

Around Town

Southwick resident to lead HCC graduation procession

HOLYOKE — Southwick resident Alejandro “Alex” Sanchez will carry the ceremonial mace and lead the procession of graduates at Holyoke Community College Commencement June 2 after being chosen for the school’s highest honor, the Elaine Marieb Faculty Chair for Teaching Excellence.



Alex Sanchez

Sanchez is a criminal justice professor at HCC, a former Holyoke city councilor and Springfield police officer. He has been teaching full-time at the college since 2006. He is also an alumnus of HCC from the class of 1990.

“It’s not just me,” Sanchez said to his colleagues during the annual staff and faculty awards ceremony on May 9, “it’s everyone working together that makes this place happen, that makes this place tick. I appreciate the recognition, but I do it because I enjoy doing it, and I like being here.”

Sanchez joined the Springfield Police Department a few years after high school, earned his associate degree from HCC in criminal justice and then went on for a bachelor’s

degree in criminal justice from Westfield State and a master’s degree in criminal justice from Anna Maria College. He also served on the police departments in Hatfield and Sunderland, was elected to multiple terms on the Holyoke City Council and held seats on the city Planning Board and Fire Commission.

Sanchez, 54, now lives in Southwick with his wife, Stefanie, and two daughters, Samantha and Gabriella. He has three adult children from a previous marriage and two grandchildren.

The Marieb Award, endowed by HCC professor emeritus Elaine Marieb, class of 1980, recognizes a full-time member of the faculty for outstanding classroom teaching. Award recipients serve for one year and receive a small stipend for professional development, lead the procession at commencement, and also give the keynote graduation speech.

HCC’s 71st annual commencement ceremony will be held June 2 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield starting at 10 a.m.