

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING OCTOBER 2015



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Hills that has helped hundreds of young women over the last decade.

During their Oct. 14 meeting, members of the Board of Trustees conducted a walking tour of campus. They learned about the expanding services of our Learning Assistance Center (LAC), where free tutoring and computer resources help students.

October highlighted the efforts Rio Hondo College educators put forth to support our students as they strive to achieve academic and life goals.

Programs like *Just Us Girls!* helped our students begin forming connections with faculty and staff that can serve them long after they move on to the next step in their higher education and career journeys. This terrific program is the idea of Rio Hondo Psychological Services Coordinator Denna Sanchez. Dr. Sanchez started a similar program at CSU Dominguez

Our counselors with the Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S) were recognized for providing more than 100 years of guidance to students.

Meanwhile, about 150 community members who are part of the Rio Hondo Region Adult Education Consortium gathered on at the Radisson Hotel in Whittier for an update on our efforts to strengthen adult education efforts and boost awareness among community members.

On top of this, a team from our Math and Sciences Division is hard at work on a plan to help local high school students recover credits and bolster math skills. They are crafting a program that includes a sophisticated software program supported by a classroom teacher – all at no expense to the students.

Each of these efforts underscores Rio Hondo College's deep and abiding commitment to serving students throughout our service area – to helping them succeed before they arrive on our campus, while attending Rio Hondo and in the endeavors they pursue when they leave.

College to Offer Math Courses to Help Struggling High School Students



Rio Hondo math professors are sculpting a plan to help area high school students strengthen their math skills or make up credits, meshing the guidance of a classroom teacher with the flexibility of one of the most advanced math software programs available.

The effort is being led by Rio Hondo College math professors Mark Littrell, Cameron English and Matt Pitassi, and Interim Dean of Math and Sciences Vann Priest. It includes a dozen self-paced, software-based review courses covering integrated math, algebra I and II, and geometry – all aligned with the new California Standards.

"The beauty of our plan is that it will provide students with the flexibility to pursue topics at their own pace and to focus on areas where they need the most help, as well as to tap into the knowledge of an onsite teacher," Littrell said.

Littrell said Rio Hondo College's math leaders came up with the idea after hearing about the challenges faced by local high school students, many of whom graduate without the math credits needed for college or who require remedial help once enrolled in higher education.

The advent of the new California Standards and the online testing they require prompted local schools to add student computers and high-speed Internet service, making it possible to use an online course.

Rio Hondo chose ALEKS, short for Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces – a program Littrell has used at the College for more than a decade and at home with his own children.

Developed more than 20 years ago by scientists at UC Irvine, ALEKS today is part of McGraw-Hill Education, and is used by millions of students across the globe. The program uses adaptive questioning to assess student knowledge. It reassesses students as they progress through course modules to ensure topics are learned and retained.

"ALEKS personalizes the content and learning experience for each student, building on their strengths and ensuring they are ready to learn each new concept," Littrell said.

The program also alerts teachers to specific challenges students encounter, allowing them to personalize help.

"That's where the second part of our plan comes in – we want to hire teachers to staff an afterschool class where students do their ALEKS work," Littrell said. "The teachers will be able to identify clusters of students who may need additional guidance or clarification of specific concepts."

The program will launch in summer for fall 2016.

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Board Update

Rio Hondo College made huge strides in its efforts to expand support for students in 2014-15, logging 43,379 service calls for assessment, orientation and counseling, Board of Trustees members learned Oct. 14.



Assessment services soared to 6,989 – a 127 percent of the college’s goal – while 5,325 students were provided orientations, according to a presentation by Vice President of Students Services Henry Gee and Dr. Mike Munoz, Dean of Counseling and Student Success.

Counseling, advising and educational planning services logged 22,759 calls – or nearly double the school’s target. In addition, the college provided follow-up services to 17,076 students deemed to be at risk, more than 1.5 times its target.

Services were coordinated by Rio Hondo College’s newly formed Student Success and Support Programs (SSSP).

“These are very strong numbers out of the gate,” Munoz said. “When we started this process two years ago, we weren’t providing orientations and assessments weren’t mandatory. We were scaling up from almost nothing.”

Now, with such strong numbers recorded, Munoz said 3SP will focus on service outcomes and effectiveness.

PROGRAM VISIT: Learning Assistance Center

Members of the Rio Hondo Board of Trustees took another of the group’s regular campus walks, visiting classrooms and programs during the Oct. 14 meeting – including the Learning Assistance Center (LAC).

The LAC, located in the Learning Resource Center, is open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays.

Services at the center are booming, with more tutors available and demand so high it often spills out of its main center and into additional rooms in the LRC.

FIREFIGHTERS

Board members also recognized the students of Rio Hondo College’s Wildland Fire Academy, who staffed Roadrunner Fire Crew 77 this summer to support U.S. Forest Service firefighting efforts.



Fall Lecture Series

More than 300 Rio Hondo College students crowded the Wray Theater as cartoonist and satirist Lalo Alcaraz screened his new Fox TV show, “Bordertown,” on Oct. 23 as part of the inaugural Fall Lecture Series.

Alcaraz, author of the syndicated cartoon “La Cucaracha,” is a consulting producer and writer for the show. He was joined by show creator Mark Hentemann, a writer for “Family Guy.”

“Bordertown” follows the lives of two neighbors – an immigrant and a border patrol agent – living along the U.S.-Mexico border in the fictitious state of Mexifornia. It will air on Fox starting in January.

The screening was the second of three events in the Fall Lecture Series. The series opened with sculptor Mario Chiodo and closes Nov. 5 with LGBT rights scholar and activist Dr. Ronnie Sanlo.

Sanlo will screen the 2014 documentary, “Letter to Anita,” which relates the impact of Sanlo’s decision to come out as a lesbian during Anita Bryant’s anti-gay campaign in the 1970s. Sanlo will comment on the documentary and join a post-screening discussion. Documentary director Andrea Meyerson will also attend.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College’s Fall Lecture Series in the *Whittier Daily News*.



Just Us Girls! Speaker Urges Conference Attendees to Be Courageous

An expert in health care training programs urged students during Rio Hondo College's second annual *Just Us Girls!* conference on Oct. 16 to be courageous as they pursue their goals, to take obstacles in stride and keep going forward.

About 50 young women attended the daylong conference, a special event designed to promote friendships and connections among Rio Hondo College students, faculty and staff.

Dr. Sandra Castillo, who has run nursing programs at Contra Costa and Los Medanos colleges, was the event's keynote speaker.

Castillo started her higher education journey by earning her Associated of Science degree in nursing from Rio Hondo College. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Cal State Los Angeles, a master's degree in Hispanic Studies from Holy Names College and a doctorate in health care education from Nova Southeastern University.

Castillo is also the author of a book on teaching strategies and a guide for nurses on calculating drug dosages.

She told students that a good education brings choices, and related how the death of her mother just months before she graduated spurred her pursuit of future education. She was a wife and mother when she earned her bachelor's degree.

Just Us Girls! was founded in fall 2014 by Rio Hondo Psychological Services Coordinator Denna Sanchez, who modeled it after *Latinas Juntas*, a program she started at CSU Dominguez Hills a decade ago with a colleague.

Dr. Sanchez said *Latinas Juntas* grew from her understanding as a psychologist of the pressure, anxiety and insecurity female students often feel. In the last decade, that program helped more than 1,000 female students attend graduate schools, attain degrees and secure successful careers.



Student Support Services Spotlight

Rio Hondo College offers an array of services to support students in their pursuit of a two-year degree and career preparation. This is the third in an ongoing feature highlighting these services.

Puente Project: The Puente Project is a national award-winning program that for more than 25 years has improved the college-going rate of tens of thousands of California's educationally underrepresented students. Its mission is to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees and return to the community as mentors and leaders to future generations.

The program is interdisciplinary in approach, with writing, counseling and mentoring components. Rio Hondo's Puente students have had the opportunity to visit San Diego State University, University of San Diego and California State University, Fullerton as well as San Diego Old Town for a culture activity. Upcoming events include: the Puente Mentor Mixer, where students will meet their mentors, and Noche de Familia, where students' families come together to learn more about the Puente Project.

Puente students will attend a Motivational Transfer Conference at UC San Diego and visit UC Irvine later in the semester.

EOP&S Counselors Recognized for Dedicated Service

Five counselors from Rio Hondo College's Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S) were recognized for their more than 100 years of service this October.

The counselors were celebrated during the 46th annual conference of the California Community Colleges EOP&S Association in San Diego.

Recognized for 25 years of service were Yvette Barber Garcia, Katie O'Brien and Jose Rodriguez. Receiving 15-year service awards were Dennyse Clark and Dianna Reyes.

"These counselors do so much for our students," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Their incredible institutional knowledge and dedication to ensuring our students achieve their goals is part of the true success of Rio Hondo College."



Community Partners Gather for Update on Adult Education Efforts

Rio Hondo College hosted about 150 members and community partners of the Rio Hondo Region Adult Education Consortium at the Radisson Hotel in Whittier on Oct. 23 for a conference themed "Inform, Engage and Connect."

Welcome remarks were provided by Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss for the event, which provided an update on the Consortium's progress on adult education. A keynote address was provided by Chris Nelson, head administrator of adult education for the California Department of Education.

Rio Hondo has been a member of the consortium since it was founded two years ago, and works to provide courses to complement adult school courses provided across the area.



Connect with Us on Social Media

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 **RioHondoCollege**

 **#iLoveRioHondo**

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.

Save The Date



7 to 10 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 4:

The Veterans Club Annual Comedy Show Fundraiser with Benny Mena; Wray Theater

10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5:

Rio Hondo College Fall 2015 Lecture Series presents two screenings of the documentary "Letter to Anita" with a Q & A and reception with Dr. Ronnie Sanlo at 11:15 a.m.; Wray Theater

2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7: Courage, Honor & Valor, an afternoon of education and celebration of the Nisei contribution to World War II, featuring retired Rio Hondo College professor and administrator Yoshio Nakamura; Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute

Nov. 9: Campus closed to observe Veterans Day

10 to 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10:

Happy Birthday, United States Marine Corps, flag salute and free cake; Mid Quad

Tuesday, Nov. 10:

Registration opens for Rio Hondo College's Winter 2016 Intersession and Spring 2016 Semester.

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 11: Veterans Day Celebration with Wall of Heroes, free hotdogs; Mid Quad.

6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 11: Board of Trustees meeting; Board Room

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 11: "Women and War," a one-act play; Campus Inn Theater

3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 12: "Women and War," a one-act play; Campus Inn Theater

11:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 13: All Staff Retreat; Pico Park Community Center

Noon to 3 p.m., Friday, Nov. 13: Workforce Development Conference and Trades Night

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 18: Discover Rio Day! Elementary and middle school students visit Rio Hondo College

6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9:

Board of Trustees meeting; Board Room



Mexican American Bar Association President Elect Leads Law Panel

More than 65 students learned about legal careers Oct. 28 during a Rio Hondo College Pathway to Law School panel discussion that included Mexican American Bar Association President Elect Maria Ramirez and three other Los Angeles area attorneys.



The panel is one in a series held by the program, launched at Rio Hondo College and 23 other community college campuses in fall 2014 to provide a continuum of support for students who aim to attend one of six top California law schools. Rio Hondo College is the only community college in the San Gabriel Valley to offer the unique program.

Ramirez is a head deputy district attorney for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, where she has worked for 24 years. She graduated from Loyola Marymount University and received her Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School in 1990.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College's Pathway to Law School panel in the *The Downey Patriot*.

Joining Ramirez on the panel were immigration attorney Michael M. Felix, a Cal State Fullerton graduate who earned his J.D. at the New England School of Law in Boston; family law attorney Matias Flores, a graduate of

UC Santa Barbara who has his degree from Loyola Law School; and criminal defense attorney Miguel Duarte, who graduated from UCLA, where he also earned his law degree. The panel was moderated by attorney Ricardo Perez.

