



PRESIDENT'S *REPORT*

January 2025

To the Harper College Community:

I welcomed faculty and staff back to campus for the spring semester with our collegewide meeting and a week full of activities, informational sessions and divisional meetings. We heard from two of our students—U.S. Marine Corps veteran Sergeant EO Sumber, president of our Student Veterans of America chapter, and first generation college student Mia Barraza, who is studying fashion design. Additionally, Dr. Williams hosted a Latine student panel featuring students Karen Torres Alvarado, Alessandro Ramos, and Maria Tovar, as part of her Provost Meeting. I feel it is essential that faculty and staff hear our student voices so they can better understand how to help our students SOAR.

We also celebrated the 10th anniversary of Learning about Abilities, not Disabilities (LAND) and Staff, Administrators, and Faculty for Equality (SAFE) employee resources groups (ERGs). Established in 2014, LAND supports employees with disabilities or use accommodations for access while SAFE supports LGBTQIA+ employees. It was heartwarming to hear the history and impact of both groups and to recognize the outgoing leaders of the groups, Dr. Sean Warren-Crouch (SAFE) and James Vitullo and April Maman (LAND). Along with Diverse Relationships Engaged in Affirming Multiculturalism (DREAM), our ERGs create a safe and welcoming space and a sense of belonging while providing leadership, mentoring and ensuring the diverse perspectives of our employees are heard by leadership.

With students returning this week, it's an all-hands-on-deck effort to welcome them back and help many of them navigate campus for the first time. We know this will become more complicated as the Canning Student Center construction ramps up, including installation of fencing for the site, which will further exacerbate wayfinding challenges. Our Facilities, Communications and Marketing teams are collaborating to ensure that we communicate these disruptions and alternate routes to our students through a multitude of channels, including our interactive campus map (maps.harpercollege.edu), mobile app, and additional signage throughout the affected areas. I ask that everyone take the time to support our students in finding their destinations and appreciate your patience as we endure the inconvenience of construction knowing that when completed we will all benefit from this incredible new student center.

As of Monday, January 13, our total FTE (CE and Credit) for is 6,448.4, an increase of 6.2% from last spring with tuition-bearing FTE at 5,783.8, an increase of 4.1% from last spring. Headcount is 10,863, an increase of 6.5% from last spring. Kudos to our enrollment management and marketing teams for their continued good work to ensure that new students are successful in their application and registration processes while returning students are finding what they need to continue on their paths for success.

It has been an active few weeks at the federal level as the nation prepares for the transition to a new presidential administration and the potential changes that may bring through policy and legislation. Just last week, a federal judge ruled the Biden administration's new Title IX regulations unlawful, which puts tremendous pressure on higher education institutions across the country who only recently made major changes to policy and procedure to ensure compliance with those regulations. As I told faculty and staff in my opening address, we will continue to collaboratively work together to ensure we are providing a culture of care for our students, faculty and staff, while navigating these changes and advocating for policy and legislation at

the state and federal levels that helps us achieve our mission to support students and their families as they pursue generational change through the power of education.



Academic Updates

By the Numbers

- Academic Support Center (ASC)
 - The Academic Support Center had 12,207 visits in fall 2024. This number represents students who worked with tutors and does not include all the students who used the space to study.
 - Tutoring for the spring 2025 semester will begin on Monday, January 13.
- Counseling Services
 - Counseling Services held 27 appointments in the month of December to support student mental health and academic success.
- Enrollment Services
 - In December, the CRM provided support through multiple communication channels, ensuring efficient assistance for students and stakeholders. Below is a breakdown of the activities during this period:
 - A total of 1,820 phone calls were logged.
 - 1,132 in-person visits were captured.
 - 3,308 inquiries were submitted via email, and information forms were resolved.
 - A total of 959 chat interactions were recorded.
 - Chatbots resolved 59% of the correspondence.
 - During the winter break (December 21 – January 1), when offices were closed, the CRM's chatbot assisted 161 web visitors.
 - FAFSA data reported for December 2024 as compared to the previous two years:

December 12, 2024 vs December 12, 2023 vs December 12, 2022	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
Number of FAFSAs	11423	11488	10829
Number of Students Packaged with State/Federal Grants	4327	2569	2408

- Hawks Care
 - In the month of December, 116 students accessed the food pantry; 22 students met with staff; 20 students received dinners on-the-go; 15 students visited the career closet.

Events

- Counseling Services
 - Counseling Services and the Hawks Care Resource Center hosted Boomer the Comfort Dog to provide a much-needed stress break during finals season. Thanks to Associate Professor Sandi Ferencz for sharing her amazing dog with us!
- Harper Wellness
 - In December, Harper Wellness held a tabling event in honor of World AIDS Day. Cook County Health offered free HIV testing at the event, providing testing to over 20 students and employees. Approximately 40 people interacted with the tabling event.
 - Also in December, Harper Wellness hosted the Finals Week Refueling Station in collaboration with Advising and Counseling Services. Students were provided with free food items as well as mental health resources to help prepare them for finals week. Approximately 100 students stopped by the Refueling Station.
- Student Engagement
 - Checkpoint Day: Last month, Student Engagement hosted Checkpoint Day, a strategic initiative to reduce barriers to spring enrollment and ensure students remain on track to achieve their academic



goals. The event was strengthened by the support of Michael Shaw and Sarah DeMay, who helped enhance the tracking of student interactions across departments and post-event communications. Participating departments included One Stop, Academic Advising, Office of Student Financial Assistance, Access and Disability Services, Hawks Care Resource Center, Registrar's Office, Job Placement Resource Center, Academic Support Center, Harper Wellness, Harper Foundation, and the University Center.

- Chicago Student Excursion: In December, Student Engagement and the German Club collaborated to host a Chicago Student Excursion to the Christkindlmarket. The event featured a group of over 50 participants enjoying lunch at The Berghoff, a tour of festive Chicago landmarks, and engaging activities that highlighted German holiday traditions. German Club Advisor Kim Jaeger enriched the experience by sharing cultural insights throughout the trip. Highlights included group photos at the Chicago Christmas Tree and Cloud Gate ("The Bean").
- Toys for Tots: Last month, the Student Veterans Association and Harper College Police Department joined forces for the annual Toys for Tots Rucksack March, followed by Karaoke with a Cop. This impactful event resulted in the collection of two overflowing boxes of toys, which were distributed to families across the Chicago area, exemplifying Harper College's commitment to community engagement and philanthropy.

Highlights

- Division/Program Highlights
 - Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)
 - In November:
 - Fifteen Honors and Phi Theta Kappa students volunteered at Deer Grove Forest Preserve, helping to remove invasive species.
 - Fifteen Honors and Phi Theta Kappa students traveled to University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to take part in an informational session and tour for transfer students.
 - Fifteen Honors and Phi Theta Kappa students traveled with advisors to see *The Marriage of Figaro* at Lyric Opera.
 - Office of International Education
 - Prof. Jean Paul Ibambe is a Rwandan human rights activist and lawyer specializing in media laws, freedom of expression, and human rights. With over 15 years of experience in journalism, media regulation, law practice, and human rights promotion, he defends journalists in legal battles through litigation and constitutional petitions. He is currently a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication (Arizona State University) focusing on legal representation for journalists, research and advocacy, and law reforms in Rwanda. Through the [Humphrey Fellowship Community College Residency Program](#), Prof. Jean Paul Ibambe will visit Harper College this spring for a week-long engagement with faculty, staff, students, and various programs. More details are to follow in the Office of International Education's newsletter, *Passepartout*.

Advancement

- As of January 7, the Foundation has awarded \$1,889,737 to 989 students for the 2024-2025 academic year. One new scholarship fund has been established - the Wendy L. Copeland Endowed Scholarship. This brings the total of new donor-sponsored scholarships created since July 1, 2024, to six.
- On January 16, Alumni Relations will host a coffee social for Harper alumni who are also employed by the college. Three hundred four Harper alumni employees received a digital invitation to the event. By the first week of January, 30 alumni employees registered for this engagement opportunity.



- The HOPE Giving Circle will host its winter social event “Mocktails and Cocktails” on Thursday, January 23, 2025 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Wojcik Conference Center. Guests will learn about the HOPE Giving Circle followed by participating in a class that will teach attendees how to create flavorful and refreshing “mocktail” drinks with added ingredients using fresh herbs, fruit infusions, and creative mixers. More information can be found at harpercollege.edu/hope.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The new cohort of Leveraging Equity in Academia through Diversity (LEAD) Faculty Fellows successfully completed their first semester at Harper! We thank their deans, department chairs/coordinators, mentors, colleagues who presented during their monthly professional development workshops and everyone who continues to help them feel welcomed and supported!
- Earlier this month, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sponsored Line Dancing with the President, facilitated by Maddy B., where employees participated in this energizing class that afforded attendees the opportunity to reconnect and learn new moves.

External Affairs

Communications

- The *Daily Herald* and *Patch* ran articles about Harper’s Corporate Mentorship Program and the successful relationships students and mentors have created.
- *Journal & Topics* newspapers including the Canning Student Center groundbreaking in a report on the top news stories of 2024.
- The *Daily Herald* reported on notable leaders in the area who died, including Harper Trustee Emeritus Dick Kolze and Harper alumnus, and former mayor of Schaumburg, Al Larson.
- *Cook County Chronicle* and *City Bureau* published articles about the Digital Equity IMPACT Small Grants Program recipients, including the Harper College Educational Foundation.
- The *Daily Herald* mentioned Harper’s anti-hate speech policy in a piece about the Cook County United Against Hate initiative.
- *Quality Magazine* highlighted Harper’s Wojcik Conference Center as the location of the ASQ Chicago Innovate for Excellence 2024 Summit.
- *MSN* ranked Harper as one of the top community colleges in the country.

Legislative Affairs

- The college sent congratulations letters to recently elected and reelected state and federal representatives and senators inviting them to visit campus for a tour of the college.
- In preparation for the annual ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C., meetings with federal elected officials are being scheduled while updated materials are being prepared.



Marketing Services

- Information sessions and tours are important ways that Harper College connects with prospective students and our community. The web team recently updated the information and tours web page to improve the user experience and accessibility. <https://www.harpercollege.edu/start/info-sessions.php>

Finance and Administrative Services

Information Technology

- The Ellucian Experience was available as the new Harper Student Portal for students and faculty throughout the fall 2024 semester, alongside the classic portal. Students have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. As of January 2nd, the classic portal has been retired, and Ellucian Experience is now the official Harper Student Portal.

Risk Management

- The Operations Council was briefed on the process for developing the Continuity of Operations Plan.

Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

- As part of the college's strategic plan development process, the Outcomes Assessment office distributed a survey to employees, students, and the community in early December. The survey asked, "What should Harper College focus on over the next four years?" More than 400 individuals (183 employees and 235 students) responded to the survey. Themes will be developed from the survey results and used as inputs in the development of the FY2026-2029 Strategic Plan.
- Members of the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) Division collaborated on the proposed selection criteria and supporting rationale for the new student success model, leveraging historical data to develop a framework that targets high-need students and addresses equity gaps. Additionally, PIE representatives worked with the program's steering committee to establish targets and projections across eight key measures, outlining the methodology and anticipated impact on institutional performance metrics.

Strategic Alliances and Innovation

Grants Office

- Harper was awarded the competitive ICCB grant application for Mental Health Early Action to support hiring a bilingual Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) to support our growing Spanish-speaking population. This is especially important for Harper's Latine student population, as 65% of Latine students with mental health conditions go untreated and access to Spanish-speaking Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor's is limited in Palatine, IL. The project also includes capacity-building efforts for a mental-health peer support group.
- Harper was awarded the competitive ICCB grant application for Innovative Bridge and Transitions grant to build on the success of the Paths to College and Career program (Paths), created with 2022-24 grant funding. This award expands Path's scope by including another high-growth industry (manufacturing) and enhancing the program delivery model. These efforts will further support underrepresented adult students who have an interest in the target industries but lack the needed training and skills, as well as skilled immigrants with related foreign experience or adaptive capacity due to advanced schooling.



Workforce Solutions

- In December, Aaron Kolb, Harper College CNC faculty, and Besa Sadiku, manager of workforce initiatives, had the privilege of joining the German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) Midwest on their Apprenticeship Germany Delegation Trip - Next-Level Apprenticeships: Transatlantic Exchange on Training Programs. This annual event brings together participants to explore best practices in apprenticeship programs across Germany. Over the six-day trip, Aaron and Besa visited companies, schools, and organizations in Mainz, Pforzheim, Freiburg, and Stuttgart. They gained valuable insights into the renowned German dual-education model and its application in advanced manufacturing. This experience provided an excellent opportunity to connect with international experts, exchange ideas, and further enhance Harper College's apprenticeship programs to better serve our students and employer partners.

