

Harper College
Results of Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Survey
Spring 2007

Prepared by the Office of Research
Teaming to Serve Research Needs of the College
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Introduction

In spring 2007, the Steering Committee for the Higher Learning Commission Self-Study at Harper College saw the need for a survey of all College employees. The purpose of the survey was to assess the degree to which employees have what they need to fulfill the College's mission and to promote a student-centered environment. In addition to providing quantitative ratings, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide written feedback on each topic.

The survey was distributed via campus mail to all 1,249 full-time and part-time employees of the College. Five hundred sixty-six (566) responses were received, for a response rate of 45.3 percent. An additional 18 surveys were received too late to be included in this report.

The report is organized into an Introduction, a Results and Discussion section that presents results of the analyses, and a Summary section. The Appendix presents a copy of the survey instrument.

Results and Discussion

As noted above, 566 employees responded to the survey. Respondents' characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	n	%^a
Employee Group		
Faculty	263	48.0%
Staff	256	46.7%
Administrator	29	5.3%
Work Schedule		
Full-time	335	66.1%
Part-time	172	33.9%

^a Proportion of survey respondents.

As shown in Table 1, survey respondents were approximately evenly split between faculty (48%) and staff (47%). The majority of respondents (66%) indicated that they were full-time employees. The majority of faculty respondents (57%) reported that they were part-time employees, which indicates that the survey did successfully reach adjunct faculty.

The first question of the survey asked if the College provided the environment needed to help the employee fulfill the College's mission. Responses are shown in Tables 2a and 2b below. Overall, approximately 85 percent of respondents reported that the College provided the needed environment. Full-time and part-time employees responded similarly, but there was a statistically significant difference in response patterns based on

employee group: although faculty and staff responded similarly, administrators tended to respond more positively (97% of administrators responded positively to this question).

Table 2a: Fulfilling the College’s Mission by Employee Group

Does the College provide the environment you need to help fulfill the College’s mission? ^a	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	Administrators n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes	73 (28.0%)	70 (27.5%)	13 (44.8%)	156 (28.6%)
Mostly yes	152 (58.2%)	143 (56.1%)	15 (51.7%)	310 (56.9%)
No opinion	8 (3.1%)	25 (9.8%)	1 (3.4%)	34 (6.2%)
Mostly no	21 (8.0%)	16 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	37 (6.8%)
Definitely no	7 (2.7%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (1.5%)

^a Responses were significantly different based on employee group ($\chi^2=20.57$, $df=8$, $p<.01$).

Table 2b: Fulfilling the College’s Mission by Work Schedule

Does the College provide the environment you need to help fulfill the College’s mission?	Full-time n (%)	Part-time n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes	85 (25.5%)	57 (33.1%)	142 (28.1%)
Mostly yes	193 (58.0%)	96 (55.8%)	289 (57.2%)
No opinion	24 (7.2%)	8 (4.7%)	32 (6.3%)
Mostly no	26 (7.8%)	10 (5.8%)	36 (7.1%)
Definitely no	5 (1.5%)	1 (0.6%)	6 (1.2%)

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their written feedback. They were asked to explain any obstacles that may keep them from fulfilling the College’s mission. A thematic analysis of their responses is presented below in Table 3. A large proportion of respondents (187 of 566 total respondents, or 33%) provided written comments in response to this question.

Table 3: Obstacles and Barriers, Top Five Themes

Does the College provide the environment you need to help fulfill the College’s mission? Explain any obstacles or barriers that may keep you from doing so.	Rank	Number of Mentions
Need improved communication	1 (tie)	16
Needs improved climate: relations with faculty	1 (tie)	16
Need improved support for adjunct faculty	2	15
Need to increase staffing levels	3 (tie)	10
Need to update non-instructional facilities	3 (tie)	10
Need more updated classrooms/labs	4	9
Need to change “top down” leadership approach	5	8

Respondents were next asked if they believed that the College as a whole was student-centered. Responses are shown in Tables 4a and 4b below. Approximately 86 percent of respondents reported that the College as a whole was student-centered. There were no statistically significant differences in response patterns based on employee group or work schedule.

Table 4a: Student-Centeredness by Employee Group

Is the College as a whole student-centered?	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	Administrators n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes	60 (23.2%)	79 (31.0%)	13 (44.8%)	152 (28.0%)
Mostly yes	164 (63.3%)	138 (54.1%)	16 (55.2%)	318 (58.6%)
No opinion	19 (7.3%)	23 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)	42 (7.7%)
Mostly no	14 (5.4%)	15 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (5.3%)
Definitely no	2 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.4%)

Table 4b: Student-Centeredness by Work Schedule

Is the College as a whole student-centered?	Full-time n (%)	Part-time n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes	90 (27.1%)	49 (28.7%)	139 (27.6%)
Mostly yes	196 (59.0%)	100 (58.5%)	296 (58.8%)
No opinion	23 (6.9%)	18 (10.5%)	41 (8.2%)
Mostly no	22 (6.6%)	4 (2.3%)	26 (5.2%)
Definitely no	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)

Respondents were also asked to comment on what the College can do to be more student-centered. A thematic analysis of their responses is presented below in Table 5. This question also received a large number of responses (186 of 566 total responses, 33%).

Table 5: Student-Centered Campus, Top Five Themes

What can the College do to be more student-centered?	Rank	Number of Mentions
Move away from the “business model”, be a college	1	20
Personal contact, professional customer service	2	13
One-stop student center	3 (tie)	10
More resources for classrooms and student needs	3 (tie)	10
More support for student services	4	9
Improve technology infrastructure	5 (tie)	6
Modify harpercollege.edu website	5 (tie)	6
Keep costs reasonable	5 (tie)	6

Finally, respondents were asked if their department, program, or service area has the resources it needs to provide an excellent education to our students. Their responses are shown in Tables 6a and 6b below. Overall, approximately 81% of respondents reported that their department/program did have the resources and support needed. Administrators were statistically more likely to give positive responses to this question than faculty or staff (93.1% positive responses for administrators), but there were no statistically significant differences based on work schedule.

Table 6a: Resources and Support by Employee Group^a

Does your department, program, or service area have the resources and support it needs to provide an excellent education to our students?				
	Faculty n (%)	Staff n (%)	Administrators n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes	66 (25.5%)	61 (24.2%)	13 (44.8%)	140 (25.9%)
Mostly yes	151 (58.3%)	133 (52.8%)	14 (48.3%)	298 (55.2%)
No opinion	7 (2.7%)	36 (14.3%)	2 (6.9%)	45 (8.3%)
Mostly no	29 (11.2%)	18 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	47 (8.7%)
Definitely no	6 (2.3%)	4 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (1.9%)

^a Responses were significantly different based on employee group ($\chi^2=31.93$, $df=8$, $p<.01$).

Table 6b: Resources and Support by Work Schedule

Does your department, program, or service area have the resources and support it needs to provide an excellent education to our students?			
	Full-time n (%)	Part-time n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes	79 (23.9%)	52 (30.4%)	131 (26.1%)
Mostly yes	182 (55.2%)	95 (55.6%)	277 (55.3%)
No opinion	32 (9.7%)	10 (5.8%)	42 (8.4%)
Mostly no	30 (9.1%)	13 (7.6%)	43 (8.6%)
Definitely no	7 (2.1%)	1 (0.6%)	8 (1.6%)

Respondents were asked what can be improved in terms of the resources and support available to their department/program. A thematic analysis of their written comments is presented below. This question received the largest proportion of written comments (216 out of 566 respondents answered this question, 38%).

Table 7: Resources and Support, Top Five Themes

Does your department, program, or service area have the resources and support it needs to provide an excellent education to students? What can be improved?		
	Rank	Number of Mentions
Update facilities	1	31
Increase staff	2	26
Increase financial resources/budget	3	25
More classroom space, especially “smart” classrooms	4	18
More full-time faculty	5	15

Summary

In spring 2007, Harper College employees were given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding how well the College supports them in fulfilling the College mission. This survey was initiated at the request of Steering Committee for the Higher Learning Commission Self-Study. The survey was distributed via campus mail to all 1,249 full-time and part-time employees of the College. Completed surveys were received from 566 individuals, a 45.3 percent response rate.

The large majority of employees reported that:

- the College provides the environment they needed to help fulfill the College's mission (85%);
- the College as a whole is student-centered (86%); and
- their department/program/service area has the resources and support it needs to provide an excellent education (81%).

Administrators gave more positive responses than other employee groups when asked about the College environment and the resources and support available to their unit. Faculty and staff responses appeared comparable, and there were no statistically significant differences based on work schedule (full-time vs. part-time).

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide written comments following each question. Thematic analysis of their responses revealed that the main perceived barriers to fulfilling the College mission were the need to improve communication and the need to improve campus climate. The most common comment regarding the College's focus on students related to the "business model" of management. When asked how the resources and support in their area can be improved, respondents most often asked for updated facilities and increased staff.

Appendix
Survey Instrument

Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Survey



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION SELF-STUDY SURVEY

The HLC Steering Committee needs your help. Please give your honest and candid answers to the questions below. Your responses will be analyzed by the Office of Research and will be kept completely confidential.

Harper's mission states:

Harper College is a comprehensive community college dedicated to providing excellent education at an affordable cost, promoting personal growth, enriching the local community and meeting the challenges of a global society.

Use pencil or black pen.

1. Does the College provide the environment you need to help fulfill the College's mission?

Definitely yes Mostly yes No opinion Mostly no Definitely no

Explain any obstacles or barriers that may keep you from doing so.

2. Is the College as a whole student-centered?

Definitely yes Mostly yes No opinion Mostly no Definitely no

What can the College do to be more student-centered?

3. Does your department, program, or service area have the resources and support it needs to provide an excellent education to our students?

Definitely yes Mostly yes No opinion Mostly no Definitely no

What can be improved?

4. What is your employee group?

- a. Faculty
- b. Staff
- c. Administrator

5. What is your work schedule?

- a. Full-time
- b. Part-time

If you would like someone from the Steering Committee to talk to you about any issues related to the Accreditation Self-Study, please include your name and phone number _____

Use reverse if you need more room for comments. *Thank you* for participating in this survey! Please return to the Office of Research by February 9, 2007. (mail code: OFC/RES)

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