

President's Report

September 2012

We have completed four weeks of the Fall 2012 term. Time certainly does fly! Students have settled into their courses and faculty are immersed in their instructional plans. It's important to note that although the semester is well underway, Harper also offers late start classes—thus staff are busy and continue to offer critical services to engage and enroll our students.

The launch of the fall semester brought us the opportunity to “test” our new parking lots and traffic configurations on the north side of campus. Some difficulties were encountered, as can be expected with a large construction program that impacts parking and traffic on a commuter campus. Much of that has been alleviated with the opening of the newly repurposed Roselle entrance. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of the month. Although the hot dry weather has been challenging in many respects, it provided us with perfect conditions to complete this project on schedule. Kudos to Tom Crylen and his staff for managing this complex project. We look forward to experiencing the enhanced safety and greater amount of green space this project brings to the campus.

On September 7, we were treated to a wonderful keynote address by Anne Pramagiorre, CEO and President of ComEd. This was in honor of the 100 Influential Women Breakfast, an annual fundraiser supporting our Women's Program. Anne's comments cleverly used lessons from kindergarten to frame ways we need to view today's world. Simple yet important lessons included viewing failure as a step to success, managing by wandering around and speaking to people, and expecting all employees to provide leadership. These points were articulated in a heartwarming and realistic manner. Our Foundation staff did a wonderful job organizing the event. Also, many thanks go to Rita Canning for recommending and engaging Anne as the keynote speaker.

We continue to monitor our enrollment which unfortunately is less than anticipated. I have asked Ron Ally to provide quarterly updates on the budgetary impact of the enrollment shortfall. We continue to monitor and control expenses and current estimates show that we will realize a balanced budget. On a positive note, we are attracting a higher percentage of high school seniors. The current penetration rate is 35% which represents the highest ever!

Our strategic planning goal leaders met recently to review their planned work for the year. Enthusiasm is high and many strategies complementing the student success theme will be pursued. We also continue to look for sustainable scalable projects that can be absorbed into our regular operations. The new focus this year is on the first 15 credit hours and strategies to ensure students successfully complete these courses. Research suggests that success with the first 15 credit hours leads to ongoing persistence and completion. Judy Marwick and Tom Dowd

are leading this effort for the College and will provide updates on new trials/pilots and progress with this new initiative.

This week, I begin my three-year appointment as a Board member of the newly formed Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. Karin Norington-Reaves, CEO of the Partnership, spoke at a recent regional workforce/community college meeting held at Harper. The goals of that group are aligned with the initiatives we have undertaken this year—to review job placement services and how well we connect our students to local employment opportunities. A task force led by Mark Mrozinski and Patty Bruner has been charged with looking at ways to enhance job placement services at Harper. This group includes members from business and industry, as well as a Harper alumnus.

Listed below are activities and achievements that have occurred over the past month.

Student Success

- Kevin Long has been selected to receive the Illinois Theatre Association's *2012 Award of Excellent in College/University Theatre*. Kevin was selected by his peers for this prestigious award. His work was cited as being a major component to the success of theatre in Illinois. Kevin will be presented with the award at the Association's annual gala later this month.
- Sheryl Otto has been invited by Terry O'Banion, President Emeritus, League for Innovation, to participate with him on a panel for a forum on academic advising at the AACCC convention in April. The session will support the monograph the Association is publishing and in which Harper has a featured article.
- Student Activities sponsored the fall 2012 Welcome Week from August 20 – August 23 to provide a warm Harper welcome to new and returning students. Over 1900 students stopped by welcome tables in academic buildings which were hosted by Harper staff and administrators, and over 500 students participated in other events such as "Karaoke on the Quad", a Snow Cone Giveaway, and a WHCM Live Remote. Both PACE and DART provided representatives to support Transportation Day during Welcome Week, and these representatives were able to share information with students about public transportation options to campus.
- The Harper men's cross country team won the Eighth Annual Harper Hawk Invite. They defeated Elgin Community College, College of DuPage, and Joliet Junior College.
- The women's volleyball team is currently ranked 4th in the Nation. Setter Kelly Sommers (Buffalo Grove High School) was named NJCAA DIII Volleyball Player of the Week after directing the Hawks to six victories to start the season. Sommers chalked up double-double performances in six of her seven appearances, registering 46 assists and 19 digs in a five-set win over McHenry County College.
- Dr. Wayne Johnson, Law Enforcement coordinator and noted mob expert, was interviewed by the Biography Channel regarding the well-documented history of the infamous gangster Frank Calabrese.

- Fire Science coordinator Sam Giordano has been appointed to the Illinois Department of Public Health Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance, represented the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association.
- Dean of Career Programs, Sally Griffith, served as a panelist for a Best Practice Session at a meeting honoring *Chicago's Best and Brightest Companies to Work For*. The topic for the panel was "Dynamics of a Changing Workforce: Finding Critical Skills and the Knowledge Gap."
- Kenya Ayers, Dean of Academic Enrichment and Engagement, and faculty members Ellen Fisher and Alice Roberts, accompanied 42 students from the International Club to a comprehensive tour of Chicago, which included Daley Plaza, the Art Institute, Millennium Park and a 90-minute lake/river cruise.
- Associate Professor Nancy Davis has published a short story in the upcoming spring issue of *Cooweescoowee*, a journal of arts and letters.
- Roger Kolman, adjunct faculty members, was presented with a special Astronomical League award for his long time service as chair of the Peltier Committee.
- Library Professor Jim Edstrom, has been appointed chair of the statewide CARLI, I-Share Acquisitions and Serials team.

Human Resources

- A significant majority of unit adjunct faculty members voted in favor of the proposed new contract between the Harper College Unit Adjunct Faculty Association (HCAFA) and the College. The parties engaged in Interest Based Bargaining to negotiate the proposed new contract. The unit was represented by Rob Alexander, Arlene Bublik, Joanne Meyerhoff, Charmain Tashjian, and Gary Wilson. Administration was represented by Brian Knetl, Judy Marwick, Sheryl Otto, and Roger Spayer. Laura Branski was the recorder.
- Professor William "Bill" Punkay was recognized at the All Campus Meeting on the opening day of the fall semester. Professor Punkay has been with Harper since its first teaching semester in August, 1967 and is a charter faculty member of the College. In all, Professor Punkay has taught for 45 years at William Rainey Harper College, 32 years as a full-time faculty member and the last 13 years as an adjunct faculty member.

Physical Plant

- The favorable weather has kept construction on the north side of campus on schedule. All parking lots were available for the first day of fall semester and the Roselle Road entrance was reopened last Monday to all traffic. The remaining work is isolated to service drives and the roadway directly in front of the Wojcik Conference Center. Weather permitting, this final stage of improvements should be completed within the next month. We would like to thank the entire campus community for their continued patience through construction.

Information Technology

- The development of a workflow in the Student Information System that allows for grade changes to be electronically submitted and processed was completed, replacing a paper-based process that required hand delivery for approvals and no ability to systematically track the request. The new system automatically routes the electronic request to the appropriate approvers and provides status information.
- The development and deployment of the My Grades mobile application, which provides students with the capability to check final course grades from their mobile device, has been completed and updated to the Harper Mobile.
- Completed the development and deployment of the Student Account Summary mobile application, providing students with the ability to check account balance and payment information from their mobile device.
- CDW-G teamed up with the Harper Information Technology department on August 2 to hold a Classroom Technology Symposium which was hosted in the Wojcik Conference Center. Over 75 technology professionals from area public and private colleges and universities attended the event. The highlight of the day was a presentation by Harper's own Linda Mueller discussing the Harper mobile app.
- The Technical Services Servers and Network Team deployed a number of new servers and improved the network infrastructure supporting classroom labs in Y Building. This upgrade provides a significant enhancement in network speed and improvement in reliability for the students who use these labs.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- The Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) launched its new year of offerings via a conference which featured some new programming. More than 300 senior citizens are members of the LLI.
- Instructor orientation meetings were held in both Continuing Education and Harper College for Businesses. New strategies for engaging learners were explored including the "flipped classroom" and group work as a means of reinforcing new concepts.

In a few days we will be celebrating Harper's 45th anniversary at the President's Ball. We have been fortunate to engage many of our business and philanthropic partners who have graciously sponsored tables. It's now time to "fill the room" and enjoy a great evening of friendship and celebration.

As a reminder, there will be no Board meeting in October. We will use this time to participate in the annual Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) conference. I am looking forward to presenting on our successful K-12 partnership with Chair Diane Hill and Superintendent of District 220, Dr. Tom Leonard.

In closing, I am delighted that another labor contract has been negotiated using interest-based bargaining (IBB). This month, the contract with our adjunct faculty will be presented to the Board for approval. I have learned firsthand, through the President's Brown Bag meetings, that employees who have participated in this collaborative negotiating process, have found it to be highly effective. The end result is a better understanding of each party's viewpoints, and most importantly, better relationships between our employees.

Enjoy the cooler weather!

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