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President's Message



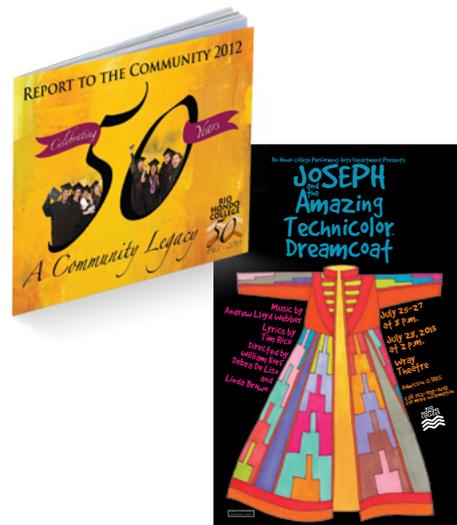
Teresa Dreyfuss

As we mark the midpoint of the semester I wish to pause and reflect on the outstanding work of our students, classified staff, faculty, administrators and our Board of Trustees. Our collective diligence and attention to detail has been recognized with several regional and national awards.

First, I am proud to congratulate the MESA/TRiO Student Support Services STEM Program for the Excelencia in Education Award. Second, I'm pleased to congratulate the Forensics Students who just earned four awards at the Free-for-Me NPDA Debate Tournament Competition which was held at University of California, Irvine. Third, I'm thrilled to congratulate the Marketing & Communications staff for earning gold and bronze awards at the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations Annual Awards Competition. Also, consider that Kathy Pudelko has just been awarded Faculty of the Year by the California Association of Post-Secondary Education and Disability (CAPED). In less than one month, we have witnessed our students, classified staff and faculty receive well-deserved recognition. These awards validate the exceptional quality of the faculty instruction, student service intervention and student achievement. Concurrently, this recognition brings credit to the College and enhances our standing in the community.

On another note, I want to commend all of the work that has been done with respect to the Student Success Taskforce Initiative. I have been extensively involved with this broad-based and far-reaching initiative along with many leaders from the College's Student Services and Academic Affairs divisions. Although some of the reforms will change the ways we operate, they are essential to the ongoing effort to not only comply with Senate Bill 1456 but to better serve our students in the long run. A new day has arrived which forces community colleges to take a critical look at how each will maximize completion and student success. Rio Hondo College is no exception to this rule. Our team will continue to lay the groundwork needed and will construct the scaffolding of intervention programs required for the implementation of the Student Success Taskforce Recommendations.

As our students approach midterms and mid-semester projects, let us rededicate ourselves to their success. Whether we contribute to their success in the classroom, across the counter, or in the lab, and regardless of whether we assist students on the academic side or the student service side, we all have a role to play in student success and completion.



Rio Hondo College Wins Marketing Awards

Rio Hondo College has been named as the 2013 Medallion Winner for winning gold and bronze awards at the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) conference in Arizona.

The gold award earned was for the 2013 Annual Report and the bronze was for the design of the "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" poster. Congratulations to former Director of Marketing & Communications Susan Herney, and staff members, Sylvia Viramontes and Crystal Maes.

Board Update

At its Oct. 9 meeting, the Board of Trustees honored the MESA/TRiO Student Support Services STEM Program with a commendation for being named one of the country's best programs that increase academic opportunities and increase achievement for Latino students.

Dr. Gisela Spieler-Persad, director of the Math Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program accepted the commendation with several of the students involved in the program. MESA was honored in Washington DC on Oct. 1 by *Excelencia* in Education, a program that identifies and catalogues educational programs that contribute to Latino student success.

After the commendation, Interim Counselor-Coordinator Jose Lara gave a presentation about the events and success of the Transfer Center.

Lara said many students have been served in several capacities, including hosting:

- Transfer Day where about 50 representatives from public and private universities were available to offer information on their respective schools;
- Transfer Conference where nearly 600 students attended workshops regarding the transfer process;
- Summer Scholars Institute where students could take a transferrable course over the span of 10 days; and
- A tour of northern California college campuses, including the University of California campuses of Berkeley, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara, as well as San Jose State.

The Board also heard updates on Measure A facilities projects and the College's accreditation process.

Along with approving revisions of Board policies, the trustees voted unanimously to hire the Dolinka Group, which will audit surrounding community development agencies to ensure the College is getting its fair share of redevelopment dollars.

BOARD ATTENDS WORKSHOP

On Oct 19 the Board of Trustees participated in a special study session that was led by trustee trainer and consultant Bill McGinnis on what their roles and responsibilities are with respect to Standard IV.

Given Standard IV's focus on leadership and governance, McGinnis led the Board in a discussion of how to thoroughly and honestly assess their performance as a Board with respect to the leadership and governance of the District. Also at this study session, the Board was briefed on the mission statement review process.

Rio Hondo Celebrates PE Complex Grand Opening

Students, staff, faculty and elected officials were on hand Oct. 23 for the grand-opening celebration for the new Physical Education Complex.

At 41,000 square feet and more than 2,000 users, the PE Complex is one of the largest and most widely used community college recreation centers in the state.

Some of the amenities include:

- An Olympic-sized swimming pool with rehab/workout pool;
- Brand-new electronic scoreboards for the softball field, baseball field and pool;
- Full-size fitness center and weight room;
- New men's and women's locker rooms with centralized access to sporting equipment;

- New athletic training room, dance studios, brand new offices, conference room, media room, weight room and classrooms;
- Newly renovated softball field and new tennis courts.
- Gymnasium for athletes on- and off-campus.

The complex is primarily used by students – athletes and those who take physical education classes – as well as faculty, staff and community members.

"This building is gorgeous and the facilities are state-of-the-art," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Our student athletes and community users deserve the very best that Rio Hondo College has to offer. This complex offers them the very best."



MESA Named One of Nation's Best

Rio Hondo College's MESA/TRiO Student Support Services STEM Program was honored Oct. 1 as one of America's top programs that increase academic opportunities and increase achievement for Latino students.



The MESA (Math Engineering Science Achievement) Program was selected from among 165 competitors from 22 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico as one of 22 national finalists for the 2013 *Examples of Excelencia* recognition. Conceived and run by *Excelencia* in Education, this is the only national initiative to systematically identify, recognize and catalogue evidence-based programs that improve Latino college success.

"This award solidifies what we have known all along – the MESA Program elevates students to reach their greatest potential," said Dr. Gisela Spieler-Persad, director of the MESA/TRiO

SSS STEM Programs. "To be recognized at a national level is important to the Rio Hondo community because it shows that the College commits the resources to help students achieve academic excellence."

MESA provides students with enrichment in mathematics, physics, and chemistry; a supportive peer group; priority registration and enrollment in classes with other MESA students; and access to the MESA Center, resources for summer research internships, mentoring experiences with industry professionals and transfer support.

Students who participated in the MESA/TRiO SSS STEM Programs in 2012-13 outperformed their peers by wide margins. The success rate for MESA students in the spring was 80 percent, compared to 65 percent for others. Students who took two or three mathematics and science courses during the semester also succeeded at a higher rate than their peers in all their courses.

"Rio Hondo College is responding to a national need for STEM professionals with these programs. Since its inception, MESA has been an outstanding program that has enriched and engaged our students," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Not only are students succeeding in math, science and engineering courses, but they are also being prepared for well-paid, highly-skilled and rewarding careers in the STEM fields."

Students Take Home Gold at Debate Tourney



The Forensics Team participated at Irvine Valley College's *Free-for-Me NPDA Debate Tournament*. Debate Coach Grant Tovmasian led five debate duos into competition, while Adjunct Instructor Awndrea Lassiter served as a guest judge. Debate partners Turner Lynch and Victor Wright earned gold medals, as did debate pair Felix Rodriguez and Andrew Perez. All five debate teams fared competitively through multiple rounds.

'Participatory Governance' Focus of Workshop

On Oct. 8, about 50 attendees representing classified employees, faculty and administrators attended the Participatory Governance workshop, which was led by Community College League of California President and Chief Executive Officer Scott Lay and past Statewide Academic Senate President Michelle Pilati, who is also a Rio Hondo College faculty member.

During the session, all attendees were able to understand that while decision-making authority lies with the Board of Trustees, all employee and constituency groups must be engaged in the process of participatory governance.

Community Comes Out to Read

Julie Mammano, author of the famous children's book, "Rhinos Who Surf," helped kick off the College's first-ever "Celebration of Reading" on Oct. 10.

The event's goal, which was hosted by the Division of Communications and Languages, was to encourage reading across all ages, said Professor Sharon Bell, head of the Department of Reading and Effective Study Methods.

"We're trying to draw in the community," Bell said. "It's really a celebration of literacy and we're trying to not only reach students on campus and adult learners, but encouraging everyone to bring their children to show them that reading doesn't have to be a chore; it can also be fun."

Aside from Mammano's reading at 4 p.m. on the Lower Quad across from the Learning Resource Center, the Celebration of Reading also featured a Read-a-thon with a goal of 3,000 minutes read; coloring, origami and face painting for children; and information tables from various community groups, including the Whittier Literacy Council and the Whittier Public Library.

"Rio Hondo College is proud to host events that bring our community together," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Reading is an essential skill that can create access to higher education, facilitate self-improvement, maximize professional development and open doors to new adventures. The more we can do to promote reading, the better."



Kathy Pudelko Wins CAPED Teacher of the Year Award



Kathy Pudelko

Fitness Center Coordinator Kathy Pudelko won the California Association for Post-secondary Education and Disability Teacher of the Year award, which recognizes an outstanding instructor or teacher who recognizes his or her responsibility for the education of all learners and has made extraordinary efforts to meet the needs of the disabled learner in the classroom through the use of innovative instructional techniques and accommodations.

Her nomination was based upon a long history of ensuring access and participation for students with disabilities in her physical education classes. Her nomination was also based on her efforts to maintain a wheelchair accessible path of travel to the Fitness Center and other PE facilities during the lengthy PE facility construction project. Despite her advocacy and the efforts of many other campus departments, maintaining access throughout the process was impossible. However, her work helped minimize those times and brought attention to the needs of students with disabilities. She is the first Physical Education instructor to receive this award in the 39 year history of the Association.

College Partnership with State Honored

Rio Hondo College is part of a special education/government consortium that has been selected to receive the 2013 Education Pipeline Award from the State Bar of California.

On Oct. 12, Director of Government and Community Relations Russell Castañeda-Calleros attended the annual State Bar of California Diversity Awards Reception and Program in San Jose on behalf of the College. The State Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) – led by Executive Director Phyllis Cheng – formed an innovative consortium with Rio Hondo College to train community college students on employment and housing investigations so students can learn substantive law and investigation methods.

This consortium led to the establishment of the Rio Hondo College Fair Housing Clinic in 2011 and the placement of five Rio Hondo College students at the DFEH Office in Downtown Los Angeles. Congratulations to Professor Belen Torres-Gil and the Career Development Center Office staff for their support in recruiting, interviewing and placing Rio Hondo College interns with DFEH.

Mutual Statement by RHCCD and RHCFA

The Rio Hondo College Faculty Association and the Rio Hondo Community College District hereby acknowledge the following: California's Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) grants community college employees the right to form, join, and participate in the activities of employee organizations of their own choosing for the purpose of representation on all matters of employer-employee relations. The District may not impose or threaten to impose reprisals on employees, to discriminate or threaten to discriminate against employees, or otherwise to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees because of their exercise of rights guaranteed by the EERA. The District is committed to these principles as it deals with its represented employees.

Conference Prepares Students for College

Rio Hondo College partnered with the Hispanic Outreach Taskforce (HOT), Whittier College and several area school districts to host the Parent Education and Student Leadership Conference, an event aimed at empowering parents and informing them about higher education options for their children.

The 15th annual conference, themed "Empowerment through Education," was designed to curb high school dropout rates among Latino students by giving parents the tools they need to help their children graduate from high school and receive their college degrees. The conference, which took place on Oct. 5, also introduced parents to college recruiters and helped them better understand school application and financial aid processes.

New this year was the Student Leadership Conference component. The Whittier College chapter of Students for Education Reform hosted a daylong symposium in an effort to bring eighth- through 12th-grade students to a college campus. The student symposium featured workshops on college admissions and more.

Representatives from Rio Hondo were on hand to offer a workshop titled "The Path to College," provided student volunteers for the event and hosted an informational table about the College.

"It's our job as educators to ensure we prepare our prospective future students as best we can by giving them and their parents the necessary tools to help them succeed in higher education," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss.



President Holds Meeting with Community Leaders

On Sept. 26, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss teamed up with President's Advisory Committee Co-Chair Victor Ledesma to facilitate the 17th President's Advisory Committee meeting – and first meeting of this fiscal year.

The President's Advisory Committee is comprised of education, government, non-profit, faith community and business leaders from all over the District. The purpose of this committee is to provide support to the President and to offer advice on how the College can better serve the surrounding community.

Superintendent/President Dreyfuss was pleased to greet committee members and was delighted to receive constructive feedback that will be very helpful to the College's academic programs, student services and mission statement review process.

