



# PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

May 2024

Dear Harper College Community:

The best time of the academic year is upon us again as we celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates and recognize the support and sacrifices made by their families to help them successfully cross our commencement stage. I can't wait to open our ceremonies at NOW Arena and welcome a record number of more than 750 participants and their loved ones. In total, our graduating class of over 2000 students includes more than 1,100 first generation college students! I am grateful to the faculty, staff and administrators that put their hearts and souls into supporting our students and helping them achieve the kind of success that is generation-changing and creates economic mobility for our students and their families.

A major part of graduation season is the numerous awards events and celebrations happening across campus. From cap decorating to photos with the President, we recognize our students with fun and flair worthy of their accomplishments. I enjoyed this year's Academic Honors Convocation with acknowledgements of the All Phi Phi and All Illinois Academic Team, Honors Program Graduates, Engineering Pathways, Alpha Delta Nu, Social Justice Studies Graduation Distinction, Global Scholar Graduation Distinction, Excellence in the Discipline, and 4.0 Grade Point Average Graduates. Additionally, we recognized faculty and a trustee with awards including **Dechen Atsatang**, James Brown Memorial Honors Scholar Award; **Sarah Vargas**, David K. Hill Memorial Award; **Professor Kevin Long**, Professor Powell and Larry Moats Extra Five Minute Faculty Award; **Professor Christopher Dunn**, Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Member Award; **Trustee Greg Dowell**, James J. McGrath Award; **Elizabeth Crowe and Nicolas Carpio Salaverry**, Motorola Solutions Foundation Awards for Excellence; and **Dr. Pardess Mitchell**, Motorola Solutions Award Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. Congratulations to all our award winners!

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The Aspen Institute's Community College Excellence Program recognized Harper College as a semifinalist for the 2025 \$1M Aspen Prize, one of only 20 community colleges in the country and the only institution in Illinois. This is our second time being recognized as a semifinalist (recently in 2023) and serves as a tremendous acknowledgement of our commitment to student success. Every day, I witness the culture of care our faculty and staff demonstrate for our students as they help them **SOAR** along our **Path for Success**. No matter who wins the prize, I know we are making a difference in the lives of those who need us the most in the communities we serve.

Our Student Affairs and Information Technology teams are diligently working to upgrade systems to ready us for the continuously changing rollout of the simplified FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). I want to commend them for their patience, creativity and dedicated efforts to help our Department of Education partners at the federal level understand the hurdles current and prospective students continue to face to finance their education. I will be participating in an AACC Board of Directors conversation with



Undersecretary James Kvaal and Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education Nassar Paydar to learn about progress and highlight our concerns.

Lastly, we completed our Decennial Committee work this month as prescribed by Illinois law. This exercise allowed us to study our efficiency as an institution serving more than 540,000 people in 23 communities. We learned more about the impact of our sustainability practices and our public-private partnerships, including the Education and Work Center in Hanover Park, the Health and Recreation Center, and the Northwest Educational Council for Student Success. A special thanks to our board members and community members, **Martha Bell and Lane Moyer**, who served on the committee.



## Academic Updates

### *By the Numbers*

- Enrollment Services
  - Through its partnership with the University Center, Roosevelt University is excited to be graduating 32 students earning their bachelor's degree here on Harper's campus in Elementary Education, Criminal Justice, and Health Science Administration. Southern Illinois University is excited to graduate their first student through the program.
  - April Chatbot Activity: 57% (848) responded of the 1,494 chats received, live staff members addressed 43% (649). Primary topics of inquiry included: "General Course/Schedule Information" (125), "Summer Classes" (103), and "Registering for a class" (98).
  - Staff effectively managed CRM activity, processing 2,396 emails and inquiry forms, 2,379 phone calls, and 625 in-person visits.
  - Disseminated over 38,000 outbound emails to students and business clients through the CRM.
  - Emails sent for Health Careers information sessions and a fall registration update.
- Counseling Services
  - Seventy-nine appointments scheduled for April.
- Hawks Care April
  - One-hundred thirty-three students accessed the Food Pantry; 24 meetings led by the Manager, Childcare Case Manager, and Resource Specialist; two students used the Career Closet.
  - Over 250 students used the Snacks for Students Initiative.
- Resources for Learning/Library
  - The Reading Room satellite library at Learning and Career Center (LCC): total circulation numbers increased from 503 fall 2022 to 752 in fall 2023.
  - One Book One Harper: six book discussions, 10 community members per session.
  - One Book One Harper: six virtual presentations, 12 attendees per session.

### *Events*

- Advising Services
  - Harper Advancing Retention through Connected Advising (ARC) hosted an end of year celebration to recognize the accomplishments of the inaugural cohort of Black and Latinx scholars who joined the program in fall 2023.
- Enrollment Services
  - Admissions Outreach hosted their Future Hawk Celebration where they welcomed and celebrated 271 incoming students, families/guests (577 total).
- Wellness
  - Harper Wellness collaborated with the Kenneth Young Center to provide Naloxone (Narcan) training to students and employees during two sessions in April. Sixty-four people trained to administer Naloxone which is an opioid antagonist medication that is used to reverse an opioid overdose.
  - Harper Wellness provided cannabis education to students regarding risks and harm reduction strategies. Eighty-one students received training.
- Counseling Services
  - Northwest Educational Council for Student Success (NECSS) in collaboration with Harper College held a Connecting Students to Pathways of Success event. Attendees included school social workers, counselors, and administrators from participating partner Districts 211, 214 and 220 to discuss how to



best collaborate to connect students to pathways of care to support academic success as they transition to college.

- Student Engagement
  - Last month, Student Engagement hosted the annual Student Appreciation Day. Two-hundred fifty students enjoyed a food truck festival, music, and games.
  - In April, the PRIDE Club hosted their annual Drag Show. Students raised \$750+ to support PRIDE Arts with their show and the sale of student designed buttons!
  - Also in April, Student Engagement, Harper Wellness, Harper Early Alert Team (HEAT), and the campus Title IX team organized campus participation in Denim Day, an International Day of Awareness towards the prevention of sexual violence and in supporting survivors of sexual assault for 75 people. The college worked with the Kenneth Young Center to provide information on preventative measures, local and national resources, and guidance on additional ways to show support and allyship. Visitors left messages of support and encouragement for others.
- Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)
  - In April, Honors/PTK held a collaborative meeting with the Harper Environmental Club, welcoming State Representative Nabeela Syed to campus to discuss environmental advocacy, sustainability initiatives, and the power of political agency and involvement among younger voters.
  - This month, Honors President Sonia Ajakaiye and PTK Vice President Rumeysa Aydin moderated a panel on mental health services at Harper College. This panel was the culmination of Phi Phi's work on the PTK College Project. Panelists included faculty from counseling and nursing, who addressed stigmas surrounding the topic of mental health, offered strategies to help identify when outside help is needed, and discussed resources and tools available to students at Harper.
  - Also, this month, the Honors Program advisors participated in Future Hawk Night, tabling and presenting at information sessions to inform incoming Harper students and their families about the benefits and opportunities afforded by our program.

### Highlights

- Division/Program Highlights
  - Athletics
    - After the winter sports standings, your Harper Hawks Athletics Program is in the lead for the 2023-2024 Daktronics Cup competition for overall program excellence in two-year colleges (non-scholarship division). Read more about it [here](#).
  - Hawks Care
    - Hawks Care launched Single Stop - a free, comprehensive resource platform.
  - Career and Technical Programs April
    - The Hospitality Management Department collaborated with the Township of Schaumburg's Program Support Services to provide a successful team building brunch for nine members of their team. The cooking demonstration concluded with a brunch in the Dining Room.
  - Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)
    - Community Service and Cultural Outings
    - In April, Honors/PTK students volunteered at the Inspiration Cafe in Chicago, preparing and serving dinner for approximately 40 individuals experiencing homelessness.
    - Also in April, Honors/PTK students volunteered at the Deer Grove Forest Preserve, helping to remove invasive species.
  - Resources for Learning/Library
    - The Harper College Archives have gone digital in a whole new way! While just a few collections were previously available on the website, the new platform, Preservica, provides access to more than 38 unique archival collections that highlight the history of Harper College. Highlighted collections include student publications, The Harbinger and Point of



View, Board of Trustee minutes and reports, and photographic and video collections, featuring our recently digitized Hawks football videos (1981-2006).

- During the 2023-2024 academic school year, the Make Shop, (the Library's makerspace) provided access to 20 different types of DIY machines and tools, hosted 31 workshops to advance students' practice in learning new artistic and creative skills, and collaborated with student clubs, teachers, and staff to provide programs that enhance academic excellence and encourage innovation.
- The Reading Room satellite library now carries bilingual material in 17 different languages to better support the AED students learning English while also honoring their connection with their native languages.

- Employee Highlights

- Athletics

- Athletic Director Sherese Parker was selected to participate in the inaugural cohort of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Aspiring Leaders Program. This program supports the NJCAA's Strategic plan to develop and inspire new NJCAA leaders throughout the association. Sherese completed the program in April at the National Convention in Charlotte, NC.

- Access and Disability Services

- Director of Access and Disability Services Jason Altmann completed his ADA Coordinator Training Certification at the University of Missouri.

- Resources for Learning/Library

- Coordinator of Library Instruction Jennifer Lau-Bond was awarded the 2023 Glenn A. Reich Memorial Faculty Award for Instructional Technology.

- Liberal Arts

- Lauren Nicols, Harper Theatre set designer, has received the prestigious Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award. This annual award recognizes and supports the work of an outstanding emerging theatrical designer within the Chicago area. Lauren Nichols has been working at Harper College as set designer for productions including *Crimes of the Heart*, *Lettie*, *Sense and Sensibility (The Musical)*, *Too Heavy for Your Pocket*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Follies*, and *American Idiot*.

- Student Highlights

- Career and Technical Programs

- Legal Studies student Elena Artemenko received the Honorable Timothy C. Evans Scholarship for Paralegal Studies Sponsored by Northwest Suburban Bar Association (NWSBA) in the amount of \$750.00 this month, at Judge's Night, held at Sky on Nine, in Rosemont. Career and Technical Programs Dean Joanne Ivory and Legal Studies Coordinator Carol Carlson-Nofsinger attended.

## Advancement

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Harper HEART Day, the college's day of giving, took place last month. The effort included more than 50 student organizations and innovative projects. Harper HEART Day exceeded its fundraising goal by 15% and inspired 58 constituents, including 19 Harper alumni, to make their first gifts to the Foundation.
- As of April 30, 2024, the Inspire Scholarship Campaign has raised \$32,835,576 in donations with 1,895 donors contributing to the campaign.



- As of May 6, 2024, the Foundation has awarded \$2,818,807 in scholarships to 1,084 students for the 2023-2024 academic year.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Earlier this month, we officially celebrated the completion of our second Guiding Learners to Intentionally Develop Efficacy (GLIDE) cohort with our annual end of the year celebration at Main Event in Hoffman Estates. We provided certificates of completion to our mentees and graduation gifts for eight of our mentors. After the recognition dinner, participants spent quality time together playing a range of games.
- Diverse Relationships Engaged in Affirming Multiculturalism (DREAM) employee resource group held its 15th Annual Mentoring Celebration this month. The event featured a mentor-mentee panel discussion moderated by Dr. Michelé Smith, Vice President of Workforce Solutions, who was later presented with an award for Outstanding Contributions to DREAM. The panelist shared valuable insight into successful mentor-mentee relationships and effectively navigating experiences on campus.
- In collaboration with the Office of International Education, we celebrated our 7th Social Justice Leadership Certificate (SJLC) cohort. Twenty-five faculty, staff and administrators participated in this culminating experience earlier this month to celebrate our seven colleagues that completed the program.

## External Affairs

### Communications

- The Communications team pitched, secured placement and/or helped facilitate 13 articles that appeared in local and national media publications. Among the highlights are:
  - Multiple national and local media outlets reported on Harper being chosen as one of the 20 semifinalists for the 2025 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
  - The *Daily Herald*, Illinois Higher Ed Coalition and Illinois Community College Trustees Association published an editorial by Dr. Proctor and Board Chair Bill Kelley about the power of community colleges, in honor of Community College Month.
  - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran articles about Harper's Speech and Debate Team winning back-to-back national championships.
  - The *Chicago Tribune* and *Shaw Local News* reported on the City of Elmhurst's First Responders memorial, centered around a sculpture by Harper Professor Jason Peot.
  - The *Daily Herald*, Illinois Higher Ed Coalition and other publications reported on Harper's expansion of green economy programs.
  - *CIO Talk Network's* podcast featured an interview with Harper Chief Information Officer Riaz Yusuff about artificial intelligence and automation in the workplace.
  - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran articles previewing acclaimed filmmaker Samyuktha Vijayan's visit to campus, in connection with screenings of her movie, *Blue Sunshine*.
  - WBBM Radio, the *Daily Herald* and *Patch* previewed Harper's Drone Experience and Safety Day event.
  - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* published stories about Harper's InZone Summer Enrichment and Sports Camp.
  - The Illinois National Guard, *Defense Visual Information Distribution Service* and the *Daily Herald* reported about Harper student Nathan Johnson winning the Illinois Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition.
  - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran reports of Harper's Student Juried Art Exhibition.



- *The Denver Post* and other media outlets published a profile of Harper alumnus and UFC heavyweight fighter Curtis Blaydes, who discussed overcoming his stutter as a high-profile athlete.
- The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* previewed the STEAM Fair that Harper hosted for younger students.

### *Community Relations*

- In the month of April, Community Relations coordinated or participated in 16 events both on and off campus. The largest events include the Eclipse @ Harper event and the STEAM Fair. Working in collaboration with Raeghan Graessle almost 4,000 people attended the Eclipse @ Harper. The STEAM Fair was a collaboration with Barrington Council for the Gifted and Talented and Microsoft. More than 500 people attended the event.

### *Legislative Affairs*

- In April, State Representative Nabeela Syed met with Dr. Proctor on campus to discuss Illinois higher education issues including support for the Governor's higher education budget, common course numbering and dual credit. She later spoke with students from our Sustainability Club.
- In April, Congressman Brad Schneider visited Harper College for the first time touring the Health Careers area and meeting with Dr. Proctor and college leadership. Issues discussed included short-term/workforce Pell.
- This month, Dr. Proctor, Chair Kelley and VP Jeff Julian attended the Illinois Community College Caucus Reception in Springfield with Governor JB Pritzker, State Senator Cristina Castro and State Senator Tom Bennett, the co-chairs of the caucus. Additionally, college leadership participated in the Illinois Community College Trustees Lobby Day advocating for state higher education issues and meeting with Representative Katie Stuart, chair of the House Higher Education Committee, Representative Michelle Mussman, and Representative Fred Crespo.

### *Marketing Services*

- April was an active month across Harper's institutional social media channels with 1,476,605 impressions, 12,717 engagements, and 6,369 post link clicks. Community College Month, the Eclipse, FAFSA Updates, the Paying for College segment of The College Tour, Speech Team national honors, summer enrollment, and the Bloch Quantum Tech Hub announcement were among April posts receiving attention.

## **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, facilities to support the Hospitality Program, and the University Center. The 100% construction documents (CD) set has been submitted to the Capital Development Board (CDB) this month.

### *Human Resources*

- Human Resources hosted its second annual Professional Development Day for second and third shift Facilities employees.
- Earlier this month, the college recognized all the retirees, employees with milestone anniversaries, employees who completed degrees and certifications, League of Innovation awards, employees who received Points of Pride recognition, and Excellence in Leadership and Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion awards.



### *Information Technology*

- IT has completed testing and installation of critical Banner upgrades in support of FAFSA simplification changes. Collaborated with Financial Aid, the Business Office, and others to achieve a quick turnaround on installs.
- The IT Security team has implemented Graham-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) compliance training for 67 employees. In April, 37 employees completed the training.

### *Risk Management*

- Four external security cameras became operational at LCC. These will provide an additional layer of security and be a tool in the investigation of any crimes committed on site.

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

- The Achieving the Dream (AtD) Annual Reflection Report was submitted in April. The reflection reports progress on student success goals, college prioritization of AtD capacities, feedback on AtD resources, and learning opportunities as well as an assessment of the college's relationship with AtD.
- The administration of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), along with the companion survey the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), and the CCSSE Race/Ethnicity, a survey to assess student experiences with racism, inclusion, and a sense of belonging, have all been closed. Over 2,000 students responded to the CCSSE survey, almost 200 faculty responded to the CCFSSE, and approximately 1,600 students answered the CCSSE Race/Ethnicity survey. Collectively the results from these surveys will provide Harper with data on student and faculty perceptions about student experiences at Harper College, both in and outside of the classroom. Harper uses this data to improve student engagement and provide optimal opportunities for positive student experiences at the college. The results from this administration will be received mid-summer.
- The Outcomes Assessment Office published the annual Outcomes Assessment Report. This report summarizes the assessment work of faculty and staff, highlighting the use of assessment results to improve student learning and department effectiveness. Updates on assessment of the general education outcomes are also included in the report.

## **Strategic Alliances and Innovation**

### *Grants Office*

- In April, Harper was awarded \$100,000 from Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) for the Noncredit Workforce Training Initiative which provides funding to support noncredit training courses and professional development initiatives that increase career training opportunities and lowers costs for noncredit students.

## **Workforce Solutions**

- In April, the Job Placement Resource Center hosted a job fair for the Law Enforcement and Justice (LEJ) Department and local law enforcement agencies. Fifty students and community members attended the event and met with the 34 agencies present.





- April and the beginning of May has been busy for the Apprenticeship Office. In early April, they hosted an information session with over 20 individuals in attendance. The Apprenticeship Office also attended the District 214 Skilled Trades event last month to meet with high school students interested in pursuing a degree or certificate through the apprenticeship model. Earlier this month, they participated in the District 211 Job Fair.
- Additionally, the Apprenticeships Office continues to make significant strides in supporting other community colleges by providing guidance on establishing Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) apprenticeship programs. Two recent training sessions were held in April for Illinois Central College and College of DuPage.

## In Memoriam

- Former Harper Assistant Professor Gary Anderson of the Business and Social Science Division passed away on March 28 at the age of 76. Gary pursued a multifaceted career, from sales representative and product manager for Adria Pharmaceuticals to vice president of clinical research for Cancer Treatment Research Foundation, before joining the Harper community as an adjunct and then full-time faculty member of Business Administration. During his decade at Harper, Gary participated in the strategy team that designed and implemented our initial First Year Seminar courses and sat on a panel about Harper's changing district. An airplane model enthusiast and avid reader, especially of military history, Gary is survived by his wife, Peggy Stone Anderson, and leaves a legacy of love to his children, stepchildren, and grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be held at the Elk Grove Park District Pavilion on June 7 from 5 to 9 p.m. [Read Gary's obituary.](#)