



Employer Assessment 2007

Survey of Employers in the Harper College District

Prepared for:

Harper College

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APPENDIX

I. BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH APPROACH

Harper College is continuing its process of development and growth. As the only community college serving Community College District 512, Harper College has opportunities to develop its programs to satisfy its many constituencies while fulfilling its mission to *“provide excellent education at an affordable price, promoting personal growth, enriching the local community and meeting the challenges of a global society.”*

As part of its commitment to ongoing community assessment to understand current and emerging needs, the College conducts survey research every three years. This year, the decision was made to engage The Melior Group, a marketing research firm specializing in education, to design and manage the research process, as well as analyze and report on results. The resulting efforts provide a *“lay of the land”* with regard to the community’s interest in education, as well as understanding what Harper should be planning for the future in terms of educational programming and outreach.

This year, the research was designed to incorporate the needs and interests of both residents and employers within Harper’s district. Reported here are the detailed findings from the employer survey, (the results of the residents’ survey were previously delivered), which was designed to...

- ◆ explore businesses’ needs with regard to higher education; what are their expectations from area colleges/universities in terms of preparing students for employment? what kinds of skills/capabilities are employers looking for?;
- ◆ understand the extent to which employers use the educational resources in their area, and how (is it for employee training? recruitment? etc.);
- ◆ explore businesses’ willingness to encourage and/or reimburse employees for pursuing classes that relate to professional development;
- ◆ measure the extent to which Harper is the “go-to” institution for employers seeking further education for their employees;

- ◆ learn impressions of Harper College; how well it is perceived to currently meet employer needs, and how well they feel it is positioned to do so in the future;
- ◆ explore preferences for future communications from Harper; and
- ◆ elicit reactions to new initiatives from Harper, including academic degrees and programs.

A questionnaire was developed by The Melior Group, with input and approval from Harper College administration. A total of 50 telephone interviews were conducted in late March - April, 2007, each lasting an average of 12 minutes. All of the businesses have at least one location in Harper College's district, and all were required to have at least 100 employees in that location. It is important to note that Harper College was not initially identified as the sponsor of the research, though toward the end of the survey, where questions focused on impressions of Harper, its sponsorship became clear.

What follows are detailed findings from the employer survey, as well as key findings and implications for future planning. Where meaningful for decision-making, results have been segmented by revenue size (<\$50M, \$50M+); this works well as an indicator of company size... a valuable segmentation measure in employer research.

II. KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

For employers in the surrounding communities, Harper College is a valuable community resource. As it considers new directions for the future – including the possibility of offering select 4-year degrees – the following key findings and implications from the research can be taken into consideration.

Support For/Interest in Education for Employees

- ◆ These employers – regardless of their size – value higher education for their employees and are committed to a policy of providing it. Over eight in ten (84%) have, in the past 5 years, encouraged at least one or more employees to take a class; 78% have encouraged courses related to an employee’s job, and/or a certificate in a relevant subject. Nearly three-quarters (72%) have encouraged employees to earn 4-year degrees...which has obviously positive implications for Harper as it embarks on developing new degree programs.

Further evidence of this overall commitment to education is demonstrated by the fact that all of the employers will consider (“possibly” or “strongly”) encouraging their employees to pursue further education in the next 5 years. As well, 94% of employers have conducted on-site training for their employees. In sum, it is clear that area employers mirror community residents with respect to the importance they place on higher education.

- Note that business and business-related classes (management, marketing, accounting, etc.) are most popular with employers; technology management is another area of need and interest.

- ◆ Area employers are willing to put to “put their money where their mouths are” when it comes to encouraging education for their employees; 80% have offered tuition reimbursement. Nearly nine in ten of those companies (87%) offer the reimbursement regardless of whether the course is related to the pursuit of a degree.
- ◆ Despite the support for higher education, the majority of employers (76%) are not currently in the business of recommending specific colleges/universities to their employees. Of those who are (n=12), Harper College leads the list with 4 employers who will endorse it.

- ◆ Support for higher education extends to recruitment from area institutions; presently, seven in ten (70%) employers in this sample – and 82% of larger employers with revenues \$50M+ – actively recruit employees from local colleges and universities. Harper College is the “go to” college, with 53% of employers who recruit reporting that they go there.

Knowledge and Impressions of, and Support for, Harper College

- ◆ Harper College is well known by, and has a strong reputation among, district employers. When asked what it is known for, 24% say “*quality education.*” Additionally, Harper enjoys a great deal of support for its mission; 58% of participants say that it is “very appropriate” (rated “5” on a scale where 5 = “very appropriate” and 1 = “not at all appropriate”), and an additional 30% rated its appropriateness as “4.” None of the participants provide a rating lower than “3.”

Harper is also, by far, the College of choice for employees in the district. Over half of all employers (54%) report that their employees who have taken classes have gone to Harper; it receives more than twice as many mentions than its closest competitor, Oakton Community College (mentioned by 16% of employers).

- ◆ Employers’ impressions of Harper are mostly positive, and the College appears to have an effective communications strategy aimed at employers. Respondents were presented with characteristics of Harper and asked to grade it. Perhaps it’s most important to state that “don’t know” responses are low; fewer than one in ten employers were unable to grade Harper because they don’t know enough about it. Additionally, on a standard grading scale, Harper does well; 90% of participants give it an “A” or “B” for *offering education that is affordable for your business*, and 86% and 84%, respectively, give these high grades for *offering classes at times convenient for working adults*, and *offering programs for people who want to complete a degree.*
 - Harper does least well on *being ahead of the curve in terms of training people to meet future hiring needs/trends.* This could be a course development issue, and/or a communications challenge (in that employers simply don’t understand what Harper is doing in this area).

- ◆ Harper College must reinforce to employers some of its key advantages: fewer than half of all employers know that *employees living outside Harper's district can pay in-district rates to take classes at Harper, nor that Harper's College for Businesses can offer training programs for employees at your company.*

Strengthening Ties with Employers

- ◆ There are unmet needs among employers in the district that Harper can help to fill; its proposed Technology Management Bachelor's degree seems particularly relevant. Over half of all participating employers (54%) report that they have difficulty filling certain positions or functional areas due to the lack of qualified applicants. While many employers report that they want people with relevant work/prior employment experience, some mention that they have difficulty finding candidates with specific skill sets, including
 - Foreign language fluency
 - Technological expertise (specific software, hardware training)
 - Customer service skill/expertise/interest
 - Engineering background
- ◆ Not surprisingly, of all the proposed Bachelor's degree programs, the Technology Management program stimulates the most interest; over one-third of participants (36%) report that they would be "likely" to hire a graduate with this background (rated "5" or "4" on a scale where 5 = "very likely" and 1 = "not at all likely"). The other programs have more "niche appeal."
- ◆ To provide direction for Harper as it plans and refines its educational delivery model, employers were asked how and where they would prefer that their employees take classes. The results reveal no clear preferences for classes that are either online, or on-site at local businesses; rather it appears that employers want their employees to have options as to how/where they take classes.

- ◆ Employers want communication from Harper College that is quick, efficient, and does not require a great deal of time or effort on their part. As such, written information that comes through the mail or via e-mail – that can be read when there is a spare moment – is most desirable. Other initiatives such as in-person presentations and meetings (which require more scheduled time) have significantly less appeal.

III. DETAILED FINDINGS

A. Characteristics of the Sample

Because an aspect of Harper College’s mission is to meet the needs of local employers, the research findings are therefore predicated on understanding a bit about these employers. This can be helpful for putting data into the appropriate context.

Title of Participant: When calls were made to recruit participants for the interviews, whoever answered the phone at each business contacted was asked to refer the call to the person who is “*responsible for human resources at this company, at this location.*” Titles of participants were

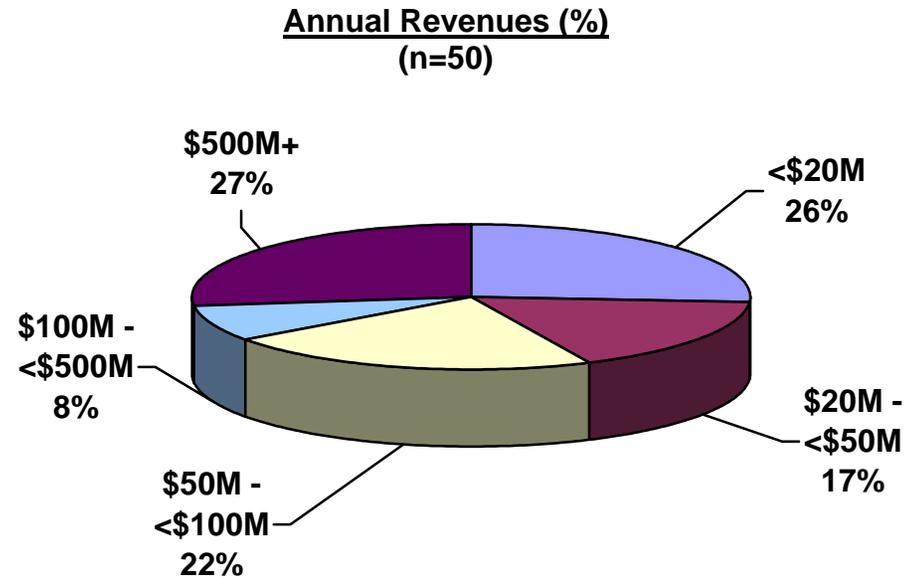
◆ HR Manager, Director or Vice President	56%
◆ Hiring/recruiting manager	12%
◆ Other management level person	8%
◆ Senior executive	6%
◆ Personnel manager/director	6%
◆ Training manager	4%
◆ Other	8%

Town where business is located: To qualify for the survey, businesses were required to have a location in, or be located close to, one of the towns that comprise Harper’s district. Elk Grove Village, Arlington Heights and Schaumburg are the best represented towns in the sample.

Town Where Business is Located (%)

	Total
n=	(50)
Elk Grove Village	20
Arlington Heights	16
Schaumburg	16
Des Plaines	10
Wheeling	10
Barrington	6
Buffalo Grove	4
Palatine	4
Rolling Meadows	4
Roselle	4
Carpentersville	2
Hanover Park	2
Mount Prospect	2

Revenue Size: Keeping in mind that the sample is limited to companies employing at least 100 people at the location in the Harper district, it is not surprising that over half of the participants (57%) report total revenues of their organization to be more than \$50 million annually.



Number of Employees at that Location: Again, the sample was limited to larger employers – those with at least 100 employees in the location where the interview was conducted. The majority of companies (78%) fall into the 100 – 250 range.

Number of Employees at that Location (%)

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
100 – 250	78	86	72
251 – 500	10	5	14
501 – 1000	6	5	7
1001+	6	4	7

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

Number of Employees in all Domestic Locations: Not surprisingly, the higher revenue companies are more likely to have more U.S.-based employees; over one-third (36%) have over 5000 U.S. employees in total.

Number of Employees in all Domestic Locations (%)

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
100 - 500	50	76	29
501 - 1000	14	5	21
1001 – 5000	12	10	14
5000+	24	9	36

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

Industry Classification: One-third of the participating companies classify themselves as Manufacturers.

Industry Classification (%)
Responses Mentioned by at least 4% of Participants

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
Manufacturing	32	29	36
Business services	16	29	7
Healthcare/medical	12	14	11
Transportation	8	--	14
Retail	8	5	11
Publishing/media/communications	6	5	7
Consumer products	4	5	4
Government	4	5	4
Construction	4	5	4
Computers tech./electronic equip.	4	5	4

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

B. Education for Employees

As Harper College continues to plan outreach to local businesses, it is critical to have an understanding of the role, and the importance, of higher education in these organizations. What is the perceived value of higher education for employees, and what is the current state of relationships between employers and institutions of higher learning? To what extent are colleges and universities, including Harper, being used by employers to advance their workforces, and how far are employers willing to go to support that learning (i.e., provide opportunities for professional development, reimburse employees for tuition, etc.)?

Encouragement of Employees to Seek Higher Education: Employers in Harper's district seem to truly value education. More than eight in ten (84%) have at some point in the past 5 years encouraged employees to take a class; 78% have encouraged courses related to an employee's job, and/or a certificate in a relevant subject. It's also quite positive to note that 72% have encouraged employees to earn 4-year degrees.

- ◆ Interestingly, there is little difference by company revenue size; smaller companies are as likely as higher revenue companies to have encouraged their employees to pursue education.

“At any time in the past 5 years, has your company...” (%)

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
Encouraged employees to take courses relating to their job	78	76	79
Encouraged employees to earn a certificate in their field	78	76	79
Encouraged employees to earn 4-year degrees	72	67	75
Encouraged employees to earn Associates degrees	64	62	64
Have not encouraged education	16	14	18

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

Subjects for Study: For the most part, employers are encouraging their employees to take business (43%) and business-related classes (marketing, 21%; management, 17%; accounting, 12%; financial services, 9%). Other subjects include: computers (information technology, 19%; computer science, 9%), education (17%) and healthcare (14%).

Course Subjects Encouraged by Employers (%)

Among employers who have encouraged one or more employees to take a course in the past 5 years
 Responses mentioned by at least 4% of participants
 [Multiple Responses Accepted]

	Total
n=	(42)
Business	43
Marketing	21
Information technology	19
Education	17
Management	17
Healthcare	14
Accounting	12
Computer science	9
Financial services	9
Engineering	7
Communications	5
Criminal justice/law	5
ESL	5
Hospitality	5
Maintenance	5
Nursing	5
Leadership	5

Schools Attended by Employees: Harper is, by far, the College of choice for employees in the district. Over one-half of employers who have encouraged employees to take a course in the past 5 years report that their employees have gone to Harper; the closest competitors generate fewer than 20% mentions. Note that three of the top five colleges receiving mention – Harper, Oakton, and DuPage – are all community colleges.

Schools Attended by Employees in Past 5 Years (%)

Among employers who have encouraged one or more employees to take a course in the past 5 years
 Responses mentioned by at least 4% of participants
 [Multiple Responses Accepted]

	Total
n=	(42)
Harper College	54
Oakton Community College	19
College of DuPage	16
Roosevelt University	16
Northern Illinois University	16
DePaul University	13
Northeastern Illinois University	13
University of Illinois - Chicago	11
Northwestern University	11
Elgin Community College	8
Loyola University Chicago	8
National-Louis University	8
Lewis University	5
Illinois State University	5
Concordia University	5

Tuition Reimbursement: To understand the level of commitment these employers have to education, they were asked about their experiences with tuition reimbursement. It is extremely encouraging to note that eight in ten employers have reimbursed their employees at some point. Somewhat surprisingly, this rate is higher among employers with lower total revenue (86% have reimbursed, versus 75% of companies with \$50M+ in revenues).

Ever Offer Tuition Reimbursement in Past 5 Years (%)

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
Ever Offer Tuition Reimbursement	80	86	75
Yes/it's a policy	76	81	71
Sometimes/it depends	4	5	4
No	20	14	25

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

Interestingly, companies with higher revenue that do offer tuition reimbursement are more flexible about the type of course they will pay for; 33% versus 17% of companies with revenue <\$50M, are willing to pay for a course that is not tied to the employee's job.

Conditions of Tuition Reimbursement (%)

Among employers who offer tuition reimbursement

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(40)*	(18)	(21)
Allow reimbursement for courses not job-related	25	17	33
Allow reimbursement for courses not related to pursuit of a degree	87	83	91

* Note that segments add to 39; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

On-Site Training: In addition to encouraging employees to take courses, the vast majority of these employers (94%) have offered on-site training as well. Of those (n=47)

- ◆ 77% have used both internal as well as outsourced/external trainers;
- ◆ 19% have used only internal trainers; and
- ◆ 4% have used only outsourced/external trainers.

Encouragement of Education in the Future: Continued interest in education for employees is extremely high. All of the employers participating in the survey will consider encouraging their employees to take some type of class in the future. Strong consideration is highest for *courses related to the job* (74% will strongly consider) and *courses for a certificate* (66% will strongly consider). Strong encouragement would be given by approximately half of the employers for *4-year degrees* (50%) and *Associate's degrees* (46%).

- ◆ Companies with higher revenue are more likely to “strongly” consider encouraging their employees to take courses relating to their job (79% versus 67% for companies with less revenue), and to take courses to earn a certificate (71% of larger companies will “strongly” consider versus 62% of smaller companies). They are also more likely to consider – at all – encouraging employees to earn Associate’s degrees (96% of higher revenue companies would consider versus 76% of smaller companies).

Consideration of Encouraging Employees to take Courses in the Next 5 Years (%)

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
Encourage employees to take courses relating to their job	100	100	100
Strongly Consider	74	67	79
Possibly Consider	26	33	21
Never	--	--	--
Encourage employees to earn a certificate in their field	96	95	96
Strongly Consider	66	62	71
Possibly Consider	30	33	25
Never	4	5	4
Encourage employees to earn 4-year degrees	90	86	93
Strongly Consider	50	53	47
Possibly Consider	40	33	46
Never	10	14	7
Encourage employees to earn Associate's degree	88	76	96
Strongly Consider	46	48	46
Possibly Consider	42	28	50
Never	12	24	4

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

Subjects Employers will Encourage Their Employees to Pursue: For the most part, employers will continue to encouraging their employees to take business (43%) and business-related classes (management, 25%; accounting, 17%; marketing, 13%; financial services, 11%). It's interesting to compare these results with what residents plan on taking in the next 5 years (as seen in the community resident report): business courses are much less popular among community residents, while education is far more desirable among residents than it is among employers.

Course Subjects Encouraged by Employers (%)

Among employers who will encourage employees to take courses in the next 5 years
 [Multiple Responses Accepted]

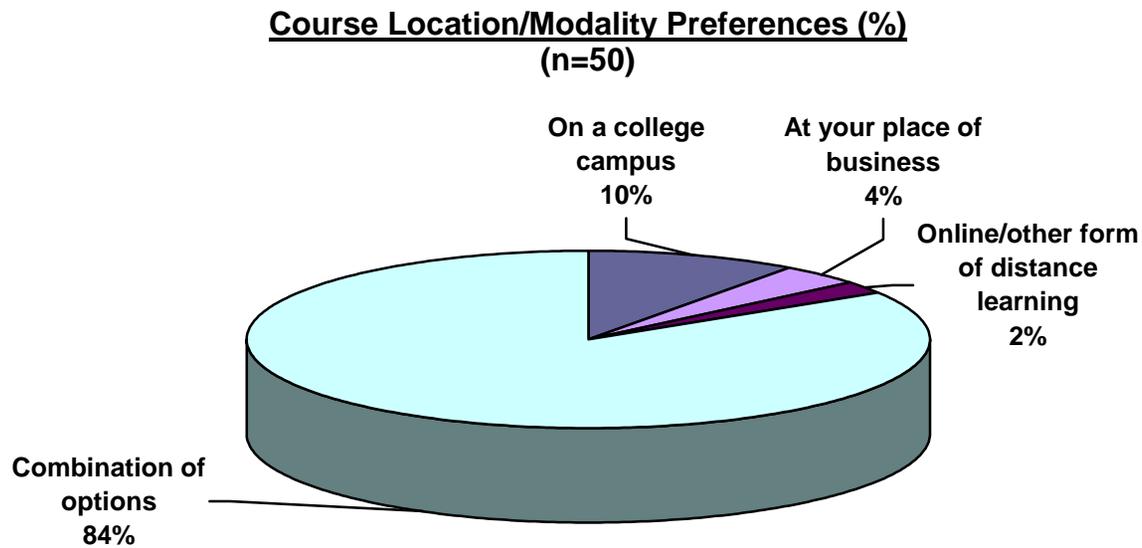
	Total
n=	(50)
Business	43
Management	25
Computer science	23
Accounting	17
Marketing	13
Healthcare	13
Information technology	11
Financial services	11
Engineering	11
Maintenance	11
Communications	9
Criminal justice/law	6
Nursing	6
Education	6
ESL	2

Recommending Specific Colleges for Employees to Attend: Most employers do not seem to have particular loyalties to area colleges and universities; only 24% report that they would recommend a specific institution for their employees to attend.

Of those employers who would make a recommendation (n=12), Harper College leads the list with (n=4) employers saying they would recommend it. Other colleges/universities with more than one mention include

- ◆ Oakton Community College (n=3)
- ◆ Roosevelt University (n=3)
- ◆ College of DuPage (n=2)
- ◆ McHenry Community College (n=2)
- ◆ Northern Illinois University (n=2)

Course Location/Modality Preferences: To provide direction for Harper as it plans and refines its educational delivery model, employers were asked how they would prefer that their employees take classes. The results reveal no clear preferences for one choice or the other; rather it appears that employers want their employees to have options as to how/where they take classes.



C. Awareness and Impressions of Harper College

To continue to enhance Harper’s position in the local employer community, it is critical to understand the extent to which the College is known, and how it is regarded. Such feedback can provide input for employer-targeted program development, as well as for outreach to employers.

Impressions of Harper College: Participants were told – well into the survey – that Harper College was sponsoring the research. When participants were asked their opinion of what Harper is best known for, quality education and availability of Associate’s degrees were mentioned most often (24% and 20%, respectively). Variety of programming/flexible hours, and low cost/affordability were mentioned by between 12% and 10% of respondents, respectively.

It is also important to note that there are fewer “don’t know” responses from employers (16%) than there were from community residents when asked the same question (28% did not know).

- ◆ Interestingly, larger employers are more likely to say that Harper College is known for quality education (32% say that, versus 9% of employers with revenues <\$50M). And, smaller employers are far more likely to report that Harper is known for offering Associate’s degrees (33% versus 11% of larger employers).

“What is Harper College Best Known For?” (%)
 Responses mentioned by at least 3% of participants
 [Multiple responses accepted]

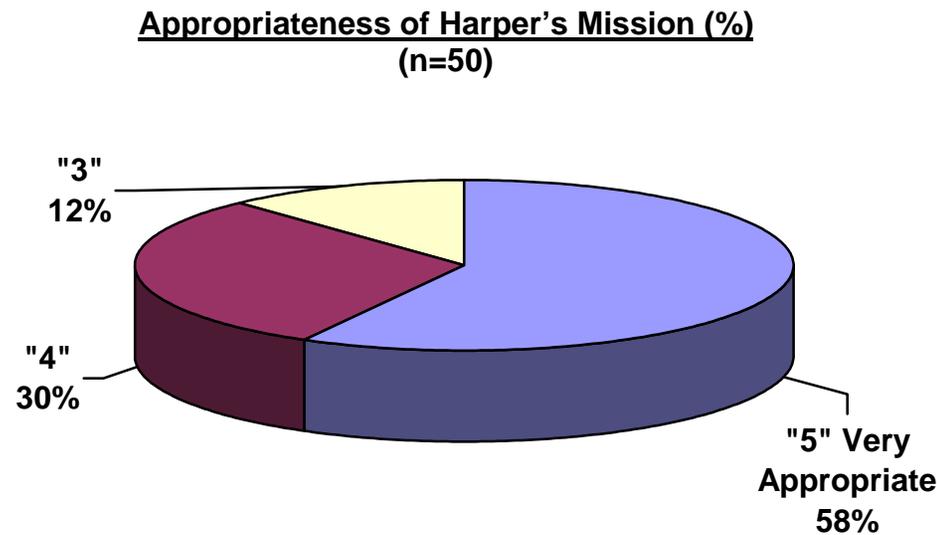
	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
Quality Education	24	9	32
Associate’s/2-year degrees	20	33	11
Variety of programs/flexible hours	12	9	14
Low cost/affordability	10	9	11
Convenience	6	5	7
Prep for 4-year colleges	4	5	4
Continuing education	4	5	4
Nursing program	4	9	--
Don’t Know/No Answer	16	14	18

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

Appropriateness of Harper's Mission: Participants were told that *"Harper College's mission is to be 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."* They were asked to rate the "appropriateness" of that stated mission.

The results convey that Harper College's formal mission is consistent with area employers' expectations of what the College should be doing; 88% of participating employers believe that the mission is "appropriate" (rated "5" or "4" on a 5-point scale where 5 = "very appropriate" and 1 = "not at all appropriate"). Note that none of the participants rated the appropriateness of Harper's mission as "2" or "1."

- ◆ There are no significant differences in perceived appropriateness of the mission when analyzed by revenue size.



Assessing Harper's Performance: Using a familiar scale, employers were asked to grade Harper on several key dimensions which are relevant to employers. Harper does quite well; on most dimensions, between three-quarters and 90% of participants grant Harper an "A" or "B," and there are very, very few "bad grades" ("D" or "F").

Harper does best on affordability; over half of all businesses (52%) give Harper an "A" for offering *affordable education*. Other perceived strengths of Harper are *offering classes at times convenient for working adults* (86% give an "A" or "B" grade) and *offering programs for people who want to complete a degree* (84% offer "A" or "B" grades).

Grades for *being ahead of the curve in terms of training people to meet future hiring trends/needs* are significantly lower, with only 18% of participants giving Harper an "A." This suggests a need for Harper to examine its course offerings, to ensure that they truly are *ahead of the curve* and/or to think about how it promotes its "cutting edge" classes.

Finally, it is important to note that there are very few "don't know" responses. This suggests that Harper College is doing an excellent job of outreach to the business community in the district.

- ◆ Note that any differences between segments, in terms of grading Harper's performance, are not statistically significant.

Harper College's Report Card (%)

Base: Those who are aware of Harper

	A = Excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	D = Poor	F = Failure	Don't Know
Offering education that is affordable for your business	52	38	8	--	--	2
Offering classes at times convenient for working adults	44	42	12	--	--	2
Offering programs for people who want to complete a degree	42	42	10	--	--	6
Offering training/classes on-site (at your business)	38	38	16	2	--	6
Training people who have the skills needed to succeed in your organization	34	40	16	4	--	6
Being ahead of the curve in terms of training people to meet future hiring needs/trends	18	56	18	2	--	6

Knowledge of Harper’s Advantages: Participants were asked if they knew some key facts about Harper that make it an even more attractive choice for employees seeking higher education. Roughly half of the participants know that *employees living outside Harper’s district can pay in-district rates to take classes at Harper*, and half also know that *Harper’s College for Businesses can offer training programs for employees at their company*. But, that leaves the other half of employers unaware of advantages Harper offers...suggesting the need to promote these advantages within the local business community.

“Did you know that...” (% Yes responses)

	Total	Revenues <\$50M	Revenues \$50M+
n=	(50)*	(21)	(28)
...your employees living outside Harper’s district can pay in-district rates to take classes at Harper?	48	52	43
...Harper’s College for Businesses can offer training programs for employees at your company?	46	48	46

* Note that segments add to 49; one respondent refused to supply revenue information.

D. Strengthening Ties with Employers

To maximize its status as a community resource for residents and businesses, Harper needs to gain an understanding of how it – as well as its competitors – is currently being utilized for recruitment of employees. As well, Harper needs to explore unmet needs of employers in terms of skills and functional areas, so that it can continue to develop programs and classes to meet those needs.

Recruitment: At present, seven in ten (70%) employers in this sample – and 82% of larger employers with revenues \$50M+ – actively recruit employees from local colleges and universities. Harper College is the “go-to” college, with 53% of employers who recruit reporting that they go there. Other colleges that benefit from employer recruitment are

◆ Northern Illinois University	27%
◆ University of Illinois - Chicago	23%
◆ College of DuPage	21%
◆ Oakton Community College	15%
◆ Roosevelt University	12%
◆ DePaul University	9%
◆ Elgin Community College	9%
◆ Loyola University Chicago	9%
◆ Northwestern University	9%
◆ College of Lake County	6%
◆ DeVry University	6%
◆ McHenry Community College	6%
◆ Northeastern Illinois University	6%
◆ University of Chicago	6%
◆ Purdue	6%

Unmet Needs of Employers: Over half of all participating employers (54%) report that they have difficulty filling certain positions or functional areas due to the lack of qualified applicants. While many employers report that they want people with relevant work/prior employment experience, some mention that they have difficulty finding candidates with specific skill sets, including

- ◆ Foreign language fluency
- ◆ Technological expertise (specific software, hardware training)
- ◆ Customer service skill/expertise/interest
- ◆ Engineering background

Likelihood to Hire Bachelor’s Degree Recipients from Harper College: Harper has identified, based on societal trends and community residents’ interest, four possible Bachelor’s Degree programs: homeland security, nursing, technology management, and education.

The Technology Management program stimulates the most interest among employers; over one-third (36%) report that they would be “likely” to hire a graduate with this background (rated “5” or “4” on a 5-point scale where 5 = “very likely” and 1 = “not at all likely”). The other programs have more “niche” appeal; a few employers are interested, but between half and three-quarters say that they are “not at all likely” to hire candidates with this background.

Likelihood to Hire Graduates of Bachelor’s Degree Programs (%)

	5=“Very Likely”	4	3	2	1 = “Not at all Likely”
Bachelor’s in Technology Management, that is, information technology, manufacturing and electronics	12	24	36	12	16
Bachelor’s in Education	8	14	16	8	54
Bachelor’s in Nursing	8	6	8	10	68
Bachelor’s in Homeland Security, that is, criminal justice, fire science and emergency management	4	6	12	6	72

Communicating with Employers about Harper College: The professionals who participated in the research are busy. Many are HR professionals, and they likely deal with multiple aspects of HR, including benefits, compensation, etc.; others are senior executives who wear “many hats” within their organization. This leaves minimal time for issues that are not of immediate concern. As such, the majority of these employers want communication from Harper College that is quick, efficient, and does not require a great deal of time or effort on their part. Written information that comes through the mail or via e-mail – that can be read when there is a spare moment – is most desirable; the other initiatives (which require more scheduled time) have significantly less appeal.

The challenge for Harper is how to become “top-of-mind,” how to get educational issues to be an “immediate concern.”

Preferences for Learning About Harper College (%)

	5=“Very interested”	4	3	2	1 = “Not at all interested”
Information via e-mail	36	12	18	10	24
Information in the mail	34	26	20	8	12
Attending a presentation from Harper College at a local professional meeting (e.g., Chamber, industry group)	8	12	32	20	28
Meeting at your workplace with representatives of Harper College	8	10	24	12	46

APPENDIX



**Business Questionnaire:
Human Resource Decision-makers
March 2007**

QUOTA: 50 Businesses

[Ask for person who is in charge of handling personnel issues at this location]

My name is _____ and I'm calling from _____. We are conducting a research study to learn about training and education employees. As a thank you for your time, you will receive \$25.

This is not a sales call and there will be no follow-up contacts. The interview will take no more than 10 minutes. This is for research purposes only and your responses will be aggregated with those of others. Is now a good time? [If NO, ask when would be a better time]

First, I need to ask you a couple of questions to see if you qualify for our survey.

A. Do you work ... [READ]

In the field of Marketing Research? [IF YES, TERMINATE]

For a college or university? [IF YES, TERMINATE]

B. How would you describe your role relative to education and training employees at your company? Are you... [READ. *ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER; ACCEPTABLE IF DECISION-MAKER FOR ONLY SOME OF THE ROLES ABOVE*]

A decision-maker

An influencer

Other [IF YES, TERMINATE]

C. What is the name of the town where your business is located, or that is closest to you?
[READ IF NECESSARY] TERMINATE IF NOT ON LIST

Arlington Heights	Elk Grove Village	North Barrington	Tower Lakes
Barrington	Fox River Grove	Palatine	Wheeling
Barrington Hills	Hanover Park	Prospect Heights	Other → TERMINATE
Buffalo Grove	Hoffman Estates	Rolling Meadows	
Carpentersville	Inverness	Roselle	
Deer Park	Lake Barrington	Schaumburg	
Des Plaines	Mount Prospect	South Barrington	

D. How many employees does your company/organization have at your location? [DO NOT READ. ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER]

- <100 employees→TERMINATE
- 100 – 250 employees
- 251 – 500 employees
- 500 - 1000 employees
- 1001-5000 employees
- More than 5,000 employees

Great, you qualify for my survey,

1. When you think of colleges and universities in your area, which come to mind first? [DO NOT READ. ACCEPT UP TO 3]

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Argosy University/Chicago | 21. National-Louis University |
| 2. Chicago State University | 22. North Park University |
| 3. Christian Life College | 23. Northeastern Illinois University |
| 4. College of DuPage (COD) | 24. Northwestern University |
| 5. College of Lake County (CLC) | 25. Oakton Community College |
| 6. DePaul University | 26. Olympia College |
| 7. DeVry University | 27. Prairie State College |
| 8. East-West University | 28. Robert Morris College |
| 9. Elgin Community College | 29. Roosevelt University |
| 10. Harper College | 30. Rush University |
| 11. Illinois College Of Optometry | 31. Saint Xavier University |
| 12. Illinois Institute of Technology | 32. Spertus College |
| 13. John Marshall Law School, The | 33. St. Augustine College |
| 14. Kendall College | 34. The Soma Institute |
| 15. Lewis University | 35. University of Chicago |
| 16. Lexington College | 36. University of Illinois - Chicago |
| 17. Loyola University Chicago | 37. Westwood College |
| 18. MacCormac College | 38. Other (specify)_____ |
| 19. McHenry Community College (MCC) | 39. Other (specify)_____ |
| 20. NAES College | 40. Other (specify)_____ |

2. [FOR THOSE NOT MENTIONED IN Q. 1] Please tell me whether you are familiar with the colleges I'll name. [READ. RECORD IF YES]

- College of DuPage
- College of Lake County
- Elgin Community College (pronounced L-GIN)
- Harper College
- McHenry Community College
- Oakton Community College

3. To the best of your knowledge, at any time in the past 5 years, has your company... [READ EACH.]

Encouraged employees to **take courses** relating to their job?

Encouraged employees to **earn a Certificate** in their field ?

Encouraged employees to **earn associates** degrees ?

Encouraged employees to **earn 4-year** degrees ?

[IF YES TO ANY IN Q3, ASK 3a & 3b]

3a. What subjects did your company encourage employees to pursue? [DO NOT READ. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

Accounting	ESL (English as Second Language)	Nursing
Anthropology	Financial Services	Paralegal Studies
Art	Engineering	Pharmacy
Astronomy	Graphic Arts	Physical Education
Biology	Healthcare	Physics
Business	Hospitality Management	Political Science
Chemistry	Journalism	Psychology
Communications	Linguistics	Public Safety/Homeland Security
Computer Science	Literature	Real Estate
Cooking	Maintenance	Sociology
Criminal Justice/Law	Management	Information Technology
Dental Hygiene	Marketing	Other (specify) _____
Economics	Mathematics	Don't Know
Education		
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)		
English		

3b. Which universities or colleges did these employees attend?

[INSERT LIST FROM QUESTION 1. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

4. To the best of your knowledge, at any time in the past 5 years, has your company conducted on-site training?

Yes → 4a Was the training conducted by...[READ]

Internal trainers

Outsourced (external) trainers OR

Both

No

5. In the next 5 years, how likely is your company to consider each of the following? Please tell me whether you would “STRONGLY CONSIDER,” “POSSIBLY CONSIDER,” or “NEVER CONSIDER”...[READ. PROGRAMMER: INCLUDE “DON’T KNOW” AS A DO NOT READ OPTION]...

Encouraging employees to take courses relating to their job?

Encouraging employees to earn a Certificate in their field ?

Encouraging employees to earn associates degrees ?

Encouraging employees to earn 4-year degrees ?

[IF likely to “strongly” or “possibly” consider any, ASK 5a – 5d]

5a. In what subjects would you encourage your employees to pursue training?

[INSERT LIST FROM 3a, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

5b. Would your company make recommendations to employees about which college or university they should attend?

Yes → 5c. Which institution(s) would you recommend?

[DO NOT READ; USE PRE-CODED LIST FROM QUESTION 1; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

No

- 5d. Would you prefer that your employees take courses...[READ. SELECT ONE]
At your place of business; OR
On a college campus; OR
On-line or some other form of distance learning; OR
Some combination of options
(OKAY TO ACCEPT "DON'T KNOW" OR "DOESN'T MATTER")

6. [IF YES TO ANY IN Q3 OR Q5, ASK] Does your company offer tuition reimbursement for employees taking job-related courses? (DO NOT READ. ACCEPT ONE ANSWER)

Yes
No
Sometimes/it depends/maybe
Don't know

- 6a. [IF "YES" OR "SOMETIMES" TO Q6] Does the course have to be tied to their job to be eligible for reimbursement?

Yes
No
Don't Know

- 6b. [IF "YES" OR "SOMETIMES" TO Q6] Does the course have to be tied to a degree to be eligible for reimbursement?

Yes
No
Don't Know

7. Does your company actively recruit employees from local colleges and universities?

Yes→7a. Which Schools? [INSERT LIST FROM Q1. CHECK ALL]
No

8. My client is Harper College, a local community college located in Palatine. In your opinion, what is Harper College best known for? [DO NOT READ]

- Quality education
- Associates/2-Year degrees
- Prep for 4-year colleges
- Low cost/Affordability
- Variety of programs/Flexible hours
- Convenience
- Continuing education
- Nursing program
- Kids summer camps/Community involvement
- Trying to become a 4-year school
- Training provider
- Training partner
- Other (specify)_____
- Don't Know
- Not aware of Harper College

9. Harper College's mission is to be 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." Using a scale of 5 to 1 where "5 = Very Appropriate" and "1 = Not at all appropriate", how appropriate is this mission for Harper College? [INTERVIEWER: RE-READ MISSION STATEMENT IF NECESSARY]

- 5 – "Very appropriate"
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 – "Not at all appropriate"

9a. (IF ANSWER 2 OR 1, ASK) Why do you give that answer? _____

[IF HARPER NOT MENTIONED IN Q1 OR Q2, SKIP TO Q13]

10. Did you know that your employees living outside Harper's district can pay in-district rates to take classes at Harper?

Yes
No

11. Did you know that Harper's College for Businesses can offer training programs for your employees at your company?

Yes
No

12. For each characteristic that I read, please grade Harper College. You don't need to have had direct experience with Harper College; your answers can be based on your impressions. Please use a standard grading scale where A= Excellent, B = Good, C = Fair, D = Poor, and F = Failure. [CAN ACCEPT "DON'T KNOW"]

- Offering classes at times convenient for working adults
- Offering education that is affordable for your business
- Being ahead of the curve in terms of training people to meet future hiring needs/trends
- Offering programs for people who want to complete a degree
- Training people who have the skills needed to succeed in your organization
- Offering classes or training on-site

13. Think about your current and future hiring needs. Are there any functional areas, or positions, that you have had difficulty filling due to the lack of qualified applicants?

Yes→

13a. Explain your answer
[INTERVIEWER: RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE]

13b. What skills and training are needed to meet your needs?
[INTERVIEWER: RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE]

No

14. If Harper College were approved by the state to offer workplace based bachelor degree programs, how likely would your organization be to hire people trained in the following? Please use a scale from 5 to 1 where 5 = “very likely” and 1 = “not at all likely”

Bachelors degree in Homeland Security [READ IF NECESSARY: that is, criminal justice, fire science and emergency management]

Bachelors degree in nursing

Bachelors degree in technology management [READ IF NECESSARY: that is, information technology, manufacturing, and electronics]

Bachelors degree in education

15. We’d like to know how to best reach you with information about Harper College. Please rate your interest in each option using a scale from 5 to 1 where 5 = “very interested” and 1 = “not at all interested”. Remember, you can use any number between 5 and 1.

How interested would you be in...

Meeting at your workplace with representatives of Harper College

Attending a presentation from Harper College

Receiving information about Harper College in the mail

Receiving information about Harper College via e-mail

[READ] The following questions are for classification purposes only.

16. What is the primary industry classification for your organization or company? [DO NOT READ. *ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER*]

Business Services
Computer / Electronic Equip.
Computer Technology: Hardware,
Software, Internet applications
Consumer Products
Financial
Healthcare / Medical
Insurance

Manufacturing
Publishing / Printing /
Media/Communications
Telecommunications/
Utilities/Energy
Transportation
Travel / Hotel/ Hospitality
Other (specify)_____

17. How many employees does your company/organization have in all domestic locations? [DO NOT READ. ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER]

- 100- 500 employees
- 501-1000 employees
- 1001-5000 employees
- More than 5,000 employees

18. Are the approximate annual revenues of your company or organization... [READ]

Under \$50 million —> Are they... [READ]

- Less than \$1 million
- \$1 million – under \$5 million
- \$5 million – under \$20 million
- \$20 million – under \$50 million
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

\$50 million or more —> Are they... [READ]

- \$50 million – under \$75 million
- \$75 million – under \$100 million
- \$100 million – under \$500 million
- \$500 million or more
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

[DO NOT READ] Refused

19. Which of the following best represents your title? [READ]

- Business owner
- Hiring or recruiting manager
- HR manager/director/VP
- Personnel manager/director
- Training manager
- Senior executive
- Other (Specify)_____

20. Would your company be interested in receiving further information about Harper College, including information about how to establish a recruiting partnership with Harper?

Yes → Company name_____

Contact Name_____

Phone number_____

No

Thank you; this concludes the survey. For verification purposes, may I please have your name, title, business name, and telephone number.