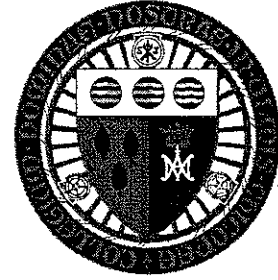


**HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ELMS COLLEGE**



FIRST DEGREE PROGRAM

Degree Completion Program between Holyoke Community College and Elms College

The goal of the **First Degree Program** is to promote a partnership between Holyoke Community College and Elms College that values degree completion while improving student persistence and retention rates.

Overview:

Students who transfer from Holyoke Community College may continue to work toward the completion of their associate degree while matriculated at Elms College. The targeted outcome will be to increase persistence and retention, acting as partners in supporting student success.

National data has shown an increase in student mobility in the student's second year of college, meaning that students are not completing their first college's degree requirements. With the First Degree partnership we can promote student graduation and retention while demonstrating our strong commitment to each student's educational success.

Implementation:

Each semester Elms College will identify students who have transferred from Holyoke Community College without completion of their Associate degree. A listing of the non-graduates, including addresses, will then be forwarded to the Transfer Affairs office at Holyoke Community College. An information letter will be sent by the Transfer Affairs office at Holyoke Community College to each student providing details for participation in the **First Degree Program** encouraging students to continue their enrollment at Elms College while simultaneously having admissible credits applied toward their Holyoke Community College associate degree.

Students participating in the **First Degree Program** will be eligible for an Elms College waiver of general education requirements; however, students will not be eligible for additional transfer scholarships. Only courses that fulfill both graduation requirements at Holyoke Community College and Elms College will be honored, students cannot change majors or request a course overload at Elms College in order to fulfill Holyoke Community College graduation requirements.

Once a student has satisfied the associate degree requirements, Holyoke Community College will complete the application for graduation; moving the student toward the awarding of their degree. The student will then be invited to participate in commencement activities at Holyoke Community College. Holyoke Community College will notify the Registrar's Office at Elms College when a student has successfully completed his/her associate degree.

Holyoke Community College and Elms College have committed themselves to improving student persistence and degree completion at our institutions.

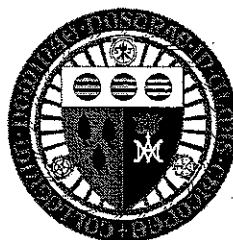
Ensuring students obtain a degree at each of our institutions deserves our attention and collective resources. Through this program we will be improving our rates of graduation, thus effectively serving as a measure of our success and the educational impact on the lives of our students. As such, we agree to participate and support the First Degree Program developed jointly between our institutions that tracks student enrollment between Holyoke Community College and Elms College and encourage students to complete their Associate degree by using applicable college-level credits earned at Elms College.

The nature of a community college student is to co- and cross-enroll at multiple institutions. Therefore our institutions need to continue to support the postsecondary academic needs of individuals in Western Massachusetts. Economic data indicates that graduates of our institutions remain in this region supporting and improving the local labor market and economies.

We commit our administrative resources to this program while assuring compliance with all applicable state and federal records and privacy laws.



HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



ELMS COLLEGE

Handwritten signature of Dr. William Messner in black ink.

Dr. William Messner, *president*

Handwritten signature of Sr. Mary Reap, IHM, Ph.D. in black ink.

Sr. Mary Reap, IHM, Ph.D., *president*

7/17/14
Date