

President's Report

January 2012

Classes officially begin for the spring semester on Tuesday January 17. We are continuing to enroll students at this time. Across northern Illinois, community college enrollment is down compared to the numbers we saw last year and the year prior. This is also true across the State and nation. Two factors seem to be reflecting this trend. First, students are no longer required to attend full-time to assure eligibility for coverage under their parent's health insurance program. All young adults up to the age of 26 can now be included in their parent's program irrespective of any student status. Many of us in the higher education sector believe this has led to a decrease in the number of credits students pursue. Second, we are seeing a fairly steep decline in student demand for transfer-oriented liberal arts courses; we have steep declines in history, sociology, psychology, and math. On the other hand, almost all of our career-oriented programs in health careers are filled to capacity with waiting lists. This, we believe, is related directly to the current narrative in the public media regarding jobs and job preparation. When the dust settles, I believe we will be (on an overall basis) 3.5-4.5% down in our enrollment. We are watching this closely with respect to our revenue targets for the year and will make any adjustments necessary to assure a balanced budget.

Last week, we had a wonderful all-college meeting. The meeting was held in a packed Performing Arts Center. We introduced new employees, saluted employee service of 5 to 40 years and bid a public farewell to retirees leaving us at the end of June (a reception in February will be held for all these folks). During the meeting, we also updated faculty and staff on progress we are making on the President's Goals and student success projects, and reviewed upcoming construction projects. No doubt the highlight of the morning's program was a presentation by Dr. Ron Williams, Senior Vice President for the College Board and past president of Prince George's Community College in Maryland. Dr. Williams gave a thoughtful presentation aimed at providing substantive context for the nation's completion agenda and praised Harper for taking a national leadership role in identifying a completion goal. Our folks were intrigued with his presentation (he is very good). There was a buzz in the air when folks left the theater. Ron helped our college colleagues understand the leadership they are providing in the very critical work we are doing on our completion agenda and this is so critical to our nation. We also distributed a newsletter that updated the campus on key initiatives, as well as current issues of *Student Success Matters and Research Matters*, that discussed our high school COMPASS testing project and PACE Climate Survey results, respectively. A copy of the newsletter is attached. It provides a six-month status report on the President's Goals.

We also met this past week with a Manufacturing Task Force composed of CEO's, secondary school leaders, and Harper academic leaders. This is the on-going work that emerged out of the Manufacturing Summit we led this past fall. Soon we will roll out an Applied Associate of Science degree in Manufacturing with three specific pathways. Included in the first semester of the program will be paid internships for the students. Our goal is to attract 50 companies willing to fund these internships. This project will also be embedded in our next grant proposal to the Department of Labor. We will extend this Harper developed degree to a statewide delivery network, if we are successful with the grant. We are very excited about this new program and congratulate Provost Marwick, Dean Griffith and Senior Executive Maria Coons for their work on the project. A special thanks to Maria for her leadership in the overall effort.

As you know, we had our first real snow event last week. It was a good test run for our entire Physical Plant. Many Physical Plant employees have roles in our snow removal plan, taking them away from the typical work they do on campus. I hope you will join me in congratulating them all for a job well done. We also hope that, while they are very good at it, we won't have to count on them very often for the balance of winter and early spring to clear snow. But, rest assured, if we need them, they will be there! Thanks to all!

Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) is beginning with a full day of training on January 17. IBB discussions are scheduled throughout the next several months. We are very hopeful that our interests will be aligned and that we can reach closure on the contract discussions well before current contracts expire. We will provide monthly reports to the Board as this process unfolds.

Below are highlights of other work that is going on around campus.

Student Success

- Early December saw the release of Volume 23 of *The Harper Anthology*, a publication prepared annually by members of the English department, to honor students' academic writing from all types of Harper courses, and to assist with writing instruction in the next year, through presentation of good models for writing. This year's volume is particularly cross-disciplinary. It includes student work from a wide range of courses—from Yoga to Chemistry—and from a wide range of students. Students working at advanced levels of study are represented by papers from the Honors Program and from the Undergraduate Research Program, but many of the papers have been authored by more typical Harper students whose academic skills have reached a higher level, thanks to their own hard work and the responsiveness of their instructors. This publication is testimony, once more, to how transformative a Harper College education can be.
- Judy Kulchawik and Paul Peterson, both faculty from the Academic Enrichment and Engagement Division, authored a textbook, *Crossing Borders in Reading and Writing*. Paul also recently completed another book entitled *Chicago Stadium, Images of Sports*.
- Terry Morris, a professor from the Business and Social Science Division, authored a new web design textbook, *Web Development and Design Foundations with HTML5, 6th Edition*.
- Jeff Przybylo, professor in Speech, is the recipient of the 2011 Edith Harrod Award given by the Illinois Speech & Theatre Association. The Edith Harrod Award is awarded to individuals for distinguished service to the Association and outstanding achievement in the profession.

- Daniel Goers, a Harper College Graphic Arts Technology student, won first place in the Ravinia Festival annual poster contest. His poster will be used to advertise the festival for 2012. He was selected as the winner among 120 submissions and will be awarded \$1000 for his talent and skill. Kevin Kroll, another Harper Graphic Art student, ranked in the top ten.

Information Technology

- **Holiday Break Activities** – A number of technology upgrades were performed by Technical Services staff members while the campus was closed during the Holiday break. A dozen Technical Services staff members assisted with phase one of the email system upgrade that involved over 300 hours of work. A number of Technical Services Desktop Support staff worked on upgrading hundreds of computers to Windows 7 and assisting with testing the new email system. Technical Services Network staff patched over 100 servers with operating system and security software updates. Technical Services Network staff also assisted with the implementation of redundant network connections for NEC and HPC ensuring the availability of telephone and network services in these two locations.
- **Student Inquiry Form** – Completed the development and implementation of the Student Inquiry Form, which is a consolidated view of key student information needed by admissions advisors, counselors and other College personnel in service to the student. The web-based form places key student information on one screen, saving time and improving service.
- **FAMIS Migration to Accruent Hosting Service** – Completed the migration to the latest version of Facility Administration and Maintenance Information System (FAMIS), using a vendor-sourced service offering that brings many new capabilities, including space and utility management, to the College. The migration also brings the College to current software levels and architecture of the system.
- **Nelnet Payment File Posting in Banner** – Completed the project to automatically post student payment information into Banner, from payments taken by Admissions Outreach. This had been a manually intensive process for the Business Office.

Human Resources

- **Upcoming Labor Contract Negotiations** – As an alternative to the traditional model used in Harper's previous negotiations with employee groups, the College and its employee units whose contracts expire in 2012 are currently investigating the use of Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) in our upcoming negotiations. IBB is based on four premises: 1) separate the people from the problem; 2) focus on interests, not positions; 3) invent options for mutual gains; and 4) insist on objective criteria. IBB training will be conducted by Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) representatives on Tuesday, January 17 from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. with the College's Adjunct Faculty, Professional-Technical Staff, Custodial-Maintenance Staff, Police Department Staff and Administrative Negotiation team members. FMCS representatives will also be in attendance at all subsequent negotiation sessions.

Physical Plant

- G&H Building Remodeling Project – Harper was notified on December 5, 2011 that the Capital Development Board released the remaining \$16,336,600 State of Illinois contribution toward the G&H Building Remodeling Project. Construction is scheduled to begin in June, 2012.

As we conclude this report, let me also note the following.

It was with great personal sadness that I informed the College's football team that football, as a sport, is being eliminated effective immediately. As the Board knows, I enjoy the sport and getting to know the young men who have played for Harper. It was clear to me through my association with the team that their passion and love for the sport is real. Regretfully, social, academic, and financial issues with the sport prompted this decision. The team is primarily made up of out-of-district students, which presents housing challenges; the geography of our league has expanded due to the recent losses of two of our league members; and the costs associated with the program have proven to be too great to continue. We have had a proud tradition in football, many fine players and coaches, and many persons associated with them that have represented our institution well. Three national championships over the history of the program are noteworthy. I know that the Board joins me in thanking all who have been involved in Harper Football for their commitment to these young men, and to the College.

Finally, I wish to thank Cathy Brod for more than 15 years of service to the College and the College's Educational Foundation. Cathy has served the College well over these years and built a strong infrastructure for our Foundation's friend and fundraising efforts. We wish her continued success. Very soon we will announce a date for a formal reception so that Board members, College colleagues and Harper friends and family can thank her and wish her well. That date will be announced soon.

There is a lot going on. It's going to be a quick semester!

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