

The Republican.



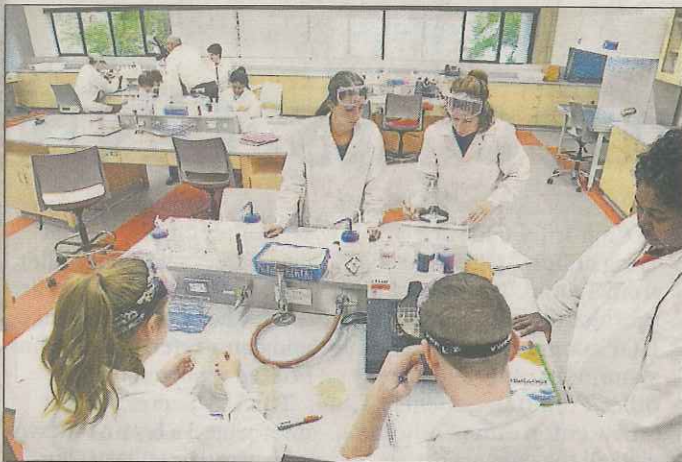
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2018

MASS LIVE



NEW LIFE SCIENCE CENTER

Holyoke Community College officially opened the \$4.55 million Center for Life Science yesterday. Page A4



Holyoke Community College held a ribbon cutting ceremony yesterday for its new \$4.5 million Center for Life Sciences. For more photos and video, visit MassLive.com.

(DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

HOLYOKE

\$4.55M Center for Life Sciences unveiled

HCC facility readies 21st century workforce

By **DENNIS HOHENBERGER**

Special to The Republican

Holyoke Community College officially opened the \$4.55 million Center for Life Science yesterday. The center features a cleanroom training facility, a first for a Massachusetts Community College.

A \$3.8 million Massachusetts Life Sciences Center grant and \$750,000 from HCC Foundation's Building Healthy Communities Campaign funded the center located in the Marieb Building.

The center will train a 21st-century workforce, steeped in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) curriculum. The program focuses on biotechnology, genetics and microbiology, with students using the latest technologies and lab equipment.

HCC President Christina Royal welcomed U.S Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., Massachusetts Secretary of Education James Peyser, state Reps. Aaron Vega and Angleo J. Puppolo Jr., Holyoke Mayor Alex B. Morse and Martha A. Waldron, of the Massachu-

WATCH THE VIDEO

M HCC unveils \$4.5 million Center for Life Sciences masslive.com.

and funding. "They came to the table to create something that is not just a nice-looking space, not just new equipment, but creating real opportunities for young people and adult learners," he said.

The center also creates pathways to higher education and careers. Peyser added that the Commonwealth was celebrating the first-ever STEM week.

More than 600,000 residents work in STEM fields in Massachusetts, with 270,000 postings for STEM jobs in the state. "This is just not a big part of our economy, but it is a fast-growing part," Peyser said.

Professor Emily Rabinsky, HCC's Biotechnology coordinator, said besides the ISO certified cleanroom, two new lab spaces were built, which feature the latest testing equipment.

She holds lectures in a separate room.

"There's much more space and more conducive to the learning environment. The old lab space we had was

Massachusetts Secretary of Education James Peyser, state Reps. Aaron Vega and Angleo J. Puppolo Jr., Holyoke Mayor Alex B. Morse and Martha A. Waldron, of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center.

Michelle Moriarty appeared on behalf of State Sen. Donald Humason, R-Westfield.

"This here is the most recent and latest example of how we're living our new mission," Royal said, "which is educate, inspire and connect."

Neal said Massachusetts' community colleges represent a chance for its citizens, especially in the age of rising education costs. "It's more important than ever to have a flourishing community college system," he said.

The state continues to lead the nation and the world in the biotechnology, Neal said. In New England alone, 18,000 precision manufacturing jobs remain unfilled. "We have this grand opportunity, and these are going to be the jobs of the future," he said.

Neal added that taxpayer-supported research, whether done at the National Institute of Health or locally, impacts society-at-large. "It is a wise expenditure of the public purse," he said. "These are the sorts of investments we make."

Royal said Peyser understands the growing missions of community colleges in Massachusetts, including "cultivating" local talent.

Peyser said the Center for Life Sciences involved public-private partnerships

She holds lectures in a separate room.

"There's much more space and more conducive to the learning environment. The old lab space we had was very difficult because of the setups," Rabinsky said.

The cleanroom, which meets industry standards, enhances the student's experience.

"With this new equipment and new space, we're able to train students to be more prepared and more competitive, and to go on from here, whether it's to a four-year school or industry," Rabinsky said.

Mya Fillion, a Biology major at HCC, experimented using gel electrophoresis to separate DNA. She protective glasses and thick, blue rubber gloves.

She said the new lab spaces gives her more educational and career options and offers her hands-on experience.

Fillion drew a watery substance through a thin tube and transferred it to a shallow well. A positive charge alters the DNA's negative nature. After 30 minutes, the DNA moves to the well's positive side. "We can use this for finding specific things in DNA if we know the size of it. We can also sequence the DNA," she said.

Fillion, 17, represents a growing number of high school students enrolled in dual-programs. She will earn an Associates in Science from HCC and complete her studies at Granby Junior-Senior High School in 2019.