

## President's Report

November 2009

Wow! It's Thanksgiving already. What a fall semester we have had thus far. The launch of this Presidency, highlighted by our "Week of Engagement," was just terrific. A lot of Harper faculty and staff assured this successful beginning. Our engagement with the community, our dialog about student success and the challenges of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College and the collaborative spirit shown by all campus groups to make this a successful week will all serve us well in the months and years ahead.

While the run up to our "Week of Engagement" was underway, and during the week itself, our College was as busy as usual! Enrollment continues to trend up. Compared to this period a year ago, we are up 4.7% in our full time equivalent (FTE) students. This percentage represents the equivalent of 460 full time students. We are currently serving over 17,000 credit students. Among these students are a number of returning veterans. We are pleased to report that our Veterans Specialist position has been filled and will be serving this special population of students to assure they receive their maximum education benefits.

In an effort to reduce the spread of H1N1 illness on our campus, we have requested H1N1 vaccines from the Department of Public Health. We recently received 200 doses of the H1N1 vaccine and anticipate that we will receive more. We have followed our Campus Emergency Procedures and have assembled an Incident Response Team to manage the vaccination process. Our first priority for vaccinations will be our campus first responders, health care workers, children in our Child Learning Center ages 4 and up and our students who registered with chronic illnesses. The priority order is in accordance with guidance from the Cook County Health Department, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the federal Centers for Disease Control.

Our students have been engaged and busy representing the College:

- The Harper Speech and Debate Team won the Community College Division of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual L.E. Norton Forensics Tournament ; this is the third consecutive tournament where the team has placed first among community colleges;
- Our Student Senate was one of five schools in the state to win the Ed Snyder Merit Book Award at the Illinois Community College Student Activities Association Fall Leadership Conference;
- The Woman's Cross Country Team took 6<sup>th</sup> place in the National Championship;
- The men's and women's soccer teams both ended their seasons as NJCAA Region IV runners-up;
- The Volleyball team ended their season with a semi final loss to Madison College. Madison went on to win the Region IV tournament
- Approximately 100 faculty, students and staff attended the "Twin Bowl" against Grand Rapids Community College. The Hawks were defeated and ended their season 2-7.

Our faculty and administrators were equally as productive:

- Professor Kevin Long is directing our fall production of THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK. The show opened November 13<sup>th</sup> and runs weekends through November 22;
- The first week of November was International Studies Week on campus. The focus this year was the 20 year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989;
- Mark Mrozinski's article, "Not the Same Old Hammer," appeared in the online newsletter of the National Association of Continuing Education and Training; and,
- The following faculty and staff made scholarly presentations last month at various conferences: Linda Frank, LaVonya Williams, Travaris Harris, Tom Thompson, Chris Dobson, Jason Ferguson, Ernie Kimlin, Chris George and Cathy Brod. Congrats and thanks to all for representing Harper so well!

The College community is very excited to have the new stairway system between Buildings A and C almost completed. This stair system will provide easy access to campus from our parking lots on the north side of the lake. The stairs should be open by Thanksgiving. A number of students and faculty will be extra thankful for those stairs on a cold winter day!

Over the course of the next several months, we will return to the themes articulated at the Presidential installation:

- Working in ways that highly leverage our resources, both internally and across our district and region, with other educational partners;
- Working to increase the success rates of our students and decreasing the achievement gaps between our various student communities;
- Strategically aligning our programs and strategic directions with those of our educational, workforce and economic development partners; and,
- Extending our conceptual view of the notion of "community" in the community college title to the boundaries of our nation.

The College will be asked to consider these themes as we undertake our work together. The themes will find a home in our strategic plan, student success agenda, master planning and organizational design considerations.

Following the November Board meeting, Cathy and I will retreat to our Virginia mountaintop for the Thanksgiving week. We will visit family and friends in Richmond and generally rest up for the push into exams, and the work ahead. We wish all of the Harper community a happy and restful Thanksgiving.