

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING APRIL 2015



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Just when you thought Rio Hondo College couldn't get any busier – or more exciting – it can and it does. April blazed through our campus community with a series of extraordinary events and undertakings.

We welcomed hundreds of students for our annual CHOICES conference, recognized faculty members for promotions and achievement of tenure, deepened our relationships with local K-12 and other community partners, and watched as our amazing students chalked up new successes in athletics and academics.

Now, we stand at the brink of what I expect will be two of our proudest moments in a year that already overflows with many such as: A ribbon cutting for our Veterans Memorial – more than two years in the planning – and our 52nd commencement ceremony, when we will welcome back our friend Gloria Molina for the keynote address. I can't imagine anyone wiser to send off our graduates.

As always, none of this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our extraordinary faculty and staff, who continually show their deep commitment to creating a student-centered campus at Rio Hondo College.

▲ Veterans Memorial Ribbon Cutting Set for May 20

Rio Hondo College will celebrate the completion of its long-awaited Veterans Memorial at a special ribbon-cutting ceremony from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, May 20 in the College's mid-quad.

The program will include College leaders, members of the Board of Trustees and veterans groups from the college and surrounding community.

"This memorial stands as a tribute to the contributions of America's armed forces and helps to celebrate the warm relationship between the College and the veterans in its student body," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss.

The memorial includes several elements: A concrete monument that stretches 8 feet long and rises 3 feet high topped with a brass plaque and bearing discs for each of the five branches of the U.S. military; a bench where students and guests may reflect on the contributions of the nation's veterans; and three flags – U.S., California and Rio Hondo College.

The monument was designed by a campus task force formed in fall 2013 after members of the College's Veterans Club raised the idea. After a wide-ranging discussion, the task force settled on the monument and location within Rio Hondo's mid-quad area. An architect was brought in to help develop those ideas.

During the ceremony, each of the flags will be raised.

To celebrate the monument's completion, the College is issuing 150 specially minted Challenge Coins, available on a first-come, first-serve basis at the ceremony for anyone wishing a keepsake.

Challenge Coins are part of a long-standing military tradition, custom made for military units and depicting symbols and mottos unique to each unit. Tradition calls for them to be taken into battle and carried at all times. They have become a cherished memento for soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

At a military gathering, a soldier may issue a "challenge" by displaying his coin and anyone failing to produce theirs may be forced to buy a round of drinks for the others.

Issuing a Challenge Coin has become popular at civilian functions, especially events that commemorate public safety programs. Rio Hondo College's Public Safety Division minted a Challenge Coin to observe its 50th year of providing service to the community.

The Rio Hondo memorial coin was designed by Dr. Ygnacio "Nash" Flores, Dean of Public Safety Academic Programs, and Don Mason, Associate Dean. One side features the College logo and dedication date; the other bears an inscription of the memorial site and the three flag poles erected for the memorial.

"It is an honor to contribute to this memorial and salute our brave and heroic veterans," said Flores. "We want all veterans to know we appreciate all they have done to keep us safe. They have a home here at Rio Hondo College and we welcome them."



Board Update.....	2
Meet the New Dean of Student Affairs.....	3
Common Core Summit with Partner Districts Hosted by Rio Hondo	3

Save The Date.....	4
Former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina to Address Graduates.....	4
Writes of Spring Draws Hundreds for Celebration of Art, Literature and Film.....	4

Three Rio Hondo Students Win Disney Internships	5
Five Rio Hondo Athletes Sign at Four-Year Universities	5

IN THIS ISSUE

Board Update

Rio Hondo trustees on April 15 recognized faculty members for earning tenure, expanded the College's priority enrollment program, reviewed developments in the Student Success and Support Program and facilities improvements, and honored winners of the Boys and Girls Club of Whittier's Youth of the Year award.

Twelve faculty members earned tenure, a key component of the California Community College's support for academic freedom. Each was announced by Academic Senate President Vann Priest. They are:

- **Alan Archambault**, Mathematics and Sciences
- **Michelle Bean**, Communications and Languages
- **Libby Curiel**, Communications and Languages
- **Marius Dornean**, Career and Technical Education
- **Juan Fernandez**, Communications and Languages
- **Song Graham**, Counseling and Student Success
- **Steve Johnson**, Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics
- **Jeannie Liu**, Business
- **Moises Mata**, Communications and Languages
- **Gregory Miller**, Mathematics and Sciences
- **Tyler Okamoto**, Communications and Languages
- **Mariano Zaro**, Communications and Languages

Incoming Faculty Association President Sergio Guzman, a counselor and associate professor offered his congratulations to the faculty members receiving tenure, saying their advancement recognizes a spectrum of contributions to the Rio Hondo community – including the College's lauded forensic program, its basic skills program and developing new degrees.

"I wanted to acknowledge how great this feels for all faculty," Guzman said. "They're faculty that are truly involved in the life of Rio Hondo College."

In addition, six faculty members were recognized for promotions, including some of those who received tenure. They are:

- **Eugene Blackmun**, professor of Business
- **Ted Preston**, professor of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- **Jodi Senk**, professor of Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics
- **Jeronimo Ribaya**, associate professor of Mathematics and Science,
- **Michelle Bean**, associate professor of Communications and Languages
- **Jeannie Liu**, associate professor of Business

Trustees also unanimously expanded the College's priority enrollment program to include a slot for first-year applicants from local high school graduates who attend schools outside of the College's immediate service area. The program allots specific priority levels to certain student groups as mandated by the state and to some selected by the College. A slot was also created for students in its Pathway to Law School Initiative. Both adjustments take effect in fall 2015.

In a presentation on the College's Student Success and Support program, trustees received updates on progress in orientation, educational planning, assessment and assistance for at-risk students. Rio Hondo is among a select number of community colleges helping to pilot the effort.

Specifically, trustees learned that:

- ✓ The College's online orientation tool had been used by 5,465 students as of mid-April;
- ✓ 50 sections of the College's orientation and educational planning class have been taught at 20 local high schools;
- ✓ 82 presentations have been conducted in six weeks to basic skills math and English classes at Rio Hondo to ensure students know the importance of completing basic skills sequences;
- ✓ Rio Hondo will pilot in fall 2015 a program to analyze student opportunities for success using multiple measures, including high school GPA, state test scores and performance in specific math and English classes;
- ✓ Rio Hondo will be among the first community college to pilot a statewide common assessment in spring 2016.

Trustees also learned that work to improve the campus soccer field launched in March and should be completed by December 2015.

The board also recognized contenders for the Boys and Girls Club of Whittier's Youth of the Year program. The College is a partner with the club, helping to provide resources and promote higher-education opportunities. The award recognizes seniors and juniors in high school for their good character and citizenship.

The youths honored are: Youth of the Year finalists Emanuel Cano, Gilbert Herrera and Jaydhel Herrera. Youth of the Year winner Michalla Rivera was unable to attend the meeting.



Meet the New Dean of Student Affairs



Rio Hondo College has hired as its new dean of student affairs an expert in student guidance with a strong, personal perspective on the community college experience.

Loy Nashua worked for more than seven years at Santa Ana College as associate dean of student development and at Pitzer College in Claremont as assistant dean of students and director of student support services for nearly 12 years.

“Loy brings invaluable experience through his past roles in student affairs that will help Rio Hondo elevate an already strong student affairs program,” said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. “We’re very pleased and excited to add his expertise to our highly focused team.”

Nashua holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of La Verne College of Law, a Master of Science in human resources design from Claremont Graduate University and a Bachelor of Arts in art with a minor in sociology from Whittier College.

He also completed general education classes at Mt. San Antonio College, giving him a student’s view of the challenges and opportunities available through the community college system.

At Rio Hondo, Nashua will direct the Student Affairs division, a collection of programs designed to help eliminate barriers to student success. Those include the student health center, programs targeting women and disabled and economically underprivileged students.

He will also help coordinate the College’s Student Success Initiative, a multi-pronged plan to help improve all students’ opportunities for academic success.

“I’m really honored to be able to work with Rio Hondo as the College deepens student service offerings,” Nashua said. “I’m passionate about assisting our students as they strive to reach their full potential.”



Common Core Summit with Partner Districts Hosted by Rio Hondo

Rio Hondo College hosted a Common Core Summit in the spring to review with partnership school districts ways to improve students’ college and career readiness in a global 21st century within the context of the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The standards, which went into effect this year for K-12 schools, call for rigorous shifts in math and English language arts curriculum and pedagogy, including emphasis on deeper conceptual understanding and real-life application as well as building knowledge through reading complex informational texts and developing evidence-based reasoning.

Hosted by Dr. Kenn Pierson, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Henry Gee, Vice President of Student Services, the summit included counselors, faculty, curriculum coaches and administrators from Whittier Union High School District, El Rancho Unified School District and El Monte Union High School District.

“Rio Hondo College recognizes the need for our institution to prepare for future students who have studied math and language arts according to models and standards of the Common Core,” Pierson said.

“Facilitating a smooth transition for students from high school to college is one of our ongoing goals at Rio Hondo.”

The summit included an engaging opening keynote overview of the standards by Dr. Betina Hsieh of the College of Education at Cal State University, Long Beach; guest district presentations on Common Core implementation; and an informative presentation on the Common Assessment Initiative by Dr. Mike Munoz, Rio Hondo College Dean of Counseling and Student Success.

The focal point in the afternoon was the breakout discipline-focused discussions, organized by Barbara Salazar, Interim Assistant Dean of Student Success & Retention, and led by Deans Karen Koos, Dr. Robert Holcomb and Mike Slavich as well as Counselor Belen Torres-Gil.

The group’s suggested next steps include arranging high school classroom walk-throughs, organizing additional discipline-focused workshop discussions and surveying efforts for developing a common assessment for community college students.

Save The Date



Today through Sunday, June 7:

Open registration for the 2015 Summer Session

7 p.m. Monday, May 18:

Artist reception, "Post Modern Barbecue"
Student Art Show, Rio Art Gallery

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 19:

Musical performance by the Workman Mill
Industrial Orchestra, Wray Theater

10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, May 20:

Ribbon-cutting ceremony and flag raising for
the Rio Hondo Veterans Memorial, mid-quad

7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 21:

Vocal Arts Ensemble, "Meet the Masters,
Part 2," Wray Theater

6 p.m. Thursday, May 28:

Commencement, Parking Lot A

6 p.m. Wednesday, June 10:

Board of Trustees meeting

Former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina to Address Graduates

Up to 1,300 Students to be Awarded Degrees at 52nd Annual Commencement

Former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina will address graduates as Rio Hondo College celebrates its 52nd annual commencement on Thursday, May 28.



The event will run from 6 to about 7:30 p.m. in Rio Hondo College's parking lot A, the only venue large enough to accommodate the hundreds of graduates and their well-wishers while the College's soccer field is being renovated.

Commencement at Rio Hondo – a day replete with tradition – begins with a breakfast for the graduates and their guests at the Rio Café hosted by the Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC). The event has grown so large in recent years that this year, for the first time, graduates are limited to two guests apiece.

During the evening ceremony, the pledge of allegiance will be led by student trustee Jaime "JJ" Magallon and students will be treated to a National Anthem sung by a classmate from the College's arts and cultural programs.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss will address the students, as will ASRHC President Alejandro Ramirez. The College will also recognize graduates who overcame personal and educational challenges to earn their degrees.

Academic Senate President Vann Priest will present the Marie I. Pelissier Award to the class valedictorian. The ceremony also includes recognition of Dean of Math and Sciences Karen Koos as the 2015 Fellow of the College. Koos will make brief remarks.

Molina will give the event's keynote address. The former supervisor has served the community for 32 years, achieving firsts at every level of government. Molina was the first Latina elected to the California State Assembly; the first Latina elected to the Los Angeles City Council; and the first Latina elected to the Board of Supervisors, where she served for more than two decades.

The graduates include students who have earned their associate's degrees, including degrees for transfer to four-year universities and nursing students.

Writes of Spring Draws Hundreds for Celebration of Art, Literature and Film

Hundreds of students and community members crowded Wray Theater during the annual Writes of Spring for talks by syndicated cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz and other influential Southern California artists and authors, and to celebrate the literary, film and artistic efforts of students.

"Each year, the Writes of Spring serves as a resounding reminder of the incredible talent that surrounds us in Southern California and which walks the halls here at Rio Hondo College," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "The moving stories, startling art and compelling films testify to the amazing creativity and passion nurtured by our extraordinary faculty."

Alcaraz, whose nationally syndicated La Cucaracha comic strip explores Latino political issues, drew so many members of the Rio Hondo community to his April 29 talk that the doors of the Wray Theater had to be closed.

Filmmaker Jill D'Agnew, cartoonist Katrina Kunstmann, writer Tyler Dilts, playwright Evelina Fernandez, author Michael Jaime-Becerra and poet Douglas Kearney also packed the 300-plus seat theater for their talks.

The event served as the backdrop to celebrations of student works – the River Deep Film Festival and readings from works selected for the River's Voice literary journal.

On April 29, the College screened nine student films to full houses. On April 30, the winners of the student film contests were announced by D'Agnew, who offered students insights into the film-making process for her first feature movie, "Life Inside Out."

River Deep Film Festival Contest winners

- The Award for Best Short Film, "Premeditative," Andrew Santacruz
- The Award for Micro-short Film (2nd place), "P18156," Andrew Santacruz
- The Audience Award Best Short Film, "Premeditative," Andrew Santacruz
- The Award for Short Film (2nd Place), "Incoming Call...," Sergio Ruiz
- The Audience Award Best Micro-short Film, "Passengers," Dir. Alberto Sampieri
- The Audience Award Best Micro-short Film, "P18156," Andrew Santacruz

Literary journal writing and art selections were winnowed from more than 100 entries reviewed by a team of editors.

River's Voice 16 Prize Winners

- Memoir, Margali Barreras, "When Parked on a Hill, Expect a Train in Either Direction"
- Short Story, Christine Luong, "Two Blocks North"
- Memoir, Jerry Valencia, "Sands"
- Poem, Lydia Tanon, "Es mi tio"
- Short Story, Brianna Sahagian, "Jessie and the Bullshefiks"
- Poem, Analisa Gomez, "Please Don't Make Me Do Things"
- Short Story, Jacob Teran, "Tanuki and the Fulfillment of Haru"
- Poem, Janet Hernandez, "Knot Undone"

Three Rio Hondo Students Win Disney Internships

Did you know Rio Hondo College students are securing valuable career internships? Three students have won coveted Disney College Program internships. Engineering major Alexandra Torres, and business administration major Anshul Verma will work with Disney as part of the company's Fall Advantage program, which runs from May through January. Arts and general sciences student Jessica Torres will take part in the Fall program, which runs from November through January. Congratulations!

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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 associate degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.

Five Rio Hondo Athletes Sign at Four-Year Universities

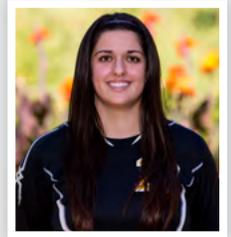
Three members of Rio Hondo College's men's soccer team and two members of the women's volleyball team signed letters of intent this spring to formalize their commitment to sports programs at four-year universities.

"This is a great validation of our program to provide our students with every possible path to success," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Each of these students excelled in the classroom and in our enriching athletic programs."

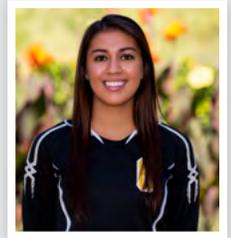
The three soccer players – all members of Rio Hondo's 2013 Foothill Athletic Conference championship team – signed with Ottawa University in Kansas.

Midfielder/defender Johnny Contreras is a 2014 team captain who earned a 3.0 GPA and made the 2014 First Team All-Foothill Athletic Conference honors and 2013 honorable mention. Midfielder/defender Gerardo Villarruel is 2014 All-Foothill Athletic Conference honorable mention who earned a 3.5 GPA. Goalkeeper Edward Maya was named to the First Team All-Foothill Athletic Conference in 2012 and 2013 and was MVP of the 2013 championship team. All three soccer players are receiving scholarships.

Volleyball setter Megan Ward will pursue a degree in sports management at Wilmington University in New Castle, Delaware. She is a two-year Rio Hondo team starter and served as a 2014 team captain. She holds a 3.5 GPA and received 2013 and 2014 All-Foothill Athletic Conference honors. She attended the California Community College Athletic Association Women's Volleyball Sophomore Showcase, an invitation-only event, and led the Foothill Athletic Conference in setting assists and serving aces.



Outside hitter Andrea Velasco will pursue a degree in health science at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York. She is a two-year Rio Hondo team starter and served as a 2014 team captain. She holds a 3.5 GPA and received 2013 and 2014 All-Foothill Athletic Conference honors. She attended the Sophomore Showcase and led the Foothill Athletic Conference in hitting and digs.



Both women are receiving scholarships.

