

HCC, GCC, Elms College presidents receive national recognition

HOLYOKE – The presidents of Holyoke Community College, Greenfield Community College and Elms College have been recognized for outstanding leadership in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the education technology company Cengage.

HCC president Christina Royal, GCC president Yves Salomon-Fernández, and Our Lady of the Elms president Harry E. Dumay were among 13 college presidents nationwide to receive the AAC&U-Cengage Inclusion Scholarship. The scholarship recognizes college and university presidents whose outstanding leadership to advance liberal education has resulted in reduced equity gaps, improved inclusion and belonging for minoritized students, and reformed hiring practices to promote greater diversity.

The recipients were announced Fri., Jan. 22, at the AAC&U Presidents' Trust Symposium, part of the AAC&U Virtual Annual Meeting. The Presidents' Trust

Symposium brings together higher education leaders from all institutional types to explore the most pressing issues facing colleges and universities and to share strategies for success.

"AAC&U is proud to recognize and support these exceptional leaders in their efforts to advance equity and quality as hallmarks of a liberal education across a diverse range of campuses and student populations," said AAC&U president Lynn Pasquerella.

The AAC&U-Cengage Inclusion Scholarship recognizes higher education leaders who support and advance quality, equity, and student success in undergraduate education. This includes improving degree completion or transfer for students from underrepresented groups; closing equity gaps in student success; improving diversity in hiring practices and creating more equitable hiring poli-



Christina Royal

cies; and increasing the sense of belonging, well-being, and inclusion among students from historically underserved populations (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and LGBTQIA students).

"We are so excited to be able to support these amazing higher ed leaders who are making a real difference by reducing inequities and increasing access to educa-

tion," said Fernando Bleichmar, executive vice president and general manager for U.S. Higher Education at Cengage. "At Cengage, we believe learning transforms lives, and the work of these leaders is so critical in giving students the opportunity to better their lives and in creating an educated, informed, and just society."

In recognition of their accomplishments, the AAC&U-Cengage Inclusion Scholarship recipients will each receive a one-year, complimentary AAC&U campus membership and a one-year com-

plimentary membership in the AAC&U Presidents' Trust, a diverse network of chief executive officers who are committed to advancing the vision, values, and practices that connect liberal education with the needs of an increasingly diverse student body, a global workforce, and thriving communities. The Trust provides members with access to dedicated resources and events as well as exclusive opportunities to promote their thought leadership.

"Growing up as a first-generation, low-income, multi-racial college student, I understand some of the challenges today's students face and the importance of having an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive," said Royal, who is also being honored this week (Thursday, Jan. 28) as one of the 2020 Women of Impact by BusinessWest magazine. "These are very important issues to me personally and professionally, as well as to our college community, and I'm honored to receive this recognition on behalf of HCC."