This month we set another Rio Hondo College record – 1,148 students are graduating, the largest number in our 45-year history. Congratulations to everyone, faculty, staff and administrators, who have collectively worked so creatively and diligently to help our students succeed.

Commencement is always memorable, this one especially so with one of our outstanding alums who delivered the Commencement Address. It is always heartwarming to see ‘one of our own,’ Marlene L. Garcia, become a pacesetter and role model. Please help us identify others you may know of or hear from! And congratulations to Dr. Frank O’Kelley, the 2008 recipient of the “Fellow of the College” award.

Thanks to Cathy Butler, Director of Student Activities, and her crew, and to all who contributed to making this year’s ceremony outstanding, and to those who labored to make every end-of-year celebration special for our students and their guests.

We continue on fast-paced path to completion of the Self Study Report, in anticipation of the AACJC-WASC accreditation team’s visit in October. Nearly 70 individuals represented a cross-section of campus constituencies, academic disciplines and student service areas as they participated in the development of the draft document, which is now in the hands of the editors.

Special thanks to co-chairs Gil Puga and Dr. Paul Parnell, and to our WASC Liaison, Dr. Loretta M Cannett-Bailes. We anticipate that the Governing Board will have opportunity for a first reading in June. The final draft will be presented for their approval at the July meeting.

As the college campus approaches the beginning of summer classes next month, I encourage you to remind your families, friends and neighbors that our summer sessions provide an opportunity for students to ‘finish faster’ in an environment that includes more convenient parking, even during construction progress!
RHC CELEBRATES 45TH COMMENCEMENT continued

Henry Gee, the Vice President of Student Services, shared five compelling stories of Rio Hondo College students, all of whom have beaten the odds to get to graduation day. Michelle Carcamo, Ana Fonseca, Bertha Glorae, Mireya Vigil and Cristy Killeen stood to receive applause for their success.

Dual enrollment student Jacob John Moore was the class Valedictorian. At just 18 years of age, he transfers to Cal Poly Pomona to begin his junior year this fall.

Commencement speaker Marlene L. Garcia spoke of her own journey to graduate from Rio Hondo College in 1977. She attended Rio Hondo concurrently with her father, each looking to education to broaden their opportunities. In the 31 years that have passed since Marlene L. Garcia crossed the stage she earned bachelor's degree at UCLA and a master's degree in Public Policy Analysis from the Claremont Graduate School. She now has 20 years experience working in the legislative arena. Currently, she is a gubernatorial appointee serving as the Vice Chancellor for Government Relations for the California Community College Chancellor's Office, where she advocates for community college students.

Garcia reminded each graduate to know who they are, and work everyday to pursue their dreams.

After each graduate's name was read, blue Frisbees filled the sky as graduates celebrated their success and began the next phase of their lives.

In anticipation of increased traffic for the commencement event, additional security officers as well as the California Highway Patrol directed incoming traffic into parking lots prior to the event, and staged the flow of traffic in order to reduce congestion at key egress points.

Special thanks to Director of Student Activities Cathy Butler and the Commencement Committee, for coordinating the event.

Board Report for the Board Meeting May 14, 2008

The Board of Trustees designated Dr. Frank O’Kelley as the Fellow of the College and Congresswoman Linda Sanchez as the distinguished Service Awards recipients for 2008.

The Board of Trustees approved consulting services for the Foster/Kinship Care programs; the GEAR UP program; an Academic Consultant for Mountain View High School; a Consultant/Project Director for Industry-Driven Heavy Equipment Maintenance Grant; a grant writer for an application for funding under the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP); and Educational Consultant to present workshops related to Enrollment Management.

The Board of Trustees awarded contracts for the renovation of Portables T-123 and T-124 Project.

The Board of Trustees also awarded a professional service contract for Information Technology Design Services for various building program projects.

Outgoing Student Trustee, Leia Hernandez (sitting) with incoming Student Trustee, Cristela Solorio- Ruiz (standing).
Student Success Stories

It is always difficult to select students to highlight, but these five students have stories that are representative of the tenacity and strength of Rio Hondo College graduates and represent a quality of character that is worth sharing.

Michelle Carcamo: In 1993 Michelle Carcamo enrolled in Rio Hondo College, but without counseling she was discouraged by her experience. She re-enrolled because she was encouraged to do so by some Rio Hondo College students that she met at her son’s daycare. She came back to Rio Hondo was able to begin her education with basic reading, writing and math. She joined Alpha Gamma Sigma, received Financial Aid, and joined the Extended Opportunity Program & Services (E.O.P.S). Despite other challenges which included moving and the illness of her mother, Michelle graduated with an Associate Degree in Administration of Justice—15 years after she began her education at Rio Hondo College.

Ana Fonseca: Ana Fonseca is also an Extended Opportunity Program & Services student. She has achieved great heights academically, including maintaining a 3.5 and above GPA and making the Dean’s list every semester at Rio Hondo. What makes Ana’s story so special is that she did all of this as a mother of 2 who became homeless during the Fall semester.

Ana did not give up. She applied for scholarships and kept going. One of those scholarships was awarded to her by Congresswoman Hilda Solis and Monterey Park City Councilman Anthony Wong. Despite all of the challenges Ana graduated with an Associate Degree in Business Administration.

Bertha Giorae: For Bertha getting her degree has been a family affair. When her daughter was young, she asked her, “Mom, what college did you go to?” and Bertha responded, “Honey, I didn’t go to any college.” Her daughter replied “Oh…..well when I go to college, you can come with me,” and Bertha just smiled and said “Ok, honey.”

Years later, this declaration by her daughter came to pass. In 2005 Bertha’s daughter needed to complete a language course to graduate from high school so she reminded her mom of her promise years before and said “Ok mom, it’s time for us to go to college.” Thus began Bertha’s college career. Her daughter is still a full time student and is scheduled to graduate next spring, her son is graduating from Stanford next month and her oldest daughter is studying to be a probation officer. Bertha has made her daughter’s dream come true and has inspired her children to be college graduates.

Mireya Vigil: Mireya Vigil believed that higher education was out of her reach until she came to Rio Hondo College and the Disabled Students Programs and Services. Mireya is a single mother of 4 children (ages 5, 8, 17, and 19) and her daughter is currently a full-time student at RHC. Having a learning disability has always made being in the classroom very difficult. Despite these challenges, Mireya was dedicated to getting her education and she wasn’t going to let anything stop her.

This Fall she will attend Cal State Fullerton. She has also received special recognitions from DSP&S. These include: DSP&S outstanding student, TRIO Top Student, Transfer Center Certificate of Completion, and the Rio Hondo College Human Services Certificate.

Cristy Killeen: Graduation was very special for Cristy Killeen who suffered through a 12 year addiction to methamphetamines, which lead to several arrests, jail sentences, and a 3 year prison term. As a part of changing her life, Cristy enrolled in Rio Hondo College where she was hired as a student worker in the President’s office. Despite her fears, she found that the President’s staff welcomed her with open arms and encouraged her to be successful. After she got her first A she was unstoppable. With a lot of support, Cristy graduated on the Dean’s Honors list with a 3.8 G.P.A. This is truly a miracle, and the best day of her life.
Drill Sharpens College Readiness

Months of planning by area agencies culminated in a realistic ‘terrorist’ scenario at the Rio Hondo Fire Academy Friday May 23, providing the opportunities for everyone to practice emergency response techniques.

The scenario included a poisonous gas ‘bomb’ that was planted at the Academy in Santa Fe Springs, affecting a large number of ‘victims’ (Fire Academy cadets) who were processed through a mock triage and treated with decontamination procedures. It was a cold and rainy day, making the cadets’ role especially chilling.

Simultaneously, and as a surprise, the college’s Emergency Operations Center was activated on campus, bringing together the principals who are charged with serving as the Incident Management Team in emergency circumstances.

Led by Dean Joe Santoro, who serves as Rio Hondo’s Incident Commander, the local component mirrored similar drills held at Whittier High School and the Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital. Dr. Martinez, who had been an observer at the Fire Academy Drill in Santa Fe Springs, rushed back to campus to participate in the EOC debriefing in the Board Room.

Nash Flores, Director of Public Safety, served as the Rio Hondo College representative during the planning and development of the multi-agency drill. Next fall, Rio Hondo College will participate with other community colleges and state agencies in a statewide emergency simulation.

Introducing Four New RHC Managers

**Gustavo (Gus) Gonzalez, Interim Director of Facilities Services.** After serving in multiple capacities in construction and facilities at Rio Hondo College since 1987, and in management since 2001, Gus Gonzalez was appointed Interim Director of Facilities Services. He is well-known on campus in his role coordinating and overseeing daily facility repairs and maintenance work from staff and outside vendors, as well as his growing responsibilities for implementation oversight of the Prop. A bond construction projects.

He was instrumental in the preparation of the Space Inventory Plan, Initial Project and Final Project Proposals for the submission of the five-year construction plan to the Facilities Planning Unit of the State Chancellor’s Office.

Gus received a Bachelor of Architecture Degree at CSU Polytechnic, Pomona, and worked as an architectural associate at a Costa Mesa firm for 12 years, providing design, construction, budget oversight as well as document production and staff supervision. Prior experience included serving as a project manager and as a draftsman for regional architectural and planning firms.

In addition to Rio Hondo College construction, Gus has been involved in major construction projects for the Los Angeles Unified School District, various public housing projects, the Port of Los Angeles, and community hospitals, as well as a multitude of commercial projects throughout the region.

Committed to mentoring future architects, Gus serves as a member of the RHC Advisory Committee for Drafting and Technology, teaches drafting as an adjunct instructor, and served as Chapter President of the East Los Angeles College ASEA Club.

**Susan Herney, Director of Marketing and Communications.** Susan Herney brings 20 years experience in community college marketing, communications and public relations to Rio Hondo College, having established the new departments of Community Relations and Public Information at Southwestern College and College and Community Relations for Grossmont College, both in the San Diego area.

She served as chairperson and as a two-term member of the City Chula Vista Board of Ethics; chaired the Community Advisory Committee for the City of Chula Vista’s Carbon Dioxide Reduction Project; served as a member of the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors where she chaired the Chamber’s Transportation Committee and Leadership Program.

Susan received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication and Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, and a Master’s Degree in Organizational Management.

Active in community college affiliated organizations at the state, regional and national levels, Susan served on the Board of Directors and as president of the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations in 2000. She was named the NCMPR national Communicator of the Year in 2003. Susan is also a member of the Community College Public Relations Organization (CCPRO) and received recognition as that organization’s “All Pro” in 1995.

Susan’s marketing and communications project entries have garnered more than 20 first-place awards in competition sponsored by NCMPR and CCPRO, including categories such as Media Success Story, Feature Story, General News Story, Annual Report, Newsletter, Online Newsletter, Brochure, and Photography.

**Dante’ Jackson, Risk Management Consultant, Human Resources.** Dante’ Jackson is serving as Rio Hondo College’s Risk Management Consultant. He has worked in the areas of industrial hygiene, environmental health and safety, hazardous waste disposal and emergency management for more than 15 years.

He received his initial training from the United States Air Force, in San Antonio Texas as a Bioenvironmental Engineering Specialist. Subsequently, he worked within the Aerospace and Defense industry for approximately 10 years, supporting the production of various missile and weapon systems at Edwards Air Force Base in Lancaster, California and Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama.

Over the past five years, Dante’ has worked in K-12 educational institutions developing their Emergency Response/Disaster Preparedness Plans, Injury Illness Prevention Programs, hazardous waste disposal programs and mitigating Workers Compensation claims.

Most recently, Dante’ Jackson is a Risk Management Specialist for the Alliance of Schools for Cooperative Insurance Programs (ASCP) and assigned to Rio Hondo Community College as a Risk Management Consultant.

Dante’ is a Registered Safety and Security Professional with the California Society of Safety and Security Professionals to include a Professional Member with the American Society of Safety Engineers. He also has obtained various certifications and training from UCLA, USC, Cal State Dominguez Hills, Texas A & M, FEMA and the California Specialized Training Institute.

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INTRODUCING FOUR NEW RHC MANAGERS  continued

Mike Slavich, Interim Dean of Career and Technical Education: Since 1984, Mike Slavich has served Rio Hondo students in both full and part-time instructional capacities. A graduate of Rio Hondo College himself, Mike received an Associate Degree in Automotive Technology; a Bachelor of Arts in Vocational Education at California State University, Los Angeles; and a Master of Arts Degree in Industrial and Technical Studies, also at CSU Los Angeles.

At Rio Hondo College, Mike initiated and served as Program Coordinator for the American Honda Automotive Program; and as Project Director for the ATTEi (Advanced Transportation Technology Energy initiative).

In professional service, Mike served as President of the California Automotive Teachers Association and continues as a member of the Board of Directors of that organization and is a member of the State Industry and Technology VTEA Advisory Committee. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Southern California Regional Transit Training Consortium.

Visual and Performing Arts on Campus

The Rio Hondo College Singers are going to Carnegie Hall!

June 16, 2008 will mark the Carnegie Hall musical debut for twenty-one Rio Hondo College students as they perform the Durufle Requiem with other vocalists from across the United States. The students have worked all year raising money, practicing music and looking forward to this rare musical opportunity. All of the students participating in this trip are members of the Rio Hondo College Vocal Arts Ensembles and several are also members of the Rio Hondo College Singers, an honors group of performers who already this year have performed the Durufle Requiem with Whittier-based Chorale Bel Canto, the Schubert Mass in G with the LaVerne University Choir, and numerous choral performances on campus and for local service clubs. Linda Brown, the choral music director of the groups, emphasizes that diversity with the choral literature performed throughout the school year builds musicality and offers something for everyone. “Being able to sing the Durufle Requiem in Carnegie Hall is a once in a lifetime event, and can be life changing. For many of our students this is the first time they have traveled on an airplane, so this event is extremely important and special.”

The Rio Hondo Mexican Folk Ensemble performs a joint concert with East Los Angeles College

The newly-formed Rio Hondo Mexican Folk Ensemble debuted this spring semester with an inaugural concert led by instructor Laura Sobrino May 14 in the Wray Theatre. Joining them on stage was the Mariachi Ensemble from East Los Angeles College. At first, each group performed separately. Then, they performed together for finale numbers before a packed house of more than 300.

Rio Hondo Art Students selected for a gallery showing in the Bluebird Art House Gallery in uptown Whittier

Thirty-five Rio Hondo students were selected to exhibit their art at the Bluebird Art House Gallery in Whittier. The show runs from June 7 to June 13, and a reception will be held 6 p.m. June 7. The gallery is located at 3437 Bright Avenue, Whittier, CA 90601. Please call (562) 696-9493 or visit www.bluebirdarthouse.com for more details.

Student Art Sale

The Rio Hondo Art Department conducted a surprise spring semester art sale May 19-May 22. Included for sale were paintings, note cards, ceramics and mouse pads – all work was created by Rio Hondo students in various visual arts courses. The sale was open to staff and students and all proceeds went to the Arts Scholarship Fund, created in 2007 to benefit current and future RHC art students.
End of the Year Celebrations

Classified School Employees Celebrated May 18-24

Rio Hondo College joined the state-wide celebration of Classified School Employee Week. Classified employees were lauded as the people who keep the community colleges running, and the people who keep us safe. They are the people who work every day to improve the lives of students.

One part of the college’s week-long celebration was an Ice Cream Social, held in the Board Room. Rio Hondo College classified staff are appreciated throughout the year. However, it is very special to have this week in May to take the time out to acknowledge all that they do.

Faculty Association Holds Year-End Luncheon and Awards Ceremony

The Rio Hondo College Faculty Association recognized the outstanding work of faculty members this month with their End-of-the-Year Luncheon, with the theme, “It’s a Jungle Out There.” The event was co-sponsored by the President’s Office. Incoming Faculty Association President Jennifer Fernandez served as MC. Honored retirees were included Jan Coe and Perry Sites. Those with 20 years of service include the following: Katie O’Brien, Mary Rivera, Belen Torres-Gil, Lupe Alvarado, Georgia Gaspar, William Korf, Armando Ayala and Mike Slavich. Those recognized for 10 years of service were: Michael Forrest, Terry Keller, Troy Flores-Olson, Judy Sevilla-Marzona, Muata Kamdibe, Beverly Reilly and Mark Littrell.

Entertainment, “Inside and Out” was a dance performance choreographed by Alyson Cartagena, and featured dance students: Melissa Flores, Destiny Padilla and Rosemary Chavez.

The event’s planning committee included Martha Carreon, Jennifer Bartz, Teresa Buell and Sylvia Viramontes.

Dual Enrollment Program Celebrates Accelerated Success

The Dual Enrollment Program Student Celebration recognized students for their successes Thursday May 22, with more than 300 students, parents and members of the community in attendance. This year, Jacob Moore of the Dual Enrollment Program Student Celebration represented the entire RHC student body as Valedictorian.

Jacob began his studies in the Dual Enrollment Program two years ago, were he was able to earn his high school diploma early (1st semester of 12 grade). Now, he will have an AA in Business Administration as a CSU Pomona as a junior level transfer student at the age of 18! He also has been selected for the Edison scholarship and business internship beginning this summer.

The Rio Hondo College faculty and staff are enthusiastic about this program, which began five years ago. The students thrive and excel due to campus-wide kindness, understanding and support. The Dual Enrollment Program is another illustration of the way Rio Hondo college finds alternate and accelerated paths for students.

Access Rio Updates

Through the work being done by approximately 75 staff members assigned to various implementation teams the following has been accomplished.

- The installation of the hardware, operating software, database and Banner is complete.
- The core technical training for the above items is complete.
- The Project Definition and Data Standards documents are complete.
- Data Migration plan is complete.
- The Reports and Security committees are formed and meeting.
- The development of the End-User training plan and process is in progress.
- The design of the data mapping from LACOE Human Resources to Rio Hondo Human Resources Banner is 50% complete.
- Student services: set-up and configuration, 30% of the training is done and 20% of the actual set-up is complete.
- Academic services: set-up and configuration, 50% of the training is done and 25% of the actual set-up is complete.
- Human Resources: set-up and configuration, 10% of the training is done and none of the actual set-up is complete.
- Financial Aid: set-up and configuration, 25% of the training is done and 20% of the actual set-up is complete.
- Operation Data Store: installation scheduled for the end of June, reporting needs assessment is underway.

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ALERT!

Hands-Free Cell Phone Use Required While Driving

Two new laws dealing with the use of wireless telephones while driving go into effect July 1, 2008. One prohibits all drivers from using a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle, (Vehicle Code (VC) §23123). Motorists 18 and over may use a “hands-free device.” Drivers under the age of 18 may NOT use a wireless telephone or hands-free device while operating a motor vehicle (VC §23124). The base fine for the FIRST offense is $20 and $50 for subsequent convictions. With the addition of penalty assessments, the fines can be more than triple the base fine amount.

END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Celebrating Academic Excellence and Outstanding Students

The Rio Hondo College Foundation hosted the Annual Recognition Ceremony in honor of 2007-2008 outstanding students and scholarship recipients May 15 at the Clarke Estate in Santa Fe Springs. Ted Martinez, Jr., Ph.D., College President, welcomed students, family and guests (including scholarship donors) to the event and congratulated all of the student scholarship award recipients. Angela Acosta-Salazar, President of the Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees, welcomed guests on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Several others participated in the program including: Leia Hernandez, Student Trustee; Dr. Andy Howard, Executive Director of the Rio Hondo College Foundation; Gil Puga, President of the Academic Senate; Rebecca Green, Coordinator of the Honors Program; Martha De La Mora, Counselor for the Honors Transfer Program; Dr. Paul Parnell, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Sylvia Southerland, President of the Rio Hondo College Foundation.

More than 100 awards were made to students for both the Fall of 2007 and the Spring of 2008 for a total of $87,600. The scholarships were sponsored by various organizations to help students achieve their dreams. Many students were able to receive multiple scholarships that not only made their Rio Hondo College education possible, but also will help them pay for their ongoing education.

In addition to the scholarships, there were awards for Outstanding Students in each of the areas within Arts & Culture Programs, Business & Applied Technologies, Communications & Languages, Health Sciences, Mathematics & Science, Physical Education, Public Safety, Social Science/Humanities & Philosophy and Special Programs & Student Services. The transfer honors program also recognized 33 students who will transfer from Rio Hondo College to four-year institutions to complete Bachelor degrees. It was a beautiful evening to showcase Rio Hondo College’s dedication to student success.

SUMMER SESSIONS HELP STUDENTS “Finish Faster”

Enrollment fees are waived if the students are still in high school. Regular enrollment fees are just $20/unit for all California Residents! Register Today at www.riohondo.edu

Go Rio and Finish Faster!