

Outlook 2018 K1 2/11/18



Holyoke Community College president Christina Royal, right, is shown here in an August with Denis Luzzi, owner of the Cubit building, taken during the construction at the HCC-MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

(DAVE ROBACK / THE REPUBLICAN FILE PHOTO)

HCC rooted in collaboration

AT HOLYOKE COMMUNITY College, we use the words “collaboration” and “partnership” a lot, and with good reason.

We don’t do anything alone. Whether we’re talking about workforce development and job training, building new facilities, developing academic programs, or forging transfer pathways, to be true to our mission, every HCC venture, project or initiative must in some way benefit the cities and towns we serve, the



CHRISTINA ROYAL

residents who live there and the places they will work.

For example, in response to industry needs, in January we

opened the HCC-MGM Culinary Arts Institute in Holyoke’s Innovation District. We expect the institute to become the region’s premier culinary arts and hospitality education and training facility, supplying a new generation of workers for area restaurants and hotels and filling many of the jobs that will be available once MGM Springfield opens in September.

This was not a solitary endeavor but a partnership of the college, the city of Holy-

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“Institutions like HCC can be key catalysts of change, but we must also evolve and grow along with our economies and communities. When we need to adapt, we do. That benefits us all.”

CHRISTINA ROYAL, PRESIDENT, HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HCC

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oke, MGM and local developers, funded through a mix of city, state, and federal funds, grants and private donations.

HCC's middle name might be “community,” but that middle C could just as well stand for “collaborate” or “co-create,” that is, working together to build something new, such as the gaming school set to open later this month in Springfield. HCC will operate the school jointly with our colleagues at Springfield Technical Community College, and in partnership, once again, with MGM Springfield.

Why?

Community colleges are in the business of education, and we operate in the public interest. As good community partners we want area residents to be educated, skilled and properly trained for the jobs that are available and offer the most potential.

As the oldest two-year college in Massachusetts, HCC has 71 years of experience partnering with institutions of all kinds. In fact, the college was born of innovation through collaboration.

We trace our origins back to the 1920s, when faculty from Amherst, Smith, Mount

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Holyoke Community College president Christina Royal joined Fire Chief John A. Pond, left, Mayor Alex B. Morse and Holyoke Public Schools receiver Stephen Zrike at the Holyoke Farmers Market's first cook-off on Aug. 31. (THE REPUBLICAN FILE PHOTO)

Holyoke and Springfield colleges and the University of Massachusetts came together to start offering college-level classes to working adults, at the time a radical idea.

Later, the Holyoke Graduate School began operating out of Holyoke High School. Students then were mostly veterans of World War II, taking advantage of the educational benefits of the GI Bill.

In 1946, that school became Holyoke Junior College with classes taught mostly by distinguished faculty from the area's top colleges. Holyoke Junior College joined the state college system in 1964 and was renamed Holyoke Community College.

In 1968, however, a fire destroyed the downtown campus and put the college's future in doubt. Administrators, trustees and state officials pushed to merge HCC with STCC, founded the previous year. But Holyoke officials, local business leaders, educators and residents objected and ultimately prevailed. The

city itself optioned the land – a former dairy farm – on which the new campus was constructed.

The community understood then – and understands now, I believe – that Holyoke Community College is vital to the region's fortunes. Finally, we can put a dollar figure on that.

A recent economic impact study calculated the value of HCC to the Pioneer Valley at nearly \$215 million annually, a contribution about as large as the region's entire arts, entertainment and recreation industry.

That is a big impact – and a lot of responsibility.



Christina Royal arrived on the campus of Holyoke Community College in January 2017 as the fourth president and the first woman to lead the college. (DAVE ROBACK / THE REPUBLICAN FILE PHOTO)

So we look for opportunities to “co-create” with partnerships like “E2E,” Education to Employment, the workforce and training center we recently established in downtown Ware at the invitation of the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corp.

We're working with area high schools to expand dual enrollment programs and with Holyoke to strengthen career pathways at Dean Technical High School and also to develop new models for K-12 education to better prepare students for college.

We aggressively apply for grants to expand workforce training for the unemployed and to enhance our academic offerings. For instance, HCC recently received a \$431,000 federal grant to expand our Community Health Worker program. Our partners are Behavioral Health Networks and Gandara Center, two hu-

man service agencies in need of employees with that kind of skill set.

When it opens on campus this summer, our Center for Life Sciences will offer advanced biotechnology education and training in the region's only instructional “clean room” lab, designed in consultation with one of our alumni, scientist Steven Richter, a member of the Class of 1975, who is founder of Microtest Labs, now Avista Pharma, in Agawam.

Society is never still. We can't be either. Institutions like HCC can be key catalysts of change, but we must also evolve and grow along with our economies and communities. When we need to adapt, we do. That benefits us all.

Christina Royal is president of Holyoke Community College. To learn more about the college and its programs, go online to hcc.edu.