President’s Message

Our students rock! Their recent accomplishments reflect the commitment of faculty, staff support, and administrative leadership. Check out these most recent accomplishments:

- Nursing licensure pass rates – Pass rates for our RN and LVN graduates are all in the 90 percent range. Our RN graduates (97 new nurses for our communities) scored a 92.78% pass rate for 2010-2011 graduates.

- Forensics, Speech & Debate – Christian Sanchez-Bartz and Vanessa Cazares beat out teams from around the country to win first place in the novice division of Dramatic Duo Interpretation at the Robert Barbera Invitational held on the Cal State University, Northridge campus Nov. 11-13. Sanchez-Bartz and Cazares were just two of ten Rio Hondo Speech & Debate students who successfully competed against 35 schools, including powerhouse teams from UCLA, Pepperdine University, Arizona State University, University of Houston, UC Berkeley, Mt. San Antonio College, Irvine Valley College, and Stanford University.

- Journalism Awards – Five Rio Hondo College students have received Los Angeles Press Club Scholarships which total $1,000. In addition, in regional competition sponsored by the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, 10 students received awards for articles mailed in prior to the competition. The on-the-spot competition yielded five awards: Second place Bring-in advertising: Mary Simkins; Fourth place Editorial cartoon: Robert Flores; Honorable mention Editorial writing: Alejandro Rodriguez; Honorable mention Feature photo: Janine Esqueda; Honorable mention Copy editing: Melissa Cano.

- Video student Josue Mendez won the Public Service Announcement contest for the best video sponsored by Montebello Bus Lines, receiving a $200 prize. Check out his video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFUtUp1nxw&feature=channel_video_title

- Athletics – 2011 Wrestling Team are the Southwest Conference Champions and move on to State Championships; 2011 Women’s Soccer Team—2nd place finish in Foothill Conference; 2011 Men’s Soccer Team—2nd. Place in the Foothill Conference—Plays Santa Ana College in the first round of the state playoffs; 2011 Women’s Volleyball Team—3rd. place in the Foothill Conference; 2011-12 Women’s Basketball Team—3rd. place in the San Diego Mesa Basketball Tournament.

Save the date for coming events!

December 7, 1–3 p.m.  December 13, 12:30 p.m.  December 14, 5–6 p.m.
Board Room  Parking Lot 2 Inauguration  Campus Inn Oath of Office
President’s Holiday Open House  Ceremony for new CNG shuttle bus  Ceremony and Reception for Trustees
Gary Mendez and Vicky Santana

As we approach the holiday season, I encourage everyone to participate in the multiple opportunities to give to those in need. We appreciate the efforts of the ASB Inter-Club Council to solicit canned food and Baskets of Hope, and the EOPS Department’s project to provide for children of our students enrolled in the CARE program. The Rio Hondo College community cares!

Yoshio C. Nakamura Honored with Bronze Star Medal

Yoshio C. Nakamura, a former Rio Hondo dean and vice president for community and student services, was honored with a Bronze Star Medal at a Congressional Gold Medal ceremony on November 2 at the nation’s capitol in Washington, D.C.
Rio Hondo Recognizes Veterans during Campus Events

The Rio Hondo College Veterans Service Center and Veterans Club provided fun and insightful ways for students to observe Veterans during the month of November, and to participate in various fundraising activities.

Beyond inducing laughter, Veterans Club Comedy Night raised funds for both Fatigues to Fabulous, a national campaign to support female veterans, and Wounded Warrior Projects, an organization that works to empower wounded veterans on November 3. The Veterans Service Center also sponsored an informative workshop, November 8, which featured American Vets speaking on topics ranging from disability, discharge, and legal issues to women veterans.

Additionally, on November 9 and 10, the Campus Inn participated in a Veterans Club fundraiser, in which SB Foods donated 10% of purchase amount to the Veterans Club. Another fundraiser was the annual Veterans Turkey Shoot where participants purchased three shots on a basket for the chance to win $150, $100, or $75.

Campus registration also announced a Veterans Priority registration, from November 28 to December 9, for eligible students.

At least 800 veteran students and employees from different eras attend Rio Hondo. Rio Hondo's Veterans Service Center, which is scheduled to move into the new student services building next month, provides assistance to veterans pursuing their educational goals.

Board Meeting

The November Board of Trustees meeting consisted of a special tribute to retiring Board President, Maria Elena Martinez. Each Board member described Martinez’s influence, thanking her for her leadership and legacy at Rio Hondo. Martinez also spoke, thanking mentors, colleagues, and faculty for their encouragement and support during her 20 years on the Board.

Martinez also had the opportunity to extend congratulations to Advanced Transportation Technologies and Energy Professor, John Frala, who received the 2011 Leadership Award, in the Instructor category, at this year’s Green California Community Colleges Summit in Pasadena.

After the award bestowals, two presentations were given to the Board. Warren Roberts, a full-time Geographic Information Systems (GIS) instructor at Rio Hondo, informed the Board of the many advantages and uses for GIS study.

Dr. Sandra Moe, associate professor of Child Development and Education and coordinator of the Pre-School Laboratory, provided an update on work in her department.

Roberts explained GIS is a computer-based data processing tool used to map, manage, analyze, display, and model spatial information to present patterns and relationships. He described how students can use GIS in various fields of study – business, government, public safety, education, public policy, and health, among others – to compile and present data. Currently, noted Roberts, the College offers a Certificate of Skill Proficiency, but urged the Board to consider adopting a General Requirement option in GIS or offering a GIS Degree option for students.

Dr. Sandra Moe presented updates on the Child Development Center and the Pre-School Laboratory. She described the purpose, and effectiveness, of the Center and Pre-School – which is to not only provide childcare for Rio Hondo’s parents, staff, and community members, but also serves as a lab school for Child Development students. She also mentioned the adoption of new California State Pre-School Standards, a multi-volume handbook to guide Child Development administrators and instructors.

Board of Trustees President Maria Elena Martinez Honored for 20 Years of Service

Rio Hondo Board of Trustees President, Maria Elena Martinez, was honored for her 20 years of service at the Board’s monthly meeting Wednesday, November 9. Martinez announced her retirement from the Board earlier this year.

A reception was held in her honor before the meeting, to provide opportunities for students, family, colleagues, and current Board members to congratulate and thank Martinez for her two decades of dedication to Rio Hondo and the community.

Representatives from the offices of several elected officials presented accolades to Martinez, each remarking on Martinez’s unique and steadfast contribution to the Rio Hondo community. Other elected officials sent declarations and resolutions thanking Martinez for her service. Honors came from the offices of US Congressmembers Grace Napolitano, Linda Sanchez, Judy Chu, and Dianne Feinstein; California Senators Roger Hernandez, Ron Calderon, Bob Huff, and Assemblymember Mike Eng; Supervisors Don Knabe and Gloria Molina; the Mayor of Pico Rivera; and the Rio Hondo Board of Trustees.

Martinez was first elected to the Board of Trustees in 1991, and re-elected in 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007. She represented Trustee Area 2 which includes the City of Pico Rivera.
Rio Hondo Forensics Team Scores a First Place at Northridge Tournament and Holds Successful Campus Meet

Rio Hondo College students Christian Sanchez-Bartz and Vanessa Cazares beat teams from around the country to win first place in the novice division of Dramatic Duo Interpretation at the Robert Barbera Invitational held the weekend of November 11 through 13 at California State University, Northridge.

Additionally, over 175 students had something to talk about at the Rio Hondo College Intramural Forensics Tournament, held Friday November 21, on campus. The annual event, hosted by the award-winning Rio Hondo Forensics Team, drew a record number of participants from the College and four local high schools. Participating high schools were California, Gabrielino, Garfield, and Walnut.

Students competed in two preliminary rounds with the top speakers advancing to a final round in four speech categories and debate. New to the tournament this year was the introduction of several special guest judges including theater scholar, producer, and director Dr. Michael Pierson-Geiger who judged the final round of Oral Interpretation of Literature.

Joining him on the “celebrity” judging panel was actress Marisa Ramirez (star of Lifetime’s cop drama Against the Wall and the hit Starz series Spartacus: Gods of the Arena) and Drew Garrett who won a 2010 “Outstanding Younger Actor” Emmy Award nomination for his role on ABC’s General Hospital.

Other judges, including Rio Hondo administrators and faculty, evaluated speakers in the areas of Parliamentary Debate, Impromptu, Persuasive, and Informative Speaking. Following competition, participants attended an all-tournament dinner and awards ceremony with a warm welcome from Dr. Kenn Pierson, Dean of the Communications & Languages Division.

Lane Reduction on Peck Road to Facilitate Rail Bridge Improvement

Effective Monday, November 21, 2011, a stretch of Peck Road between Pellissier Road and Workman Mill Road will be reduced to single-lane traffic in each direction due to construction related to the improvement of the rail crossing bridge in that area. This construction is undertaken by the Los Angeles County Sanitation District.

This “lane reduction” on Peck Road will occur for roughly nine months, with the anticipated completion date of August 21, 2012, which would be right before the start of the Fall 2012 semester. This lane reduction is most likely to impact those who commute to the Rio Hondo College campus from South El Monte, El Monte, Rosemead, and all other San Gabriel Valley cities to the North of the college.

A map of the project is pictured here. There are at least three possible alternate routes for commuters’ consideration:

1. Detour from Peck Road Southeast to Rooks Road South (which would turn into San Gabriel Valley River Parkway to Rose Hills Road East to Workman Mill Road. North to the College.
2. 60 East to Crossroads Parkway, take Crossroads Parkway to Workman Road. Southbound to the College.
3. 605 South (past the Peck Road exit) to the Rose Hills Road exit. Turn Eastbound onto Rose Hills Road, then drive Northbound on Workman Mill Road to the College.

If there are any questions about the project, visit the website at www.phimf.org for more information.
El Paisano Editors Receive Los Angeles Press Club Scholarships

The Greater Los Angeles Area Press Club honored five El Paisano students with a total of $1,000 in scholarships on Friday, November 4. Editor-In-Chief Eva Rivera, who’s been with the college newspaper for three semesters, won a $300 scholarship. Online Editor-In-Chief Chu-Ling Yee, Sports Editor Marco Lopez, and Photo Editor Melissa Rocha were all awarded $200; and Lifestyles Editor Laura Morales won $100.

“These scholarships mark the hard work that these individuals have put in during their tenure at El Paisano as editors and writers,” said El Paisano Advisor John Francis. “We are very proud of their tenacity and work ethic.”

Student Clubs and Athletes Prepare for the Holidays by Donating Food and Time for Those in Need

In the spirit of holiday giving, the Rio Hondo Inter-Club Council and the Women’s Basketball team set out to help out needy families this Thanksgiving.

The Inter-Club Council hosted their annual canned food drive during most of November. The campus’ 32 active clubs competed against each other in the drive to gather the most canned foods. Student club leaders encouraged club members to contribute as many canned items as possible, placing the goods in decorated boxes throughout various department offices, or in the ASB office, on campus.

Tri Omega, the club with the most canned goods, collected the first place prize of $300. The second place club, Alpha Gamma Sigma, received $200, and the third place club, D.A.W.N. (Drug Awareness and Wellness Network), collected $100. A total of 1,018 canned goods were collected and donated to local shelters.

The Rio Hondo Women’s Basketball team also contributed to those in need, and hosted their third annual “Thanksgiving Feed” in the City of Watts on Sunday, November 20 at Lee’s Market in Los Angeles. The Lady Roadrunners, together with the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, participated in preparing traditional Thanksgiving meals, with turkey and stuffing, and in serving the dinners to residents and families in Watts.

Rio Hondo ASB Lends “Helping Hands” to Students with Families

Rio Hondo College parents and families in need of clothing for their ever-growing babies and toddlers were invited to participate in an infant/toddler clothing exchange on campus Thursday, November 17, at the Learning Resource Center.

The exchange, dubbed Helping Hands by the Rio Hondo College’s Associated Student Body (ASB), was the second successful event of its kind on campus. Last year, the ASB Helping Hands exchange distributed approximately 1,200 articles of clothing.

Clothing donations were accepted through most of November just in time for the holidays. Members of the public, as well as student participants, were encouraged to drop off usable clothing for newborns through 4 years-old at various locations around campus. Student participants were entitled to select clothing items equal in number to what they donated, and enjoyed lunch sponsored by the ASB. Students who didn’t donate articles of clothing, but paid their Student Services Fee, were also invited to choose up to ten pieces of clothing during the last hour of the event.

Dr. Sondra Moe, associate professor of Child Development and Education and coordinator of the Pre-School Laboratory, also attended the event to answer parenting questions and to discuss new pre-school standards.

Rio Hondo Dance Program Held Fundraiser for New Production Work in Progress, Looks Forward to Nutcracker

The Rio Hondo Dance Program held a fundraiser at Shakey’s Pizza in Pico Rivera for their annual performance of the Works in Progress Dance Concert Thursday, November 10, from 6 – 9 pm. Participants were asked to leave their receipts at the register, and 25% of the menu price was donated to the Dance Program for the Concert.

The Concert showcased new choreographic work by Rio Hondo students, and original works by a guest artist and Program Director Alyson Cartagena. The Dance Concert ran from Thursday, November 17 through Saturday, November 19.

The Dance Program is also looking forward to its first performance of the Nutcracker Sunday, December 18, at the Sky Rose Chapel at Rose Hills. The performance begins at 2 pm, and admission is $7 in advance, $10 at the door, with children five years-old and younger free.

This performance of the Nutcracker is a contemporary version of the beloved holiday classic. This abbreviated holiday favorite is a family friendly event choreographed with children in mind. Funds collected from this performance will support the Rio Hondo Dance Collective’s efforts to attend the American College Dance Festival next year.