

President's Report

September 2010

The temperatures have cooled a bit in September, but student engagement activities continue to warm up! This week, we held a very festive *Hullabaloo* celebration featuring fun activities such as photos in the "Big Red Chair" and handwriting analysis. Students were provided the opportunity to learn about our clubs and organizations, and become familiar with on-campus departments and support services. Of course, the best way to attract students is with free food and we had plenty! The event was sponsored by the Campus Activities Board and thanks go out to the many people who planned and executed this wonderful event.

We have learned of two awards that will soon be presented to the College. First, Kurt Hemmer and Tom Knoff were informed that their film *Wow! Ted Joans Lives!*, which will premiere at the Berkeley Video & Film Festival on September 25, received the Grand Festival Award for Art Documentary. Also, Harper's student government will be presented with a leadership award from the Illinois Community College Student Activities Association in November. Congratulations are due to all involved in these initiatives.

On September 10, we hosted a Strategic Planning Teams "Draft" where our Goal Leaders staffed the teams that will activate the nine goals that were developed as part of the community strategic planning process. All who volunteered, and there were 170 faculty, staff and administrators who did, were placed on work teams! This is a wonderful testament to the commitment, dedication and excitement that has been created around the strategic plan.

To ensure that we are successful in our attempts to produce 10,604 additional graduates with degrees and certificates, institutional effectiveness measures are being vetted and discussed. These measures will help us determine what is working and, perhaps more importantly, what is not working. Benchmarks are important in this process so we will be looking at comparable community colleges to help us determine how we are doing. The ultimate goal is to provide transparent information to the community in the form of a dashboard that highlights Harper's progress toward meeting established goals.

A regional workforce planning meeting has been scheduled for the afternoon of September 28 at the Wojcik Conference Center. I have invited presidents from 15 neighboring community colleges to meet with Byron Zuidema, Region 5 Administrator, for the workforce system. In addition, Jennifer Stasch, Director of the Workforce Board of Northern Cook County, has invited workforce directors from the regions associated with these community colleges to attend. We will be discussing ways we can collaborate to help leverage resources and gain access to valuable grant dollars. In addition, I have asked 10 community college presidents and executives from community colleges in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri and Kentucky to attend a meeting that evening

to meet with Byron and discuss possible regional consortiums. Byron has been very gracious with his time and we plan to make the most of his availability.

The Village of Schaumburg has approved the use of Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) service to Harper College, at a cost of \$2 each way, for Harper students living in Schaumburg. Normally, DART can only be used within the municipal boundaries of Schaumburg. In effect, Harper College is the only location DART provides service to outside of Schaumburg. Harper students living in Schaumburg can now call 90-minutes prior to pick-up, and a DART vehicle will pick them up at their door and drive them to Harper College, or any location within Schaumburg. This is a viable transportation option for students who don't own a car, are physically disabled and unable to drive, or want to reduce their carbon footprint by using public transportation.

Student FTE enrollment is 10,045 which reflects an increase of 3% as compared to last Fall. Our budget calls for an overall 5.5% forecasted increase in FTE enrollment; 4% covers expenses and 1.5% is for contingency. We are closely monitoring enrollment to ensure the budget is viable. Late start classes are being promoted to encourage students, primarily adults, to begin classes now. Overall, neighboring community colleges are reporting much lower increases than last year.

Increased enrollment has placed greater demands on our people and systems:

- The work load within the Office of Student Financial Assistance continues to be demanding. To date, we have awarded \$8.8 million in aid to students, which is a 66.6% increase from last year. Also, 3,350 students have been served. This represents a 62.1% increase over last year.
- On August 23, the MyHarper Student Portal experienced an all-time high in student visits, 55,835! Most visits were recorded in the registration section of the portal. This tool allows students to search and register for courses, and check their class schedule. The system performed flawlessly during this peak period, as response time and system availability remained at optimal levels.
- Cafeteria sales are up almost 12% from the same period last Fall for the first two weeks of the semester, with record sales at all sites, the main cafeteria and the three satellite locations. Through the master planning process we have learned that the current kitchen and serving areas are in dire need of improvement. In spite of these challenges, Food Service is doing an admirable job serving staff, students and visitors.

Below is an update on a few of the many physical plant projects that are underway:

- New Chiller Plant: All mechanical components have been installed and the plant has been started. Control systems are being programmed, and various tests and system balancing are taking place. Site restoration including grading, irrigation, new sidewalk and sod has begun.
- HPC: HVAC & Roof Replacement – The HVAC portion of this project is substantially complete and in operation with all of the old units removed. The new main electrical panels have been installed and re-wiring is complete. Roofing work is approaching 80% complete. The metal panels for the east half of the rooftop screen walls have been delivered. The west half screening will follow completion of the roofing. The entire project is expected to be complete by the end of September.

This project was especially difficult to schedule since major building systems were being replaced while students, faculty, office staff, and four dental businesses tried to carry on their business as usual. We learned that construction projects of this nature should not be undertaken without relocating classes and events, and fully vacating the work areas impacted.

- J-Theater Renovations: Ceiling demolition was completed followed by the installation of a new layer of acoustic insulation. Reinforcement of the old catwalks is complete and the new egress ladder behind the stage is being installed. Harper's acoustical consultant issued final details for sound control deflectors which will add some cost to the project. This project is expected to be complete by early December.

We are planning for a fun weekend on October 23 when Grand Rapids Community College comes to town for the *Twin Bowl*. We have invited "twins" who are current students, alumni, community members and football fans to attend the game and help toss the opening game coin. I hope everyone can come out for the game and help cheer our football team on to victory.

Enjoy this cooler football weather. Go Hawks!

Ken