

Grant Extends Free HCC College-Prep Program

HOLYOKE, MA — Holyoke Community College has been awarded a \$450,000 state grant to extend its free college preparation program, Transition to College and Careers, for three more years.

The grant from the state Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) allocates \$150,000 a year for the next three fiscal years – 2021, 2022 and 2023 – with the college providing an additional 30 percent match.

Transition to College and Careers, also known as TCC, is a free, adult education program that helps students 18 or older prepare for college and identify a career path. Coursework includes intensive academic preparation in reading and writing, math, study strategies, and computers.

The program is designed for all adults, including students with high school equivalency certificates, those who have completed English as a Second or Other Language or other adult literacy programs, and those



Students in HCC's Transition to College and Careers program celebrate their graduation.

who have been out of school for a long time and want to return.

"TCC is really a bridge for them so they feel like they understand what college is about and gain confidence in their abilities to manage the academic workload," said TCC director Marie Troppe.

There is no cost to students for

the classes or course materials.

"The grant and the college cover everything," Troppe said.

HCC runs daytime and evening TCC groups during fall, spring and summer terms. All classes meet on the main HCC campus at 303 Homestead Ave.

The program serves 60 to 75 stu-

dents a year.

The grant funds TCC instruction for about 30 of those students a year (15 each fall and spring), with priority given to students who come from other DESE-funded adult education programs, such as the Literacy Project, the Care Center, the Center for New Americans, the Community Education Center, the Valley Opportunity Council or one of HCC's many other community partners.

As an additional incentive, the DESE grant also pays for 12 college credits for students who go on to enroll at HCC or another college.

"That's a tremendous savings and an incredible incentive," said Troppe. "Twelve credits is essentially four free college classes for students who complete the TCC program."

The next series of TCC classes at HCC will begin in September.

For more information or to apply for the program, please visit hcc.edu/tcc or send an email to tcc@hcc.edu. ■