



PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

December 2024

Dear Harper College Community:

First and foremost, I wish everyone season's greetings, happy holidays and a safe and restful Winter Break. Our faculty and staff have worked tirelessly this semester helping our students SOAR on their *Path for Success* in and out of the classroom while also managing numerous major initiatives and projects. I am incredibly grateful for your efforts and hope that you rest and recharge while spending quality time with family and friends.

In November, we were able to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week in several ways. I was happy to speak at the Chicago Apprenticeship Network event held at Zurich where Governor Pritzker (via video) and other state officials, employers and apprenticeship partners were there recognizing the importance of apprenticeships for advancing our students' career aspirations while strengthening outcomes for employers and economic development across the state. On campus, we held an Apprenticeship Breakfast in which five employers served on a panel with their apprentices to share real-world student and employer experiences on how powerful and life-changing apprenticeships are with prospective students. Dr. Kelly Lapetino from the Illinois Department of Economic Opportunity participated and distributed proclamations from Governor Pritzker's office to Harper College and the other employers who currently participate in our apprenticeship program. Many thanks to our Workforce Solutions division team (Dr. Michelé Smith, Darice Trout, Besa Sadiku, Chris Candelas) for their steadfast work in continued cultivation of apprenticeship partners and growing impact for our students and regional employers. Further, this team continues to play a leadership role in helping other institutions start or strengthen their apprenticeship programs, most recently at Waubensee Community College.

On leadership, I just returned from the League of Innovations Executive Leadership Institute where I presented to aspiring leaders on the president's role in transforming institutions. I discussed transformational leadership competencies from various theoretical frames and shared the approaches I've taken at Harper – listening to lead, fostering a Culture of Care, implementing systems thinking and strategic planning, cultivating inclusionary practices, resource development and entrepreneurial efforts, building an effective use of teams, creating powerful communications strategies and more. I find joy in sharing what I've learned during my career with others as they prepare to step into their own leadership opportunities.

At Harper, we have benefitted from incredible leadership and support from our community, and we celebrated two examples of that in November at the Canning Student Center groundbreaking ceremony. In addition to state funding, the funding for the Canning Student Center and University Center is provided by the generosity of our community members who voted overwhelmingly in favor of our 2018 referendum. We were also able to recognize Rita and John Canning at the ceremony for their original \$1M donation to the Rita and John Canning Women's Program and celebrate their new commitment of an additional \$1M of support for the program, first announced that day. It was a privilege to honor their kindness and philanthropy and to hear directly from our Women's Program student Esmeralda Roman who said, "With this extra help, I have been very diligent in my classes, earning As or Bs. I am very motivated because of donors like you. I want to make sure your generosity has the impact you hope for. With only 13 credits left to complete my degree, your support is helping me reach that goal." These are touching words and a powerful example of the vision Harper's



leadership has had for creating a center with a myriad of supports for our students as we help them succeed. To that end, I was glad to celebrate the groundbreaking with my predecessor President Emeritus Dr. Kenneth Ender who joined us at the ceremony along with elected officials, representatives from the University Center, the Capital Development Board and others. It was a truly historic day!

With that in mind, construction fencing will be erected around the student center site shortly. The Business and Social Sciences Building and the Emergency Services Training Center will also be breaking ground in spring 2025. We will have to be patient and support our students and campus visitors to navigate campus during a busy construction season over the next few years. Our Communications, Marketing and Facilities teams are working together on additional communication, wayfinding and signage to assist us with this effort.

Our strategic planning process—*Participate. Discover. Focus.*—continues with high participation through our dialogue sessions and data summits. We are also surveying students, faculty and staff for additional input. The collective insights and feedback will be synthesized for our strategic planning conference next semester to be held on February 27. I hope many of you will participate in this important engagement opportunity.

Finally, I communicated to employees and students this week to share what I learned from our community-building sessions and thanked you for your honesty and vulnerability in discussing what challenges and opportunities lie ahead in 2025. As I stated in my letter, we will continue our strong focus on our mission of lifting up students and transforming lives and remain steadfast in our commitment to support everyone, including our marginalized communities. I wish you all a safe and restful break and a Happy New Year!



Academic Updates

By the Numbers

- Academic Support Center (ASC)
 - Through week 15 of the fall term, the ASC has logged 10,918 student visits, approximately three thousand more than this time last year. At the fifteen-week mark in the fall 2023 semester, the ASC had logged 7,921 visits.
 - We estimate that the Academic Support Center will have a total of over 12,000 visits for the fall 2024 semester. These 12,000 visits represent students who worked with tutors, not those who used the space to study.
 - The Supplemental Instruction (SI) program has worked with full and part-time faculty to offer SI in eight new courses this spring, including in the disciplines of Astronomy, Earth Science, Physics, Math, Geography, and Computer Science. Twenty-five SI Leaders will provide course-specific academic support for nearly 50 course sections, an increase of five leaders from fall 2024.
- Counseling Services
 - Counseling Services held 56 appointments in the month of November to support student mental health and academic success.
 - The Counseling Services manager held four therapeutic process groups for students as a part of Harper's civic engagement plan.
- Enrollment Services
 - Departments leveraged the CRM to track and manage student interactions efficiently, enhancing operational workflows and fostering collaboration across teams. The team processed over 3,600 emails and forms, responded to 2,454 calls, and assisted 1,345 in-person visitors across various departments.
 - Our chatbot successfully handled 54% of the 1,264 total chats, resolving 677 inquiries, while live staff managed the remaining 46% (587 chats). The most frequently discussed topics included "Spring 2025 Registration Inquiries" (139), "Registering for a Class" (126), and "Course Schedule" (91).
 - Utilizing the CRM, we delivered over 33,000 broadcast emails to students and clients, including invitations to information sessions and advisor communications.
- Hawks Care
 - Hawks Care nominated roughly 40 case-managed students for Thanksgiving dinners through Basket Brigade, an organization that hosted their three-day event on campus.
 - In November, outreach was sent to just over 2,800 currently enrolled students regarding the possibility of being eligible for means-tested benefits based on their SAI (Student Aid Index) from 2024-2025 FAFSA applications under recent guidance in the FAFSA Simplification Act.
 - Hawks Care also hosted appointments for currently enrolled students to apply for means-tested benefits in the month of November. Students and their households (if applicable) were able to apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Family Planning with support through the application and managing required proofs. A representative from the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) was in Hawks Care early November to answer student questions.
- Resources for Learning
 - Library Services Programming and Events: During the fall term, Library Services hosted five programming events including three One Book One Harper (OBOH) book discussions (43 attendees), and two virtual presentations (50 attendees). Additionally, library staff interacted with students to promote library services during 10 campus-wide outreach events including Fall Fest (263 attendees), Hullabaloo (178 attendees), Fall Open House (92 attendees), Fusion (Office of DEI - 7 attendees), Halloween Outreach (86 attendees), Resource Fair (21 attendees), International Education Week (10 attendees),

Hawk the Vote (100 attendees), Promise Program Welcome Event (30 attendees), and Thrive Wellness Bash (180 attendees).

- Make Shop Programming and Events: During the fall term, the Library Make Shop's drop-in program had 1,099 interactions. We hosted nine workshops with 55 attendees, eight programs were created in conjunction with student clubs/organizations with 221 attendees, and two credit courses (42 students) booked the space for projects. Topics ranged from watercolor basics, mosaic art, sewing, pet portraits, button making, 3D printing, visual poems, and mug painting.
- Library Building Traffic: In November, 14,351 patrons visited the library.

Events

- Harper Wellness
 - The Harper College Buddy System, in collaboration with the library, hosted a mug painting party for an end-of-the-semester social event in late November. Ninety students participated in the social event where they were able to decorate their own mug.
 - Harper Wellness worked with the Kenneth Young Center to host Naloxone (Narcan) training on campus, which can be used to save someone's life during an opioid overdose. Twenty-five faculty, staff, and students attended the training.
- Health Careers
 - Students in the Massage Therapy Clinic organized a donation drive through November to benefit four local charities and collected over 225 pounds of needed items.
 - Donations were collected for the benefit of Hawks Care, the Kenneth Young Center (providing mental health, senior services, and LGBTQ+ services to local residents), the Almost Home Foundation (a shelter for dogs and cats located in Schaumburg), and Packages for Patriots (an Elk Grove Village organization sending personalized care packages filled with treats, hygiene essentials, entertainment items, and heartfelt letters to individual Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines serving overseas).
 - In the four years Harper Massage Therapy students have coordinated this donation drive, nearly half a ton of needed items have been donated to local charities.
- Start Smart & Learning Communities
 - As reported at the November Board Meeting, Harper successfully hosted the National Learning Communities Conference in November at Loew's Chicago O'Hare in Rosemont. This conference provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the outstanding work being done in the area of Learning Communities at Harper and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive!

Highlights

- Division/Program Highlights
 - Career and Technical Programs
 - Fashion Studies Professor Nupur Sharma visited Academia Del Lusso's academic campus in Rome and met with the Rome campus team of the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) Abroad.
 - Academia Del Lusso invited Harper fashion students to apply for a design competition where the students and their designs will participate in an annual fashion show that takes place in September 2025 in Rome at the Spanish Steps. Designers from the house of Valentino and the house of Versace will be in attendance.
 - IES proposed to have our students, and the department collaborate with Indiana University (IU) to create a customized and affordable experience for them. Professor Sharma will be reaching out to the recommended faculty of IU to have further conversations and possibly an articulation agreement with Indiana University.

- Enrollment Services
 - This December, through our partnership with Roosevelt University, the University Center will graduate our first student with their Master of Business Administration (MBA). The MBA program debuted in the fall of 2023 as the first master's degree offering in the University Center.

- Hawks Care
 - The "dinner on-the-go" initiative for evening students launched mid-November in Hawks Care and Building M and launched early December in the Library. To carry out this initiative, Hawks Care's hours expanded to 7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday in November. Forty-three students received dinners in the month of November.
 - Hawks Care served as the lead department for Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) Feed the Need food drive for the months of October and November. Thank you to our partner collection offices across campus and to everyone who donated to benefit our campus pantry.

- Start Smart & Learning Communities
 - Work continues with the Area of Interest (AOI) chairs to increase opportunities for students to complete their Start Smart course. The Interdisciplinary Programs Office (IPO) is collaborating with others to determine how best to incorporate Start Smart opportunities into transfer plans for AA/AS degree programs.
 - For the spring 2025 semester, four learning community opportunities will be available for students with courses from across the various divisions. Thus far, enrollment is strong in these courses and marketing efforts continue to encourage students to take advantage of these learning community opportunities.
 - Work continues to increase student compliance for taking Start Smart, specifically for those students who started at Harper in the fall 2024 semester. We hope to connect with those students who did not complete their Start Smart course in the fall and encourage them to complete it in the spring.

Advancement

- The Foundation culminated its 2024 Corporate Mentorship Program with a luncheon for all student and corporate participants in December. This year's program involved 22 student-mentor pairs with mentors from eight Foundation corporate partners.

- The Foundation has awarded \$1.4 million in scholarships to 919 students this academic year. Two new scholarship funds have been established - the Linda C. Meyer Scholarship and the Engel & Julian Family Scholarship. This brings the total of new donor-sponsored scholarships created since July 1, 2024, to five.

- The Foundation held its quarterly board meeting on December 10, 2024. At the meeting, the Board welcomed new member Kevin Drucker; celebrated the outcomes of the Foundation's four year strategic plan; heard from donors Pam and Robert Tichy and the recipient of the Tichy Family Second Chance Scholarship, Kelly Bierer; met Dr. Amanda Hirsch, the recipient of the Glenn A. Reich Memorial Faculty Award for Instructional Technology; and learned more about Harper's international students from Jill Izumikawa, Coordinator, International Students and Andre Anderson-Powell, a student from the UK who received the Karma Foundation Scholarship which supports full-time international students with financial need.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sponsored the first Guiding Learners to Intentionally Develop Efficacy (GLIDE) excursion of the year in late November. Fifty-six students enjoyed a fine dining experience at Fogo de Chão, followed by the Lyric Opera's production of *Blue*, a powerful performance that explored themes of family, identity, and resilience. Special thanks to LEAD Fellow E-B Martinez for joining us.
- This month, we wrapped up the semester for GLIDE with a joyful winter celebration in the film lab, creating lasting memories together. This culminating event marked the successful completion of students' first semester as we wished them well with finals.
- The Cultural Center hosted 143 meetings and events during the fall 2024 semester. Groups such as GLIDE, Advancing Retention through Connected Advising (ARC), Pride Club, Amnesty International, Trans Tea Time, Black Learners and Kickbacks (BLK), Diverse Relationships Engaged in Affirming Multiculturalism (DREAM), and Learning about Abilities, not Disabilities (LAND) have held regular meetings, workshops, special events and space for safe community gatherings.
- The LAND Employee Resource Group (ERG) held a successful end-of-year luncheon earlier this month. The co-chair roles were officially passed from April Maman, access advocate in Access and Disability Services, and James Vitullo, writing center lead specialist in the Academic Support Center, to Sara Lucas, coordinator of scheduling in Access and Disability Services, and Dr. Brian Cremins, faculty in the English Department. April and James indicated they would continue to support Sara and Brian as they transition into their new roles. Dr. Tamara Johnson presented James and April with plaques in appreciation for their years of service to LAND.
- The SAFE (Staff, Administrators, and Faculty for Equality) Employee Resource Group has a new chair starting in January. Dr. Sadie Hochman-Ruiz will lead with a renewed focus on maximizing effectiveness as advocates for queer faculty and staff in the coming years. Dr. Tamara Johnson presented Dr. Sean Warren-Crouch with an award to recognize his years of dedication and service as outgoing SAFE chair during the DEI & ERG End of the Year Celebration.

External Affairs

Communications

- The Communications team pitched, secured placement, and/or helped facilitate eight articles that appeared in local and national media publications. Media mentions include:
 - The *Daily Herald*, *MSN*, *Chicago Construction News*, *Journal & Topics* newspapers, *Yahoo Finance* and other publications reported on the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Canning Student Center. The Office of Governor JB Pritzker and Illinois Senate Democrats posted news releases in support of the Canning Center and an article was featured in ICCTA's listserv.
 - The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* published articles about Sarah Lima, a graduate from Harper's Career Skills Institute who has become an entrepreneur.
 - The *Chicago Reader's* 2024 Best of Chicago poll nominated Harper in three categories: best college for 18-25-year-olds, best college for lifelong learners and best overall radio station (for WHCM).



- The *Daily Herald*, *Patch* and *Our Community Now* ran stories about Harper receiving the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine for the second year in a row.
- A *Medium* article praised the effectiveness of Harper's apprenticeship programs.
- The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* published articles about Harper Learning and Career Center employees who completed their bachelor's degrees via the University Center.
- The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran articles about Harper's culture of care for students during finals week, including social events and thrive kits.
- *Journal and Topics* newspapers and the *Daily Herald* previewed the Harper College Festival Chorus's Christmas concert.
- *Insight Into Diversity* magazine published a report about Harper's Women in Tech event from earlier this year.
- The *Daily Herald* previewed the Harper College Theatre Ensemble's production of *The Odd Couple*.
- *Patch* and the *Daily Herald* previewed the Back Porch Revue's tribute to Jim Croce's 1973 Harper College concert.
- The *Daily Herald* reported on a Harper alumnus who now coaches the Wheelchair Bears.

Community Relations

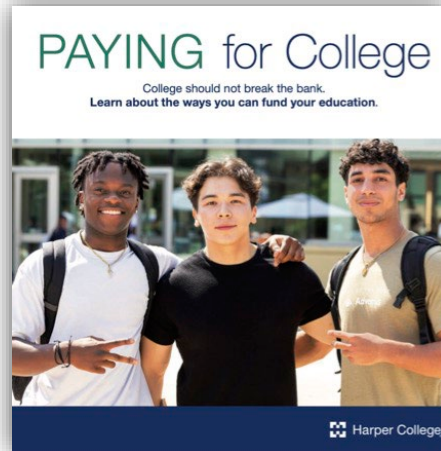
- Community Relations has wrapped school tours for the fall semester. More than 1,400 students in 5th-8th grade visited campus to learn about areas of study, careers and what it's like to be a Harper student. All nine tour dates are booked for the spring semester. We are anticipating almost 3,000 students visiting campus this year.

Legislative Affairs

- The college hosted a Legislative Breakfast to update its state and federal elected officials on key legislative and policy priorities for the upcoming year, such as community college baccalaureate degrees at the state level and workforce Pell at the federal level. Attendees included State Representatives Mary Beth Canty, Nicolle Grasse, Tracy Katz Muhl, and Michelle Mussman, as well as State Senator Mark Walker. Additionally, staff members were in attendance from the offices of State Representatives Jenifer Sanalidro and Nabeela Syed, State Senator Seth Lewis, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Congresswoman Jan Schakowksy. They were joined by the college's Executive Cabinet and members of the Board of Trustees.

Marketing Services

- Marketing Services collaborated with Financial Aid and Scholarships and Admissions Outreach to produce the Paying for College brochure. The brochure features information to help students find resources to make college more accessible and affordable. The brochure made its debut at the fall high school open house and is currently in its second printing. A Spanish-language version of the brochure is currently in production for release in early 2025.



Finance and Administrative Services

Facilities Management

- The scope of work for the Canning Student 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. ComEd Line Relocation required for the Canning Student Center has been completed. CDB has awarded the General Contractor contract to PATH Construction. Contractor is awaiting CDB's Approval to Proceed.
- BSSB (Building I):
The 2021 Campus Master Plan has identified the need to replace the Business and Social Science Buildings (I and J) with a new Business and Social Science Building (I) which will house the new and improved classrooms, laboratories, and offices to provide additional facilities for new and expanded programs. The design team is in the process of finalizing the bid documents and having final review meetings with the input groups and the Steering committee. The temporary space design for Building I 2nd floor is being finalized and will be reviewed by the deans and the Steering Committee. We expect to go out to bid early spring for the temporary space and the building construction.

Information Technology

- All required individuals have successfully completed the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)-mandated training. This training was identified as a finding in the recent internal GLBA assessment.

Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- In November, the Strategic Planning and Accountability Committee in collaboration with the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division, hosted three Data Summits as part of this year's strategic planning process, drawing 172 participants. Attendees engaged in meaningful campus-wide conversations, guided

by 14 visually engaging data element handouts aligned with the You Matter, We Care: SOAR framework. These handouts provided key insights into data from employees, students, the community, and workforce constituencies, fostering discussions on the experiences and needs of Harper's diverse stakeholders.

- The Office of Outcomes Assessment recently updated information on general education outcomes on the Harper website. This included updating recent results from the Communication and Quantitative Reasoning assessments as well as providing updates to activities that will be occurring for each of the outcomes in 2024-2025.

Strategic Alliances and Innovation

Strategic Alliances and Innovation

- Members of the SCC3 team hosted a Cybersecurity Career Panel engaging our Cybersecurity Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) members and industry professionals to benefit students currently in the Harper's cybersecurity program, while also fostering interest among potential future students that comprised of traditional and non-traditional learners, career changers, high school students (and parents) and female attendees, reflecting the SCC3 grant's mission to empower more women to enter in the tech industry.
- The Cook County Clerk's Office promoted their new Community College Field Technician Program through Harper's "Hire a Hawk" job portal. This resulted in two student hires, one of whom is interested in pursuing cybersecurity studies.

Grants Office

- The college received a \$15,000 Cook County Digital Equity IMPACT grant through the Educational Foundation. This award will support teaching digital literacy skills to those with minimal or no familiarity with computers, email, etc. The program will be delivered in collaboration with the United Palatine Coalition, and the class will be taught in Spanish.

Workforce Solutions

Job Placement Resource Center (JPRC)/Apprenticeship

- During National Apprenticeship Week November 17-23, the JPRC and Apprenticeship Team were actively involved in a series of events that highlighted the importance of apprenticeship programs.
- In November, the Workforce Solutions team, including VP of Workforce Solutions Dr. Michelé Smith, Senior Director of Workforce Solutions and Job Placement Darice Trout, Manager of Workforce Initiatives Besa Sadiku, and Apprenticeship Program specialist Chris Candelas, traveled to Waubensee Community College for the Apprenticeship 101 college-wide training. More than 90 staff and faculty members attended the workshop, both in person and online.
- Also in November, the JPRC and Apprenticeship team hosted the Apprenticeship Connections: Breakfast and Insights event to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week. With over 120 interested candidates and employer representatives (including Advocate Health Good Shepherd Hospital, DB Schenker, Dynamax Inc., Wieland Group Thermal Solutions, Inc., Zurich North America), the event was a resounding success. Dr. Kelly Lapetino, Ed.D., regional administrator for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, presented the Governor's Proclamations to Harper College and our employer partners, recognizing the vital role apprenticeships play in shaping the future workforce.

