

HOLYOKE

HCC begins search for new president

By RON CHIMELIS

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The search for the next president of Holyoke Community College is underway.

HCC has assembled a 21-member search committee and retained the Pauly Group Inc., a national consulting firm that assists in the recruiting and hiring of community college executives.

Angela Provart, Pauly Group president, is working directly with the committee. Provart previously assisted the college in the presidential search that led to the hiring of Christina Royal, HCC's fourth president.

Royal has been HCC president since January of 2017. In August, she announced she would retire after the 2022-2023 academic year.

Her last day will be July 14, and she expects to assist with the transition to the next administration. Her involvement in the transition speaks to her far-reaching influence with innovation, technology, inclusiveness, student services and expansion of relationships with area four-year institutions.

Royal led the college through the COVID-19 pandemic as well as its 75th anniversary in 2021. She said she is leaving to pursue personal goals.

The search committee held its first meeting on Nov. 3.

"I realize that a lot of people are paying attention to this search, and they should



Holyoke Community College President Christina Royal will retire in July after a tenure that saw transformational change at the college. (DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

be," said search committee chair Eleanor P. Williams, a member of the HCC Board of Trustees and an attorney at MassMutual.

"The decision about who will lead HCC is an important one. The committee will put forward a slate of candidates, one of whom will be the next president of the college. We are all grateful to have been chosen to serve on this committee, and we take our responsibility very seriously."

Provart hosted a virtual Town Hall with members of the HCC campus community recently to learn more about the college's needs and expectations. A second Town Hall is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 30, from

noon to 1 p.m. for HCC faculty, staff and students.

Williams said the search committee hopes to select a slate of semifinal candidates by March and conduct interviews later that month. Finalists will be invited to visit the college and meet with the Board of Trustees and various campus groups in early to mid-April.

"Everyone who interacts with the finalists will have an opportunity to share their feedback," Williams said.

The search committee includes five members of the HCC Board of Trustees — Williams, Vanessa Smith, Ted Hebert, Ivonne Vidal, and Robert Gilbert, the board chair.

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faculty members, eight HCC staff members representing various campus constituencies; one HCC Foundation trustee; and one student; as well as Anthony Soto, receiver-superintendent of Holyoke Public Schools; and Robert Awkward, assistant commissioner for academic effectiveness at the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

More information on the search for HCC's fifth president will be posted on the college website.