President’s Message

With the arrival of spring semester, our many teams at Rio Hondo College are busily delivering services to our students and sharing the message of our mission with the community.

In January, we marked the launch of our Community Education Forums, five sessions in which we will deliver details about our array of student support services, transfer pathways and stellar academics. Our first session highlighted the El Monte pledge and El Monte Promise, which provide students from El Monte and South El Monte with seamless educational pathways to UCI and Cal State Los Angeles.

We welcomed 150 high school counselors to our Regional Counselor Breakfast, another opportunity to showcase how we make the transition to Rio Hondo and beyond smooth and effective.

Workshop Assists Students in Accessing Financial Aid Resources

Rio Hondo College hosted a comprehensive Cash for College financial aid workshop and application lab on Jan. 28 to assist students with funding their higher education journeys. The event included guidance for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as the California Dream Act.

The event, held in the Rio Café, provided one-on-one support in English, Spanish, Mandarin and Vietnamese. The event was sponsored by the Rio Hondo College Office of Outreach and Educational Partnerships, the Los Angeles Cal-SOAP Consortium, Rio Hondo College First Year Success Center, Rio Hondo College Financial Aid Office and Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon, 57th District.
Firefighters Receive Advanced Rescue Training

Forty-five firefighters from across California hewed their way through structures and carved up cars from Jan. 23 to Feb. 3 during an advanced training course at Rio Hondo College’s annual Regional Truck Academy.

The Regional Truck Academy, launched in 2006, offers professionals a mix of instructional lectures and hands-on exercises, including forcible entry into burning structures, structure ventilation, high-rise operations, elevator rescues, rope rescues, thermal imaging, auto extraction and rapid intervention tactics.

The academy runs for 88 hours over 11 days with a one-day break halfway through.

Former College Vice President Honored by LA Supervisors

Former Rio Hondo College vice president and Whittier area artist Yoshio C. Nakamura was honored in December by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for his service in World War II.

Nakamura, 91, who received the French Legion of Honor Medal in November, was invited to the board meeting by Supervisor Janice Hahn.

Nakamura was born in Rosemead in 1925. At age 16, he was interned with other Japanese-Americans at the Tulare Assembly Center, a converted racetrack near Fresno. He was later relocated to a camp in Arizona, where he reported for duty in the U.S. Army in 1944.

Nakamura was deployed to southern France in March 1945 as part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a unit made up of Japanese-Americans. He was assigned to a heavy weapons group, using deafening mortars and machine guns to wage war. He saw combat in the Rhineland Campaign and later, in Italy, achieving the rank of staff sergeant.

He received the Bronze Star, two Presidential Unit Citations, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the EAME Campaign Medal with three battle stars. In 2011, he joined other members of his unit at the U.S. Capital to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest U.S. civilian honor.

During the Board of Supervisors meeting, Nakamura spoke about the injustice of the internment camps and the importance of learning from the past.
Local Police Agencies Hire Police Academy Graduates

Twenty-two of the 29 cadets who graduated Jan. 11 from Rio Hondo College’s Police Academy were hired by area police agencies, including all four female cadets, even before they completed the program.

Cadets from Class No. 203 are starting their careers at agencies from Hermosa Beach to El Monte, Signal Hill to San Fernando. Several have joined California State University campus departments in Fullerton, Northridge and Los Angeles.

Rio Hondo College’s intense academy runs for six months and includes more than 1,000 hours of instruction in 42 public safety topics as well as physically grueling training. Eighteen police chiefs attended the graduation ceremony.

Two days before the ceremony, the cadets raised money for the Special Olympics and honored a fallen police officer during their traditional Pride Run, held this year in San Fernando.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo’s College honoring fallen police officer the Whittier Daily News.
Rio Hondo Showcases Stellar Academics, Student Services

Rio Hondo College leaders highlighted the promise of community colleges and shared personal stories of their academic journeys on Jan. 19 during the first of five Community Education Forums showcasing transfer and pathways, including the El Monte Pledge, honors programs, financial aid, career and adult re-entry programs, and other student support services.

The event, held at the El Monte Educational Center, provided El Monte and South El Monte students and community members with a chance to meet top-notch faculty from the College’s comprehensive academic and career programs, including its highly popular nursing, public safety, business administration and four-year automotive technology degree programs.

“We have so much to be proud of at Rio Hondo College, including the fact that Rio Hondo consistently ranks in the top community colleges for transferring underrepresented minorities to the UC system,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

The forum was attended by El Monte City School District Superintendent Maribel Garcia, El Monte Union High School District board members Esthela Torres de Siegrist and Maria Morgan – a Rio Hondo College alumna – as well as El Monte Promise Foundation board member Teresa Pinedo and foundation project manager Christina Davila.

College leaders highlighted innovative student support services, such as support for foster youths, low-income students, veterans, high school and adult re-entry students, and transfer and career guidance.

Rio Hondo College partners with local K-12 school districts, California State University and UC Irvine to ensure student transfers, and with the El Monte Promise Foundation to instill the value of pursuing a higher education at a young age.

Rio Hondo College offers 24 associate degrees for transfer that guarantee admittance to the CSU in addition to 50 associate degrees and 60 certificate programs.

Rio Hondo also is among the top 25 community colleges for Hispanic students nationwide.

During the forum, Student Trustee Brandon Pablo Leon praised Rio Hondo College’s Pathway to Law School program, honors program, student advocacy program and clubs. He also talked about the new bookstore that was just completed in time for spring semester and touched upon the other projects that will continue to beautify RHC.

The College’s mascot, Rex the Roadrunner, got the crowd excited for opportunity drawings that included Rio Hondo College T-shirts and two Kindle Fires, which will also be door prizes at each remaining forum.

The forums continue through May:

- 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23
  La Serna High School
  15301 Youngwood Drive, Whittier

- 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 16
  Whittier High School
  12417 Philadelphia St., Whittier

For information, call 562-908-3403 or email outreach@riohondo.edu.

El Monte Pledge Eases Transition to College

Rio Hondo College students from El Monte and South El Monte schools benefit from special services through the El Monte Pledge, a pact designed to promote college education.

The Pledge is one of several programs run through the El Monte Promise Foundation, a community group that grew out of a partnership among Rio Hondo College, area schools and education-supporting institutions that wanted to create a pathway to higher education success that started even before students began elementary school.

“The El Monte Pledge exemplifies Rio Hondo College’s commitment to our community, to ensuring our students find the success they deserve and to ensure that access to higher education is a given no matter anyone’s socio-economic status,” Superintendent/Trustee Teresa Dreyfuss said.

Established as an independent foundation in 2012, El Monte Promise took over several programs started by Rio Hondo College while the College focused on providing students with additional services.

Special services for El Monte Pledge students from El Monte City, Mountain View and El Monte Union High school districts include a full-time dedicated counselor, priority for registration for the annual Summer Scholars Transfer Institute at UC Irvine and priority registration for Rio Hondo College classes.

The Pledge also eases transfers to California State University Los Angeles and UC Irvine.

In addition, the foundation assist students in saving for college by matching savings funds, holding financial literacy programs in elementary schools, college planning nights for high school students, community dialogues on college attendance and internships.
More than 150 counselors from local high schools attended Rio Hondo College’s Regional Counselor Breakfast on Jan. 20, learning about the College’s expanding cluster of student support services and innovative approach to basic instruction.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss gave welcoming remarks to the group, which was then briefed on specific programs.

Dean of Counseling and Student Success Dr. Mike Muñoz shared details about the College’s use of multiple measures – not just placement tests – for placing students into math classes.

Counselors also learned about Rio Hondo College’s summer bridge program, which eases students into college, the Avance program for expanding service capacity, services for students from low-income families, career guidance, transfer pathways, fire academic and academy programs for automotive technology and environmental science, among others.
8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15 and Thursday, Feb. 16: Senior Preview Days, Wray Theater

Friday, Feb. 17: Campus closed for President’s Day holiday

Monday, Feb. 20: Campus closed for President’s Day holiday

6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23: Community Education Forum, La Serna High School, 15301 Youngwood Drive, Whittier

9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24: Free tax preparation services, Administration of Justice Building

8:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 25: Career and Technical Education Open House, Tech Quad

Noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, March 2: Forensics Showcase, Wray Theater

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, March 3: Women's History Celebration, Wray Theater

9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, March 3: Free tax preparation services, Administration of Justice Building

8 to 9 p.m. Friday, March 3: Faculty Art Show, Art Gallery

6 p.m. Wednesday, March 8: Board of Trustees meeting, Rio Hondo College

6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 16: Community Education Forum, Whittier High School, 12417 Philadelphia St., Whittier

9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, March 17: Free tax preparation services, Administration of Justice Building

6 p.m. Friday, April 28: A Taste of Rio, Rio Hondo College

Serving the communities of
- El Monte
- South El Monte
- Pico Rivera

and portions of:
- Norwalk
- Downey
- La Mirada
- City of Industry
- Los Nietos*
- East Whittier*
- South Whittier*
- West Whittier*
- Avocado Heights*

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