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President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Each year around this time, we all look back and take stock on what we have accomplished, and what we would like to see in the future. I look back at 2013 and note that it has been a momentous and celebratory year for Rio Hondo College.

First, I want to thank all the staff, faculty and administrators for serving our students and putting them first. Because of your hard work and dedication, Rio Hondo College awarded 1,463 degrees and certificates of achievement.

In 2013 we celebrated the College's 50th anniversary with a campus birthday party, an anniversary gala, reunions and, of course, the 50th Commencement Ceremony.

The College also celebrated the opening of the El Monte Educational Center (EMEC), which features state-of-the-art classrooms, a computer study room and an open courtyard. In its very first semester, EMEC served more than 200 students from the El Monte and South El Monte communities. We also opened our Physical Education Complex, and have seen it utilized more and more every day.

The 2013 year was also filled with accolades and awards for many campus programs. To name a few, the MESA/TRiO Student Support Services STEM program was honored for being one of the top programs in the nation for Latino students; several College publications received honors for design from statewide marketing and public relations organizations; and Forensics students won several debate tournament awards.

With so much happening in 2013, topping it may seem like a daunting task. However, as I've learned in my 26 years at Rio Hondo College, each year is better than the last. We have a lot to look forward to, and I hope that with all of us working together as a team, we can create the best college environment for our students in 2014 and beyond.

Women's Soccer Wins National Recognition

Under the leadership of Coach Jennifer Tanaka-Hoshijo, Rio Hondo College women's soccer team ended its season with regional and national recognition for academic and athletic achievements.

The women's soccer team was selected for a Team Academic Award, making it one of only three community college teams in the nation to receive the honor, representatives from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) announced in December.

The NSCAA Team Academic Award recognizes teams nationally across the community colleges, National Collegiate Athletic Association and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics divisions. As a team, the Roadrunners maintained a grade-point average above 3.0 through the 2012-13 academic year.

In addition to the Team Academic Award, the Roadrunners finished second in the Foothill Conference; player Micaela Estrada won Foothill Conference Player of the Year; Sierra Kaufmann and Selena Quezada were named to 1st Team All-Conference; Amber Davidson-Ponce, Miranda Flores and Karen Ortega were named to 2nd Team All-Conference; and honorable mention went to Susana Gonzalez, Katelyn Oshima and Natalie Preston.

"The women on our soccer team are not only great on the field, they are also stellar students in the classroom," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "To be recognized as such by the NSCAA is an honor, and hopefully a tradition for all of our student athletes for years to come."



Board Update



Rio Hondo Community College District trustees Mary Ann Pacheco, Madeline Shapiro and Norma Edith García outlined their goals and addressed the challenges ahead as they were sworn into office Dec. 11 to serve four-year terms on the Board of Trustees.

Pacheco, the newest member of the board, took the oath of office administered by one of her former students, Art Sandoval. Pacheco had worked as an English teacher at the College for 37 years, and said her focus will remain on student progress.

“I’ve always told people I was employed at Rio Hondo College, but I work for the students,” Pacheco said. “As a member of the Board of Trustees, I will continue to work for the students.”

García, who was sworn in by her sister, El Monte City School District Superintendent Dr. Maribel García, said her last four years in office were filled with triumphs and challenges. Despite major budget cuts, she said the College maintained a full summer school schedule, as opposed to other community colleges in the area. Students also voted to increase the fee of parking for the betterment of the school to help mitigate the budget reductions from the state.

“That is the spirit of this community college,” García said, adding the Board has worked tirelessly to be efficient, accountable and transparent.

Whittier Mayor Bob Henderson swore in Shapiro, the 2013 Board President and alumna of the College. Shapiro said she will work to ensure that the students receive the best college experience at Rio Hondo, as she had as a student. With the projects made possible through Measure A bonds – including the new PE Complex, Student Union, Administration of Justice building and many more – Shapiro said the future of the College is bright.

“Rio Hondo College has come through the hard times, and we are proud of that,” Shapiro said. “We are poised and ready for a renaissance.”

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Arts Division Wraps Successful Semester

The Division of Arts and Cultural Programs had a very busy fall, hosting more than a dozen performances and three art exhibits. The Division presented music, theatre, dance, comedy and film screenings collaborating with multiple departments and community groups.

On The Quad

The Division’s first event of the semester was a grand collaboration with Student Life & Leadership. Together, they produced a day of mariachi music, *folklorico* dance, food and fun in celebration of Latino Heritage Month. Especially exciting was *El Grito* contest, featuring the vocal stylings of Arts and Cultural Programs Dean Chris Guptill, Associate Dean of Student Services Dr. Mike Muñoz and the College’s reigning queen of *El Grito*, Jasmine Lopez.

In the Art Gallery

Under the direction of gallery coordinator Robert Miller, the Division presented a one-man show of Ron Reeder titled, *It’s About Time*. From that title to the artwork to the opening night reception, this popular exhibit was filled with the warmth and humor that typifies Reeder, an instructor at the College. Following this, the Division offered SUR: Biennial, a three-way collaboration with Cerritos College and the Torrance Art Museum. Artists from Southern California and Latin America presented works in all media, including sculpture, paint, film and performance. The semester ended with a display and sale of students’ artwork, just in time for holiday shopping.

On Stage

Students outdid themselves in October’s Short-Play Festival, producing, directing and performing in eight one-act plays at the Campus Inn Theater. The audiences were great and enjoyed the edgy and often hilarious works the drama students chose. In December, Bill Korf directed the ‘40s screwball comedy, *Out Of The Frying Pan*, about the adventures of six struggling young actors. Kerry Farmer’s tech students turned the Campus Inn into a New York apartment, complete with kitchen and enough sight gags to fill a Marx Brothers’ movie. On the Wray Theater stage, meanwhile, the Music Department presented concerts by guitar instructor Frank Accardo, Steve Moshier’s Workman Mill Industrial Orchestra and choral groups under the direction of Lauren Schaer and Linda Brown.



ALT Welcomes Mt. SAC President/CEO



Mt. San Antonio College President and CEO Dr. William Scroggins visited Rio Hondo College on Dec. 4 to serve as the guest speaker at Rio Hondo College’s monthly Accreditation Leadership Team (ALT) meeting.

In response to the invitation of Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, Dr. Scroggins described his extensive accreditation experience through several visiting accreditation teams and his perspective on Mt. SAC’s accreditation process.

Dr. Scroggins provided advice on how to oversee a successful accreditation self-study process and summarized best practices on how to prepare an Accreditation Report, which were both well received by the members of ALT.

Under Dr. Scroggins leadership as a college president, his previous and current community college institutions have earned a perfect 4-0 record, never having received a sanction under his presidency. He has also conducted a total of 11 accreditation site visits and chaired eight out of these 11. Dr. Scroggins’ informative presentation was followed by an engaging question and answer session.

During the annual reorganization meeting on Dec. 11, attendees were treated to a holiday concert with hand bells in the Board room by students from the Choral Music Program. The festive mood of the night continued as Trustee Vicky Santana took over the president's gavel, while Shapiro was voted to serve as vice president of the board, and Trustee Gary Mendez was voted to serve as clerk for 2014.

The Board then heard presentations of the substantial progress in both the building program and the accreditation self process.

Students to Offer Tax Help

Rio Hondo students certified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as tax preparers will provide free basic income tax return preparation to qualified individuals and families. The service is made possible through a partnership between Rio Hondo, the IRS, and its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.



The service will be available from Feb. 7 through April 11, Fridays only, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Business building B-118. VITA will be closed on Feb. 14 and March 28. Appointments are recommended and can be made through the Rio Hondo College Business Division office at (562) 463-7359.

Individuals and families qualify when their annual earned income is \$51,000 or less. Volunteers will prepare: Form 1040, 1040A, and 1040EZ; standard and itemized deductions; earned income tax credit; and Schedule A, B, C-EZ. They will not prepare: Form 1040 NR; Schedule C, D, E, F, and SE; Married filing separately; rental property; or farm income.

The eight- to ten-student volunteers became IRS certified through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance I - ACCT 096 class offered at Rio Hondo this fall with Accounting Instructor Jeannie Liu. The tax preparation service serves as the class lab.

Adopt-a-Child Program Brings Holiday Cheer

The holiday season was a much more cheerful one for 124 children whose parents are part of the Extended Opportunity Program & Services (EOP&S) and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE). The EOP&S/CARE staff has successfully sponsored the Adopt-a-Child Program for 10 consecutive years and currently serves 68 parents in the program.

"I am excited to honor our CARE students and their children. This is what the holiday season is all about. A special thanks goes to CARE Specialist Laura Verdugo for always going above and beyond to organize this special event," said Christine Aldrich, interim director of EOP&S/CARE and CalWORKs.

The Adopt-a-Child Program helps low-income students, who are also single parents, provide gifts for their children during the holidays with donations from College students, faculty and staff.

The program held its annual Holiday luncheon on Dec. 17 in the Rio Café. Students enjoyed a delicious lunch, had the opportunity to hear from former CARE students who have transferred, and received gifts for their children. Also in attendance at the event were the surviving children of the late CARE student Helen Amaya - Jazmin, 13; Jennifer, 12; and David Gaitan, 5; and her surviving mother. Amaya, along with her daughter Joelene and fiancé, were killed in a car crash this past October.



College Hosts 'Ready to Lead'

Rio Hondo College hosted, for the second year in a row, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's (CHCI) "Ready to Lead" (R2L) Conference on Dec. 14.

The morning started off with the national spokesperson for R2L, Wilmer Valderrama, actor and producer. He inspired the students with his personal story of immigration, learning English and the hard work he put in to become a Hollywood star. The President and CEO of CHCI, Esther Aguilera, along with Vice President of Student Services, Henry Gee gave a warm welcome to the students after Wilmer finished his testimony.



The students attended three different workshops on College Planning, Financial Literacy and Leadership Development. The afternoon special guest speaker was Honorable Hilda Solis, former Secretary of Labor, former congresswoman and former Rio Hondo Board of Trustee. She shared with the students about being the first in her family to attend college, and encouraged them not to give up on their dreams. Newly elected trustee, Mary Ann Pacheco was also in attendance that afternoon. Thanks also to staff members Vanessa Chavez and Anacany Torres for conducting two workshops, and for Dr. Mike Muñoz for spearheading the connection with the CHCI event.