

Alumni Connection

HOLYOKE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

FALL 2018

FUTURE FOCUS

HCC unveils a new blueprint
for the years ahead

Success for All
Strengthening HCC as a
Hispanic Serving Institution

AND:
*Student Emergency Fund
Prompts Donor Challenge*

DEAR READERS



Christina Royal, Ph.D.,
HCC President

With the fall semester underway, HCC is buzzing with energy and renewed purpose as we begin the work of putting our plans for the future into action.

As you may recall, last year, students, faculty, staff, alumni, board members and community stakeholders came together to articulate our commitment to students, our role in the community, and our institutional values. The result was the creation of new mission, vision, values and student experience statements (published in this issue of the Alumni Connection), as well as strategies and objectives that will guide our work.

Why are we doing this? The world around us is rapidly changing. To build a sustainable future for our college and meet the evolving needs of our students, HCC must change as well. This process illuminated the importance of nurturing a culture of innovation and a willingness to be bold and strategic in focusing our resources and efforts.

Educate. Inspire. Connect. Three words now capture HCC's mission, which succinctly states who we are and what we do.

As alumni, you are the extension of this mission out in the world. I invite you to consider the ways in which you might embrace HCC's new mission in service of our students and their future. It truly takes a village.

As I near completion of my second year as president, I am more impressed than ever by the achievements and commitment of our alumni. Thank you for your example and for all you do for HCC.



Bonnie Zima Dowd
Director, Alumni
Relations

As an HCC alumna, you know the challenges our students face. Maybe you had to choose between buying books or putting food on the table for your family. Perhaps you watched a friend leave HCC because she couldn't afford both car repairs *and* tuition.

Too often, a financial emergency can be the beginning of the end of college. Peg Wendlandt '58 knows first hand the life-altering power of receiving help in times of crisis. That's why, last year, Peg and her husband, Gary, contributed \$20,000 to the President's Student Emergency Fund.

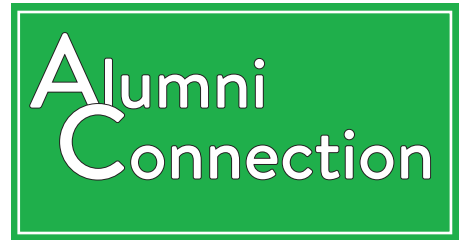
Established in 2017 by President Christina Royal, the fund supports students facing unexpected hardships. Whether it's a rent deposit, car repair, medical bill, or unanticipated trip home due to a family emergency, the fund provides a small safety net to help students stay focused on their studies – and on track toward graduation.

Knowing what a difference this aid can make, Peg and Gary have decided to give even more, and hopefully inspire you to join them. From now through Dec. 31, 2018, they will match every gift made to the President's Student Emergency Fund, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$20,000.

We are so excited to announce this extraordinary challenge from the Wendlandts. Your gift of any size will be matched, making the impact that much greater.

What an inspiring message to send to today's students.

Dawn E. Bryden '89
President, Alumni
Council



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Bonnie Zima Dowd, ex officio

The HCC Album photo in our Spring 2018 issue brought back a lot of memories and inspired a lot of letters about the 1968 fire that destroyed HCC's downtown campus. Here are excerpts from a few. We'll share more in the next issue.

BREAKING NEWS

For me, it will always be a moment frozen in time. I lived on Dwight Street, a few blocks away. As I made the trek up Beach Street toward the school for my afternoon class, I could see the thick, black smoke billowing from the building. I parked the car, jumped out, and just stood in total shock and amazement. Once it all sunk in, I instinctively ran to the nearby coffee shop to drop a dime in the pay phone and call the local radio station (WREB) where I had a part-time job as a disc jockey. They immediately put me on the air with my firsthand account of what I was witnessing across the street. Little did I know, that would be my first "Breaking News" report of a broadcast career that continues to this very day. While a career in television was not on my radar screen at the time of the fire, after graduating from Boston University in 1971 I took a job as a director at WWLP-TV. A year later I switched gears and joined the WWLP news department as a reporter/anchor, eventually moving to Michigan where I anchor/report for the NBC & Fox affiliate in Flint.

William "Bill" Harris '69
Grand Blanc, Michigan

CLOSE CALL

The alarm sounded during my music appreciation class. My classroom was on the third floor and I was thinking it was another fire drill. As I walked down the hall to the stairway there was a faint smell of smoke. At that time, I realized this may not be a fire drill. We were directed to a sidewalk across the street. Turning around I got my first view of the burning building. Flames were visible above the classroom I had just left. A few minutes later fire spread to my classroom. That is when I realized there would be no saving this old building.

George A. Fournier '75
Northampton, Massachusetts



INDELIBLE IMAGES

I was in 6th grade at Kirkland School, which was on the same street as the former Holyoke high school building. We were told the old high school was on fire so we rushed to the window and could see the smoke and flames. It is a very vivid memory for me even to this day – 50 years later. In 1974, I graduated from the new Holyoke High School. My recollection is that after the fire, HCC had a fundraiser where they sold original bricks from the burnt building. Each brick had a stenciled image of the school's facade.

Bob Radowski '77
Ludlow, Massachusetts

COLLEGE CREDIT

Earlier that year I was actually appointed as the official photographer for HCC. On the day of the fire I had been at morning classes and driven home where I received a phone call asking me to get back to the school because a fire had broken out. I

drove back right away and arrived to see the building engulfed in flames and a huge scene of first responders and bystanders. I took lots of pictures that day, but the picture that is most memorable for me is the one of President Frost with a broken heart, standing and staring and watching his world on fire. Perhaps he was already thinking about what to do next because within days we were in college again, attending classes in a number of different buildings. But it became clear that Holyoke Community College was not about the buildings, it was about the students and the faculty. At first we made do with makeshift solutions and then makeshift became temporary and temporary became routine. And to our credit we continued to educate and graduate our students, and the rest is history. I owe so much to Holyoke Community College and look forward to a visit in the near future.

Arnie Goldstein '70
Bellevue, Washington

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

HCC welcomes letters from readers. Send your remarks to Editor, Alumni Connection, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040 or email comments to alumni@hcc.edu. Please include your name, class year, home address and telephone number.

HCC earns Patrick Prize



Heart Moser '18 leads Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito on a tour of the new HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute during the April 12 grand opening celebration.

San Juan mayor visits HCC



Carmen Yulín Cruz, the mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, shares a moment with HCC student Esai Santiago-Bigas during her April visit to HCC.

'I'm here for you'



HCC student Cindy Soriano of Northampton poses with author Esmeralda Santiago outside the Leslie Phillips Theater.

The Boston Foundation awarded HCC the 2018 Deval Patrick Prize for expanding its culinary arts and hospitality programs. In announcing the award June 5, Rosalin Acosta, Mass. secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, cited HCC's efforts to scale up the labor pool to meet the needs of employers in the hospitality and food service industry. Most impressive, she said, was the opening of the \$7.5 million, 20,000 square-foot HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute in downtown Holyoke. "The facility is the region's only state-of-the-art hospitality and culinary arts center and will help increase experiential learning opportunities, especially for hands-on training," she said. The institute opened for the start of the Spring 2018 semester, followed by a grand opening celebration in April.

Read more at: hcc.edu/patrick

During an April tour of western Massachusetts, San Juan mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz stopped by HCC to talk to students in two Learning Community classes. Cruz came to prominence after Hurricane Maria, when her vigorous and vocal campaign for aid for the people of Puerto Rico drew national attention. On campus, she made a special connection with HCC student Esai Santiago-Bigas, who had relocated to Holyoke after the September 2017 storm. "It was a great experience being able to meet her," he said. "She stood up for the people of Puerto Rico in a time of need and has been an inspiration to me after such a tragic thing happened to the island. Meeting her has been a great motivation for me, and it's something I'll remember for a long time to come."

Puerto Rican author Esmeralda Santiago filled every seat in HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater – and then some – during her March appearance at HCC. Many people came clutching copies of her 1994 memoir, *When I Was Puerto Rican*, and waited in a long line later to have them signed. "Just to come here and see her and hear her speak – it was so meaningful and inspiring to me," said HCC student Cindy Soriano. As Santiago took the stage, those who weren't already standing rose to their feet, clapping and cheering. "I've always longed to be able to look out at an audience like this, where you can see all the humanity that I know exists in the world," she said. "I'm here, really, for you. I'm with you."

Read more at: hcc.edu/santiago

Theatrical Acclaim



A scene from the Fall 2017 HCC Theater Department production of "Rhinoceros," by Eugene Ionesco, directed by HCC theater professor Tim Cochran.

One play was a drama about an abused woman trying to rebuild her life after getting out of prison. The other was a comedic parable about the dangers of conformity. Both HCC Theater Department productions won ensemble-acting awards at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in February. HCC's production of "Getting Out," by playwright Marsha Norman, received the award for "Outstanding Ensemble Performance" for the Spring 2017 semester. The college production of "Rhinoceros," by Eugene Ionesco, won the same award for the Fall 2017 semester. "This is a really nice recognition because we're in competition with four-year institutions, and it's a large region," said HCC theater professor Pat Sandoval '84, director of "Getting Out." "This is a real credit to our department because it shows that the students are working together to create a place and time, and it comes across that they are well rehearsed and ready to perform."

Read more at: hcc.edu/theater

All-American History



All-American James Moriarty '18 during a track meet earlier this year.

With a throw of 175 feet, James Moriarty '18 earned a spot on the medal stand and a place in Holyoke Community College athletic history. Moriarty took second place in the men's javelin event at the NJCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships at Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica, New York, in May. Though edged out of first by a mere five feet, his throw garnered Moriarty All-American honors. He is the first HCC athlete to ever be named an All American in track and field. "It's great for the college and great for James," said Thomas Stewart, HCC's director of Athletics. "It's fantastic." Moriarty graduated from HCC June 2 with honors and his associate degree in Communications, Media and Theater Arts. He'll throw the javelin next spring for the track and field team at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Read more at: hcc.edu/javelin

Garden in a Box



This "Leafy Green Machine" from Freight Farms sits in a lot next to the new HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute on Race Street in downtown Holyoke.

On the outside, it looks like an ordinary shipping container. On the inside, though, it's a "Leafy Green Machine" that can grow as much produce in a year as two acres of farmland. Two of these Freight Farms containers sit side by side in a previously vacant lot on Race Street in downtown Holyoke, next to the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute. Thanks to an investment of \$208,000 from the state, HCC students will work alongside urban farmers from the nonprofit Nuestras Raices, learning hydroponic gardening techniques. Some of the lettuce, spinach, basil, cilantro and other leafy greens and herbs grown inside will be sold to the culinary institute, HCC on-campus dining services, and local restaurants, and some will be donated to help feed hungry people on campus and in the community. "These container farms provide a means of addressing food insecurity in Holyoke while at the same time offering experiential learning opportunities," said HCC president Christina Royal.

Read more at: hcc.edu/freight

HCC president Christina Royal shares a laugh with student Haley Woods, a member of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, during the May 23 Future Walk celebration, when HCC's Strategic Plan was unveiled.



HCC unveils a new blueprint for the years ahead

FUTURE FOCUS

By CHRIS YURKO

As a candidate for the position of president at Holyoke Community College, Christina Royal did her homework. Before her interviews, she studied all she could about the college and combed the HCC website for information about its history, people and programs.

Among the items she reviewed was the HCC mission statement, which, she noted to herself, went on for six, packed paragraphs.

Later, during her first days as president, she revisited that mission statement on the college website, and copied and pasted it into a Word document, realizing then that it filled an entire page, single spaced.

“My first thought was, How does everybody know what the essence of the work we’re doing is if the mission statement is this long?” she recently recalled.

To find out, she started asking faculty, staff and other administrators – *What does the HCC mission statement say?* “Nobody, not a single person,” she recalls, “could recite it.”

They can now.

The old mission statement – RIP – in service since 2005, checked in at 479 words. The new one is but three, and here they are:

Educate. Inspire. Connect.

“I love our mission statement,” Royal said in a July interview. “It’s clean, crisp. It’s on point, and I think it’ll resonate very well. All three words really speak to the core mission of what we do. There’s a level of focus now to our mission that you don’t need a whole page to say. You can say it in three words.”

While the words may seem simple and obvious, they are the result of a year-long initiative unlike anything the college has gone through in recent memory. This “Strategic Planning Process” included hundreds of faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, and community members who engaged in various configurations for workshops, brainstorming sessions, discussions, lectures, brown bag lunches, surveys, focus groups, forums and more to produce a blueprint to guide HCC for the next four years and construct a foundation for a future beyond even that.

HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2022

MISSION

Educate. Inspire. Connect.

VISION

Holyoke Community College aspires to be a college of academic excellence known for helping students overcome barriers to success.

VALUES

Kindness, inclusion and trust are the foundation of the work that we do together. Innovation and collaboration enable us to explore and implement the ideas that will shape our future.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Holyoke Community College commits to delivering a transformational student experience characterized by:

- A “connection network” that draws people, services and knowledge together to address students’ fundamental needs and thus ensure their readiness to succeed at HCC.
- An affordable, relevant education provided by talented faculty and resulting in career and transfer opportunities that enable students to thrive.
- An approach to educating the whole person that continuously meets students where they are—socially, financially, educationally and geographically—and engages them in real-world learning experiences.
- A vibrant, connected college community that enriches the learning experience, delivers relentless encouragement and builds life-long connections.

STRATEGIES

#1: TEACHING & LEARNING

Enhance and expand innovative teaching and learning practices that support quality education for all.

#2: EQUITY, INCLUSION & STUDENT SUCCESS

Work with the communities we serve to increase equity.

#3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TRANSFER

Align programs with workforce demands, student needs for transfer and employment opportunities.

#4: SUSTAINABILITY

Create a sustainable model for long-term growth.

Besides a new mission statement, the Strategic Planning Process also produced a few things HCC has never had before: an aspirational vision statement, a values statement, and a pledge to students to deliver a transformational college experience. On top of that, the effort produced a set of four strategies and nine objectives that will guide day-to-day college operations as HCC recalibrates its priorities to address changing demographics, educational expectations, and the needs of students.

You can read all these in the graphic that accompanies this interview with President Royal, during which she explains what the Strategic Planning Process was all about.

What is a Strategic Plan and how is it different than the typical planning the college is used to?

I would describe the process that existed before as more of an operations plan to identify the day-to-day work that has to occur in order to move forward. The difference with a strategic plan is the strategy element; it’s being strategic about our future, figuring out what we want to accomplish in the next couple of years in support of our students and the communities we serve. What do we need to do? What issues do we need to address? How are our students doing and how can we position them to do better? What issues are our communities going through and what role does the college have in that process?

Why did the college need to do this now?

It was important to get started because there is an increasing level of accountability in public higher education and I didn’t feel we could afford to wait. There is a changing expectation with every new person that’s in office in the White House and the Dept. of Education at a national level and an increasing emphasis on outcomes and performance. When you’re talking about trying to move the needle on some of these very difficult types of issues we need to start sooner rather than later. For example, if you put together a pilot to test a new initiative to help improve completion rates, you might not know the impact of that pilot for a number of years. So I think it’s important that we start now, that we start to create a culture of experimentation, of being data informed in looking at what we’re trying, that we look at best practices and we take into consideration our specific communities to come up with new ideas on how to move forward.

What are those “difficult types of issues”?

Student success is a top priority, and many times, fostering that success begins with our work with high schools to ensure students are prepared for college-level work and life.

HCC has tremendously high-achieving students – it has given me such pride to witness their accomplishments day after day. However, we must remember we are educating students from some of the poorest communities in the entire state.

While the percentage of school-aged children living in poverty in Massachusetts is about 14.5 percent, it is 42.3 percent in Springfield and 43.7 percent in Holyoke. We have a responsibility to provide the highest-quality education to all who seek it. Doing so requires a commitment to addressing equity and closing the achievement gap. These are challenges that we, as a community college, are uniquely positioned to tackle.

Another issue is financial sustainability. State funding doesn't cover as much of our budget as it did in previous years. Pell funding also doesn't cover as much of the cost of education as compared to past years. We need to be better advocates for communicating the importance and value of education to our society as a whole and the specific importance and value to our local communities. We also have to address affordability, because many of our students do not have financial means, even though we are a very affordable option in the Pioneer Valley.

And enrollment has been declining.

Higher education has always had a counter-cyclical relationship to the economy, so when the economy is strong, people are able to readily obtain higher paying jobs. When the economy turns downward, the job market becomes tighter and those lacking skills or experience look to higher education to enhance their portfolio and gain job skills. Right now, our economy is doing relatively well, which translates for us into declining enrollment. However, my larger concern is looking at retention, or ensuring that every single one of our current and future students can be successful and graduate.

Let's get back to the new mission statement. Three words?

The steering committee and the board of trustees did a fabulous job providing drafts that captured the essence of what HCC represents, and students, faculty and staff gave us great feedback. We went through several iterations because the early language was not exactly what we wanted. With further refinement we finally landed on the words that resonate most. When you engage that many people, some amazing insights emerge, and when you discover the language that really speaks to you, it seems so obvious, but let's not forget the year's work it took to get there.

Why is that mission statement so important?

The demographics of our students are so different today than they were 15 years ago. I believe we have a team that is very student centered, but for us to really make progress on some of these persistent and challenging issues there has to be a level of focus within the institution. That focus starts at the top with the mission statement. Let's look at those three words.

"Educate." Our first priority is education. It's important that we know our ultimate goal is to provide education, training, and

academic credentials that lead to jobs. As a liberal arts institution, we also teach students to become better citizens who contribute to their communities.

The second is "Inspire." We serve thousands of individuals at varying stages of work and life. Some of them are struggling with day-to-day issues like poverty and food and housing insecurity and others are looking for a good foundation for their first two years in order to transfer to the college of their choice. We meet students where they are, but to get through college, every single person needs inspiration. They need guidance, they need coaching, they need support. Inspiration is really important.

And the last piece, "Connect," was an interesting one that I think emerged in this process in a number of ways, especially in thinking about our role as a connector within the community. Our job isn't necessarily to directly and solely solve all of the challenges students face. They are going to come to us with academic issues, which we are going to work to resolve. But they are going to come to us with a lot of non-academic issues as well, and those non-academic issues might be things best addressed by community organizations, such as helping to resolve food insecurity and housing insecurity, and child care and transportation. How do we get people connected to other people in support of lifting up this community? How do we connect students to other institutions for continued education or to employers for career opportunities? How do we connect high achieving students to the internships and experiential learning opportunities that will prepare them to transfer to top-ranking universities in our region and beyond?

HCC now has a vision statement: "Holyoke Community College aspires to be a college of academic excellence known for helping students overcome barriers to success." Can you explain how that came about?

The mission statement really focuses on our reason for existence. This represents who we are and what we do. Our vision statement speaks to what we want to work toward in the future. The mission statement reflects present day. The vision statement reflects the future.

The college did not have a vision statement, so this was a new exercise for us. The purpose of the vision statement is to help propel HCC forward; it's providing some guidance on a future direction but it also speaks to some things that are out of reach now but are aspirational and possible with a long-term strategy.

The first part of our vision statement has to do with aspiring to be a college of academic excellence. That piece really speaks to our commitment to being the best educational institution we can be and focusing on the richness of the learning experiences our faculty and staff cultivate for students.



The second piece of our vision statement has to do with being known for helping students overcome barriers to success. There was a little bit of debate about this during the plan's development, because talking about barriers in a vision statement seemed a bit contradictory, that we should be focusing on positive aspirations. But when we talk about the idea of being a college that is known for helping students overcome barriers, it specifically creates a huge opportunity for us to be a college actually known for coming up with solutions to the most stubborn and persistent issues our students are experiencing and that community colleges across the nation are experiencing.

It's an intentionally bold statement. There was a lot of thought that went into its development and what we will need to do to move our college and our communities forward. Helping our students overcome barriers to success is one of those elements.

HCC has never had a values statement. Why does the college need one?

A mission statement provides clarity on who we are; the vision statement represents where we're headed; values are more about the college culture. Values represent us as a people. The three words of kindness, inclusion and trust represent our foundation. Kindness is a reflection of the care and empathy that we want to underlie our work. Trust is necessary in order to work effectively as an institution. Inclusion is already a part of who we are when we think about diversity and equity. Those values serve as the bedrock for innovation and collaboration, how we want to take our work to the next level. We want to be creative, and we want to work more effectively together.

Why was a pledge to students, a student experience statement, something important to articulate?

The student experience statement is a reflection of students' being part of the strategic planning process, and a big part of that process, both as an input and an output. We need to understand what students think of HCC. What is the experience they're having and what do they want to have? What could we do differently to improve their current experience? What would they change? So, through the student experience workshops – we had two of them with different groups of students and employees coming together – we built models of what a student experience looks like now and what the ideal experience might look like. What I thought was fascinating was the intersection of how our employees look at how we serve and support students and what students experience when receiving those services and supports. Through that, there were a couple of things that were important to everyone and those are defined in our student experience statement.



(Top) Monica Perez, vice president of Academic Affairs, with President Royal, during the Future Walk. (Bottom) ASL professors Nick Lalanne and Claire Sanders consider a message for the "Word Wall," one of the features of the Future Walk celebration.

Key Events

August 30, 2017 | Kickoff

"Forward, Further: The Future of HCC"

Introduction by President Christina Royal. Guided workshop for faculty and staff with Liz Murphy from CampusWorks.

October 20, 2017 | Future Summit

Presentations and discussions

"Teaching and Learning of the Future," by Thomas King, professor of Physics, Bridgewater State University

"Connecting Education and Work in the Future," by Katie Stebbins, vice president of Economic Development, University of Massachusetts

"Sustainable Food Security in our Future," by Andrew Morehouse, executive director, The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

Dec. 4-23, 2017 | SWOT Survey

Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Jan. – Feb. 2018 | Environmental Scan

Analysis of changing demographics, market conditions and competition

February 21 | External Focus Group

Topic: Health Care Careers

February 27 | Student Experience Workshop

With Liz Murphy, CampusWorks

March 9 | External Focus Group

Topic: Education Services

April 25 | "Shaping the Future: HCC & the Pioneer Valley"

Panel discussion and community conversation

Moderator: Amanda Sbriscia, HCC vice president, Institutional Advancement

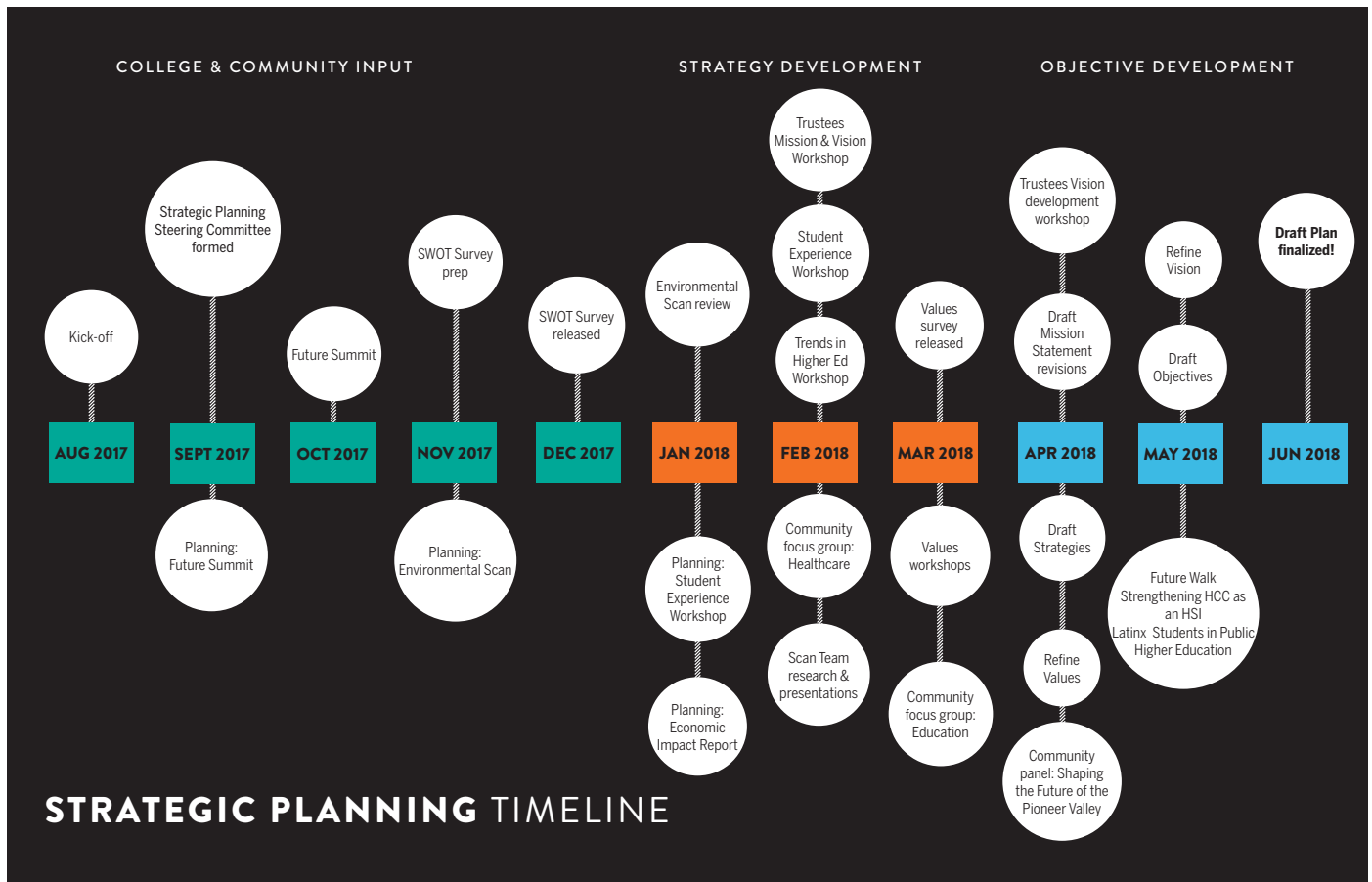
Panelists: Tricia Canavan, president of United Personnel; Nathan Costa '03, president, Springfield Thunderbirds; Dianne Fuller Doherty, entrepreneur and community advocate; Scott Foster, co-founder, Valley Venture Mentors, Inc.; Marcos Marrero, director of Planning and Economic Development, Holyoke; Shannon Rudder, executive director, Providence Ministries; Rick Sullivan, president and CEO, Western MA Economic Development Council; Katie Allan Zobel, president, Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.

May 23 | Future Walk Celebration

Debut of Mission, Vision, Values, and Student Experience statements

May 23 | "Strengthening HCC as an HSI"

Presenters: Mónica Torregrosa, professor of Spanish; Myriam Quiñones, coordinator, Multicultural Academic Services; Raúl D. Gutiérrez, professor of Spanish; Michele Snizek, director of Retention and Student Success
 Guest Speaker: Carlos Santiago, commissioner, Massachusetts Dept. of Higher Education, "Latin Students in Public Higher Education."





The process resulted in the creation of four priorities that form the essence of the strategic plan: teaching and learning; equity, inclusion & student success; workforce development & transfer; and sustainability. Is that enough?

In a word: Yes. As you go through a strategic planning process, the first and most important things to determine are: how are we doing today, what emerging issues and trends are going to affect how we do our work tomorrow, and what do we need to do to move the dial on some of the key areas of accountability at the state and federal level. It's very difficult to take year-long conversations, SWOT surveys, environmental scans, input and source documents, and student success data and distill it down to a few key priorities. But that's part of the process, and I think what we have now is exactly what we need for where we are today.



How do the mission, vision, values and student experience statements translate into action in terms of day-to-day operations?

The four strategies of our strategic plan are focused at the broadest level of the institution. The nine objectives add another layer of understanding about what those strategies represent. But for a lot of people the work resides at the level below the strategic plan. So we are now working on action plans that will enable supervisors to provide guidance to their staffs on the type of work that we'll be engaged in, particularly when it comes to annual planning. That's where it will start to become much more tangible for people. But I will say that, beyond the actual day-to-day work, people need to embrace the plan as our core work, and we need to stay focused on those areas identified as our priorities, and that if we do those things well, the college is going to be significantly better off in four years than when we started this plan.



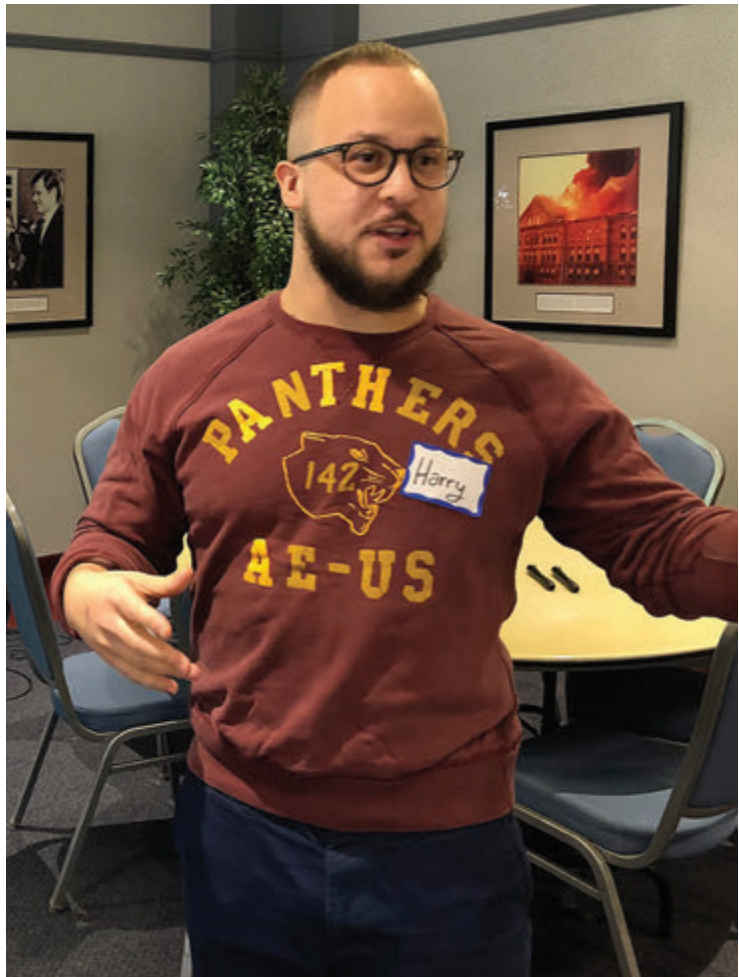
Why only four years?

Four years is not a long time, but I do feel this will give us an opportunity to start to benchmark to see how we're making progress. Originally we were looking at a three-year plan, but we have to align the strategic plan to the budget and to our other plans, such as our IT plan, facilities plan, student success plan, academic plan, and ultimately with accreditation. Our accreditation visit is in 2020, so it was important for us to be able to go through that visit and then be able to get the feedback from our accreditors so we can start work on the next plan.

So after four years HCC will need to do this all again?

I think we will be in a much better place in four years to refresh this work as we continue. This felt like a very intense process, because it's the first time the college has gone through it in recent history. As people now have skillsets and an understanding and the experience of going through a strategic planning process they will continue to foster that mindset, then when we actually get to the point of needing to refresh our plan it's not going to feel like such a new process to them; it's going to feel like an extension of the strategy and planning work we're already doing.

(Top) Olugbemiga Adekunle, dean of Science, Engineering and Math, presents for his table during the April 25 "Shaping the Future: HCC & the Pioneer Valley" community forum at HCC. (Middle) Panelist Rick Sullivan, president and CEO of Western MA Economic Development Council, makes a comment during the "Shaping the Future" forum. (Bottom) A group of HCC staff and faculty present a skit to showcase their vision of HCC's future during a strategic planning workshop.



Top left, caricaturist Allison Litera captured ideas in a graphic montage during the Student Experience Workshop. Bottom left, Myriam Quiñones, coordinator of Multicultural Academic Services, works on a Word Wall message at the Future Walk. Top right, Harry Hill '13, a graphic designer in HCC's marketing department, shares his group's ideas during the February 27 Student Experience Workshop. Bottom right, Idelia Smith, assistant vice president of Academic Administration, participates in a workshop exercise.



When you first came on board you said one of your priorities was to guide HCC through a strategic planning process. Now that you've done that, how do you feel about it?

I'm really, really happy with the product that we have developed in this process, but I think that what I'm most impressed with is how the process brought us together as a campus community. We have people who are dedicated and committed to putting students first, and I see that every day. It's been really impressive watching the campus community come together and watching the community at large support us through this process. I've heard

a tremendous amount of positive feedback about the college and people are very excited about the direction we're going in.

Any other thoughts about the process or the plan?

I believe education is the solution to most problems in our society, and it takes a village to raise a student. What I'm most proud of about HCC, and what I think will serve as a catalyst for our success with this plan, is that we take our middle name seriously. Partnership is baked into the DNA of Holyoke Community College; we recognize the value of community in addressing issues and creating opportunities for area residents to be successful. *Ac*

Success for All

Strengthening HCC as an HSI



Carlos Santiago, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, was the keynote speaker at a May 23 event celebrating HCC's new status as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

By CHRIS YURKO

In fall 2016, Holyoke Community College marked a major milestone. For the first time, Hispanic student enrollment at the college surpassed 25 percent.

With that, HCC joined a growing national club of colleges and universities recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Education as "Hispanic Serving Institutions," or HSI's.

The HSI designation makes HCC eligible to apply for special grants to expand educational opportunities and enhance services and supports for Hispanic students, who have historically trailed their white classmates in the metrics typically used to quantify academic success: persistence (remaining enrolled from one semester to the next), retention (remaining enrolled from one year to the next), course completion, and graduation.

By spring 2018, Hispanic enrollment at HCC had already risen to nearly 28 percent, a trend expected to continue, not just in Massachusetts, but nationwide.

"The LatinX population is growing," said Carlos Santiago, Massachusetts commissioner of Higher Education, during a May 23 forum at HCC focused on strengthening HCC as a Hispanic Serving Institution. "These

students are coming to your doors. They're coming in with all different backgrounds. For some of them, English is not their first language. Some of them are coming from school districts that didn't quite give them the skills they need to be successful walking in on day one. They're coming in with gaps."

At a time when total college enrollment is declining, due mostly to an improved economy, low unemployment, and a decrease in the number of high school graduates, the increasing Hispanic student population represents both opportunities and challenges, Santiago said.

"If you can take the student that needs the most help and lift that student's achievement," he said, "everyone will benefit."

Addressing the achievement gap is a priority for the state, Santiago said. It is also a key provision of HCC's new strategic plan, described in the preceding pages.

The HSI forum, held in the Leslie Phillips Theater, followed HCC's Future Walk celebration in the lobby outside, where the college's new mission, vision, values and student experience statements were unveiled. In her opening remarks at the HSI forum, President Christina Royal noted that more than 50 percent of Holyoke residents are Hispanic and that Holyoke is home to the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans in the continental United States, per capita.

"In Holyoke Ward 2, specifically," she said, "the average income is around \$14,000 per year, so we know the impact that education can have on the residents and their families in our local communities."

In fall 2016, she said, 58 percent of HCC's first-time, degree-seeking Hispanic students required developmental education in English (compared to 32 percent for white students); 88 percent required developmental education in math (compared to 76 percent for white students); and 56 percent required both (compared to 30 percent for white students).

"This is why equity is so important to the work that we do and to our strategic plan," she said, "because you can't have success for all without equity."

What being an HSI does not mean is that HCC intends to focus its attention on Hispanic students to the exclusion of others, said Spanish professor Mónica Torregrósa, who introduced the forum's panel of presenters.

"Much like using universal design in our classrooms improves the educational experience, not just for students with disabilities but also for students with diverse learning styles, strengthening the ways in which we serve LatinX students actually enhances HCC's mission to serve all students," she said.



One program model that shows great promise in reducing the achievement gap is Puente. Puente, which means "bridge" in Spanish, builds off the success of HCC's Multicultural Academic Services program, called MAS, which means "more." MAS was established in 2010 as an intensive advising and academic support program for English as a Second Language students transitioning to regular classes and for international students.

"The MAS program works under the theoretical perspective that all students will benefit from the services we provide, which target those marginalized ones just like universal design," said MAS coordinator Myriam Quiñones. "Retention for MAS program students has always been higher than their HCC student counterparts."

For example, she said, from fall 2016 to fall 2017, the overall retention rate at HCC was 50 percent and 45 percent for Latino students compared to 63 percent for all MAS students and 66 percent for MAS Latino students.

Through Puente, created in 2016, MAS now also focuses on a third group – high school students transitioning to HCC.

"Imagine that you are about to choose a retirement plan," Quiñones said. "Your first step is to look at companies. What does your employer support? Which is better, an aggressive or conservative plan? What is a Morning Star profile? Words like vesting, bull market, stocks, bonds, or cash are so foreign and confusing. That is how our first-generation, underserved students feel when applying for college."

Key components of Puente include HCC student mentors, summer programming, campus tours, student panels, bilingual open houses, financial aid workshops, admissions workshops, and high school visits by representatives from the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services and the Pathways transfer program.



Spanish professor Raul Gutiérrez talks about a "Bridging Cultures" grant that has enabled HCC to incorporate more Latino Studies material into humanities and social science classes.

"Community and college collaborations are key to building that strong bridge for new students," she said, "especially first-generation, first-time, underserved and low-income students.



Spanish professor Raúl Gutiérrez talked about the success of HCC's "Bridging Cultures" project," a three-year, grant-funded initiative to integrate Latino Studies material into humanities and social science classes. In 2015, HCC received a \$120,000 award from the National Endowment for the Humanities to design new curricula in partnership with the Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

One of the grant's main objectives was professional development: each summer, HCC faculty engaged in week-long workshops – called "Latino Studies Boot Camp" – with UMass scholars to develop new course material infused with LatinX content.

The result has so far resulted in the creation of new classes, such as "Introduction to Latino Studies," "Latino/a Politics," and "Tainos, Creoles and Boricuas: Caribbean Identities in History and Literature." Beyond that, though, professors are incorporating LatinX material into existing courses, such as reading LatinX writers in English classes, analyzing the Puerto Rican debt crisis in economics, and examining the work of Mexican photographers in art class.


"By learning about diverse cultures and the

contributions of LatinX people, all students widen their knowledge and are better equipped to function in today's multicultural world," Gutiérrez said.

There was also a cultural component. The grant paid to bring in guest speakers, artists and writers for campus events open to the general public, such as author Esmeralda Santiago, whose spring visit filled the Leslie Phillips Theater with a standing-room only crowd (See Around Campus on Page 2).

Gutiérrez shared a comment from one student in Prof. Torregrósa's Caribbean history and literature course: "Having classes examining culture, influence and contributions of the Puerto Rican and Caribbean community is critical in Holyoke. The students at this college should be represented and celebrated. In addition, this class provided the space for myself and other non-LatinX students to learn to participate in a discussion about personal identity and culture. The class was a critical moment in my education as well as my cultural literacy and understanding."

While HCC's HSI designation is based on enrollment, said Michele Snizek, director of Retention and Student Success, the focus is on reducing achievement gaps – increasing those rates of persistence, retention, completion and graduation.

"The goal is to take our successful models, some of which you've seen here this afternoon," she said, "and determine how we can grow those to benefit all students. Success for all is the measure we're using." 

Donald Vitkus '05 (1943-2018)



Vitkus with his former teacher, Jackie Griswold, retired professor of human services, during his April 2017 visit to HCC.

To call Donald Vitkus '05 a non-traditional student doesn't come remotely close to describing the path that led him to HCC.

Abandoned as an infant, flipped like a hot rock through foster homes, misdiagnosed a "moron" at the age of 3, he was deposited at 6 at the Belchertown State School, where, following years of abuse and neglect, he might very well have died in obscurity like so many other unfortunate and lonely souls, forgotten and buried on Turkey Hill in unmarked plots in the notorious institution's graveyard.

But that was not his fate.

After 11 years, Vitkus was released - "paroled" was the term - from virtual imprisonment and spent the rest of his life making up for that lost time. He joined the Army, served in Vietnam, earned his high school diploma, married, raised children and watched his grandkids grow.

He worked at U.S. Envelope in West Springfield for 30 years until the factory shut down. In 2003, he came to HCC and studied human services. At 62, he earned his associate degree and spent the rest of his working life as a personal caregiver and advocate for the developmentally disabled.

His life story is told in the book *"You'll Like It Here": Donald Vitkus - Belchertown Patient #3394*, by Ed Orzechowski, a Northampton writer Vitkus met during an event at HCC when he was a student.

They appeared together on campus during a book signing tour in April 2017. Vitkus, then 73, shook hands and signed books and talked about his experiences at the former state institution so, he said, history would not forget, nor be repeated.

His wish, he said then, was to be buried one day in the state school cemetery, "with my brothers and sisters, in honor of them." He did not expect that wish to be granted.

It was.

Vitkus died in January at the age of 74. On Sat., June 23, his cremated remains were buried in the Warner-Pine Grove Cemetery on Turkey Hill in Belchertown during a memorial service attended by some 70 family members and friends, including Orzechowski, his biographer.

"Donald left Belchertown," Orzechowski told the crowd, "but Belchertown never left him."

Read more about Donald Vitkus '05 and his visit to HCC at: hcc.edu/vitkus



Thomas E. Zebrowski '48,

left, one of the last two living members of HCC's first graduating class, died at the age of 99 in Holyoke. He was active in many local veterans organizations as well as the college's Alumni Association. In 2007, he was honored with HCC's Distinguished Alumni Award. On the right is classmate Theodore J. Gorski.

In Memoriam

We are saddened to learn of the passing of the following members of the HCC community:

Barbara I. Murray, *X-Ray Instructor*

Basil W. Robinson, *retired science professor*

John F. Sokol, *former emeriti and retired engineering professor*

John "Ed" Cebula '80

Joyce D. Desorcy '88

George Flores '73

George Keefe '67

Jennifer Klemish '90

Roger R. Laferriere '74

John J. Strzempko '55

James Szlosek '91

Claire L. (Descoteaux) Wilson '80

If you would like to contribute in memory of a classmate, friend or relative, visit hcc.edu/donate or call Bonnie Zima Dowd at 413.552.2253.

Student Emergency Fund Prompts Donation, Challenge

By Judith Kelliher

For Margaret “Peg” (Laframboise) Wendlandt ’58, attending Holyoke Community College proved to be a transformative experience.

Though she had enjoyed Cathedral High School in Springfield and her friendships there, she wasn’t much involved in school activities.

But HCC – then Holyoke Junior College – was different. On her way to an associate degree, she joined the student council, graduation committee, tea committee, and yearbook and newspaper staffs. She helped organize popular dances and waved pom-poms on the sidelines for sports teams as a cheerleader.

That HCC experience continues to influence her life.

She and her husband, Gary Wendlandt, a graduate of Washington University and a retired insurance executive, believe in the power of education. Since 2009, the Wendlandts have funded two endowed scholarships through the HCC Foundation: one for students with significant financial need and one for those in the nursing and health fields. Every year, scholarships in their name are awarded to 11 HCC students.

They understand first hand what that kind of support can mean. In March 1958, during her sophomore year, Peg’s father died, leaving her mother to support the family. “Without a scholarship, I would not have been able to attend college full time,” she said. “I am very grateful that someone helped me and am glad that we are now in a position to help others.”

After HCC, Peg went on to the University of Massachusetts and, later, to Western New England School of Law. As the first HCC alumna to earn a law degree, Peg received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2007 and the Distinguished Service Award at Commencement in 2014.

“Education has made a great deal of difference in our lives and how we have succeeded over the years,” said Peg, whose career included work as a family law attorney, a substitute teacher in the Holyoke Public Schools, and an actuarial analyst at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance

Company. “Gary and I both received scholarships to assist us in achieving our goals of education, and feel fortunate that we can help others do the same.”

The Wendlandts have also accounted for HCC in their estate plan. Most recently, the New York City residents donated \$20,000 to the President’s Student Emergency Fund, established in 2017 by HCC president Christina Royal to assist students experiencing financial emergencies or facing catastrophic events.

“While many of us may have a support system or safety net to assist during challenging times, that may not be the case for some HCC students,” said Amanda Sbriscia, HCC vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. “And none of them should see their educational dreams derailed by circumstances beyond their control.”

Gifts like the Wendlandts’ mean HCC officials can respond when the need arises, Sbriscia said.

“We could not possibly know, with certainty, what and how many emergencies our students will face in each academic year,” she said. “But we do know that we are more prepared to respond to these needs thanks to the Wendlandts’ generosity.”

Not content with the initial donation to the fund, the couple recently issued an additional, dollar-for-dollar, matching challenge gift to the President’s Student Emergency Fund of up to \$20,000. **(See sidebar for details.)**

“We felt the emergency fund was an excellent way for us to help students in need,” Peg said.

After all these years, it’s the little memories that often transport Peg back to HCC, like the time the cheerleaders had to make their own outfits.



Peg ’58 and Gary Wendlandt.

“At that time, since I did not know how to sew, cheerleader Pat Cousineau’s mother made my outfit for me,” she recalled. “She also assisted with others. That was the kind of community we were. That’s why I want to give back.” *At*

\$20,000 Challenge

Now through the end of 2018, Peg and Gary Wendlandt will match, dollar for dollar, every gift made to the President’s Student Emergency Fund – up to \$20,000. That’s an additional \$20,000 in emergency funding from this extraordinary couple. But not without you.

How it works:

You give \$25 – Peg and Gary give \$25!

You give \$100 – Peg and Gary give \$100!

Alumni and friends give a collective \$20,000 between now and Dec. 31, 2018 – Peg and Gary will match it with another \$20,000!

Your gift of any size will be matched by Peg and Gary. Every gift has a profound impact.

To make your gift and see it matched, go to hcc.edu/donate today!

\$20,000 CHALLENGE

\$20,000 CHALLENGE

Down on the Farm After graduating from Hampshire College in 2017, **Dylan Donicz '15** spent a year doing construction projects for U-Haul. "I got a lot of building experience," he says, "but it was kind of a nice reminder of how much I don't fit into other places but farming." The Holyoke native and 2015 HCC graduate is fitting in just fine now as the farm site manager and farm program director for the Holyoke nonprofit Nuestras Raíces. Donicz studied sustainable agriculture at HCC with professor Kate Maiolatesi and went on to earn his bachelor's degree in sustainable agriculture and pollination practices at Hampshire, working with bees as well as sheep and cows and learning animal husbandry. He plans to put those skills to work on the Nuestras Raíces farm off Jones Ferry Road, enlisting goats to help control weeds in overgrown fields. "I've got real high hopes for it," he says. "If we can turn weeds into meat, that's a pretty good thing."

1 Dylan Donicz '15 is the new manager of the Nuestras Raices farm off Jones Ferry Road in south Holyoke.

Summer Studies **Emily Burns '16** spent the summer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an undergraduate fellow in the SIGNALS/Neurobiology Summer Research Program. Burns, who is studying neurobiology and psychology at Bay Path University, worked alongside the principal investigator on an independent project exploring the neural pathways that influence epilepsy. At Bay Path, she is part of the Women in STEM Honors Program and has been working on her own project researching the relationship between sports participation and neurocognitive function. Burns was one of HCC's Profiles of Excellence for Commencement 2016 and still works at the college as a tutor in the Writing Center. She is the daughter of alumni **Cynthia '84** and **Brian Burns '85** – a sergeant with the HCC Campus Police – and sister of Erin Burns, a visual arts student at HCC.

2 Emily Burns '16 in the HCC Writing Center, where she still works as a tutor. Read more at: hcc.edu/emilyburns

Finding the Right Path **Betty Jo O'Brien '17** received the Pathfinder Award at Bay Path University's 2018 Commencement ceremony May 12. The award is presented to a non-traditional student who excels academically while balancing family, career, and community service responsibilities. O'Brien graduated from Bay Path with a 4.0 GPA and her bachelor's degree in business administration, which she also studied at HCC. The award was the second honor O'Brien has received this year. In February, she was named the Elizabeth Dole Foundation Caregiver Fellow for Massachusetts and will serve a two-year term advocating for the emotional, financial, and political support of military caregivers and veterans. O'Brien applied for the scholarship after she became the full-time caregiver for her son Kevin, an Air Force veteran, during his battle with a rare brain cancer.

3 Betty Jo O'Brien receives the 2018 Pathfinder Award at Bay Path University's 2018 Commencement.

Kitchen Aides You don't have to work hard to find culinary arts alumni working hard inside the new HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute. **Zoe Theocles '17** joined the staff there

as a daytime receptionist this spring and more recently joined MGM Springfield in August as a hostess at The Chandler steakhouse. Her former classmate **Tyler Carrier '17** is a full-time culinary lab technician at the institute and shares a first-floor office with **Maureen Hindle '12**, the CAI's other full-time tech. Lab techs order food and supplies, maintain the kitchens, assist instructors, and help cook. Current culinary arts student and soon-to-be alum **Carl King** works nights and weekends on the second floor as a lab tech for HCC's noncredit culinary and hospitality workforce training programs. King plans to complete his culinary arts certificate this fall and continue for his associate degree while also taking on a new job as a cook at Cal Mare, another MGM Springfield restaurant.

4 HCC Culinary Arts alumni Tyler Carrier '17, Zoe Theocles '17, Maureen Hindle '12, and Carl King '19 in the teaching kitchen at the new HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute in downtown Holyoke.

In the Army Now At Commencement 2015, jazz vocalist **Jonathan Mendez** earned his certificate in music and performed Michael Buble's "Feeling Good" as the student singer. Two years later, at Commencement 2017, he graduated with his associate degree in liberal arts and gave the keynote speech as the student orator. On June 6, just days after Commencement 2018, Mendez graduated yet again – this time from U.S. Army basic combat training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. With his college degree, Mendez, 30, entered the military as a private first class, and he's been assigned a full-time active duty post as a "42A" – human resources specialist – with the 2nd Battalion 13th Infantry Regiment at Fort Polk, Louisiana. "The U.S. Army was absolutely not what I thought it would be before joining," he wrote in his U.S. Army profile. "I knew it would be tough and challenging, but it is so much more."

5 Pfc. Jonathan Mendez '15 (music), '17 (liberal arts) completed U.S. Army basic training in June. Read more at: hcc.edu/mendez

'Challenge Yourself' HCC criminal justice professor **Alex Sanchez '90** was the recipient of the 2018 Elaine Marieb Chair for Teaching Excellence. The award is presented each year to a full-time faculty member who exemplifies outstanding classroom teaching. Winners serve for one year, receive a small stipend for professional development, lead the Commencement procession, and give a graduation address. In his speech, Sanchez told the 903 members of the Class of 2018 that college is like a roller coaster ride, full of excitement, anxiety, ups, downs, twists and turns – but worth the trip. "Challenge yourselves," he said, and "don't be afraid to take another leap of faith, as you have done for your education and careers."

6 HCC criminal justice professor Alex Sanchez '90 delivers the keynote faculty address to graduates at HCC's 71st Commencement June 2. Read more at: hcc.edu/sanchez



Class Notebook

What's going on in your life?

We want to know what you've been up to since your school days at HCC. Send news of your wedding, retirement, promotion, travels, children/grandchildren, awards, academic achievements, military honors, whatever!

Email news and photos to alumni@hcc.edu or mail us at the Alumni Connection, c/o Alumni Relations, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040.

The deadline for the Spring 2019 publication is Dec. 1, 2018.

1963

Carol Salamon and her husband **Mitch '62** recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of their family business, Salamon Flooring in West Springfield, Mass. The third-generation company – soon to be fourth-generation company – was founded in Holyoke by Mitch's father in 1943.

1977

Jim Ramondetta is the owner of Berkshire Nautilus in Pittsfield, Mass., established in 1989. He holds a master's degree in exercise science from Queens College and bachelor's degree in biology from Williams College.

1982

With help from the Alumni Relations office, former HCC study buddies **Laura Pisano** and **Joanne (Menard) Hogan** recently reconnected after more than 20 years. Pisano is an administrative assistant at Westfield State University in the Nursing and Allied Health Department; Hogan lives in Hatfield, Mass., with her husband and two daughters.

1984

Boston-based **Susan Yahn DiPinto** is senior vice president of private banking at Berkshire Hills Bancorp, parent corporation of Berkshire Bank. She has been with the company since October 2017 and has 30 years of relationship management and leadership experience.

1986

Paul LeHenry is a compliance analyst at AmeriHome Mortgage Company in Woodland Hills, Calif. After earning his associate degree in

hospitality management at HCC he went on to earn two certificates from the American School of Mortgage Banking.

Southampton resident **Carla McAvoy** is a registered nurse with Highland Valley Elder Services, a private nonprofit corporation serving older adults and their families in western Mass. She recently served on the 2018 Western Mass Elder Care conference steering committee. The conference, for area professionals who work in elder services, was held at the HCC Kittredge Center.

1987

Barbara Pliska, of Hadley, Mass., is a computer resource manager at Smith College. She earned her associate degree in retail marketing from HCC and a bachelor of science in consumer studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is an active Girl Scout volunteer and has been recognized for her exemplary service in support of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

1989

Sharon Hamel is an account executive with Boston Citywide Sales, Marriott International. After reading about the college's new Culinary Arts Institute in our Spring 2018 issue, she proudly wrote that HCC is "creating great opportunities to build knowledge and strength for the future of the hospitality industry."

1991

Patrick Collins was recently promoted to sergeant with the Connecticut State Police, where he's been a trooper for two decades.

After earning his associate degree in criminal justice from HCC, he went on to Westfield State University for his bachelor's. Collins is also a state-certified emergency medical technician. He lives in Windsor Locks, Conn., with his family.

1992

Janet Olbrych, of Chicopee, Mass., has worked as the administrative assistant for Chicopee mayor Richard J. Kos for the past four years. She earned an associate degree in business administration from HCC.

1997

Jim Leyden is executive director of the Longmeadow Council on Aging. Prior to that, he was the program coordinator for the Chicopee Council on Aging. Leyden He says his HCC education – he holds an associate degree in liberal arts and science – prepared him well for his time at Springfield College, where he received a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation services, and Bay Path University, where he earned a master's degree in nonprofit management and philanthropy.

1999

Hospitality management major **Brian Emerson** is the food service manager at Duncaster Retirement Community in Bloomfield, Conn. He has volunteered with Duncaster's charity golf tournament and worked in the service industry for nearly two decades, including time at the former Hofbrauhaus in West Springfield, Mass.

2000

Chicopee resident **Elaine Madra** retired after working at HCC for almost 32 years. She served

as a secretary in the Student Records office. Madra was named HCC Volunteer of the Year in 2005 by the college Alumni Association.

2003



Ruby Maddox was recognized as one of the 14 "Social Entrepreneurs of Color out to Change the World." She is the co-founder of Leaders of the Free World, an international experience and leadership

development program for young black men. The organization's mission is to develop dynamic leaders who are globally minded, self-aware and service driven. Maddox is a graduate of Bay Path's master's degree program in nonprofit management and philanthropy. "Couldn't have done it without HCC!" she writes.

Thomas Simons is executive chef at Enrico's Brick Oven Pizzeria & Pub in Sturbridge, Mass. In addition to creating menu specials, Simons selects the craft beers served at the pub. He writes that he was inspired to pursue a certificate in culinary arts from HCC by his grandmother and her cooking.

2004

Lisa A. Booth of Agawam is a sales associate at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, where she is responsible for maintaining and overseeing all insurance requirements for Big E, among other duties. She earned her associate degree in early childhood education from HCC and previously worked with special needs students as a paraprofessional in the Agawam Public Schools.

2005

Daniel Reyes is an off-premise manager in the Philadelphia market of The Heineken Company. After earning his associate degree in hospitality management from HCC, he went on to receive a bachelor's degree from UMass Amherst. Prior to Heineken, he worked as a sales representative

with the Williams Distributing Company of Springfield, Mass.

2006

Mary Russell is a commercial lines account manager with The Dowd Agencies, LLC, where she manages insurance clients and supports producers with a variety of initiatives. She received her associate degree in psychology from HCC.



Former HCC class valedictorian **Karen Sise** is the assistant registrar at Smith College and volunteers her time as an Ada Comstock Class cabinet adviser. After earning her associate degree from HCC,

Sise went to Smith College through the Ada Comstock Scholars Program and received her bachelor's degree in anthropology with a minor in music there, followed by a master's degree in higher education from UMass in 2017. She lives in Easthampton, Mass., with her 12-year-old daughter and two cats.

2007



Kokui Francisca (Dzefi) Adesokan is an assistant engineering manager at Pratt and Whitney, an aerospace manufacturing company in Connecticut. After HCC, she transferred to UMass Amherst, where

she earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering before going on for her MBA at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. "HCC helped kick off my career and eased by transition from Togo, West Africa, to the United States," she writes." In 2017 she was recognized by Pratt and Whitney as a STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Production) Ahead emerging leader.

2010

Melanie Convery, of Holyoke, is an IT configuration analyst with Health New England. She received an associate degree in computer information and technology from HCC, a bachelor's from UMass Amherst and a master's degree from Simmons College. Interesting piece of trivia: Four years ago, she and her husband, Neal, legally changed their middle names to "Seamster."

2011

William M. Kelly is an officer with the Chicopee Police Department. He earned his associate degree in criminal justice from HCC.


2014

Senior Airman **Stephen A. Lent**, a combat arms training and maintenance instructor with the 104th Security Forces Squadron, is on his way to a new job with the Department of Homeland Security. After graduating from HCC with an associate degree in criminal justice and moving on to Westfield State University for his bachelor's degree, Lent spent five months training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia.

2016

Former HCC criminal justice major **Karra Smith**, owner of Something to Talk About Boutique, was named business owner of the year by the Association of Black Business Professionals in March and awarded a certificate by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in Boston. The Springfield retail shop is located in Tower Square and features ladies fashions and accessories.

2017

Shellie L. Spencer published a new novel, *Absence of Will*, in March through Dorrance Publishing Co. The book follows two characters who try to stop an evil source that inhabits humans and makes people act on their negative emotions. When she's not writing, she operates Raw Face Graphics and Art, a graphics business in Feeding Hills, Mass. 

Tell us what you think!

TAKE THE ALUMNI SURVEY ONLINE AT hcc.edu/survey


Your answers, which will be kept confidential, will help us to better serve and support all HCC alumni.

ONLINE AT: hcc.edu/survey

Take 10 minutes now to share your feedback and be entered to win an iPad Mini!

HCC Album



It's not exactly the Green Monster at Fenway Park, but, for HCC, it's still pretty big. The electronic scoreboard pictured above went up in March and is the first scoreboard ever at Cougar Field, home to the HCC men's baseball team. "It adds a little flavor to the place," says Tom Stewart, HCC's director of Athletics. "Now the president can look out her window and see the score." The green, solar-powered unit was installed outside the right field fence by Hampden Engineering of East Longmeadow in March at a cost of about \$13,000, paid from leftover funds raised by the HCC Foundation for the construction of the Bartley Center for Athletics and Recreation in 2001. Over the years, the Bartley Center Fund has been tapped periodically to make other improvements to Cougar Field, such as re-grading the infield, re-sodding the outfield, installing a sprinkler system, and adding fences. One high-tech feature of the scoreboard is that it can be operated by wireless remote from the dugout. "For us, for what we're able to do as a community college, with our budget - it's perfect," Stewart said. Though the baseball team finished with an overall record of 7-15-1 this season, they put a monster number up on the new scoreboard during their last home game of the season, shutting out Mass Bay Community College 17-0. 



Do you have a sports memory from your time at HCC? Email us at alumni@hcc.edu and we'll run it in a future edition of Alumni Connection.

FALL EVENTS



Wednesday, September 26, 2018

Community College Night at Fenway Park

Red Sox vs. Baltimore Orioles

7:10 p.m., Fenway Park, Boston, Mass.

Join alumni, students, friends and families for a night of baseball at Boston's legendary ballpark. For more information, call 413.552.2182 or email kgifford@hcc.edu. with Community College Night as the subject.



Saturday, September 29, 2018

Phillips Festival 2018:

An Evening of One-Act Plays

A tribute to Leslie Phillips with special guest performances by HCC Alumni

7:30 p.m. Leslie Phillips Theater, Fine & Performing Arts Building

Continuing for the third year, a talented crew of returning alumni, theater students, faculty and staff gather to write, direct, rehearse and perform 4-6 new and original plays in just 24 hours. The event, which is filled with theatrical drama and madness, pays tribute to Leslie Phillips, a dedicated faculty member who died in 1988. Phillips played a pivotal role in the formation of HCC's theater department and lent her creative talent and intense focus to inspiring students to explore and discover their passion for the performing arts.

Proceeds from the benefit support the Leslie Phillips Fund for Theater Arts and Education. The fund will be used for a variety of initiatives such as scholarships, master classes, guest artists, and theater enrichment programs, along with capital needs such as theater improvement and equipment replacement.

Tickets: \$15 (general admission) and \$10 (students and HCC faculty & staff)

Reserve a seat at www.hcc.edu/alumnievents or call the box office at 413.552.2528

Interested in participating in this fun event? Contact the HCC Alumni Players at 24HF@comcast.net or on the HCC Alumni Players Facebook Page.

Can't join us, but still believe in supporting HCC and the Leslie Phillips Fund for Theater Arts and Education? Go online to hcc.edu/donate and make your gift.



Thursday – Saturday, November 8, 9, and 10 and 15, 16, and 17

In the Heights – HCC Fall Musical

7:30 p.m. (and 2 p.m. Saturday, November 17)

Leslie Phillips Theater, Fine & Performing Arts Building

Don't miss the hit Lin-Manuel Miranda musical that tells the story of a vibrant, tight-knit, New York community on the brink of change. It's about three generations, their hopes, their struggles and their dreams. This production is made possible, in part, by the support of the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts and MassHumanities. Directed by Patricia Sandoval '84 and HCC music professor Ellen Cogen, it features a diverse cast with lively music, dancing, and songs.

Tickets are \$10 (general admission); \$8 (students and senior citizens).

For more information or to reserve a seat, call the HCC Box Office at 413.552.2528.



Monday, December 31, 2018

Year-End Charitable Gifts

It's the last day of the 2018 tax year and we want to provide a friendly reminder to make your tax-deductible gifts to your preferred charities before midnight. We hope one of your priorities is Holyoke Community College and we thank you in advance for your generosity.

Alumni Connection

Holyoke Community College Alumni Office
303 Homestead Avenue
Holyoke, MA 01040

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OUR VISION

The banner below was created by Allison Litera, a caricaturist enlisted to document, graphically, the ideas that emerged during two Student Experience Workshops, part of a year-long Strategic Planning Process described inside, beginning on Page 4.

