

Higher Learning Commission 2018



Executive Summary

Assurance Argument

HARPER COLLEGE
50
Years

PROUD PAST
STRONG FUTURE
1967 - 2017



MISSION

Harper College enriches its diverse communities by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education. Harper College, in collaboration with its partners, inspires the transformation of individual lives, the workforce, and society.

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY:

An environment where relationships and practices are based on trust.

RESPECT:

Interactions which add dignity to ourselves, our relationships with others and our organization.

EXCELLENCE:

Student, employee and organizational success through a creative and responsive work environment by exceeding the needs and expectations of all.

COLLABORATION:

Accomplishment of better results by working together than otherwise likely to occur by working alone.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Our vision is to enrich our world by educating culturally literate students who recognize the opportunities of and make positive contributions to a global society.

- We create a culture of scholarship, integrity and innovation rooted in the diversity of our Harper community.
- We inspire our Harper community to believe that there is a transformative impact when people from different world views work together collaboratively.
- We partner with our community to demonstrate that it is possible for people of all viewpoints and persuasions to respect and learn from each other.

We are committed to fully engaging the wealth of thought, backgrounds, languages and life experiences of our students, colleagues and community to foster an environment of academic excellence and student success.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

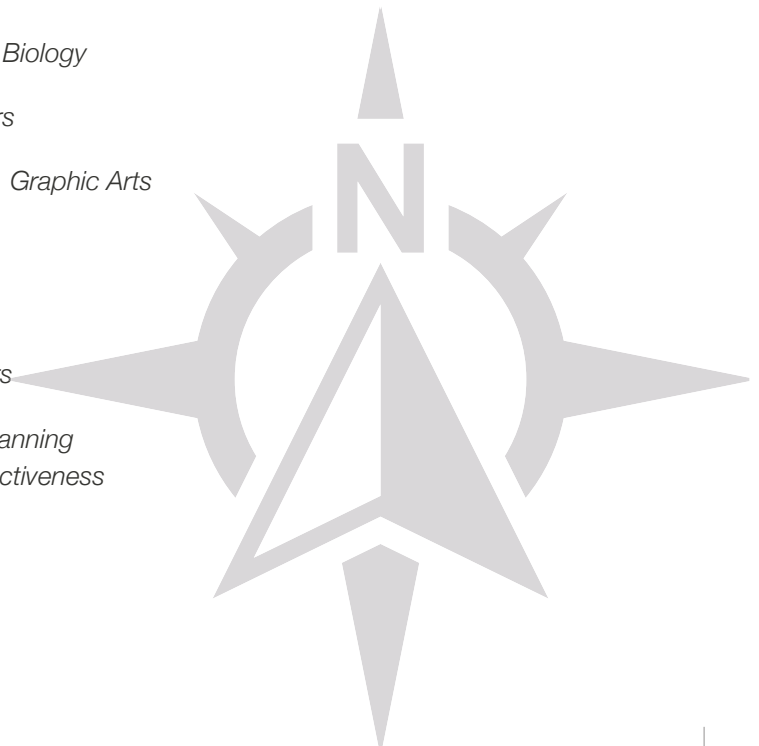
We, at Harper College, believe that our charge is to facilitate active learning and foster the knowledge, critical thinking and life/work skills required for participation in our global society. We work with our community partners to enrich the intellectual, cultural and economic fabric of our district. We believe that excellence in education must occur in an ethical climate of integrity and respect. We hold that the strength of our society is rooted in our diversity and that it is through synergy that we achieve excellence.

Dr. Kenneth L. Ender
President



STEERING COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Julie Ellefson, Co-Chair | <i>Professor, Chemistry</i> |
| Darlene Schlenbecker, Co-Chair | <i>Executive Director, Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness</i> |
| Colleen Burns | <i>Professor, Philosophy</i> |
| Dr. Mark Mrozinski | <i>Assistant Vice President, Workforce Development and Executive Dean, Community Education</i> |
| Dr. Brett Fulkerson-Smith | <i>Associate Professor, Philosophy</i> |
| Michelé Smith | <i>Vice President of Workforce Solutions and Associate Provost for Curriculum</i> |
| Nellie Khalil | <i>Assistant Professor, Biology</i> |
| Dr. Kimberly Chavis | <i>Dean, Health Careers</i> |
| Patricia Bruner | <i>Associate Professor, Graphic Arts</i> |
| Dr. Jennifer Berne | <i>Dean, Liberal Arts</i> |
| Dr. Kelly Page | <i>Professor, Physics</i> |
| Dr. Travaris Harris | <i>Dean, Student Affairs</i> |
| Susan Egan, Evidence Coordinator | <i>Project Assistant, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness</i> |



OPEN PATHWAY ACCREDITATION

Open Pathway is a process for maintaining Higher Learning Commission accreditation that follows a 10-year cycle and is focused on quality assurance and improvement. Institutions must demonstrate, through evidence, that they meet the five criteria for accreditation. The Open Pathway process has four requirements, including the Quality Initiative, a project tailored to Harper's priorities and focused on institutional improvement. Requirements include:

1. **Submission and acceptance of a Quality Initiative (QI) Project Proposal and Report**
(located on the HLC portal page)
 - QI Project: "Improving Student Achievement through Broad-based Evaluation and Planning"
Major outcomes of the project included:
 - Completion of a SWOT analysis
 - Revision of the mission statement
 - Refocusing of the key performance indicators of the College, known as the Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs)
 - Development, implementation and ongoing work of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan
 - Creation of dashboards to track progress towards IEM and strategic goal targets
2. **Submission of a comprehensive Assurance Argument (located on the HLC portal page)**
 - A 35,000 word document articulating how Harper meets the criteria for accreditation
3. **Submission of an Evidence File**
 - A collection of documents supporting the narrative of the Assurance Argument
4. **On-site Comprehensive evaluation – March 5-6, 2018**



HLC CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

CRITERION ONE. MISSION

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Harper College is committed to creating a culture where the mission guides actions, drives innovation, and inspires excellence for the increasingly diverse community. Beginning in 2013, Harper initiated a comprehensive review and revision of its mission statement. Input was provided by hundreds of internal and external constituents. The resulting statement is clear, concise, and relevant and describes the important work of the College. The mission statement has been effectively communicated and socialized throughout the campus, and faculty and staff understand their roles in carrying out the mission. The mission statement appears publicly on the College website and in publications geared to students and the public at large.

The College takes seriously its role in the community and society. Particular attention is paid to diversity and Harper has been recognized externally for its efforts. A Diversity and Inclusion Task Force brought renewed attention to matters of diversity and inclusion, and set targets for institutional metrics around diversity. The task force report served as the diversity and inclusion plan and has realized significant impact in advancing diversity and inclusion on Harper's campus. The College has recognized that room for improvement remains and continues to focus efforts on increasing the diversity of faculty and administrators, and creating a culture of inclusion that values and respects each member of the College community.

Harper values its broader role in the community. The College has worked to align its mission with the educational system of which Harper is a part, coordinating our educational offerings with sender high school districts and baccalaureate granting institutions. Further, Harper offers education, training, and apprenticeships to serve the surrounding business community. Harper also serves the community at large through cultural arts programming and the many campus facilities available for public use.



CRITERION TWO. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Harper College acts with integrity and its conduct is ethical and responsible. Integrity guides the operations, policies, and practices of the College. The Board Policy Code of Ethics addresses the expected ethical standards of the Board of Trustees as well as all employees of the College. This policy highlights the importance of honesty, integrity, and caring in the educational environment.

Harper presents itself clearly and completely for all stakeholders. This is evidenced through engagement in a transparent and public budget process, which demonstrates both fiscal responsibility and accountability to its diverse community. Additionally, the College Catalog/Student Handbook, which includes the cost of attendance, is readily available to the student body.

Board meetings are open to the public and shared governance meetings are open to the campus community inclusive of students. The autonomy given to the President, administrative staff, and faculty by the Board of Trustees, over the financial, operational, and curricular business of the College is indicative of the trust that the Board has in the ethical practices of the College staff and senior leadership.

Harper is committed to ensuring academic freedom and clear communication of students' rights. The College also demonstrates a high level of integrity in the classroom where freedom of thought and expression are welcomed and encouraged. Opportunities for freedom of expression exist throughout the campus, both inside and outside of the classroom.

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CRITERION THREE. TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Harper College provides high quality education by ensuring its programs are appropriate to higher education. Communication with advisory committees and specialized accreditation enable programs to maintain industry standards. The inclusion of most transfer courses in the Illinois Articulation Initiative serves as evidence that they provide the foundation for upper-level coursework. Harper is committed to curricula that are consistent across modalities through standard course outlines that include student learning outcomes.

Degree programs include general education coursework designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of educated individuals. General education outcomes are integrated into a wide range of courses to ensure students communicate, reason, think critically, use information, and examine diverse perspectives. Students and faculty share their creative and scholarly work through publications, presentations, and exhibits.

Harper faculty and staff are qualified with many holding credentials that exceed the minimum educational requirements of their positions. Continuous learning is valued at the College as evidenced by the resources provided for professional development. The Academy for Teaching Excellence provides a variety of programming and instructional support for all faculty. The Harper Leadership Institute provides a unique opportunity for all employees to enhance their professional effectiveness and develop leadership skills.

Student support services are available to assist all students in reaching their academic and career goals. Two Presidential/Institutional Priorities—that all new credential-seeking students are assigned an advisor/counselor and that all degree seeking students enroll in a Start Smart experience in their first semester—indicate the College’s commitment to student success. To enhance students’ educational experiences and increase their engagement with the institution, Harper offers numerous co-curricular clubs and organizations. Many of these organizations include civic engagement events which strengthen communities while promoting civic responsibility.



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CRITERION FOUR. TEACHING AND LEARNING: EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Harper College demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs. The College follows a rigorous and consistent program review process, which includes action plans to improve program effectiveness. Further, this responsibility is displayed through the authority the College maintains over curriculum, expectations for student learning, and faculty qualifications. Quality is also exhibited through the success of Harper students after earning a credential.

Harper is dedicated to a culture of assessment and continuous improvement. As the assessment culture has grown, support for assessment has also expanded. In 2009, both an Outcomes Assessment Office and an assessment shared governance committee were established to support and promote assessment throughout the campus, and ensure the use of assessment results to improve student learning. While participation in outcomes assessment is strong, the College recognizes the opportunity to increase levels of engagement.

The College has established ambitious yet attainable goals for student persistence and completion through the Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs). Data are collected, disaggregated and analyzed to develop and inform strategies designed to improve student persistence and completion. The College’s focus on persistence is further reinforced through the appointment of a retention officer.

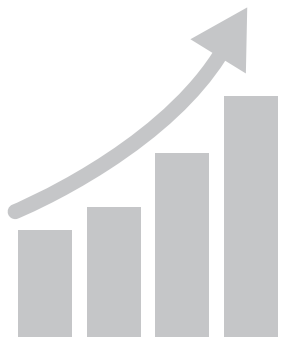
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CRITERION FIVE. RESOURCES, PLANNING, AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Harper College practices innovative planning and effective resource allocation to support its mission. Harper's proactive response to fiscal challenges demonstrates its ability to maintain a balanced budget, without sacrificing the educational experience of its students. The College manages resources appropriately to support the advancement of its physical and technological infrastructures, which has resulted in the expansion and enhancement of instructional support, learning, and study space for students.

Harper's strategic planning process elicits input from students, staff, faculty, community members and ultimately, the Board of Trustees. In addition, the College's shared governance structure further strengthens the appropriateness of its planning processes by soliciting feedback from all stakeholders within the institution. This culture of inclusion ensures that the College's policies are vetted with representation from the many diverse perspectives that exist among Harper's community. Comprehensive assessment, open accountability and informed decision-making processes are features indicative of a progressive institution with procedures and policies in alignment with its mission. The College's physical and technological infrastructure, along with comprehensive fiscal and strategic planning, increase Harper's ability to continue providing excellent educational opportunities to its students despite ongoing state budget challenges.





PROFILE OF HARPER COLLEGE

Harper College is a comprehensive community college located in Palatine, Illinois, serving High School Districts 211, 214, and Unit District 220. Harper is dedicated to student success initiatives focused on three strategic directions: Inclusion, Engagement and Achievement and is committed to its mission of enriching its diverse communities by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education. Harper College, in collaboration with its partners, inspires the transformation of individual lives, the workforce, and society.

More than 42% of Harper’s students are Hispanic, Asian American, or African American. Nearly 23% of students receive Pell grants. Sixty-six percent of the student body enrolls on a part-time basis. Roughly 52% of students are between the ages of 19 and 24, and 53% intend to transfer to a 4-year colleges or university. Student success increases each year, currently with a 28% graduation rate and a 30% transfer rate.

Harper is governed by a Board of Trustees, elected by the voters in its district, and one student representative, who has an advisory role and is elected by the student body. The College is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Harper’s operating revenue comes from tuition and fees (43%), state subsidy (4%), local taxes (52%), and other sources (1%).

HISTORY

Named for the originator of the community college concept, William Rainey Harper College is a comprehensive, open door community college—one of 48 in the state that make up the Illinois Community College System. The College’s District No. 512 was established by voter referendum in 1965, and Harper offered its first classes in 1967.

Throughout its history, Harper has had a record of monumental growth. The initial 1967 enrollment of 1,725 students jumped to 3,700 in one year, doubling projections. When the doors opened on Harper’s newly acquired campus in 1969, 5,350 students were enrolled. Since then enrollment has grown to over 25,000 (credit) students. With a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 9,700, as well as a full-time staff of 750 employees, including 228 full-time faculty, Harper is one of the largest community college in the state.

Harper’s President, Dr. Kenneth Ender, was appointed in July 2009 as the institution’s fifth president. Dr. Ender and the College Board of Trustees set out to develop a new strategic plan to increase student success. The College is implementing its second strategic plan under the Ender presidency. The 2016–2019 plan commits the College to three strategic directions; Inclusion, Engagement and Achievement.

THE COMMUNITY

The Harper College District No. 512 includes portions of four counties: Cook (which makes up the majority of the area and population of Harper's district), Lake, Kane and McHenry. The municipalities that are located within Harper's district range in size from Tower Lake's 1,255 residents to Arlington Heights' 75,926 residents. An estimated 536,000 people live within the district. Of these, approximately 23% are age 17 and under, and 28% were age 55 and over. A majority of residents are Caucasian (66%). Of the remaining population, 16% are Hispanic, 14% are Asian, and 3% are African American.

Household incomes in Harper's district communities are striking in both range and in the changes between 2010 and 2015. In 2015, median household income varied from a low of \$56,110 in Wheeling to a high of \$173,650 in South Barrington. Median incomes in 16 of the 23 communities were above the Illinois median of \$57,574. However, incomes in all but seven of the communities decreased between 2010 and 2015, ranging from a decline of 1% to 25%. These trends represent a decrease in the amount of household income available for education.

Harper College and its community enjoy a fruitful and successful relationship. The College has achieved a 98% satisfaction rate from its graduates. In fall 2008, Harper College district voters passed a \$153.6 million capital bond referendum to support the facilities enhancements. In addition, the non-profit Harper College Educational Foundation actively raises funds for the College through individual, foundation, and corporate donors. The large number of financial services, manufacturing, and healthcare institutions in the district are among Harper's supporters.

SERVICES OFFERED

Harper College offers associate degrees, certificate programs, and the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. The College offers seven associate degrees, five of which are designed for students who will transfer to a four-year college or university to complete a bachelor's degree. The five are the Associate in Arts (AA), the Associate in Science (AS), the Associate in Fine Arts–Art (AFA), the Associate in Fine Arts–Music (AFA) and the Associate in Engineering Science (AES) degrees. The sixth, the Associate in General Studies (AGS) degree program, is designed as an individualized program option meeting needs not met by other degree programs. The seventh, the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree, is awarded upon completion of a two-year career program and prepares graduates for immediate entry into a specific career field.

Harper also provides certificate programs, designed with prescribed courses to meet specific needs of the community, including area businesses and industries. In addition, the College offers contract training to local industry through the Harper Business Solutions, provides non-credit learning opportunities for students of all ages through Continuing Education, and supports students who need high school equivalency and ESL services through its Liberal Arts Division.

As an open door, open enrollment learning institution, Harper provides an array of student services to meet student need, including access and disability services, multi-cultural enrichment and support services, summer bridge programming to prepare students for college-level rigor, student clubs and activities, sports and recreation teams, and many other opportunities.

FACILITIES

Harper College supports a wide range of programs with a 200-acre campus in Palatine and two satellite facilities: the Harper Professional Center in Schaumburg and the Learning and Career Center in Prospect Heights. The campus is comprised of 24 buildings and offers state-of-the-art science and technology laboratories and classrooms, a comprehensive library and learning resources center, computer labs, lecture halls, theaters, a wellness and sports center, and the Wojcik Conference Center.

