

Drone pilot certification course begins May 4

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College (HCC) will once again offer a hands-on program for individuals that want to become FAA-licensed drone pilots.

“Flying Drones for Profit, Public Safety and Commercial Applications” will meet on four Saturdays beginning May 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the main campus of HCC, 303 Homestead Avenue. The last class is June 1.

The course will prepare individuals to take the Federal Aviation Administration Remote Pilot in Charge exam, which they must pass to become licensed drone operators. All classes will be taught by Larry Harmon, co-director of the GeoGraphics Laboratory at Bridgewater State University and an industry consultant on small, unmanned aircraft systems.

“Our program provides actual piloting lessons and everything drone operators need to know to pass the FAA test,” said Ken White, HCC dean of Community Services. “Larry Harmon is an expert in the field.”

The lecture portion of the course will meet in the HCC Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development on the main campus. Students will fly drones outside nearby on the college sports fields.

The course focuses on all content required to pass the FAA Remote Pilot test, including regulations, national airspace system rules, weather, aircraft loading, aircraft performance and flight operations.

The cost for the four-week, non-credit course is \$315. Space is limited. Drones will be provided for use in class. Participants can bring their own but that is not necessary.

The course should appeal to professionals in a wide range of industries, White said, including engineering, construction, insurance, agriculture, emergency services, public safety, security, environmental management, transportation, and retail as well as those involved in more artistic pursuits like movies, video and photography. To register, people may go to hcc.edu/bce or call 413-552-2324.