

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

COLLEGE NEWS

Olivia Clark graduates Post Univ.

WATERBURY, CONN. – Olivia Clark of Montgomery successfully graduated from Post University on May 3 earning a Bachelor of Arts in psychology with a cumulative GPA of 3.46.

Post University is a private for-profit university in Waterbury, Connecticut. It was founded in 1890 as Post College. The university offers 60 undergraduate and graduate programs in day, evening, and online courses.

HCC Foundation awards \$405K in scholarships

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation has awarded \$405,000 in scholarships to students for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The HCC Foundation awarded 438 scholarships to 422 incoming, current and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. Individual awards range from \$500 to \$5,000.

HCC celebrated this year's recipients and donors at a scholarship reception on May 14. Local students receiving scholarships were: Ian Cartmill of Chester, Andrew Ashlock of Easthampton, Miranda Brown of Easthampton,

Gabrielle Carey of Easthampton, Brenda Carrier of Easthampton (two awards), Christopher Daehne of Easthampton, Richard Damon of Easthampton, Alec Donahue of Easthampton, Isabella Gitana of Easthampton, Nataly Gonzalez of Easthampton, M.B. Gowins of Easthampton, Steven Hoynoski of Easthampton, Elishama Jean of Easthampton, Sawyer Kirley of Easthampton, Skylar Nyt of Easthampton, Eliot Papadakis of Easthampton, Emma Pelletier of Easthampton, Breana Rynn of Easthampton, Keilani Tirado of Easthampton, Sebastian Pacheco of

Florence, Anna Teng of Florence, Carla Zingre of Florence, Celina Almendarez of Northampton, Jenna Baranowski of Northampton, Jennifer Buri Yunga of Northampton, Nyia-Marie Forbes of Northampton, Kathryn Guinn of Northampton, Alyssa Jost of Northampton, Timo Kukharchuk of Northampton, Elian Ortiz Viera of Northampton, Beatrice Parent of Northampton, Somnang Ren of Northampton, Lyra Schaffer of Northampton, Sagrario Turner of Northampton, Julian Vann of Northampton, Alondra Vazquez of Northampton, Zachary Young of Northampton, Jennifer

Labaw of Pittsfield, Amber Coley of Russell,

Yahia Ajam of Westfield, Cari Avalone, of Westfield, Neremy Babu of Westfield, Alicia Booth of Westfield, Abigail Brenzel of Westfield, Angelou Cardoza of Westfield, Rebeca Cuba of Westfield, Rebecca Dixon of Westfield, Kseniia Dromova of Westfield, Finn Evans of Westfield, Gavin Fabiani of Westfield, Liubov Gun of Westfield, Amanda Janisieski of Westfield, Elizabeth Kudrya of Westfield, Milana Mukha of Westfield, Ariana Navarro of Westfield, Michael Navarro of Westfield, Celines Nieves Ramos of Westfield, Kyle

Philleon of Westfield, Chloe Phillips of Westfield and Jeff Gougeon of Williamsburg.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

An alphabetical list of scholarship recipients and their specific awards can be viewed on the HCC website at hcc.edu/scholarships-2026.

SEASON

from page 1

that did not meet the power rankings necessary to make the tournament.

In short, the team with the highest run differential in Massachusetts also has one of the lowest league power rankings. The issue was first brought to the public by School Committee Chair Jason Forgue at their May 13 meeting.

While he applauded the district's decision to stop the practice of students paying athletic fees or "pay to play" as Forgue called it, the resulting loss of revenue led to the decision to play only league games for its sports teams. As a small school, 339 students in grades 6 - 12, according to the Mass. Department of Education, Gateway plays in the lowest league in Western Massachusetts.

Despite this, their power ranking would have improved and likely qualified them for the tournament had they played a couple of higher, non-league teams. Littleville Principal and former Gator athlete and coach, Melissa McCaul explained to the School Committee that improving the team's strength of schedule would put them in a different power ranking and they wouldn't necessarily need to play more games than they did this year.

According to Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo, the league-only schedule went into effect in the last few years. She believes this was the result of the lack of incoming funds and eventual closing of the athletic revolving account once Gateway stopped collecting student fees and charging admission to games; they no longer had a stream of revenue to support additional games, she said.

The baseball team is also in a pickle because they were assigned to a lower league for 2025-2027, due to their record the prior years. Leagues are only reassigned every two years, so there is no opportunity to request a

different league placement until 2027.

Varsity Baseball Coach Deryck Savoy explained that prior to this year they would play every team in their league twice and the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference would also assign them a couple of cross-league games, offering teams greater skill and competition and adding to their power ranking.

In 2026 the PVIAC no longer assigned out-of-league games, leaving it to individual schools to decide and schedule for themselves. The idea, Savoy said, was to create more parity and to address mounting fiscal issues for public schools in Massachusetts.

Savoy researched this and has not been able to find any other teams in the state, who have not opted to schedule cross-league games this year. In addition, because of Gateway's prior record and possibly their size they are in the lowest ranked league, where he said many of the teams are in a rebuilding year. "Even though we were undefeated, we didn't make the (WMASS) tournament," Savoy said. "If we'd had cross-league games and lost, we still would have gotten in." Savoy said the team's record did get them into the state tournament, because all teams with at least a .500 win record qualify. The Gators are listed in the Division 5 state tournament; their low power ranking, however, will have them face one of the top teams in the first round.

This is Savoy's third season as Gateway's Varsity Coach and his fifth year with the program. He credits his team's success with their cohesiveness.

Most of them have played together since their Little League years. "We're in a really good place. We're getting good offensive production up and down the entire order and have awesome pitching, led by Jacob Maynard," Savoy said.

Some Gateway teams did play teams outside of their league. The girls varsity softball team, for example, had non-league games in their schedule. This had to happen, Savoy said, because their league had fewer teams and they needed to have as many games as the baseball team under Title IX.

ly mandate came down from the district.

Each year, Bonenfant submits two athletic budgets: one for the league-only needs and one for a full schedule that includes cross-league contests. The minimum number of games needed to qualify for the state tournament is ten.

"We lost out due to strength of schedule and no out-of-league games. It's an MIAA and funding issue."

– Gateway Regional High School Catcher Theo DeAngelis-Page

According to Gateway's Athletic Director, Matt Bonenfant, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association voted to change state tournament qualifications; one outcome is that the WMASS tournament has simply become part of the regular season.

In making his season schedule, Bonenfant adds two "to be announced" games at the end for teams that make up what's left of the WMASS tournament. Teams that don't qualify, he said, play a couple of consolation games.

This, along with Gateway's growing fiscal challenges, has led to a "district-directed mandatory schedule," meaning playing the games in the league schedule only plus the two TBA games.

Three teams this year had cross-league games to establish parity with a mirror team. This year, he had to schedule extra games for the boys soccer and girls softball teams to offer the same number of games as the girls soccer and baseball teams. But all teams, he said, are playing fewer games overall than before the league-on-

One factor in the budgetary discussion is the cost of getting to away games. A Lecrenski bus taken to an away game will cost Gateway between \$468 - \$668, and includes \$40 per hour in wait time for the driver while the game takes place.

Gateway has also purchased its own vans that a team might use; the coach can drive one at no additional cost and the athletic budget only has to pay for the gas. If a second van is needed for the team, another Gateway staff member must be used to drive at a rate of \$25 per hour from start to end of the trip. Depending upon distance, the second van can cost \$125 - \$150 (plus gas) but is still substantially less than a contracted bus.

However, this is further compounded when coaches are already staff members and a game requires transport before the school day ends, resulting in also paying for sub coverage.

With baseball as the example, the home field is not without costs either; that school pays the \$208 per game to cover the umpires.

Bonenfant emphasized Principal Will Sullivan has been extremely supportive of

Gateway athletics and submits the Athletic Director's preliminary budget with the full season schedule.

But with no revenue stream to support the extra games and climbing budget challenges for small, rural schools, Gateway has little option but to trim the schedule as one of many cost-saving measures taken across its schools.

The problem is not unique to Gateway, as evidenced by South Hadley putting eliminating athletics and extra-curricular activities on the table when an override to support the school budget failed to pass.

Solutions are already being sought to rectify this next year, although they will come too late for Gateway's current baseball team. Catcher Theo DeAngelis-Page (senior) and sophomore Weston Anderson, starting pitcher in the May 20 second consolation game at home against Southwick, are frustrated.

"I think it's pretty dumb," said Anderson.

"We lost out due to strength of schedule and no out-of-league games," said DeAngelis-Page. "It's an MIAA and funding issue. We maxed out our season, winning 11 of 12 games by 5 runs or more." The team split their consolation games, beating Division II Amherst by 8-1 and finally breaking their win streak by falling to Southwick by a score of 11 - 1.

While the Gators will go to the State Tournament, their ranking is so low that they will face a very high seed in the first round.

Forgue posed having teams fundraise and/or sell advertising to support the extra athletic costs to restore the school's athletic schedule. School Committee policy seems to both allow and not allow fundraising and Matarazzo said she will ask the Policy Subcommittee to look at clarifying that language. She believes that the school committee would be in favor of fundraising

and selling advertising as a means to support the athletic budget.

Matarazzo believes that the school committee would not support reinstating athletic fees. And Bonenfant points out that it needs to be studied if the school considers reinstating admission fees. If a family of four attended all home basketball games, for example, it would cost them more than paying a \$100 per season athletic fee, he said.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data says that 43% of the district's students are low income. One cost savings idea is to have boys and girls teams compete at the same location and travel together.

Bonenfant said he's also created an annual cross country meet that runs on Gateway's home course at the Littleville Dam. It's a challenging and interesting course and there are seven non-league teams that have committed to that race, with three more on a wait list.

But there are no easy answers for Gateway on this issue. Bonenfant said that the difference in cost between playing the full vs. league-only schedule totals \$27,000.

He fully appreciates kids being able to join a team without paying a sports fee, and has seen it lead to kids trying a sport they've never played before. Advertising is a great idea, but the question would be how it would be executed.

At this point, the only thing everyone agrees upon is that this needs to be looked at and solutions considered. But, again, it's too late for Gateway's talented baseball team.

"I'm not certain that everybody understood how this would play out when this decision was made," Savoy said. "Last time they played this well was 2014. You don't know, in a school this size, when a team like this will come around again."

PUBLIC NOTICES

Chesterfield Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE

A Public Hearing will be held at 6:30 PM on **Monday, June 8, 2026 at 6:30 PM** in the Town Offices, 422 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA to consider the following Zoning Bylaw changes:

Adopt a temporary moratorium bylaw on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), expiring on Sept. 30, 2026, unless ended earlier by a vote of Town Meeting or Extended by a subsequent vote of Town Meeting, Co-located, Accessory and Freestanding BESS of any capacity; and, on the use of BESS in Town Center District (TC), Water Supply District (WS), Floodplain District (FP), Westfield River Protection District (WRP), Mass Wildlife BioMap3 Core Habitats, all per-

manently protected areas, all areas with prime agricultural soils. Adopt a zoning bylaw to amend sections of the Chesterfield Zoning By-law to define and regulate BESS.

A copy of the full proposed bylaws is available for viewing at the Chesterfield Town Clerk's Office.

Sarah Hamilton
Planning Board Chair
05/21, 05/28/2026

**TOWN OF RUSSELL
Public Hearing
June 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Russell Town Hall
65 Main Street
Russell, MA 01071
FY22/23 CDBG Public Hearing
for Proposed Amendment**

The Town of Russell, in association with the Pioneer Valley

Planning Commission, will conduct a public hearing regarding the FY24 Community Development Block Grant Program. The hearing will take place at **6:00 PM on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, in person at the Russell Town Hall, 65 Main Street, Russell, MA 01071**. If the meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, the hearing will take place during the rescheduled Selectboard meeting.

The hearing will be for the purpose of presenting a proposed program amendment for this grant award. The proposed amendment will utilize uncommitted and available funds from the Valley View Avenue project to create a line item for new sidewalk installation on Old Westfield Road. The Valley View Avenue Neighbor-

hood project has met its grant program goal, construction has been completed, and this project is now closed.

All residents with questions or comments will have an opportunity to be heard. Written comments will be received by the Town and may be sent to the Selectboard Office at 65 Main Street, Russell, MA 01071. Written comments will be read aloud during the hearing. For further information or to submit a written comment, contact Evan Mastroianni at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission at (413) 781-6045 or emastroianni@pvpc.org. Persons who require special accommodations should contact the Town prior to the hearing date at (413) 862-6200.

05/28/2026

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com