

Hotel Training Lab to be created in Holyoke

HCC secures \$35,000 grant to train students in hospitality industry

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HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College (HCC) will establish a Hotel Training Lab on the second floor of the MGM Culinary Arts Institute on Race Street in Holyoke.

The college announced it secured a \$35,000 Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant to create the training lab. The funds from this competitive grant will be used to purchase equipment for the lab. In the grant application the college had to include things like a project description or overview, anticipated demand for jobs in the industry, the geographic area to be served, and a budget including a list of equipment to be purchased.

HCC announced the lab will be set up like a hotel reception area and equipped with the most up-to-date technology and software so students can become familiar with working in all aspects of hotel operations as well as gain those skills.

"We recognize that when the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute was developed that it's part of the hospitality industry, and that's much broader than just restaurants and banquet houses and other types of food-related businesses," said Jeff Hayden, HCC vice president of Business and Community Services. "It includes hotels and venues that provide services to the public, especially in relation to the tourism industry, therefore the



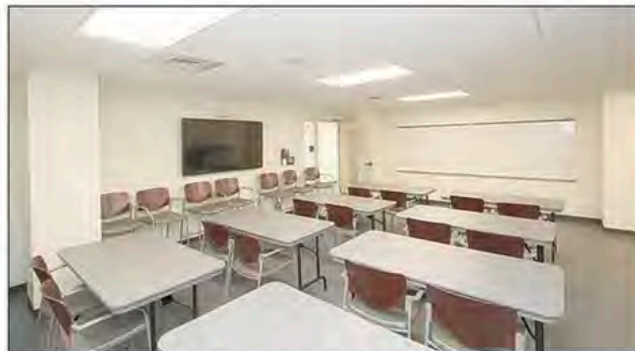
Photos courtesy of Chris Yurko

Holyoke Community College will set up a hotel training lab on the second floor of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute on Race Street in downtown Holyoke.

hotel training lab was a desire to try to get individuals the specific skills they need for those jobs."

"As you can imagine with hospitality- and hotel-related jobs, many of them require an additional level of customer service training, so that's one piece," Hayden continued. "But there are also some very practical things that are needed, like knowing the software for registration systems and the like, and we will be training on that."

Hayden continues to explain that some of the positions students would train for include first-line supervisors for housekeeping and janitorial services, hotel, motel and resort desk clerks, and janitors, cleaners and housekeep-



This room on the second floor of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute is being turned into a hotel training lab.

ers – any kind of hotel job one could think of, Hayden said. He added HCC was projecting to enroll over 500 students in credit or non-credit workforce training programs over the next three years, and specific cours-

es, which are still in development, would most likely run 40 to 60 hours.

"We will have employment partners who will help us

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identify specific types of things that they need individuals to be trained in, and we will work with them to help provide employer expectations to students as well as be participants in mock interviews and, of course, asking their help for job placement," Hayden said.

Hayden also added that while specific courses to be offered in the lab are still in development, there are other creden-

tials or programs that will use it to some level. Some of these include Hospitality Management Certificate, Associate Degrees in Hospitality Management – Career or Transfer option, and workforce training certificates in programs like Event Planning Certificate, ESOL Contextualized Training for Hotel Workers, and Hospitality Certificate – Supervisors and Managers, to name a few. The Hotel Training Lab will be set up by late February to early March.