

Description of Community Forums

The genesis of the Rio Hondo Community Forums was a Board meeting in February 2012. In prior years, Rio Hondo College had hosted Board meetings in the community to give community leaders, parents, and students a chance to witness Board actions. Now, the Board endeavored to create an opportunity for a dialogue between campus representatives and community leaders. The Board also wanted to encourage community attendees to take advantage of this opportunity to access College resources, connect with members of the College outreach team, and learn about Rio Hondo College. The Board envisioned attendees could provide comments about what the College could do better and collaborate with college leaders to identify new, creative solutions.

The Superintendent/President responded by compiling a Community Forum Task Force that was comprised of administrators, faculty members, classified staff, and student leaders. The Task Force scheduled, planned, and implemented community forums in each of the five Board Trustee areas. In the invitation letters, the Superintendent/President noted that the purpose of the forums was to solicit feedback on Board institutional priorities for the subsequent year and to share timely information related to the College budget and how it shapes the services provided to the community.

At each of the five forums, attendees collected valuable information on College services, including admissions, financial aid, counseling, and other student support services. Information related to statewide initiatives to improve community colleges was distributed and discussed. There were 300 attendees at the five forums. A large number of attendees were from local high schools, so high school counselors, administrators, and teachers were able to learn about how the Student Success Task Force recommendations would involve and have an impact on how community colleges align with K-12 courses and services.

Feedback from the written surveys, focus groups, and visual institutional priorities chart exercise were collected, tallied, and analyzed by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP). The subsequent report included a summary of the results and a compendium of all documents, presentations, agendas, and handouts used at each of the five forums. The Office of the Superintendent/President shared the executive summary of this report with the surrounding community. The Board of Trustees was able to use some of the information provided on educational priorities in the subsequent year when difficult decisions were being made, institutional goals established, and budget recommendations considered.