

President's Report

December 2013

Although the calendar says that winter is a week away, it appears that it has already arrived. From my office window, I can clearly see a frozen pond and snow scattered throughout Harper's landscape. So, although the calendar says otherwise, winter is upon us! That being said, staff in the facilities area quickly and efficiently began snow removal and salting processes, so we have experienced minimal disruptions. We are ready for winter when it officially arrives.

As we look back over this Fall semester we have much to be proud of. Our men's cross country took the national championship again, the work of our math department faculty led to another 5% reduction of entering freshman needing developmental courses, and our manufacturing program continues to earn appreciation and respect regionally and nationally. Across the entire campus—students, faculty and staff are being recognized for excellence.

We have successfully launched the new shared governance system this fall—the official launch was November 1st. The new policy councils and committees have elected their leadership and the policy approval process of the College is being enacted. In fact, our first formal recommendation is in the “first reading” stage. The Student Success Policy Council has recommended this proposed policy to eliminate late registration. After the first reading they will review feedback that is being collected as part of this step. Next, the Council will vote to move the recommendation to the second reading step which will most likely occur in January. Afterwards, the recommendation will flow to the President. If adopted, we will no longer permit students to register for a class after the first meeting of that class. There is substantial local and national data that provides ample evidence that late registration typically leads to course failure. Therefore, we wish to discontinue this practice.

Dean Michelé Robinson will join the Executive Council on January 1 as the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion. Work in this area is already underway and she will report progress to-date to the Board at the December meeting. We welcome her into this new and important role.

Dean Robinson will be replaced as Dean of the Business and Social Science Division by Kathryn Rogalski who comes to us from the College of Lake County. She will begin in this role on February 1st.

We are taking some temporary measures to comply with the new “concealed carry” regulations. There is policy being proposed that will align our practices with the State's new regulation. The Board will receive the recommended policy regarding the new law for vote in February. In the meantime, there will be no weapons allowed in campus buildings and a signage program to that affect will be implemented in early 2014.

Below are many outstanding activities and accomplishments that have occurred over the past month.

Student Success

- Laura Bennett was elected to serve as President-Elect of the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA), which is the national professional organization for student conduct administrators with over 2600 members from colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and Canada. Laura is the first ASCA President employed at a community college during her election and presidency, and she begins the first year of her three-year term in February.
- During the month of November, 798 students participated in programs and events sponsored by the Office of Student Involvement. Besides intramurals and campus recreation, students volunteered and helped clean apartments at the Little City Foundation, attended leadership development events, and a group of Student Government Senators and Campus Activities Board members attended the Illinois Community College Student Activities Association (ICCSAA) Fall Student Leadership Conference at the College of Lake County. At the Conference, the Student Government was recognized and received the Ed Snyder Merit Book Award for the 11th consecutive year.
- Scott Friedman and Debbie Reuter from Access & Disability Services presented the session, *Taking a Stand for Your Campus Community: Proactive Approaches to Student Behaviors*, to a packed room at the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education NASPA Region IV-E Conference in November. Laura Bennett, Student Conduct Officer, collaborated on the development of the presentation.
- Thanks to the generous donations from faculty, staff and students, the Harper College Human Services (HMS) Club was able to secure 150 bags of clothing to be donated to the PATH (Palatine Assisting Through Hope) Day of Giving. The clothing was distributed at the PATH Day of Giving, which took place during Thanksgiving weekend. HMS Club students and Advisors directly participated in the weekend event located at the Palatine Opportunity Center. A special thanks to Valerie Walker, Human Services Program Coordinator and HMS Club Advisor and the members of the club for sponsoring this worthwhile project!
- The men's and women's cross country teams won the region championships prior to their national meet. Along with their third straight win at Nationals, Brennan Albuck, Zach Stella, Juan Barajas, and Jhoan Lino were named All-Americans.
- The women's soccer and volleyball teams both finished as region runners-up. The volleyball, men's soccer, and women's soccer teams finished the season with 5 All-Region and 13 All-Conference award winners.

Physical Plant

- Holabird & Root hosted a tour of the work currently taking place at Buildings D and H for our Architecture 201 students. This event gave them an opportunity to get a real-time look at the building assembly process on two very complex and high profile projects for the College and all of the logistics and challenges encountered along the way. Since the event proved to be very successful, future tours are being scheduled so that the students can continue to realize the evolution of the construction process in an active environment.

- De-icing and snow removal equipment has been installed on fleet vehicles. All necessary precautions have been taken to ensure campus-wide vehicular and pedestrian safety continues throughout the winter months.
- Schematic design work was completed in late September for the One Stop/Student Center. Since then, the project team has been working diligently to prepare the first of several design estimates related to the desired scope of work. The project team will work with the project's various input groups to get the project within budget, as adjusted for inflationary increases since the Master Plan was completed. The design development phase is expected to start in mid- to late January.

Information Technology

- Completed the project to create a proof of concept for student analytics that uses risk factors to predict student success. This used source data from the College's Achieving the Dream cohorts and provides a data warehouse and a web-based interface for accessing the information and generating reports. This will provide data that will enable the College to provide interventions to improve student success.
- Completed the project to migrate the College's Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to Microsoft's cloud-based Office 365 platform. The Dynamics CRM is used by Harper College for Business for partner relationship management, student servicing, and more.
- The Technical Services team provided support for the Harper College Board of Trustee's meeting held at the Harper Professional Center in November. This included coordination of relocating equipment in the classroom, providing support for presentation technologies and laptop computers, and coordinating sound system support.
- The networks/server team, along with the telecommunication team, performed a large number of upgrades over the Thanksgiving break. Much "behind-the-scenes" work was done to the IT infrastructure, including the update of many operating systems on critical servers, new software was installed, and testing of InformaCast broadcasts was performed. A great deal of gratitude goes out to the members of the Technical Services team who worked during the break in order to ensure our systems were updated and maintained.

Public Safety

- Harper College received recognition from the National Weather Service as a Storm Ready location. To receive this recognition, the College needed to demonstrate compliance in several critical areas:
 - Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center
 - Have more than one way to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public
 - Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally
 - Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars
 - Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.
- In July 2013, the Illinois Legislature passed the Concealed Carry Weapon (CCW) law. Harper College must post mandated signage prohibiting concealed carry weapons at every roadway entry and public doorway. It is anticipated that CCW Permit applications will be made available to the public during the first week of January 2014, with the first

CCW permits issued by the Illinois State Police in March 2014. The signage will be in place in early January.

Finance and Administrative Services

- Alexian Brothers awarded Harper College with the Community Partnership Award. Harper entered a vocational partnership with Alexian Brothers earlier this year that allows their clients to work at Harper. We currently have six of their clients working in our Dining Services area. Ron Ally accepted the award on behalf of the College.

Advancement

- The Foundation Board held their quarterly meeting in early December. The group was treated to a guitar performance by a student in the Community Music Program which has been funded by the Resources for Excellence Program. Donors who provided in-kind gifts to the physical sciences department were thanked for their contribution of gems, crystals and other significant stones for study and display.
- The Board of Trustees and Foundation Board were treated to a wonderful holiday concert in the Performing Arts Center in early December, followed by a reception.
- The year-end appeal is underway and several notable donations have been made to the Foundation. New scholarships have been created and two estate gifts have been received this fall in support of scholarships.
- A newly designed *Community Catalyst* was published and distributed. This publication shares stories on donors, scholarship recipients, Foundation events and updates. Featured in this issue was a story on the “rocket boys” highlighting the project from beginning to end as Harper science students entered the NASA collegiate competition and ultimately placed 4th in the country. The article ended with a “where are they now” follow-up with the students.
- A luncheon was held for donors who have provided future support for Harper College at Chicago Prime Steakhouse. The thirty-plus attendees were given tickets to the holiday symphony concert to follow the luncheon. This was a stewardship event to thank those who will provide philanthropic gifts to impact the students through scholarships as well as program and facility support in the future.

Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

- A goal leaders’ meeting was held to review progress on key initiatives in the strategic plan. Goal teams continue to actively pursuing projects that will help the College achieve the 10,604 completion goal.
- The Strategic Planning and Accountability shared governance committee is beginning its work to review the College’s mission statement. Continuing Education Dean Mark Mrozinski provided a summary of his dissertation which focused on college mission statements.

Workforce and Economic Development

- The Fast Track area hosted a “completion celebration” for students who completed degrees and certificates since last May. Over 130 guests attended the celebration, including family members. Several students were acknowledged for earning three credentials.
- Harper College for Business has moved into their new offices at the Harper Professional Center.
- The Small Business Development Center recently completed a successful program review conducted by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
- The Workforce Support area hosted “rapid response” sessions for community members impacted by layoffs at area Dominick’s stores.

Marketing and Communications and Legislative Relations

- The General Assembly narrowly passed a pension reform bill during a special session in late November. The bill was quickly signed into law by Governor Quinn. The legislation now heads to court where it will be challenged as unconstitutional. The first step will be a ruling on an injunction which would prevent the new law from taking effect until the court issues a final ruling.

All four legislative leaders supported the plan, which they say, will save \$160 billion over the next three decades. Briefly, the plan reduces an annual compounded 3% cost-of-living increase for retirees, raises the retirement age for workers 45 and under and imposes a cap on pensions for the highest-paid workers. Employees will contribute 1% less out of their paychecks for their pensions and some employees will have an option to contribute to a 401(k)-style retirement plan.

- The Community Relations Task Force met in late November and early December to consider the results of a large telephone survey of residents and employers and smaller focus group sessions with eight stakeholder groups: mayors/village presidents, large employers, not-for-profit leaders, K-12 educators, higher education leaders, small business leaders, healthcare providers, and state and federal elected officials. The good news from the survey results is that Harper’s top of mind awareness remains very high among district residents and Harper’s reputation for quality and academic excellence is strong.

Some of the challenges identified in the survey include an increase in the number residents who answered “nothing/don’t know” to the question “What is Harper best known for?” and a desire for more interaction with the College, especially from business groups and large employers. A recommendation on a plan to create a more robust community outreach program is expected to be put forward in January.

- News articles about Harper that appeared in local media outlets recently include:
 - *Daily Herald Business* section feature story on Dr. Ender being named by the White House to the Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (AMP) Steering Committee 2.0.
 - *ABC 7 News Chicago and Daily Herald* feature stories about Harper student and WWII veteran Bernie Bluestein, who has been taking classes at Harper since 1989.
 - *Daily Herald* feature story on Harper adult student Alan Leinonen and his jazz/soul/blues radio show on Harper’s radio station WHCM-FM 88.3.
 - *Chicago Tribune and Daily Herald* stories on area high schools students attending the College’s annual Latino Summit.

In closing I wish to thank members of the Harper Community Chorus for an outstanding holiday musical performance last Sunday afternoon in the Performing Arts Center. Cathy and I hosted Board members, Foundation Board members and many College friends at this event. They all remarked that the performance was first rate!

Cathy and I will spend the holidays down south with family and friends. We look forward to this special time of year as we count our blessings and share the season with loved ones. We trust that all of you will have the happiest of holidays and a bright New Year! Enjoy the Season!

Ken