



# PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

March/April 2021

Dear Harper College Community:

Happy Community College Month! We do have so much to celebrate, especially as we reflect on how community colleges have risen to the challenge and supported our communities during the pandemic. As Vice Chair Kelley wrote in [his column](#) in the Daily Herald, “Though faced with unprecedented challenges this past year, Harper College and its sister institutions are finding new and innovative ways to keep students on their educational journeys while removing financial barriers and serving as critical lifelines to students with food, housing, transportation and financial insecurities.” Indeed, this has always been our mission as the community’s college—to improve our students’ and their families’ lives through generation over generation no matter the obstacle.

As I reflect on the months of March and April for this report, I am extremely proud of our staff, faculty and students and admire their perseverance, resilience, and tenacity. To believe it was little more than a year ago that we left campus for what we thought would be a few weeks of remote work and learning. Instead, we faced tremendous challenges with grace and creativity; we leaned on our partners, old and new; and most importantly, we found ways to innovate and collaborate to serve our students, changing the way we teach, learn and work now and into the future.

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Our tireless efforts, moving forward together as one institution, have kept the safety and health of our students and employees front and center and include successful advocacy through the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents to ensure vaccination eligibility became available to our staff and faculty on March 22. I was also pleased to have Dr. Jacqueline Korpics, Cook County Department of Public Health’s vaccine expert, talk to the college community as part of our March Town Hall. As we prepare for spring and fall semesters with a gradual increase of employees and students back on campus, I am also happy to report that we will offer free, voluntary COVID-19 testing to faculty, staff, students and community members as part of the state’s SHIELD Illinois testing program, which uses the University of Illinois’ highly effective saliva-based test. Our focus throughout the remainder of the spring, as well as summer and fall, will be continued delivery of the highest quality learning and engagement opportunities to our students while keeping them safe.

In March, we hosted our first Professional Development Day for all employees. Though we were virtual, we were still able to create a thought-provoking and educational day with 27 sessions offered by fellow colleagues and guest speakers on topics such as “Work Smarter, Not Harder While Working Remotely,” “Creating a Culture of Kindness,” and even “Zumba with the Provost”! I am grateful to the planning team that embraced the challenge of creating this inaugural Professional Development Day and helping us keep a focus on ourselves as we work to improve professionally so we can continue to support our students.

I am excited to announce Dr. Tamara Johnson will join us July 1, 2021, as vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion, pending Board approval at the April meeting. Dr. Johnson, who currently serves as vice



president for diversity and inclusion at Adler University, brings with her over 20 years of teaching and leadership experience in academic affairs, student affairs, and diversity, equity and inclusion. Harper College will benefit greatly from her expertise in recruiting and retaining underrepresented populations and designing, implementing and assessing diversity programs and services for students and employees. Dr. Johnson will be a tremendous asset as we continue to embrace diversity, equity and inclusion at Harper.

We recently hosted our Achieving the Dream coaches for our annual check-in visit regarding our student success agenda and our Strategic Plan focus. The coaches visited with each of our Strategic Plan goal teams and provided feedback that we are currently reviewing. Our partnership with AtD is critical to our work and having their input helps us refine and improve our implementation and evaluation of our student success strategies going forward. The Executive Cabinet and I are looking forward to the meaningful proposals that will impact our students in the years to come.

### **COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) Update**

- The Communications team organized two employee town halls: the February event featured a representative of the Cook County Department of Public Health to discuss COVID-19 and the vaccine; the April event focused on the college's plans for a phased return to campus. The team also highlighted information about vaccine availability and provided valuable resources via email and the website to students who returned to campus for lab classes.
- CRT approved the expansion of on-campus facilities and activities including athletics, instructional space for the dental clinic, TABE testing, corporate training, and InZone.

### **Student Success**

#### *Enrollment Services*

- Students may now use a chosen name at Harper College. Our institution recognizes that students may use names other than their legal name to identify themselves. In collaboration with the Registrar's Office, IT, our Student Communications Manager, PRIDE and the Student Government Association, the college has created a process to support a student request to use a chosen first name where possible. A Chosen Name is the name a student wishes to be known by in the Harper College community that is different from their legal name. Students may update their first name by filling out an electronic form that will be updated by the Registrar's Office within 24 hours.
- More than \$185,000 in tuition relief has been awarded for spring 2021 to 371 students. Of those, 344 were students registered for six or more hours. Twenty-seven students who registered for less than six credits were also awarded relief as approved exceptions.
- The One Stop processed 4,856 inbound contacts in March, which is up 28% from last year. We received 2,350 phone calls, 1,944 emails, 544 live chats, and 18 social media posts. We saw a significant increase in phone and email volume from March of last year. Phones were up by 74%, while emails saw a rise of 64% year-over-year. The chat volume also increased by 35% from last year. The One Stop conducted call campaigns, including reminding students of payment dates and financial aid requirements. We made 757 calls and reached 27% of students during the campaigns in March.

### *Interdisciplinary Programs*

- In February, nine Harper Honors students presented a total of six oral presentations and one poster at the Honors Council of the Illinois Region's Student Symposium.
  - Jodee Capati: "Empowering Black Women through Words: The Speech and Sounds of Octavia Butler"
  - Alejandro Espino: "Photovoltaic and Spectrometry Applications on NASA Mars Rovers"
  - Julie Dinquel, Claudia Massopust, and Ashley Rosenthal: "Green is the New Black: An Approach Towards a More Sustainable Fashion Industry"
  - Taylor Hall, poster presentation: "Managing the Damage and Death to Coral with Mass Spectrometry"
  - Connor Hults, presenting his talk, "Escaping the Matrix: Addressing the AI Threat"
  - Dominique (Niki) Yuvienco, presenting her talk, "Passivity in Bernardo Bertolucci's The Conformist."
  - Nick Methner: "Micro and Macro-environments: The Suburban Lawn and the Earth."

### *Health Careers Division*

- In early March, the Northwest Community Hospital Vaccine Clinic expressed a need for RNs to help administer vaccinations. Through the workforce partnership between the Health Careers Nursing department and NCH, this opportunity was advertised to newly graduated Harper nursing students. For the operation of the clinic, the 9-12 month, full-time position was publicized with a workload of 40 hours per week offered with benefits. Immediately, many Harper grads applied for the position and eight were ultimately hired to work as RNs in the NCH Vaccine Clinic.

### *Career and Technical Programs*

- The Graphic Arts Design Club designed a poster for the Winfield Fire Department which they are using as part of their marketing campaign to purchase new equipment and hire staff. Posters are now hanging in businesses in Winfield.
- In March, LEJ Program Coordinator Brad Grossman hosted a virtual online Police Training Workshop designed to prepare anyone interested in becoming a police officer with the arduous selection process. This was a collaborative effort with the NW Suburban Recruitment Taskforce, consisting of seven towns: Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove, Hoffman Estates, Mt. Prospect, Palatine, and Schaumburg. A total of 54 individuals registered for the workshop, with 49 attending. Based on the survey results, the goal of successfully preparing attendees for the selection process was accomplished, with one attendee sharing, "I learned a lot about the hiring process, and my interest in Law Enforcement became even more significant than I imagined can be."
- In March, the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board donated a Residential Fire Sprinkler System Model to the Harper College Fire Science Technology Department. This prop will allow our students access to all the components in a residential fire sprinkler system.

## *Access and Disability Services*

- Eighteen faculty registered for the Perkins-funded Digital Accessibility Workshop Series program. Four workshops took place between February and March, with 12 faculty members attending all workshops. They are currently performing some remediation work to their online course content with the goal of achieving the recommended online accessibility benchmark of 90% in Ally, Blackboard's tool for increasing accessibility in the learning management system.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

- On Wednesday, April 21 the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion hosted the End of the Year DEI Celebration event.
- The SAFE ERG partnered with the Kenneth Young Center to offer a session during Professional Development Day on the importance of using correct pronouns for the LGBT+ community. This session was attended by over 140 people with many asking for more education on this topic!
- In March, Dr. Claudia Mercado and LaVonya Williams represented the SAFE ERG at the North Suburban Community Network which brings together different segments of our community to work towards creating safer and more affirming spaces for all LGBTQ+ people.
- In March, SAFE ERG hosted the first part of the ERG Identity Discussion Series, bringing together all three ERGs to discuss books and articles related to their group's identities.
- In April, members of the SAFE ERG will be attending the "Beyond Rainbows, Building the Will and the Skills to Serve and Affirm our Diverse Queer and Trans Students" summit. We will be presenting in partnership with the Office of DEI on "Successful Employee Resource Groups for LGBTQ+ Employees."
- Last month, DREAM attended the SAFE-ERG book discussion. In April, DREAM hosted a book discussion during its membership meeting.
- In April, the DREAM mentoring group hosted its celebration for mentors and mentees.
- In April, LAND presented *Disclosing Your Disability at Work* with speaker Amy Gaeta to learn strategies for how and when to disclose your disabilities. Amy Gaeta is a Ph.D. candidate in the literacy studies and visual cultures programs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Amy identifies herself as an autistic, practicing poet, professional editor, disability rights activist and editor of the *Unseen Zine* from the *Invisible Disability Project*.

## **Finance and Administrative Services**

### *Facilities Management*

- The scope of work for the Multicultural Center Project will include the remodeling of room D281 into a community room, lounge, kitchenette, conference room, work area and other support spaces. Construction has commenced and is scheduled to be completed in July 2021.

- The scope of work for the Building X Dental Hygiene Simulation Lab Project will include the remodeling of room X143 at Building X to create a Simulation Lab for the Dental Program. Construction has commenced and is scheduled to be completed in July 2021.

### *Information Technology*

- Several improvements were made to the Degree Works planning tool. Several Banner screens were aggregated into one field that displays if a student is part of a special affiliation of students that may need additional consideration when advising. A new section was added to the Class History that includes a graduation status entry that shows student petitions to graduate and graduation awards. Another class history section was updated to show a student's current registration status code.
- The Banner Student Information System Oracle Data Base was upgraded to the most current version, Oracle 19c.
- The Desktop group replaced old bulb projectors to new laser projectors in 90 classrooms.
- The AutoCAD suite was upgraded to version 2021 in four classroom labs.

### *Police Department*

- By the end of the week, all police officers and CSOs will be trained and have on their person Narcan, an opioid antidote used to counter the effects of opioid overdoses such as heroin.

## **Advancement, Marketing and Communications**

### *Advancement*

- The Harper College Educational Foundation held its first-ever day of giving: Harper HEART (Helping Everyone Access Resources Together) Day. The day raised \$10,965 in support of Harper College students. The campaign communicated with Harper retirees and alumni. Additionally, three student organization: the International Students Club, the Student Government Association, and the Harper Society of Engineers launched their own campaigns to raise funds to help their peers succeed. The International Students Club won the inaugural Harper HEART Day Competition for Good by raising the most funds through their efforts. Additionally, five community volunteers became Harper HEART Day Champions by reaching out to their personal networks in support of the funds most meaningful to them. Harper HEART Day culminated with a drive-in movie featuring E.T. The Extra-terrestrial.
- This month the HOPE Giving Circle, Harper's women's affinity program, held the annual Women at the Table Panel Discussion. The event featured a panel of female leaders in discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing women in leadership today. Moderated by Dr. Proctor, panelists included Martha Bell, Managing Principal, Tilton, Kelly + Bell; Monica Mueller, Vice President, Government Affairs, Motorola Solutions; and Nicole M. Wolter, President and CEO, HM Manufacturing. The HOPE Giving Circle has raised over \$200,000 in support of female students pursuing their education at Harper and beyond.
- The Harper College Educational Foundation is now accepting nominations for the 2021 Distinguished Alumni Awards, including the award for Outstanding Recent Alumni. The Outstanding Recent Alumni Award honors alumni who have attended Harper within the last ten years. Learn more about the Distinguished Alumni Awards including criteria, nominating instructions and applications by visiting

<http://harpercollege.edu/distinguishedalumni>. Nominations are due by 5 p.m. on May 17. The Distinguished Alumni awards ceremony will take place in October 2021.

- The Harper Heritage Society welcomed new members Clara Basch Stone and Mike Stone. Clara is a Harper alumna who has included Harper College in her estate plan.

### *Community Relations*

- This month two Promise students spoke with members of the Eisenhower Junior High girls club. The students talked about their experience attending their first year of college virtually and what it is like to be part of the Promise program.
- Community Relations has created the community needs advisory committee where representatives from community organizations and school districts meet monthly to discuss the growing needs of the community and better understand the current Harper programs that may address those needs. Representatives from enrollment services, adult education and student development are also part of the committee.

### *Marketing Services*

- The University Center Billboard campaign runs April 26-June 18, located on Route 53, north of Euclid Avenue facing north. Estimated impressions per week is 273,585.
- March and April Social Media Highlights
  - [Created video](#) to commemorate Community College Month, which was shared by ACCT.
  - Additional #CCMonth posts featured [Harper President Dr. Avis Proctor](#) and Harper employee [Dr. Kathy Coy sharing her journey](#) as an adult student.
  - March social media metrics across all institutional channels:
    - 6,964,177 Impressions, a 190% increase over the previous month.
    - 57,149 Engagements, a 131% increase over the previous month.
    - 46,975 Post Link Clicks, a 173% increase over the previous month.

### *Media Relations*

- *Community College Daily* published an op-ed by Dr. Proctor on the important role community colleges play in improving lives and supporting the economic vitality of their communities by being responsive to current needs and proactive in preparing for the future. The op-ed recognized Community College Month. The American Association of Community Colleges ran the piece on its *21<sup>st</sup> Century Center* site.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an op-ed by Harper Vice Chair Bill Kelley on how Harper and community colleges have supported students throughout the pandemic and the critical role they'll play in the post-pandemic economic recovery. The op-ed recognized Community College Month.
- The *Daily Herald* and *Journal and Topics* ran articles on Harper freezing tuition for a second year and the board passing other tuition and fee relief measures.



- The trade magazine *SNIPS* highlighted Harper's HVACR program as part of a larger piece on the state of education in the industry.
- The *Daily Herald* posted an article on the statewide virtual career fair that Harper College and several other community colleges partnered to hold.
- The *Daily Herald* posted an article about Harper partnering with several Northwest suburban communities to offer a Police Officer Training Workshop. The event aimed to find new and more diverse candidates, provide clarity on the hiring process, and increase awareness for the many career opportunities and benefits in law enforcement.
- *University Business* ran an article on the need for institutions to address their digital engagement gap and to provide traditional and non-traditional students with clear personalized pathways to boost enrollment and retention numbers. Community Education Manager Scott Cashman commented that CE and credit students have very different needs to help reach their goals.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article promoting a Know Your Rights seminar covering law enforcement and health care topics that Harper partnered to hold with the local chapters of The Links, Inc. and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- *CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education)* published an article about the Educational Foundation's drive-in movie donor appreciation event.
- The *Daily Herald* published an article about the Harper College Theatre Arts Department's upcoming production of "Too Heavy for Your Pocket" and a conversation featuring Dr. Bernard Lafayette Jr., who participated in the Freedom Rides, and others associated with the play's production.
- The *Daily Herald* published an article about retiring commander of the Lake Country Major Crime Task Force George Filenko, who described Harper as the "jumping-off point to becoming a police officer."
- *Journal and Topics* ran several articles on the Harper College Board of Trustees election and an endorsement of the three incumbents; the *Daily Herald* Editorial Board also endorsed the incumbents and posted a video on its website of the endorsement session with the four candidates.

## Legislative Affairs

- In March, the college signed on to an AACC letter urging Congress to double the Pell grant maximum award.
- In March, the college secured letters of support from Congressman Casten, Congressman Krishnamoorthi and Senator Duckworth for Harper's application to the Aviation Maintenance Technical Workers Workforce Development Grant Program.
- In March, Dr. Proctor and Jeff Julian, chief of staff, held a meet and greet meeting with new Rep. Martin McLaughlin, R-52. Rep. McLaughlin's district includes the communities of Barrington, Barrington Hills and South Barrington.
- Throughout March and April, the college advocated for support of legislation for a community college bachelor's degree in early childhood education, including securing Rep. Fred Crespo as sponsor of the

House bill 3619 as well as securing sponsors for the Senate bill 1832, which passed out of the Higher Education Committee, 13-1.

- In March, Governor Pritzker signed a package of four bills implementing the economic access, opportunity, and equity pillar of the Black Caucus Agenda passed during the lame duck session. This package includes measures to prevent employers from discriminating against those with criminal records; expand access to state contracts for minority-owned businesses, women, and individuals with disabilities; reduce interest on payday loans; and improve access to public housing.
- Governor Pritzker along with Speaker Welch and President Harmon penned an [op-ed](#) outlining their collective priorities for spending the federal COVID funds. All three leaders agree, Illinois “needs to stay the course by managing our state and federal funds responsibly.”
- In April, Dr. Proctor, EVP Rob Galick, and Jeff Julian, chief of staff, met with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle to discuss how Cook County and Harper College can work together collaboratively to support the County’s educational and workforce needs as well as respond to the pandemic. This has led to an April 27 tour for President Preckwinkle to see the college’s advanced manufacturing labs.
- In addition to Harper College Board of Trustees incumbents Diane Hill, William Kelley and Nancy Robb being reelected, the April 6 municipal election results include:
  - Village of Arlington Heights, President: Thomas W. Hayes (Independent)\*
  - Village of Barrington, President: Karen Darch (Nonpartisan)\*
  - Village of Barrington Hills, President: Brian D. Cecola (Independent)
  - Village of Deer Park, President: Gregory Rusteberg (Nonpartisan)
  - City of Des Plaines, Mayor: Andrew Goczkowski (Nonpartisan)
  - Elk Grove Village, Mayor: Craig B. Johnson (Independent)\*
  - Village of Hanover Park, President: Rodney S. Craig (Hanover Park Strong)\*
  - Village of Hoffman Estates: William D. McLeod (Nonpartisan)\*
  - Village of Inverness, President: John A. “Jack” Tatoes (Independent)\*
  - Village of Mount Prospect, Mayor: Paul Wm. Hoefert (Nonpartisan)
  - Village of Palatine, Mayor: Jim Schwantz (Nonpartisan)\*
  - Village of Roselle, Mayor: Wayne D. Domke (Independent)
  - Village of South Barrington, President: Paula McCombie (Independent)\*
  - Village of Wheeling, President: Patrick A. Horcher (Independent)\*\*denotes incumbents

## Strategic Alliances and Innovation

- In February, Harper received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for \$2,763,258 as part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). This award represents funding designated for student aid and is intended to make financial aid grants to students which may be used for any component of the student’s cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus. Institutions are required to prioritize students with exceptional need.
- In March, Harper received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for \$9,818,809 as part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). This award represents the funding designated for institutional costs and is intended to assist colleges and universities in preparing for, preventing, and responding to coronavirus. These funds can be used to defray institutional expenses associated with coronavirus, to carry out student support activities authorized by the HEA of 1965 that



address needs related to coronavirus, and to make additional financial grants to students.

- In March, the Educational Foundation received a \$2,500 grant from Northwest Community Healthcare. This grant supports Hawks Care with funding for grocery and gas cards for students in need.
- In April, the college received a \$2,500 grant from the Midwest Institute for Intercultural-International Education (MIIE). This grant will support Harper's Office of International Education in the development of a series of faculty curriculum infusion projects and co-curricular programs focusing on South Asia.
- In April 2021, Harper's Academy for Teaching Excellence was awarded a \$25,000 grant for the Digital Equity Research Practitioner Partnership, a collaborative effort between Achieving the Dream, Every Learner Everywhere, Digital Promise, the Gates Foundation, and the APLU. Harper is one of four colleges selected nationally for this partnership which focuses on supporting faculty as they explore, design, and create culturally responsive practices to support student learning in a digital environment. This project will assist in the use of new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students.

### Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- The Office of Institutional Research has launched a new Power BI interactive report designed to promote understanding of the student lifecycle at Harper. The SOAR Momentum Report uses the Search-Onboard-Advance-Realize (SOAR) framework to explore student milestones met and outcomes achieved for each phase. This report currently focuses on new, first time in college, degree seeking students (Title III Cohorts) and provides disaggregation along multiple student characteristics. Future enhancements will include additional cohorts of students.
- Several Harper faculty members—Patty Bruner, Julie Ellefson, Dr. Rich Johnson, and Jose Vital—along with Deann Surdo, director of outcomes assessment, presented "*Assessing Outcomes in a Remote Environment*" at the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Illinois Community College Assessment Fair in February. In this presentation and panel discussion, Harper faculty addressed the challenges and successes of conducting assessment in a virtual environment.
- Thirteen Harper employees participated in the first cohort of the Data Literacy Basics Badge offered by the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness division. Employees in a variety of roles learned about critical components of data literacy, received an introduction to the most common institutional data resources used at Harper for operational and strategic planning, and worked collaboratively to create presentations using insights from one or more data sources of their choice. This badge will continue to be offered as we focus on promoting data literacy at Harper.

### Workforce Solutions

- Community Education Manager Scott Cashman has been elected to the Board of Directors of LERN - The Learning Resources Network (LERN) beginning in March. LERN serves about 9,000 professionals annually offering information and consulting expertise to providers of continuing education and customized training.
- Harper's Community Education staff was interviewed by LERN regarding the use of digital badges by Community Education. We have been using badges for some years in lieu of offering certificates.



Advantages for students include the ability to share credentials electronically and a substantial improvement in the ability of potential employers to understand the substance of the credential via their online access to program descriptions and outlines. The interview appears in LERN's UGotClass online learning March newsletter.

- Harper Business Solutions (HBS) has resumed its Leadership Training programming for Nation Pizza and Foods. Classes held in Z-102 were a great success. Our sincere thanks to Nancy Savard and Randy Toelke for their excellent support behind the scenes.
- HBS also won its bid for customized leadership training with The Edlong Corporation, beating out a traditional/professional training organization to secure this opportunity.

### *Promise*

- For seniors in high school who are a part of the Promise Scholarship, the deadline to submit their community service hours will be extended to the end of summer school (mid-July). The number of hours they are required to complete will remain the same.
- Students from our inaugural cohort of Promise Scholars are slated to graduate next month. Planning is underway to celebrate this significant milestone for our first graduates of the Promise Program.

### **In Memoriam**

- Finally, I am sad to share news of the passing of two former Harper College faculty members. John Davis, Spanish professor who taught at Harper for 32 years, passed away in Austin, Texas, on July 30, 2020. Gene (Eugene) Kimmet, chair of the Economics Department until he retired in 1988, passed away in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, on February 13, 2021. We send our condolences to their families.