



## PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

January 2021

Happy New Year and welcome back to the spring 2021 semester. I hope you had a restful and restorative break. It was unlike any other year, but I certainly enjoyed spending time with my husband and son while reconnecting with family and friends virtually.

While the calendar year may have changed, we are still dealing with many of the same challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the distribution of vaccines has given us hope that we will be able to return to a new normal at some point in the not-too-distant future. Until then, we will continue to do everything we can to help our students stay on track with their educational goals, while we support our employees in the remote work environment.

The college received good news that we are expected to receive approximately \$12.5 million as part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act). The CRRSA funds will bolster our already substantial support programs for students and their families. As soon as these funds and the accompanying rules and guidelines are released, we will get the dollars to our students as quickly as possible.

I am hopeful that the CRRSA is just the beginning of federal relief dollars for higher education and that through legislation and policy, the incoming Biden Administration will elevate the focus on community colleges as it addresses the economic hardships caused by COVID-19. In February, members of our Board of Trustees and I will be meeting with our federal legislators as part of the Community College National Legislative Summit, where we will make the case for their continued support of community colleges as the providers of critical training, retraining and reskilling for our nation's communities. I look forward to the opportunity to make this case on behalf of Harper College and our sister institutions.

Our spring semester begins with all of our courses online while we monitor the transmission of the virus in our district as well as vaccination efforts in hopes that we can return some students for on-campus labs after March 14. As our Modalities committee works on plans for the summer and fall semesters, we are also continuing our overall planning for an eventual return to campus. We will follow the science, use a phased approach in our return, and take the necessary steps to keep our students, employees and community members safe and healthy. I was pleased to learn last week that the Cook County Emergency Services has inquired about using the Harper College main campus as a site for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine. We are in the early phases of the planning process, but it is certainly an exciting prospect to serve as a point of distribution for this vaccine for our community.

Finally, we were fortunate to hear three inspiring stories from our students Stephanie Wallace and Daniel and Roberto Olvera at the virtual All Campus meetings. I want to thank them for sharing their experiences and inspiring us to be the best we can be every day to serve our students and ignite their momentum for success.

### **Campus News . . .**

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## COVID-19 Response Team Update

- The CRT is beginning to review the return-to-work plan in preparation for a return to campus post-pandemic.
- We are transitioning our COVID-19 positive reporting protocols. COVID-19 positive students will now report their status using an online formstack rather than reporting them through their faculty member. This will be implemented upon completion of legal review of the form.
- Athletics will be suspended for the winter season and will not be held at an alternate location.
- The Farmer's Fridge service will be suspended until further notice due to low usage.

## Student Success

- In December, the college hosted Erasing the Distance, a program that collects true stories from people who have been impacted by mental health issues and sculpts their actual words into monologues and scenes. The 60 attendees present at the event were able to listen to three distinct stories. As one of the student attendees stated, "This event helped to narrate the experience of living with a mental health issue."
- Hawk Talk released a new video, Managing the Stress of Finals and the Holidays, in December. Harper Wellness and Student Involvement conversed with Cindy Washburn and DuBoi McCarty from Counseling Services and the Hawks Care Resource Center to discuss how to manage stress around finals and the holidays. The video had over 321 views.
- At the end of the semester, Honors and Phi Theta Kappa students ran a food drive and collected over \$250 worth of items, and Phi Theta Kappa students hosted a movie night and a game night as part of the Phi Theta Kappa College Project.
- The Office of International Education at Harper College has been awarded \$10,000 over the next four years through the Midwest Institute for Intercultural-International Education (MIIE) and the South Asia Center at the University of Washington. The objectives for our MIIE grant proposal are integral to Harper's Global Region of Focus strategy. The grant will fund curriculum infusion projects in seven courses taught by Harper faculty who participated in the college's South Asia professional development seminar. Each curricular project will be assessed according to one or more of Harper College's Global Learning Outcomes. In addition to the curriculum infusion projects, a number of co-curricular programs, including speakers, campus presentations, excursions, public performances, and conferences, will be offered over the period of the grant.
- The Center for New Students launched a series of virtual, synchronous sessions to complement the online New Student Orientation module where students connect with academic advisors and orientation leaders (current students) to walk through student technology and tips for success. The first session received positive feedback, with all students agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel more confident about starting at Harper as a result of the session.

- Hawks Care/Counseling has received 109 requests for Student Assistance Funds and has provided \$49,000 to 98 students to date. Additional support via individual appointments continues to connect students to longer-term supports in the community. The Counseling department will also begin offering the option of video appointments.
- The use of the Starfish student success system in fall 2020 to provide proactive student alerts, referrals or positive encouragement has shattered usage records. 4,175 students received a flag of concern, referral or kudo from a faculty member or advisor, which represents a 54% increase as compared to fall 2019. Additionally, this is the first semester in which the majority (54%) of the raised items in Starfish were kudos or positive encouragement to students. These kudos were initiated by advisors and by a record number of almost 300 faculty members. (Source: Starfish System Data Extract)
- Harper College FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) volume has remained steady despite the significant decrease in FAFSA completion nationally (18.5% decline in high school seniors completing a FAFSA nation-wide). Harper has received 11,306 FAFSAs to date for 2020/21 as compared to 11,506 in 2019/20 which is a 2% decline. Important to note, the Office of Student Financial Aid has maintained a 24-hour process time for verification of student files while working remotely. Additionally, the state of Illinois passed a new regulation that requires all high school students to complete the 2021/22 FAFSA in order to graduate. Harper College is working closely with high school counselors to provide resources and support to help meet this compliance requirement but also to assist as many students as possible during such a tough financial time.
- The One Stop Center processed 2,931 inbound contacts in December, which was slightly up from last year. The center received 1,672 phone calls, 1,001 emails, 255 live chats, and three social media posts. Due to no in-person service, there was a significant increase in other communication channels. Emails were up by 125%, while live chat saw a rise of 29% year-over-year. Phone volume also increased by 19% from last year. The One Stop conducted various call campaigns, including reminding students of payment dates and completing their financial aid requirements. We made over 1,800 calls and reached 30% of students last month. Special thanks to the team members in the Mailroom and Print Shop for assisting with the outbound calls.
- Two Paralegal Studies students have been employed full-time by companies (G/L Garces Law in Arlington Heights and Charles T. Newland & Associates in Rolling Meadows) for which they served as interns through the program in fall 2020.
- Harper student Hong-Seok Park won second place in the 2020 Ravinia Poster competition. Ravinia Music Festival in Highland Park holds a poster competition every fall. The winning poster is used to advertise the festival's upcoming season that begins in June. Hong-Seok designed the poster as an assignment in his GRA 120 Design 1 during the fall 2020 semester.
- Harper College Adult Educational Development (AED) students have continued their studies through the pandemic. AED quickly made the switch to online learning at the start of the stay at home order and last summer the program received great news that the GED exam would be offered virtually. This has enabled the 148 students enrolled last fall to work towards earning their GED. Thus far, eight have earned the credential.

- Kisa Jafri, a One Million Degrees (OMD) student, was selected to participate in the *Aspen Young Leaders Fellowship* (AYLF) for the 2020-2021 Chicago cohort. The *Aspen Young Leaders Fellowship* (AYLF) identifies, cultivates, and amplifies future generations of talent to engage in the values-based leadership essential for transforming their lives and society for the better. AYLF is a place-based, multi-site program that nurtures a cadre of diverse youth committed to addressing the most compelling social, political, and scientific issues facing their communities. The fellowship is designed to:
  - Connect talent to opportunity
  - Develop passions into purpose
  - Transform vision into action
- One Million Degrees (OMD) at Harper nominated Daliyah Sanders and Kisa Jafri to serve on the Partnership for College Completion (PCC) Students Advisory Council. PCC aimed to secure one representative per ILEA institution, however both Daliyah Sanders and Kisa Jafri were selected serve a one-year (renewable) term to represent Harper College on the Council.
- Health Careers announced a new Dietetic Internship program starting in fall 2021. This allows students who qualify, to obtain internship hours required for eligibility to take the registration examination for dietitians and become a registered dietitian.
- Dr. Elizabeth Pagenkopf, RN, MSN, EdD, coordinator of the Certified Nursing Program, received her Doctorate in Community College Leadership from Ferris State University in January. Her dissertation was “The Role of Critical Thinking in a Certificate Program; The Nursing Assistant.”
- Patricia Lacy Gandor, MS, RDMS, RVT, RT, concentration and clinical coordinator, Sonography Programs, recently received her Master of Science in Health Profession Education and Leadership from Rutgers University. In spirit of Covid-19, the concentration of the graduate project/thesis was “Creation of a Student-Centered & Accessible Online Sonography Course.”

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Harper College completed the Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) Equity Plan as part of our statewide partnership to reduce achievement gaps for low-income, Latinx and African American students.
- The Learning about Abilities, Not Disabilities (LAND) employee resource group met with EVP Rob Galick to discuss the current status and future goals for inclusiveness and accessibility of the campus.
- Plans are underway to restore the Multicultural Center for a Fall 2021 opening.

## Finance and Administrative Services

### *Facilities Management*

- DLR Group has begun reporting out its findings relative to the Campus Master Plan. They will begin the development of concepts and alternatives to meet the colleges needs in February 2021.
- The scope of work for the Building W Water Infiltration Repairs will include installation of a sub-floor ground water drainage system along the inside of the exterior wall of the amphitheater in Building W to replace the

existing underground drainage system that has collapsed. The project is substantially complete.

- The scope of work for the Building D Refrigerant Detection and Purge Remediation Project will include upgrades to the refrigerant leak detection and purge systems in Building Z. The project is substantially complete.

#### *Information Technology*

- Ellucian Degree Works was upgraded to the latest version.
- Completed the requested Bookstore system phone tree implementation. The implementation of the phone tree includes answers to commonly asked questions. This feature allows the Bookstore staff to respond to student requests faster and more efficiently.
- Implemented enhanced security to the Citrix environment.
- Distributed wireless Cisco phones to the Student Development front line workers. The wireless phones allow the front-line workers to answer student calls and serve students from home.

#### *Business Services*

- Harper College is providing students with savings on course materials in select courses by providing those materials through an Inclusive Access Program. For the fall 2020 semester, 21 courses with 969 students participated in the Inclusive Access Program and provided students with course materials in a digital format with an average savings of 61% or approximately \$97,000 off of the physical textbook alternative. The Follett Bookstore and faculty worked with publishers to select materials that could be offered in a digital format for inclusive access and received an average discount of 15% or approximately \$11,000 off of the price of similar digital materials. With the Inclusive Access Program, students are charged a course materials fee as part of the class fees when they register for the course. The course materials are provided to students through their Blackboard course site and are available for the first day of classes. Digital materials typically include courseware with eBooks or standalone eBooks.

### **Advancement, Marketing and Communications**

#### *Advancement*

- Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Fitzgerald, Jr. and their daughter Celine Fitzgerald established the Fitzgerald Family Endowed Scholarship with a donation of \$250,000 at the end of December. This scholarship will be open to support students who have financial need and meet any of the following criteria: from an underrepresented population, first-generation, is an immigrant or a child of first-generation immigrants, or students with disabilities.
- Out of the 116 students that applied for the \$140,000 ACE II (Advancing Community Economics) Grant from Rotary International Foundation, 47 students met the initial criteria and 35 students submitted an interview video. Three teams of 17 volunteer reviewers ranked the 35 students, and recipients will be notified this month about their spring 2021 scholarship award. The grant will support these students through the end of their academic program or until spring 2023, whichever comes first, as long as the students continue to meet all the grant criteria.
- Out of the 61 students that applied for the additional \$25,000 the Rotary Club of Schaumburg/Hoffman Estates donated to the Fishing Well Scholarship, 14 students met the criteria of the scholarship. All 14

students were awarded scholarships for the spring 2021 semester. Scholarship amounts ranged from \$800 - \$4,000.

- The HOPE Giving Circle, Harper's women's affinity program, will host its winter social event, a virtual paint and sip night, on Tuesday, January 26, at 7 p.m. Members and friends of HOPE will have the opportunity to paint an original piece of artwork led by an instructor and also hear about the HOPE program and from the current student recipients. To date, 50 women have signed up to participate.
- Current balance for Promise Program as of December 31, 2020, is \$21,550,322.04, which includes \$4,085,663.35 of investment earnings.

### *Community Relations*

- Community Relations' seasonal card campaign was a huge success. More than 50 Promise, ACE and Fishing Well students wrote messages of hope and support on 2,000 cards that were shared with organizations across the district. Cards were delivered to 32 police and fire departments, 15 assisted living facilities, The Barn senior program in Schaumburg, and Clearbrook and Good Shepherd Hospital. Numerous organizations shared their appreciation for the cards and the personal messages from students.
- Community Relations is partnering with the Rotary Club of Elk Grove Village to host a coat and food drive for families in the Elk Grove Village community. The event will take place on Saturday, February 6, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. New and gently used coats, hats, gloves and scarves will be accepted. Donations of non-perishable foods will also be accepted. The donations will be distributed to multiple food pantries in Elk Grove Village. Harper is a member of the rotary club.
- Community Relations is continuing Harper's partnership with D15/Partners for Our Communities community school program in which students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade participate in after school programs. Last year students visited campus once a month to participate in activities hosted by the Makerspace, the Make Shop and Campus Recreation. This year's activities are being conducted virtually and the college is providing supplies and instructions for activities that students can safely do at home.

### *Marketing*

- Many students identify college affordability as a primary barrier to enrollment. A New "Paying for College" [Landing Page](#) was launched on December 21 and was given top listing on the home page. This allows prospects/students to view all of their options in one convenient place and quickly click through for resources. A financial aid overview video and facts on how Harper awarded \$33+ million to nearly 12,000 students last year was included to help reduce the concerns of college costs and encourage people to learn more. The linked subpages were also given a refresh to increase clarity and encourage action. In just a few weeks, the page has 638 unique page views. Users then clicked to learn more about tuition (42%), scholarships (13%), financial aid (12%), payment plan (7%), student employment (3%), loans (2%), and veteran benefits (1%).
- "Destination Harper" Holiday Card is a stand-out mailer and part of "Destination Harper," an intentional outreach campaign encompassing a series of events, content and touchpoints aimed at engaging high school seniors during this important college decision time. The card's message offered our best wishes for 2021, affirmed Harper's commitment to be of continued assistance, and included a detachable magnet featuring a series of Destination Harper events planned for spring semester.

### *Media Relations*





- The *Daily Herald* ran an article about the new free training program that Harper launched with Prologis Inc. to provide rapid skills training for workers in transportation, distribution and logistics sectors.
- *Newsweek* published an article about how a two-year college education could be the most viable financial option for many students. The magazine ran a list of community colleges across the United States whose graduates earn the most money, compiled by *Stacker* using 2020 data from *Payscale*. Harper College was listed No. 49.
- Assistant Professor Therese Hart wrote a guest column for the *Daily Herald* on the challenges of the pandemic and how she's worked to cultivate hope and resilience. In her column, she highlighted how Harper has supported students through technology loans, financial assistance, the new mental health app and other initiatives. She wrote, "We kept our faculty, staff and students safe. We rallied, we supported each other, and we found ways to make it work," adding, "We have been consummate examples of resilience and positivity in some pretty dark times."
- The *Daily Herald* ran a column on former adjunct faculty member Rocco Blasi, who published his first novel in 2020. He died on Christmas Eve due to complications from COVID-19.
- *WGN Radio* interviewed Wayne Gregory, an adjunct faculty member in the law enforcement and justice program, who discussed his work training boxers and helping veterans to become coaches, mentors and owner-operators of boxing gyms.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article previewing Barrington's upcoming virtual Town-Warming event featuring Dr. Proctor as a panelist for a discussion, "Looking Ahead to the Post-Pandemic World." The January 23 event features former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley.
- The *Journal and Topics* ran an article about Harper's plans to begin the spring semester fully remote.
- The *Chicago Tribune* ran an article about efforts Arlington Heights is taking to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the village; for one initiative, leaders pointed to partnering with Harper to identify diverse applicants for its police department.

## Legislative Affairs

- During the 101<sup>st</sup> General Assembly's Lame Duck Session, legislators worked on numerous bills including several major omnibus bills put forth by the Black Caucus. Of note, HB2170, which focused on education and workforce development, was passed by both chambers and is headed to the Governor's desk. Notably, this bill was focused on equity in schools for minoritized students with a focus on early childhood education, state standards for high schools, and summer programs for impoverished students. Harper, in conjunction with the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents, advocated with its state legislators for some changes to the bill's development education language to ensure reforms that were previously underway were accounted for as well as reporting requirements and related funding to address these mandates. The college will receive full updates on this bill as well as others passed during the lame duck session from its lobbyist and the ICCCP shortly.
- State Senator Ann Gillespie's bill prohibiting the use of isolation rooms and restraints as a behavior management technique in public and private schools passed the Senate and is awaiting consideration in the House. In fall 2020, Harper College's education faculty members provided feedback on the draft bill for Senator Gillespie at her request.

- State Representative Chris Welch was elected the new Illinois Speaker of the House for the 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, which began its work on January 13 with the swearing in of the new General Assembly. Welch replaces State Representative Michael Madigan who suspended his candidacy for the leadership post after serving 38 years as Speaker.
- Governor JB Pritzker will give his State of the State/budget address on February 17.

## Strategic Alliances and Innovation

### *Grants Office*

- In December, Harper was awarded \$12,282 from ICCB as part of the Developmental Education Innovation Grant program. Funding will support Illinois' Developmental Education Reform through instructional models that assist with moving students through developmental education into gateway courses.
- The college received an award of \$11,367 through ICCB's Transitional Instruction Innovation Grant program to support the development of a Transitional English course to be taught throughout the high schools in Harper's district.
- In December, the Educational Foundation received a grant award of \$15,000 from the Gene Haas Foundation to support scholarships for Advanced Manufacturing students and NIMS credentialing.

### *Strategic Alliances*

- Elk Grove Village is partnering with Harper on the Prologis/JFF grant initiative that offers a free online program for those interested in entering the Logistics/Supply Chain field. Elk Grove is issuing a press release in this regard, encouraging residents and others to enroll in the program.

## Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- The Office of Institutional Research has developed several Power BI dashboards to facilitate better understanding for the campus community of common student success metrics. The Grades dashboard presents course success rates, and the Persistence dashboard provides fall-to-spring, spring-to-fall, and fall-to-fall persistence rates. Both dashboards disaggregate data by multiple student characteristics such as gender, race-ethnicity, first generation status, PELL eligibility, and market segment. Additionally, the Grades dashboard allows for viewing by course, department, division, modality, and meeting time.
- The [2020-2021 Fact Book](#) has been released. The Fact Book is a one-stop resource designed to provide the answer to commonly asked questions about Harper College and the Harper district.
- Throughout the month of December, the Office of Outcomes Assessment offered virtual drop-in sessions for individuals to build their course-level, program-level and non-instructional 2020-21 assessment plans. These sessions provided system support as well as consultation on building new assessment plans. In total, individuals representing 14 assessment units attended the sessions.



- The Strategic Planning and Accountability Committee approved the metrics for strategic goal targets. The goal teams will now focus their work on developing initiatives to achieve the goal targets.

## Workforce Solutions

- Kathleen Canfield, director of the Job Placement Resource Center, delivered a live webinar entitled "Job Search: What's Changed, What Hasn't?" for Harper's Alumni Association. The presentation was recorded and will be available on the Alumni Connect website. 18 people logged in.
- Harper Business Solutions kicks off 2021 by contracting with BCS for live online LinkedIn training sessions assisting those in career transition. January enrollment is up 40% from in-person training.
- The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Harper College helped over 500 local businesses receive nearly \$4,000,000 in financing in 2020, resulting in a 55% and 100% increase (respectively) over last year.

### *Promise*

- 485 Promise Scholars will continue at Harper in the spring 2021 semester:
  - Five early high school graduates starting their first semester
  - 305 scholars continuing into their second semester
  - One scholar continuing into their third semester
  - 174 scholars continuing into their fourth and final Promise semester