



## PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

December 2021

Dear Harper College Community:

I am pleased to report that we are concluding the fall 2021 semester without having to shift back to remote learning due to COVID-19. Despite Delta and the most recent variant, Omicron, we have worked tirelessly to maintain a safe and healthy learning and working environment for our students, faculty, and staff. This includes our numerous mitigation efforts, such as on-site testing, contact tracing and meeting the Governor's vaccination or weekly testing mandate. This work requires tremendous effort from our employees in addition to their other duties. I am grateful for their dedication. We will continue to monitor the virus and will adjust our plans, if necessary. I am looking forward to a spring semester with more students and employees on campus as we work toward our target of 70% of classes in a face-to-face or blended format and rebuilding our campus community.

As you'll see from this report, our work in community building is well underway as we celebrated the opening of the Cultural Center, supplied Thanksgiving meals to families in need through our Learning and Career Center's collaboration with the Prospect Heights Police Department, and hosted a roundtable discussion with the Illinois Manufacturing Association Educational Foundation. These activities are important to our mission of serving our students and community.

In November, we welcomed Riaz Yusuff, our new Chief Information Officer, to the college after a successful national search. As you are aware, the national job market has become extremely competitive driven by a variety of factors including the pandemic and the resulting "Great Resignation." I appreciate the diligence of the search committee in their work to fill this important position on campus as well as Sue Contarino, who served as our interim CIO.

Our Strategic Plan goal teams are accelerating their work delivering proposals to address our targets and measures as we intensify our efforts around student success, removing barriers and closing equity gaps. The Executive Cabinet recently approved proposals for a CE to credit pilot program, Developing Equity-Minded Policy Rubric, and CircleIn software to support students in our high enrollment, lower success courses. CircleIn has been shown to increase participation and success rates for all students, but especially students who do not historically access tutoring or supplemental instruction (students from historically disenfranchised backgrounds, first-generation students, students of color, students from low-socio-economic environments). Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we are continuing to make progress toward our targets through focused solutions for our students.

We have met the challenges of 2021 in supporting our students and our community. Happy Holidays to you and your families and best wishes as we embark on a new chapter and a New Year with resolve, resilience and reimagination!

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## Student Success

### *Career and Technical*

- Interior Design student Larissa Peixoto won first place in the National Kitchen and Bath Association, Chicago Chapter, Design Vision Contest, held in October in the category of Bathroom Design for her project completed at Harper in IND 233 Bathroom Design Studio.
- Law Enforcement and Justice student Jorge Castillo was diagnosed with Leukemia last month and received several weeks of chemotherapy treatment in the hospital. The LEJ Faculty teaching his courses were able to work with him on his assignments and along with the Graphic Arts department, the LEJ Program created a poster to encourage Jorge in his battle with leukemia. Both faculty and students signed the posters, which were delivered to Jorge's home. According to his own words, "I am speechless and don't know exactly what to say except that I am grateful and honored by your support."
- In November, the Learning and Career Center (LCC) resumed its annual collaboration with the Prospect Heights Police Department to bring holiday food to local families experiencing food insecurity. Officers delivered bags and boxes with all the makings of a great Thanksgiving dinner directly to cars during the curbside pickup event, the seventh on record. In total, their food drive with Tony's Fresh Market and Gene's Village Towing served 62 households with 269 family members. 60% of households reported one or more Harper students and were served regardless of town residence due to their link to Prospect Heights through the LCC.

### *Interdisciplinary Programs*

- Combined groups of Honors and Phi Theta Kappa students performed the following service opportunities:
  - Volunteered at Deer Grove Forest Preserve.
  - Assisted at a local food pantry.
  - Tie dyed face masks for a local elementary school.

### *Health Careers*

- Nursing Schools Almanac has ranked Harper College as one of the best nursing programs in Illinois. Harper is included on two lists: the [best associate degree \(ADN\) programs](#) (ranked fifth) and the [best licensed practical nursing \(LPN\) programs](#) (ranked second).

### *Student Engagement*

- Harper's student athletes and coaches were honored with multiple awards including:
  - Men's Division III Soccer All Region/All Conference Awards:  
Aaron Bustamente, Palatine; Tyler Dawson, Rolling Meadows; PJ Hopkins, Jacobs; Adan Ramirez, Rolling Meadows; Kevin Reynolds, Palatine; Leo Tule, Wheeling; Kyle Varela, Palatine
  - Region Tournament Most Valuable Player:  
Jonathan Rivas, Elk Grove
  - Region Coach of the Year:  
Andre Watson, Harper College

- Women’s Division III Soccer All Region/All-Conference Awards:  
Tessa Hornstein, Conant; Kazzanra Lopez, Buffalo Grove; Nubia Olvera, Palatine; Mia Perucho, Elgin;  
Genevieve Rendi, Dundee-Crown
- Women’s DIII Volleyball All-Region/ All Conference Awards:  
Jules Carusiello, Hersey; Taylor Pfaller, St. Viator

### *Office of International Education*

- The Institute of International Education (IIE) American Passport Project Grant received by the Office of International Education (OIE) provides funding for free passports to 25 Pell-eligible first year Harper College students. The OIE has selected 25 finalists and their names have been forwarded to IIE for confirmation of award. Of the 25 nominations, nine students have been confirmed by IIE as award winners as of this submission.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- Cultural Center Opening Week was a great success including the culminating program, “Open Doors,” (the official launch), which had over 200 students, staff, faculty, administrators and community members attend. Remarks were provided by Dr. Tamara Johnson and Dr. Avis Proctor; representatives from our three Employee Resource Groups: SAFE – Sean Warren-Crouch, DREAM – Karega Cooper and LAND – James Vitullo; representatives from three student organizations: Black Student Union – Candice Epps, PRIDE – Mitchell Ryba, and Latinos Unidos – Lupe Solano Valle; and closing words from Dr. Travaris Harris. Our sincere appreciation to the many individuals that attended the events and those that played important planning and execution roles.

### *Social Justice Leadership Certificate*

- The 2021-2022 Social Justice Leadership Certificate cohort has reached the halfway point of their year-long professional development program. The nine cohort members are working on seven social justice-focused campus-based projects and presented their proposals to the Advisory. We are excited to see their projects begin to take shape over the next few months.

## **Finance and Administrative Services**

### *Facilities Management*

- The scope of work for the Canning Center will include new facilities for the Campus Life/One Stop Admissions Center (Student Center) to provide one location for student services and related functions, Hospitality Facilities to support the Hospitality Program, and the University Center which will include the Professional Center, the Regional Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub and the Testing and Certification Center. The program is complete and will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval in December 2021. Schematic design will commence in January 2022.
- The scope of work for the Box Office Relocation Project will include the relocation of the Box Office from Building J to Building R. Construction is substantially complete. The Box Office has moved operations to Building R.

## Information Technology

- Configuration changes were applied to the Degree Works degree planning tool. The configuration changes allow for advisors to monitor if a student's spring plans are on or off track.

## Advancement, Marketing and Communications

### Advancement

- The Foundation hosted its first ever Employee Scholarship Reading event. Harper employee, who are also donors, were invited to participate in scoring scholarship applications. Guests selected a winner of this year's Betty and Matt Cockrell Endowed Scholarship, which assists students who are employed while attending Harper. 671 applicants met the basic criteria for the scholarship, and the attendees read applications from the top seven. Ultimately, they selected a returning adult student who decided to pursue her passion for nursing after surviving breast cancer for the \$3,500 award.
- The Foundation hosted its annual Donor Appreciation celebration in conjunction with the Theater Department's production of the *It's a Wonderful Life* radio show. All donors contributing \$100 or more this year were invited to attend the radio show. Guests received an at-home viewing kit delivered to their homes to enhance the experience of an old fashioned holiday radio show listening party. This event was made possible by Gold Sponsors, The Beaubien Family, and Silver Sponsors, Martha Bell, Sam Oliver, Carol Pankros, and Mary Jo Willis.
- The Business and Entrepreneurship Club led a crowdfunding effort in late November with the mission of raising funds to help local children this holiday season. They partnered with Toys for Tots and the Harper College Makerspace to fundraise for materials to 3D print toys. The students managed the graphic design, outreach, and communication strategy to raise \$1,759 for materials. The printed toys will be delivered to the recipient organization in December.
- The Harper Alumni Program in partnership with Harper's Job Placement Resource Center and Continuing Professional Education will host a career-focused webinar for alumni, *Switching Gears in Your Career*, from noon to 1 p.m. on Thursday, January 13, 2022. Alumni will learn strategies and tips for changing careers in today's job landscape and learn about program paths as a means to thinking of new career opportunities. Visit [harpercollege.edu/alumni](http://harpercollege.edu/alumni) to learn more.
- The HOPE Giving Circle and the Harper Professional Advisors Series are partnering to host the upcoming event "Financial Wellness at All Ages" on Tuesday, January 11, at 5:30 p.m. The event will feature an all-female panel discussion highlighting the important information you need to know about having financial wellness at all stages of your life. Visit [harpercollege.edu/hope](http://harpercollege.edu/hope) to learn more.

### Community Relations

- Rotary Club partnerships are an important part of Harper's engagement with our civic organizations. Every week Harper representatives attend meetings for their assigned clubs. This past month representatives attended meetings for the Rotary Club of Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates, Rotary Club of Elk Grove Village and Barrington Breakfast Rotary.
- We are excited for the return of the Celebration of Giving. Each year Community Relations partners with Take 5 and Human Resources to host the Harper employee holiday party. New toys, books, winter hats, gloves, and scarves are collected as part of the D59 Celebration of Giving. The Celebration of Giving supports families at John Jay and Salt Creek elementary schools by giving parents an opportunity to select a toy to give to their children that they might not otherwise be able to afford. Due to the pandemic, Harper

was not able to participate last year. We are looking forward to celebrating the holidays with our colleagues and reigniting the tradition of supporting families in our district.

- In January, Amie Granger will take over as board chair for the GOA Regional Business Association for 2022. Harper has had a representative on the board for more than seven years. GOA hosts monthly luncheons, networking and other events throughout the year to support members and the regional business community.

### *Marketing Services*

- The new Non-Credit Community Education landing page design highlights major program categories and high-traffic program areas (motorcycle and InZone) while eliminating a large "dead zone" where few users clicked. The project featured a cross-team collaboration within Marketing Services, utilizing on-staff expertise in UI/UX (user interface/experience) and web analytics to identify usability issues, along with design and web development expertise to create and implement a solution.
- Destination Harper, the series of virtual events for high school students and parents, concluded on December 7, with The College Experience: Campus Life, Events, Jobs, Athletics, Honors, Leadership and More. There were more than 100 RSVPs at this session. The spring session will begin on January 25.

### *Media Relations*

- A Chicago Tribune article about the Build Back Better Act included insights from Dr. Proctor on the value of the legislation despite the elimination of the free community college proposal, and the hope it may resurface in the future.
- The Daily Herald ran an article about Harper being selected among the 150 community colleges eligible to apply for the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
- The Daily Herald and Patch ran a profile on Maria Vargas, a recent paralegal studies program graduate who's pursuing a career in immigration law.
- Journal and Topics ran an article on Congressman Sean Casten and Federal Aviation Administration officials visiting Harper to learn about the college's new drone technology program.
- Journal and Topics ran an article about Harper's Experience Day, which drew hundreds of area school-aged children in person and online for a range of activities.
- The Daily Herald and Patch ran an article about Harper's Makerspace helping to make 3D-printed toys for Toys for Tots.
- The Daily Herald and Patch ran an article promoting Harper's radio version production of "It's a Wonderful Life."
- The Daily Herald highlighted retired professor Pascuala Herrera, who wrote a memoir that won the 2021 Illinois Author Project's Spanish language contest.
- The Daily Herald and Patch wrote about Harper partnering with sister institutions to form the Community College Collaboration Series, which provides older adults with lifelong learning opportunities in an online setting.

## Legislative Affairs

- Dr. Proctor welcomed Rep. Jonathan Carroll to campus for a relationship-building meeting and tour of the Health Careers area, including the simulation hospital and surgical tech suite. Rep. Carroll also spent time with the Student Government Association sharing his experience in state government and answering questions from students. During the visit, Dr. Proctor shared a memo from the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents (ICCCP) articulating concerns about [HB2778](#), which was passed during the Veto Session and provides paid time off for a COVID-19 related absence for unvaccinated employees or their children. ICCCP advocated against the bill for numerous reasons including it undermines COVID-19 mitigation strategies, disincentivizes vaccination and diverts federal relief funds from students. While the Governor is expected to veto HB2778, it did pass the General Assembly with enough support to override the veto. The college and its partners will continue to work with General Assembly members to amend the legislation to address the concerns raised by all parties.
- The Illinois General Assembly convenes the 2022 spring session on January 4.

## Strategic Alliances and Innovation

### *Grants Office*

- In November, the Grants Office submitted a proposal for ICCB's Innovative Bridge and Transition Program requesting \$242,400. This grant would support implementation of three career pathway programs at the Learning and Career Center and includes the development of 15 adult education, community education, and continuing professional education courses. These courses would include industry-contextualized content and individualized instruction to address individual student's skills gaps identified by assessments.
- 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 with financial assistance to support their choice for continued enrollment. For the fall semester, through the end of November, \$4,319,940 in emergency aid has been awarded to 3,438 students. A "last call" email message and a text message was sent to all students who had not received an emergency aid grant for fall term to inform them that the fall application will close on December 17.

## Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- Institutional Research collaborated with Student Affairs to administer the Trellis Student Financial Wellness survey in November 2021. This nationwide survey begins to explore the connection between student finances and academic success. Over 2,000 students responded to the survey which yielded a 20% response. Survey results will be delivered mid-spring and will be used to better understand how student financial stress, including food and housing insecurity, impacts student success at Harper.
- In collaboration with Enrollment Services, Institutional Research has worked with the Illinois Community College Board to restore lost data and remain on target for successful completion of all state and federal compliance reporting. Compliance reporting is essential to ensure federal funding for our students and access to benchmark metrics used for strategic and operational planning.
- This fall, the General Education Advisory Committee met to review and provide input regarding General Education assessment at Harper. This committee is comprised of members of the community, including employers, representatives from high school districts and transfer institutions, alumni, as well as Harper

College faculty and staff. Discussion centered around alignment of learning outcomes to transfer and workforce requirements. The committee will meet again during the spring to continue their review of general education outcomes as well as assessment results. The General Education Advisory Committee is a new addition to the Harper community and provides those leading general education assessment work with valuable insights and reflections from students, employers, and transfer institutions.

## Workforce Solutions

- The Learning Resources Network (LERN), the world's largest association in continuing education and lifelong learning, held its annual conference virtually in November. The attendance of 1,700 was its largest to date. Presenters from Harper included Scott Cashman, Darby Lanpher and Kevin Hahn. The combined attendance at their five presentations was 1,170. Topics presented included working from home, a national live online class clearinghouse, converting in-person classes to online classes, customer service and 2022 summer camps for youth.
- The Illinois Manufacturing Association's Education Foundation hosted a regional roundtable discussion at Harper's Wojcik Conference Center in November, where Harper was recognized with a State of Illinois Proclamation for Apprenticeship Week. The event prompted an opportunity to discuss career exploration, talent pipeline challenges, and local workforce issues to better support improved outcomes for all students. Those in attendance included education stakeholders with local high school districts, colleges and universities, workforce investment boards, the DCEO, Mayor Rich Veenstra of Addison, as well as manufacturers including Tamarack Products, Inc., Taubensee Steel & Wire Co., and SWD Inc.

### *Promise Scholarship*

- 30 Promise scholars will be completing their degree a semester earlier than anticipated this fall. To date, 199 students have earned their degree entirely through the Promise Scholarship program.

## In Memoriam

- Dr. Michael Oester, retired Harper professor, passed away on November 20. Dr. Oester was an instructor in the Chemistry department for 29 years, retiring with professor emeritus status in 1999. He soon returned to Harper, working as a part-time chemistry tutor in the Academic Support Center until 2016. He is remembered fondly as a great teacher and friend.