



**Capital
Development
Board**
Building a Better Illinois

State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Capital Development Board
Tamakia Edwards, Executive Director

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Harper College Breaks Ground on New Canning Student Center to Enhance Campus Life and Student Success

Palatine – Harper College has officially broken ground on the new Canning Student Center, a state-of-the-art 144,000-square-foot facility that will centralize key student services, foster campus life, and house critical academic programs. The facility, which will be located in the heart of Harper’s campus, represents a significant investment in student success and community engagement, supported by \$46.4 million in state funding through Rebuild Illinois and \$55.3 million in institutional funds, which includes support from a referendum overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2018.

“Through Rebuild Illinois, not only are we revitalizing public infrastructure but we’re also investing in our students and communities,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “The new Canning Student Center will be a hub of opportunity, providing hands-on training, essential services, and a welcoming space for students to connect and grow. This groundbreaking is a testament to our commitment to Illinois’ community college students, ensuring that they have the resources and support they need to build successful careers and a brighter future.”

The Canning Student Center will provide an essential hub for student services such as Admissions Outreach, Academic Advising, Access and Disability Services, the Cultural Center, and the Job Placement Resource Center. Designed to serve as the epicenter of student engagement, it will also offer a variety of spaces for student organizations, dining, programming, and personal well-being, including a meditation room and a community staircase to encourage social interaction and engagement.

“The Canning Student Center embodies Harper College’s commitment to fostering student success, building a welcoming and engaged community and creating pathways to opportunity,” **said Dr. Avis Proctor, president of Harper College**. “This transformational facility will not only centralize critical services and support, but also provide innovative spaces for learning, student development programming, collaboration, and personal growth. We are deeply grateful to the state of Illinois and our community for making this vision a reality and investing in the future of our students and our region.”

In addition to these student-centered spaces, the Canning Student Center will feature new instructional facilities for Harper's Hospitality Management programs, including teaching kitchens, a mock hotel, and restaurant environments. These facilities will support students in Culinary Arts, Hotel Management, Food Service Management, and Tourism, giving them hands-on training that will prepare them for successful careers in the hospitality industry.

A standout feature of the building will be the University Center, which brings together higher education partners including DePaul University, Northern Illinois University, Roosevelt University, and Southern Illinois University. This collaboration will allow students to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees on Harper's campus, providing a convenient and affordable pathway to a four-year degree.

The Canning Student Center is named in recognition of Rita and John Canning, longtime supporters of Harper College, and the Rita and John Canning Women's Program. Their generous contributions have helped make this transformative project a reality.

"The Canning Student Center is a pivotal step forward in creating a modern, inclusive, and engaging campus experience that will help students succeed both academically and personally," **said TJ Edwards, Executive Director of the Illinois Capital Development Board.** "The Capital Development Board is proud to oversee the design and construction of this project in accordance with the protocol for state-appropriated projects, ensuring that the facility meets the highest standards and serves the students and community for generations to come."

"Harper College is an integral institution on the pathway to success for undergraduate and continuing education students in this region of Illinois. I have long been advocating for the construction of a student center here, and I'm truly thankful that we've reached this important date," **said State Senator Cristina Castro (D – Elgin).** "Investments like this not only enhance the educational environment, but also serve as an important recruitment tool to grow the student body."

The Canning Student Center is scheduled for completion in summer 2027 and will be a cornerstone in the ongoing effort to make Illinois a top destination for education, student support, and community engagement.

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About Harper College

Harper College is a nationally recognized community college located in Palatine, Illinois, offering a wide range of degree and certificate programs. With a commitment to student success, Harper provides high-quality education, workforce training, and community services that help students achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals.

For more information, please visit www.harpercollege.edu.

About the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB)

The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) oversees the construction of new state facilities, such as prisons, state parks, mental health institutions, and college and university projects. In addition, CDB is responsible for renovation and rehabilitation projects at over 8,770 state-owned buildings spread over more than 100 million square feet of floor space.