% above last year. As we see more and more traditional age college students and adults accessing us, these numbers will grow. It has been particularly pleasing to our staff to see many students using the Banner system, and particularly a feature called MyFinAid, that allows a student to check the status of their applications in real time. This is also invaluable to our staff, as many phone calls are avoided.

Sometimes, no matter what the status of student finances are, some run into a short term bind for a few bucks. We are proud to report that the faculty and staff in Harper's Multicultural Learning Center have banded together to establish a new Emergency Fund for students in need. We want to congratulate the staff for establishing this fund, and thank Associate Dean Laura LaBauve-Maher for her leadership.

As we are enrolling new students, we are also welcoming their parents with a newly revamped Parent Orientation program. We have had over 500 students participate this summer. To a parent, all have reported feeling that they will be in a better position to help their sons and daughters as a result of the Orientation.

As the summer term draws to a close, students and faculty are preparing for final exams which will occur next week. The week following, faculty and students will enjoy a couple of weeks of break prior to the new semester beginning. We will welcome new staff and faculty as we begin the fall semester

One can walk around the campus and get a sense of the College staff preparing for the fall semester. Many, many facility projects will start and finish this month and next. One that we are pleased to report is complete is the renovations to the Stadium. Board members will note new sod, new portable visitor side bleachers and, if you look carefully, a field on grade! Despite what you read about "running down hill," the field is really supposed to be level!

We are completing the upgrades that were planned to the swimming pool, and now have broader lanes and starting blocks for external swim team use. We

were particularly delighted to learn that the US Olympic Swim Team was interested in practicing in our facility and will be in our pool September 16-19 in the early morning hours.

A lot of folks work very hard every day to make our campus inviting and pleasing to the eye. Many work “behind the scenes” doing work that most of us are not even aware was done; yet we would notice had it not been. I want to particularly salute the work of our maintenance crews and Conference Center staff who did a superb job in turning what could have been a disaster into a remarkable event. Last month, the College provided space for a job fair sponsored by U.S. Representative Mark Kirk. The staff expected fewer than 500 folks to attend... 1600 did. In short order, our staff did a superb job of rearranging company tables on the fly to relieve what was quickly becoming an overcrowded situation. The Congressman’s staff, which had never held a job fair before, were very appreciative of the quick work and the professionalism of Harper employees. Kudos to all!

For me it has been a remarkable start. I’m more excited about the opportunity here than I was when the Board first elected me President. And, I was pretty excited then, if you recall! I’m surely aware that we “make a difference” at Harper College. And that the potential is here to do so on a grand scale. We have a lot to do. We are surrounded by “insurmountable” opportunity. And we intend to make “no little plans.” Thank you, members of the Board, for bringing me to William Rainey Harper College.