



## PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

November 2021

Dear Harper College Community:

The month of November reminds us of the importance of gratitude and connecting with family and friends. We certainly have many things for which to be thankful at Harper this year.

On November 2, we learned that the college has been selected among the top 150 institutions eligible for the nation's signature recognition for America's community colleges—the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Being selected by Aspen is an incredibly rewarding honor that speaks to the tremendous dedication of our faculty and staff to teaching, learning and student success and the perseverance of the Harper College community as we have earned this recognition while we are still squarely focused on fulfilling our mission and safely navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will host the official grand opening of the Cultural Center, located in D-Building, on Thursday, Nov. 18. This week features numerous activities to celebrate this vitally important center for students, employees and our community. Our new Cultural Center will be a beacon of light for everyone across campus to connect in meaningful ways, building on the legacy of the Center for Multicultural Learning, while creating new ways to support and engage people with various backgrounds and from all walks of life.

This month, we began adjusting our social distancing protocol from 6 feet to 3 feet, effective November 15 for non-instructional spaces and Spring 2022 semester for classrooms as part of our phased Return to Campus plans. Adjusting the social distancing protocol is in line with guidance issued by ICCB this summer and assists our efforts to increase our on-campus presence. This spring, we hope to meet our on-campus target of at least 70% of sections being offered in a face-to-face or blended format. Additionally, as I reported to the Board of Trustees at the Committee of the Whole meeting, we have expanded our COVID-19 testing through a new provider and teams are working hard to meet the challenge of the weekly review of testing submissions as part of compliance with the Governor's mandate.

Part of our focus as we increase our on-campus presence is rebuilding community with intentional focus on deeper, meaningful connections. We have tasked members of the President's Learning Council to identify opportunities for community building working with our Core Values Strategic Plan goal team, the Take 5 Committee, and the HR/Wellness Shared Governance Committee. In October, I was delighted to see the successful efforts of our Student Engagement team to build community on campus for our students as they hosted Harper's first Fall Fest. Five hundred pumpkins and fall decorations turned the Quad into an idyllic autumn scene, where faculty and staff interacted with students sharing information about college programs and services, including an intriguing scientific experiment led by our chemistry faculty using the aforementioned pumpkins. We hope this event, among many others, strengthens students' connection to Harper and positively influences retention and completion outcomes. I look forward to our ongoing efforts in this area as we continue to return to campus, centering service to our students and our community. Thanks to all of you for your dedication to Harper, and I wish you a safe and healthy Thanksgiving holiday.

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## Student Success

### *Enrollment Services*

- Enrollment Services has completed phase 1 of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) implementation and is currently moving into phase 2. The CRM will help align various departments' communications, complex business rules, enrollment funnel tracking, workflow assignments to users and improve the student's experience through engagement opportunities. They were able to accomplish the following tasks in Phase 1.
  - A new mobile-first credit application that lets students easily access the interface and complete the application from their smartphone, computer, or tablet.
  - An appointment scheduling and event management process for the One Stop, Testing, Business Office and CNSO.
  - Integrated our current Chat product with Salesforce.
  - Integration of data transfer from Salesforce to Banner.
- During phase 2, they will continue to improve our processes of engaging with students while streamlining internal and external communications. The items below are scheduled to be completed in Phase 2 over the next few months.
  - Centralizing communications for different departments to provide the student a better experience when interacting with various offices.
  - Integrating our phone, texting, and email campaigns into one system.
  - Creating new workflow and communication processes for prospective students to improve the student flow in the enrollment process.
  - Expanding our current application to include limited enrollment programs.
  - A new Knowledge Database system that allows students to find answers to common questions 24 hours a day.
  - Integration of data transfer from Banner to Salesforce.
  - A new queuing system for different departments, including the One Stop to help manage the flow of in-person traffic.
  - Replacing our current ticketing system with the Salesforce case management system. Salesforce Case Management allows staff to record, track and solve student issues across different channels, including email and phone.

### *Admissions Outreach*

- Destination Harper provides prospective students and their families with the information and opportunities that they would normally experience in person during our open house events.

This Fall 2021 semester they have hosted two Live Online Information Sessions and two more are scheduled for the semester. Their first information session, "Paying for College" covered all things financial aid and scholarships. Carolyn Phipps, financial aid specialist, reviewed the financial aid process and opportunities for students and their families. Lauren Chilvers, scholarship manager, reviewed scholarship opportunities and how to apply. An Ignite Scholar joined the session as well. This student explained why he chose Harper and how he can afford college with the help from the scholarships he has received. We had 24 students and family members attend the "Paying for College" session.

The second Fall 2021 online session, "Transfer Successfully to a Four-Year School" reviewed the opportunities for transfer that a student at Harper has available to them. Agnes Szemborski, transfer

coordinator, reviewed transfer programs and information about the transfer process. Max Bisaillon, University Center specialist, reviewed the opportunities available through Harper's University Center. We had 36 students and family members attend this session. For this session two Harper College-Engineering Pathways alumni joined us virtually from the University of Illinois-Urbana.

### *Student Development*

- OMD Successfully met the goal to serve 200 students this fall. The October Scholar Development Session (SDS) included a coach/scholar virtual activity facilitated by OMD Coach and Harper Wellness Manager Beth Ripperger. Coach recruitment was extended through October to accommodate the growth of the program. Also, in October it was announced that two One Million Degrees (OMD) students from Harper College were selected to serve on the Partnership for College Completion (PCC) Student Advisory Council for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- The Women's Program Conducted a campaign during Domestic Violence Awareness month which included an Inside Harper article, encouraging participation in Purple Thursday, and engaging with over 200 students at Fall Fest on "Green Flags" or indicators of healthy relationships.
- Student Engagement launched the Collective Well-Being Social Hours in Fall 2021, which are a way for students and employees to informally interact with one another. A different department hosts the social hours each month at a different spot on campus. In October, Counseling Services and the Hawks Care Resource Center hosted the social hour where they handed out free snacks and provided information and resources about their respective areas. Around 50 people attended the October social hour.

### *Office of International Education*

- Beginning in early October, five Harper student volunteers participated in a pilot IREX Global Solutions Conversations Program through the Stevens Initiative, which is managed by the Aspen Institute and supported by the U.S. Department of State. The goal of the Stevens Initiative is to build global competence and career readiness among young people in the United States and in the Middle East and North Africa through virtual exchange. Facilitated by Dr. Richard Johnson, director of the Office of International Education, the student team engaged in six binational calls with a team from the Erbil Polytechnical University of Iraq in Erbil, Kurdistan. Over the course of six binational calls, Harper students learned about the daily lives and studies of their counterparts, practiced empathy through intercultural communication skills, discussed U.N. Sustainable Development Goals in the context of their own communities. For their participation, the students have earned two Youth Essential Skills (YES) Badges for cross-cultural communication and virtual collaboration skills. The YES Badges were developed by IREX and are recognized by employers as certifying proven 21st century leadership skills. With the success of this pilot program, the Office of International Education hopes to expand the number of Harper students and faculty who take advantage of this impactful virtual exchange opportunity.

### *Career & Technical*

- In November Professor Brad Grossman hosted members from the 'I Am A Gentleman' organization. Located in Chicago, this organization focuses on engaging, enriching and empowering young men for successful careers, healthy lifestyles, marketable skills and well-balanced relationships. Led by Jermaine Lawrence Anderson, executive director of I Am A Gentleman, Inc., approximately 35 high school students and counselors were in attendance for this day-long event.
- Harper College has been selected to participate in the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Advanced Technical Education (ATE) Mentor-Connect program for 2022. This program will prepare a team of two



STEM faculty, supported by a grant writer and college administrator to submit an ATE grant proposal with the aim of establishing a geospatial/sUAS learning center, and creating interdisciplinary STEM learning opportunities for students with a focus on biological science remote sensing applications. Harper's team will consist of Mukila Maitha, geography faculty and chair/drone and GIS program coordinator, as the Principal Investigator, Crystal Peirce, biology faculty and chair, as the Co-Principal Investigator, Magdalena Dolas, grants specialist, and Darice Trout, interim dean of business and social science.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Pending Board approval, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is excited to welcome Brittany Barber as manager of the new Cultural Center. Brittany is a higher education professional with 10 years of experience, including various roles at Elgin Community College. She holds a bachelor's degree in Communication and Theatre Arts from the University of Pittsburgh, a master's in Nonprofit Management and Leadership from Capella University, and is currently working on her doctorate in Higher Education Administration and Foundations at Illinois State University. In her role as manager, Brittany will ensure that the Cultural Center is a welcoming space for students, staff and faculty, that offers a full spectrum of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice programs, trainings and resources.
- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will launch the official grand opening of the Cultural Center this month located in Building D (above Starbucks), which will be preceded by the following events:
  - Student Unity Board and Brush Workshop. Hosted by Student Engagement students had the opportunity to create wooden signs with one of six designs promoting unity and inclusion.
  - Safe Zone Training. Facilitated by LaVonya Williams and Andrew Anastasia, this three-hour training was offered to Harper employees and focused on creating a safer more welcoming environment for our LGBTQ+ community members.
  - Diverse Author Series. Dr. Micere Keels, author of *Campus Counterspaces*, joined us to discuss her book and engage Harper community members in dialogue. The first 20 attendees will receive a free book.
- In November, DEI in collaboration with Academic Affairs, sponsored a lunch for current and past Diverse Faculty Fellows. Drs. Johnson, Janosik and Proctor engaged with attendees about their experiences and discussed new possibilities for the future.
- Special thanks to the Harper College Educational Foundation for sponsoring 10 tickets for a Harper College table at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance & Commemoration, hosted by the Illinois Commission on Diversity and Human Relations. This program was held at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center and Hotel. Faculty, staff and administrators enjoyed dinner and a concert featuring the Five Blind Boys of Alabama.
- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Provost's office collaborated to deliver an in-person luncheon for the Ignite Scholars. Drs. Johnson, Janosik and Proctor all spoke during the program.

## Finance and Administrative Services

### *Facilities Management*

- The scope of work for the Cultural Center Project will include the remodeling of room D281 at Building D into a community room, lounge, kitchenette, conference room, work area and other support spaces. Construction is complete and the center will officially open on November 18, 2021.
- The scope of work for Sound System Upgrade Project will include upgrades to the sound system in Building R theater to support current and future program requirements. Construction is substantially complete.

### *Information Technology*

- The IT department received an overall satisfaction rating of 96.96% for the month of October.
- The IT Service Desk answered 431 Cleared4Harper questions from students.
- October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. To raise cybersecurity awareness at Harper College, each October the IT Security team selects a cybersecurity topic—this year’s topic is Phishing. The team sent a video and quiz to all Harper College employees focused on identifying and avoiding Phishing attempts.

## Advancement, Marketing and Communications

### *Advancement*

- The Foundation has received over \$250,000 in donations for the creation of eight new scholarships since July. These scholarships include:
  - Clearwater Capital Endowed Scholarship
  - Datla Family Endowed scholarship
  - Jackie LeFevre Endowed Scholarship
  - Kimberly Family Achieving Dreams Scholarship
  - League of Women Voters League of Women Voters-Arlington Heights, Mount Prospect and Buffalo Grove Scholarship
  - Lisa and Joseph Lynn Scholarship for Adult Students
  - STEM Achievement Scholarship
  - Wintrust Scholarship
- This month Nearly 40 women attended the HOPE Giving Circle fall social event “The History of Chicago Candy Companies.” The event featured the opportunity for women to connect with each other, learn about the HOPE Giving Circle program and hear a lecture from historian Tim Wilsey on the Chicago Candy Companies and their history. To date 18 students have received the HOPE scholarship and over \$230,000 has been raised by members, donors and friends of the HOPE Giving Circle since its inception.

### *Community Relations*

- The 2021 Harper Experience Day was a huge success. Due to the pandemic, we were not able to host the large in-person annual event, so we hosted a hybrid event. More than 120 families registered for free



activity supply kits which included supplies and instructions for more than 10 activities created by Harper faculty and staff and supplies for four virtual activities. More than 20 Promise, ACE and Fishing Well scholars packaged the activity supplies for the kits. Eight community partners helped distribute more than 300 supply kits to the families that registered. Partners included Arlington Heights Memorial Library, Barrington Area Library, Des Plaines Public Library, Elk Grove Village Public Library, Mount Prospect Public Library, Palatine District Library, Partners for our Communities and Schaumburg Township District Library. Families attended a limited number of in-person activities hosted on campus by the astronomy department, the Health and Recreation Center and the Makerspace and Entrepreneur Center. More than 12 Promise, ACE and Fishing Well Scholars earned community service hours by volunteering for the in-person activities. Alumni also returned to campus to volunteer for the event. Virtual events were also hosted by the Library Make Shop and Makerspace and Entrepreneur Center. A very big thank you to everyone that helped make this year's event a success.

- Last month Amie Granger and 10 Promise students attended the annual Trunk and Treat hosted by Palatine Park District and Partners for our Communities. More than 110 families attended. The event provides a safe environment for families to trick-or-treat and meet community organizations. Promise students handed out candy, Harper pencils and stickers.
- Also in October, Dr. Maria Coons and Dr. Tamara Johnson attended the Grand Opening Celebration for Partners for Our Communities (POC) Hanover Park location. Harper partners with Partners for Our Communities through multiple programs including ESL and HSE classes at the Community Resource Center in Palatine, representatives on the POC board and the Higgins Educational Center advisory board, collaborations with ICompete and Warrior Way Learning Center, and participation in multiple POC events throughout the year.

#### *Marketing Services*

- Admissions Outreach is partnering with Partners for Our Community and the Housing Authority of Cook County to offer a free career planning course. Marketing Services is helping to communicate this opportunity.
- Marketing Services is proud to have helped with communication and promotion for the four events marking the opening of Harper's Cultural Center. This included different audiences RSVP forms, calendar listings, social and InsideHarper posts, landing page, posters, flyers as well as navigational signage. Great work and collaboration with the Web Team, Design, Publishing and Mail Services, Social Media, Photography and the Communications team.

#### *Media Relations*

- The *Chicago Tribune/Arlington Heights Post* ran an article on Congressman Sean Casten and Federal Aviation Administration officials visiting Harper to learn about the college's new drone technology program. The article ran in various trade publications including Government Technology and Aviation Pros.
- WBBM Radio aired a story about the Casten visit and interviewed Associate Professor Mukila Maitha; the segment ran several times.
- *University Business* ran an article about the 150 community colleges selected to be eligible to apply for the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.



- The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran an article on the success of the Career Skills Institute. Now in its ninth year, the program teaches job skills to students with mild intellectual disabilities. The AACC also ran the article in its 21st Century Center blog.
- The *Chicago Tribune* and several other Illinois newspapers ran a profile on Harper alum Dina Cimarusti, owner of the popular Sugar Moon Bakery in Logan Square.
- The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran an article about Experience Day, which was presented in a hybrid format with students engaging in on-campus and online activities.
- *Journal and Topics* ran an article in a special veterans section about Harper's Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students.
- The *Daily Herald* ran an article on Harper endowing \$9 million of the MacKenzie Scott gift.
- The *Chicago Sun-Times* ran an op-ed by SIU President Austin Lane, who highlighted its recent Saluki Step Ahead agreement with Harper and other community colleges.
- *365 Barrington* ran an article about the One Million Degrees program at Harper and the need for community volunteers to become coaches.
- The *Daily Herald* interviewed Associate Professor Nupur Sharma, fashion program coordinator, for a light-hearted piece on politicians who wear sweater vests.

#### Legislative Affairs

- US Representative Sean Casten, who serves Illinois' sixth congressional district, the Federal Aviation Administration's regional director Rebecca MacPherson, Dr. Avis Proctor, Harper College president, visited Harper's Drone Technology and Applications program in October. They learned about the program's history and curriculum from Mukila Maitha, Geography Department Chair and Program Coordinator. Former and current students Angelica Avalos, Fernanda de Souza Ramos Kuzuhara, Carolina Szoep, and Sonja Berry-Perez explained the use of drone technology in their fields of interest and career opportunities before guiding visitors through an exercise using a drone simulator. Harper's drone program is one of only two programs in Illinois in the FAA's Unmanned Aircraft Systems-Collegiate Training Initiative. The program offers comprehensive training in both multi-rotor and fixed wing drones, prepares students for the FAA's Part 107 drone pilot exam, and is closely tied to Harper's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) certificate program which provides workforce technology skills that are in high demand.
- Governor Pritzker signed SB1169 into law, which amended the Health Care Right of Conscience Act to clarify that COVID-19 pandemic mitigations and enforcement of those mitigations are not a violation of the Act. SB1169 will be in effect on June 1, 2022.
- Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) paving the way for generational investment to the tune of \$1.2T in national infrastructure spending including funds for clean water, broadband access, roads, bridges, airports and other transportation needs.
- Politico reported some good news as it relates to the Biden Administration's Build Back Better legislation and higher education. "Higher education advocates reeling from Democrats' decision to abandon free college had something to smile about when lawmakers released the latest draft of the partisan social spending bill — \$500 million for college completion grants...The funding will not expand access to college,

like free tuition would have. Rather, it will finance the first federal program devoted to ensuring more low-income students and students of color graduate.” The legislation continues to be debated in Congress.

- The new Congressional maps are on Governor Pritzker’s desk awaiting his signature. While a majority of Harper’s district continues to be located within the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, currently represented by Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, several notable changes will take effect because of the new maps. Most notably, Harper’s district will no longer be located within the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, currently represented by Congressman Sean Casten. Instead, portions of the Harper district will be located in the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, currently represented by Congressman Mike Quigley, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, which is currently represented by Congresswoman Marie Newman. Newman has announced she will run in the newly drawn 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District against Rep. Casten. Small portions of the eastern portion of Harper’s district will continue to be represented by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (9<sup>th</sup>) and Congressman Brad Schneider (10<sup>th</sup>). View the [new maps](#).
- Jeff Julian, chief of staff, attended the Barrington Area Virtual Legislative Town Hall, which featured elected officials representing Harper, including state Senator Dan McConchie, R-26, state Representative Martin McLaughlin, R-52, and state Representative Tom Morrison, R-54.

## Strategic Alliances and Innovation

### Grants Office

- In October, Harper received the following grant awards:
  - Illinois Green Energy Network (IGEN) grant. This grant award of \$37,385 will support the development of the North America Board of Certified Energy Practitioners® (NABCEP®) Solar Heating Associate examination prep program in Fall 2021. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) will begin offering this program in Spring 2022. Upon completing the course, students will be prepared to complete the exam and earn the industry-recognized credential. Grant funding will cover curriculum development, instructional equipment, marketing, and tuition waivers for up to 15 students in the Spring class.
  - Illinois Green Energy Network (IGEN) grant. This grant award of \$10,000 will support the design and hosting of a Green Energy Career Networking Event. The event hosted by CPE will include the convening of a panel of green economy professionals and educators in the region and attendees will include incumbent workers and those seeking skills for a new career field. The event will include updates on renewable energy, information about careers in the green economy, discussions of workforce demands in the green economy, and training opportunities.
  - Illinois Green Energy Network (IGEN) grant. This grant award of \$17,990 from IGEN will support the development of Distributed Energy Resources (DER) training in partnership with SunSpec Alliance. Initially, SunSpec instructors will deliver the online classes in Spring 2022. Concurrently, Harper will acquire, update, and adapt the curricula to meet ICCB and Harper requirements. This will allow Harper to continue to expand its education and training program related to DER technologies. SunSpec’s curricula has been approved by the U.S. Department of Energy and by using this curricula, Harper will be able to quickly implement a DER cybersecurity program.
  - Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant. DCEO awarded \$318,000 to cover operational expenses for the Education and Work Center in Hanover Park. The EWC is a collaboration between Harper and Elgin Community College to serve residents in Hanover Park and the surrounding communities. Residents have access to English as a Second Language, High School



Equivalency, and Adult Education basic skills classes, along with career resources and job placement services offered by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership.

- In October, the following grant proposal was submitted:
  - National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant. This grant proposal requested approximately \$350,000 to support the development of a new career pathway in Autonomous Technologies and Industry 4.0 from high school dual enrollment courses to completion of an associate degree. The project includes industry collaboration for program design and curricula development to ensure alignment with industry needs for a skilled technical workforce. It also includes dual enrollment, faculty professional development, recruitment and outreach, and third-party evaluation of program outcomes.
- The Grants Office is administering the student portion of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants from the U.S. Department of Education and managing the disbursement of \$19.4 million in emergency aid grants to students.
  - The emergency aid application period for Harper students enrolled in fall 2021 opened on July 23, 2021 in an effort to provide students the choice to use this financial assistance to support their continued enrollment.
  - Through the end of October, \$2,779,250 in emergency aid has been awarded to 2,161 students.
  - A communications plan has been implemented to reach those students who have not yet applied for fall semester emergency aid to include email messages and text messages to students, an informational email sent to all faculty and advisors, and an announcement in the MyStudent portal.

### **Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness**

- The Office of Institutional Research has developed a Power BI report for the Provost, Deans, and department heads to support the revitalization of on-campus offerings. The Campus Utilization report is an interactive dashboard that analyzes and provides tools for maximizing our transition away from the majority online courses toward a majority on-campus environment.

### **Workforce Solutions**

- The college held its first Technology Sector Summit in October in the Wojcik amphitheater and via live stream. This event brought together technology experts across multiple industries to discuss the changing needs of employers and how to best prepare our current and future students for the workforce. Local employers, community partners, high school partners, faculty and students attended this event.
- Harper, along with McHenry Community College and Rock Valley College, has received an Innovation Award from the Illinois Council for Continuing Education and Training (ICCET). The Community College Collaboration Series built on the strengths of each college's Lifelong Learning as a way of mitigating the impact of the pandemic on senior learners. Students in the Lifelong Learning Institute now have access to some courses at other colleges via Zoom. The Lifelong Learning Institute focuses on the needs and interests of students aged 55+.
- Kathleen Canfield presented to the Elk Grove Village Job Fair employers with a keynote address on "Attracting Top Talent at Job Fairs and Beyond" in November.



- Drs. Michele' Smith and Scott Cashman made a presentation at Moraine Valley Community College on the Foundations of Race and Racism in October. Attendance included 100 staff and faculty both in-person and online.
- In the first half of CY2021, the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Harper helped local business owners raise \$2.7M in capital, start 10 new companies, create 72 new jobs, and advised 273 businesses over 1,320 advising sessions.