

President's Report

December 2011

Although not quite as busy as May, December on a college campus is marked with many activities that symbolize the end of a semester, and the end of the calendar year. I had the privilege and honor of attending and participating in a pinning ceremony for the mid-year graduates of our health careers program. In addition, our Fast Track program hosted a celebratory event at the Harper Professional Center honoring our semester completers in various programs. Family members attended and current Fast Track students, who were arriving for class during the festivities, received a glimpse of how they will be honored when they finish their programs.

The comprehensive compensation study, which was conducted by the outside consulting firm Mercer, has been completed. A steering committee comprised of Harper staff from all employee classifications directed the efforts by reviewing and authorizing the job descriptions that were benchmarked and compared. Comparison groups included peer community colleges, published surveys, and local municipalities. All employee classifications other than full-time faculty were included in the study. (A full-time faculty compensation and benefits study was conducted in January.) The results of the Mercer study revealed that Harper offers competitive salaries and highly competitive benefits. This is great news and explains why we are able to attract and retain highly qualified staff.

Results of another key survey were made available. An employee climate survey called PACE is administered every three years. This survey is also conducted by an outside consulting firm. The results were outstanding. Employee sentiment in all categories was ranked in the "Consultative" area which is one of the highest tiers. One area, Student Focus, received a ranking in the "Collaborative" area, which is the highest tier.

Harper hosted a quarterly meeting of the Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition (NIWC) in early December. The group discussed the possibility of pursuing a second round of TAA grants. If you will remember, we filed an application on behalf of NIWC in April and unfortunately were unsuccessful. However, we learned from that experience and are planning to strengthen our application with two key improvements: 1) focus on theme that will be adopted by the community colleges that are participating, and 2) broaden our geographic reach. NIWC members agreed to focus on the manufacturing sector as it is experiencing job vacancies that have few qualified applicants. In addition, we are reaching further south in Illinois to community colleges located in strategic regions.

Similarly, the Auto Communities Consortium (ACC), which is a multi-state community college workforce group, is planning to submit another proposal. We plan on participating in this effort as well. Early indications are that the request for proposals will be issued in early January and will be due at the end of February. We are ready for this compressed timeframe and feel we can be competitive with both the NIWC and ACC proposals.

There is a fair amount of change underway in the workforce development system locally. The three workforce boards, (northern Cook, Metropolitan Chicago, and Southern Cook) are being merged in to one Cook County Board. I have been invited by Karin Northington-Reaves to participate in the planning sessions occurring weekly. We have accepted this invitation as the workforce system is a vital partner in our work and we receive many students by referral from them. I shall keep the Board informed as the planning continues and a structure emerges.

Below are some notable activities and accomplishments from the past month.

Student Success

- Three Harper College fashion students scored first-place titles at the annual Fashion Group International Design Competition in Chicago this month, beating out competitors from four-year colleges and universities in three categories. Marlene Witt of Hanover Park took the top prize for Evening Wear with a pink knee-length strapless gown; Amela Bego of Schaumburg earned a win in Wearable Art for a gown made from a hand-crocheted skirt and a repurposed long-sleeved knit dress; and Genevieve Jauquet of Lake Barrington received a first-place title for her navy blue lace-lined trench coat. The three, who earned scholarship cash, were among nine Harper students who advanced to the contest's finals.
- Students meeting specified requirements at Harper will be guaranteed admission to the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, thanks to a recently developed transfer partnership. Harper is one of only 5 partner community colleges selected to participate in this program.
- We received great news from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. They provided an update on the relative success of colleges in the rates with which their students passed the NCLEX. This is the national examination for licensure as a registered nurse. The report covered two six month periods April through September 2010 and April through September 2011. Here is how Harper ranked:

	2010	2011
Harper compared to all Illinois schools granting Associate Degree Nursing or Bachelor Degree Nursing	#1 (out of 75)	#1 (out of 77)
Harper compared to all Associate Degree Nursing programs in the U.S. and its territories	#1 (out of 1008)	#1 (out of 1045)
Harper compared to all Associate Degree Nursing or Bachelor Degree Nursing in the U.S. and its territories	#1 (out of 1686)	#1 (out of 1752)

- Athletics:
 - Seven student athletes participating in fall sports were awarded most valuable player (MVP) awards at the fall sports banquets over the past few weeks: Cross Country- Pablo Ramirez; Volleyball - Alyssa Cazatto; Men's Soccer- Diego Caldera; Women's Soccer-Amanda Herdegen; Football- Offensive MVP, Greg Kennedy; Football - Defensive MVP, Louis Erkins; Football - AI Snyder Award , Jordan Reinhart-Smith.
 - Eleven Scholar Athlete Awards were presented at the fall sports banquets to students who participated for two seasons and maintained a Harper GPA of 3.0 or higher: David Chavarria, Marni Gonnering, Lindsey Pickle, Samantha Rosinski, Amanda Herdegen, Tiffany Jost, Samantha Rill, Jackson Davenport, Thomas Ehrlich, Mark Larsen, and Kevin Lawson.

- Student Activities developed and co-facilitated the first day-long certificate program called the *Harper Leadership Challenge* on Saturday, November 5. There were 83 students, representing various clubs and organizations as well as non-affiliated students, who completed the program and received a certificate of merit for their efforts. As part of the Leadership Challenge program, the first *Community Service Fair* at Harper College on November 7. There were 27 community organizations representing various areas that showcased their organization and the volunteer opportunities they offer.

- In December, The Center for Innovative Instruction concluded three semester-long faculty fellowship projects.
 - Sue Bajt completed her work on a project entitled: *Wikibooks for Computer Information Systems*. This allowed Sue's students the opportunity to work with a global community to create an electronic textbook.
 - Margaret Geppert worked with the Virtual Chem Collective to create 16 different chemistry demonstrations for her project called: *Using Virtual Chemistry Labs in Physical Science*. Maggie's students along with many Chemistry students now have access to several new virtual labs.
 - Pardess Mitchell completed her work titled: *Using Wikis to Support Online Learning*. This project helped Pardess to implement the five "Stages of Inquiry" Wikis into her drug awareness course curriculum.

- Laura Bennett, Student Conduct Officer, has been elected to the national Board of Directors for the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA). Laura is the Association's first Director of Community Colleges, a newly created position on the Board.

- The Career Programs Division hosted the Area 19 Business Professionals of America Competition at Harper College on December 10, 2011. There were 115 area high school students – all dressed in business professional attire – competing in 43 different contests such as Extemporaneous Speech, Broadcast News Production, Computer Security, and Graphic Design Promotion. Between competitive events, the students were able to explore Harper College. We were very pleased to host this event especially since it had been held at DeVry for the past several years.

- Debbie Franzen, Accommodation and Transition Specialist, hosted over 100 students from Algonquin Middle School in Des Plaines this month to explore postsecondary options for students with disabilities.

- Student Development Counseling Faculty LaVonya Williams and Linda Frank co-presented *Designing an Integrative Assignment as an Intervention Strategy for Student Success* at the 16th Annual National Learning Communities Conference in Chicago in November.
- President Ender and Maria Moten, Dean of Enrollment Services, presented at the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) conference in November. The topic of the conference was *Building Community through Student Success*.
- Scott Friedman, Director of Access & Disability Services, and Laura Bennett, Student Conduct Officer, presented *Reconsidering Conduct and Behavioral Intervention Practices: Perspectives that Include Students with Disabilities* at the recent NASPA Region IV-E Conference.
- Laura Bennett was elected to the Board of Directors of the Association for Student Conduct Administration. She will also serve in a newly created position, Director of Community Colleges.
- Laura Bennett, Student Conduct Officer, and Shannon Lengerich, Assistant Dean and Director of Health Services, presented *A Strategic Review of Campus Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment Practices*, at the third annual national conference for the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA).
- Ashley Knight, Dean of Student Affairs, presented with three chief student services officer colleagues at the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators (ICCCA) Annual Conference in Decatur in November. The topic was *Best Practices in Student Retention: Impact on the Completion Agenda*. Ashley also presented on *Athletics Fundraising and Booster Clubs in Illinois Community Colleges* at the Illinois Council of Chief Student Services Officers Fall Commission Meeting the same week.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- Nancy Wajler recently served as a guest on WGN radio. Nancy highlighted the wonderful work Harper is doing to support dislocated workers in this prolonged, challenging economic environment.
- The Continuing Education area received a donation of a tanker truck that will be used in Harper commercial driver's license (CDL) program. Harper is one of two CDL schools nationally that offer specialized tanker truck training.

Information Technology

- Student Inquiry Form – Completed the development and implementation of the Student Inquiry Form, which is a consolidated view of key student information used by admissions advisors, counselors and other College personnel in service to the student.

The web-based form places key student information on one screen, saving time and improving service.

- Bookstore/Financial Aid Student Account Number – Completed the programming to change the student financial aid account number imported to the bookstore system to align with the other systems of the College (it previously contained a unique suffix). The intent is to simplify Financial Aid transaction processing for the student at Bookstore checkout.
- Blackbaud/Spark – Completed the implementation of Blackbaud's NetCommunity Spark system, which provides email communication, online fundraising tools, advanced online giving options, online event management, and registration capability.
- Harper Voicemail Upgrade – Performed the upgrade of the Harper phone voicemail system from Unity 5.0 to Unity Connection 8.6 over the Thanksgiving weekend. Staff was on campus Thanksgiving Day through Saturday completing the system upgrade without any interruptions to services.

Finance

- State Funding – The Governor's Office of Management and Budget released the remaining \$16,335,800 of the \$20,335,800 appropriation for the G & H Building project originally appropriated in the FY 2010 Illinois Jobs Now package. With the release of the state funding, this project will go out to bid.
- Textbook Rental Program – In an effort to continue to reduce the cost of textbooks for students, HarperStore has added about 225 titles to its textbook rental program for the Spring 2012 semester. This brings the total number of rental titles to 364 and represents approximately 25% of the total titles used on campus. Since January 1, 2011, students have rented 3,013 textbooks with an estimated savings of \$200,000.

Human Resources and Institutional Research

- Robert Half International's 2011 Holiday Toy Drive – As part of a holiday celebration, the Human Resources and Institutional Research offices donated several toy gifts to Robert Half International's 2011 Holiday Toy Drive. The new toys will benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of Elgin.

Human Resources

- Distinguished Alumni Panel - Roger Spayer, Chief Human Resources Officer, was invited to facilitate a panel discussion of distinguished alumni as part of his former High School's (DePue, Illinois) Student-Parent Night.

Physical Plant

- The College received a check for \$250,000 as a partial settlement for the flood damage experienced at the College in early fall. We anticipate receiving another \$65,000 based on our claim.
- State Approval – The Capital Development Board (CDB) formally approved Harper College’s architect recommendation and will enter into an agreement with Cannon Design for Architectural/Engineering services related to the One Stop Admissions and Campus/Student Center. These negotiations are expected to occur over the next 8-12 weeks and be finalized so that the programming phase of the project can commence in Spring 2012.

Cathy and I hosted a staff holiday party at our home a few weeks ago. It was a wonderful way to connect with colleagues during this special time of the year. As is tradition, Cathy and I will head to warmer temperatures for a few weeks of rest and relaxation. I have asked the staff to turn off their work computers and phones and focus on spending time with family and friends. We will observe and enjoy this “off the grid” time from close of business December 22 thru January 2, 2012. Of course there will be a skeleton group of police, security and engineers monitoring the campus that week. We hope for a quiet campus.

It is with pride and gratitude that I look forward to the wonderful and exciting things we will accomplish together in 2012. Cathy and I wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season

Ken