



An HCC student holds up flags from Mexico and Paraguay during a Hispanic Heritage Month celebration on campus in October 2019.

Submitted photo

HCC celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month during this pandemic year with a series of online events that includes cooking demonstrations, lectures on the ethnic and political history of Holyoke, exhibits and conversations on public art, and a student panel examining the shared heritage of Black and Latinx people.

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Beginning Friday, Sept. 25, four members of the HCC community will share favorite recipes highlighting their ethnic heritage, followed by question and answer sessions with the chefs. Raúl Gutiérrez, associate professor of Spanish and coordinator of HCC's Latinx Studies program, will kick off the cooking series on Sept. 25 at 11 a.m.. He will be followed by Harold Santiago, special program coordinator in HCC's Admissions office on Tuesday, Sept. 29 at 11 a.m.; HCC student Liuginsa Rosa on Monday, Oct. 5 at 1:30 p.m.; and HCC math instructor Aida Medianero on Tuesday, Oct. 13, at 11 a.m.

"Each of the four cooks represents

a different nationality," said Derek Estrella, an HCC Financial Aid counselor and secretary for the college's Hispanic Leadership Committee, which organized the Heritage Month events. "Raúl is Mexican, Harold is Puerto Rican, Liuginsa is Dominican and Aida Peruvian. I'm also asking them to share a signature song they grew up with while cooking."

Also on Tuesday, Sept. 29, from 6 to 8 p.m., the public is invited to share their ideas for "El Corazón de Holyoke: Comenzamos!" (The Heart of Holyoke: Let's Begin), kicking off a new phase of public art installations that celebrate Latinx and Puerto Rican artists and culture in the city.

On Wednesday, Sept 30, from 11 a.m. to noon, Holyoke resident and HCC

alumna Maria Cartagena, Five College community partnerships coordinator, will present "History of Holyoke - Political Landscape," focusing on the ethnic, cultural and political influence of Hispanics in the city.

The "El Corazón de Holyoke" conversation continues on Thursday, Oct. 15, from 6-8 p.m. with "Cultural Place-keeping and the 'salsa' of Public Art," a presentation and Q&A with cultural districts program manager Luis Cotto from the Mass Cultural Council; Springfield Poet Laureate Magdalena Gómez; and interdisciplinary artist Shey Rivera Rios.

HCC's Hispanic Leadership Committee, a newly formed group of HCC staff and faculty involved in campus and community engagement activities, will hold an online session on

Wednesday, Oct. 14, from 2 to 3 p.m. introducing themselves to the college and wider Holyoke community.

The college's Hispanic Heritage Month's activities will conclude with "Anti-blackness in the Hispanic Community" on Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., a student panel discussion examining racial bias as well as the shared heritage of Black and Latinx people. The panel will consist of members from two HCC student clubs, the Black Student Alliance and the Latinx Empowerment Association, and moderated by Rockell Bartoli, a Miami-based author and student-success coach.

All events will be held on Zoom. They are free and open to the public but pre-registration is required. To register, please visit hcc.edu/hhm.