

President's Report

October 2010

Students are preparing for their mid-term exams and fall air has arrived. It's difficult to believe that the semester is nearly half over. Time does fly! The past month brought many positive things to Harper College. Our enrollment continues to build, some crucial capital funds have flowed to the College, and the last fiscal-year audit was very positive.

Below are some of the additional highlights and updates.

- The Rita and John Canning Women's Program was formally dedicated.
- Wayne Johnson received a special award from the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois for his outstanding efforts and commitment to local, state and federal law enforcement.
- Harper College's Child Learning Center received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- The American Heart Association Heart Walk was hosted on campus and hundreds of community members participated.
- The AED Department was awarded a \$20,000 Bridge Implementation Grant to launch bridge-to-healthcare courses.
- The DAS Department was awarded a \$24,000 Career and Technical Education Grant to develop and implement a bridge to CNA program for developmental reading students.
- The chiller plant project is substantially complete and all systems are in operation.
- The HVAC systems at the HPC are all running; the new electrical and gas services are complete and rooftop screen walls are near completion.
- Construction work continues ahead of schedule with the J-Theater renovation.
- The architects are finishing their plans and specifications for the Y-Building Emergency Generator project.
- Work continues on the major upgrade to the Oracle Financial System - bringing Oracle EBS to release 12. This project is in the final stages.
- The upgrade of Blackbaud's Raisers Edge software to the latest version was completed for the College Foundation. This enhances their application capabilities.
- The implementation of the Nebraska Book Store (NBS) system was completed.

As this is the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year, I will also comment on our progress to-date with Presidential/Board Goals.

We have committed to developing a working relationship that can be characterized as ***open and transparent***. To that end, we have committed ourselves to developing institutional effectiveness measures that will be determined jointly and shared widely. In addition, we have committed to an annual operational plan and activating the College's new Strategic Plan. Significant progress has been made in each of these areas. The strategic plan is fully staffed with 170 members of our faculty and staff. Each of the 9 goals has faculty/administrative co-leaders working to coordinate the work of employees from across all sectors of the College. Metrics are being developed to measure progress in each of the goals. Budgets are being developed as well and they will be financed through the special strategic reserve fund the Board authorized. The development of the institutional effectiveness measures is well underway. As you will recall, we began our Board discussion last month on these measures. We reviewed national models and benchmarking results as well as a recommendation for a starting point for Harper. In November, we will discuss peer groups and start to review individual measures. Once the measures are established, targets will be set for each measure. We look forward to these important discussions with the Board. Finally, the operational plan has been developed, approved, and is currently being executed. There is little indication that this overall goal of openness and transparency will not be met.

Second, we committed to developing an implementation plan for the College's ***physical master plan***. The overall site plan for the \$398 million plan has been authorized by the Board. In early November, we will be presenting the Board with a "Phasing Plan" that will couple overall priorities of the plan with existing resources. This phasing plan will describe a timeline, budget and priority for each of the projects developed in the master plan.

Third, we sought to ***leverage funds*** committed to the strategic plan from the College with funds from local school districts, as well as private gifts from individuals and foundations. We also committed to seeking additional state and federal grant funds to assist our efforts. We have made some good progress in these last three months. Each of the feeder higher school districts (211, 214, and 220) agreed to join our Northwest Consortium for Student Success. Also, each district has committed to funding their share of projects that we launch in the schools they represent. We have been actively seeking and sourcing grants to finance portions of this work. To date, we have been awarded 14 competitive and agency partner grants totaling \$1,600,000. In addition, 5 grants are pending totaling approximately \$1,500,000; we also are in the process of submitting 2 grants totaling \$420,000. Finally, we will be meeting with the entire Foundation Board in a planning retreat to seek support for the Strategic Plan.

We continue to actively promote our ***student success agenda***. We have deployed six specific strategies to support this work. Aimed at increasing overall graduation rates we are seeking to reduce the need for developmental education, accelerate the remedial education we provide, promote new support strategies for "at risk" populations, and dramatically increase the number of students who participate in our summer Bridge Program and Choice Scholars Program. We are now providing post-secondary

readiness assessments for all of our feeder high schools and we are working very closely with high school faculty on a math alignment initiative. We have made very good use of the Achieving the Dream coaches and data support. Annual goals are currently being developed to align our graduation rates with an additional 10,604 Harper graduates over the next ten years.

Finally, we are working to develop a ***new business plan*** for the Division of Professional and Continuing Education. We have examined “best practice” institutions across the country and consulted with a number of national experts in the workforce development arena. We will be ready within the next few months to describe the plan to the Board.

Community colleges continue to receive an unprecedented amount of state and national recognition. The recent *White House Summit on Community Colleges*, hosted by Dr. Jill Biden, affirmed that the initiatives we are pursuing via the strategic plan are indeed relevant and current. Governor Quinn’s endorsement of our efforts to renovate Buildings G & H is evident through the appropriation that was just released. These funds will allow Harper College to move to the next phase of this important renovation which will provide enhanced instructional and student support space for critical career and technical programs.

I continue to be energized by the talent and commitment of the students, staff and faculty at Harper College. Together, we will continue to accomplish many great things!

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