

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING APRIL 2016



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Rio Hondo College's string of achievements continued in April, marking expansions in our academic program, campus services and student achievements. Together, it is a continuing validation of the commitment of our extraordinary team of educators, staff and administrators to continue pushing for student success.

Our well-regarded automotive technology program received yet another boost in April, earning approval from the Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to offer the state's first Associate of Science degree for students seeking to become technicians for hybrid, electric and fuel-cell vehicles.

Students who complete the course of study will not only qualify for the degree, but also claim a certification they can use to secure employment and

position themselves to enter our historic Bachelor of Science program in automotive technology.

Next, our accounting students helped community members save thousands of dollars in tax-preparation fees through our annual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

Not to be outdone, our Associated Students of Rio Hondo College spent \$5,000 to improve our campus facilities, purchasing a hydration station where students can refill reusable water bottles with free, pure, refrigerated drinking water.

Other student achievements included participants in a yearlong leadership program, foster youths who advocated for their peers in Sacramento and writing and film students who showcased their work during our annual Writes of Spring.

Altogether, these achievements represent the incredible energy that drives Rio Hondo College to pursue new ways to ensure all of our students succeed.

Rio Hondo College Named among Top 25 Community Colleges in U.S. for Hispanic Students

Rio Hondo College has been named to the 2016 list of **Top 25 Community Colleges for Hispanics** by Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine, recognizing the College's success at helping Latino students attain degrees.

The list is based on data reported by community colleges to the National Center for Education Statistics. Hispanic Outlook has generated the list for about 20 years.

Rio Hondo College ranked 13th for its Latino student population, at 80.7 percent in 2014. The College ranked 24th for associate degrees completed by Latino students for data reported for the same year, which is the most recent year reported.

"Rio Hondo College is dedicated to helping all of our students succeed as they pursue degrees and transfer to four-year universities, train in one of our highly regarded public safety academies or acquire new job skills," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "This recognition of our success on behalf of a significant population of our students is incredibly meaningful."

Rio Hondo College provides all students with a wide array of support services, including an innovative First Year Success Center. The College is recognized as a Hispanic-serving institution by the federal government, which has awarded it several Title V grants to develop services specifically for Latino students.

One such grant helped the College create a popular Summer Bridge program that eases student transitions from high school. The most recent, awarded in September, will bring \$2.62 million over five years.

College leaders will use the latest funds to expand Rio Hondo's capacity for fostering student success by creating a yearlong integrated success pathway for first-year students to persist into their second year. The program will be offered through the First Year Success Center.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College in the *The Whittier Daily News*.

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Board Report



Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees learned about efforts to strengthen the College dance program and recognized faculty and staff members during its April meeting.

Rio Hondo College Director of Dance Dr. Alyson Cartagena outlined how during her recent sabbatical she created and won approval for an Associate of Arts degree in dance, revised 17 courses, drove efforts to update and expand student learning outcomes in the

Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics Division, and created a guide to boost recruiting and student success.

Cartagena also completed her second year of doctoral coursework and successfully defended her dissertation, "Tactile Learning: Touch and Touch Self Efficacy," on Dec. 16, 2015.

Her efforts led to some unanticipated outcomes, including a community-centered production of "The Nutcracker" staged in December 2015. The performance showcased student dancers, but also served as an outreach tool for the College. Students from four local schools were recruited for the performance and introduced to Rio Hondo College's dance program as a result.

The College also created and produced its first Alumni Dance Concert, in which nine Rio Hondo College dance alumni choreographers presented original work. Trustees praised Cartagena for her dedication to strengthening the dance program.

"I may need a sabbatical from my sabbatical," Cartagena joked. "It was a very productive and effective use of time."

The Board also watched a video of Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss as she and a board member kicked off a program to celebrate College offices with a visit to the College Accounting Office. Next in line is the Office of Information Technology.

Board members also congratulated faculty members on their promotions and advancement.

Professor: Ada P. Brown, Arts and Cultural Programs; Colin Young, Behavioral and Social Sciences; Mariano Zaro, Communications and Languages

Associate Professor: Alan Archambault, Mathematics and Sciences; Karen Gottlieb, Health Sciences and Nursing

Assistant Professor: Juan R. Fernandez Communications and Languages; Tyler Okamoto, Communications and Languages; Amelia Ortiz, Health Sciences and Nursing

Tenure: Amelia Ortiz, Health Sciences and Nursing; Rodolfo Rios, Business

Rio Hondo College Offers State's First A.S. for Hybrid, Electric Vehicle and Fuel-Cell Auto Techs

Rio Hondo College's groundbreaking Automotive Technology Program received approval in April to offer California's first Associate of Science degree in hybrid, electric vehicle and fuel-cell technology, a high-demand career field.

The approval from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office came in just 22 days – an incredibly quick turnaround that acknowledges the strength of the program, said Professor John Frala, who designed the Associate of Science degree.

"Companies are calling me about employees already," Frala said. "These cars are in heavy demand in California and there is a shortage of qualified technicians right now. Not many technicians out in the field are safely trained to work on high-voltage vehicles."

Rio Hondo College is recognized for its trail-blazing efforts in automotive technology.

In spring 2015, Rio Hondo was chosen to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in automotive technology as part of a historic venture at the state community colleges. The degree becomes available in fall 2016.

Fralla, who worked on the B.S. program, began developing the concept for the new A.S. degree four years ago as part of his focus on alternative-fuel technology. A pioneer in the field, Fralla sits on the Green Team, a state advisory group dedicated to creating a series of hydrogen refueling stations known as the California Hydrogen Highway.

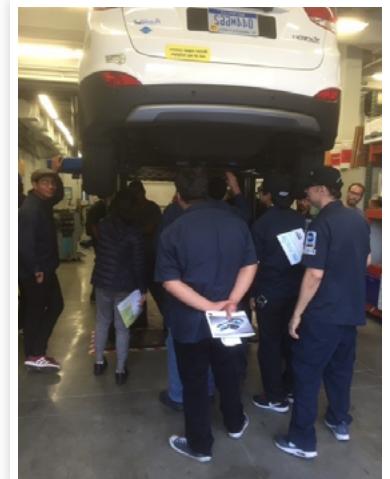
RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College's Automotive Technology Program at *CBS Local Los Angeles*.

California's 21st hydrogen station opened on April 27 with about 80 stations expected to open by December.

Fralla also led an effort that secured a \$200,000 National Science Foundation grant in May 2015 to develop alternative fuels training. The funds accelerated the creation of the A.S. degree. Students will study electrical systems, chemistry, physics and applied mathematics – a combination of skills demanded by the complex alternative-fuels vehicles.

"Rio Hondo College continues to forge new career paths for our students, staying at the forefront of technology and opportunity," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "This new degree is a tremendous addition to our rich Automotive Technology Program."

Fralla said students in the A.S. program will qualify to continue in the Bachelor of Science program, as well as automotive technology programs at California State University, Los Angeles. They can also earn Certificates of Achievement in the alternative-fuel technology field.



Accounting Students Help Community Members Save Thousands in Tax Prep Fees

Rio Hondo College students helped 323 community members save an estimated \$84,303 in tax preparation fees while recovering \$295,415 in refunds through the College's 2015 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Twenty Rio Hondo College accounting students volunteered for the VITA program over 10 Wednesdays between Feb. 3 and April 13, helping area residents who earned \$52,000 or less in 2015 with Forms 1040, 1040A and 1040EZ and related documentation.

The effort topped the highly successful 2015 VITA effort, which helped 248 community members recover \$240,839 and save an estimated \$67,700 in fees.

In total, volunteers contributed more than 1,000 community service hours, earning the group a gold Presidential Service Award. All volunteers received letters from President Obama thanking them for their volunteer services along with gold eagle pins. In addition, the volunteers received certificates of appreciation from the IRS and Board of Equalization.

College leaders honored the student volunteers during an April 22 luncheon. Attending were representatives of the IRS, California Board of Equalization, state Franchise Tax Board, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss and Associate Dean of Public Safety Don Mason.

Accounting instructors Steve Valdes and Jeannie Liu oversaw the program.



Acclaimed Author Discusses Links between Language and Culture during Writes of Spring

Acclaimed author Victor Villaseñor spoke about the connections between language and culture and offered guidance to creative writing students during a visit to Rio Hondo College for the annual Writes of Spring literary and arts festival.

Villaseñor, nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for his works that explore the concept of cultural identity, offered the keynote speech during the two-day event in addition to speaking with students and College leaders.

The annual festival celebrates literature and art with a focus on Southern California writers and artists. This year's event, held April 20-21, included readings by students from selections in River's Voice, Rio Hondo College's student literary anthology, and film screenings from the College's River Deep student film festival.



Students Recognized for Completing Leadership Program



Forty-three Rio Hondo College students have been recognizing for completing a yearlong leadership program offered in conjunction with California State University at Fullerton, Santa Ana College and Santiago College.

The group is the sixth cohort to participate in the Student Leadership Institute, launched in 2010-11.

The Institute features two levels. Forty-two Rio Hondo students completed Level One, recognized with a certificate from Cal State Fullerton. One student, Bianca Alcala, completed Level Two, which included volunteering in her community, attending workshops and strengths coaching, and presenting a project on social change to Level One participants.

Students celebrated their graduation from the program on April 26 at a banquet at Cal State Fullerton.

Applications to be part of the seventh cohort will be accepted this summer.



Rio Hondo Guardian Scholars Advocate in Sacramento

Three students in Rio Hondo College's Guardian Scholars program spent three days during April visiting the state Capitol and lobbying legislators on behalf of foster youths as part of the annual Foster Youth Education Summit.

Students Jhaylin Asturia, Paola Mejia-Paz and Amber Whittemore networked with other foster youths and learned about issues related to higher educational success thanks to scholarships funded through the national Foster Club.

Among the issues discussed was the foster youth achievement gap, an extension of priority enrollment and expansion of a funding program established to help foster youth succeed.



(Left to Right): Deborah Lopez, FKCE/ YESS-ILP Specialist; Amber Whittemore, Guardian Scholar; Marisela Saenz, Guardian Scholars Interim Counselor/ Coordinator; Jhaylin Asturias, Guardian Scholar; Paola Mejia-Paz, Guardian Scholar.

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 **#iLoveRioHondo**

 **bit.do/riohondocollege**

Serving the communities of

- El Monte
- Santa Fe Springs
- South El Monte
- Whittier
- Pico Rivera

and portions of:

- Norwalk
- East Whittier*
- Downey
- South Whittier*
- La Mirada
- West Whittier*
- City of Industry
- Avocado Heights*
- Los Nietos*

*Unincorporated communities within our District

Mission Statement

Rio Hondo College is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.

Save The Date



6 p.m. Thursday, May 26:

Commencement Ceremony

6 p.m. Wednesday, June 8:

Board of Trustees Meeting, Rio Hondo College

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 18:

Student Art Show, Rio Hondo College Art Gallery

Tuesday, May 24:

State of College address, City of Whittier

Thursday, June 9:

State of College address, City of Santa Fe Springs

Student Government Unveils Hydration Station

Rio Hondo College, student government and area political leaders marked Earth Day on April 20 with a ribbon-cutting for the new Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC) Hydration Station in the Student Union.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss congratulated the students, led by ASRHC President William Ashby, for their vision in creating a station that will offer pure, refrigerated water for refilling reusable water bottles – a sustainable and environmentally friendly addition to the campus.

"We are proud of our student leaders for their environmentally conscious approach to filling a campus need," Dreyfuss said. "This new station is an enhancement to our campus that will serve our students for years to come."



Representatives from U.S. Rep Linda Sanchez and Assembly Majority Leader Ian C. Calderon were also at the event, which was attended by students and campus staff.

Professor Steve Katnik also talked to the crowd about the importance of environmentally sensitive technology.

The \$5,000 Hydration Station was purchased by the student government, which will also fund annual maintenance costs.



Pictured (L-R): Student Trustee Melissa De Leon, Senator of Student Success, Virginia Gummig, President Teresa Dreyfuss, ASRHC President William Ashby, Senator of Sustainability Reyna Vazquez and Senator of Legislative Affairs Efrain Ruiz.