

GOVERNOR PATRICK APPOINTS HELEN CAULTON-HARRIS AS CHAIR OF HOLYOKE COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOSTON – Friday, October 19, 2012 – Governor Deval Patrick today appointed Helen Caulton-Harris as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Holyoke Community College. Ms. Caulton-Harris is the current Board Chair at Holyoke Community College and today’s announcement is an affirmation of her appointment under the Governor’s new authority to appoint the Board Chairs at each of the Commonwealth’s fifteen community colleges.

The Governor’s community college plan, supported by the Legislature and included in the FY13 budget, calls for the Governor to appoint the Chair of the Board of Trustees at each community college. This plan will create a more integrated, effective community college system that is responsive to both local and statewide employer needs by giving community colleges additional capacity to expand their efforts to provide students with high-quality, relevant educational and training programs. This plan will also help strengthen the connections between our campuses, our employers, and our workforce so that students of all ages have the opportunity to succeed.

“Our community colleges are at the center of our efforts to close the skills gap and help people get back to work in Massachusetts,” said Governor Patrick. “I want to thank Ms. Caulton-Harris for her willingness to serve in this capacity and am confident that she will be a continued partner in our collective efforts to better serve our students and employers, building a stronger Commonwealth for generations to come.”

Ms. Caulton-Harris is the Director of the Division of Community Services for the City of Springfield where she is responsible for administrative oversight of four city departments and directly supervises the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services, the Pioneer Valley Area Health Education Center and Health Services for the Homeless. Ms. Caulton-Harris has played a prominent role in developing policy for the health and human services needs of underserved populations on the local and national level, and has received numerous awards including the AIDS Action Community Service Award from AIDS Action Committee and the Rebecca Lee Award from the Harvard School of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. She is on the Board of Directors at the Massachusetts Career Development Institute, the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County and the United Way of Pioneer Valley. Ms. Caulton-Harris has served as a member of the Board of Trustees at Holyoke Community College for over six years and was first appointed as Chair in March 2012.

"I am deeply honored by the Governor’s appointment and by the opportunity to serve Holyoke Community College in this way," said Ms. Caulton-Harris. "HCC is one of the premier community colleges in the region, and I look forward to continuing to use my time, talent and energy to support the mission of this world-class institution."

"This is outstanding news for Holyoke Community College," said Holyoke Community College President Bill Messner. "Helen's experience, commitment and leadership will be of great benefit to the college and its mission of service to the community. I look forward to working with her to advance our shared vision for HCC."

Delivering on the goals of his community college plan, Governor Patrick recently awarded community colleges a total of \$4 million in grants to support increased skill training and workforce alignment, improved student learning outcomes and efficiency measures at campuses across the Commonwealth. These grants will give campuses the additional capacity they need to promote higher completion rates of degrees and certificates, be more responsive to the needs of local economies as well as of the state's fastest growing sectors and adopt a system-wide standard core of course offerings. Holyoke Community College received \$167,883 to support the college's Gateway to College Prep program, help increase graduation and student success rates on campus, support ongoing work to develop student learning assessments and increase civic engagement among its students.

To learn more about the Governor's community college plan visit <http://www.mass.gov/governor/agenda/education/>.