

Alumni Connection

**HOLYOKE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**
SPRING 2021

HCC's Network of Champions

New mentorship program connects
alumni and students of color



ALSO INSIDE:

**More Than a Good Fit:
HCC remembers dean
Moira Maguire**

DEAR READERS



Christina Royal, Ph.D., HCC President

This edition of the Alumni Connection marks the start of our 75th anniversary as well as a full year of teaching, learning and operating remotely amid the global pandemic. Over the course of these trying months, our students, faculty and staff have demonstrated all that is extraordinary about HCC – resilience, innovation, and the ardent belief that anything is possible. I have witnessed the very best of HCC during this time, and it is on display in the pages that follow.

For 75 years, HCC has been a beacon of hope and opportunity. In 1946, what was first called the Holyoke Graduate School (and, soon after, Holyoke Junior College) was established as a

municipal program providing night-school college classes to returning WWII veterans and other adults. In 1968, after fire destroyed the main college building on Sargeant Street, the resourcefulness and innovative spirit of our community enabled students to resume their studies in church basements, an armory, rooms above a restaurant, and other locations, after missing only one day of classes.

The HCC of today continues to adapt to meet the needs of our region, provide our community with opportunity, and deliver exceptional academics that propel our students forward. Recently, through a new partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, we developed a first-in-the-state cybersecurity training program that is creating pathways to careers for people with disabilities. Our Women's Leadership Luncheon series and Conversations with Christina events welcomed hundreds of alumni, friends, and business leaders for virtual professional development and meaningful discussion.

Our students have also taken the lead: members of our student Latinx Empowerment Association launched a children's book drive to stock a "Little Free Library" in the Holyoke Flats neighborhood because they believe in the power of literacy and education.

In January, I attended the closing event for HCC's inaugural Championships Mentorship Network, a program you can learn more about beginning on Page 4. During the virtual event, alumni mentors and student mentees each had the opportunity to share how the program had impacted their lives. "Life is easier when you have someone you can relate to," said Eilianie Alvelo '13. This was why she became a mentor, and her statement reminds me of the importance of our mission to "educate, inspire and connect."

As we embark on our 75th anniversary year, we look boldly toward a future inspired by all we have learned and all that we know to be possible. Through the vision, dedication, ingenuity and investments of our entire community – faculty and staff, students, alumni, board members and friends – we will further strengthen HCC as a college of academic excellence known for helping students overcome barriers to success.

The story of Holyoke Community College is one of its people. Our collective belief that anything is possible is woven throughout our history, and it serves as the foundation for all we will become in the years and decades ahead.

Christina Royal

Alumni Connection

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Editors:

Chris Yurko and JoAnne L. Rome

Design/Art Direction:

William Murphy

Layout:

William Murphy

Photography:

Chris Yurko

Class Notes/Change of Address:

Please contact the Alumni Office
413.552.2253 or alumni@hcc.edu.

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From the Archives

In recognition of HCC's 75th anniversary year – and a preview of our special edition Alumni Connection magazine, coming in Fall 2021 – we bring you a selection of items from the HCC Archives. Please share your own memories with us and we might include them in the next issue or on our special 75th anniversary website now under construction.

FIRST CLASS

Thomas E. Zebrowski and Theodore J. Gorski comprised the entire first class of graduates of Holyoke Junior College in 1948. The photograph (top right) was taken at the home of Zebrowski's father at 159 Walnut St in Holyoke. It was given to the HCC Archives by Zebrowski's son, Edward, in 2016.

FROM FALL 2005

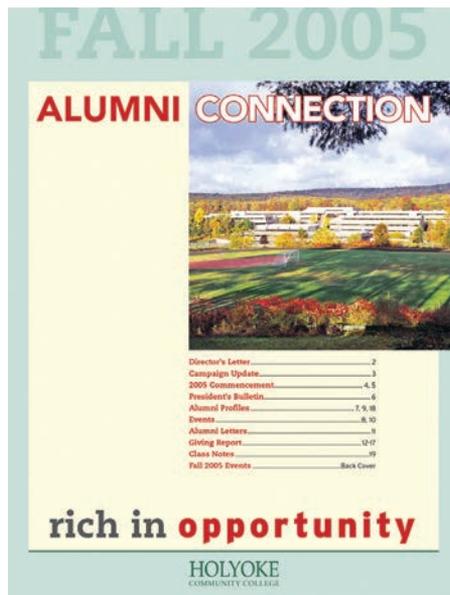
Joanna Brown (HCC's now retired coordinator of Alumni Relations) visited me several weeks ago, and during her visit I told her how important Holyoke Community College had been to me way back in the 1950s. I had been in a children's tuberculosis sanatorium for several years, and although I theoretically had a high school diploma, I was way behind the curve when it came to dealing with people my own age. Holyoke Community College gave me an opportunity to play "catch up" on my adolescence at the same time that it prompted me to develop my intellectual skills. In the years since I left HCC, I encountered only one college that had the same kind of mission that HCC has. That institution is the divinity school at Howard University, in Washington, D.C., that offered evening classes in theology. Its faculty noticed that I had a bent for theological research and writing, and encouraged me to get a Ph.D. in that field. I did that, and since then I have been "straightening out" an important part of the history of the Church of England in the

19th Century that has been very much neglected. I am very much enjoying my work, and I am grateful to HCC for giving me a fine education and to Howard University for nudging me in the right direction.

– Mary Louise McIntyre '55, Ph.D.
Editor's Note: McIntyre died in 2010

I grew up on Lyman Terrace in Holyoke, the fifth of nine children and the first one to go to college. Back in 1965, Holyoke Community College was not a choice, it was the only choice for me. First of all, the price was right. Second, I could walk to school (neither my mom, my dad, or I had a driver's license). Can you imagine walking from Ward 4 to South Street, even in winter? On occasion, I did take the bus, but mostly I chose to walk and prepare mentally for the day. When I started at HCC, I was excited and frightened. I was lucky to be hired as a work-study student in the library. I will never forget Miss Root and the library. It sure saved me financially and got me away from my books for 15 hours a week. The two years at HCC went by so fast. I know it must have been hard work, but it was also fun. I started to feel that anything I wanted was mine if I worked for it. I would have to say the professors showed me by example that hard work paid off and that education was the key. Nothing made a bigger difference in my life than knowing that I was one of many students (no matter where we came from) who were going somewhere in our lives because we put in the time and effort.

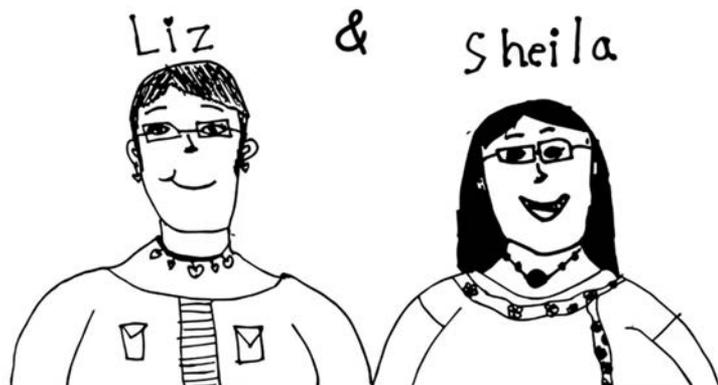
– Betty LaFreniere Willard '67
Willard lives in Florence, Mass.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

HCC welcomes comments from readers. Contact us on social media, send an email to alumni@hcc.edu or mail a letter to us at Alumni Connection, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040. Please include your name, class year, home address and phone number.

#theitsybitsy zoom cast
with



Pandemic sparks academic innovations

Service Learning has long been an integral feature of many HCC classes. Through Service Learning, students engage in community-based projects that enhance a course's academic objectives. The projects get students out of the classroom and directly involved with staff and consumers of agencies such as the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club, Nuestras Raices, the Holyoke Public Library, and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

The best projects are often hands-on. Even though COVID-19 has shifted most classes to remote instruction, HCC instructors have found new and innovative ways to continue Service Learning despite the pandemic.

For instance: In Education 213 (Student Teaching) students in Prof. Sheila Gould's class created an online program titled "The More We Get Together: Conversations That Build Bridges in Early Education." Affectionately called the "Itsy Bitsy Zoomcast," the show is a seven-part series during which students interviewed professionals working in the early education field. (Zoomcast image above, by Marianne Gould, age 9.) In "Pathologies of Power," an Honors class taught by professors Raúl Gutiérrez and Vanessa Martinez, students created bilingual lesson plans for a first-grade class at Holyoke's Joseph Metcalf School.

"It's so important to be able to have these experiences in our community, to be able to reach people in our community, but it's even more important during this pandemic, so much more important," said Lisa Mahon, coordinator of Service Learning, during a December celebration of fall semester projects, held over Zoom. "The impact is just phenomenal. It impacts socially, academically, and emotionally, so I'm so thankful for the work that you guys have done."

Here are a few more projects from the fall semester:

Curriculum in Early Education, Prof. Sheila Gould; Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art; Project: create interactive online art exhibit based on children's books.

Principles of Marketing, Prof. Klara Karol; Chicopee Chamber of Commerce; Project: comprehensive marketing plan.

Psychology of Women, Prof. Sheryl Civjan; RFK Academy, Springfield; Project: facilitate online discussions on topic of "emotional expression" through poetry, music and art.

Building a Healthier World, Profs. Naomi Lesley (English) and Vanessa Martinez (anthropology); Multicultural Community Services, Holyoke; Project: lead discussions about literature with program participants.

English Composition, Prof. Lisa Mahon; Voices from Inside; Project: read and analyze writing of incarcerated women and engage in online poetry reading and discussion with the authors.

KUDOS



President Christina Royal – one of the 2020 "Women of Impact" by *Business West* magazine ... and one of 13 college presidents nationwide recognized for outstanding leadership on diversity, equity and inclusion by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the education technology company Cengage ...

Student and Latinx Studies major **Miren Neyra Alcantara** – one of six finalists for *Business West* magazine's first-ever "Young Woman of Impact" award ...



anthropology – recipient of the 2020 Elaine Marieb Faculty Chair for Teaching Excellence award ...

Raúl Gutiérrez, associate professor of Spanish and coordinator of HCC's Latinx Studies program – recipient of the 2020 Antonio Pantoja Award for Distinguished Achievement from the Latino Scholarship Fund of Western Massachusetts.

[IN BRIEF]

Cybersecurity Training

In collaboration with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, HCC launched a free, intensive cybersecurity training program for people with disabilities. After 10 months of training, 15 students completed the Cisco Academy Cybersecurity Training pilot program in December. Now, as certified Cisco Certified Network Associates and Cisco Certified Cyber-Operations Associates, program graduates qualify for jobs as cybersecurity analysts in a growing field that could earn them entry-level salaries of more than \$70,000 a year. "The opportunities are just so much bigger and better than what I had before," said program graduate Aidan Burke. "I was kind of floundering a bit in terms of direction in my life, and now I have an opportunity to move up in the world."

Latinx Studies Pact

Students who major in Latinx Studies at HCC can now transfer seamlessly to Westfield State University and apply their credits toward a bachelor's and master's degree thanks to a new agreement between the two schools. The 2+2+1 program will enable HCC students to apply their credits toward a B.A. in ethnic and gender studies with a double major in Spanish. In their fifth year, students can earn a master's degree in public administration.

'Together HCC' Touted

HCC was one of 10 U.S. colleges selected as finalists for a Bellwether award for its "Together HCC" fundraising and social media campaign. Bellwether finalists represent leading community colleges whose programs and practices are considered outstanding and innovative. HCC launched "Together HCC: A Campaign for Caring" at the end of March in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The three-month campaign raised about \$38,664 from nearly 200 private donors for the President's Student Emergency Fund.

Seeing More Smiles



Ash Aliengena, right, a literacy specialist at HCC's Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center, with HCC student Jackie Santana, whose essay inspired the "See More Smiles" campaign.

Inspired by a deaf student's essay about the pandemic, HCC literacy specialist Ash Aliengena started a campaign last spring to highlight the frustrations of those who depend on lip-reading to communicate. Aliengena started making "accessible" face masks with clear plastic windows and created a website offering free design patterns. Aliengena's "See More Smiles" project is a collaboration with HCC's Office for Students with Disabilities & Deaf Services, which is helping to spread the word. To date, Aliengena, who uses the pronouns they/them, has hand-sewn more than 100 masks and given most of them away. Buoyed by the November election, Aliengena plans to send a set of "windowed" masks to the White House for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. "I think it would mean so much to so many people to see our political leaders wearing one of these masks on the national stage, putting accessible communication front and center and making it a priority," they said.

Read more at hcc.edu/smiles

Check out Aliengena's mask designs at hcc.edu/see-more-smiles

HCC hosts hearings on Soldiers' Home deaths

In October, HCC hosted the Joint Special Legislative Oversight Committee for a series of hearings examining COVID-19 related deaths at the Holyoke Soldier's Home. The hearings, held in the HCC Campus Center dining room, brought in elected officials from all over



Members of the Joint Special Legislative Oversight Committee await testimony from family members and staff about COVID-19 deaths at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home.

Massachusetts to hear testimony from staff and family members who discussed conditions at the home, where 76 veterans died from COVID-19. Among the legislators who heard testimony was (now) former house member and HCC alum and HCC member Aaron Vega '90 of Holyoke.

HCC'S

NETWORK *of*



CHAMPIONS

By JANICE BEETLE

As a junior at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, Zasha Valentin started a job working at McDonald's.

The following year, her mother urged her to quit – not the job, but school. It was more important, she was told, that Zasha help supplement her family's income. High school was expendable, and college not remotely on her radar.

The message was drilled into her head, she recently recalled: "Work, work, work."

Years later, Valentin, now 25, is a first-year student at HCC and was recruited to be part of a new mentorship program focused on students of color, the HCC Champions Mentorship Network, affectionately called "Chats with Champions."

The program pairs first-semester students like Valentin with

alumni of color who share their backgrounds, academic interests and career ambitions – those who know, through their own, often bumpy experiences, how to succeed in college and beyond.

"I had to figure a lot out myself," says Armanis Fuentes '19, one of the program's alumni mentors, who grew up in Holyoke.

Fuentes' parents never finished high school, and he too was pushed into the world of work.

After holding various minimum-wage, entry-level positions over several years, he enrolled at HCC. Without family guidance, though, he had to find his own way through often-confusing college processes, such as applying for financial aid and choosing classes.

"It definitely was trying," he says.

Destiny Calderon



Yarenis Olivera '09





Fuentes graduated from HCC in 2019 with high honors and now holds two separate fellowships at Williams College, where he is majoring in history and art. He is eager to pass along what he has learned.

“To be able to impart knowledge is a better use for it than keeping it in my head,” he says.

After months of planning, the Mentorship Network got off the ground last fall with 21 students matched with 16 alumni mentors, thanks in part to a \$100,000 grant the college received from the Lumina Foundation, a national nonprofit that seeks to dismantle systemic barriers to success for Black and Latinx college students and help them earn their degrees.



The creation of the Champions Mentorship Network ties directly into one of HCC’s principal strategic goals: increasing retention and success rates of students of color. It also aligns with the state Dept. of Higher Education’s top priority of education equity.

“We’re helping to foster connections and open paths for our students of color to empower their academic success and help them navigate their education and life goals,” said Julie Phillips, HCC’s coordinator of Alumni Affairs and one of the mentorship program’s co-creators. “The whole point is for these students to see alumni who look like them who are out around the country, working. Because the mentors have walked this path, they have a certain empathy for the mentees that is unique and special, and it fuels their passion to serve.”



The Champions Mentorship Network builds on a series of alumni panel discussions started in the spring of 2020 called “Chats with Champions.” Each of two panels focused on a different academic area – business and social sciences – and featured alumni working in those fields. (A third alumni event on STEM was canceled after the campus was closed due to COVID-19.)

As part of the new program, Chats with Champions has moved from the HCC Campus Center, where the first sessions were held, to an online platform. During the fall, as part of the new network, virtual group chats were held on topics with more of a focus on mentorship: community leadership; aha moments; and transferring to a four-year college or university.

Phillips administers the program along with HCC alumna Myriam Quiñones ’95, coordinator of MAS, HCC’s Multicultural Academic Services program, and Lauren LeClair, coordinator of Orientation and New Student Programs. They say the Champions Mentorship Network is unique in higher education circles, as it specifically pairs incoming students of color with alumni of color in their field of interest, and the program is already reaping benefits for both students and mentors.

Phillips explains that the network is based on three pillars: one-on-

The HCC Champions Mentorship Network is the brainchild of three HCC staff members: Julie Phillips, coordinator of Alumni Relations (top), Lauren LeClair, coordinator of Orientation and New Student Programs (middle) and Myriam Quiñones ’95, coordinator of Multicultural Academic Services.



Left to right: Nathalie Vicencio '02, Eiliane Alvelo '13, and Shawn Robinson '05 take part in a "Chats With Champions" alumni panel discussion moderated by Prof. T. Ross, far right, chair of the HCC Sociology department before the pandemic in spring 2020.

one conversations between student and mentor; the virtual group chats with panels of mentors who offer dynamic conversations on specific topics; and workshops developed by Quiñones and LeClair that help students with tasks such as registering for classes, setting goals and securing financial aid.

Lumina grant funds were used to buy 21 new Chromebooks for the HCC library that are dedicated for students in the Mentorship Network. (Participants also receive a small stipend: \$400 for students and \$100 for alumni.)

Students are required to set college or career-oriented goals and monitor their progress weekly. Their mentors help hold them accountable.

The network works, the program coordinators say, because students have an advocate in their field of interest with whom they develop a personal relationship as well as a wider network of experienced alumni they can call upon in the future for help.

"This was a great opportunity for me to talk about my journey

as a student of color and now as a professional working in the field that I chose," said Elizabeth Román '03, a bilingual reporter for the *Springfield Republican* newspaper and editor of its sister publication, *El Pueblo Latino*. "I'm here for Nhi" – her student mentee – "and any other student who feels that they want to share their story or talk to or get advice from someone who looks a little like them."

Like Román, the alumni "champions" are developing a sense of leadership, and enjoy talking about their experiences at HCC as well as their jobs and how they got them.

"Mentors are very invested in helping their mentees, going out of their way to assist them—texting when the student needs help with homework, or offering kudos on a completed task," Quiñones says. "We asked mentors to give one hour a month. They're giving many hours. They are invested so much they want to make sure mentees have access to them."

After dropping out of high school, Valentin earned her high school equivalency. She is now a registered behavioral technician and

“I’ve met amazing people who encourage me and are very kind and supportive. They all offer me support that I do not have in my household.”

works full time at Papermill Elementary School in Westfield, implementing behavior modification plans for students with special needs. Along the way, she developed a passion for the work and wanted to learn more.

At HCC, she is majoring in elementary education and paired with mentor Eilanie Alvelo '13, of Westfield. After graduating from HCC with her associate degree in liberal arts, Alvelo transferred to Westfield State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in applied behavioral science. Alvelo, who is bilingual, is now a board-certified behavior analyst at the May Institute and Behavioral Concepts, where she provides behavior analytic services to children with autism while supporting Spanish-speaking families.

“I decided to become a mentor because, when I was at HCC, my mentors were key ingredients to my ability to finish my two-year degree, transfer to a four-year college and be successful there,” Alvelo said. “I think life in general is easier when you can help identify the steps you need to take to get where you want to be.”

Through the fall semester and into the new year, Alvelo has offered many assists to Valentin, one of her two mentees. For instance, she helped Valentin craft a professional-looking resume and cover letter.

Valentin plans to transfer to a four-year school after completing her education at HCC. Her goal is to earn a master's degree and work in applied behavior analysis, like Alvelo.

Having a mentor in her field of interest is helping Valentin enhance her HCC education and is better preparing her for a real career, she says.

Alvelo, for her part, says she enjoys listening to her mentees' hopes and dreams and working with them to figure out ways to minimize or eliminate any obstacles that could interfere with their ability to reach their goals.

“We identify very specific steps they can take,” Alvelo says. “I appreciate being able to be there for them when they text me, sharing that they feel overwhelmed by finals, work, or life in general. I know that sometimes we just need someone to say, “You got this! Just keep swimming!” and so I am happy to be that person for them.”

Fuentes, 23, was paired with HCC student Johnny Garcia Jr., who grew up in Chicopee under similar circumstances to his in a family that did not have any experience with college. Garcia says taking part in the network has pushed him outside his comfort zone, as he hoped it would. He's grateful to have a mentor who understands his experience.

“I've met amazing people who encourage me and are very kind and supportive,” he says. “They all offer me support that I do not have in my household. They offer me their advice. These are things I do not normally have in my everyday life.”

Garcia is studying criminal justice and biology and plans to join the military after graduating from HCC to help pay for the remainder of his education. He says Fuentes has been instrumental in helping him figure out which branch of the military

would suit him best. “He has helped me make decisions that were really hard,” says Garcia. “He encouraged me to ask questions and do my research.”



Fuentes said he finds excitement in his role as mentor.

“It’s a cool opportunity to reach students who are in the position I was just in a year or two ago,” he says.

The pilot phase of the program concluded in January. A less intensive, more informal version will continue through spring.

Phillips notes that all 21 student-mentees successfully completed their program goals and all of them returned to HCC for the spring 2021 semester. Based on the program’s success, the HCC Foundation has committed funds to allow the full version of the Champions Mentorship Network to continue in the fall.

“We want to continue with the current students and recruit a new cohort of incoming students,” Quiñones says. “We would like have at least 30 mentees.”

After one semester, the future of the network seems as bright as those it serves.

They are certainly not likely to run out of willing alumni.

The program has “helped me tons toward achieving my goals,” says Valentin. “Who knows? Maybe when I graduate, I can join the program as a mentor.”

Interested in becoming an alumni mentor?

Please visit: hcc.edu/mentor





MEET THE CHAMPIONS



Clockwise from top left: Alumni mentors Ruth Suguey Tirado '11, Victor Carreras '13, Julissa Colón '13, Myke Connolly, '04, and Elizabeth Román '03.



Champions Mentorship Network

Kim Monson '01

Director, Residential and Therapeutic Services, Children's Study Home; adjunct faculty, Westfield State University; HCC Alumni Council (B.S., human service, University of Hartford; MSW Smith College)

Sarah Monson '03

Assistant director, Annual Giving, American International College; board member, Vet Air (B.S. health care administration, University of Phoenix)

Elizabeth Román '03

Reporter, *Springfield Republican*; editor, *El Pueblo Latino*; HCC Alumni Council. (B.A., English, University of Massachusetts)

Myke Connolly '04

Brand ambassador, Stand Out Truck; author, "Launch and Stand Out;" chapter chairman, SCORE Western Massachusetts; executive committee, EforAll Holyoke; Board member, Junior Achievement

Yarenis Oliveras '09

Relationship manager, Empower Retirement; member, Assoc. of Latinos at Mass Mutual and Allies. (B.A., psychology, American International College)

Johnnie Ray McKnight '10

Middle school math teacher, Springfield Public Schools (B.S., business administration; MBA, American International College)

Ruth Sugay Tirado '11

Educational and career adviser, Community Education Project. (B.A., Latin American studies, Mount Holyoke College)

Eilianie Alvelo '13

Behavior Analyst, May Institute and Behavioral Concepts Innovations (B.A., psychology; M.S., applied behavioral analysis, Westfield State University)

Victor Carreras III '13

Physician assistant, Hampden and Franklin County Cardiovascular Associates (B.A., health science society and policy, Brandeis University; M.S., physician assistant studies, Baypath University)

Julissa Colón '13

Special programs coordinator, HCC Gateway to College program (B.A., Latin American studies and history, Smith College)

Maritza Santiago Porter '15

Clinician, Brightside for Families and Children (B.A., psychology and education, Mount Holyoke College)

Haziq Bin Mustapha '17

Math tutor, InfinityEd, Amherst, Mass. (B.S. math, Boston University)

Yasmina Mattison Sudan '17

Freelance photographer (B.A., photography, biology, Hampshire College)

Karianne Santiago Ruiz '17

Student, master's in public health, University of New England; New England liaison, National Puerto Rican Student Coalition (B.S. public and global health, University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Adam Syme '18

Student, Isenberg School of Management, UMass Amherst (former branch manager, Young Entrepreneurs Across America; former residential counselor, ServiceNet in Hadley)

Armanis Fuentes '19

Student, history and art, Williams College. Public Humanities Fellow, Mellon Mays Undergraduate Junior Research Fellow. 

ALUMNI IN ACTION

Pandemic not fatal for fall play The show was meant to be different: A traditional stage play, yes, performed in the Leslie Phillips Theater with a live audience in the seats, but also one that would be streamed over the internet and include real-time interactions with more distant viewers. COVID-19 turned that model upside down. By necessity, "Fatal Fisticuffs," the HCC Theater Department's Fall 2020 production, evolved into a completely live-streamed, virtual event, with 13 student- and alumni-actors performing before green screens in their homes, the action patched together remotely and directed by HCC theater professor Tim Cochran.

"Fatal Fisticuffs," an original, commissioned work by HCC theater alumnus and playwright **Tom Roche '16**, was performed four times over three days in November. The shows combined some pre-recorded fight sequences with live action and featured a number of other HCC theater alumni in key positions: **Cory Missildine '13**, a professional gamer and owner of a livestreaming company, Missildine Online, served as streaming coach; **Mike Pray '08**, a member of Tieline Theater, a Massachusetts theater collaborative, as fight choreographer; as well as **Axel Cruz '11** (assistant director), **Matt Haughton** (actor), **Elaine Stoneham '11** (actor), **Chelsea Jeronimo '15** (actor), **Brandon Williams '13** (actor).

1. Corey Missildine '13 records Mike Pray '08 on the stage of HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater in preparation for "Fatal Fisticuff," by Tom Roche '16, shown in photo 1.1

Read more about "Fatal Fisticuffs" at: hcc.edu/fatal

At Your Service As a student at HCC, **Jeffery Anderson-Burgos '15** distinguished himself in many ways. Not only did he ace all his classes (he graduated with a GPA of 4.0), but he was a vigorous participant in student clubs and government, serving as president of the Student Senate. During his final year, he received a "29 Who Shine" award from the state Dept. of Higher Ed. After HCC, Anderson-Burgos transferred to Commonwealth Honors College at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. Long active in state and national politics, Anderson-Burgos recently accepted a job as administrative assistant to the Holyoke City Council, the kind of government service job he has been looking forward to since graduating from HCC. "I enjoyed my time at UMass, but my years at HCC continue to hold a special place in my heart," said Anderson-Burgos, who works at City Hall. "I should note that my experience serving as Student Senate president at HCC is the part of my background I highlighted the most in discussing what I felt my qualifications are for the job."

2. Jeffery Anderson-Burgos '15 in the City Council room at Holyoke City Hall.

A culinary dream fulfilled **Nicole Ortiz '20** completed her associate degree in culinary arts in May 2020. In October, she returned to the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute to celebrate the grand opening of her food truck business – Crave, "a dream of mine for a long time," she said. Holyoke mayor Alex Morse helped Ortiz with the ribbon-cutting. In addition to Latin-inspired fare like tacos, Crave sells rice balls, soup, loaded potatoes, and a variety of vegetarian and vegan options. "I want to give a big shout-out to HCC for teaching me everything I know," said Ortiz, who is already planning to add a take-out shop and second truck to her Crave operation.

3. Nicole Ortiz '20 Ortiz celebrates the grand opening of her food truck, Crave.

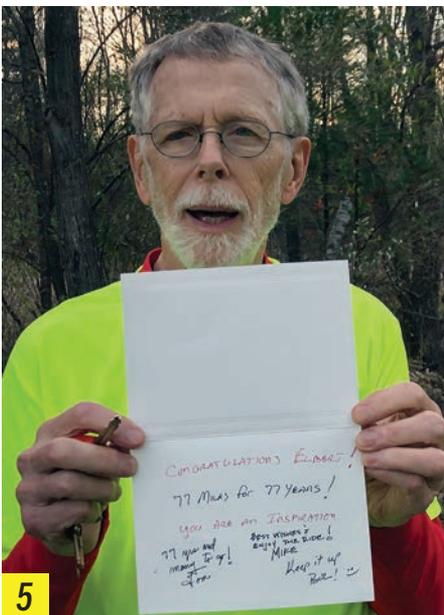
Read more at: hcc.edu/crave

Diving into campus life The Nov. 9 edition of Maine Campus, the online publication of the University of Maine, featured **Rachel Irzyk '20** in its #YouMaine column under the headline, "New transfer student dives right into the campus community." Irzyk, a biology major at HCC, is studying wildlife ecology at UMaine, where she is a member of four college clubs – so far: the Blade Society, Wildlife Society, Black Bear Beekeeping and Ewe-Maine Icelandic Sheep Club. "The clubs have helped me get out of my comfort zone and have made me try new things," Irzyk said. "They have also helped me expand interests outside of my major and are the main reason why I chose to live on campus during a pandemic," she said in the interview. After UMaine, Irzyk plans to focus on herpetology, inspired by Turtie, the eastern painted turtle she rescued when she was 10 years old.

4. Rachel Irzyk '20 and Turtie.

77 miles for 77 years In recognition of his 77th birthday, **Elbert Bowler '08**, completed a 77-mile bike trek on a warm, sunny, November day. Riding mostly on rail trails, Bowler and his four cycling buddies started at the Columbia Bikeway in Westfield and finished five hours and 45 minutes later at the end of the Norwottuck Rail Trail in Belchertown. Bowler, a retired advertising employee at the *Springfield Republican* who lives in Holyoke, said he averages 40 to 90 miles a week on his bike during the warmer months. Even so, he told a Republican reporter he was so giddy with excitement at the end he would have raised his arms in the air like the winner of the Tour de France, "if I could still ride with my hands off the bars."

5. Bowler '08 after his trek.



MORE



Dean Moira Maguire stands behind a trunk full of school supplies before they were given away to HCC students in September 2020.

Than a Good Fit | *Dean Moira J. Maguire, 1965-2020*

By CHRIS YURKO

Before she had uttered one word during her first on-campus interview, Moira Maguire had a good feeling about Holyoke Community College.

It was early December 2017. She was sitting outside the President's Office waiting for the chair of the search committee to escort her into the conference room and couldn't help but notice the array of brightly colored holiday gift bags filling the office suite and busy college staff carrying in more and more.

"Do you guys have a Giving Tree?" she asked one of the haulers, who turned out to be HCC staff assistant Nelson Lopez '04, a member of the annual Giving Tree committee.

"Oh, yea," he said, "right out there in the lobby."

"I thought that was really cool. What a great sense of community."

Maguire recalled that episode in April 2018, just a few days after starting her new job at HCC as dean of Social Sciences. "That was literally my first impression of the college," she said then, "staff banding together to buy gifts for people in the community."

The more she learned about HCC the more she liked it.

"It just felt like a good fit for me," she said.

More than a good fit, her colleagues would argue. A great fit, however brief her time.

In November 2020, Dean Moira Jean Maguire died at her home in Easthampton, Mass., after a sudden illness. She was 55 years old.

"This is a devastating loss not just for the college, but for each of us personally," President Christina Royal said in a message to faculty and staff. "Moira impacted the lives of so many members of the HCC community; it is hard to comprehend her passing or our collective life without her."

Maguire was a Boston native and sounded like one, describing herself proudly as "an original Charlestown townie and Red Sox fan."

"I grew up with a single mom who had three kids, and she really struggled for a long time to make a life for us," Maguire said. "Because of my upbringing I think I have a lot of empathy for students who come from deprived backgrounds."

Her Irish Catholic heritage infused her work as much as her life.

As an undergraduate, Maguire studied history and political science at George Washington University. She earned a master's degree in history from Northeastern University and later a doctorate from American University in 20th Century Irish history.

As a teacher and scholar, she spent more than 10 years at the University of Ireland Maynooth. Her work on infanticide and the Irish government's care of unwed mothers and their children led to many publications, including a book, *Precarious Childhood in Post-Independence Ireland*.

An expert in her field, Maguire consulted with the BBC on several documentaries, and her research was credited with helping to reunify Irish families that had been separated for decades.

For 12 years she taught history at the University of Arkansas, returning to the Northeast to be closer to her mother after her step-father died, and stepping into her first role as a college administrator as dean of liberal arts at Schenectady County Community College in New York.

During that 2018 interview, she recalled an incident from early in her tenure there. On the first day of classes of a new semester, she met a frazzled woman wandering the hall, three fussing young children in tow. Maguire asked if everything was okay. No, the woman said. She had no childcare, the kids hadn't eaten breakfast, and she didn't want to be late for class.

Maguire offered to take the children to the cafeteria, where she heard their life story.

"Once they had food in their stomachs, they were completely charming," Maguire said. "They were so engaging and so outgoing you would never know their lives were just pure chaos. Here's a mom living in the city mission with three kids trying to get an education, and it really struck me that that's who we're serving. We're serving students who don't have a lot of other options."

The scene stuck with her like a marked passage in a beloved book.

"That's really what a community college is for," she said. "For a lot of students, it's their chance to make another life for themselves. Over the course of my time there, I began to see that, for me, working at a community college isn't a job, it's a sort of calling."

She backed up those beliefs with action, volunteering at homeless shelters and food pantries.

At HCC, she worked to increase access to childcare for students juggling school and parenthood. She was the lead administrator responsible for compiling the 122-page self-study the college was required to submit for its 10-year accreditation review. (Granted, by the way, in January 2021).

What she will be remembered most for, though, if her colleagues and friends have anything to say about it, is the school supply drive she founded.

It started small, in the fall of 2019, in her division, Social Sciences. Faculty and staff donated supplies students could pick up in the office – notebooks, pencils, backpacks. No charge.

"We pretty much had everything they needed," she said last summer. "Students were literally crying, having this help."

The pandemic nearly put an end to the school supply drive before it could become an annual event. But Maguire found a way.

She enlisted a team. They drafted a plan.

“Moira impacted the lives of so many members of the HCC community; it is hard to comprehend her passing or our collective life without her.”



Maguire, left, soon after her arrival at HCC, with Idelia Smith, assistant vice president of Academic Affairs, and Monica Perez, now retired vice president of Academic Affairs.

HCC GIVING



Maguire's cat, Buster, watches over boxes of school supplies stacked in her living room.

“That’s really what a community college is for. For a lot of students, it’s their chance to make another life for themselves.”

“Just because students won’t be on campus doesn’t mean they won’t need school supplies,” she wrote in her outreach letter to faculty and staff. “We hope this school supply drive will provide our students with much-needed resources while also allowing us to come together to demonstrate the kindness, generosity and community spirit that make HCC such a great place to work and learn.”

The plan included an Amazon Wish List and a single point for delivery – the Easthampton home she shared with Buster, Huck, Harry, Bob and Maggie, her cats. In a short span, more than 100 packages were delivered to her house. “My living room has been a train wreck for the last week and a half,” she said.

Maguire and other members of the team assembled nearly 300 colorful bags filled with notebooks, binders, loose-leaf paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, folders, and, upon request, specialty items such as clipboards, calculators, and printer cartridges. During two-hour time slots, students drove through the parking lot behind the Donahue building to collect them.

When they ran out of bags and supplies, Maguire ordered more.

“My supply cupboard has been picked clean,” she wrote a few days later. “Overall, I’d say it was a big hit!”

After Maguire’s death, her colleagues came together for another purpose – to establish a memorial fund through the HCC Foundation. The intent of the Moira Maguire Fund for Student Success is two-fold: to provide school supplies and support students who need help with childcare.

“Dr. Maguire quickly made it clear early on that she would do anything she could to support student success and provide students with everything they needed as whole persons, not just in academics,” HCC education professor Sheila Gould said in a tribute to her former dean.

Gould noted a detail about Maguire many people might miss: She wore a Saint Brigid’s cross around her neck. Saint Brigid of Kildare, one of three patron saints of Ireland, was a nun who fought for truth and justice and against inequality. The patron saint of scholars, Saint Brigid is also protector of the enslaved and defender of the poor and children living under difficult conditions.

A prayer to Saint Brigid describes her as a woman of peace who brought harmony to conflict, light to the darkness and hope to the downcast, a voice to the wounded and weary.

“Moira,” said Gould, “wore the Saint Brigid’s cross as a reminder to herself of her culture and the traits she wanted to represent.”

And well she did.

To make a donation, please go to hcc.edu/give and select “Moira Maguire Fund for Student Success” from the dropdown menu or send a check to the HCC Foundation, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040 and write Moira Maguire Fund in the memo line. 

GRANTS

In 2020, HCC was awarded:

\$75,000 from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts for the President's Student Emergency Fund for COVID-19 relief

\$100,000 from the Lumina Foundation to expand the work of HCC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion task force and create mentorship programs for students of color

\$199,000 from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission for gaming training education and community mitigation

\$265,000 from the Mass. Dept. of Higher Education for HCC's STEM Starter Academy

\$450,000 (over three years) from the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to extend HCC's free college preparation program, Transition to College and Careers

\$680,000 from the Mass. Department of Early Education and Care to continue Career Pathways training for educators working in early education programs

\$1 million (over five years) from the National Science Foundation to continue HCC's STEM Scholars program

\$1.1 million from the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education for ABE (adult basic education) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at HCC's Adult Learning Center and Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center

\$1.9 million (over five years) from the U.S. Department of Education to continue HCC's TRIO Student Support Services program (formerly STRIVE)

\$1.9 million (over four years) from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services to train community health workers to better help families impacted by opioid use

\$2 million (over five years) from the U.S. Dept. of Education for various initiatives to help HCC strengthen academic instruction and student supports as a "Hispanic Serving Institution."



Over the last six months, HCC alumni and friends have demonstrated extraordinary generosity through their philanthropy, establishing new funds and enhancing existing scholarships that change students' lives and strengthen our community. In October, Peg '58 and Gary Wendlandt's \$100,000 contribution to the President's Student Emergency Fund enabled HCC to meet the increased needs of students amid the challenges of the pandemic. In December, and again in February, two separate planned gift commitments were established to pave the way for future generations of HCC students. Gifts of all sizes and planned gift commitments – made to remember, honor, celebrate, and make a difference – total \$1,259,034 and have been contributed to the following funds, which represent some of the more than 200 funds managed by the HCC Foundation:

Amy Loved Animals Scholarship

Bartley Center for Athletics & Recreation Fund

Bill Wieliczka Jr. Arts & Theater Scholarship

Brian M. Burns '85 Scholarship

Culinary Lab Equipment Fund

David LePage Scholarship

Division of Arts and Humanities

Division of Business and Digital Learning

Division of Health and Natural Sciences

Division of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Elia Dreyfuss Scholarship

Equipment and Technology Fund

General Scholarship Fund

Helen M. and James E. Izatt Scholarship

Helen M. and James E. Izatt Scholars Fund

HiSET Fund

Hospitality and Culinary Arts Fund

Kathryn "Kitty" Broman Scholarship

John Sullivan Scholarship

Leslie Phillips Fund for Theater Arts and Education

Library Fund

Martha E. Keochareon Nursing Scholarship

Mary M. Naro '78 Scholarship

Maurice '52 and Peggy Ferriter Scholarship

Moira Maguire Fund for Student Success

Music Fund

Neil and Mary Sheehan Scholarship

Panitch Family Transfer Scholarship

Peg '58 and Gary Wendlandt Scholarship

Phi Theta Kappa

President's Student Emergency Fund

Sobon Family Fund Scholarship

Social Justice Award

Steve and Gail Olesiak Scholarship

The Ted and Barbara Hebert Teddy Bear Pools & Spas Scholarship

The John R. Lewis "Good Trouble" Scholarship

Thrive Center and Food Pantry

Timothy M. Thompson Memorial Scholarship

William Dwight Scholarship

Unrestricted Fund

Unrestricted Endowment Fund

CLASSES

NOTE-BOOK

What's going on in your life? We want to know what you've been up to since your school days at HCC. Send news of your wedding, retirement, promotion, travels, children/grandchildren, awards, academic achievements, military honors, whatever! Email news and photos to alumni@hcc.edu or mail us at the Alumni Connection, c/o Alumni Relations, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040.

1972



Marie Proulx-Meder

spent four summers photographing homegrown "Mary Gardens" – outdoor statues of the Virgin Mary, usually incorporating flowers into the scenes. She

recently published more than 400 of her color photographs in a book, *Many Faces, One Mary: Discovering Homegrown Gardens and Shrines of Our Lady*. After graduating from HCC, Proulx-Meder of Chicopee, Mass., received a bachelor's degree from University of Massachusetts Lowell and a master's in piano pedagogy from the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music. She has been teaching piano at HCC through the Business and Community Services division for more than 20 years.

1977

In honor of Veterans Day 2020, United Veterans of Holyoke presented **Gina Nelson** with its Citizen of the Year award. Nelson began her civilian career in the military as a teenager at Westover Air Reserve Base and retired in 2011 as a purchasing agent with the U.S. Department of Defense. She is the co-founder and executive director of Community Roots and veterans lunch program, a Holyoke nonprofit that connects people with services they need. Nelson is vice president of the Council for Human Understanding of Greater Holyoke and a eucharistic minister at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Holyoke. A South Hadley High School alum, Nelson earned an associate degree in law enforcement at HCC and a bachelor's degree in legal studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

1982

Lori Todd has been named the new executive director of Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing, Springfield's first continuing care retirement community. She holds decades of experience as a registered nurse, serving in hospitals, home care, occupational health and long-term care settings, and has been a licensed nursing home administrator for 34 years. She has worked for The Loomis Communities for nearly 20 years, previously serving as executive director for Loomis House in Holyoke. Todd has helped pioneer culture change in nursing homes, and has been recognized for promoting person-centered care. She is a member of the Massachusetts Culture Change Coalition, and is currently a surveyor for the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities in the United States and Canada.

1989

United Veterans of Holyoke presented its Public Safety Award to **Sgt. Joseph Garcia**, a 30-year member of the Holyoke Police Department. A Holyoke High School graduate, Garcia started as a reserve police officer, eventually becoming a full-time officer there. He provides crisis training for Holyoke Public Schools staff and administrators and oversees the "Stop the Bleed" program, which teaches first-responders how to apply tourniquets to severe wounds.

1992

Brenda Rodriguez was promoted to assistant vice president, banking center manager, of the Chicopee branch for PeoplesBank. She has more than 14 years of financial services and banking experience, having served in various retail banking roles, most recently as banking center manager for the St. James Avenue Banking Center in Springfield. A resident

of Springfield, her volunteer work includes Christina's House, Credit for Life, and the East Springfield Neighborhood Council Community Fair.

1997

Jennifer (Pilecki) Bauer of Southampton has been promoted to assistant branch manager of bankESB's Southampton office. Bauer has more than 20 years of banking experience. She joined bankESB in 1998 as a teller and was promoted to teller supervisor in 2008. Bauer earned her associate degree in business administration from HCC and received several banking and financial services-related diplomas and certificates from the Center for Financial Training as well as the American Institute of Banking.

2001

Talib Sadiq has been with Amherst Regional Public Schools since July 2014 and was recently named interim principal for Amherst Regional High School. Sadiq earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from UMass Amherst.

2003



Nate Costa, president of the Springfield Thunderbirds minor league hockey team, was a guest on the Oct. 26, 2020, episode of *Business West* magazine's weekly podcast, "Business Talk."

Costa talked with *Business West* editor George O'Brien about the team's preparations for the upcoming season, the importance of the team to the ongoing efforts to revitalize Springfield, and how the Thunderbirds stay relevant during

this ultra-challenging time. Go to businesswest.com to listen to the interview in Episode 36.

2004

Amanda (Garlick) Limero is a client services and operations associate for the St. Germain Investment Management Co., working in Northampton, Mass. She has more than 18 years of banking experience and brings a wide range of skills in operations, administration, corporate communications and customer relationships to her new position. She spent the previous 13 years at United Bank, the last five of those as a payment operations manager. After HCC, she earned a bachelor's degree in business management from the Isenberg School of Management at UMass Amherst. She recently passed the Securities Industries Essential exam, a new-for-2020 requirement in the securities industry.

2005



Anna (Mitchell) Zadworny has been promoted to assistant vice president and training and staffing manager at Greenfield Savings Bank. In her new position, she is responsible for

facilitating one-on-one and classroom training for employees with a focus on enhancing employee development, including product knowledge, internal systems training, and compliance course oversight. After completing her associate degree at HCC, she graduated with honors from Babson College in the financial studies program. She is currently pursuing a

business management degree with a minor in leadership at Bay Path University. She serves on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County and as assistant treasurer of the Salvation Army of Hampshire County, and also volunteers for United Way of Hampshire County.

2008



Brian Kapinos is the regional advising director for the Connecticut State Community College system. He holds a bachelor's degree from UMass Amherst, and a master's in public administration from Westfield State University, and a doctorate in education from the University of Hartford. Kapinos also holds adjunct faculty positions at HCC, the College of Our Lady of the Elms, and Hartford.

2010



Johnny Ray McKnight has joined Springfield Public Schools as a math instructor. McKnight earned both his bachelor master degrees from American International College. Prior to teaching, McKnight was an operations manager for PeopleReady in Springfield. He is also serving as mentor for HCC's Alumni Champions Mentorship Network, which you can read about on Page 4.

2011

Jonencia Wood is the director of alumnae inclusion and events at Mount Holyoke College. Previously, she served as director of alumnae engagement at Mount Holyoke and was a diversity specialist with Baystate Health. She holds a master degree in management from Cambridge College and is an alumna of Leadership Pioneer Valley.

2018



Phung Pham is attending the McCallum Graduate School of Business at Bentley University, studying for a master's degree in business and data analytics. She earned a bachelor's degree

in accounting from the Isenberg School of Management, UMass Amherst.

2020

Juan Flores is working with OneHolyoke, a



nonprofit community development corporation, as a bilingual translator, graphic designer and social media assistant, communicating important health information about

COVID-19 to Holyoke residents. Flores, who lives in Holyoke, graduated from HCC with his associate degree in Computer User Support. He started at OneHolyoke as a volunteer before being hired for his current position. 

In Memoriam

We are saddened to learn of the passing of the following members of the HCC community:

- William K. Koszewski '53
- Steven M. Roberts '62
- Robert T. Gallant '82
- Joseph G. La Belle '88
- Mary J. Farrar '89

- Warren T. Grinnan, *retired faculty*
- Arthur L. Jackson, *retired faculty*
- Jesse Lange, *faculty (biology)*
- Moira Maguire, *dean (social sciences)*

- And these longtime friends and supporters:*
- Martin Dunn
 - Neil Sheehan

To contribute in memory of a classmate, friend or relative, visit hcc.edu/donate or call Patrick Carpenter at 413.552.2746.



Driving Literacy

Behind the masks, above, are HCC students Alex Santiago, left, and Julio Colón, members of the college's Latinx Empowerment Association, otherwise known as the LEA Club. They are holding two of the many children's books donated during a February book drive the club organized. The books will be used to stock a "Little Free Library" the club is building from scratch. While collecting books of all kinds, members are particularly interested in those that deal with topics of race, cultural heritage and LGBTQ+ issues. Their objective is to put the children's library where it is needed most, in the Holyoke Flats, one of the poorest sections of the city. "As a resident of the Flats and a Holyoke Community College student, I believe that children who live here don't have enough access to books that represent them and their experience," said Santiago, the lead organizer. "While two Little Free Libraries have been established in Holyoke, their locations in the Highlands mean they are not easily accessible to children living in the Flats. As a club, we believe that representation matters, especially during this alienating time." [A](#)

2021 EVENTS

Theater

Thursday-Saturday, April 15-17

In These Times

7:30 p.m. (and 2 p.m. Saturday, April 17)

The HCC Theater Department presents a collection of original stories from the HCC Community about the COVID-19 era. Directed by Patricia Sandoval '84. Presented via Zoom.

Visit hcc.edu/events to register for this virtual event.

Conversations with Christina

An event series for HCC alumni, hosted by President Christina Royal and held via Zoom, featuring topics important to you, our students, and the future of HCC. Email alumni@hcc.edu to attend one of these virtual events.

Tuesday, March 9

Community College Education: The Smart Choice

10:30-11:30 a.m.

A conversation about HCC and why community college is a smart, affordable and responsible choice for students starting their academic journeys.

Wednesday, April 14

The Non-Traditional Student Experience

6:30-7:30 p.m.

HCC's student body is comprised of many non-traditional-age students. Join President Royal, a select panel of alumni and students to learn about how the experience of non-traditional students enriches the HCC community.

Thursday, May 13

Topic: TBD

1-2 p.m.

Community Outreach

with the HCC Alumni Council

March 30

Zooming Through a Remote World

6:45-7:30 p.m., via Zoom

Thomas Rachele '97, director of Humanities for Springfield Public Schools, and Maureen Babineau '00, an independent

educational consultant, will share Zoom strategies to make life easier and your screen time more effective.

Saturday, April 17

Self-Care with Kim

1-2 p.m. via Zoom

Kim Monson '01, a licensed clinical social worker, will help participants identify and manage the sources of their stress.

Let's Connect: Health Sciences

Alumni panelists and students from HCC's radiologic technology, nursing, community health worker, certified nursing assistant, and veterinary and animal science programs share their experiences

Thursday, April 22

Compassion Fatigue

6:30-7:30 p.m., via Zoom

Open to HCC students enrolled in the health sciences programs, alumni, faculty and staff

Fundraisers

Tuesday, April 27

#TogetherHCC Day of Giving

Tuesday, June 30

Fiscal Year End

It's the last day of HCC's fiscal year, so we want to provide a friendly reminder to make your tax-deductible annual gift if you have not already done so. You can make a big impact on a student's life. Visit hcc.edu/donate.

Monday, September 13

HCC Foundation Golf Classic

Springfield Country Club, Springfield, Mass.

Join alumni and friends on the golf course and help raise funds for HCC students and programs. Register to play or to be a sponsor at hcc.edu/golf. For more information, contact Patrick Carpenter at 413.533.2746 or pcarpenter@hcc.edu.

Visit hcc.edu/alumni-events for more information or to register for one of these virtual events.

Alumni Connection

Holyoke Community College Alumni Office
303 Homestead Avenue
Holyoke, MA 01040

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www.hcc.edu

AC EXTRA

HCC's Scholarship Savant



Since his first semester at HCC, Hospitality management major Todd Cummings '21 has amassed an impressive array of scholarships from a wide variety of nonprofits and industry associations – 12, so far – and he's far from done. "These scholarships have changed my life, both pre-pandemic and current," he says. "In all honesty, I would have had to drop out without them."

Read the Online Exclusive at:
hcc.edu/todd-cummings