



2016 HARPER COLLEGE
COMMUNITY SCAN
Executive Summary

Created by the Office of Institutional Research
Based on the report developed by



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The Community Scan conducted by Harper College every three years is a comprehensive study in which the College can gauge changes in the community's attitudes and opinions toward Harper. Data is collected with the use of two surveys, the Community Survey for community residents and the Employer Survey for community businesses. The College utilizes this information to improve the understanding of the community's needs, to measure the community's awareness of Harper's initiatives, and to inform the College of potential changes that may benefit both Harper and the community.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Community Survey was initiated in 2010 and administered for the third time in 2016. The survey measures the community's awareness of the College, the importance and perception of specific attributes, and the community's understanding of the strategic partnerships and programs offered by Harper.

Goals and Outcomes of the Community Survey

Goal 1: Measure the awareness and familiarity of the constituents in the District with the College and constituents' knowledge of the programs and services offered by the College.

- Major Outcomes:
 - A total of 46% of 2016 residents listed Harper first as a college in the area, a 13% increase since 2010.
 - Overall familiarity with Harper has steadily increased, from 57% in 2010 to 59% in 2016.

Goal 2: Assess importance of the College's programs and services with constituents and the constituents' ratings of the College's performance in providing those programs and services.

- Major Outcomes:
 - Several of the community residents' top ten, most important attributes have shifted since 2010. The "affordable" attribute, (cost/value for money/affordable/financial aid), remained the most important attribute to district residents in 2016.
 - The "career development" attribute has increased in importance the most since 2013; the importance of classes and programs offered at the times needed has also increased since 2013.
 - Seven new attributes were added to the 2016 survey to gauge the residents' importance of workforce activities and public partnerships. While all of the attributes were rated as important, none of the new attributes ranked in the top ten in order of importance.

Goal 3: Understand how well the College manages its resources of the District for the benefit of constituents.

- Major Outcomes:
 - The majority of district residents (61%) agreed that the College is an important contributor to the community's economy; and 34% responded "did not know."
 - A total of 53% of community residents agreed or strongly agreed that the College manages its resources well; and 42% responded "did not know."
 - Almost half of the area residents (48%) agreed that the financial resources at Harper are well managed; and 46% responded "did not know."

EMPLOYER SURVEY

Beginning in 2013, the College decided to add a second component to the Community Scan to better understand the needs of district employers. By administering the Employer Survey, Harper has the opportunity to improve its knowledge of what employers deem as the required skill sets to match the business needs of a well-trained workforce.

Goals and Outcomes of the Employer Survey

Goal 1: Employers' perceived barriers to growth of their companies, (new to 2016 survey).

- Major Outcomes:
 - Over 80% of the employers reported the availability of the workforce and qualified employees as the major barriers to growth.
 - A total of 78% of employers attributed the low number of applicants for the difficulty in filling vacancies, while 58% of employers attributed the applicants' lack of relevant work experience. In addition, 57% of employers noted that applicants were unwilling to accept the wages offered and approximately 50% reported that applicants lack the technical or occupational skills needed for the job.

Goal 2: Employer training needs and preferences for delivering that training, (replication of 2013 survey).

- Major Outcomes:
 - More than 90% of employers provided employee training, parallel to 2013.
 - A total of 78% of employers viewed their outside vendors as training partners, (new to 2016 survey).

Goal 3: Knowledge of Harper's programming and services available to employers, (new to 2016 survey). Understanding the degree to which employers know about Harper's programming will help the College be a better resource for the district employers.

- Major Outcomes:
 - The majority of employers are somewhat familiar with programming at Harper, as most employers rated Harper's programs and services between a 3.5 and a 4 on a 5-point scale. However, Harper's Mobile Unit was the only item rated higher than a 4.
 - Employers are most familiar with Harper's Mobile Unit, custom training, and the Small Business Development Center. Employers are least familiar with the availability of the Wojcik Conference Center, free job postings, and job fairs.

Goal 4: Opportunities for the educational partners to provide employers educational opportunities for their employers, (replication of 2013 survey).

- Major Outcomes:
 - The awareness of the Business EdVantage Program has decreased by 9%, from 36% in 2013 to 27% in 2016.
 - Interest by employers for follow-up contact from Harper has increased by 13%, from 24% in 2013 to 37% in 2016.