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HCC welcomes Rachel Rubinstein as first VP of Academic and Student Affairs

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is pleased to welcome Rachel Rubinstein of Florence as its first vice president of Academic and Student Affairs.

Prior to her arrival Oct. 1, Rubinstein spent 16 years at Hampshire College in Amherst, where she was a professor of American literature and Jewish Studies and from 2010 to 2018 served as dean of Academic Support and Advising.

At HCC, Rubinstein will oversee the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in what is a newly unified role at the college.

“As dean of Academic Support and Advising at Hampshire I was working with the entire school, across the curriculum, on student success and support,” said Rubinstein. “I worked with struggling students, and I worked with transfer students from community colleges, so the idea of a struggling student who is having academic issues not necessarily because they are underprepared but because of the challenges in their lives impinging on their ability to learn is familiar to me.”

The combined position is one of the features that attracted her to HCC.

“I think most of the community colleges in Massachusetts have this model, and I think the alignment is so necessary,” Rubinstein said. “What faculty are asked to do these days is very taxing because it’s not just about teaching anymore. It’s about advising. It’s about mentoring. It’s about student support. The issues that students are dealing with are tremendous and faculty need help. These issues can’t be solved by just Academic Affairs. They also can’t be solved by Student Affairs. It has to be a coordinated effort.”

Rubinstein holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Yale University and a Ph.D. from the Department of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University.

A child of Mexican-born, Jewish immigrants, Rubinstein grew up in a Spanish-speaking household and also studied Yiddish. Her academic studies, professional scholarship and teaching have largely focused on immigration, migration, and multilingualism.

“The other thing that attracted me to HCC was Holyoke,” she said. “The prospect of being at an HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) was really appealing to me. Holyoke has a really deep history as a city of immigrants, and literature of immigration is what I do.”

Rubinstein was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship and a Whiting Foundation Travel Fellowship. She has taught at Smith College and Mount Holyoke College and also taught adult learners and high school students through community organizations including the Jones Library and the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst.

Her scholarly work includes two co-edited volumes, *Arguing the Modern Jewish Canon: Essays on Literature and Culture in Honor of Ruth R. Wisse* (Harvard University Press, 2008), and the forthcoming *Teaching Jewish-American Literature* (MLA Publications Committee, 2019). She is the author of *Members of the Tribe: Native America in the Jewish Imagination* (Wayne State University Press, 2010), which earned a Jordan Schnitzer Book Award Honorable Mention.

She lives in Florence with her husband, Justin Cammy, an associate professor of Jewish Studies and World Literature at Smith College. They have three children: Aviya, Amitai and Shalev.

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Holyoke Community College is the Commonwealth's oldest community college, serving more than 11,500 students annually in credit and noncredit programs and courses. The college holds transfer agreements with more than two dozen colleges and universities. Recognized for its Honors Program, online learning curriculum, learning communities, and service to students, HCC also offers business development opportunities through the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development. Please visit us on the web at www.hcc.edu