The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the
North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools

NCA

30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400 | Chicago, IL 60602 | 312-263-0456
800-621-7440 | Fax: 312-263-7462 | www.ncahlc.org

Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher le[...]

January 23, 2008

TO: President Robert Breuder
William Rainey Harper College

FROM: Robert R. Appleson, Associate Director, Accreditation

SUBJECT: Final Team Report

Enclosed is the institution's copy of the final Team Report of a visit to William Rainey Harper College. The Commission encourages you to make additional copies of the Team Report to circulate to your constituencies. In addition, I have attached draft copies of the Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS) and the Organizational Profile (OP). These two documents, the SAS and the OP, will be posted on the Commission website after the Board of Trustees validates the accreditation decision of the Institutional Actions Council or the Review Committee. They are enclosed now for your information and for your review. You will receive an official action letter, an SAS and an OP following validation of the action by the Board of Trustees.

You are asked to acknowledge receipt of the Team Report and the SAS and OP worksheets; and to file on behalf of your institution, a formal written response to the evaluation team's report and recommendation. Your response becomes a part of the official record of the evaluation visit. Your response also serves as an integral part of the evaluation process, and it will be included in the materials sent to the next team that visits your institution. Please send your institutional response to me **two weeks** after you receive this report, send copies to members of the visiting team, and set aside some additional copies for the Commission's review process. (See *Handbook of Accreditation, Third Edition*, Chapter 2.2-2)

In your response, you are also asked to let me know which review option you prefer: the Readers Panel or the Review Committee. A description of these processes appears in the *Handbook*, Chapter 2.2-2 and 2.2-3. Please review these options and advise me as soon as possible, whether you agree essentially with the team's report and recommendation and therefore choose the Readers Panel, or whether you wish to have the team's report and your materials examined by a Review Committee. The next Review Committee meeting is January 28, 2008, in Chicago.

Enclosed please find three evaluation forms. In an effort to strengthen its professional development program for Peer Reviewers, the Commission is initiating this structured method outside of the institution's formal written response to seek from the institution an evaluation of the team. We recommend that you distribute these to knowledgeable people representative of several constituencies at your institution. You can make additional copies if you wish. Your participation is voluntary but greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions concerning the evaluation team's report, the SAS, the OP or the review options, please let me know.

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Kim J. Linduska, Team Chairperson

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

William Rainey Harper College
Palatine, Illinois

November 5-7, 2007

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Kim Linduska Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs, Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny, IA 50010, Chair

Dr. Stephanie Bulger, Vice Chancellor, Curriculum and Learning Technologies, Wayne County Community College District, Detroit, MI 48226

Dr. Evonne Carter, Associate Vice President of Academics, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dr. Mark Davis, Vice President for Business and Finance, Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma City, OK 73159

Dr. Don Doucette, Vice Chancellor for Education and Technology, Metropolitan Community College- Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 64111

Dr. John Ganio, Vice Chancellor for Education, Saint Louis Community College, St. Louis, MO 63102

Jaralyn Jargo, Dean, Division of Business, Health Sciences, and External Education, Century Community and Technical College, White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Dr. Rose Kuceyeski, Professor, Information Technology, Owens Community College, Toledo, OH 43699

Dr. Gail Mee, President, Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn, MI 48128

Contents

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

A nine member team conducted a three day visit (November 5-7, 2007) to Harper College for the purpose of a comprehensive evaluation. Charged with serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning, the team validated the information that was gathered and analyzed by the institution. The team members also offered consultative advice to Harper College in the spirit of advancing the quality of learning.

B. Organizational Context

Founded in 1965, William Rainey Harper College (identified heretofore as Harper College) is a comprehensive community college that operates under the auspices of the Illinois Community College Board as one of 48 community colleges in Illinois. The College is governed by a local board of trustees that is elected from across the district. The Harper College district encompasses 23 communities over 200 square miles in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. In addition to the main campus, Harper College offers degrees at two other campus locations: the Northeast Center and the Harper Professional Center. Harper College serves over 40,000 students enrolled in degrees in Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Engineering Science, Associate in Fine Arts in Arts and Music; an Associate in General Studies degree, an Associate of Applied Science degree in 46 career areas, and 80 certificate programs. Harper College also offers developmental and adult education programs, continuing education, business management seminars, cultural affairs, women's programs, support services for students with disabilities, and community counseling services.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit
None

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited
Harper Professional Center and the Harper Northeast Center

E. Distance Education Reviewed

The College has goals to increase online instruction, both to grow its enrollment and to address the needs of identified populations, including working adults. The College has secured approval from the Higher Learning Commission to offer online degrees and has developed the capacity for students to earn a number of certificates and degrees taking online and blended courses. Students report satisfaction with and confirmed the rigor of current online courses, and a dedicated support function, the Department of Instructional Technology, provides a high level of support for faculty who are interested in designing   and offering online or blended courses   .

The College has confirmed that its current online instructional management system, Blackboard Basic, is inadequate to support substantial growth in the online program, and the inadequacies of the student information system, Regent, compounds the problem of generating and populating course sites from course and student information files. Academic leadership for online education is quite diffuse, limiting coordination of scheduling, development and support for an expanded online program. In addition, because faculty adoption of Blackboard resources to support in-class instruction has been limited, the College has not yet cultivated sufficient faculty resources to develop a much expanded online program. Distance Learning is addressed in greater detail in the Advancement Section of this report.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Steering Committee (11)
Diversity Group (9)
Community Rel ations/Foundation VP & Directors (6)
Outcomes Assessment Committee (11)
Distinctive Student Groups (19)
Distinctive Programs (14)
Curriculum Committee (15)
General Education Assessment (11)
Student Senate & Student Leaders (20)
Deans (8)
Extension Site Visit (7)
Technology Group (15)
Academic Affairs VP & Deans Council (17)
Administrative Services VP & Directors (7)
Information Technology VP & Directors (4)
Support Staff (151)
President's Council (10)
Oversight C ommittee & Shared Governance Chairs (26)
Oversight Committee   (5)
Faculty & Adjunct Faculty (99)
Enrollment & Marketing V   P & Directors (6)
Career Coordinators & Program Chairs (48)
Student Affairs VP & Deans/Directors (10)
Institutional Planning Committee (14)
Strategic Planning/Alliances VP & Directors (3)
Student Senate & Student Leaders (23)
Fire Science Advisory Co   mmittee (12)
Faculty Senate (18)
President
Instructional Technology Committee (6)

Vice President of Academic Affairs
Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Director of the Department of Instructional Technology
Executive Assistant for the Asso   ciate Vice President of HR/Diversity & Org. Dev.
Director of the Office of Research
Faculty Development Coordinator
Director of the Physical Plant
Campus Architect
Board of Trustees (8)
Foundation Board (15)

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

Fact Book 2005

Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Survey Results Spring 2007

ICCB 2006 PQP/Program Review Report

Survey of 2005 Career Graduates Program-level Tables

ADA Brochure

Sexual Harassment Brochure

Worker's Compensation   Brochure (Hard Copy)

2007-2008 Academic Affairs Operational Calendar

2006-2007 Catalog

Harper   College Academic Calendar

Resources for Students

Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures

Transfer Options

Career Programs

Course Descriptions

2007-2008 Catalog

About Harper   College

Enrollment Services

Resources for Students

2007-2008 Catalog and Student Handbook (hard copy)

News Clip Packets (hard copy)

Local Newspaper Articles

Course Credit Approval Request

Faculty Development Web Site (hard c   opy)

Faculty Retreat 2007 Flyer (hard copy)

New Adjunct Faculty Orientation Presentation (hard copy)

New Faculty Course 2007

Professional Development Handbook

DoIT Faculty Fellowships

Faculty Development Seminars

Faculty Development Web Site

Multicultural Faculty Fellows

New Faculty Mentoring Program

Teaching and Learning Innovation Grant

Technology Grant

2007 Spring Orientation Week Schedule

Graduate Course Enrollment

WEB Staff Development Day

WEB Robert L. Breuder

Classified Supervisory Co   nfidential Handbook

Discrimination Complaint Procedure
Faculty Handbook, December 2006
Faculty Handbook, March 2005 (hard copy)
Workplace Violence Procedures
Administrative Services Procedure Manual (hard copy)
Code of Ethics
College Colors and Mascot-Modified September 26, 2006
Confidential Reporting of Wrongdoing
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Fair Use of Copyrighted Works-New as of March 25, 2003
Freedom of Information
Gift Ban Policy
Ombudsperson
Planning Policy
Purchasing Policy Revis   ed 2004
Sexual Offenses
Use of Drugs and Alcohol
Workplace Violence
October, 2006 Annual Campus Security Report
2006-2007 Institutional Outcomes Report (hard copy)
HLC Steering Committee Outcomes Assessment Feedback Survey (hard copy)
Columns 1-3 Fo   rm Instructional Outcomes Form
Columns 1-3 Form Non Instructional Outcomes Form
Columns 4&5 Outcomes Form All
Dr. Breuder's correspondence to staff and faculty
Instructional Outcomes Cycle 1 Results
Nichols Response to Cycle One (hard copy)
Non Instr uctional Outcomes 2005-2006
Non Instructional Outcomes Cycle 1 Results
Outcomes 2004-2005
Outcomes 2005-2006
Outcomes 2006 -2007
Outcomes Assessment Cycle 1 Fall 2004-   Fall 2005 Summary Report
Outcomes Consultation Example
Outcomes Results Analysis –   Cycle 1 (2005/2006)
Outcomes Results Cycle 1 Template
Outcomes Review Teams
Timeline-Program Level Assessment
Training Manual-Program Level Outcomes
WEB-eTree Tool
WEB – Outcomes Template
Academic Affairs Organization Chart

Administration Org Chart   -2006
HLC Self Study Org Chart
Human Resources Organization Charts 1996-2003 (hard copy)
Center for Multicultural Learning Program Review (hard copy)
Courses Approved by Academic Standards as of 09/19/06 for fulfilling the Diversity Requirement
Faculty Fellows Information (hard copy)
R.E.A.C.H. Summer Bridge Program Information (hard copy)
Fulbright Scholar
Study Abroad
Fishin for the Mission (slide presentation)
Student Activities 2004-2005 Annual Report (hard copy)
Student Activities 2005-2006 A   nnual Report (hard copy)
WEB – Honors Program
WEB – Latinos Unidos
WEB – Phi Theta Kappa
WEB – Speech Team
WEB – Student Clubs and Organizations
Academic Convocation Programs, 1997-2006 (hard copy)
WEB – Student Awards Banquet
Academic Assessment S   ummary 2006-2007
Advising Notebook (hard copy)
Department of Academic Success Information (hard copy)
Job Fair (Daily Herald Ad-hard copy)
Resources for Students
WEB – Course Applicability   system
WEB – Course Articulation Agreements
WEB - Illinois A   rticulation Initiative
WEB   – Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum
WEB – Transfer   College Fair
WEB – Transfer Web Sites
Academic Honesty Form
Academic Honesty Policy (hard copy)
Code of Conduct and Dispute Resolution
Student Complaint Log (hard copy)
Annual Plan 2005-2006 (hard copy)
Annual Plan 2002-2003
Goals and Tasks 2006
Strategic Long Range Plan 2007-2010 (hard copy)
Strategic Long Range Plan 2006-2009 (hard copy)
SWOT Input Form – Opportunities
SWOT Input Fo   rm – Strengths

SWOT Input Form – Threats
SWOT Input Form – Weaknesses
A Review of Selected Management and Support Systems of the William Rainey
Harper College Department of Public Safety (hard copy)
Campus Security Act Policy
Emergency Operations Plan June 2006
Environmental Health and Safety Procedure Manual (hard copy)
Environmental Management Plan
2006 Career Graduate Survey
2006 Transfer and Career Graduate Surveys-Executive Summary
2006 Transfer Graduate Survey
2005 Career Graduate Survey
2005 Transfer and Career Graduate Surveys-Executive Summary
2004 Career Graduate Survey
Annual FTE Program Distributions for BUS/SS Division   1996-2003
CCSSE (Community   College Survey of Student Engagement) Synopsis
CCSSE Frequency Distributions
CCSSE Harper College Benchmark Scores
Community Employer Need Assessment 2007
Community Needs Assessment 2004
Community Needs Assessment 2007
Current Institutional Projections 2006
Environmental Scan 2006
Environmental Scan 2003
Fact Book 2006
40 Years and   Forward DVD
WEB – Computer-Assisted Bibliographic Instruction Classes
WEB – Copyright and Fair Use
SMART Classroom Technology Training
WEB – Acceptable Use Policy
WEB – SMART Classroom Technology
WEB – Tuition Waivers for Employees
2006-2010 Adjunc t Faculty Contract Agreement
2006-2010 Fulltime Faculty Contract Agreement
2002-2006 IEA /NEA Contract Agreement
Distance Learning Focused Visit Report
DoIT Program Review
2005-2007 Student Affairs Outcomes Assessment, Results and Use of Results

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The structure and scope of the self-study process is outlined in the Introduction of the Harper College Self-Study Report (pages 20-28). Harper College builds its processes and the resulting documents around a series of goals that define Harper College as an institution, and validates its value to the communities it serves. The Self-Study Report responded to the cross-cutting themes outlined by the Higher Learning Commission: future-oriented; learning-focused; connected; and distinctive. The process also responded to the five criteria, examined the many dimensions of Harper College, and openly addressed the challenges the College faces as it continues to grow to meet the needs of communities it serves. The Self-Study process included a significant number of individuals that represented every constituent group at the institution, and enjoyed very strong support from the Board of Trustees and the President.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

Harper College's Self-Study Report describes, documents, analyzes, and evaluates the state of the College in the present, and accurately assesses its capacity to operate in the future. A review of documents and in meetings that included nearly all faculty and staff, confirmed to the team that the Self-Study is an honest portrayal of the strengths and weaknesses of Harper College, and the conclusions and recommendations outlined at the end of each chapter will be addressed by the staff and faculty of the College. The team found that Harper College created a Self-Study Report that reflects all the hallmarks of effective self-study reports as stipulated in 5.2-6 of the Higher Learning Commission Handbook for Accreditation.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The 1997 accreditation visit resulted in only one required activity: the development of a report on outcomes assessment of student academic achievement. The report was submitted in May of 1999; and was accepted by the Commission. While Harper College has made significant progress on its assessment plan, the 2007 visiting team has asked Harper College to submit a report in 2010 to the Commission to address some structural and administrative support issues. The details of the request for the follow-up report are outlined in the summary of Criterion Three, on page 20 of this report, and in the final recommendations of the team on page 25.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

A memo from the Assistant Director for Legal and Governmental Affairs of the Higher Learning Commission dated October 29, 2007, states that the Commission had received four third party comments regarding Harper College, all in support of the mission of and services provided by the College. During the visit the team confirmed that the College appropriately solicited third party comment and has in place appropriate mechanisms for stakeholders to offer comments.

Requirements for third party comments were fulfilled.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

A separate chapter of the Self-Study Report addresses Harper College's compliance with federal regulations. Harper College offers courses and programs that adhere to the Illinois Community College Board Policy and Procedures documents. The team reviewed the required Title IV Compliance requirements and application verification documentation. The team also reviewed the student Right-to-Know information, annual Campus Crime and Security reports, Title IX compliance documents, FERPA guidelines as published by the College, the Harper College Affirmative Action Plan, FMLA guidelines, and ADA compliance. The team also reviewed the College's record of complaints, including the Grievance Policies, and reviewed with administration the informal and formal processes for students and staff to voice a complaint. The team found Harper College in compliance with all federal requirements.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

    The College has clearly defined its philosophy, vision, mission, and core values. The statements are clear and consistent with the mission of a comprehensive community College. They are widely distributed in College publications, on the College website, and on banners and posters throughout the College. Some examples include the College catalog, the Strategic Long Range Plan, Faculty Handbook, and marketing materials.

    There is considerable evidence that Harper College values diversity. A new World Cultures and Diversity requirement has been added for all graduates and a Multicultural Faculty Fellows internal grant program has been developed to support faculty in their efforts to integrate multiculturalism into the curriculum and into their teaching strategies. A Center for Multicultural Learning was established to serve the needs of minority students. Other programs include Disability Services, a Women's Program, and the Nonnative Literacy program. An Institutional Diversity Plan was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2001 and a Diversity Committee was established. In 2004, the Diversity Plan was integrated into the College's Strategic Long Range Plan. A new Associate Vice President for Diversity and Organizational Development position was created and filled. A diversity training program is required for all search committee members.

In the HLC visiting team meeting with the support and professional staff, participants demonstrated that they knew and clearly understood the mission of the College. They were also able to provide specific examples of how the College is fulfilling its mission. Members of the Board of Trustees clearly articulated an understanding of the mission of the College and their role in fulfilling it. In a meeting with students, the visiting team found that students understood the mission and were able to give concrete examples of how the College works to achieve it.

The faculty's commitment to quality and innovative teaching strategies clearly demonstrates support for the College mission. Examples include the adoption of collaborative learning and the development of learning communities.

The Board of Trustees' knowledge of the College mission, strong fiscal oversight, and advocacy for the College in the community demonstrate effective leadership. The collaboration between faculty and the administration on the construction of new teaching spaces and laboratories in the Avanté Center is an example of collaborative processes that work well.

A Shared Governance system has been created that allows for participation on College wide committees by faculty, staff and students. This system, although somewhat complex, appears to lead to recommendations that are taken seriously and acted upon by the administration.

Harper College operates with legal and fiscal integrity. The Board of Trustees manages the College in compliance with the Illinois Community College Act and Illinois statutes. Fiscal stability is maintained as reaffirmed by the Aaa bond rating from Moody's. Annual independent audit results have been favorable with no significant findings and Harper is approved to participate in federal financial aid programs through June 2010.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**

    Despite recent efforts to improve diversity among College employees, there is a noticeable lack of diversity among the faculty. Although students of color represent 33% of all Harper College students, only 11.1% of the full-time faculty came from underrepresented groups in June 2006. Approximately 70% of the faculty has been hired over the past decade which suggests that a significant opportunity to increase the diversity of the faculty was lost. The Diversity Committee has expressed a goal

of having the faculty diversity approach that of the student body. Students also expressed a desire for a more diverse faculty. However, data analysis confirms that progress toward that goal has been slow, and staff agrees that additional attention to the diversity plan is required. The issue of diversity will be addressed in greater depth in the Advancement Section; however, at a minimum, the institution should consider revising its recruitment and hiring procedures to include statements and practices that demonstrate valuing multicultural representation and to look beyond advertising and assessing applicants using traditional qualifications only.

In spite of the Shared Governance system, the faculty has a significant issue related to collaboration and communication as evidenced in the results of the PACE survey, the Faculty Senate climate survey and interviews with the faculty during the site visit. This may be due, in part, to the rapid growth and significant changes at the College during the   last few years, which can create stress in an organization. Whereas the shared governance system allows major issues to be brought forward for consideration, there remains a concern that all parties do not feel they are heard and that their feelings and opinions are valued. As the College continues to grow and expand programs and services, this issue will require organizational attention. The climate of communication and collaboration at the College would be improved through open dialogue about issues important to the future of the College; the faculty voice is a crucial component of that dialogue and opportunities for faculty to be heard in a manner that is sincere are vital to the health of the institution. The institution should establish venues to open and foster these discussions and use them to build mutual respect for ideas and concerns in areas vital to student success and employee communication and collaboration. The communication issue will also be addressed at greater length in the Advancement Section.

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
   None noted.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.**
   None noted.

<u>Recommendation of the Team</u>: Criterion met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of

resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

   From a review of the 2006 Environmental Scan, the 2006 -2007 College Budget Plan, and the 2006 - 2009 Strategic Long Range Plan it is evident that processes are in place which have allowed the College to implement an effective strategic planning process that is based upon key data and other inputs, includes participation of all employee groups, is updated regularly, and influences the priorities that are included in the development   of the annual budget   .

   Through meetings with staff, and a review of planning documents, it is evident that the College has invested in a well-staffed institutional research function that produces a wide array of data and analyses that are used in the major decision making processes of the College.

   From an examination of the physical facilities, discussions with the director of Physical Plant and the College architect it was apparent that the College's physical facilities are well maintained, compliant with applicable codes, well lit with good climate controls, and there is a campus master plan which has guided new construction and renovations over the past several years.

   Harper College supports two extension centers that serve a growing and diverse population in their service area. The Harper Professional Center was purchased in 2001 and is part of an office park. It has 10 lab/classroom spaces, a conference room, several technology-enabled (i.e., smart) classrooms, and space available for rent. Programming includes an expanding Adult Fast Track program involving the addition of 2-4 cohorts per semester, IT certification courses, and computer training courses. The site is well maintained as evidenced by well-maintained and inviting facilities.

   Purchased in 1994, the Northeast Center is a stand alone building with more than 25 lab/classroom spaces. It has a growing Adult Education Developmental program for the immigrant population who live near this center, Adult Fast Track courses, continuing education courses, computer training courses, facilities available for rent, and includes multi-use classroom space to extend offerings provided by the main campus to the local community. The site is well-maintained as evidenced by its well-maintained and inviting facilities.

The College has invested in the development and support of a robust technological infrastructure that effectively supports key institutional functions, services and programs, including a reliable and secure broadband institutional network, a comprehensive desktop infrastructure, multiple and abundant computer lab and technology-equipped classrooms and learning spaces, and a range of applications and electronic resources.

The College's human resources policies (HUM H 001 through 008) were reviewed. This review confirmed that the College has clearly defined hiring practices, including policies for updating position descriptions, and using search committees for full time administrative and faculty positions. Advertisements for vacant positions may be posted in outside media sources but are also posted on the College's web site. The College has a clearly articulated affirmative action policy and a diversity plan written in 2003 - 2004.

A review of the past three years of audited financial statements and the annual plan for each of those years indicates a balanced budget each year and a steadily increasing College fund balance. This provides flexibility for the College to address new opportunities that may arise and the financial stability to handle unexpected economic or financial contingencies.

Various outcome assessments of institutional effectiveness were reviewed and discussed with the Vice President for Strategic Planning; it was evident that these processes were incorporated into the annual update of the Strategic Plan. This in turn effected budgetary decisions which were incorporated in the annual plan or budget.

All levels of planning from the initial SWOT analysis, update of the Strategic Long Range Plan, goals and tasks development, and the development of the annual plan align with the College's mission statement. The College's mission statement as well as its goals and objectives are printed in the annual plan and the Strategic Long Range Plan.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**

    Although the College has invested heavily in its technological infrastructure, key components of that infrastructure are not yet fully operational and require institutional attention in order to support the goals of the College for growth and effective teaching and learning for both current and future Harper College students.

Specifically, the antiquated student information system (Regent) is scheduled for replacement with SCT Banner's student information system by 2009, and the current instructional management system, Blackboard Basic, is inadequate to support the growth of the College's online program or to provide routine support for in-class instruction. While improvements in both of these areas are either underway or under consideration, the College will be seriously hindered in its ability to expand online instruction or to meet student expectations for online resources to support traditional classroom instruction until these key pieces of the technology infrastructure are effectively implemented.

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
    None noted.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.**
    None noted.

Recommendation of the Team: Criterion met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**
    The College's focus on   renovating and building facilities provides the current and future Harper community with a legacy of state-of-the-art classrooms, labs, offices and learning spaces. A tour of the facilities reveals that full-time and adjunct faculty have adequate office space to complete class preparation and to meet with students.

    Through interviews with Curriculum Committee members, and a review of the Curriculum approval process, the team confirmed that curriculum is developed and evaluated for currency by the faculty with input from the advisory committees; the Curriculum Committee systematically reviews curriculum for currency and consistency.

    As evidenced by conversations with faculty, staff and students, courses are offered

to students in a variety of modalities, including face-to-face, online, web-blended, short courses, and other delivery methods. During interviews, students stated that they were satisfied with the variety of course delivery methods offered at Harper College.

The Outcomes Assessment Committee is comprised of both faculty and administrators who have been working on the Self-Study Report. Committee members have attended workshops and conferences on assessment and have attempted to bring a meaningful, grassroots assessment program to Harper College. The assessment process that began in 1999 was modified in 2004 to focus on 3 to 5 educational outcomes each year; faculty agrees that this focused effort on assessment will yield meaningful results.

Orientation activities held at the beginning of the terms and during the semester for full and part time faculty allow for structured development experiences. During interviews with faculty members, it was confirmed that funds are available for professional development, discipline specific training, and travel to conferences.

The College provides assistance to incoming students in acclimating to College life through multiple options for orientations. Activities are targeted toward young students, older returning students, second language students and ADA students, and other targeted groups as needed. Peer mentors are also available for new students.

Over 186 programs and activities were offered for students last year (2006-07) to assist students to access a rich campus life; over 1500 students joined clubs or participated in activities that were offered. In addition to formal campus activities, the College provides health and psychological services to students, wellness programs and facilities are available to students and staff, and academic advisors, study hall assistance and academic progress reports are provided to support student athletes.

The College's philosophy of community policing provides all constituents with a safe and secure learning environment. Service programs are offered to the community each year. In 2006-07, 36 safety awareness related programs were offered to staff and students at Harper College.

Student academic assistance is provided in a variety of venues: a comprehensive library, a writing center, tutoring, study centers, academic warnings, success classes, open labs, computer labs, multicultural learning center, and career

center. Adult Educational Development courses and English as a Second Language courses are also available. Interviews with students revealed a high level of satisfaction with the available services.

Interviews with staff and the Self-Study Report provide evidence that Harper College has a comprehensive set of educational offerings, services, and rental space for the communities throughout their service area. The Adult Fast Track program which serves over 100 students at the Harper Professional Center offers a flexible pathway to an associate's degree for working adults, IT certification courses, and an emerging small business services initiative. The Northeast Center offers children's programs, lifelong learning opportunities, English as a Second Language, and academic courses. Both locations provide access to student support services.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**
   None noted.

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
   While there is the beginning of an effective outcomes assessment culture at Harper, it is impaired by some structural difficulties. Notably, the assessment activities are currently administered by an ad hoc committee of the HLC Self-study project, the committee is separate from the General Education Assessment Committee, and the program lacks sufficient administrative support. In discussions with faculty members, they expressed uncertainty about the future of the ad hoc assessment committee once the accreditation visit concluded, and how the two separate committees would work cooperatively to further the institutional assessment efforts.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.**
   None noted.

<u>Recommendation of the Team</u>: **Criterion Three is met.**
Commission follow-up is recommended: Progress Report on assessment of student academic achievement to the Commission due May 30, 2010 which outlines the progress made in the documentation of Harper College's Outcomes Assessment Plan. The follow-up report must include the following:

1. A charter and scope of work for the standing assessment committee which outlines the timelines, goals, and the specific activities to be accomplished by

the committee.

2. An organizational chart that includes the division and department of the College that provides oversight to the assessment activities; and documentation of the leadership to the assessment initiative, including the co-chairs and the committee members, to assure broad representation from all disciplines.

3. The complete list of learning outcomes of the transfer and career programs and a summary of the documents from which students, faculty, and community members can access and review the outcomes.

4. The processes in place for implementing multiple assessment activities for Career Program Outcomes and General Education Outcomes, and the completion of "Column 5" for all program and transfer areas that identify results of assessment activities that have led to improvements.

5. A summary of the financial and personnel support provided to faculty for assessment activities to ensure all faculty members are involved in   the assessment process.

6. Strategies that link the 5-year program review process (required by the Illinois Community College Board) to the outcomes assessment processes, so that common measures are employed to assess the acquisition of skills by the students, and to provide greater efficiency and consistency in the assessment and evaluation process.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

   The self-study report and meetings with faculty, staff, and administrators showed evidence of a wide variety of educational opportunities that promote a life of learning for Harper College employees. These offerings include College orientations, grants, and fellowships, as well as funding for professional development workshops, conferences, and courses. Some examples include seminars sponsored by the Teaching and Learning Center, the Employee Institute for Learning, Staff Development Day, and Harper College tuition waivers.

   Interviews with academic deans and senior administrators provided reports of participation in the Leadership Institute of Schaumburg, attention to distributing   *First Frids*(an academic newsletter), and opportunities for mentorship for academic administrators and faculty. These activities demonstrate institutional commitment in

the professional development of its academic staff and faculty as well as the recognition of scholarship and research activities.

The Harper College self-study reports that the College uses multiple methods to publicly acknowledge the achievements of students, faculty, and staff in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge. These reports in the self-study were corroborated in part by interviews with classified staff who gave examples of being recognized by the President through email, oral, and written communication and in the *Inside Harper* newsletter. Additionally, a sense of pride in Harper College was evident in these staff reports.

In order to assess the usefulness of its curricula to students, Graduate Surveys are performed annually and results are shared with academic deans. In 2005, the Graduate Survey response rate was 54%. Additionally, career programs have advisory committees whose membership includes business leaders who provide input on the relationships between courses and skills gained by students.

Harper College's support of numerous student activities such as Ethics Bowl, Harper College Mentor Program, Student Senate, field trips, and student clubs are examples of ways in which the College implements curricular and co-curricular activities that relate responsible use of knowledge to practicing social responsibility.

Harper College supports professional development opportunities for faculty to stay current in their field and increase their skills and knowledge by providing many opportunities including seminars, classes, and retreats. This commitment is evidenced by additional opportunities such as the teaching and learning innovation grants, technology grants, DoIT faculty fellowships, and multicultural faculty fellowship. Additional support includes technology and pedagogy faculty workshops in a variety of face-to-face and distance formats; graduate courses on technology design and use in the classroom, implementation and training for new technology products such as Elluminate Live! Finally, professional development funds are available for full-time faculty as stipulated in the Agreement between Board of Trustees of Community College District 512, County of Cook and State of Illinois and William Rainey Harper College Faculty Senate, Local 1600, AFT, AFL-CIO. Stipends are provided for adjunct faculty.

The College supports teaching and learning according to Article III-L of the *Agreement* by providing a mentoring program for full-time faculty and adjunct faculty members serving in their first or second semester in that division. Additionally, DoIT

provides professional development for faculty via the Successful Teaching Online Mentoring Program (STOMP) and many other opportunities including a dedicated faculty development coordinator.

As documented in the Harper College Results of 2006 Career Graduate Survey, in general, recent graduates of Harper's career programs appear to be employed, satisfied in their job experience, and satisfied with the services and instruction that Harper College provides, which is a continued trend from 2004.

Meetings with students involved in campus activities confirm that Harper College embraces co-curricular opportunities which support and broaden the learning core of the College's mission. The range of opportunities for students to participate in such activities (approximately 40 clubs and 8 organizations), and the faculty and staff who advise them demonstrate commitment of this institution to promoting a life of learning.

After a review of Advisory Committee minutes in the Resource Room and meeting with Advisory Committee members, it is apparent that the Advisory Committee members serve the College's career programs in providing relevant curriculum changes to meet community needs   .

Harper College helps students and employees understand and practice responsible and ethical use of knowledge through various policies and procedures such as FERPA, Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct and Dispute Resolution, Copyright and Fair Use, Acceptable Use Policy, and Netiquette Statement.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**
    None cited.

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
    None cited.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.**
    None cited.

<u>**Recommendation of the Team**</u>: Criterion met; no Commission follow-up

recommended.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met.**

    Community members verbalized -- with enthusiasm -- that the organization's outreach responds to identified community needs. In reviewing copies of surveys to alumni and community members, the team found evidence that the College is proactive in assessing and serving its constituent groups. The Environmental Scans and Community Needs Assessments are completed on a three year cycle with updates in the intervening years. Group interviews provided evidence of outreach and unique programs of engagement with the business communities, the high schools, and to the twenty-three geographic communities in the College service area such as Community Night.

    Reaffirmed by the 2006 Environmental Scan results and the CCSSE survey, the physical, financial, and human resources of the College support programs of engagement and service including ESL and developmental education. The Adult Educational Development department operates both Nonnative Literacy and GED classes on campus, at the NEC and five community sites.

    Many formal and informal opportunities exist to forge communication between Harper College and the community. Faculty, staff, and administration actively participate in community service organizations, boards, and schools. Harper College and its three feeder high school districts formed the Northwest Suburban Education to Careers Partnership to promote the transition of high school students into appropriate career programs.

    Interviews with students and community leaders revealed that Harper College responds to their need to have alternative delivery methods for courses and programs. For example, the Fast Track programs have provided working adults access to degrees in a format that accommodates work schedules, and allows students to progress through programs in cohort groups. The growth of online courses and programs also provides access to courses for students that have work schedules incompatible with the traditional academic calendar

    Community members spoke of the planning efforts regarding the baccalaureate degree as evidence of the responsiveness of Harper College. The community

2. **Degrees awarded:** No change.

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. **Stipulation on affiliation status:** No change.

2. **Approval of degree sites:** No change.

3. **Approval of distance education degree:** No change.

4. **Reports required**
   One progress report is due to the Higher Learning Commission on May 30, 2010. The required report will outline the progress made by Harper College in the area of Outcomes Assessment and must include the following:

   1. A charter and scope of work for the standing assessment committee which outlines the timelines, goals and specific activities to be accomplished by the committee.
   2. An organizational chart that includes the division and department of the College that provides oversight to the assessment activities; and documentation of the leadership to the assessment initiative, including the co-chairs and the committee members, to assure broad representation from all disciplines.
   3. The complete list of learning outcomes of the transfer and career programs and a summary of the documents from which students, faculty and community members can access and review the outcomes.
   4. The processes in place for implementing multiple assessment activities for Career Program outcomes and General Education outcomes, and the completion of 'Column Five' for all program and transfer areas that identify results of assessment activities that have led to improvements.
   5. A summary of the financial and personnel support provided to faculty for assessment activities to ensure all faculty members are involved in the assessment process.
   6. Strategies that link the 5-year program review process (required by the Illinois Community College Board) to the outcomes assessment processes, so that common measures are employed to assess the acquisition of skills by the students, and to provide greater efficiency and consistency in the assessment and evaluation process.

5. **Other visits scheduled:** None.

leaders expressed strong support for the idea of a baccalaureate degree at Harper College, and are pleased that the administration and the Board of Trustees are exploring the legality of such an undertaking.

Students that currently wish to articulate to a baccalaureate degree program have access to the Harper College Partnership Grid, which lists articulation, transfer, and partnership agreements with baccalaureate degree granting institutions, including the statewide Compact Agreement and the Illinois Articulation Initiative, dual admissions, and the 90/30 or 3 + 1 agreements.

Survey evidence and communication with Community representatives conveyed a high level of support and satisfaction for Harper's value as a vital part of the community. The challenge to Harper College is to provide a systematic method for collecting the information pertaining to all its good work with its community and developing a system to record and analyze the responses, as the College prepares for continued growth in many programs and services.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**
   None noted.

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
   None noted.

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up.**
   None noted.

   <u>**Recommendation of the Team**</u>: Criterion met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. **Affiliation Status:** No change.

B. **Nature of Organization**

   1. **Legal status:** No change.

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year – 2017-2018)

Rationale for recommendation: Based on the evidence presented to, discovered, and confirmed during the on-site visit by the team members and documented by the evidentiary statements in support of the College's fulfillment of the criteria and core components, the team members are unanimous in their recommendation to the Higher Learning Commission that Harper College continue full accreditation until the next comprehensive visit in academic year 2017-2018. This team expressed confidence that Harper College is well positioned to continue to fulfill its mission to serve the educational needs of its communities, as it is so succinctly stated in its promotional and recruitment materials: *GoForward.*

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

William Rainey Harper College
Palentine, Illinois
November 5-7, 2007

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Kim Linduska, Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs, Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny, IA, 50321 Chair

Dr. Stephanie Bulger, Vice Chancellor, Curriculum and Learning Technologies, Wayne County Community College District, Detroit, MI, 48226

Dr. Evonne Carter, Associate Vice President of Academics, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dr. Mark Davis, Vice President for Business and Finance, Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma City, OK 73159

Dr. Don Doucette, Vice Chancellor for Education and Technology, Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 64111

Dr. John Ganio, Vice Chancellor for Education, St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, MO, 63102

Jeralyn Jargo, Dean, Division of Business, Health Sciences, and External Education, Century Community and Technical College, White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Dr. Rose Kuceyeski, Professor, Information Technology, Owens Community College, Toledo,

Contents

I.   **OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION**

William Rainey Harper College is a comprehensive community college that operates under the auspices of the Illinois Community College Board as one of 48 community colleges in the state, serving 23 communities in the northwest suburbs of Chicago that encompass over 200 square miles. Harper College offers four Associate degree programs, forty six Associate of Applied Science program, and eighty certificate programs, in addition to developmental and adult education, continuing education, and business and industry training services to its constituents.

Harper College has, within the Illinois Community College System, a reputation for excellence in its service to students and to the community. That reputation was validated throughout the entire accreditation visit, as evidenced by the team's interaction with faculty and staff, students, the Board of Trustees and other community leaders, and by tours of the exceptional facilities at the main campus and at the Harper Professional Center and the Harper Northeast Center. The faculty and staff members are devoted to the success of the students at Harper, and exhibit an impressive enthusiasm for continuous improvement, whether it's in developing additional academic support services or extra-curricular activities for students, providing opportunities for student research, or exploring new strategies to market Harper College to potential students. The pride in the college was evident everywhere on campus, creating a vibrant atmosphere for student learning. The student population at Harper College is primarily traditional age, and reflects the ethnic and racial make-up of the district. The students interviewed by the accreditation team members were very satisfied with the quality of their education, the services and activities provided, and the physical plant. Community leaders and the Board of Trustees spoke in glowing terms about the impact of Harper College on the community, and the support provided the college by business and industry. Community support is evident in the physical plant, as the district approved a bond issue to build the new Avante Center, which includes state of the art classrooms and laboratories. The community also generously supports the Harper College Foundation; not only in general student scholarships, but also through several academic support programs targeted for specific under-served or at-risk populations. Harper College has invested in facilities that visibly enhance the reputation for quality that is their hallmark. The facilities most importantly provide an outstanding environment for learning, but the buildings and grounds demonstrate, in a very visual manner, the College's commitment to quality in its educational opportunities for students.

Harper College is not without its challenges. The tuition rate is among the highest in the state, and although it has not yet adversely impacted enrollment, the College must be vigilant about pricing its educational programs beyond the means of any population within their service area. As with most institutions of higher education, the Illinois State legislature does not fund Harper College at the level needed to grow programs and services to meet the needs of the additional students. Careful planning and fiscal prudence have allowed Harper to maintain a comfortable fund balance, but significant growth is difficult without additional funds.

Harper College is a large, complex institution that prides itself on meeting the needs of many different constituencies in its district, as outlined in its mission, vision, and core values statements. Competing demand among those constituencies for time and resources, both financial and human, has led to some internal communication problems, primarily between the faculty and administration. The College is working hard to bring greater diversity to its faculty

and staff, and recognizes the need to intensify the effort in order to meet its stated goals. Harper College is in the beginning stages of a major technology infrastructure change, as it prepares for the 2008 implementation of SCT Banner as its administrative computing system. As this change occurs, the faculty and administration at Harper College should examine their commitment to and delivery of online courses. With its rich faculty resources, a dedicated IT staff, and a relatively young (and technology savvy) student population, Harper College could serve as a leader in distance learning as the student demand continues to grow.

In summary, Harper College is a very fine institution that is well poised to meet the many and varied educational needs of the communities it serves. The following topics for consultative advice are intended to provide some general guidance and to offer some specific advice in areas that were either identified in the Assurance Section as needing organizational attention or follow up, or as asked for by the institution.

II.   CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

Topic One: Online Learning/Technology Infrastructure

Harper College has earned approval from the Higher Learning Commission to offer online degrees via distance education delivery based upon a focused visit in September 2005. During that visit, the college demonstrated to the satisfaction of the visiting team its commitment to investing in the infrastructure necessary to support distance education offerings, including support for faculty in developing online courses and a variety of available online student support services.   The 2005 evaluation team also made a number of recommendations related to the future development of the program, several of which focused on tracking student success in the online environment.

The leadership of Harper College continues to express its desire to expand its online course, certificate and degree offerings both to meet the needs of students in its various communities and to grow its enrollment, particularly among its nontraditional student population. However, the college has experience only very modest growth in its online course offerings since the 2005 visit. While there are many ways to measure such growth, a telling statistic is that the number of online sections offered by the college in fall 2007, 145, is only 17 more than the number offered in fall 2005, or just over 13 percent growth in two years. Other community colleges with more concerted efforts to grow online enrollments are experiencing growth rates closer to 25 to 50 percent per year.

There are many things that Harper College can do to increase both the quality and quantity of its online offerings and it is the purpose of this section to offer such consultative advice.

Technical Infrastructure: Currently, the college's efforts to grow its online enrollments are limited by the inadequacies of portions of its technical infrastructure. While the college has much stronger technology infrastructure in place, including a robust network infrastructure, an extensive lab and desktop infrastructure, strong academic and administrative applications in many areas, strong electronic communications, and a dynamic web presence, the college has deployed only a very limited instructional management system, Blackboard Basic, to support its online courses. This system has limited functionality and is widely considered

inadequate for a college of the size, resources and ambition of Harper College. The technology leadership of the college is currently considering options to upgrade its current system, and there have been good reasons to have limited the college's investment in the particular instructional management system. However, the college will not be able to grow its online offerings significantly without a decisive commitment to a single, robust instructional management system, and it will be hampered in its support of online offerings until it does so.

A related but equally significant limitation of the technology infrastructure currently deployed to support online learning is the lack of a student information system that is integrated with the instructional management system used by the college. Colleges which have had the most success supporting online teaching and learning have integrated these systems so that a course shell or course website is automatically created for each section of each course offered by the college. A faculty member needs only to make the course site available to students by a simple three-click process. Such automatic course site creation depends upon integration with a modern student information system, such as SCT Banner which the college currently plans to implement by fall 2008. In the most successful installations not only does the student information system feed automatic course site creation for each section, but it also populates each course site automatically with the college supplied e-mail address of every student enrolled in every section of every course. In short, the major technology systems of successful institutions facilitate the universal use of the instructional management system of the college by faculty and students, and thus both encourage and support the use of online resources to assist teaching and learning.

In summary, the college is urged to move as quickly as possible to standardization on a single, robust instructional management system to support all courses and sections as quickly as feasible, and then to implement a best-practices solution of automatic course site creation for all sections, populated with college-supplied e-mail addresses for all students enrolled. Until the college does so, its growth in online enrollments will be seriously constrained.

Faculty Participation: Another obstacle to the growth and development of Harper College's online offerings is the non-pervasive use by college faculty of an instructional management system, such as Blackboard, to support instruction in on-ground or traditional college courses. By the best estimate available from college staff, no more than 25 percent of all Harper College course sections use a course website of any kind to support teaching and learning, including easy to use electronic communications among students and faculty via e-mail or discussion boards and online access to course resources, information and materials, such as course syllabi, assignments, schedules, and grades.

It is important to understand that fully online courses are simply one end of a continuum in the use of course websites and online resources to support instruction wherever that instruction occurs, either in class or via the web. Best practice colleges and universities have agreed upon a standardized common instructional management system and make it available to faculty to support all of their courses, from traditional classes to fully online ones. Students come to expect that course information such as syllabi and assignments will be readily available to them through a course web site, that their grades that mark their progress through a course will be available, and that electronic communications with the faculty member or classmates will be facilitated through a course web site. Students at Harper

College expressed the same appreciation for courses that provide such online resources to them, and were surprised and disappointed that more faculty did not utilize Blackboard more in support of their courses.

The college has not yet realized the benefits associated with the standardization on a platform like Blackboard because it has not yet achieved a critical mass in use of the software to support all Harper College classes. Until that percentage reaches at least one-half to two-thirds of all course sections, Blackboard will not serve as a pervasive system for supporting teaching and learning at Harper. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be widespread interest among Harper faculty in supporting their traditional courses with Blackboard course web sites. This is explained in part by the limited capabilities and difficult to use the version of Basic Blackboard currently employed by the college. Still, the college will need to find the instructional leadership to make the case that the benefits to teaching and learning of providing web-based support for student and faculty interactions, sharing of course materials and grades far exceed the small effort and training required to use the system effectively. Modern students simply expect that course information and communications will be available online, and institutions that do not meet these student expectations will fail to attract and retain them.

Support for Faculty and Students: The College does provide interested faculty with a full range of high quality support services both to use instructional technology effectively in the classroom and to develop and teach online courses. The Department of Instructional Technology (DoIT) provides interested faculty with instructional design services, training in the use of available tools, research into available resources and even assistance in building online courses, modules and related instructional materials. DoIT also researches standards and best practices in online instruction and shares these with faculty members who utilize its services. DoIT staff and leadership actively participate in college technology committees and actively promote the use of instructional technology to support teaching and learning in a variety of college settings. The office even helps to identify courses needed by the college to offer students full degrees or certificates online and helps recruit faculty to develop these courses. So, the college has invested well in supporting faculty interested in using technology to improve teaching and learning, whether in traditional classrooms or in the online environment.

However, there is a volunteer quality associated with the support provided to faculty interested in online instruction. Training is not required of faculty prior to the development of and implementation of an online course. Quality standards for such courses, while known to DoIT staff and academic administration, are not established nor required. Even decisions regarding which courses are to be developed and taught online are made based upon faculty interest rather than an institutional plan, which results in the college not really offering full blown degrees and certificates online.

Also, there is some confusion regarding the technical support available to faculty and students in the online environment. Various technology units of the college provide various types of support regarding the technical problems that might be encountered by faculty or students. Also, there does not appear to be sufficient after hours coverage to support students who might encounter technical problems in dealing with the online environment either in the evening or on weekends when online students are most likely to need

assistance. As the college expands its online offerings and increases the use of Blackboard to support traditional classes, the college will need to organize its support resources more effectively into a single point of contact or help desk, and extend the hours of such support to include the times when online students are most likely to be using college technical resources.

Leadership and Coordination: Harper College does many things well in providing distance education alternatives to its students and communities. Anecdotal evidence indicates that students are quite pleased with the quality and rigor of the online courses they have taken, and they hope the college will expand these offerings. Students very much appreciate the use of course websites, when they are available, to support traditional classroom instruction. Willing faculty is well supported in developing online courses and in otherwise using instructional technology to improve teaching and learning. However, even with these successes, it is clear that Harper College is not among community college leaders in using technology to improve teaching and learning, nor in offering a broad array of online courses, certificates and degrees. The college has had modest success with those faculty interested in the online environment, but it has not succeeded with a concerted effort to involve more faculty in the initiative.

There are few formal structures available to coordinate the development and implementation of an online schedule of classes or development plan. There is really no distance education department or formal committee, with DoIT and the Instructional Technology Committee serving as a stand in for departments and committees devoted to expansion of online instruction. While it is not unusual for new initiatives in an academic setting to be initiated primarily from the bottom up, that is, by individual faculty volunteers supported by academic administration, such an approach is not likely to yield a well coordinated expansion of online instruction to meet student and community needs.

If the college hopes to expand its distance education and online offerings, it will need to develop organizational structures necessary to lead and support such an initiative. First among these needs to be academic and institutional leadership for these efforts.

Topic Two: Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Harper College has made significant progress in its assessment activities since the last accreditation visit in 1996. As noted in the Assurance Section, the College needs to formalize the structure of the assessment process and imbed it into the operation of the academic programs. The following recommendations provide an outline for that process.

By establishing a standing college-side committee to lead the activities related to assessment, Harper would demonstrate a systematic commitment to improved student learning and outcomes assessment. This committee should provide the leadership and coordination of the efforts of the current Outcomes Assessment Committee and the General Education Assessment Committee. Because of the work already completed on outcomes assessment in a variety of areas, this committee would not be starting over, but instead be refocusing and aligning its past activities and efforts.

A suggested process to follow would be to:
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current and previous assessment plans (5-column assessment; career program assessment ad the required ICCB five-year evaluation);
- Determine the value of current assessment tools;
- Investigate and systematically make modifications of the assessment plans as results warrant;
- Develop an integrated assessment plan that includes the assessment of outcomes in career programs, transfer offerings/programs, and general education.

Across the country, colleges have been focusing on outcomes assessment for many years. There are numerous 'best practices' published in periodical and trade books that are readily available. Some suggestions from the team are:

- *Assessing for Learning- Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution,* written by Peggy Make and published by the American Association for Higher Education in Sterling, Virginia, in 2004. This text provides a great overview of the assessment of learning, numerous examples and a through bibliography for further reading. Peggy is also an excellent speaker, and successfully engages faculty members who continue to express reluctance in participating in the assessment process.
- *How Do They Know We Know- Evaluating Adult Learning,* published by Jossey-Bass, 1998. Written by Jane Vella, Paula Beradinelli and Jim Burow. Besides providing an easy to follow assessment primer, there are three fine examples of evaluating learning in existing programs that would give instructors a model from which to operate, and lead to further analysis of assessment practices.
- *A Teacher's Guide to Performance-Based Learning and Assessment,* published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in 1996. This book guides faculty through the analysis of developing performance-based tasks.
- *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education,* published by Jossey-Bass, 1999. Written by Catherine Palomba.
- *Student Learning: A Central Focus for Institutions of Higher Education,* published in March 2002, by Alverno College Institute I Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This document offers contributions from over twenty-five colleges on successful assessment practices.
- *The Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* published a special Outcomes Assessment issue in Spring of 2002 (Volume 9, #2).

One request that the team received from Harper was to help identify strategies to share information about student learning and assessment with the larger community. On the Cochise College website, there are a number of documents and reports that have been made available to the public. You may access this information and their documents at:
http://www/cochise.edu/deptsdirs/committees/assesscom/index.asp

A quick web search will provide a number of other resources and samples that are shared publicly, including:
http://www/gettysburg.edu/about/offices/ees/institutionalanalysis/assessment/

Topic Three: Challenges of Growth

Although Harper College has earned significant benefits through growth in enrollment and in securing financial stability, there is evidence that the stresses of such growth have taken some toll and present a danger of continued and possible increasing challenges to the culture of the college community. Among those challenges is an apparent tension between the faculty and the administration. The faculty has expressed concerns over the fact that adjunct faculty produce the greater part of student credit hours of instruction. While individual adjuncts can bring unique expertise and talents to the instructional repertoire and certainly provide flexibility in responding to changing instructional needs, relying on adjunct instruction to such a large degree can rob an institution of the focus, integration, and commitment to the college mission that can be gained by a greater presence of full time faculty.

However, the question of concerns over the proportion of part-time to full-time faculty may be the surface expression of a deeper underlying concern. The faculty-developed climate survey, and reports by individual faculty members expressed that they do not feel engaged in the fundamental decision making process of the college. Greater involvement, integration and production may be achieved through active engagement of the faculty in meaningful involvement in academic decision-making.

One strategy to include the faculty more within the academic decision-making process is to create an academic champion or liaison to the leadership team. This could be accomplished through the creation of a position (it could be rotating) in instruction or appointment of an existing academic administrator to the leadership team. This individual could serve as a direct liaison between the faculty and the leadership team, and serve primarily a communication function. Key to the success of such an effort would be that the faculty is made to feel that their voice is both heard and valued in the academic decisions of the college.

Topic Four: Hiring Diverse Faculty
Harper College has articulated a goal to diversify its faculty and staff in order to better serve the increasingly diverse communities that it serves. Since the last self-study visit, the college has had the opportunity to replace approximately two-thirds of its faculty largely because of vacancies created by retirements. However, in the process of replacing its retiring faculty, the college was not able to increase the diversity of diversity in its faculty.

Colleges that have had some success in hiring a more diverse faculty have done so by consciously attempting to influence the traditional way that colleges hire faculty. Successful colleges begin by deliberately identifying the hiring of diverse faculty as an explicit institutional goal and then by implementing processes that are more likely to achieve that goal while still respecting the traditional faculty prerogative to have major input in the hiring of their future colleagues.

A key to success is to insist on a college wide discussion about what constitutes "qualified" or "well qualified" faculty. Left unexamined, the definition of a well qualified faculty member will default to mean a faculty member with a doctorate in the discipline from a prestigious university with substantial college-level teaching experience. Most faculty screening committees will instinctively identify several examples of such "veteran college faculty" from any pile of candidate applications, and the results will typically be the selection of traditional and non-diverse candidates. However, if the college discussion is able to examine what constitutes "well-qualified" and is able to agree that what is desired is "well-qualified to teach Harper

College students," then the qualities searched for by screening committee members in candidate pools can be broadened to consider other promising candidates that are well qualified by virtue of other experiences than simply a terminal degree from a prestigious university with multiple years of college teaching experience.

For instance, at one Midwestern community college, faculty screening committees routinely attempt to identify different categories of candidates in all faculty candidate pools. The categories their faculty screening committees use include:

Category One
Strong academic and veteran college-level teacher.

Category Two
Bright and talented with initial teaching or other experiences that indicate great potential to be a highly effective community college faculty member.

Category Three
Unusual and interesting background or experience or expert in a specific area that indicates great potential to add value and diversity of perspective to the curriculum, students, the academic division, and the institution.

Category Four
Successful adjunct faculty already teaching at the college.

Instead of interviewing six or seven candidates of similar type from category one, the college's faculty screening committees routinely interview the best one to three candidates from each category. As a result, the college has had substantial success in hiring a more diverse faculty by consciously looking for diversity of all kinds in the candidates that it selects for interviews. To be sure, strong academic and veteran college faculty are regularly hired, but so are some unusual candidates that have added diversity and energy to the college's faculty and environment.

There are many other adjustments to typical faculty hiring processes that can be made to increase the chances for obtaining more diverse results. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Define all candidates who meet the posted minimum requirements, for instance, Master's degree in the discipline with some teaching experience, as "qualified" so that all candidates who meet these qualifications are screened into the active candidate pool.

2. Avoid posting multiple additional criteria as minimum requirements. These may be added as preferred qualifications, but it is important to broaden the pool of those who meet minimum requirements. Screening committees may establish preferred qualifications and characteristics that are demonstrably relevant to the job of supporting and improving student learning.

3. However, no preferred qualification, such as earned doctorate, specific esoteric course work, or multiple years of college-level teaching experience, may be used as the sole criteria to screen out otherwise qualified candidates, as this would have the impermissible effect of making a preferred qualifications actually unposted minimum requirements. Rather, screening committees must consider combinations or preferred qualifications, not single litmus-test preference, to identify the best qualified candidates to teach the college's students.

4. Consider a broader selection of preferred characteristics as valuable indicators of

quality, such as commitments to the community college mission, experience assessing and improving student learning, accommodating diversity of student learning styles; experience teaching diverse students, using technology to improve student learning, using multiple delivery mechanisms, experience with learning communities or writing intensive approaches, evidence of collaboration and ability to contribute to collegiality and shared governance, and evident of multicultural and global perspectives.

5. Do not permit the use of matrices that calculate a numerical score by which to rank candidates for faculty positions. Although matrices that include the desired characteristics of faculty candidates may be used, these must be qualitative in nature because quantitative scores of candidate qualifications are inherently unreliable in rating quality, create a false impression of objective rank and can expose a college and its hiring processes to legal liability and external scrutiny. Check marks, written comments, and other such indications can be noted on a matrix to identify those candidates that exhibit a substantial pattern of evidence of meeting a broad combination of preferred qualifications and desired characteristics. However, in all cases, numerical scores must not be permitted.

6. Characteristics and experiences that encompass the broadly defined diversity sought by the institution in its faculty, staff and administrators, may be discussed in screening committees, but the focus of the discussion must be on how certain characteristics and experiences can contribute to a candidate's ability to support and improve learning among community college students.

7. All faculty positions should remain open until filled. Applications received after the posted date for initial screening may also be considered on an equal basis and without prejudice as those received by the posted date-until such time as the committee selects candidates to be interviewed.

Others have established "grow your own" programs that identify potential faculty sometime during their academic career and nurture and support them until they are fully qualified community college faculty. Other colleges have implementing teaching intern programs that provide diverse candidates who might not have the successful teaching experience at the college level that is usually required to be competitive for full-time faculty positions with the opportunity to gain such experience. Interns are hired on temporary, limited duration contracts for one or two years to allow them to gain the experience and acceptance among their future colleagues that make them competitive for full-time faculty positions when these become available. Programs such as these make it possible to tap an otherwise large and typically more diverse supply of potential community college faculty, high school teachers, who are usually not considered for college faculty positions by reason of lack of successful college teaching experience.

Colleges with the resource base and diverse and growing community have the ability to attract, hire and retain diverse faculty if they are thoughtful and committed to achieving that outcome. Institutional and faculty leadership need to be committed to achieving a more divers faculty and then to lead a conscious redesign of faculty hiring processes to achieve the result.

Topic Five: Centers of Excellence

Harper College administration asked the team to provide some consultative advice on the development of Centers of Excellence at the college. Such centers are becoming more

prevalent in community colleges, as they have been in 4-year universities for many years. In some states, the state legislature is targeting funds toward specific Centers of Excellence in its community colleges in an attempt to foster enrollment growth in programs that prepare students for occupations for which a worker shortage is anticipated. Centers of Excellence are also designed, at some colleges, to draw attention to a specific program or discipline because of the distinctive work that is done there, or because the students graduate from the program with unique skills or a unique degree.

Before any group is convened to determine which departments or disciplines will have the designation of Center of Excellence, there must be a very clear definition of what the purpose of such centers would be, what criteria are used to designate the center, who is involved in identifying such centers, and whether there is additional status afforded to the centers (more funding, stipends for faculty members, etc.). Once those decisions are made and publicly articulated, the college will be ready to begin the process of identifying the centers.

Certainly Harper College has programs and disciplines that could be designated as "Centers of Excellence" under most common definitions. One such definition is the capacity to serve as a leader in specialized education and training, and to provide a point of contact and resource hub for best practices, innovation, and professional development opportunities. Some examples that meet that definition could be the health science department, as it provides specialized training, is very closely tied to the industry it serves, and the facilities provide significant opportunity to engage in best practices in the profession. Another example might be the Chemistry Innovation project funded through the National Science Foundation that provides opportunities for significant student research. That program is unique, provides opportunities for more involvement in science and math, which is a national imperative, and is not replicated in other community colleges in the nation.

While the Center of Excellence designation would certainly serve as a marketing and recruitment tool, and provide a means of drawing additional resources to the college, there is always the risk of alienating other excellent program on campus, particularly if internal funds are reallocated from one department to support activities of a Center of Excellence in other departments. This is a very good idea that, correctly done, could enhance Harper's reputation for excellence. It will require significant planning that involves all of the stakeholders in the college.

III.   RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

Harper College has a stable financial base that is strengthened by responsible and self-sustaining financial practices. Revenues and expenditures have remained stable and the fund balance is very healthy, despite declining state support. Although tuition is high relative to other community college in the greater Chicago area, the administration and Board of Trustees has maintained a 'slow but steady' plan for tuition increases, fully informing the public of its long range strategy. The very healthy financial status of Harper College will well serve its students and communities into the future.

The physical plant at Harper College is outstanding, and is a very visible indication of its commitment to excellence it its educational programs. Although all of the buildings and grounds

are well designed ad well maintained, of particular note is the Avante Center. The faculty was involved in the design of the building; the building is very student friendly, and the health and dental labs are state of the art, and designed to optimize the teaching and learning process.

The Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board deserve special note in this recognition section. The visiting team found the Board of Trustees very knowledgeable of Harper's strengths and challenges, and clearly understood its role in its operation. The commitment of the Board to Harper's mission, and its willingness to advocate for and promote the College is to be commended. Likewise, the Foundation Board takes its responsibility very seriously; the number and variety of initiatives it funds is outstanding. The College is certainly richer and stronger because of the involvement of the Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board.

The variety of co-curricular opportunities for students at Harper College is truly impressive. Not only does Harper offer the traditional sports, music and theatre programs, all of which are well known and successful in their respective leagues; Harper boasts a nationally ranked debate team, offers students opportunities for scientific research, and provides opportunities for students from traditionally under-served populations to access services and activities to boost their chance of success in college.

INSTITUTION and STATE: William Rainey Harper College, IL

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*:

DATES OF REVIEW: 11/5/07 -   11/7/07

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

DEGREES AWARDED: A

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: None.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: No prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Progress report due 5/30/10 on outcomes assessment

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: none

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1997 - 1998

YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2007 - 2008

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2017 - 2018

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: William Rainey Harper College, IL

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS):)*: Continued Accreditation

_____ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

		Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate			
	Associate	44	
	Bachelors	0	
Programs leading to Graduate			
	Masters	0	
	Specialist	0	
	First Professional	0	
	Doctoral	0	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:		Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
	Campuses:	None	
	Sites:	Palatine (Harper Professional Center) ; Palatine (Northeast Center)	
	Course Locations:	5	

Out-of-State:		Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
	Campuses:	None	
	Sites:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-USA:		Present Wording:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
	Campuses:	None	
	Sites:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

AAS in Financial Services: Commercial Credit Management offered via Internet; AAS in Financial Services: Real Estate offered via Internet; Certificate in Accounting Clerk offered via Internet; Certificate in Advanced Management offered via Internet; Certificate in Cisco Network Administration offered via Internet; Certificate

in Commercial Credit Management offered via Internet; Certificate in Computers in Business offered via Internet; Certificate in Financial Management offered via Internet; Certificate in General Management offered via Internet; Certificate in International Business offered via Internet; Certificate in LAN Management offered via Internet; Certificate in Linux Network Administration offered via Internet; Certificate in Marketing offered via Internet; Certificate in Microsoft Network Administration offered via Internet; Certificate in NetPrep Network Specialist offered via Internet; Certificate in NetPrep Senior Network Specialist offered via Internet; Certificate in Purchasing offered via Internet; Certificate in Real Estate Brokers License Preparation offered via Internet; Certificate in Real Estate Sales Professional offered via Internet; Certificate in Sales Management and Development offered via Internet; Certificate in Technical offered via Internet; Certificate in Web Development offered via Internet; Certificate in Web Visual Design offered via Internet

Recommended Change:
    (+ or -)