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## HCC president chosen for national leadership fellowship

Holyoke Community College President Christina Royal has been selected for a national fellowship for first-time college presidents administered by the Washington, D.C.-based Aspen Institute.

The Aspen New Presidents Fellowship is a new initiative designed to support community college presidents in the early years of their tenure to accelerate transformational change on behalf of students.

Royal, who lives in Northampton, was one of two community college presidents from Massachusetts to be chosen, along with Luis Pedraja of Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester. They are part of the inaugural group of 25 Aspen Fellows selected from more than 100 applicants nationwide.

The leaders, all of whom are in their first five years as a college president, will

engage in a seven-month fellowship beginning in June 2020.

"The Aspen Institute has a reputation for excellence, and I am honored to be selected as part of the inaugural group alongside President Pedraja," said Royal, who started working at HCC in January 2017 after three years as provost and vice president of academic affairs at Inver Hills Community College in Minnesota. "Higher education is experiencing a lot of disruption as the world changes. We are being challenged in greater ways to alter the ways we educate and provide support for students as demographics shift and their needs and preferences change. It is an exciting opportunity to be in the company of other scholars and community col-



Christina Royal

lege presidents who want to grow and learn in an intense environment that exposes us to new models of thinking."

The fellows were selected for their commitment to student success and equity, willingness to take risks to improve outcomes, understanding of the importance of community partnerships, and ability to lead change.

"We know more than ever before about how community colleges can improve outcomes for students, both in and after college," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. "And the urgency for them to do so only increases, especially for students of color and low-income students. These fel-

lows have shown they are fully, urgently committed to excellence and equity, and we look forward to working alongside them."

JPMorgan Chase is funding the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship as part of New Skills at Work, a five-year, \$350 million investment to support community colleges and other pathways to great careers and economic mobility.

Nearly 80 percent of community college presidents nationwide plan to retire in the next decade. Through this fellowship and its other leadership programs, Aspen is committed to helping to replace those exiting the presidency with an exceptionally capable and highly diverse talent pool.

For more information, visit [higher.aspeninstitute.org/meet-the-aspen-presidential-fellows-new-presidents](https://higher.aspeninstitute.org/meet-the-aspen-presidential-fellows-new-presidents).

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