

**Assurance Argument**  
**Harper College - IL**

2/5/2018

# 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Argument

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### 1.A.1 Mission Development Process

Harper College is committed to ensuring that each member of the College community understands the mission and their role in fulfilling it. Beginning in 2013, the Strategic Planning and Accountability (SPA) Shared Governance Committee, consisting of representatives from all employee groups and an active student participant, launched a [comprehensive process](#) to revise the mission statement. The new statement recognizes the increasing diversity of our communities and addresses these shifts through a focus on partnerships and the College's responsibilities to the individual, the workforce, and society.

The SPA Committee used a four-phase process to develop the draft mission statement.

#### Phase 1: Criteria development

To develop mission statement criteria, the SPA Committee examined other community college mission statements, and reviewed mission statement research and practice to establish a framework for garnering campus input. SPA Committee representatives met with various shared governance committees and facilitated a process for determining criteria. Open sessions were held to gather input from campus constituents not participating on shared governance committees. Based on input, the SPA committee established the following criteria to determine the efficacy of the revised mission statement. The statement:

- is concise and succinct.
- clearly articulates the central collegiate and community functions performed by the College.
- captures how Harper is distinctive in delivering its mission.
- assists in evaluating the degree of "mission-centricity" for future goals and strategies.
- reflects our constituents.

#### Phase 2: Theme identification

Input for the mission statement themes was gathered from both external and internal constituents. External input was gathered via focus groups with more than 50 key community members. Internal input was gathered from the Board of Trustees, students, and employees through discussion sessions and an online survey. Collectively, these activities yielded 858 suggestions which were categorized into 13 themes. The top four themes accounted for 70% of the suggestions:

- Teaching/Learning/Student Success
- Access/Affordability
- Diversity
- Community Engagement

### **Phase 3: Draft mission statement development**

The SPA Committee used the criteria and the themes to develop the following draft mission statement:

Harper College enriches its diverse communities by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education. In collaboration with partners, Harper College inspires transformation of individual lives, the workforce, and society.

### **Phase 4: Draft mission statement evaluation**

Constituent feedback on the draft mission statement was solicited in the form of a survey. Links to the survey were placed on the employee portal, student portal and the external website. An email invitation was sent to focus group participants. The [survey](#) was open for eight days and 214 responses were received. Respondents were primarily employees (53.27%) and students (35.51%), and the majority of respondents (79.44%) agreed or strongly agreed that the draft mission statement was representative of Harper's mission.

Harper employees were also invited to evaluate the degree to which the draft mission statement met the mission statement criteria. Overall, respondents [agreed](#) the mission statement met the five criteria.

### **Final Vetting, Approval and Communication**

Using stakeholder feedback, the SPA Committee made minor revisions to the draft mission statement resulting in the following:

Harper College enriches its diverse communities by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education. Harper College, in collaboration with its partners, inspires the transformation of individual lives, the workforce, and society.

The final statement was vetted through the shared governance process and advanced to the President. After the President's approval, the proposed statement was submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval. The new statement was approved at the [February 25, 2015 Board meeting](#). This mission statement reflects the input of hundreds of constituents and aligns with the College's philosophy and core values of integrity, respect, excellence, and collaboration. The process of developing the new mission statement exemplifies the value Harper places on broad input.

As a final step in revising the mission, the SPA Committee collaborated with Marketing Services to create and implement a [communication plan](#) for the new mission statement. See 1.B for more detail.

### **1.A.2 Alignment with Mission**

## Academic Programs and Student Services

Harper articulates its responsibility to provide quality, affordable and accessible education in its mission statement. This mission is consistent with the five curricular missions of the community college as articulated by Cohen and Brawer in *The American Community College*, the seminal work on the role and function of the community college:

- Academic transfer programs
- Career and technical programs
- [Continuing education](#)
- Developmental education through remedial math and English
- [Community service](#).

The [College catalog](#) is available online. It demonstrates the variety of academic offerings that reflect the diversity of the student population and the needs/interests of the community. Additionally, Harper offers student support services through [Academic Support Services](#) and [Student Life](#) programming.

## Enrollment Profile

The College's enrollment profile demonstrates that the diversity of the community is mirrored in the diversity of the College's [student body](#). The student population currently over-represents the diversity of the community. This enrollment profile is consistent with that of open-enrollment, associate degree granting institutions, which often are more diverse than their communities. Further, the College's community is increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity and income levels. More families appear to be experiencing economic strain as evidenced by the increase in students eligible for the federal lunch program in area public schools over the past several years. In response, the College created the Harper Ambassador program.

The [Ambassador Program](#) pairs Harper employees with schools in which 50 percent or more of students are [eligible for the Federal lunch program](#). The program utilizes Harper resources to demonstrate to students and parents that a post-secondary education is affordable, accessible and possible. Harper Ambassadors act as a source of information for the school and provide a direct link to Harper programs and resources. The ultimate goal of the program is to inspire post-secondary aspirations and to support students and families in becoming college and career ready.

### 1.A.3 Planning and Budgeting

The mission guides the work of the College, both operational and strategic. Thus, review and revision of the mission statement was the first task of the strategic planning cycle and formed the foundation for the strategic planning activity. The Strategic Planning Conference, held in March 2015, utilized the newly revised mission statement as the grounding statement for its efforts. Additionally, the [College Plan](#), representing the College's comprehensive planning and budgeting process, begins with a statement of the College's mission. More detail regarding the strategic planning process and how it drives the budget and other planning processes at the College is provided in 5.C.

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## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Argument

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#### 1.B.1, 1.B.2, and 1.B.3

The mission statement appears publicly on the Harper College website and in the Catalog/Student Handbook. The mission statement is also included in print publications directed toward the public including community reports, cultural arts brochures, and postcard mailings. Additionally, the mission statement is publicly displayed throughout the main campus and at the College's additional locations - Harper Professional Center (HPC) and the Learning and Career Center (LCC).

The institutional core values align with the mission statement by emphasizing excellence in an atmosphere of collaboration and respect. The [core values](#) also appear with the mission statement on the College website and in the Catalog/Student Handbook and in various print materials.

As for the College vision, the Strategic Planning and Accountability (SPA) Committee is currently engaging the campus in a vision development process that parallels the mission work described in 1.A. A new vision statement will be recommended to the Board later this spring.

As discussed in 1.A, a revised mission statement was finalized in spring 2015. Harper faculty and staff are actively identifying how the College enacts its mission and how the work of individuals and departments reflect the mission. Current [strategies](#) to communicate the mission include stating the mission on meeting agendas, posting the mission in prominent locations across campus, and including the mission on the employee login screen. Videos with groups of students, faculty, and staff stating the [College mission](#) have been created, viewed at the All-Campus meetings, and posted online. Additional videos have been produced for each of the [five criteria for accreditation](#), including one focused on Criterion One: Mission. Additionally, in fall 2017, the campus community engaged in an "I am Harper" campaign during which employees and students were invited to demonstrate how they live the mission.

The key themes of the mission are clearly articulated below. The College's core values are also reflected in these key themes.

#### Quality

One mark of Harper's quality is its commitment to student success. Success is often defined as

completion of a credential. In 2009 President Obama highlighted the fact that the U.S. ranked 12th among industrialized nations in the number of 25-to-34-year-olds with college degrees. He challenged community colleges to change this and produce five million additional completions by 2020 with the [American Graduation Initiative](#).

In response to this challenge, Harper began a coordinated effort to increase the number of completions by [10,604](#) - the number of additional credentials Harper determined it needed to add by 2020 to do its part to meet the President's goal. The College surpassed its goal of 10,604 additional credentials in May 2017. In addition to increasing the number of credentials earned, Harper has focused on increasing its three-year graduation rate. In 2016, Harper achieved a [graduation rate of 28.41%](#), the highest rate in the previous 10 years.

Another mark of quality is the acceptance of Harper credit at other institutions. As a participant in the [Illinois Articulation Initiative](#), Harper major courses and [general education courses](#) articulate to over 100 Illinois colleges and universities. Additionally, 14 individual programs are [accredited](#) by relevant professional organizations.

Harper has put into practice its commitment to providing quality education by instituting an accountability system throughout the institution. Under the previous strategic plan (2010-2015), the College focused on creating a culture of accountability and transparency with a strategic goal to "identify, monitor and publish results on institutional effectiveness measures, key performance indicators and metrics for strategic goals." In 2010, work began to develop this culture which included measurement and reporting of performance on key metrics, known at Harper as the Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs). The development of IEMs is significant and reflects the College's long-term commitment to both accountability and continuous improvement. The year-long process of developing the IEMs was thorough and included review of the College's mission, vision, initiatives, and priorities, as well as an examination of stakeholder expectations, and a thorough benchmarking activity.

Long-term IEM targets were set in 2012 and the College communicates progress towards targets on an annual basis via internal and external dashboards and in the publicly available annual Accountability Report. IEMs focus the institution's efforts and provide insights as to where further improvements are needed. Progress is measured annually and long-term targets are reviewed to keep the College focused on improvement. In terms of student achievement, the College's course, general education, and program-level [outcomes assessment](#) framework ensures that Harper collects, analyzes and uses data about student learning to focus efforts on improving teaching and learning. Outcomes assessment at Harper is fully explained in 4B.

Finally, Harper's quality has been recognized in the following national awards:

- In 2016, Harper was recognized for "developing an organizational culture designed and dedicated to increasing student success" through the Achieving the Dream [Leah Meyer Austin Award](#).
- Harper was named one of the 150 community colleges eligible for the 2017 [Aspen Prize](#) which "recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes."
- The awarding of major grants is additional evidence of programmatic excellence. Harper was awarded two workforce grants to develop apprenticeships in 2016:
  - Department of Labor/American [Apprenticeship Grant](#). Harper was awarded a \$2.5M grant to fund apprenticeships in the Insurance, Information Technology and Manufacturing sectors.
  - Harper was named a partner for the Illinois Manufacturing Association's [\\$3.9M](#)

[Apprenticeship Grant](#) to fund the creation of apprenticeships over the next five years in Illinois. The apprentices attend college via an employer-sponsored program and are compensated for working throughout their apprenticeships.

## **Affordable**

Harper's commitment to keep tuition affordable is demonstrated in the [financial policy](#) that limits annual tuition and fee increases. This policy is intended to avoid large irregular increases in any given year and enable students to plan their college expenses accordingly.

Commitment to affordability can also be seen in the following:

- 6,553 [financial aid packages and scholarships](#) totaling \$19,549,173 were awarded in 2015-2016.
- [Apprenticeship programs](#) have been developed in cooperation with local business partners providing free on-the-job training and paid tuition.
- [Dual credit courses](#) allow district high school students to earn college credit at little or no cost while enrolled in high school. An [increasing number of students](#) are successfully completing these courses and reducing their college costs.
- [Promise Program](#) provides tuition-free education at Harper for [students](#) who meet academic, attendance, and service requirements throughout their four years of high school and maintain these standards while at Harper.
- [Business EdVantage](#) allows employees who live outside of Harper's district, but work in-district, to take college credit courses at in-district rates.

Community colleges in Illinois are being significantly challenged with regard to affordability. In FY2017, the State of Illinois initially released only a small percentage of community college funding and did not initially fund the Monetary Assistance Program (MAP). MAP provides financial assistance to some of the neediest students in the community. Harper demonstrated its commitment to fulfilling its mission of providing affordable education by agreeing to cover student MAP grants if the state did not meet its obligation. The State of Illinois did eventually approve a budget for 2017 and released funds to community colleges, including support for MAP grants.

## **Accessible**

Harper provides open access to programs and services for all in the district. The College offers a variety of options to meet multiple academic goals and learning levels. However, accessibility at Harper is not solely defined as open access, but rather as open access combined with support to create the higher education opportunity all deserve. Formal academic support is available to students through [Access and Disability Services](#), [Success Services](#), and the Tutoring and Writing Centers. Instructors also utilize [supplemental instructors](#) - student leaders selected by the instructor who provide additional academic support through peer-assisted study sessions. Further, Harper programs are accessible through offerings that serve specific populations such as [English as a Second Language](#), and [Fast Track](#). Courses offered online and at additional locations provide further access to Harper's programs.

## **Transformations**

The mission of community colleges, including Harper, is to provide post-secondary education for all. Preparing students to matriculate to a four-year institution, gain professional certification, or become more informed citizens are examples of how the College transforms the individual, the workforce and



society.

Transformation of individual lives refers to the cultivation of an improved quality of life for students through transfer options, job opportunities, increased economic power, and personal enrichment. This transformation is advanced broadly through general education where students are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of all educated individuals. More specifically, Harper fulfills its mission to transform lives through such programs as the High School Equivalency program, Job Placement Resource Center services, and English as a Second Language programming. These programs enable students to move to the next step in reaching their goals.

Harper strives to populate the workplace with highly skilled and credentialed employees, thereby “transforming the workplace.” Harper’s Advanced Manufacturing program, apprenticeships, and other career programs are illustrative of this aspect of the mission. Additional details are provided in 1D.

The impact of higher education extends beyond the well-documented increased earning power to private and social benefits as analyzed in MacMahon's *Higher Learning, Greater Good*. For example, college-educated adults are more engaged in their communities and more likely to contribute to charities by volunteering and through donations. [Harper’s Distinguished Alumni](#) provide poignant examples of the transformational power of the Harper experience. These alumni are recognized not only for personal successes, but also for community service.

### **Diverse Communities**

As noted in 1A, the demographics of Harper’s district have changed. Most notable is the increase in the Hispanic population such that Harper is within two-percentage points of being recognized as a Hispanic serving institution. The processes and activities of the College that reflect attention to human diversity are outlined in 1C.

### **Collaboration with Partners**

Collaboration is one of the College’s core values and collaboration with community partners is explicitly stated in the mission and philosophy. Harper has developed strong partnerships with local high schools through the Northwest Educational Council for Student Success (NECSS), which has resulted in higher levels of college readiness for high school students and reduced spending on developmental-level classes. Furthermore, the College has developed articulation agreements with area 4-year colleges as well as 3+1 degree partnerships, which provide pathways to more advanced degrees for our community. These programs allow students to work toward their four-year degrees locally and at Harper’s affordable tuition rates.

Additional examples of collaboration within the College and between the College and community partners are explained in 1D.

### **Sources**

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## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Argument

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#### 1.C.1 and 1.C.2

Harper College addresses its role in a multicultural society by offering a variety of opportunities for students, faculty, and staff that address issues of diversity and inclusion. A sample of these efforts is presented within the context of Harper's [Diversity Statement](#), which demonstrates a commitment to multiculturalism. The statement was informed by research and reflects the College's mission, core values, and culture. Examples of resulting actions are provided after the diversity statement.

*Our vision is to enrich our world by educating culturally literate students who recognize the opportunities of and make positive contributions to a global society.*

- *We create a culture of scholarship, integrity and innovation rooted in the diversity of our Harper community.*
- *We inspire our Harper community to believe that there is a transformative impact when people from different world views work together collaboratively.*
- *We partner with our community to demonstrate that it is possible for people of all viewpoints and persuasions to respect and learn from each other.*

*We are committed to fully engaging the wealth of thought, backgrounds, languages and life experiences of our students, colleagues and community to foster an environment of academic excellence and student success.*

Following are examples of actions that demonstrate Harper's commitment to meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse communities:

- The annual employee [Diversity Symposium](#) engages the campus in a dialogue around issues of diversity and inclusion.
- A College-wide [Diversity and Inclusion Education Program](#), provides employees with a foundation in inclusion behaviors/practices and cultural competence. The program launched in FY2017 with Diversity and Inclusion Dialogue Sessions.
- [Employee Resource Groups](#) offer a safe and supportive environment to employees of diverse cultures, orientations, and perspectives. These groups are autonomous, develop yearly goals, and report annual activities.
- The [One Million Degrees](#) (OMD) program assists highly motivated low-income students to succeed in school, work, and life. The program is offered in partnership with OMD Chicago and Harper is provided financial resources and infrastructure.
- The [Ambassador Program](#) partners the College with area [elementary and middle schools](#) with 50% or more students qualifying for the federal lunch program to connect them to Harper

services and increase post-secondary aspirations.

- The [Learning and Career Center](#) (LCC) in Prospect Heights serves an area of the district with changing demographics. In 2013, a needs assessment was conducted to identify the educational needs of this community. The LCC mission was refocused to better serve the career challenged, first-generation immigrant populations by bringing together career training and social service providers.
- The [Education and Work Center](#) (EWC) in Hanover Park is a collaboration between Harper, Elgin Community College, and the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership. EWC provides Adult Basic Education, career training/resources, English as a Second Language, and high school equivalency classes to career challenged and first-generation students.
- The [Diverse Faculty Fellows Program](#) places culturally diverse fellows in Harper's classrooms to increase the multicultural experience of students and diversify the Harper faculty.
- The [Multicultural Faculty Fellows Program](#), from 2003-2016, engaged 49 faculty from 31 disciplines in an opportunity to explore multicultural issues as they intersect with curriculum, teaching, learning, and campus climate. Each semester, multicultural fellows unveiled projects for the campus community to see the depth of Harper's diversity commitment in individual work. In fall 2017, focus groups were conducted with former fellows to determine how the program can evolve to best serve the future needs of the College.
- The strategic planning process involves and engages hundreds of internal and external constituents in the development of the College's multi-year strategic plan.
- The [guiding principles for shared governance](#) demonstrate a commitment to creating an open and safe environment that fosters collaboration and builds community.
- The [core values](#) of collaboration and respect demonstrate a commitment to working together, and to engaging in interactions that add dignity to one's self and others. The significance of the core values is demonstrated through their inclusion in the staff annual review process.
- [Bias Incident Reporting](#) creates a means by which the College can address incidents of bias. Since implementation, 25 incidents have been filed and appropriate, non-punitive actions have been taken in all cases.
- The [Student Code of Conduct](#) outlines student responsibilities and behavior as well as the disciplinary process for violations. The Code was revised to be more inclusive with regard to gender identity and sexual misconduct.

As a result of these commitments, Harper engages employees and students in an environment that fosters a range of ideas, perspectives, and cultural literacy.

Harper's commitment to diversity and inclusion is also reflected in the College's focus on increasing achievement levels for all students. Beginning in 2009, with Harper's Achieving the Dream (ATD) work, the College prioritized analysis of disaggregated student data to identify achievement gaps. Gaps were identified for not only developmental-level students, but also for students of color, with young Black males having the largest gap in achievement. Since inception of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, Harper has focused efforts on reducing achievement gaps and increasing success for all. As a result, achievement gaps for Hispanic students have been nearly eliminated while achievement gaps for young Black males have decreased but still remain. The 2016-2019 Strategic Plan continues the focus on reducing gaps and increasing success with the strategic directions of inclusion, engagement and achievement.

In 2016, Harper College was awarded the ATD [Leah Meyer Austin Award](#), which recognized Harper for demonstrating "outstanding achievement in developing an organizational culture designed and dedicated to increasing student success." The effects of these changes were demonstrated through an overall graduation rate increase of 10 percent, with significant progress being realized with non-white populations; the Hispanic/Latino graduation rate grew from 11% to 25% and the African American

student graduation rate improved from 4% to 11% over a four year period. As previously stated, although improvements were attained, achievement gaps still exist and continue to be an area of focus. The College's new assigned advisor model will help ensure students have a point person to help navigate the college experience. This approach was modeled after the OMD support system which has been successful in serving diverse populations.

Harper also enriches the student experience and promotes inclusion through student life opportunities in the Center for Student Involvement. This Center offers many [clubs and organizations](#) for diverse students. Active student organizations include International Students, Deaf Club, Latinos Unidos, Black Student Union, and Pride Club, Harper's student organization dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ community. These groups provide a social network that supports students as well as an organizational framework for social and political advocacy. For example, the Pride Club has advocated for special educational outreach to teach the campus about transgender identity. It also addresses the campus experiences of students through the recommendations of bathroom signage revisions and inclusion of students' preferred first names on class rosters and ID cards. Gender neutral restrooms are now included in all new and newly renovated buildings and preferred name options are available for students.

### **Institutional Focus on Diversity and Inclusion: President's Task Force**

In 2011, Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs) were established as the key performance indicators of the College (rationale and process described in 1.B) with employee diversity identified as an IEM. In the months following, targets were developed for all IEMs with the exception of employee diversity as the College struggled to reach consensus on this target. Through this process, a series of broad and candid conversations took place, leading the President to conclude that attention to matters of diversity and inclusion was needed. In summer 2012, the President developed a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force charged with the following:

- Engaging the College in an institutional survey on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Examining best practices model institutions
- Recommending a goal for the employee diversity IEM

In October 2013, shortly after the completion of the Task Force's work and the submission of their [final report](#), the College administered the Personal Assessment of College Environment (PACE) survey. This survey had also been administered in 2005, 2008, and 2011, and comparative data was provided in the analysis. The [results](#) indicated both recurring issues and new challenges, with the ability to influence the direction of the College and the opportunity for advancement consistently receiving the lowest scores. Additionally, in 2013, the opportunity for involvement and commitment to racial and ethnic diversity were cited as areas for improvement. These findings supported the recommendations of the Task Force.

The Task Force recommendations were outlined in phases as priorities to be addressed from FY2014 through FY2018. The first phase included the establishment of an Inclusion Officer position. This position, along with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, was established in 2014. The primary purpose of this executive-level position and office was to implement the recommendations of the Task Force. This [summary](#) explains the work of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion since its inception. Phase two priorities included diversifying senior leadership and faculty. Harper continues to be challenged in employing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community it serves. The Institutional Accountability [Report](#) provides data to demonstrate the need for improvement in the diversity of new hires and in the [voluntary separations](#) of diverse employees. Specific strategies have been implemented to address this issue.

## **Diverse Employee Recruitment**

Harper has focused efforts on increasing diversity among new hires.

- Implemented the [Diverse Teaching Fellowship Program](#), with eight fellows participating since 2015. One fellow was hired as full-time faculty and another has continued as adjunct faculty and tutor.
- Created a consistent approach to [Search Committee practices](#) that aligns with College core values and goals around diversity and inclusion. All search committee members are required to participate in a "[Cultural Competency and the Search Committee](#)" workshop.
- Developed and implemented the [Diverse Employee Recruitment Plan](#). One outcome of this plan has been the increased percentage of applicants identifying as diverse who move forward in the search process.

## **Diverse Employee Retention**

Harper has instituted several practices in an effort to promote a culture of inclusion and to retain diverse employees.

- Implemented [360 degree evaluation](#) process.
- Established Employee Resource Groups to advance diversity goals.
- Developed and implemented a [Diversity Scorecard](#) to assist the College in monitoring and responding to key indicators related to diversity and inclusion on campus.
- Administered the [Cultural Values Assessment](#). This assessment identified significant gaps between actual and desired institutional culture, and several limiting values in the current perceived culture. In response, the College developed a plan to address the results. In fall 2016, 227 employees attended a total of 16 presentations to vote on the Top Four Desired Values on which the College would focus: Respect, Open Communications, Collaboration, and Accountability. Using these values, brainstorming sessions were held in spring 2017 to provide actionable behaviors that would exemplify the top four values. In fall 2017, the Office of Diversity of Inclusion in collaboration with Institutional Research began communicating those values and actions to the President's Cabinet.
- Implemented a College-wide Diversity Education Program ([grant proposal](#)). The plan was implemented in [FY2017](#) and the College offered 15 Diversity and Inclusion Dialogue Workshops with 270 employees, representing all seven employee groups, participating. Additionally, eight Harper employees were trained as facilitators with seven earning their certification to lead additional workshops.

Harper's mission, philosophy, and core values demonstrate the College's commitment to its role in a global and multicultural society. The commitment to serving diverse communities is reflected in the College's [strategic plan](#), which identifies "Inclusion" as a strategic direction:

*Inclusion: Foster an environment that values and respects each member of Harper's diverse community and actively encourages cross-cultural engagement.*

This strategic direction is further defined by the following supporting paragraph:

*Harper is committed to a culturally responsive environment that makes all members of our community feel confident that the full extent of their humanity and contributions are recognized and honored. An environment that welcomes, values and respects all members of the College's diverse community—across the spectrums of ability, academic preparedness, age, ethnicity, faith, gender expression,*

*identities, race, and more—fosters a culture where all feel safe to participate, in open and respectful discourse, without fear of discrimination or marginalization.*

Harper recognizes the diversity of its communities and student populations. It responds to specific needs as they relate to diversity, inclusion, and academic achievement gaps. The College's mission, values, goals, strategies, initiatives, programs, behaviors, and actions reflect attention to the diversity of society as appropriate to its mission and constituencies. While important work remains to be done, particularly regarding employee diversity and inclusion, the commitment to diverse cultures and perspectives, and to creating a diverse and inclusive organizational environment is strong. Harper has identified important gaps between its current and desired culture, and has begun work to move towards this desired culture.

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## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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#### 1.D.1. Harper serves the public

Harper's commitment to the public good is demonstrated both at the institutional level through strategic planning and through individual [programs and services](#) provided for community members.

Harper College is a public, open-access institution dedicated to serving the community. Strategic planning is essential for determining the College directions and ensuring alignment with the mission and needs of constituents. The College engages in community-based strategic planning which brings together individuals representing all constituents of the College. Administrators, faculty, staff, the Board of Trustees, local high school superintendents, representatives from local two- and four-year colleges, as well as community and business leaders participated in the strategic planning conference. The broad representation of constituents participating reflects the College's commitment to the public. The directions and goals for recent strategic plans [were a result of conference discussions](#).

The College also serves the public by offering adult education and support programs in the community. An example of community outreach is demonstrated in Harper's collaboration with Elgin Community College to open the Hanover Park [Education and Work Center](#). This facility provides adult basic skills instruction, job search, and career readiness assistance for low-socioeconomic and limited English-speaking adult students. Another example is Harper's [Learning and Career Center](#) which provides programs to enhance academic skills and workforce development. This Center is designed to meet the needs of the community, by offering short-term career programs, English as a Second Language, and High School Equivalency exam preparation.

Promoting [service opportunities](#) enables the College to serve the public by instilling the idea of lifelong active citizenship in its students. For instance, the College sponsors [Make A Difference Day](#), an annual student volunteerism day. The [Center for Student Involvement](#) organizes this event and provides support for other student volunteerism opportunities throughout the year. [Phi Theta Kappa](#) is a student group particularly involved in service activities including the following:

- Packing food for children in developing countries
- Preparing and serving food for the homeless
- Participating in Habitat for Humanity
- Providing holiday gifts to children removed from their homes
- Helping at a domestic violence crisis center

Developing civic responsibility is also a key feature of the Promise Program. In order for high school students to earn tuition-free education at Harper through the Promise Program, they must meet academic, attendance, and service requirements throughout their four years of high school and maintain these standards throughout their time at Harper.

### **1.D.2 - Education takes priority**

Harper's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes. The College does not remit funds to investors or a parent organization, but rather is accountable to taxpayers, students, and the community it serves. Academic programs, and educational and student support services take priority in Harper's planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes. The College budget is annually developed around the institutional priorities with the majority of operational funds allocated to instruction and student support services. For more details on budgeting and resource allocation, see 5A.

### **1.D.3**

#### **Communities of Interest**

Harper engages with several communities of interest, and the College is committed to responding to their needs. These communities can be grouped into three areas: education, business, and cultural arts.

#### ***Education***

Harper recognizes its role in an educational continuum and strives to develop strong partnerships with K-12 and four year institutions in addition to fulfilling the educational needs of the community.

At the high school level, Harper collaborates with its three sender districts through the [Northwest Educational Council for Student Success](#) (NECSS). Goals of this partnership include the following:

- Increasing the percentage of students who begin college-ready
- Ensuring curriculum alignment between high schools and Harper
- Creating pathways that lead to post-secondary credentials and employment
- Leveraging resources

NECSS has focused on mathematics and English, two disciplines where large numbers of students were placing into developmental level courses. Progress has been made toward all four goals through these major initiatives:

- A fourth year of math is not required in Illinois. Many choose not to enroll in a senior year math class and are at increased risk of placing into developmental math in college. To address this problem, Harper partnered with district high schools to administer the College's math placement exam to juniors to determine their level of college-readiness and advise students to take an appropriate math class during senior year. The Harper Math Department and the high school Math Departments worked collaboratively to align curriculum with students taking a common final exam. Successful completion of this high school math course enables students to enroll in college-level math. The results of this effort are significant: the percentage of high school graduates beginning college-ready in mathematics, rose from [45% to 72%](#) (at 85% for the 2016 graduates).
- The [English Alignment Project](#) (Bridging the Gap) is a collaboration between Harper developmental English faculty and district high school English teachers to redesign a senior

high school English course to serve lower-achieving students. This course introduces students to critical reading and writing in response to nonfiction arguments. Successful completion of the course enables students to place into college-level English. [Results](#) are promising with 21 of 30 *Bridging the Gap* students enrolled in Harper's fall 2015 English 101 passing the course. Though derived from a small number of students, this pass rate (70%) exceeds the historical average of English 101 pass rates (66%).

- The [Summer Scholars Program](#), launched in summer 2016, combined and built upon the success of the College's previous bridge programs. District high school seniors planning to attend Harper, with placement in at least one developmental-level course, are eligible for this program. Students participate in a learning community to increase math, English, and reading skills while earning college credit. Additionally, students have the opportunity to network with peers and Harper faculty, and take advantage of Harper resources.

A strong example of Harper's partnering with four-year institutions is the College's [University Center](#), which provides access to four-year degrees on Harper's campus. Beginning in spring 2016, Harper partnered with area universities to provide students with access to earn 3+1 degrees in nursing, general studies, and criminal justice.

In addition, Harper reaches out to middle school students by hosting a [College and Career Expo](#) which provides a college campus experience for 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students and their families engage in interactive activities that highlight various careers and areas of study. The [Harper Ambassador Program](#) provides volunteer liaisons from Harper to local schools. [Harper representatives](#) have participated in events such as reading, math and science nights, in-class activities, family fun fairs, parent education nights and open houses. All schools visit Harper's campus for a tour with more than 3,000 students visiting Harper each year. Thirty schools within five school districts are participating in the Harper Ambassador Program. Details regarding the Ambassador Program are provided in 1.A.

Through its [Continuing Education Division](#), Harper offers a wide variety of specialized programming to community members. The summer [InZone](#) Program offers classes of special interest for youth ages 8-14, ranging from arts and crafts to sports camps. Continuing Education also offers classes aimed at interests of community members age 55 and older through its [Lifelong Learning Institute](#). These classes are offered on the main campus, and at several locations throughout the Harper district. Finally, programs to enhance work readiness are provided for adults with intellectual disabilities through the [Career Skills Institute](#).

### ***Business***

[Harper Corporate Training](#) provides continuing education and training for organizations within the community to prepare the workforce for specific tasks and provide skill updates. Additionally, the [Illinois Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#) at Harper provides no-cost business consulting and low-cost training seminars to help new and growing businesses in the community. Further, the College meets the [needs of working adults](#) by providing evening education programs through the [Fast Track Program](#) which enables adults to obtain certificates or associate degrees in an accelerated, cohort style program.

In the technical areas, Harper is partnering with industry leaders to open doors to careers through paid apprenticeship opportunities. Harper has taken a new approach to apprenticeships. In the past, an apprenticeship was created to serve the needs of an individual company. Harper however, invited groups of companies to start their apprenticeships at the same time. In this way full classes of apprentices are formed on the same learning track, increasing the total number of people trained and

saving time and money for all involved.

As of spring 2018, Harper has registered nine apprenticeships with the Department of Labor. Apprenticeships include:

- Industrial Maintenance Mechanic
- General Insurance
- CNC Precision Machining
- Supply Chain Management/Logistics
- Cyber Security
- IT Generalist
- Retail and Sales Management
- Banking and Finance
- Graphic Arts Print Production.

The College has also submitted for CDL Truck Driving which may also launch in 2018.

Another way Harper collaborates with the business community is through advisory committees. As a college in Illinois, Harper is required to have an [advisory committee](#), made up of local professionals, for each career/technical program. These advisory committees provide current information about the needs of the work place. The College uses this information to create new programs, revise curriculum, and refocus programs to meet emerging needs. Additionally, the College communicates information regarding program changes and new programs to its partners and stakeholders in the community through the advisory committees. The following are two examples of how Harper responded to needs in the local job market brought to its attention by advisory committees:

- The Manufacturing Program Advisory Committee argued that the 10-year old maintenance curriculum needed updating. Further, two main areas within the program needed certificate offerings. As a result of recommendations from its [advisory committee](#), the manufacturing program created [new programs](#) in basic maintenance and commercial maintenance to meet the needs of the community.
- The Graphic Arts [advisory committee](#), recommended creation of a [new course](#) to teach students WordPress and Mobile Technologies.

Harper career programs have also collaborated with local industries to provide authentic work experiences for our students as illustrated by the following examples:

- Harper and Zurich North America [collaborated](#) to address the insurance industry's loss of experienced talent due to impending retirements. The first cohort of a two-year apprenticeship was launched in January 2016, [with the goal](#) of bringing people into key technical roles in the insurance industry early in their careers. Apprentices are students seeking a two-year business administration degree who are simultaneously employed by the insurer.
- Harper's Fire Science Technology Program works closely with many communities in the area to provide training and education for Harper students and to create a pipeline of potential candidates for area fire departments. The [Fire Academy](#) is run in collaboration with the Elk Grove Township Fire Department and the [Fire Service Internship program](#) works closely with eight fire departments.

Harper also collaborated with regional workforce service providers and brought together 16 northern Illinois community colleges and seven workforce systems to form the [Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition](#). This group has committed its members to a regional College Completion Agenda aligned

with high demand employment sectors.

Additionally, the College's [Job Placement Resource Center](#) (JPRC) prepares students to be successful in their job searches and provides a service to local employers by communicating available jobs to students and graduates. Beginning in June 2014, Job Placement Specialists connected with employers to educate them about Harper programs of study and discuss how Harper students could fill their employment needs. JPRC staff also work with Harper program coordinators as liaisons to employers and students. The presence of a center specifically focused on job placement and related career resources is not common for community colleges and reflects Harper's commitment to provide education that leads to quality employment.

### ***Cultural Arts***

Harper provides the community with a wide variety of cultural experiences, [including](#) musical concerts, theater productions, lectures, films, art exhibits, student fashion shows, and other cultural events which not only serve the public but also reinforce learning on campus. The [Cultural Arts Brochure](#) provides a focused point of contact for all arts events.

The [Harper Community Music and Arts Center](#) provides lessons, classes, and spaces to community members to develop their musical and artistic passions. Community members also participate in theater productions, musical groups and choruses. During the 2016-2017 academic year, [2,001 people](#), ranging in age from two to 96, participated in these music and arts programs.

### **Facilities Serving the Community**

The community at large utilizes the following services and facilities at Harper:

- Academic Support Centers
- Child Learning Center
- Dental Hygiene Clinic
- Therapeutic Massage Clinic
- Fitness Center
- Library
- Women's Program
- Wojcik Conference Center
- Observatory
- Facility rentals for community events

An excellent example of Harper's collaboration with the community is the renovation of the Wellness and Sports Center. Palatine Park District and Northwest Community Healthcare in collaboration with Harper, have agreed to transform the aging [Building M](#) into an engaging educational facility that encourages a culture of wellness and provides recreational facilities and an immediate care facility for Harper students, faculty, staff and the community. The building will remain the home of the Kinesiology and Health Education Department, as well as the Athletic Department.

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## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### Summary

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Harper College is committed to creating a culture where the mission guides actions, drives innovation, and inspires excellence for the increasingly diverse community. Beginning in 2013, Harper initiated a comprehensive review and revision of its mission statement. Input was provided by hundreds of internal and external constituents. The resulting statement is clear, concise, and relevant and describes the important work of the College. The mission statement has been effectively communicated and socialized throughout the campus, and faculty and staff understand their roles in carrying out the mission. The mission statement appears publicly on the College website and in publications geared to students and the public at large.

The College takes seriously its role in the community and society. Particular attention is paid to diversity and Harper has been recognized externally for its efforts. A Diversity and Inclusion Task Force brought renewed attention to matters of diversity and inclusion, and set targets for institutional metrics around diversity. The task force report served as the diversity and inclusion plan and has realized significant impact in advancing diversity and inclusion on Harper's campus. The College has recognized that room for improvement remains and continues to focus efforts on increasing the diversity of faculty and administrators, and creating a culture of inclusion that values and respects each member of the College community.

Harper values its broader role in the community. The College has worked to align its mission with the educational system of which Harper is a part, coordinating our educational offerings with sender high school districts and baccalaureate granting institutions. Further, Harper offers education, training, and apprenticeships to serve the surrounding business community. Harper also serves the community at large through cultural arts programming and the many campus facilities available for public use.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Argument

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Harper College identifies integrity as a core value; integral to this commitment is the expectation that excellence in education occurs in an ethical climate of integrity and respect. It is expected that members of the College community be responsible and accountable for their actions to ensure that the College provides an environment where relationships and practices are based on trust. Integrity guides the operations of the College and the behaviors of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Ethical Behavior and Practices

##### *Board of Trustees*

As determined by State of Illinois laws for community colleges and reflected in the College's shared governance and organizational charts, the Board has [final responsibility](#) for the governance and operation of the College. The Board of Trustees determines and advocates for the mission and the fulfillment of public purposes of education. The Board assures comprehensive institutional planning, quality programs and outcomes, and adheres to the core values of the College. Board members are expected to behave in a manner that exemplifies ethical behavior. Ethical behavior for the Board of Trustees and all College personnel is outlined in the Board Policy Manual that includes a [Code of Ethics](#). Manuals for different employee groups also include sections on ethics, further emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior and reinforcing the Board policy. In all cases, manuals emphasize transparency and the importance of due diligence on the part of the agent, thereby helping to establish a culture of integrity at the highest levels of the College. Harper has established a system for [confidential anonymous reporting](#) to encourage people to report perceived wrongdoings without threat of harassment or victimization, thereby ensuring high ethical standards are likely to be maintained. The President is charged with providing a quarterly update to the Board regarding the complaints received and actions taken to address any perceived wrongdoing.

To ensure newly elected Board members have the materials and resources they need to serve ethically and effectively as Trustees, they participate in an [on-boarding and orientation process](#) that includes completing a mandated [Open Meetings Act](#) course. Additionally, all Board members participate in workshops to review their shared understanding of the Board duties and best practices, determine the need to re-examine policies and practices, and develop a work plan. Each July, the Board meets to discuss current issues and future trends, and each December, they participate in a [financial workshop](#) where a five-year projection of the College's finances is presented and reviewed. Trustees elected or



appointed after January 1, 2017 are required to complete regular leadership training as outlined in the [Illinois Public Community College Act](#). Participation in these workshops and training sessions provide the Board with the information and tools they need to make evidence-based ethical financial and operational decisions.

### ***Employees***

Harper is an equal opportunity employer and publicly displays the Equal Opportunity statement on its external website. To promote fair and consistent hiring practices, employees serving on search committees for supervisory, administrator, or faculty positions must participate in a [Search Process Workshop](#) and a Cultural Competency and Search Committee Workshop prior to serving on the [committee](#).

The College is committed to treating all people in a fair and ethical manner. In support of this commitment, the President formed a task force charged with examining diversity and inclusion on campus. As discussed in 1.C, the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force report outlined a number of key recommendations, including the creation of an executive-level position of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion. The Special Assistant develops, implements and supports diversity and inclusion initiatives. This position has a three-year term providing full reassigned time to an associate or full professor. The structure allows for fresh insight to be continuously infused in the position while providing sufficient time to implement strategies. Work resulting from the first three-year term includes an effective protocol and system for reporting [incidences of bias](#), a [360-degree feedback](#) system for college leadership, and measures focused on accountability for diversity and inclusion efforts such as the [Diversity Scorecard](#) and the Diversity Institutional Effectiveness Measures. Harper was recently acknowledged for its work in this area and was honored to receive the Illinois Community College Trustees Association 2017 Equity and Diversity [Award](#), the Association of Community College Trustees Central Region Equity [Award](#) and the 2017 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity [Award](#) from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine.

Unionized employee groups have negotiated contracts that include grievance procedures to ensure disputes over conditions in the agreements are dealt with fairly and equitably. The parties involved are encouraged to resolve any problems informally, but if that process is not successful, a detailed formal [grievance process](#) is followed. Contract negotiations are conducted respectfully and with integrity, sometimes using modified interest-based bargaining, enabling the teams to focus on key issues. Teams have successfully reached contract agreements without strikes since 2002.

The commitment to fair and ethical behavior is modeled by College leadership. The President offers opportunities for faculty and staff to meet with him for open dialogue and casual conversation. These invitations contribute to a culture of transparency and community building. The President also leads all-campus meetings at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters for the purpose of disseminating [information](#) on institutional strategies and priorities, recognizing faculty and staff, and keeping the campus informed about the financial standing and status of the College budget.

### **Financial Integrity**

#### ***Budget Process***

Financial integrity is evidenced in the College's transparent and open [budget preparation process](#). By following the College's financial guidelines and policies, a balanced budget is presented to the Board for approval each year. Special budget meetings are held annually with the Board of Trustees to review the financial status of the current year, outline the assumptions used for the following year's

budget, and examine five-year projections. The Board approves a preliminary budget in June, followed by a period of at least 30 days where the budget is on [public display](#) at the College for any interested parties to review. The final budget is adopted by the Board in August. Harper has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) each year since FY2000. This award recognizes preparation of the highest quality budget documents and best practices on budgeting, aligned with state and local budgeting guidelines.

To allow for greater transparency and institution-wide input, the [Finance Committee](#) was added to the shared governance system in 2013. The Committee recommends finance assumptions and ongoing implementation of the College budget process. Policy recommendations resulting from the work of the Finance Committee are submitted to the Institutional Resources Policy Council for review and approval. In 2015, the Finance Committee [recommended](#) a change in the financial policy regarding tuition and fee increases in the Board of Trustees Policy Manual. The recommendation was made after reviewing the following:

- Revenue sources of the College
- Tuition and fee policies of peer institutions
- Tuition increases needed to ensure an ongoing balanced budget through 2020
- Input on revised policy options from the campus community

The policy recommendation was [accepted](#) by the Board with the limit set at a maximum of 5% rather than 6% of total tuition and fees. Non-policy recommendations emanating from the Finance Committee, such as the [56 actions](#) to reduce campus spending and increase revenue, are considered by the ex-officio member of the committee.

### ***Ethical Use of Funds and Resources***

As a public institution, it is incumbent upon the College to be responsible stewards of financial resources. The processes for purchasing goods and services demonstrate Harper's commitment to meeting this responsibility.

The Administrative Services Procedural [Manual](#) outlines processes for obtaining quotations for the following:

- Purchases of \$25,000 and over
- Requests from sole suppliers
- Bid requests and requests for proposals
- Construction and renovation project bid requests

By following these processes, products and services are procured in an ethical manner and favoritism is avoided.

Providing quality education is a key component of the College mission. To ensure funds are allocated appropriately based on the needs of academic programs, department chairs and coordinators submit annual requests for capital, furniture, remodeling, and personnel to their deans. Deans confer with the Provost to review, prioritize, and approve requests while not exceeding the budgeted funds for academics. All expenditures for supplies and capital are approved by appropriate administrators through the iProcurement system and detailed records are maintained as evidence of fiscal responsibility and as a means of financial accountability.

The College has an extensive technology infrastructure and provides for the use of equipment,

software, networks, and facilities to the campus community. Access and use of these resources is considered a privilege and all employees must agree to comply with the College's Acceptable Use of Harper College Communication Network [policy](#) with each new log-in into the College's administrative network.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is maintained by hiring qualified faculty who, collaboratively with the administration, develop, implement, review and evaluate courses and programs. Each department determines the [credentials](#) for faculty in their content area and, with the dean, ensures that all faculty hold the necessary credentials. Faculty are recognized as experts in their fields and have the right to select their own teaching strategies and course materials. As outlined in the Faculty [Contract](#), faculty are entitled to academic freedom that includes freedom to discuss their subject matter, even controversial matters, in their fields, as well as freedom to conduct research and publish results. Faculty are also expected to be accurate in their communications, exercise appropriate restraint, and show respect for the opinions of others. As stated in the Academic Honesty section of the Board Policy [Manual](#), "Harper College is committed to the promotion of high ethical standards which are best attained in an environment in which individuals practice honesty and integrity." Students are also expected to practice honesty and integrity. A [Student Code of Conduct](#), available online, includes a table of student rights and responsibilities. It also provides examples of student behaviors, including academic dishonesty, that are prohibited. Students are encouraged to informally resolve any incidents of misconduct or conflict. When resolution is not possible, the processes for reporting, hearing, and appealing student misconduct are explained.

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## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Argument

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Harper College is committed to presenting itself clearly and completely to students and the community it serves. Using various methods, the College communicates accurate and timely information about its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

The College website provides information to students and the community at large. The website includes general information about the College as well as the catalog, course schedules, financial aid, community activities, and information specific for current and prospective students. Additionally, the College has a mobile app and is active on both Facebook and Twitter. These venues allow the College to connect with the community in a variety of ways.

The [College Catalog/Student Handbook](#) is the official policy and procedure document for students. The student handbook is available via the College website, which provides readily available links to printable documents. The handbook is reviewed and updated on a regular basis with many individuals contributing to ensure currency and accuracy. In addition to detailing the College policies and procedures, the Catalog includes information on Federal and state laws.

Students are also able to connect with the institution through the Student Portal. The [Student Portal](#) is an excellent place for students to find information on applying for financial assistance, selecting courses, and registering. Accounts and payment options, goal and educational plan progress, as well as links to Blackboard, transcripts, and general announcements are also available. A robust new Student Portal was launched in October 2017 with a variety of enhanced features. The new technology includes a dashboard that enables students to quickly see notifications and updates. Additionally, portal integration with Degree Works includes a visual illustration of student progress towards their goals as well as an “on-track” or “off-track” indicator based on the created academic plan.

The [Campus Directory](#) is the primary source of information regarding Harper faculty and staff. This Directory is available through the Harper website and, since 2012, on the Harper mobile app. Additionally, the printed and online versions of the College Catalog include degree information on administrators and full-time faculty. Contact information for faculty and staff can also be obtained by from the campus information desk.

The individual cost of attending Harper is presented publicly on the College website with the [Net Price Calculator](#). Current tuition rates and fees are published each year, along with information regarding payment arrangements, financial aid, and use of vouchers/waivers. Additional programmatic cost comparisons by institution are provided to students via marketing and admissions materials.

[Consumer information](#), provided in compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Student Right to Know Act, the Jeanne Clery

Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, the Drug Free Workplace Act and the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act is provided to the public on the College website. This information is also provided to students in the [College Catalog/Student Handbook](#).

The College website and catalog provide information regarding control. Oversight and leadership is provided to the College by the Board of Trustees. Information on the [Board of Trustees](#), including their role and activities, can be found on the College website. Additionally, the community can clearly review information related to governance, strategic and operational work, and institutional priorities in Harper's "[Report to the Community](#)" issued by the President's Office.

The College Catalog discloses the overall accreditation status of the College from the Higher Learning Commission. This information is presented clearly, along with information about the various programmatic accreditations, on the Harper [website](#).

The current policies and procedures discussed above are the result of recent efforts to improve communication to the College community, and especially the public. Beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year, the College Catalog is published twice per year, both in electronic format on the website and in hard copy. As of fall 2016, in support of sustainability efforts, the printed catalog is now only available internally. If external audiences or students wish to print any portion of the Catalog, the website provides links to PDF files of the information. Additionally, a major revision of the catalog and Student handbook occurred during the 2015-2016 academic year. These publications are regularly revised, based on feedback from students and on curricular changes, to aid students in navigating in a user-friendly manner. Previous versions of the Catalog are archived for reference.

The College recognizes that multiple communication channels are needed to effectively reach students so, the position of Student Communications Manager was created and filled in August 2014. The Student Communications Manager has created planned and cyclical [communications](#), rather than the previous ad hoc communications. Communications are sent to students via a monthly email newsletter, with timely [information](#) shared regarding registration, payments, FAFSA, and academic planning. The Marketing Services Department has identified improvements in open and click through rates for these communications. Additionally, in fall 2015, Harper implemented the use of Instagram profiling and a pilot "texting" project is planned for FY2018 to begin sending targeted text messages to students.

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## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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#### 2.C.1 and 2.C.2 Board's deliberations reflect priorities and consider constituent interests

The Board Policy manual states that Board members must clearly understand that independence, honesty, integrity, and caring are essential qualities of an educational institution, and the concern for values and ethics is important to the whole educational experience. The Board of Trustees exercises its judgment and is expected to perform its duties in the best interests of the College at all times, and in a manner that presents an ethical image to the community, avoiding even the appearance of impropriety. To this end, and to assure that College officers and employees will not use their positions for personal or private gain, the Board requires that its actions and the actions of its employees be consistent with College policies and procedures.

The Board conducts regular business via two monthly public meetings, held ten months of the year. [Notices](#) of all meetings are posted and sent to local news agencies to make the public aware of a scheduled meeting, as required by the Open Meetings Act. The Board Chair, in consultation with the President, determines the agenda for Board meetings. The Board reviews, deliberates and ultimately votes on exhibits that impact business operations as well as the academic priorities of the College. The week prior to the formal Board meeting, the Board meets in the Committee Meeting of the Whole (COW) to [discuss key items](#) and review in detail Board exhibits. No formal actions are taken at COW meetings. The Board takes action the following week during the formal Board meeting.

Monthly [consent agenda](#) items include review and approval of competitive bids, requests for proposals, purchase orders, personnel changes, and purchases made via consortia. The Board also reviews, deliberates, and votes on major initiatives via the "[New Business](#)" section of the Board meeting. Items within this area include the College's Strategic Plan, new programs of study, faculty tenure and sabbaticals, tuition and fee changes, property tax levies, bond issues, major construction projects, and new or revised policies.

The Student Trustee and Faculty Senate President provide updates to the Board during regular Board meetings. In addition, the Board agenda includes time for employees and members of the public to comment. These opportunities for comment and feedback occur before the Board formally votes on consent agenda and new business exhibits. In addition, the Board places the legal budget on public display and conducts public hearings, as required.



### **2.C.3 Board preserves its independence from undue influence**

Board members are required to adhere to [ethical standards](#) that preserve independence from undue influence from donors, elected officials, and others. College policy states that, “no member of the Board of Trustees or employee shall influence or seek to influence or participate in the purchase of products, services, letting of contracts or other transactions of the College when such influence or participation may result in personal gain” and that “no member of the Board of Trustees shall be interested directly or indirectly in any contract, work or business of the College except as permitted by law.”

Members of the Board of Trustees are subject to the filing requirements of the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act and thus file a [Statement of Economic Interests](#) with the Cook County Clerk each year. Furthermore, any fines or penalties assessed against a member of the Board of Trustees who fails to timely file a required Statement of Economic Interests shall be paid by the non-complying Trustee and not by the College. That said, no Harper Trustee has failed to comply with this filing or adhere to the College’s ethical standards.

### **2.C.4 Board delegates day-to-day management to the administration and academic matters to the faculty**

The President serves as the chief executive officer of the College and derives authority from and is directly responsible to the Board. It is the President's function to recommend policies requiring Board approval. Other functions are the implementation of Board policies and actions, and the authorization of administrative procedures and practices. The President also serves as chief representative of the College in the community. In accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act and the President’s employment contract, the President executes directly or by delegation to staff all executive and administrative duties necessary for the efficient operation of the College.

In addition, the Board of Trustees delegates to the President or designee authority to enter into contracts involving expenditures under \$25,000, in accordance with administrative [procedures](#). When deemed appropriate by the President or designee, such contracts shall be based on submission of written or verbal quotations by at least three prospective vendors. All accounts payable and payroll transactions are provided to the Board monthly. The Board is notified in advance of any substantial changes to the administrative procedures.

If the Board does not hold a regular meeting during the month, authority is delegated to the President to approve necessary business items. This authority is granted via a formal Board [exhibit](#) during the previous month’s board meeting.

The [policy manual](#) also states the Board's expectation of the faculty in overseeing academic matters. The faculty and administration have the responsibility for developing curriculum subject to approval by the Board of Trustees and the Illinois Community College Board (where required). Upon approval, the faculty and administration carry the responsibility for implementation, and for the regular review and evaluation of courses offered. All curriculum is reviewed and approved by a [Shared Governance Curriculum Committee](#) that maintains a membership of both faculty and administrators. [Minutes](#) from these committee meetings provide evidence that illustrate the oversight of academic matters by faculty.

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## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Argument

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Harper College is committed to providing a quality education. Integral to this commitment is the right of all members of the academic community to explore and discuss questions of interest and concern and to express opinions, even if unpopular. Several policies and procedures facilitate this commitment.

#### Academic Freedom

The rights and responsibilities of teaching faculty pertaining to academic freedom are outlined in the contracts for both [full-time](#) and [adjunct](#) faculty. Faculty are free to pursue research and present instructional materials which are pertinent to the subject taught and are expected to present all facets of controversial issues in an unbiased manner. These rights and responsibilities are consistent with the Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom adopted by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1940. Since 2008, no faculty has formally filed a grievance alleging a violation of academic freedom.

In addition, Harper has never appeared on the AAUP Censure List – evidence that College administration is committed to the freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The [AAUP Censure List](#) identifies institutions whose administrative officers and governing board "are not observing the generally recognized principles of academic freedom and tenure approved by [the AAUP]..."

#### Curriculum Development

The College's commitment to the freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning is also evidenced by its collaborative and democratic curriculum development process. Although curriculum proposals must be originated by faculty with relevant expertise, the [curriculum approval process](#) requires that the rationale for the course be vetted by the Department Chair, the Division Dean, and the Curriculum Committee Division Representative. Feedback provided during these initial conversations is used by the originating faculty member to improve the curriculum proposal.

Once developed, the curriculum proposal is submitted to the shared governance [Curriculum Committee](#) for consideration. The committee not only reviews and makes recommendations concerning the courses that the College offers, it also serves as an institutional resource for curriculum planning and development.

After at least one week of review, the committee meets with the originating faculty to discuss any curriculum proposal. During this meeting, the committee and the originating faculty work collaboratively to improve the proposal by making mutually agreeable modifications. The committee officially votes on any curriculum proposal two weeks after this meeting.

If approved by the committee by a simple majority, curriculum proposals are forwarded to the Provost's Office for final approval. If, at any stage, a curriculum proposal is not approved, the originating faculty is encouraged to revise and resubmit. The numerous checks at multiple stages is a testament to the fair, thorough, and rigorous nature of the curriculum development process.

As of fall 2017, the College offers 1,232 courses in different disciplines to students, all of which have been approved through this curriculum development process. This is further evidence that the College takes seriously its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### **Classroom Environment**

The freedom of expression and pursuit of truth is vital inside the classroom. In addition to being responsible for establishing course learning outcomes and topic outlines, faculty have the freedom to choose texts and activities for their courses. Students, too, have the opportunity to freely express their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs.

Faculty encourage open discussion and disagreement, in the spirit of respectful academic discourse. Even more fundamentally, the College is committed to students' equal opportunity to education. At Harper, no student shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. This commitment to equal opportunity is included on the Harper [syllabus checklist](#), to which faculty refer as they construct their class syllabi each semester.

### **Student Experience**

Students also have opportunities to freely express themselves beyond the classroom. The College hosts a student-run radio station, [WHCM-FM](#), which offers programming to the local community and beyond. WHCM-FM follows Federal Communications Commission regulations as they relate to obscenity and indecency. Beyond these regulations, students are encouraged to exercise their right to freedom of speech in a mature manner that reflects positively upon Harper. Students producing opinion programs must note during their program that the opinions are theirs and not the opinions of the College.

Similarly, the student-run, online newspaper, The [Harbinger](#), complies with the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Conduct. Since 2008, it is also bound by and upholds the Illinois College Campus Press Act. Although discussion regarding content is encouraged, no faculty member may edit or restrict content; faculty serve in a strictly advisory capacity regarding content, and advice is offered only to add insight into student editorial decisions. These decisions are within the purview of students alone.

In addition, the College boasts a large variety of [student clubs and organizations](#) catering to the interests of between 1,500 and 2,500 [student-participants](#) each year. The Center for Student Involvement has a [clear process](#) for starting a new organization and any student is welcome to do so.

### **Larger Community**

The College's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning extends beyond enrolled students to the larger community. [Policies and procedures](#) relating to the use of bulletin boards, demonstrations, distribution of literature, and speakers, seek to balance a robust commitment to freedom of expression with the values of respect and civility. These and other related

policies and procedures can be easily found online and in the College Catalog/Student Handbook.

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## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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#### 2.E.1 Integrity of research and scholarly practice

Harper College has an active [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). The IRB has the responsibility of ensuring that data derived from, or to be derived from, human subjects is collected and used in a manner that complies with the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) and the US Food and Drug Administration (21CFR, Parts 50 and 56). The IRB consists of five regular members: the Director of Institutional Research, a representative of the Provost, a Harper faculty member with quantitative research experience, a Harper faculty member with qualitative research experience, and a representative of another institution of higher education that offers advanced graduate-level research curricula. The IRB is responsible for reviewing [all research projects](#) conducted by or involving human participants affiliated with the College, including faculty, staff, and students, thereby providing effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by the campus community.

#### 2.E.2 Ethical use of information resources

Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources in a variety of ways. The Catalog/Student Handbook include a clear and comprehensive policy on the [acceptable and unacceptable uses](#) of technology resources, including email, internet, and electronic files. Each time students [log on](#) to campus computers, they must affirm their commitment to abide by this policy. Further, the Library provides information on [copyright and fair use](#), and contains links to several tutorials for additional guidance on issues surrounding copyright.

The [Library offers instruction](#) to thousands of students each year. Some of this instruction focuses on the ethical use of information resources. For example, the Library offers, in conjunction with the Writing Center, a series of workshops, which include a session on the ethical use of information resources. During these sessions, librarians cover a variety of issues relating to the ethical use of information, from the importance of proper citation, to discussing the advantages and disadvantages of various types of resources.

Additionally, students are instructed in information literacy and ethical use of information when they make use of the College's Reference Service. Librarians answered more than 20,000 reference questions in 2016, many of which were about research. As a result, librarians worked one-on-one with students aiding them in their research, thereby demonstrating an appreciation for the importance of using information in an ethical manner.

Students also receive instruction on the ethical use of information resources from faculty in the classroom. Information Literacy is among the College's five general education learning outcomes. Three-fourths of Harper [courses map](#) to this learning outcome. It states that all students who successfully complete a degree program should be able to effectively "apply a variety of credible sources to support a given topic." In doing so, students learn how to engage ethically with credible academic sources, including, for example, responsible acquisition and accurate citation using one or more of the most common formats. During academic year 2014-2015, faculty, in conjunction with the Learning Assessment Committee, assessed information literacy skills in their students. In this assessment, [information literacy](#) was defined as the topical relationship of sources to the assignment, the quality and authority of sources selected, and the accuracy of the citations. Results indicated that as a student progresses to matriculation, the ability to ethically use information resources increases.

### 2.E.3 Academic honesty and integrity

The College has clear policies on academic honesty and integrity. These [policies](#) are published in the Catalog/Student Handbook and, as indicated on the [syllabus checklist](#), should be included on all course syllabi. Effective enforcement of these policies follows the procedures detailed in the [Student Code of Conduct & Resolution Procedures](#). This document was updated in July 2015, to improve compliance with relevant laws, reflect best practices, and more effectively communicate policies and procedures to students. Procedures are informed by a commitment to the legal requirements for due process, and by the ethical principle of respect for all parties involved.

These procedures ensure the respect for students as well as faculty. Students are empowered to follow the [academic complaint process](#) to appeal or challenge an instructor or department decision. This process is detailed in the Catalog/Student Handbook.

Over the past five years, an average of 44 annual incidents of [academic dishonesty](#) have been reported, with a decrease from 41 in academic year 2012/13 to 35 in academic year 2016/17. While this number is low, the process for reporting academic dishonesty allows the individual faculty member to directly address and discipline, without institutional reporting of the incident. The low numbers reflect the philosophy of the College which emphasizes supporting the student and nurturing students to succeed academically. However, the College recognizes this low number is an opportunity for enhanced reporting while still maintaining strong student support.

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## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### Summary

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Harper College acts with integrity and its conduct is ethical and responsible. Integrity guides the operations, policies, and practices of the College. The Board Policy Code of Ethics addresses the expected ethical standards of the Board of Trustees as well as all employees of the College. This policy highlights the importance of honesty, integrity, and caring in the educational environment.

Harper presents itself clearly and completely for all stakeholders. This is evidenced through engagement in a transparent and public budget process, which demonstrates both fiscal responsibility and accountability to its diverse community. Additionally, the College Catalog/Student Handbook, which includes the cost of attendance, is readily available to the student body.

Board meetings are open to the public and shared governance meetings are open to the campus community inclusive of students. The autonomy given to the President, administrative staff, and faculty by the Board of Trustees, over the financial, operational, and curricular business of the College is indicative of the trust that the Board has in the ethical practices of the College staff and senior leadership.

Harper is committed to ensuring academic freedom and clear communication of students' rights. The College also demonstrates a high level of integrity in the classroom where freedom of thought and expression are welcomed and encouraged. Opportunities for freedom of expression exist throughout the campus, both inside and outside of the classroom.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Argument**

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#### **3.A.1 Currency, Performance, and Appropriateness**

Harper College offers courses and programs that are responsive to community needs and individual goals. The currency of courses and programs is assessed through a [Program Review](#) process outlined in 4.A. This process requires programs to review and develop action plans regarding their goals and objectives. Additionally, all career programs vet their curriculum and outcomes with professional [advisory committees](#) for currency, rigor, and industry relevancy. Several programs also obtain [specialized accreditation](#) that assures program validity. These professional collaborations secure industry approval and allow students to sit for their credentialing board exams, a necessary step in securing professional employment.

The curriculum approval process at Harper helps to assure the curriculum is legitimate, sound, and appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. New and revised curricula are submitted to the shared governance [Curriculum Committee](#) for approval. The Curriculum Committee is comprised of a cross-section of faculty and staff. To gain approval for a new course, the faculty originator must demonstrate that the new course has been through multiple levels of inspection and that it requires the appropriate prerequisites, adheres to course outcomes validated by disciplinary expertise, meets credit hour requirements, and has student learning at its core. This thorough process ensures that courses are vetted for redundancy so they are unique additions to the curriculum.

The widespread transferability of Harper courses to four-year institutions is an indicator that the courses are appropriate to the degree or certificate. Most [100 and 200 level courses](#) offered for transfer are included in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). This agreement guarantees that students will transfer a "package" of courses, having fulfilled most of their general education requirements and the first two years of many baccalaureate programs. To qualify for IAI, courses must be submitted to the General Education Core Curriculum or to a specific discipline's panel consisting of faculty from two- and four-year institutions. IAI courses are reviewed every five years by appropriate panels to ensure the courses continue to meet standards. Course transfer

guides/agreements with public and private colleges and universities are listed in the course catalog and can be found on the College website. Harper also participates in [Transfer Compact Agreements](#) for students who complete an Associate in Arts or Science degree. Nine participating Illinois colleges accept these degrees as meeting all lower division general education requirements and grant junior standing upon transfer, although some majors may have additional requirements.

### 3.A.2 Learning Goals

Harper clearly articulates learning goals for associate degree and certificate programs with 30 or more hours. All degree programs require the completion of 15+ hours of general education that encourage students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of educated individuals. The [General Education Learning Outcomes](#) include skills in communication, information literacy, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and diverse perspectives and cultures. The [curriculum map](#) illustrates the extent to which these outcomes are addressed in a variety of courses in most disciplines. For all Associates in Applied Science Degrees, [program outcomes](#) are listed in the online catalog. All courses also include student learning outcomes on official course outlines and syllabi. This direct communication with students about course outcomes increases students' awareness of their own learning. Clearly stated outcomes also benefit the department by offering a map for curricular assessment and a framework for course design.

### 3.A.3 Consistency

Course delivery at Harper occurs through face-to-face, online, blended, dual credit, fast track and continuing education classes. Harper does not have any consortial arrangements. [Standard course outlines](#) are required for all credit courses and are adhered to for ensuring program quality and learning goal consistency, regardless of location or mode of delivery. The use of a [syllabus checklist](#) for faculty also encourages [consistency](#).

Harper and its sender school districts formed a regional partnership, [Northwest Educational Council for Student Success](#) where goals were set and formalized. One specific area of collaboration has been the expansion of dual credit offerings. The number of dual credit students has increased from 152 FTE in FY2012 to 606 FTE in FY2017. Thirteen new dual credit courses were added in FY2017. Instructors for dual credit must have the same credentials as instructors at the College. A set of [procedural guides](#) has been developed to assure that the institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor, student learning, learning resources, and that dual credit courses have the same learning outcomes as courses taught on campus. Harper and high school partners met 20 times in FY2017 to discuss alignment between dual credit and campus courses. Annual meetings to discuss outcomes and assessment are planned beginning FY2018. Harper's commitment to consistency is exemplified in the Basic Nursing Assistant (BNA) training program (which leads to a CNA). The [BNA rubric](#) is applied to every course regardless of location of instruction. All BNA students, including dual credit, face to face, and blended, must pass state-wide standardized tests. [Results](#) for 2015 and 2016 indicate that 93% or more of BNA students, regardless of how the course was delivered, passed the state exam, exceeding the Illinois state pass rate target.

Harper's [Fast Track](#) is an accelerated part-time program that includes several degree and certificate opportunities for students who meet specific criteria. Students must meet with a Fast Track counselor, have a minimum GPA of 2.0 from any previous college credit, and complete a mandatory orientation. Only students who are completing a certificate or degree in Fast Track are permitted to register for these courses. Faculty who teach Fast Track courses, are provided [professional development coursework](#) to learn strategies on supporting adult learners in an accelerated classroom.

Harper offers online and blended courses as well as certificates and degrees in a distance learning format. The growth in distance learning offerings is attributable to market demand and the growth of internal capacity (e.g. trained online instructors) to provide classes in this modality. To address any inconsistencies in the quality of online and blended classes, the Curriculum and Instruction Strategic Plan Goal Team set a goal to implement a process for quality assurance in online/blended courses. Oversight of the distance education initiatives that include course design review, faculty professional development, and expansion efforts lies with the Dean of Teaching, Learning, and Distance Education. The Academy for Teaching Excellence, led by the dean and a faculty chair, provides support for distance course development. Prior to teaching an online/blended course for the first time, faculty must complete one of several online/blended education training options and a distance course development [checklist](#), that includes a course design self-review and a review by an instructional design specialist, using the Open SUNY Course Quality Review ([OSCQR](#)) rubric. Access to other [online resources](#), to promote best practices, are also available through the Academy website. To ensure continuous quality, each online/blended course is [reviewed](#) by the faculty member and a trained peer reviewer on a five-year cycle using the OSCQR rubric. The impact on the quality of online/blended course design and student success as a result of these new initiatives has yet to be determined, but will be assessed to determine appropriate future directions in distance learning.

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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### 3.B.1, 3.B.2 and 3.B.3

#### General Education Framework

General Education coursework at Harper is designed to offer degree-seeking students a breadth of knowledge from a variety of disciplines. All degree programs require students to complete 15+ hours of general education. Through these courses, students are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of educated individuals.

Harper's [General Education Outcomes](#) reflect its mission, which promises a quality education that is accessible to a diverse student body. When the outcomes were refined in FY2016, they were benchmarked to general education outcomes at more than 20 community colleges and are consistent with the Essential Learning Outcomes promoted by Liberal Education and America's Promise, a national initiative sponsored by Association of American Colleges and Universities. The General Education Program Review is intended to ensure that general education courses are robust and relevant and that general education outcomes are embedded in all degree programs. The [General Education Curriculum Map](#) is a tool that identifies courses in which general education outcomes are introduced, practiced, or reinforced.

It is through the integration of these outcomes that Harper can be certain that all students are able to work with data collection and analysis (quantitative reasoning and information literacy), communicate clearly (communication), master modes of inquiry (critical thinking, information literacy), evaluate (critical thinking) and adapt to changing environments (diverse perspectives).

#### 3.B.4 Human and Cultural Diversity

As a curricular requirement, all students seeking an Associate's Degree must complete a [World Cultures and Diversity course](#). This graduation requirement was added to increase students' awareness, appreciation, and understanding of perspectives of different cultural groups needed to live and work in a global society. Departments recommend to the Curriculum Committee courses that have a significant focus on diversity and/or world cultures. The Committee evaluates the applications to determine whether the course meets the criteria necessary to earn this designation. To date, 67 courses fulfill this requirement.

Harper has a [rich history](#) of support for international education and cultural diversity. The Office of International Education (OIE), in collaboration with the International Studies and Programs (ISP) shared governance committee, currently provide leadership to the College in this regard. Beginning in 2013, students may earn the Distinction of International Perspectives upon graduation by completing 12 hours of interdisciplinary academic studies through courses designated as having substantial global content, as well as a portfolio and capstone project.

A core component of the ISP Committee's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan is the Global Region of Focus, a three-year cycle of interdisciplinary programs and area studies centered on a region of the world. Faculty can enroll in a seminar course on the focus region and travel to the region for a study abroad experience. Once completed, they are required to develop and implement a curriculum infusion project. Eight faculty members participated in the first cycle in which Africa was the focus region. From 2015-2017, 2474 students in 101 sections of 34 courses were directly impacted by the infusion projects. The ISP Committee, in conjunction with OIE, also developed [Global Learning Outcomes \(GLOs\)](#) that have been mapped to several courses and tools for assessing the outcomes have been proposed. Additionally, fourteen faculty members participated in the second Global Region of Focus (Latin America) and developed [curriculum infusion projects](#) that assess one or more of the GLOs.

OIE also sponsors events that include International Education Week, Read Around the World, guest speakers with varied perspectives on the world, and an annual International Education Summit. This event, open to faculty, staff, and students at Harper and other nearby institutions, promotes the discussion of best practices in and the future of international education.

Faculty, who were awarded [Multicultural Faculty Fellowships](#), developed multicultural curricular infusion projects and engaged in group study about educational issues related to diversity; 56 faculty fellows participated in this program. During fall 2017, focus groups were conducted with previous fellows to determine how the program can best serve the needs of the College going forward. Results will be shared and next steps proposed in 2018.

Students have opportunities for international educational experiences through Harper's Study Abroad program administered through the OIE. From 2013 to 2016, the OIE received \$40,000 through a Harper Educational Foundation [Resources for Excellence Grant](#). Over the years of the grant, the monies have been dispersed to 34 students and 17 faculty to participate in study abroad opportunities through a competitive application process. Of the students who received awards, 85% would not have otherwise been able to participate in the program due to financial constraints. In the case of the faculty awards, each faculty member used the funds to further his or her professional development in a global setting. By the terms of the grant, faculty were required to present the highlights of their international experience to the ISP Committee. Several recipients made a second presentation during the College's annual International Education Week.

A wide variety of [student organizations](#) celebrate and promote diversity, including the Black Student Union, The Deaf Club, and the Indian/Pakistani Association. These organizations provide informal opportunities to learn about groups on campus ranging from lectures to student advocacy events to

cultural opportunities.

### 3.B.5 Creative and Scholarly Work

Faculty are actively engaged in their fields of study and stay current in their disciplines in a variety of ways. They are encouraged to share their scholarly publications or creative activities. Promotion and tenure are contingent upon continued professional learning in disciplines or pedagogy. The [published work](#) of Harper faculty are highlighted each semester by the Provost in recognition of achievement and to widen the impact beyond the individual.

Students work with faculty in classes and on special projects as part of their own research and creative activities. The [Harper Anthology](#), [Point of View](#), and [Harbinger Online](#), are examples of high-quality publications that showcase student writing and artistry. Student voices and creative endeavors are valued as an essential part of the Harper Arts Community. The [Harper College Art Gallery](#) hosts student work, faculty exhibitions, and visiting artists. Labs and other spaces throughout the College house places for collaborative inquiry and original research. Students have the opportunity to participate in scientific research through biology and [chemistry research courses](#) and independent study projects.

Faculty can apply for [sabbatical leave](#) for activities such as research, writing, disciplinary inquiry, or implementing a program that impacts student learning. Faculty present their projects at a [Board meeting](#) upon their return. [Resources for Excellence grants](#) can be used to support creative and scholarly work that aligns with the Strategic Plan and impacts student success. Faculty can also apply for [Teaching and Learning and Instructional Technology Grants](#) that support applicants in designing innovative teaching and learning projects. The final grant reports include the impact the innovations had on student learning and the faculty member's own professional growth.

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

### Argument

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#### 3.C.1 and 3.C.2 Faculty Qualifications and Responsibilities

Harper College is committed to student success through recruiting and developing well-qualified faculty and staff. As of fall 2016, Harper employs 695 faculty members, resulting in a [19:1 student to faculty ratio](#), below the peer average. Faculty account for 46.1% of the total employees. Full-time faculty members have taught at Harper for an average of 12.5 years. Of the current 208 full-time faculty, 45 have more than 20 years of service. Full-time faculty are assigned a minimum workload of 30 instructional hours per academic year, except English faculty who teach a minimum of 24 hours per academic year. Faculty also maintain 10 office hours per week. Additionally, the College employs five library faculty and 15 counseling faculty. Faculty also participate in shared governance, are active contributors to the work of their departments and academic divisions, and serve as department chairs and career coordinators.

Faculty oversee curriculum development. New and revised curricula are submitted to the [Curriculum Committee](#) comprised of 14 full-time or adjunct faculty voting members, administrators and staff. Expectations for student performance are established by faculty and are included in the syllabus for each class. Faculty assess student learning in individual courses and they participate in course- and program-level assessment. The assessment process is addressed in Criterion 4.

Harper follows rigorous protocols in selecting qualified faculty. To be eligible to serve on a full-time faculty search committee, employees must have attended a [Search Process and Cultural Competency Workshop](#) within the last three years. The [search process](#) ensures that Board policies of the College are met and all applicants are considered fairly. For full-time faculty hires, recommendations are made by a search committee comprised of faculty and the division dean, and are discussed with the Provost who makes the final recommendation to hire to the President and Board. Adjunct faculty are recommended by chairs or coordinators, approved by the dean, and forwarded to the Board for final

approval.

All faculty, including those teaching [dual credit](#), are appropriately credentialed to teach. Many faculty members hold terminal degrees or the highest credential in their field. All full-time faculty credentials are published in the College Catalog/Student Handbook. A Statement of Teaching Credentials to establish minimum guidelines for teaching qualifications was prepared jointly by administration and Faculty Senate as indicated in the Board Policy Manual. The [Faculty Credentials Statement](#) is reviewed annually by deans and chairs/coordinators.

### 3.C.3 Faculty Evaluations

Full-time and adjunct faculty are evaluated regularly. The procedures for full-time faculty evaluations are detailed in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Non-tenured faculty complete a formal evaluation process each year that consists of a personal assessment report, peer evaluation that includes an evaluation of teaching effectiveness, dean or supervisor evaluation, and student evaluations. The review teams read the previous year's review to determine if any recommendations to improve were addressed. Ultimately, the Tenure Committee, comprised of faculty, reviews these documents prior to making recommendations to the President. Tenured faculty complete a self-evaluation, and are reviewed by peers and their supervisor once every five years. Evaluations may occur more frequently when requested by the faculty member or the dean. The results of these evaluations are placed in personnel files. Students have the opportunity to complete Student Opinionaires of Instruction (SOIs) in select courses. The format for SOIs transitioned from paper to electronic in FY2015 and beginning fall 2017, SOIs are available for all courses.

Adjunct faculty are evaluated regularly per their [contract](#). Department chairs conduct observations and submit a written report during the first two semesters of an adjunct faculty member's employment. Returning adjunct faculty are then evaluated on a two-year cycle. Prior to consolidation of the Center for Innovative Instruction and the Center for Adjunct Faculty Engagement (CAFE) into the Academy for Teaching Excellence, CAFE conducted these evaluations by completing the Evaluation of Classroom Observation Report. The report was discussed with the adjunct faculty member and then submitted to the department chair/coordinator, division office, and placed in the personnel file. Adjunct faculty now have a choice of [three options for evaluation](#). Students evaluate adjunct faculty in every class each semester through the electronic SOI process.

### 3.C.4 Professional Development

The Academy for Teaching Excellence (Academy) provides a myriad of [programs, workshops, and graduate equivalency courses](#) that are [utilized](#) by full-time and adjunct faculty. During 2016-2017, the Academy investigated a new model for professional development and launched Communities of Practice (CoP). CoP are voluntary and designed to align with interests of a small group of faculty. Any faculty member can propose a new CoP. Participants are supported by the Academy with space for meetings, an organizational structure, and augmented professional development funds to support their inquiry. An [Achieving the Dream \(ATD\) Grant](#), designed to increase adjunct faculty engagement, has provided funding for a CoP that began in fall 2016, with a focus on applying Scholarship of Teaching and Learning principles to classroom practice. Fourteen CoPs with 107 (duplicated) members are currently active.

The Multicultural Faculty Fellowship, Outcomes Assessment Fellowship, and Center for Innovative Instruction Faculty Fellowship are examples of opportunities that allowed faculty to work on a project of their own design related to the topic area. The latter two fellowships have transitioned into CoP to involve more faculty in collaborative work in these areas.

Improving online instruction is a priority for FY2018. A work group of the Curriculum and Instruction Strategic Plan Goal Team developed guidelines for professional development for all faculty teaching online. This work is largely supported by the two instructional designers working in the Academy and is coordinated by the Adjunct Faculty Outreach and Engagement Specialist.

New full-time faculty members are required to attend a one-semester [faculty course](#) with topics designed to support professional development inside and outside the classroom. Faculty provide [feedback](#) at the end of the course to inform the topics and formats of future meetings. New faculty are also supported by a [Faculty Mentor Program](#). This program helps ensure that new faculty are aware of the professional support and development opportunities offered within and supported by the institution. The [program is highly regarded](#) by mentors and mentees. This standard of professional collaboration is set in the first year and encouraged to continue through the lifespan of a faculty member.

[New adjunct faculty](#) participate in a two-part orientation experience through the Academy. An [online pre-orientation](#) provides an overview of the College mission and communicates relevant policies and procedure. An on-campus orientation then focuses on the following:

- IT training
- Academic technologies such as the College's learning management system (Blackboard)
- Instructional techniques
- Classroom management/threat assessment

Additionally, the Academy manages communication with adjunct faculty through email, direct mail, and the website to ensure that adjunct faculty are aware of key dates, resources, and professional development.

Professional Development Units (PDUs) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for faculty who attend events such as the faculty retreat and assessment conference. PDUs and CEUs accumulate and are noted during promotion applications. Harper provides each faculty member with funds annually to promote professional development. In FY2016, full-time faculty were each allocated \$1,150 and collectively used more than \$180,000 for [professional development](#). Money not used by an individual faculty member can be offered to others to make up for shortfalls. Unused professional development funds are allocated to College-wide educational programs, when appropriate. Adjunct faculty are generally eligible for up to \$400 each per year for [professional development expenses](#). In FY2016, adjunct faculty used over \$20,000 in pursuit of professional enrichment.

Faculty at Harper are committed to their own enrichment and receive recognition for these efforts. Sabbatical projects, faculty presentations, publications, and degrees earned indicate that faculty are taking advantage of the processes and resources provided by the College.

### **3.C.5 Faculty Accessibility**

Course [syllabi](#) are utilized to inform students of faculty office locations, posted office hours, and other contact information. Syllabi are available to students at the beginning of each course and are posted on Blackboard. All full-time teaching faculty are required to maintain weekly office hours per the [Faculty Contract](#). [Cumulative data](#) from the SOIs indicated, on average, that 95% of students reported their instructors were approachable and 96% of students reported their instructors were available during office hours or by appointment.

Harper has administered the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#) every third year since 2006. Student-faculty interactions is one of the benchmarks shown by educational research to positively impact the student experience and the educational outcomes. Harper's benchmark score has been between 48.0 and 50.9, hovering around the CCSSE cohort score of 50.0. In 2009, students were asked to rate the quality of their relationships with faculty; 84% of the respondents gave the highest range (5-7) with the average (5.57) slightly below that of the CCSSE cohort (5.68).

### 3.C.6 Qualified Staff

Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development. Harper ensures that its staff members are appropriately qualified by following strict hiring guidelines. For example, [job descriptions](#) indicate the minimum qualifications needed for various staff positions. Staff are adequately prepared to work in a student support environment and complete training specific to their department. New staff members undergo a probationary period to ensure an appropriate fit with the position. All staff members are reviewed annually. Many employee groups produce goal statements to help focus their work in the upcoming year. Development Plans are created collaboratively between employee and supervisor if the level of performance needs improvement. Professional development opportunities are offered to staff members. Human Resources offers [training and staff professional enrichment](#) opportunities, such as Lunch and Learn and Book Discussions. Schedules are posted to the employee portal for staff. The value the institution places on professional development and enrichment is reflected by inclusion in annual performance reviews.

The [Harper Leadership Institute](#) (HLI) provides a year-long opportunity for faculty and staff to participate in a program designed to enhance professional effectiveness and provide a pathway to future leadership opportunities. The program is designed for those seeking a deeper understanding of Harper within the context of the community college movement, for those desiring to improve professional efficacy, and for those who aspire to greater leadership roles. Any employee is eligible to apply for this experience with the support of their supervisor. The HLI program is valued by the campus community and will be offered as long as interest remains.

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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

## Argument

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### 3.D.1 Support Services

Harper College provides a comprehensive set of student support services that assist students in reaching their academic and career goals. Academic advising and counseling services are provided as a regular part of the student on-boarding process. [The Center for New Students and Orientation](#) (CNSO) serves approximately 6,000 new students annually. During orientation students meet with their assigned academic advisor for individualized academic planning and further career development support. The CNSO conducts a survey with the purpose of obtaining feedback to assist staff in evaluating how well the new student orientation process met the students' needs and for program development and improvement.

Harper redesigned its delivery of student services in 2015, with the opening of the [One Stop Center](#), an integrated front-end student service provider centralizing registration and records, financial aid, and the business office. One measure of success of the One Stop may be the reduction in phone volume from 80,332 (FY2016) to 74,732 (FY2017). By centralizing contacts for assistance the One Stop has reduced the run-around students experienced by having to call multiple areas for assistance.

Some services support the needs of specific student populations:

- [Access and Disability Services \(ADS\)](#) serves students with documented disabilities. ADS offers assistive technology, classroom assistance, untimed testing and other accommodations to those who qualify.
- The [Rita and John Canning Women's Program](#) offers educational planning, financial assistance and academic and social support for low-income or abused women and men.
- The [Veteran's Center](#) is a central location with resources for all military veterans, active-duty personnel, and their eligible spouses and dependents.
- The [Office of International Students](#) houses services designed to help non-native students adjust to overseas study.
- The [Child Learning Center](#), a [Gold Circle of Quality Facility](#), offers programs for small children in the community.

- [Health services](#) are available to students and employees and include physical exams, vaccines, sick visits, and birth control consultations; 8,424 visits were logged in FY2016.
- [Psychological services](#) are available to students who need short-term mental health care or personal counseling. In FY2016, there were 4,683 duplicated and 202 unduplicated visits. Mental health care is frequently duplicated as students attend multiple sessions to work on personal issues. Health and Psychological Services make referrals for longer-term care when needed.
- The [Job Placement Resource Center](#) (JPRC) provides job search assistance to all currently enrolled students and alumni. It assists students in resume preparation and interviewing techniques. It also offers networking opportunities with area businesses. In FY2016, 2,496 students (duplicated) were served through appointments, walk-ins and resume reviews. Additionally, 4,039 students were reached through 221 classroom presentations and 151 students reported they were placed in jobs.

A wide spectrum of [academic support](#) is provided to students through the Writing Center, the Tutoring Center, and Student Success Services. [Data](#) from these services show higher instances of success when students use these services. In addition, full-time faculty are available a minimum of ten office hours per week to provide academic support for students; up to five of these hours may be held in a learning setting such as the Tutoring Center. [Supplemental Instruction](#) (SI), a program that provides regular academic support facilitated by a [SI student leader](#), is available in some courses. SI participation has increased from 145 students in 2012-2013 to 581 in 2015-2016. Students who attend seven or more [SI sessions](#) successfully complete their courses and persist to the next semester at a higher rate than nonparticipants.

### **3.D.2 and 3.D.3 Placement and Advising**

Harper takes a proactive role in supporting college readiness through meaningful collaborations with district high schools. The high school district [penetration rate](#) is increasing and large numbers of high school students are preparing for college with aligned curricula and programs. In 2012, [The Northwest Educational Council for Student Success](#) put forth initiatives related to college and career readiness including providing maximum opportunities for high school students to earn early college credit, thereby increasing their likelihood of post-secondary success. The [Key Impact Trends and Annual Highlights](#) document from the 2012 cohort shows a six-percent increase in college graduation rates between dual credit and non-dual credit earners.

Harper students demonstrate their level of college readiness in key educational areas upon entry. The policy on assessment and placement in English and mathematics is published in the [College Catalog/Student Handbook](#). The [Testing and Placement Shared Governance Committee](#) oversees issues related to testing and placement. As a result of the College's participation in Achieving the Dream, a review of internal data identified an opportunity to decrease the amount of time students spend in developmental education and increase the number of students who progress to and succeed in gateway courses. The College instituted a number of changes to improve upon these measures that included curriculum changes and the adoption of [alternative placement methods](#). Math placement has changed considerably as the College has transitioned to a placement tool that has accompanying instructional modules that students can use as a course of study in order to prepare to retake the assessment. English placement has changed from a standardized placement measure to one that relies upon authentic demonstration of academic writing to determine student placement in college or developmental English.

As part of the Presidential Priorities (also known as Institutional Priorities), all new credential-seeking students will be assigned an advisor or counselor whom they can contact when questions arise or

referrals are needed to other support services. Students are encouraged to meet with advisors at any time to stay on track with their academic plan. Twelve advisors were hired in FY2017 bringing the College's advising/counseling staff to 44 full-time equivalent advisor/counselors.

Another Presidential/Institutional Priority is that degree-seeking students participate in one of the [Start Smart](#) options, course experiences that students take in their first semester. These courses move students forward to success by introducing academic language, study skills, college resources, and the support of a cohort of other students. See 4.C for success details.

Students at risk and those involved in specific programs require more intrusive and compulsory academic support and advising. Students who have been identified as at risk are aided through an [intervention](#) program which helps facilitate communication between teaching faculty and advisors about academic struggles. [One Million Degrees](#) students receive intrusive case management that enables them to overcome a variety of barriers they face in college. [Distinguished Trustee Scholars](#) are awarded merit-based scholarships. To maintain the scholarship, the students must participate in the Honors Program, maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA, and meet with an academic counselor each semester. [Engineering Pathways](#) students are directly admitted into the University of Illinois engineering program once they complete the first two years at Harper. This program is selective and requires students maintain a 3.5 GPA in the required courses as well as meet with counselors from both Harper and the University of Illinois.

Student feedback on services is collected and analyzed through the [Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) (SSI) and the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (CCSSE). In 2011 and 2014, students rated academic advising effectiveness and campus services important, but were only somewhat satisfied with both areas. The support for learners score on CCSSE was 2.9 points below the 2015 cohort. The new advising model is expected to have a positive impact on the student experience and their satisfaction with these services.

### **3.D.4 Infrastructure and Resources**

As one of the largest community colleges in Illinois, Harper's main campus inhabits almost 200 acres of indoor and outdoor space. One-third of the [physical space](#) at the College is dedicated to classroom, laboratory, and study space. Students benefit from a wide range of specialized facilities to support curricular and co-curricular activities, such as, the Wellness and Sports Center (Building M), Performing Arts Center, Observatory, Dental Hygiene Clinic, Massage Therapy Clinic, Simulation Hospital, and science and career laboratories. Harper also has two additional off-campus locations.

In 2009, a team of architects collaborated with the Campus Master Plan Steering Committee to develop a [master plan](#) to be enacted in phases from 2010-2020. This plan was designed to support future growth of the College and to be responsive to the needs of the students and the community. Many of the recommendations in the Master Plan have been addressed. Building D was renovated and dedicated in 2016 and houses the departments of Mathematics, English as a Second Language, and Adult Education as well as a variety of student support services. The library, academic support centers, and the Academy for Teaching Excellence will be located in the renovated Building F, on schedule to reopen by June 2018. Building M renovations began in March 2017 and will house the Kinesiology and Health Education department and Athletics, as well as fitness and wellness for curricular, co-curricular, and community programs. It was funded, in part, through partnerships with Palatine Park District and Northwest Community Healthcare. The renovation and expansion of Building A (Canning Center) is an approved state funded project, but is on hold pending release of state Resource Allocation Management Program funds. Updates on capital projects are included in the



### [College Plan](#).

The [library](#)'s primary roles are cultivation of information literacy skills and curricular support. Research assistance, library instruction, and the library collection are the primary methods used to fulfill these roles. The library redesign will allow it to become a central campus space of learning, exploration, research, discovery, and socialization. It will provide a variety of learning spaces and will connect to the natural environment by intentional design for natural light. The renovated library will provide an intellectual hub for students, faculty, and staff with flexible learning spaces, 24/7 online service assistance with a professional librarian, and a café. Harper values the library for its research potential and for its diverse offerings for students and faculty.

Technology is continually updated as detailed in the Information Technology [Strategic Plan](#). Computer workstations are easily accessible throughout the campus in mega-computer labs and in learning spaces such as the writing center and the ESL lab, internet cafés, and the library. As part of the FY2016 Information Technology Initiatives, 278 of Harper's 309 classrooms and meeting spaces were [upgraded](#) with enhanced technology and SMART podiums. The remainder are scheduled to be completed by the end of FY2018. Students and faculty have access to Microsoft 365 and wireless presentation technology in many classrooms. The student portal provides information about registration, scheduling, grades, financial aid, and support services. It also provides access to Blackboard, the learning management system. The development of a new [student portal](#) in 2017 included the creation of a dashboard for students, that provides a quick view of notifications and updates. Students also have access to technical support through phone, email or web chat.

At Harper, learning goes beyond the confines of the physical campus. [Partnerships](#) with local organizations enhance student learning and contribute to the vitality of the community. Healthcare students learn through [clinical rotations](#) at hospitals and other medical facilities. Students in [apprenticeship programs](#) move between Harper classrooms and local businesses, and early childhood education students work alongside experienced teachers in local childcare facilities.

Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on College facilities in the SOIs. Overall, facilities are well regarded, particularly in the new and renovated buildings.

### **3.D.5 Information Literacy**

Information literacy is taught in a variety of courses and disciplines and is supported by library faculty and staff. Students enrolled in writing-intensive courses, such as the English composition courses, engage in a wide variety of academic activities designed to increase their competency as they encounter print and non-print media. Additionally, the participation by faculty and students in 13 disciplines in the recent information literacy general education outcomes assessment project demonstrates a widespread focus on information literacy across the curriculum.

Further, Harper's library staff conduct sessions on library sources. During these sessions the library faculty discuss how to evaluate information on the basis of currency, relevancy, accuracy, authority, and purpose. On average, between FY2008 through FY2017, 5,318 students in 320 classes participated annually in [library instruction](#). The majority, 53-65% annually, of the classes participating in library instruction are from the Liberal Arts Division, however, library faculty have extended their outreach to other disciplines. Results from the [fall 2017 assessment](#) indicate that learning how to search and use databases were the most useful skills students learned from the session and nothing was unclear during the library instruction. The library faculty also created an [Information Literacy Workshop](#) for first-year seminar (FYS) courses, and an [integrative assignment](#) for faculty to use when introducing first-year students to the examination and interpretation of information. Survey

results indicate the majority of students believe the FYS course and library collaboration improved their ability to find what they needed through the library and increased their understanding of available resources.

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## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

## Argument

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### 3.E.1 and 3.E.2 Clubs and Organizations

Harper College recognizes that co-curricular programs add to student engagement and education. Mission-centered student organizations are available through the [Center for Student Involvement](#) (CSI). Student organizations provide the opportunity to develop essential skills such as teamwork, project management, and time management outside a classroom environment. Such skills support students' transition into the workforce. Nearly 70 [student organizations](#) have been established based on student interest and operate with the support of an advisor. [Campus events and programs](#), such as coffeehouse-style musical performances, a Kwanza multicultural celebration, and Student Veterans Association meetings, are often planned by one student organization but appeal to many students. As a result, students' awareness of other cultures increases and student involvement on campus is heightened. Many clubs present programs during the semester, and CSI tracks attendance at these programs to measure student involvement. The [CSI Annual Report](#) highlights milestones of the co-curricular, educational efforts led by CSI and its partners.

Data presented in the FY2016 CSI Annual Report demonstrate the value of co-curricular involvement at Harper in supporting the College's goal of increasing persistence. Students who engage with co-curricular opportunities demonstrated a fall-to-spring persistence rate of 77.8% compared to the general student body rate of 75.6%. Additionally, involved students earned a mean GPA of 2.99 in fall 2015, compared to a general student-body GPA of 2.17 for the same term. Advisors often act as mentors, thereby increasing student-to-faculty/staff connections.

Harper seeks to stimulate, encourage, and recognize the depth, scope and originality of student work through its [Honors Program and Honors Society](#). Annually, approximately 0.8% of Harper's [student population](#) are accepted into the Honors Program and 2.4% of Harper's student's are members of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the official honors society for two-year colleges. Many Honors and PTK events and weekly Honors meetings featuring different guest speakers, contribute to student educational experiences.

Students can develop and showcase their artistic, journalistic and broadcast skills through different venues on campus. The [Point of View Literary and Visual Arts Magazine](#) is a perennial award-winner, showcasing a variety of student visual arts, photography, poetry, and short stories. In 2016, Point of View was listed among the top winners of the annual Literary Magazine Competition with 2<sup>nd</sup> place recognition for the overall magazine, and several individual-artist awards. The Harbinger Online student newspaper, indicates it is "the only place to read about Harper College from

Harper College students.” The College’s radio station, WHCM 88.3FM, is staffed by student program hosts, program staff, and station managers. They broadcast daily programming via the College’s FCC license and are streamed live via the Internet.

### **Athletic Programs**

Through the [Harper Hawks Athletics](#) program, student-athletes participate in a variety of intercollegiate competitive experiences. All students may participate in a variety of fitness and athletic opportunities via [campus recreation](#). Athletics and recreation encourages success by maintaining and optimizing students' physical and emotional health which maximizes their readiness to learn. Additionally, athletics programming contributes to a sense of pride and community spirit on campus. Academic data on student-athlete success is provided in the Student Affairs [End of Year Report Summary Report](#). Student-athletes achieved fall-to-fall, fall-to-spring, and three-year graduation rates that exceeded the 2016 targets for the college-wide Institutional Effectiveness Measures.

### **Student Governance**

Students are encouraged to take part in the governance of the College. In compliance with state law, each spring semester a new Student Trustee is elected from the general student body to represent all Harper students as a member of the College’s Board of Trustees. Upon being sworn-in, the Student Trustee offers an advisory, non-binding vote on Board business. The Student Government Association (SGA) is recognized as an official voice of the student body with its student leadership elected on a regular basis and governed by a [Constitution and By-Laws](#). SGA addresses issues that are of concern to students and serves as an official link to the administration on many student-life matters. Students are invited to serve on [Shared Governance Committees](#) to provide the student voice on a variety of topics. The committee’s Ex-Officio member acts as mentor to the student.

### **Community Engagement and Service Learning**

Service learning teaches students civic responsibility, strengthens communities, and enriches the learning experience. Students engage in service learning through curricular and co-curricular programs. Courses and programs that incorporate service learning include human services, early childhood education, psychology and biology. The Office of International Education strongly encourages programs to include a [service component](#) in study abroad courses. Field Biology students volunteered at an animal rehab center in Costa Rica and the students who traveled to Uganda for their geography and humanities courses worked at a women's high school. Student organizations, including PTK and Honors, Environmental Club, and Human Services Club organize and participate in a variety of civic engagement events including Feed My Starving Children, Habitat for Humanity, Toys for Tots book drive, Special Olympics, food drives, habitat restoration, creation of book bag literacy activities, collections for disaster victims, and a semester-long Impact Poverty Drive. See 1D1 for additional details regarding community engagement.

Harper is committed to helping students succeed in the workforce through economic development partnerships. Recently, Harper was awarded \$2.5 million in federal grant money to establish new [apprenticeship programs](#). One of the innovative partnerships is with Zurich, a leading global insurer. Information Technology and [Manufacturing apprenticeships](#) are also being developed through the grant program. Harper continues to support the [Illinois workNet Center](#), which offers job seekers and employers access to a broad range of employment, training, education, economic development and labor market services. Another community investment is a partnership with Wintrust Community Bank, which held a [four series boot camp for small business owners](#). Wintrust provided a generous

donation to offer low-cost affordable training at Harper's Learning and Career Center. These professional workshops provide students and members of the community the opportunity to develop essential new skills working alongside business professionals.

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## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### Summary

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Harper College provides high quality education by ensuring its programs are appropriate to higher education. Communication with advisory committees and specialized accreditation enable programs to maintain industry standards. The inclusion of most transfer courses in the Illinois Articulation Initiative serves as evidence that they provide the foundation for upper-level coursework. Harper is committed to curricula that are consistent across modalities through standard course outlines that include student learning outcomes.

Degree programs include general education coursework designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of educated individuals. General education outcomes are integrated into a wide range of courses to ensure students communicate, reason, think critically, use information, and examine diverse perspectives. Students and faculty share their creative and scholarly work through publications, presentations, and exhibits.

Harper faculty and staff are qualified with many holding credentials that exceed the minimum educational requirements of their positions. Continuous learning is valued at the College as evidenced by the resources provided for professional development. The Academy for Teaching Excellence provides a variety of programming and instructional support for all faculty. The Harper Leadership Institute provides a unique opportunity for all employees to enhance their professional effectiveness and develop leadership skills.

Student support services are available to assist all students in reaching their academic and career goals. Two Presidential/Institutional Priorities—that all new credential-seeking students are assigned an advisor/counselor and that all degree seeking students enroll in a Start Smart experience in their first semester—indicate the College's commitment to student success. To enhance students' educational experiences and increase their engagement with the institution, Harper offers numerous co-curricular clubs and organizations. Many of these organizations include civic engagement events which strengthen communities while promoting civic responsibility.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

## Argument

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### 4.A.1 Program Reviews

Harper College is committed to rigorous and consistent program review. Using a systematic college-wide process designed to foster a culture of continuous improvement, program reviews are conducted for academic programs, student services, and academic support services. While the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) requires routine program reviews to ensure analysis of program need, cost effectiveness, and quality, [Harper](#) also requires the development and implementation of action plans to strengthen and improve program effectiveness. Harper's academic program review process was revised in 2008 based on feedback from HLC to better align assessment with program review, and in 2014 to allow programs undergoing specialized accreditation to better utilize the self-study process to inform program review. The process was last updated in 2017 to reflect the changes made in the [ICCB Program Review Manual](#).

Programs are required to undergo the program review process every [five years](#). Completion of the ICCB program review process is included in the College's annual operational plan and this goal is met



each year. Program review [reports](#) that include program summaries, progress report results, and the program review schedule are submitted annually to the ICCB and posted on the employee portal.

Program review includes collaboration among faculty, staff, and administration. The program review process provides an opportunity to evaluate the degree to which programs are meeting stated goals and objectives. The process also provides evidence in support of the institutional mission. Program reviewers are provided with standard data reports and can utilize customized research prepared by the Office of Institutional Research. Draft reports are reviewed with the appropriate dean in January so any financial and resource needs identified through the process can be included in the budget planning for the upcoming fiscal year. After completing the report, members of the program meet with their dean, the assistant provost and provost to discuss the results and potential impacts of the review. This process, which includes broad institutional participation, is invaluable in maintaining the relevance and currency of academic programs, student services, and academic support services.

#### **4.A.2 and 4.A.3 Evaluation and Quality of Credit**

Harper evaluates the credit it transcripts to ensure its quality. Advanced Placement (AP) examinations and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations are developed by the College Board and credit for these exams is accepted at most colleges in the United States. In 2015, Illinois enacted *The College and Career Success for All Students Act*, which ensures that students scoring three or higher on AP examinations will receive college credit for the course. All active [AP exams](#) are accepted for credit at Harper. To ensure the validity of the test results, students must have the AP scores sent directly from the College Board or present scores in a sealed envelope. Harper also administers 33 [CLEP](#) exams through the campus Testing Center, and accepts International Baccalaureate credit as well as the Seal of Biliteracy.

Students may earn credit for military experience by submitting a transcript from their military branch that outlines credit recommendations. The [transcript is then evaluated](#) and, when necessary, department chair/program coordinator input is requested to determine whether the experience equates to courses at Harper. The awarding of credit is determined by the Registrar's Office.

Proficiency exams developed by Harper faculty are available for students to earn credit for some courses not available through CLEP or AP. In some programs, alternatives to a written test, such as student portfolios, musical performances, industry certifications, and work-skill evaluations are reviewed by faculty in the discipline. Proficiency credit may be granted or a pre-requisite for a course waived based on the evaluation of student work by faculty. A team of faculty and staff are currently working to make the information regarding [credit for prior learning](#) more accessible to students. Student inquiries are directed to an advisor who personally contacts the student to provide assistance.

Harper has policies to ensure the quality of the transfer credit it accepts. Students who wish to receive credit for courses completed elsewhere may have their official transcripts evaluated by Harper staff. Harper only accepts credit from regionally accredited institutions. Transferred courses do not affect Harper GPA, and grades from transferred courses will not appear on a Harper transcript. The College does not award credit for courses in programs if an equivalent course/program is not offered. The staff in the Registrar's Office utilize [itransfer.org](#) to compare [IAI](#) numbers and the transfer guide practices of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, to assist with the determination of credit.

For international transcripts, Harper accepts the reviews from [third party vendors](#) who specialize in foreign transcript evaluation. The College directs students to send their international transcripts to [two specific vendors](#), both National Association of Credential Evaluation Services members, for

evaluation because they provide excellent quality at a reasonable price. Credit is awarded from international institutions based on the findings of the evaluation services.

If it is unclear whether a course from an international institution is equivalent to a Harper course, the appropriate chair/coordinator is asked to assist in the determination of course equivalency. However, in all cases, the Office of the Registrar makes the final determination when awarding credit.

#### **4.A.4 Institutional Authority: Student Learning, Academic Rigor, Prerequisites**

Harper College maintains responsibility for the oversight of all curricula via the [Curriculum Committee](#). For new courses and course revisions, the curriculum originator, a faculty member, follows the outlined [curriculum process](#). Transfer courses must be articulated with at least three four-year public universities. Final approval is given by the Provost's office and ICCB (if applicable) after which the course is activated. Courses are also reviewed every five years through the program review process. Additionally, career programs meet each semester with Advisory Committees who collaboratively review the program and curricula as needed.

The decision to develop new programs is based upon student demand and labor market analysis. A proposal is developed in the appropriate division or department. It is first presented to the Provost and then to the President and the Board of Trustees. Approval from ICCB and, when appropriate, HLC must be granted before the program can be offered. Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) and Surgical Technologist (ST) are [two new programs](#) approved in 2017. The PTA program was proposed after it was determined that many students in Harper's district were enrolling in PTA programs at colleges in other districts. The ST program was proposed as a result of discussions with hospital partners. The market analysis conducted by Harper's Office of Institutional Research indicated a 41% increase in employment (to more than 100,000 jobs) for PTAs and a 30% increase in employment (to 127,800 jobs) for STs over the next 10 years.

The College ensures learning and course rigor are maintained through the annual assessment of program, course, and general education learning outcomes. The assessment cycle includes use of results and improvement strategies. Details regarding assessment can be found in 4B.

All Harper students, including dual credit students, and employees have access to learning resources maintained by the Harper library. The [collection of materials](#), both physical and online, includes books, periodicals, and non-print material. Librarians, who serve as liaisons to academic divisions, communicate with departments and divisions to ensure the collections remain relevant. In recent years, the print collection has decreased, while electronic resources have increased. These trends are consistent with the decrease in print and media circulation and the e-resource searches by library patrons. Since the library is a member of the North Suburban Library System, students and staff may submit requests for materials housed in other libraries in the system at no cost.

A Statement of Teaching Credentials to establish minimum guidelines for teaching qualifications is prepared jointly by the administration and the Faculty Senate as indicated in the Board of Trustees [Policy Manual](#). The [Faculty Credentials Statement](#) is reviewed annually by deans and chairs/coordinators.

[Dual credit](#) oversight is maintained by department chairs, academic deans, the dual credit coordinator, and the Assistant Provost-Dean of Enrollment Services. The department chair, in collaboration with the dean, is responsible for regular review of dual credit courses to ensure that course syllabi, learning outcomes, text materials, and assessments are consistent with the same credit courses taught on campus. Faculty credential requirements are also reviewed by deans and department

chairs/coordinators and are consistent with the requirements of faculty teaching the same college credit courses on Harper's campus. [Credentials of dual credit instructors](#) are kept on file at Harper.

Recognizing the importance of appropriately credentialed faculty and the benefit of offering dual credit opportunities to high school students, the Northwest Educational Council for Student Success (NECSS), a regional partnership between Harper and its sender school districts, collaborated with Roosevelt University to develop an 18 credit-hour program for science teachers in school districts 211, 214, and 220. If successfully completed, the courses are accepted as partial fulfillment of the MS degree in Biology. Ten high school teachers successfully completed the program in August 2016.

Instructors teaching dual credit courses receive [guidelines](#) for teaching such courses, as well as the same syllabus checklist, course outline and student learning outcomes used by Harper faculty. By fall 2018, transfer and new career dual credit courses taught in the high schools will adhere to the College's semester schedule. As a member of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), Harper follows the guidelines recommended by NACEP for concurrent enrollment partnerships.

#### 4.A.5 Specialized Accreditation

Several programs maintain [specialized accreditation](#). Specialized accreditation ensures educational rigor, quality, and national standing. All programs are in good standing with the specialized accreditors with the exception of the Medical Assisting program. This program is on probation but expects to return to good standing in 2018.

#### 4.A.6 Evaluating the Success of Graduates

One year after graduation, Harper administers an annual [Follow Up](#) survey to graduates. The survey evaluates whether graduates believe the College has sufficiently prepared them for employment or continued study at transfer institutions. Data are disaggregated by career and transfer graduates.

Career graduates' response rates are typically slightly higher than those of transfer graduates; the gap was particularly wide among 2015 graduates. Efforts to increase transfer graduates' response rates in 2016 were successful. Of those respondents who graduated in 2016, the majority indicated they were successful or very successful in achieving their educational objective and considered instruction at Harper good or excellent; this is consistent with survey results since 2009. Data from this survey are used to assess the employment and educational status of graduates and their overall satisfaction with the College and their program of study. Career programs assess the results of this survey as part of their program review and report the results to [ICCB](#). Beginning with the 2013 graduates, survey results are presented in two formats, a dynamic dashboard and a static report on the employee portal.

ICCB published survey data on the percent of career graduates from Illinois community colleges employed or continuing their education and the level of satisfaction with their programs. Harper generally compared favorably with peer institutions as reflected in the 2015 results, the last year ICCB compared the colleges.

College	Percent employed	Percent continuing their education	Satisfaction Maximum score is 5
Harper			

N=149 of 289 surveyed in 17 programs	80.0%	30.6%	4.11
All Illinois Colleges	79.6%	28.2%	4.22

Many career programs conduct employer surveys to ensure employer satisfaction with Harper graduates and graduate preparation as entry-level professionals. The survey results are utilized by the programs in a variety of ways. For example, the Radiologic Technology program includes results from employer surveys in their program assessment plan and the Cardiac and Medical Sonography program made changes to course curriculum based on employer feedback.

Graduates consistently pass licensure exams for their respective industries. The [pass rate](#) for students at Harper regularly exceeds the target set by the accrediting body, Illinois rates, or national rates. These pass rates serve as another indicator of the success of Harper graduates.

The College began collecting data in 2017 from the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the National Clearinghouse. The data are used to study five-year outlooks with respect to employment and wages for all students who exit Harper, with and without a credential. This project is in the initial stages, but the [preliminary analysis](#) indicates students who leave Harper with a credential earn more over time than those who leave without a credential. Harper was awarded a [Seamless Transfer Pathways grant](#) with Township High School District 211 and Northern Illinois University. The work of this grant could serve as a model for other transfer partnerships that would benefit students and provide a means to assess the success of Harper graduates.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Argument

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#### 4.B.1 Assessment Processes

Assessment of student learning outcomes has been conducted at Harper since the 1990s. In 2003-2004, a comprehensive review of assessment practices identified the need to strengthen learning outcomes assessment at Harper, and improvements were shared in the 2007 Higher Learning Commission self-study. However, the 2007 comprehensive evaluation identified additional areas for improving assessment, and the College submitted a [Progress Report](#) on Outcomes Assessment in 2010. The College was commended for the evidence it submitted regarding the improvements that were made between [2007 and 2010](#).

Based on a need identified in the 2007 evaluation, Harper established an Outcomes Assessment Office in January 2009. As the College's assessment culture has grown, the office has also expanded in [both function and size](#). The department now manages processes and training related to learning assessment (general education, program, and course) as well as non-academic assessment, indirect assessment and survey research, strategic planning evaluation, and a wide range of other institutional effectiveness functions. The department continues to recommend and implement process improvements in the areas of general education assessment and campus-wide engagement in assessment.

The outcomes assessment processes enable the College to collect, analyze, and utilize data about student learning so that institutional and departmental efforts can focus on improving student achievement and the learning experience. The mission of the Outcomes Assessment Office is to support the assessment activities of the College and promote a culture of evidence focused on continuous improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. To achieve this mission, the office works collaboratively with faculty and staff across campus, and works closely with the Learning Assessment (LA) Committee.

The [LA Committee](#), a shared governance committee that leads learning assessment at the College, is responsible for planning and implementing the annual assessment of general education learning outcomes, as well as engaging the College community through discussions and resources related to student learning assessment. LA Committee [membership](#) encompasses faculty across many College divisions and several different employee groups. Additionally, the Committee's work groups (subcommittees) extend membership to colleagues who are not voting members of the Committee, in

keeping with the College's commitment to broad participation in assessment.

## **General Education**

Harper's General Education Learning Outcomes provide student learning goals that pertain to all associate-degree programs. These outcomes were [refined](#) in FY2016 after revision of the College's mission statement. Stakeholders had identified concerns with the 12 general education outcomes, particularly the challenge with assessing all 12 outcomes in a timely manner. The LA Committee implemented a review process that included stakeholder input, and ultimately adopted [five refined](#) general education outcomes. In 2017, departments across Harper updated the [curriculum map](#) which identifies the connection between courses and general education outcomes and helps facilitate timely and appropriate assessment of those outcomes. The College's five refined general education outcomes focus on communication, critical thinking, diverse perspectives and cultures, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning.

General education outcomes [assessment](#) is conducted annually by the LA Committee and its work groups, as well as various faculty members who measure the outcomes within their courses. At least one general education learning outcome is assessed each year through a [work group](#) dedicated to that outcome. Before assessing, work groups conduct research and review best practices from other institutions in relation to assessment of similar outcomes. This research includes attending presentations and workshops at professional conferences, reviewing relevant literature, and reviewing available assessment tools. Work groups then plan an assessment that is relevant for the given general education outcome and contextualized for Harper. Recently, work groups have chosen to develop assessment instruments that are unique to Harper but are also informed by methods used outside the College. Questions and appropriate rubrics are developed and, when necessary, norming sessions are held to promote inter-rater reliability. This method allows for assessments that are specific to Harper's general education outcomes, ensuring results can be used for improvement.

Beginning in FY2016, the College increased participation in general education assessment through the use of random sampling rather than requesting volunteers. In the first year using this method, student artifact collection increased from 472 to 1,059, and participation of students with 45 or more credit hours increased from 102 to 351. The number of instructors and disciplines participating in general education outcomes assessment has also increased. Thirty-nine instructors representing 22 disciplines participated in assessment of quantitative reasoning, and 40 instructors representing 19 disciplines participated in assessment of diverse perspectives and cultures when the new sampling technique was used, compared to 13 instructors in 13 disciplines participating in the voluntary assessment of information literacy.

## **Program-level and Course-level**

All career degree programs at Harper have specific learning outcomes that are shared with students through the Programs of Study section in the online College Catalog/Student Handbook. The programs also have [curriculum maps](#) that identify the courses in which the program learning outcomes are introduced, reinforced, practiced, or not relevant. Student learning outcomes for all courses are provided to students through [course syllabi](#) as well as in the course outlines for every course offered by the College. These outlines are available on Harper's CurricuNet website.

Program-level and course-level assessment, and assessment of administrative and student support departments, are conducted annually based on the Nichols Model, which encourages using assessment results to make improvements:

Column 1. Identify the mission

Column 2. Define the learning outcomes

Column 3. Select assessment measure(s) and establish criteria for success

Column 4. Implement the assessment and analyze the data

Column 5. Use assessment results to improve student learning

Programs/departments report their assessment efforts through the College's TracDat Assessment Management System. TracDat allows the College to collect and [maintain assessment information](#) in a standardized manner while allowing users flexibility when building their assessment plans. It also provides access to current and historical assessment information, which ensures continuity over time.

At the end of each assessment cycle, the Outcomes Assessment Office analyzes the work from the previous year and reports this analysis in the [Annual Outcomes Assessment Report](#). The report provides high-level assessment information such as participation rates, use of results for improvement, and the annual actions of the LA Committee and Outcomes Assessment Office.

#### **4.B.2 and 4.B.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Use of Results**

##### **General Education Outcomes Assessment**

After planning and administering the annual general education assessments as described above, the assessments are scored by the given work group in partnership with the Outcomes Assessment Office. After scores are tallied, results are analyzed by the work group and the Outcomes Assessment Office. These results are communicated to the College the following semester via faculty workshops, news postings, and presentations at all-faculty meetings. Work groups use the remainder of the year to continue gathering campus-wide feedback, and then use the results and feedback to create student learning improvement plans. This work is also informed by faculty surveys that were administered in fall 2014 and [fall 2017](#). These surveys helped the LA Committee and its work groups determine what resources for improving general education learning outcomes would be most useful and how faculty would most likely access resources.

General education improvement plans are communicated through means best suited to faculty including workshops, internal College communications, and the employee portal. Each [improvement plan](#) is implemented prior to reassessing the given outcome. The partnership between the LA Committee and the Outcomes Assessment Office ensures these improvements will be implemented and sustained over time.

##### **Assessment in Academic, Student Support and Administrative Areas**

As explained above, the assessment process is framed through the Nichols five-column model, which establishes the expectation that assessment results are being used to improve student learning or, in the case of administrative departments, campus services. Therefore, as part of the annual assessment process, programs and departments specifically define an improvement plan in column five, titled Use of Results. If a criterion for success was not reached, departments/programs are required to identify what improvements will be made in the related program, course, or department. If a criterion was reached, they are encouraged to explain how their results will be used for improvement and whether they will continue to gather data or make changes in their assessment procedures.

Departments also report assessment results and use of results over time in their five-year program reviews. Although the connection between program review and assessment was improved prior to the 2010 Progress Report on Outcomes Assessment, this process was further refined and improved in



FY2014. Through the program review, departments reflect on the previous five-year period to summarize improvements that were made as a result of assessment. For example, the Humanities Department discovered in their most recent program review that their rate of Fs and Ws was higher than other departments. They therefore revised their student learning outcomes and developed a course-level outcomes assessment plan. A faculty member was awarded an Assessment Fellowship to facilitate this process. The goal is to use the assessment process to determine how to improve student success without sacrificing rigor.

Additional information about program review is available in 4A.

### ***Program Assessment***

Program assessment is based on the program's student learning outcomes that are defined by program faculty and published in the Harper Catalog. Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, certificate programs with 30 or more credit hours, developmental math, and English as a Second Language participate in academic program outcomes assessment activities. Reporting for academic program-level assessment is the responsibility of each program coordinator, but all faculty members are expected to be involved in the assessment processes. The increases in the number of programs completing the annual assessment cycle and the number of assessment results leading to actions as reported below are indicative of broad faculty participation. Five years of [program-level assessment data](#) are provided for review.

Comparing data from [FY2011](#) to [FY2017](#), the completion rate of the full cycle of program-level outcomes assessment increased from 78% to 100%. A full cycle includes planning, implementation, and use of results of the assessment. As part of the assessment process, programs identify actions for improving student achievement of outcomes. For example, FY2015 assessment results indicated that although Paraprofessional Educator students understood theory and practice, they were unable to support their opinions with evidence from research. Therefore, the department worked to build content into all of their courses to enhance students' ability to support opinions with research. Revisions included redesign of Case Study and Observation Reflection paper guidelines and rubrics. Of the over 200 assessment results typically reported annually, more than 62% identified ways to improve course content, pedagogy or assessment methods.

### ***Course-Level Assessment***

Course-level assessment is based on the course learning outcomes as defined in Harper's General Course Outlines. Transfer departments participate in the course-level assessment process. Reporting is the responsibility of the department chair or coordinator, but all faculty members are expected to be involved in the assessment processes when their courses are assessed.

Although course-level assessment has been occurring in academic departments for many years, FY2013 represented the initial use of standardized reporting of course-level assessment plans and results. Most departments spent that year revising and developing appropriate course-level outcomes, so the percentage of courses reporting a full cycle of assessment was only 42% (N=26). By FY2017, the percentage increased to 100%. As part of the assessment process, departments identify actions for improving student achievement of outcomes. For example, the results of the spring 2015 [Philosophy course assessment](#) showed that student performance was low for the outcome "apply distinct philosophical perspectives to a discussion of real-world issues." The results were used to design a common summative assessment implemented in spring 2016 by faculty teaching Introduction to Philosophy. The results from 2016 then informed the agenda for the 2018 department retreat. The number and percentage of assessment results that lead to improvements in course content, pedagogy

or assessment methods increased each year from 24% in FY2013 to 60% in FY2017. Five years of [course-level assessment data](#) are provided for review.

Examples of action plans created to improve student learning as a result of program-level and course-level assessment are included in the Outcomes Assessment annual reports.

### ***Student Support and Administrative Services Assessment***

Outcomes assessment of [Student Support Services and Administrative Services](#) began in 2004 and is conducted annually by the student support and administrative units following the same assessment timeline as programs and courses. Cycle completion rates have increased over time; the completion rate has increased from 77% to 100% between FY2012 and FY2015. Each year since FY2012, more than 60% of non-instructional assessments led to improvements in services, programs, or other operations with a high of 70% in FY2017. For example, as part of its FY2015 assessment process, Psychological Services conducted a research study collecting aggregate data about prior treatment histories of student clientele. Prior treatment history helps inform allocation of resources on a macro-level and provides meaningful data about treatment planning on an individual level. The data collected were utilized in shaping student resources to address the significant percentage of students with extensive prior treatment histories. Additional appointments for clinical triage, case management, and crisis intervention have now been built into the schedule for these students.

Assessment of co-curricular programs is also included in this process. Currently this focuses on ensuring those areas are supporting student learning within their academic coursework. For example, Athletics added a Student Athlete Success Center Coordinator to work with student athletes and coaches to improve the study hall experience and to increase compliance with study hall requirements. As a result, 90% of the student athletes agreed the study hall helped them study more effectively and complete their homework on time. The FY2016 Operational Plan included a goal of improving student success through extra-curricular engagement opportunities by 5% compared to the overall student population as determined by fall-to-spring persistence and semester GPA. The goal was partially met; the GPAs of the Student Leader Cohort were higher (2.99 versus 2.22 in fall and 2.90 versus 2.35 in spring) and although the persistence rate was higher for the Student Leader Cohort, it was only 3.7% higher, and not the targeted 5%.

Student organizations have not been involved in the College assessment process. However, the Center for Student Involvement has worked closely with Outcomes Assessment to develop a three-tier plan in creating and assessing learning outcomes for all student organizations by FY2020. These assessments will help identify specific skills gained through individual club and organization involvement, and future assessments will provide data to enhance current programming and student advisement, as well as demonstrate alignment with the College mission.

#### **4.B.4 Best Practice and Engaging Members of the Harper Community**

The Nichols Model for assessment was chosen because it aligns with best practices in assessment, particularly the focus on using assessment results for improvement. As noted in *Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education* (George Kuh et al, 2014), using assessment results, although one of the most difficult steps in the assessment cycle, is critical to guiding changes in practices and policies to improve student learning and success. In order to complete the annual assessment cycle, departments and programs must explain how they are using assessment results to make improvements, thereby making routine this frequently missed critical component of the cycle.

When the same outcome is assessed the following year, the changes that were made can be assessed to determine if they were effective.

The LA Committee and Outcomes Assessment Office work together to communicate with and provide professional development opportunities to the College community. The largest of these opportunities is the [Assessment Conference and Share Fair](#), offered annually since 2010, which brings approximately 100 employees together annually to learn more about assessment and share best practices.

The Outcomes Assessment Office also provides [workshops](#) on topics such as writing learning outcomes, self-assessment, classroom assessment techniques, and use of TracDat. For example, the Office facilitated a three-seminar series in diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment during fall 2014. Faculty participants developed a plan for conducting their own assessments and if they completed the series, earned a Certificate for Teaching Excellence. Thirty-eight faculty participated in one or more of the seminars with 26 attending all three seminars in the series. In fall 2016, the Outcomes Assessment Office partnered with the academic deans to develop and implement Learning Assessment Workshops designed to improve faculty knowledge and use of assessment results for improvement; 36 department chairs and coordinators participated in the workshops. Participation in these workshops could have contributed to the increase in the number of departments and programs completing the full assessment cycle. Division, department, team, and individual [consultations](#) are also a regular part of the support provided by the Outcomes Assessment Office.

Faculty members interested in specialized experiences relating to outcomes assessment can apply for additional funding to support their research and experience in assessment. These experiences began as faculty assessment fellowships in 2010, allowing individual faculty members to partner with the Outcomes Assessment Office to create an [assessment project](#) that would provide the faculty member and her/his department with valuable information about student achievement. From 2010-2016, twelve faculty, representing eleven disciplines/areas were awarded fellowships. In FY2017, the fellowship began converting to a Community of Practice (CoP) format, which allows more faculty members to engage in assessment in innovative ways. The CoP allows faculty to work with peers in a collegial setting to implement innovative projects related to outcomes assessment. The eight members of the current Assessment CoP received financial support to attend the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis to further enhance their assessment knowledge and skills and strengthen their sense of community. Harper is able to create and support faculty with a commitment to continuous improvement of student learning through these specialized experiences.

Additional support for faculty and staff involved in assessment is provided through extensive training and reference materials that are available on the employee portal. These resources are managed by the Outcomes Assessment Office and include information about how to use assessment to [make improvements](#), general education assessment and improvement, and tutorials for using TracDat.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Argument

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#### 4.C.1 Ambitious and Attainable Goals

Ongoing analysis of retention, persistence, and completion rates provides evidence of Harper's commitment to helping students reach their educational goals. Harper established goals for student persistence and completion through [Institutional Effectiveness Measures \(IEMs\)](#), the key performance indicators of the College. The work associated with the College's previous and current multi-year strategic plans also aid in achieving these goals.

Student success measures represent one-half of the IEMs. The rationale and process for the creation of the IEMs is described in 1.B. Targets for the IEMs are established through the College's shared governance process led by the Accountability Work Group of the Strategic Planning and Accountability (SPA) Committee. The target-setting process engages both the Board of Trustees and the campus community. The Board of Trustees provides guidelines regarding the overall distribution of targets, while the campus community identifies areas of priority through a campus survey. The work group examines trend and benchmark data, previous targets, priorities, strategic plan goals, and results of the campus survey before recommending targets to the Board for approval. Targets are set based on a performance improvement framework and include the following categories:

- **Expected:** If we continue on our current path, this target represents the expected outcome.
- **Improvement:** A challenging, yet attainable target that can be achieved through increased effort.
- **Stretch:** A target achieved only if the measure is prioritized and institutional focus is placed on dramatic improvement.

Current and previous targets for persistence and completion have been ambitious and are consistently in either the improvement or stretch categories. Progress toward the targets for each measure are displayed on dashboards on the College website and the employee portal. Demographic and benchmark data are provided for internal constituents on the employee portal. These ambitious

targets are attainable as evidenced by [achievement targets](#) for student persistence and completion by 2016, which were established previously. Currently, student persistence measures represent two of the three [stretch targets](#) for 2020. As such, human and financial resources have been allocated through the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan and Title III initiatives to enable the College to meet these targets.

Student success and enrollment are standard categories in the Operational Plan, and results from one year are used to inform goals for the following year. For example, in FY2016, the fall-to-spring persistence rate increased beyond the targets for students enrolled in One Million Degrees, or a Start Smart course, or who met with a counselor because they were flagged through Early Alert. This increase occurred even while the rate for continuing students decreased by 1.5% from FY2015. Expansion efforts in all three initiatives were [targeted for and met](#) in FY2017. Implementation of expansion of Early Alert is a goal in the FY2018 Operational Plan as well.

In addition to the IEMs and the Operational Plan, the [2010-2015 Strategic Plan](#) outlined goal targets to increase completion and achievement among all students, with a focus on identified at-risk student groups, including students in developmental courses, young male students, and black non-Hispanic students. The goal targets set in the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan focused on three targets to increase overall student completion:

- Increase percentage of first-time, full-time freshman from sender high schools [taking credit-bearing courses](#) to 60% by 2015
- Increase the number of [certificate and degree completers](#) to over 3,000 annually for a total of 10,604 additional degrees conferred by 2020; this goal was met in 2017
- [Decrease student achievement gaps](#) by increasing semester-to-semester persistence, success in developmental courses, and success in gatekeeper courses among at-risk student groups, while increasing academic achievement for all

The [2016-2019 Strategic Plan](#) includes three major goals related to student success:

- Academic Planning and Pathway
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Student Experience

Each of these goals has identified success [targets](#). They also align with the College mission to provide quality and accessible education and to inspire the transformation of individuals. Although ambitious, the College has demonstrated the ability to attain these goals as described in the analysis and use of data.

#### **4.C.2 and 4.C.3 Analysis and Use of Data**

Harper maintains a strong focus on data-informed improvements in student achievement, persistence, and completion. This focus intensified in 2009 when Harper became a member institution of [Achieving the Dream \(ATD\)](#), a network of community colleges and advisors that focuses on research-based educational reform to increase student success and completion. The interventions proposed in the ATD plan were developed based on [data analyzed](#) by a team of faculty and staff. Harper identified gaps in academic programs that block student success and completion. Some of the key opportunities for improvement included the following:

- Low overall graduation rate
- Disproportionate graduation rates for developmental and African American students
- Low success rates among students in developmental math, English, or reading courses and

gatekeeper college courses.

This initial work was then integrated into the College's 2010-2015 Strategic Plan along with the inclusion of additional student success initiatives. Following a rigorous process of piloting and evaluating results, several student success initiatives were institutionalized.

Institutionalized initiatives varied in focus and included efforts to improve college-readiness, course completion and success, persistence and completion. Examples of institutionalized [initiatives](#) include the following:

- [Partners for Success](#) - an initiative to conduct placement testing with district high school juniors to assess college-readiness and address needed remediation prior to college entry. Results indicate an increase in math enrollment during the senior year as well as significant increases in college-readiness.
- [Early Alert](#) – an initiative that focuses on early identification of at-risk students. Faculty “flag” students who are at-risk for not successfully completing a given course and an advisor/counselor reaches out to the student to provide guidance. Initial results indicated a significant increase in persistence and course completion rates for students who were “flagged” and saw a counselor. The Early Alert cohort expanded in FY2017 to include 60% of new first-time-in-college, degree-seeking students (1,383/2,314), which included 100% of those with developmental placement.
- [Placement for Success](#) – an initiative that changed College policy to require students placing in developmental coursework enroll in at least one development course each term until competency is achieved. [Enforcement](#) of the policy has been challenging, with a five-year average compliance rate of 70%. Upon further review of the policy, it has been determined that additional steps are needed to enforce the policy. The implementation of degree planning and assigned advisors/counselors, initiatives in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, are two strategies that will address this.
- R.E.A.C.H. – a two-week summer bridge program focused on students with developmental placement levels, with a concentration on historically underrepresented minority students transitioning from high school to Harper. [Results](#) indicate a significant increase in math and English placement after retesting. Additionally, students develop a valuable network with faculty, campus resources, and other students while gaining confidence in their ability to navigate the college experience. Two other summer bridge programs, developed in collaboration with high school partners, were also offered at Harper under the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the three programs were reviewed, the best features of each were identified and they were consolidated into Summer Scholars, a four-week program piloted in 2016. Unfortunately the Summer Scholars program was only able to recruit half the number of students typically recruited by the Summer R.E.A.C.H. program. Additionally, testing and retention results were less desirable as well. Therefore, [Summer Scholars](#) currently seeks to return to a two-week program format.

Harper was awarded the [Leah Meyer Austin Award](#) by Achieving the Dream (ATD) in February 2016 for making “sweeping changes in its operations and culture that have led to substantial improvements in student success,” according to ATD President and CEO, Dr. Karen A. Stout. Harper's focus on transforming its culture and operations led to the following results between 2010 and 2014:

- Increased graduation rate from 14% to 24%, according to the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS)
- Improved African-American students' fall-to-spring persistence from 69% to 78%
- Increased African-American students' college-readiness in math rate from 15% to 58%

- Raised Hispanic students' college-readiness in math from 36% to 62%
- Improved African-American students' completion for developmental math from 10% to 21%

Other initiatives included in the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan showed success for small numbers of students. In the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, the College committed to focus on strategies that would promote student success for large numbers of students, thereby focusing on scalable initiatives.

The 2016-2019 Strategic Plan is making progress toward its goals. To date, Areas of Interest, which align with the concept of pathways, have been identified and are being implemented. A conceptual roadmap of the student experience has been drafted, and new ways of ensuring quality online course delivery are being implemented. Promising teaching practices are being developed and tied to communities of practice, with a culture of care underscoring the overall experience students should have while engaging with and attending Harper. These initiatives are designed to improve student success through increased persistence and completion.

Harper's efforts to improve student persistence and completion received additional support in 2014 when the College was awarded a [Title III](#) grant through the Department of Education's Strengthening Institutions Program. The goal of this grant is to increase the capacity of the College to provide improved student engagement, tracking, communications, success, retention, and completion. The three objectives of the grant are as follows:

- To strengthen academic and student support services and experiences for degree-seeking students
- To strengthen early educational experiences and support services for high-need students (developmental students, African American students, and students who struggle to reach the 30-credit milestone)
- To strengthen and increase the capacity of academic and student support technology infrastructure and communication systems

Title III strategies are closely aligned with the goals of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. Projects designed to meet the objectives include the following:

- **Holistic Assessment:** A suite of targeted projects have been designed to enhance and improve the success of new students. These projects include improving the initial data-gathering around student intent, improving the comprehensive assessment of new students in course placement and from a non-cognitive perspective, improving support for undecided students, improving mandatory development placement, and improving the use of Degree Works, a degree planning and audit tool, in initial advising in Orientation.
- **Start Smart:** These courses aim to support degree-seeking first-time college students by developing an educational plan of study and promoting use of support services. In FY2017, students who successfully completed a Start Smart course and developed a plan to completion experienced a 12% increase in persistence compared to the Title III cohort overall. Additionally, the longitudinal analysis of the fall 2015 First Year Seminar cohort indicates those students had higher retention rates and GPAs, and earned more credits and more credentials over a two-year period as compared to a control group.
- **Educational Planning:** Degree Works will be utilized to create an entire academic electronic course plan and notify students when they are "off track."
- **Portal/MyPlan:** The development of a new student portal in 2017 included the creation of a dashboard for students, so they can quickly see notifications and updates related to the life of being a student from classroom and student support perspectives.
- **Data Warehouse/Analytics:** A data warehouse has been installed to aid in historical and trend



analysis. A predictive analytics system has also been installed to identify current students who may be at-risk of not persisting based on data from the student information system and the course management system.

- Student Advocate: The initial concept was to use volunteer mentors to guide students through their Harper experience. Upon further review, it was determined this concept would not be sustainable and a one-year pilot was conducted using Academic Success Coaches. That pilot helped to inform the creation of an assigned advisor/counselor case management system that launched in Student Development in 2017.
- Early Alert: A system expansion is planned to target at-risk students (see above for details). The system will also be used for case management to support the new advising model and will serve as the primary communication tool between advisor/counselor and advisee.

Status reports for Title III projects are prepared [quarterly](#), while an external evaluation is prepared [annually](#) by a third party. All reports are available to the campus community on the employee portal.

The [Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force](#) composed of faculty and staff, was established in 2014 to develop strategies to increase enrollment of adult and young adult students at Harper College and to improve persistence and completion rates among all Harper students. It is now a permanent task force that sets recruitment and retention goals on an annual basis and continues to review business practices to improve overall enrollment/retention rates for the College.

Under the purview of this Task Force, [a retention officer](#), who monitors and communicates on efforts to retain current and previously enrolled students, was appointed in 2015. Some of these efforts include verifying the need for registration holds, examining practices to reduce the number of course withdrawals, and examining the reasons for dropping a course prior to its start. In addition, the Task Force recommended development of programs to enhance the onboarding of new students, including First-Year Seminar courses, orientation sessions for new students, improving scheduling and pathways to completion, and development of an Enterprise Relationship Management system to track student engagement at the College. Recommendations are forwarded to the appropriate Strategic Plan strategy team, Title III project team, or shared governance committee, when applicable. The Task Force also completed research on the [adult population](#). Many of the areas identified as needing attention are being addressed through the Title III and Strategic Plan initiatives. Additionally, a Hispanic Enrollment [Task Force](#) was created in fall 2017, and their recommendations are due in spring 2018.

#### **4.C.4 Methodology and Process**

Student success data are collected, analyzed, and communicated by the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division. These data are made available to the campus and community through an online dashboard and annually through the [Institutional Accountability Report](#). Student success data include persistence rates, graduation and completion rates, transfer rates, and overall student advancement rates.

The Office of Institutional Research reports student data to a variety of state and national agencies. Graduation rates, transfer-out rates, persistence and student advancement rates are reported to [IPEDS](#). Course completion rates and persistence rates are reported to the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP).

Using these benchmark data to compare performance against peer institutions is a best practice in higher education; it is a strategy included in *The Handbook of Institutional Research* and is outlined in *Benchmarking: An Essential Tool for Assessment, Improvement, and Accountability* (2006), J. A.

Seybert (Ed.), *New Directions for Community Colleges*. San Francisco CA: Josey-Bass. As such, Harper utilizes benchmark data whenever available to evaluate performance and set targets. Further, by reporting these data to various agencies, Harper ensures that the methods it uses for data collection and analysis meet the standards for higher education institutions.

From 2013 to 2015, the College issued a [Student Success Report](#) annually to provide data demonstrating changes in student progression, completion, and transfer rates over time for various demographics. These reports were used to identify areas of student success and areas that warranted improvement. The reports were electronically accessible to Harper staff and faculty. Beginning in FY2016 Student Success Reports were replaced by an updated external Institutional Effectiveness Measure (IEM) dashboard and a new [internal dashboard](#) on the employee portal. These dashboards provide similar data as was previously available in the Student Success Reports with high-level data included on the external dashboard. Demographic data are disaggregated on the internal dashboard. The interactive and user-friendly nature of the dashboards make student success data more accessible to the campus community and increase awareness and use of these measures by stakeholders.

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## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Summary

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Harper College demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. The College follows a rigorous and consistent program review process, which includes action plans to improve program effectiveness. Further, this responsibility is displayed through the authority the College maintains over curriculum, expectations for student learning, and faculty qualifications. Quality is also exhibited through the success of Harper students after earning a credential.

Harper is dedicated to a culture of assessment and continuous improvement. As the assessment culture has grown, support for assessment has also expanded. In 2009, both an Outcomes Assessment Office and an assessment shared governance committee were established to support and promote assessment throughout the campus, and ensure the use of assessment results to improve student learning. While participation in outcomes assessment is strong, the College recognizes the opportunity to increase levels of engagement.

The College has established ambitious yet attainable goals for student persistence and completion through the Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs). Data are collected, disaggregated and analyzed to develop and inform strategies designed to improve student persistence and completion. The College's focus on persistence is further reinforced through the appointment of a retention officer.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

## Argument

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### 5.A.1 Sufficient Resources

#### Financial Resources

Harper College has sufficient fiscal resources to support its operations and fulfill its mission. The College operates on a sound financial basis as indicated in the fiscal year (FY) [2017 financial statements](#). Harper has total asset and deferred outflow of resources of \$488,187,852, and total liabilities and deferred inflow of resources of \$231,105,664. In FY2017, operating and non-operating revenues were \$180,442,137 and operating and non-operating expenses were \$176,427,041. At the end of the fiscal year, Harper increased its net position by \$4,015,096, with a total fund balance of \$54,457,202 in Tax Capped Funds (the funds for which local property taxes can be levied and used for operation of the College). The fund balance represents 48.3% of the budgeted annual expenditures. This percentage aligns with the Board Policy requiring a fund balance between 40% and 60% of budgeted annual expenditures in Tax Capped Funds. The College has maintained a fund balance in excess of [40%](#) for more than 10 years.

Harper's revenue comes from three primary sources:

- Local property taxes (52%)
- Student tuition (43%)
- State appropriations (4%)

Harper is fortunate to have a strong local tax base and low reliance on state appropriations.

Additionally, the College is working to further reduce the dependence on state funding, as evidenced by the [FY2018 budget](#). Harper consistently develops a [balanced or better budget](#) for [tax-capped funds](#).

The College received an [unmodified opinion](#) from the independent auditor review of its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The unmodified opinion [states](#) that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the College.

Harper's financial health is also reflected in the College's bond rating and Composite Financial Index (CFI) for FY2017. For more than 15 years, the College has held a [Moody's Aaa bond rating](#), the highest rating awarded. Despite state budget concerns, Harper has consistently maintained a Aaa rating because of its healthy operating reserves, low dependence on state appropriations, and an annual budget process that ensures appropriate allocation of funds, maintenance of a balanced budget, and collaboration with the Board of Trustees. Additionally, Harper has maintained a CFI ranging [between 2.35 and 3.80](#) over the past seven fiscal years. These numbers are consistently in the "Above" range, demonstrating adequate financial resources.

## Human Resources

Harper has sufficient staffing to support operations and provide quality educational services to its students. The College employs a total of [1,508 employees](#), including an instructional staff of 208 full-time faculty and 487 part-time faculty. The College [organizational chart](#) provides documentation of a structure that supports student learning and institutional effectiveness. Additionally, the College has a [student-to-faculty ratio of 19:1](#) and typically maintains a ratio below the peer mean.

## Physical Infrastructure

Harper is a large community college providing education to more than 25,000 credit and 12,000 non-credit students annually, on a 200-acre campus containing 24 buildings with over 1.7 million square feet. Harper's additional locations include the Learning and Career Center, the Harper Professional Center, and Northwest Community Healthcare. College facilities more than adequately accommodate an FTE enrollment of 9,951 (FY2016) and the 2010-2020 Master Plan will increase space to accommodate [13,095 FTE](#) by 2020.

In 2008, district voters passed a \$153.6 million capital bond referendum, providing the College with funds for repairs, renovations, and additions to existing campus buildings. The [2010-2020 Campus Master Plan](#), updated in 2016, was created to comprehensively address the College's physical needs. Through plan development, the need for [additional academic and student support space](#) to meet current and future needs was revealed. Additionally, \$40 million was allocated for preventative maintenance over this 10-year period. [Preventative maintenance expenditures](#) are included in the College's Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs) and reported on annually.

Major capital projects demonstrate the College's commitment to maintaining an excellent physical infrastructure. Examples of projects completed under the 2010-2020 Master Plan include:

- Building H: Career and Technical Education Center – \$38 million renovation providing new classrooms and labs for Harper career programs. Additionally, with support from a [\\$500,000 grant from the Fabricators and Manufacturers Association](#) (FMA), a [\\$1.78](#) million state-of-the-art Metal Fabrication Lab for the Advanced Manufacturing Program was constructed.
- [Building D](#) – Renovations to create updated, appropriately sized classrooms that offer faculty and students more opportunities for teaching and learning.
- [Building F](#) – Renovations to update and expand this building began in fall 2016 and will be

completed spring 2018. The building houses the library and student support services.

- [Building M](#) – Renovations to transform the building into an engaging educational facility that encourages a culture of wellness, began in spring 2017 and will be completed for the fall 2018 semester.
- Building A: [Canning Center](#) – The College's future One-Stop Student Center, on hold pending release of Resource Allocation Management Program (RAMP) funds from the State of Illinois.

The net effect of the two completed projects, Buildings H and D, includes new classrooms and an additional 14,200 square feet of student support and study space, providing sufficient space for future growth.

### **Technological Infrastructure**

Harper has a strong technology infrastructure that supports both current and anticipated needs. The Information Technology (IT) Department supports all technology functions of the College. Operating under a comprehensive [Strategic Plan](#), IT is focused on providing a progressive and integrated technology environment at Harper.

To best meet the technology needs of the College, IT is organized in [two main areas](#), Client Systems and Infrastructure Services. Client Systems meets software and support needs, and Infrastructure Services manages the database, applications, and network needs of the College.

Harper has two Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, BANNER and Oracle EBS. BANNER is the College's Student Information System (SIS) product. Students have access to key services such as registration, payment, and financial aid through SIS, also referred to as the Student Portal. The system can accommodate 1,000 students registering in a five-minute period, which is well beyond the current rate of 100 students per five minutes. Oracle EBS serves as the College's human resource and finance system.

Additional technological resources include the following:

- Wireless network capacity to support nearly 5,000 simultaneous connections and the ability to increase capacity at any time.
- [500 academic applications](#) installed across campus in over 264 smart classrooms.
- Student access to email with unlimited storage, standard Microsoft products, library databases, and streaming media. More than 20 computer labs and a service desk are also available.
- Blackboard as the learning management system to support instruction for blended, online, and face-to-face courses.
- More than 5,000 workstations on a five-year refresh cycle.
- [Disaster Recovery Plan](#) to ensure return to normal operations after a significant disruption.

Additionally, in FY2015 the Board of Trustees approved adding [technology metrics](#) to the College's IEMs. This indicates Harper's commitment to a technology vision and infrastructure that supports student learning and campus operations.

### **5.A.2 Resource Allocation**

As a public institution, Harper has no superordinate entity to which revenue is disbursed.

The College's resource allocation process is extensive and inclusive. It provides adequate resources to core educational activities, like teaching, advising, and student support services. Financial allocation

decisions are made as part of the [annual budgeting process](#). These decisions result in the allocation of funds to College departments. The Budget Manager carefully monitors the process, as do the Controller, and the College's Executive Council. Importantly, there are [system and process controls](#) in place so that funds cannot be moved without the review and approval of the appropriate managers and administrators, thus ensuring that funds remain designated for intended purposes.

On average over the [last five years](#), more than 60% of the College's operating budget has been allocated to expenses associated with the state-defined categories of instruction, academic support, student services, scholarships, grants, and tuition waivers. For FY2016, \$63.2 million - 61% of the operating budget, was allocated to these areas. This includes expenditures for faculty salaries, academic support staff, equipment, materials, supplies, and other costs that support instruction. The College's resource allocation process has created the budgetary stability necessary to properly fund our educational programs, despite ongoing economic challenges faced by higher education in Illinois.

### **5.A.3 Realistic Goals**

The College's goals and priorities are realistic and supported by the institution's organizational structure, available resources, and opportunities. The 2016-2019 [Strategic Plan](#) is aligned with the College mission and focuses the institution on three directions and five goals. These goals speak to enhancing online education, developing high impact teaching practices and incorporating areas of interest or pathways into the student onboarding process. A culture of care underscores the overall experience students should have while engaging with and attending Harper. These initiatives are designed to improve success for all students as demonstrated through increased persistence and completion. Additionally, the Strategic Plan is supported by significant resources, both human and fiscal. [Resource allocations](#) to support strategic initiatives and integration of strategic work into the operations of the College ensure these goals are both realistic and relevant. In addition to the student success related goals, others surrounding employee professional development and effective stewardship of resources are significant aspects of the Strategic Plan.

Further, the [FY2017-2019 Presidential Priorities](#) (also referred to as "Institutional Priorities") are realistic and in alignment with the College mission and strategic plan. The work to accomplish the goals of these priorities is integrated into the Operational Plan of the College. As a result, human and fiscal resources are assigned to these priorities. The priorities include ensuring all credential-seeking students develop an education and career plan, assigning all new credential-seeking students to an advisor who will assist in navigating their Harper experience, ensuring the Promise Program is fully funded at \$10 million, and completing the refurbishment of the Canning Center (student center), David K. Hill Family Library (Building F) and Building M (Wellness).

Additional goals and activities aligned with and supporting the College mission are highlighted in 1A.

### **5.A.4 Qualified Staff**

To ensure quality education, faculty and staff are appropriately qualified and trained in their respective fields. Harper's workforce is highly qualified with nearly half ([46.2%](#)) holding a Master's or Doctoral degree. Additionally, the College continues to update its faculty credentials based on the needs of the curriculum and ever-changing technologies. Details on [faculty credentials](#) can be found in 3.C.

To ensure its faculty and staff remain adequately trained, the College provides generous professional development funding and opportunities. Over the last three years, the College has expended an average of \$523,000 on employee [professional development](#), reaching a high of \$600,188 in FY2017.



Professional development expenditures remain consistently above the 60th percentile in the National Community College Benchmarking Project ([NCCBP](#)) and average annual expenditures of more than \$500 per employee. The College also provides on-campus resources and opportunities for employees. The [Academy for Teaching Excellence](#), is a professional development support center for faculty that offers [faculty development courses](#), graduate equivalency courses at no cost to faculty, instructional design and technology support, and support for adjunct faculty members. Staff at all levels are also provided [on-campus development opportunities](#). These include “Lunch and Learn” sessions, a leadership certificate, workshops, and book discussions. Further, the Human Resources department [surveys staff](#) to identify areas of focus for professional development offerings. In staying true to Harper's core value of excellence, the College further encourages the professional development of employees by offering on-campus [graduate programs](#) at a reduced cost.

To further validate that employees are appropriately qualified and trained, all employees undergo [periodic review](#)/performance evaluations. All staff are [evaluated](#) on professional accountability, quality of work, problem solving skills, and teamwork. Administrators are evaluated based on developed goals and in alignment with key competencies. Faculty are [evaluated](#) on instructional service, professional development, and institution/community service. The faculty evaluation process is detailed in 3.C.

### **5.A.5 Budgeting Process**

Harper has a well-developed process for budgeting and monitoring expense.

The College devotes considerable time and resources to long-range financial planning with the annual preparation of a [Five-Year Financial Plan](#), which creates a framework allowing the College and the Board of Trustees to review the implications of major financial decisions. Once the Five-Year Financial Plan is completed and reviewed with the Board, it is used as a foundation to start the budget process.

The [budgeting process](#) begins with an approved [planning calendar](#) and is documented in the budget section of the employee portal and in the College Plan. The Board first considers a tuition change which establishes a large component of revenues, impacting the expense-side of a balanced budget. Budget information sessions and training classes are held, and individual divisions/departments work on expense budgets. The Executive Council reviews and approves the preliminary budget including any facility and furniture, academic capital, technology, and other requests. Once the preliminary budget has been completed, it is presented to the Board for consideration and adoption and is then made available to the public for viewing. After the required public viewing period, a public hearing is held before the [Board adopts](#) the budget.

Monitoring of the budget is conducted at the individual department/division levels. Spending of departmental funds, previously approved by the Board as part of the annual budget process, requires a check requisition or purchase requisition/purchase order approved by the appropriate level of authority. Budget versus actual financial [reports](#) for the Tax Capped Funds are prepared and presented monthly to the Board. Annually, a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is prepared and independently audited.

For seven consecutive years, Harper has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for [Excellence in Financial Reporting](#), by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). To receive this award, a government organization must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report that satisfies both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Argument

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#### 5.B.1 Governing Board

Harper College's Board of Trustees provides effective oversight of financial and academic policies. It meets legal and fiduciary responsibilities while maintaining current knowledge of College activities and operations. The Board serves as the policy-making body for the College and Harper's shared governance system ensures that the Board has the [final decision](#) on college-wide financial and academic [policies and procedures](#). For example, through shared governance in FY2016, the Board actively participated in the development and [approval](#) of the FY2016-2019 Strategic Plan, the approval of [new programs](#), and the approval of [new and updated](#) campus policies, as well as a [tuition increase](#) and salary increases. The Board is also responsible for adopting the annual budget, certifying the tax levy amount, and complying with legal requirements regarding the financial management of the District. Finally, the Board hires the President, who has responsibility for the daily operations of the College.

Harper's Board meets its legal and [fiduciary responsibilities](#), as denoted in the fiduciary duties document published by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and in the Board Policy Manual. An independent auditor, [Crowe Horwath LLP](#), confirms each year that Harper and its Board of Trustees meets its financial responsibilities.

The Board is active in the College community and participates in a variety of Educational Foundation and College events. The Board is also active in the Illinois Community College Trustees Association and the Association of Community College Trustees (a Harper trustee currently serves on its board). To ensure effective operations, the Board obtains knowledge about the College in various ways:

- [Onboarding process](#) that provides a thorough education about Harper policies, practices, and future plans, plus information on state, national, and accreditation associations. This includes a new course, mandated by the state and taught by an authorized provider.
- Annual retreat to discuss [Board governing issues](#) and timely topics related to higher education and Harper College.
- Communication through monthly updates in the form of a written [President's Report](#), as well as frequent updates on the budget, the Presidential Priorities/Institutional Priorities, Strategic Plan, [Operational Plan](#), and Master Plan/Facilities.

- The Board convenes public meetings twice a month, 10 months of the year. [Agendas](#) from FY2015-FY2017 provide an overview of the topics addressed at Board meetings.
- A [Five-Year Financial Plan](#) that forecasts financial trends is used by the Board as a tool to stay informed, provide guidance to College leadership, and examine the financial implications of decisions. This plan is updated annually by College administration and staff.

In this multitude of ways, the Board keeps current and knowledgeable, and meets its legal and fiduciary duties while overseeing the College's financial and academic policies.

### **5.B.2 Policies and Procedures**

Harper engages its internal constituencies in the institution's governance through a robust [shared governance system](#) and leadership focused on the importance of campus-wide input and participation. The College actively encourages participation in shared governance through a structure, appropriate to each committee, which includes representation from all employee groups as well as student representation.

Effective shared governance processes are critical to the College's success. As such, a campus-wide [assessment and review](#) of the shared governance system was a priority in FY2012 and [FY2013](#). The review emphasized two major tenets of shared governance:

- All constituent groups have a critical role to play in shared governance
- All are valued and encouraged to contribute their expertise in meaningful ways to ensure success of the institution

Harper's shared governance system has [two major branches](#):

- Student Success - [Committees](#) focused on the academic aspects of the College
- Institutional Resources - [Committees](#) focused on the operational aspects of the College

Governance items begin in committees and then proceed to the Policy Council that is responsible for each branch. Recommendations are forwarded to the President who presents policy recommendations to the Board. The [Shared Governance Recommendation Checklist](#) reinforces this path, including input from all stakeholders in the approval process. The structure of Harper's shared governance system echoes the philosophy that participation by all constituencies is critical to institutional effectiveness.

In addition to structures and philosophy that support broad participation in governance, College processes actively encourage all members to participate. [Institutional service](#) (including participation in shared governance) is included in the faculty evaluation process. Staff are also encouraged to participate in shared governance. By including institutional service in performance evaluations and promotions, Harper clearly and actively encourages all members to participate in shared governance.

### **5.B.3 Policy Setting Processes Encourage Collaboration**

The setting of academic requirements adheres to policies established by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the academic departments at Harper. Academic changes, updates, and revisions are addressed as follows:

- Course and program-level academic requirements are developed by faculty with academic credentials in the discipline. For 15 percent of Harper's courses ([145 courses approved for general education](#) transfer credit and [58 courses approved for major](#) transfer credit) many of these requirements are also outlined by the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI).

- New program curriculum is developed by faculty, reviewed and approved by the appropriate dean, and brought through the shared governance Curriculum Committee for approval. Once the curriculum has gone through this process and the Provost's Office gives approval, it is sent to ICCB. New programs must also gain approval from the Board and the Higher Learning Commission.
- All ICCB academic requirements are followed as written in the ICCB Program Manual and ICCB Administrative Rules Manual.
- Other academic policies and processes are discussed and recommended through the College's shared governance. This provides multiple perspectives for all policy discussions and recommendations.

Policy changes may originate outside an academic department; however, the Shared Governance structure is utilized to ensure the greater Harper community provides input on the proposed policy changes. While most academic policies are processed through the student success branch of shared governance, some, like the Academic Honesty, Student Academic Complaint Process and Academic (Grading) Appeals policies, are developed through the Office of Student Conduct and the Registrar's Office and are advanced through the shared governance system.

[Membership in the student success branch](#) of shared governance, the body responsible for setting the vast majority of the College's academic requirements, policies, and processes, is primarily full-time and adjunct faculty (43%), followed by administration (23%), staff (29%), and students (5%). Previously, actual participation was low for students, adjunct faculty, and individuals in the custodial/maintenance employee group. To increase student participation, the Office of Student Involvement (now the Center for Student Involvement) launched an [initiative to increase student participation](#) in [shared governance](#). Student participation has improved, and the focus is now on improving participation for the adjunct faculty and custodial/maintenance constituencies.

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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Argument

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Harper College engages in systematic and integrated planning. The College undertakes a variety of significant planning activities, which are articulated through the College's [planning and accountability structure](#) and summarized in the comprehensive annual College Plan. Included in this extensive planning document are the following:

- [Institutional Effectiveness Measures \(IEMs\)](#) - long-term key performance indicators of the College
- [Strategic Plan](#) - four-year plan that sets the College's direction and delineates goals that will move the College forward
- [Operational Plan](#) - annual plan that delineates the College's operational goals and links goals to the Strategic Plan, IEMs and Presidential/Institutional Priorities
- [Budget and Capital Plan](#) - annual plan that defines the processes that link planning and budget, and delineates the annual Capital Plan.

The College Plan also includes the Presidential Priorities (also known as the Institutional Priorities). These priorities are established by the President in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and support the Strategic Plan and Operational Plan.

#### 5.C.1 Aligned Resource Allocation

Harper is committed to its mission and priorities. It allocates sufficient funding to provide quality, affordable, and accessible education to its diverse community. In support of this mission, as discussed in 5A, the College allocates approximately 60% of its operating funds for educational purposes, including instruction and academic support.

The College also dedicates resources to maintaining a culture of transparency and accountability. The [Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division](#), in collaboration with internal and external constituents, systematically records and communicates goals and outcomes, thereby demonstrating the College's commitment to documenting operational performance and using this information to improve.



As discussed in 5B, the Strategic Plan provides institutional focus and outlines priorities. As a [Presidential/Institutional Priority](#), the work of the Strategic Plan is supported with human and fiscal resources. For the 2010-2015 plan, more than 170 members of the Harper community worked on 18 strategic teams to meet the plan goals. To advance this work, the Board made appropriations of [\\$3.28 million](#) over the duration of the plan. Currently, the College is carrying out the 2016-2019 plan which seeks to build on existing student success achievements, while focusing on the strategic directions of Inclusion, Engagement, and Achievement. The 2016-2019 plan includes five goal teams consisting of [89 Harper employees](#) representing a variety of employee groups.

Significant investment continues to be committed to Strategic Plan activities. For example, one of the strategic goals, to ensure students develop an educational plan, aligns with [Title III](#) work and is also a Presidential/Institutional Priority. To achieve this goal, technology that allows students to build an educational plan was procured and implemented. This technology, Degree Works, contains tracking functions that provide both students and advisors with progress indicators and alerts when students register for classes that are “off plan.” Cost of this system was in excess of [\\$250,000](#), and more than 30 Harper employees participated in its development and implementation.

Additionally, in FY2017, a new academic advising model was created in support of two Presidential/Institutional Priorities:

- Development of education/career plans
- Assignment of student advocates

To achieve the new advising model, where credential-seeking students are assigned an advocate (advisor or counselor), 19 existing positions were identified and those roles converted to academic advisors. Additionally, through reallocation of funds totaling approximately \$450,000, eight new academic advisor positions were created. These 27 advisors are in addition to the College's 10 full-time and six FTE adjunct counselors. As of January 22, 2018, more than 6,900 students have been assigned to an advisor or counselor under the new model. Moving forward, this number will grow as the College continues to assign new credential-seeking students to an advisor or counselor.

### **5.C.2 Alignment of Assessment, Planning and Budgeting**

Harper links its process for assessment, evaluation, planning, and budgeting. To aid in accomplishing this, the College has an integrated planning and accountability structure linking these processes and combining several components into a unified College Plan.

The College's [strategic planning process](#) is an excellent example of the institution's commitment to assessment-based planning and budgeting. Prior to plan development, the College engages in a [SWOT analysis](#) to identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats facing the College. The SWOT is a thorough process that includes the analysis of institutional performance and assessment data as well as external information and data. Additionally, the College focuses attention on the Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs), as well as outcomes assessment data in the planning process. Once the long-term Strategic Plan is developed, implementation is led by teams who work to improve performance of the College related to the strategic directions and goals. These teams develop evaluation plans and budgets prior to receiving approval to pilot student success initiatives. [Evaluation plans](#) address the intended outcomes of the initiative, identify criteria for success, and communicate results. Evaluation plans provide the institution with data that are utilized to measure the initiative's effectiveness and cost. A Champion Team of faculty and administrators, provide oversight of all activities supporting the Strategic Plan. This team ensures that planning, budget, and evaluation occur as part of a [three-step process](#).

The College's [Operational Plan](#) delineates annual operational goals that require collaboration and sustained participation from multiple divisions. Each goal has a target, institutional leaders, and is linked to the Presidential/Institutional Priorities, Strategic Plan goals and the IEMs. Budget is also linked to this plan as institutional leads identify the fund in which the activities related to achievement of the given goal are budgeted. Large institutional assessment and evaluation projects are also included in the Operational Plan. These include the following:

- [PACE Employee Climate Survey](#) - Results of the recent administration indicate that employees are most satisfied with climate as it relates to student focus and supervisory relationships. Employees were least satisfied with items related to institutional structure. Overall, the climate of Harper College is positive and consultative, with room for improvement.
- [CCSSE \(Student Engagement\)](#) - Results of the most recent survey indicate that Harper increased its score on four of five benchmarks: Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, and Student-Faculty Interaction.
- [Noel-Levitz \(Student Satisfaction\)](#) - Results from the most recent administration indicate the highest level of satisfaction with campus services and room for improvement in admissions and financial aid effectiveness.
- [Cultural Values Assessment](#) - This assessment identified significant gaps between actual and desired institutional culture, and several limiting values in the current perceived culture. A plan to address the results is discussed in 1.C.
- SWOT analysis (see 5.C.2 and 5.C.4)
- Environmental Scan (see 5.C.4)

Additionally, outcomes assessment activities of the College as well as [Program Reviews](#) are included in the Operational Plan. Assessment at the course, program and general education level are integral to this plan and results are used by the institution and the departments/programs for improvement and budget planning.

### **5.C.3 Broad-based, Inclusive Planning Process**

As referenced in 5.C.2, the College's planning structure includes several unique planning processes, including the Strategic Plan, Master Plan, budget, and Operational Plan. While the processes of all these plans involve many areas of the College, an exemplary example of campus-wide engagement in planning is the development of the Strategic Plan, which involves every constituency of the College.

Planning for the current [Strategic Plan](#) first began in 2014 with the work to revise the College's mission statement. The revised mission statement was advanced through the shared governance process and approved by the Board in February 2015. Concurrent with the mission revision, four strategic planning [dialogue sessions](#) were held. These sessions included presentations from subject matter and industry experts. They also included Harper faculty and staff as expert panelists who responded to the presentations and provided unique perspectives.

Session feedback was gathered through discussions, input groups and survey opportunities, and shared with the conference attendees and College community. Engagement in the dialogue sessions provided employees with the opportunity to learn about and respond to critical institutional issues, ensuring broad-based input in the development of the next Strategic Plan.

In spring 2015, a multi-day off-campus planning conference was held. Conference [attendees](#) represented College faculty and staff, members of the Board, students, and community leaders in education, business, workforce development, and government. Conference [pre-reading materials](#), including the [outcomes](#) of the dialogue sessions, were made available to the entire campus

community. Conference attendees heard national thought leaders present on [various topics](#), explored strategic issues and potential strategies, and participated in group discussions of the content. Video of conference presentations and the associated handouts were made available to the entire campus community. The conference outcome was a set of themes for strategic directions and goals. The Strategic Planning and Accountability (SPA) Committee, a shared governance committee, engaged in a comprehensive input process to draft the strategic direction and goal statements based on the conference themes.

In April 2015, the SPA Committee held an additional dialogue session to share information and solicit feedback on draft strategic direction and goal statements. [Feedback](#) received at this session indicated concern about the intention of the strategic goals as written, specifically regarding the “pathways” goal. Feedback also indicated that more input on the statements was needed. As a result of these concerns, work groups were created and led by the SPA Committee.

In summer 2015, [work groups](#) comprised of constituents from across all employee groups and student representatives, were formed to revise initial draft statements based on constituent feedback. The major outcome of this work was revised direction and goal statements that reflected both the themes of the conference and incorporated the broader campus feedback.

Development of the Strategic Plan, involving internal and external stakeholders, illustrates Harper's philosophy that the planning process should encompass the entire institution and include perspectives from as many stakeholders as possible. The College's other planning processes, such as those used to develop the Campus Master Plan, budget, and Operational Plan, are also vetted through multiple channels and involve multiple stakeholder groups. Harper College considers the institution as a whole and uses ideas from all internal and external constituent groups in its planning processes.

#### **5.C.4 Planning Based on Current Capacity**

Harper endeavors to understand the conditions that have the potential to affect current and future revenues, and uses this information to inform planning processes. For example, Harper engages Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies to conduct an [Environmental Scan](#) every three years. The 2017 scan revealed an environment that included the following:

- Declining household incomes
- Declining financial support from the state
- Increasing racial and ethnic diversity
- Increasing costs of attending college
- Increasing populations that speak languages other than English
- Declining district high school student populations

Additionally, the [SWOT](#) analysis identifies Harper's current state of affairs, and highlights areas where Harper is strong as well as those needing focused attention. Following are results of the most recent SWOT analysis:

- Stagnant persistence rates
- Decaying physical plant and infrastructure
- A vastly underfunded state pension system
- Ever-increasing competition for students
- Decreasing financial support for higher education

Furthermore, the College continues to experience [declining enrollments](#). In a context of decreasing

support, increasing costs, and decreasing enrollments, the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan was developed, and in the process the strategic goal of Stewardship emerged. The primary goal of Stewardship is to: "Dedicate resources, both human and financial, to optimize student success, while remaining responsive to external trends and issues that have documented effects on the College." The Stewardship Team developed a [Cost-Benefit Analysis instrument](#). The purpose of this instrument is to ensure that, in a context of financial uncertainty, resources are allocated to those activities that are most likely to support student success by assessing scalability, cost and impact. Using this instrument, the team makes a recommendation to the Champion Team which considers the resources required to enact the initiative when making its decision.

Another way Harper is acting upon current and future potential financial instability is through its shared governance system. The shared governance [Finance Committee](#) is charged with reviewing, refining and recommending approaches to unplanned budgetary impacts. An example of their work occurred in FY2016, when a revenue shortfall created a budgetary deficit. First, the campus community was asked by the Executive Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services to provide ideas for reducing costs or increasing revenue. More than 2,400 suggestions were received and reviewed by the Finance Committee. The suggestions were synthesized by the committee into revenue enhancement and cost reduction items for FY2017 and [56 suggestions](#) were provided to the administration for consideration and action as appropriate.

In budgeting for FY2017, Harper assumed that it would receive a reduction in state funding and implemented a variety of tactics to ensure that the budget remained balanced. These tactics included reducing expenses, limiting pay increases, reducing and reallocating employee positions, and offering voluntary retirement options to faculty. These measures have contributed to an overall decrease in the College's operating budget.

In continued response to the uncertainty of state funding Harper has instituted responsive budgetary strategies that decrease reliance on [state funding by 25% per year](#). This, along with Harper's ability to consistently bring forward balanced operating budgets, is indicative of fiscal responsibility despite state budget issues. Another strategy for addressing budget concerns is an increased focus on grant opportunities. Harper has devoted efforts towards identifying appropriate [grants](#) and partnerships to support its student success efforts and programming.

### **5.C.5 Planning Anticipates Emerging Factors**

Harper is committed to providing faculty and students with excellent instructional technology. The shared governance [Technology Committee](#) developed information and instructional technology strategic directions, planning priorities, investment recommendations and funding strategies. The committee determines institutional needs and engages in strategic planning concerning College-wide technology. For example, the committee is considering ways to optimize use of learning management systems and it evaluated and recommended [lecture capture tools](#).

Another example of the College's commitment to technological innovation for education can be found in its Information Technology (IT) division. The division recently completed the development and implementation of a [new degree audit and student planning system](#). The IT division is also implementing a student analytics system. The implementation of these systems will allow Harper students to get up-to-date information on their progress towards completion of their educational goals. In addition, the student analytics system will provide Harper staff with predictive information on student performance and risk factors. This will reshape the way Harper meets the needs of its students.

In an effort to address shifting demographics, keynote sessions at the Harper College [Strategic Planning Conference](#) included topics such as "Higher Education in an Era of Change" and "Aligning Workforce and Community Needs." One of the dialogue sessions conducted in preparation for the development of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan was entitled "[Harper's Changing District](#)". Using data from the College's then recent Environmental Scan, this session provided an overview of the economic, workforce, and population trends impacting Harper's district. The College has identified shifting demographics as a key emerging factor that warrants future planning. The diversity of Harper's community residents has shifted significantly, and the College is committed to meeting the demands of this new student population. The Environmental Scan indicates the white non-Hispanic population decreased by [10,866](#) from 2010 to 2015 with an increase in residents from all historically underrepresented groups. Recognizing the achievement gaps among some of Harper's ethnically diverse student populations, one of Harper's strategic directions, [Achievement](#) focuses on equitable achievement among all demographic groups. In addition, the President has issued priorities to the Board which include the assignment of an advisor to incoming students. The advisor will be responsible for monitoring students' progress from entry to completion of educational goals. By fall 2019, the Presidential/Institutional Priorities call for all new credential-seeking students to have an advisor assigned at entry.

Harper recognizes and embraces an increasingly globalized society as demonstrated by the formation of the International Studies and Programs Committee, a shared governance committee, and the Office of International Education. The purpose of the International Studies and Programs Committee is to coordinate the development, growth, and effectiveness of international and intercultural programs, including intercultural exchange, study abroad, internationalization of the curriculum, and faculty exchange.

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## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Argument

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#### 5.D.1 Evidence of Performance

Harper College documents and works to improve its performance in all areas. Accountability is a key component of the College culture and was made a priority during the [2010-2015 Strategic Plan](#). As such, documentation and communication of institutional performance remains an area of focus. To support this priority, Harper has created a detailed planning and [accountability structure](#) that is incorporated into operations across campus. As transparency is essential for full accountability, the College documents and disseminates performance results to both internal and external constituents.

Harper reports institutional performance outcomes for [Strategic Plan Goals](#), [Institutional Effectiveness Measures](#), and [Operational Plan Goals](#). Progress towards meeting Strategic Plan goals is monitored by the Champion Team, and IEM targets are overseen by the Strategic Planning and Accountability (SPA) shared governance committee, with outcomes compiled and published through the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division. Operational goals are managed by the College Operations Council and reported in the annual Accountability Report.

As part of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, the College created [Institutional Effectiveness Measures \(IEMs\)](#) to assess performance on key indicators. The IEMs align with Harper's mission and reflect the needs and expectations of stakeholders. After careful analysis, in FY2016 Harper refocused the IEMs to better align with College priorities for performance related to student success as well as institutional success. These refocused IEMs provide a more comprehensive examination of College performance.

Progress toward Operational Plan goals is reported quarterly by the responsible parties and shared with the Board of Trustees. At the end of the fiscal year, the [Operational Plan outcomes](#) are published in the Institutional Accountability Report.

Financial matters are reported publicly in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). This report exhaustively details the accounts of the College, including revenues and expenditures across all funds. The CAFR also contains the independent auditor's report certifying that the College continues to adhere to generally accepted accounting principles in reporting its financial transactions. As has been previously noted, the College has been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for seven consecutive years.

Another vehicle for assessing effectiveness is through [Sightlines](#) Facilities Benchmarking and Analysis. The Sightlines survey provides data-driven recommendations for maintenance of Harper's facilities, as well as an analysis of space allocation, capital investments and operations. Each of these areas is benchmarked with peers and provides a framework for informed decision making.

Additionally, the College has a three-year cycle of assessing the satisfaction and/or engagement of constituents.

- Student engagement is assessed using the Community College Survey of Student Engagement ([CCSSE](#))
- Employee satisfaction is assessed using the Personal Assessment of the College Environment ([PACE](#)) survey
- Engagement and satisfaction of district residents and employers with Harper educational offerings and services is assessed using a [Community Survey](#)

The College also regularly conducts a [Cultural Values Assessment](#) with all employees to collect information on employee personal values as well as current and desired cultural values and the [Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) to gather additional actionable data from students.

Finally, the College makes available documentation of additional operational data. During FY2017, the Data Standards Committee, in collaboration with Institutional Research, created the [Bits and Bytes](#) employee portal site where a wide array of student success, enrollment, financial aid, and institutional data can be accessed and used for operational and strategic decision making.

### **5.D.2 Application of Learning for Improvement**

Harper demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement in a variety of ways. The College's strategic planning process is an excellent example of how improvements in both student achievement and operational effectiveness are developed, evaluated, and institutionalized. Strategic planning at Harper focuses on the use of data to direct institutional efforts towards improving student achievement and the learning experience, while striving to [optimize the College's resources](#) for student success.

Goal teams are currently developing initiatives as the College executes its [2016-2019 Strategic Plan](#). Critical to determining the effectiveness of these initiatives is an evaluation process. The [strategic plan cycle](#) includes an evaluation component to ensure that thorough evaluation occurs prior to full scale implementation. The Accountability Work Group, a subcommittee of the shared governance SPA Committee, assists teams in developing evaluation plans. After the initial “pilot” implementation, the Accountability Work Group reviews results and makes recommendations to the Champion Team. The Champion Team reviews recommendations and makes full scale implementation decisions, pending input from the Stewardship Team on financial implications of the initiative. Initiatives with results that indicate significant potential impact and positive cost/benefit will be scaled at the institutional level and become part of the College’s operations. Initiatives with results that show uncertain impact may be adjusted and re-piloted, while initiatives with results that indicate minimal impact at scale are discontinued. This evaluation process ensures that only the initiatives with significant potential impact are included in future operations.

As indicated in 5.D.1, the College has a set of IEMs used to assess, communicate, and improve performance. Each year, in developing the College’s Operational Plan, division leadership focuses on how the work in each operational unit impacts the priorities of the College. In order to achieve the established IEM performance targets, operational efforts must align with overall goals. In the FY2018 Operational Plan, for example, the student success IEMs are supported by more than 10 operational goals. As stated in 4.C.1, the College sets goals that are realistic yet challenging. To achieve these goals, evaluation and use of results for improvement are essential.

The College is also focused on improving its operations related to employee hiring, retention, and



satisfaction. Increasing diversity among employees, especially faculty and administration, needs attention. To bring this need to the forefront of College operations, two IEMs were developed around employee diversity (hiring and separations) and an [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#) was developed to lead diversity initiatives on campus. These initiatives are detailed in 1.C. Additionally, as described in 5.D.1, the College has made a commitment to the regular assessment of employee cultural values and employee satisfaction through the Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) and the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE).

Also identified in 5.D.1, the College assesses student engagement on a regular cycle using the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Overall results are shared with the campus community through posted reports, presentations, and a dashboard. Additionally, the Provost discusses results at the beginning of each semester at all-faculty meetings. In these discussions, areas where action should be taken to improve engagement are shared and faculty are asked to implement changes to increase engagement. Additionally, strategic planning teams, particularly the Student Experience Team, have focused on CCSSE results when developing strategies to improve the student experience. These strategies include communication with students, culture of care, and the development of a student "road map."

The College's focus on using data for improvement intensified when Harper joined the Achieving the Dream (ATD) network in 2009. In the early stages of ATD participation, the College formed a "[Data Team](#)" and undertook a thorough analysis of disaggregated data to identify areas for improvement including the student populations most at risk. Data were shared across the institution and interventions were developed based on the data. Interventions included the following:

- Partnering with our district high schools to increase college-readiness
- Summer bridge programs to increase college-readiness and success
- Early Alert to identify and intervene early, and increase successful completion of courses and overall retention

Through these and other efforts, college-readiness, course success and completion, and overall certificate/program completion rates increased.

The College's outcomes assessment process is another vehicle utilized for continuous improvement. This process focuses on collecting, analyzing and using data about both student learning and operational effectiveness to direct improvement efforts. Examples of using assessment results to improve student learning can be found in 4.B.

Student support and administrative areas also participate in the annual outcomes assessment cycle. Participation in outcomes assessment by the administrative/student support areas has consistently been high with participation rates more than 90% for the last four years. Participation was 100% in 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Consistently, more than 60% of results are used to make improvements. One example of using assessment result for improvement is in Student Financial Assistance. After reviewing continuing concerns regarding student loan default, a campus-wide financial literacy team was established. Actions taken include creation and implementation of a financial literacy pilot activity for Summer Scholars and collaboration with "iontuition" to improve service to students. After implementing these activities, Harper's three-year default rate decreased from 12.9 to 9.9 percent. Additional data on participation and use of results are included in the annual [Outcomes Assessment Report](#).

## Sources

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## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### Summary

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Harper College practices innovative planning and effective resource allocation to support its mission. Harper's proactive response to fiscal challenges demonstrates its ability to maintain a balanced budget, without sacrificing the educational experience of its students. The College manages resources appropriately to support the advancement of its physical and technological infrastructures, which has resulted in the expansion and enhancement of instructional support, learning, and study space for students.

Harper's strategic planning process elicits input from students, staff, faculty, community members and ultimately, the Board of Trustees. In addition, the College's shared governance structure further strengthens the appropriateness of its planning processes by soliciting feedback from all stakeholders within the institution. This culture of inclusion ensures that the College's policies are vetted with representation from the many diverse perspectives that exist among Harper's community. Comprehensive assessment, open accountability and informed decision-making processes are features indicative of a progressive institution with procedures and policies in alignment with its mission. The College's physical and technological infrastructure, along with comprehensive fiscal and strategic planning, increase Harper's ability to continue providing excellent educational opportunities to its students despite ongoing state budget challenges.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*