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# Biology professor to lead HCC's 76th Commencement

**HOLYOKE** — Joseph Bruseo, professor of biology and recipient of the 2023 Elaine Marieb Faculty Chair for Teaching Excellence Award, will lead the procession of graduates and give the keynote address at the 76th Commencement of Holyoke Community College on Saturday, June 3.



Joseph Bruseo

Commencement exercises begin at 10 a.m. at the MassMutual Center in Springfield.

A resident of Palmer, Bruseo has been teaching biology at HCC since 2005.

"It is a big honor," said Bruseo. "I know there's a lot of people that are up for this every year. I kind of see it as an award for just doing my job. I don't try to do anything special or above and beyond just to chase an award. Everything is student motivated. Their success is my success."

The Marieb Award, endowed by the late HCC

professor emeritus Elaine Marieb '80, recognizes a full-time member of the faculty for outstanding classroom teaching. Award recipients serve for one year, receive a small stipend for professional development, lead the procession at Commencement, and give the keynote graduation speech.

This year, HCC will confer associate degrees and certificates to more than 600 graduates from the class of 2023.

A handful of students from this year's class will also be featured on stage. Environmental Science major Henry Zucco '23 of Holyoke will be the student orator; Latinx Studies major Mishie Serrano '23 of Westfield will deliver a spoken word performance of original poetry; Veterinary and Animal Science / Veterinary Technician major Kelandra

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Hurd '23 of Amherst, the Student Senate president, will present the class gift; and Liberal Arts major Luis Pinto-Jimenez '23 of Holyoke will offer a recognition of student ornamentation.

For those who cannot attend in person, HCC will stream the Commencement ceremony live over the Internet. The live stream will be available through a link on the main page of the college website, [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu), where other details about this year's Commencement can also be found.

The ceremony will be American Sign Language interpreted.

Bruseo earned his bachelor's degree in biology from Rutgers's University in his home state of New Jersey before going on for a master's degree in wildlife management from Frostburg State University in Maryland and a Ph.D. in biology from Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

Along the way, and before coming to HCC, he worked as a small mammal

biologist at Wildlife International and a lab coordinator at Amherst College.

In a preview of his speech, Bruseo shared that he had a rough start himself in college.

"I always relate to students that, in my first undergrad year, I ended up withdrawing from my general bio course because I was gonna fail it. I took it again the next semester and got an A," he said. "So, I tell them, you try your best. Not everyone is at the same point of readiness. Learning is a building process. You go step by step."

"Particularly at a community college, there's a wide diversity of learning styles, students with outside commitments," he said. "You're always juggling. Everyone is in a different spot. Some need more work. Others are a little more self-sufficient, but, in the end, you kind of get everybody going in the same direction."

And on June 3, he will certainly be getting everyone going in the same direction as he leads the procession into the MassMutual Center for Commencement.