

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING APRIL 2017



## President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As we approach the final week of spring semester, Rio Hondo College is blossoming with promise and achievement – as noted in the honors being received by our students and faculty.

Students on our Forensics Speech and Debate Team collected a cluster of awards at the spring national competition, our journalism students brought in 14 awards at the annual Journalism Association of Community Colleges competition and student athlete Rachel Bustillos received a

full-ride scholarship to play volleyball for Bethel College in Kansas.

These achievements are reflective of the tremendous dedication and talents of our faculty, such as Margaret Griffith, a professor of art and drawing at Rio Hondo College for 10 years.

Griffith has been honored with the inaugural Mid-Career Artist Grant from the Davyd Whaley Foundation. The prize recognizes her extraordinary body of work – a talent our students benefit from daily in their classrooms.

Rio Hondo College's focus on student success was also recognized by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, which named Rio Hondo College along with 19 other colleges for the California Guided Pathways Project. This project focuses on helping students reach their academic dreams, and complements several other grant-funded efforts through which Rio Hondo College is helping to craft the community college of the future.

Congratulations to our students and faculty on these accomplishments – a record of success that I am sure we will continue to build upon in the months to come.

## Art Professor Wins \$10,000 Grant for Mid-Career Artists

Margaret Griffith, a Los Angeles-based artist and Rio Hondo College professor of drawing and painting, has won the 2017 Mid-Career Artist Grant from the **Davyd Whaley Foundation**, a \$10,000 prize that recognizes her body of studio work.

This is the foundation's first year awarding the prize.

Griffith, who joined Rio Hondo College in 2007, holds an BFA in painting and an MFA in sculpture. Griffith works in a variety of forms, including site-specific installation, sculpture and drawing; much of the work she submitted with the grant application was sculptural.

Recently, she has focused on site-specific installations, with new work inspired by gate patterns taken from historical buildings that represent privilege, exclusivity, status and wealth.

Griffith said her active career as an artist helps inform her teaching at Rio Hondo College.

"My professional practice is incredibly important for my students to see," she said. "It allows me to set an example, show how to handle constructive criticism and emphasizes the importance of self-discipline."

She said it's important for students to explore their creativity.

"The creative process is also one of experimentation, and you have successes and failures. With my students, I try to explore elements outside of what they are used to doing."

Griffith said artists must be equally driven by their passion and organized to ensure they complete their works.

"I talk to my students about how you come up with a dramatic body of work and how you take that out into the world. The classroom is really like a little testing place for the real world," she said.

Griffith plans to use the grant to pursue projects that address a national and international audience, and fund her research and travel. She hopes to travel to Washington, D.C. to take images and gather resources from direct observation. She may also create an audio work that records the voices of those visiting from across the globe as well as those who live and work in the area.



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# Board Report

Members of the Board of Trustees in April celebrated faculty advancement, reviewed a plan for strengthening new faculty orientation, learned of a professor's sabbatical achievement, bid farewell to retiring staff and faculty members and recognized their Classified Employee of the Year.

Seven faculty members achieved professor status: Alyson Cartagena, Libby Curiel, Lydia Llerena, Katherine Bee Lopez-Alvarado, Jill Pfeiffer, Angela Rhodes and Kevin Smith; two became

associate professors: Moises Mata and Rodolfo Rios; and two advanced to assistant professor status: Jose Arroyo and Alexander Gardos.



Board members received an update on a pilot program for orienting new full-time faculty, a process that includes sharing best practices, expectations and an understanding of student needs and the Rio Hondo College culture.

Orientation sessions in the past have typically spanned eight hours, but the College has been working to provide an expanded version. The pilot program spans 16 hours over five months. Presenters said they plan to broaden the program and deepen its offerings in an extended 32-hour version of the program.



Associate professor of philosophy Scott Dixon shared with trustees the details of his recent sabbatical, spent creating new classes, refining lesson plans and writing his Ph.D. thesis.

Dixon surpassed his original sabbatical plans, which called for creating two new courses. He created a special

course for Rio Hondo College's new Bachelor of Science in auto technology, modified two courses for online use, created instructional videos for two classes and participated on a scholarship committee.

"Probably the most important lesson I learned during my sabbatical year, is that every instructor needs to take a step back and consider what they do in their teaching and in life," Dixon said.

Trustees bid farewell to Occupational Education Project Specialist Karen McKenzie, who is retiring after 31 years, 8 months of service. McKenzie was hired in 1985 as an instructional assistant. She has held her current post since 1990.

Trustees also recognized long-time Career Center Counselor/Coordinator Belen Torres-Gil, who started with the district in 1988 as a counselor and became a professor. Torres-Gil is retiring after 29 years of service.



Board members congratulated Math and Science Division Secretary Yolanda Ramirez, who was named Classified Employee of the Year in March. Ramirez joined Rio Hondo College in 2004, and has served on about 20 different college committees in addition to being active in Rio Hondo College's chapter of the California School Employees Association.



## Rio Hondo College Chosen for Effort to Boost Student Success

Rio Hondo College and 19 other California community colleges have been selected to take part in the California Guided Pathways Project, a venture designed to substantially increase the number of students who earn a certificate or degree at a community college by leveraging the significant investments California has made in student success.

The colleges, selected through a competitive application process and announced on April 17, will design and implement structured academic and career pathways for all incoming students by 2019.

"I am confident that this project and the 20 participating colleges can positively impact the future of California," said California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley, who serves on the project's advisory committee. "I look forward to leading a series of systemwide efforts to implement the Guided Pathway model throughout the California Community Colleges."

Guided Pathways provides a framework for colleges to help students who face barriers to completing a college education. By creating structured educational experiences, pathways support each student from the point of entry to the attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and employment in a chosen field.

The project, which was launched in December 2016, is funded by College Futures Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the Teagle Foundation, and participating colleges. The California Guided Pathways project was inspired by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways Project to support increased certificate and degree completion within the California Community Colleges.

Over the next three years, colleges will send teams to institutes where they will receive guidance and structured time to create clear pathways to high-quality credentials and develop the change management strategies needed to accomplish this goal. College teams will be made up of five people including the president and a faculty leader. Each college will also receive support from a team of pathways coaches and information on complementary reform efforts in California that can help support specific facets of their work.

The Guided Pathways model helps colleges clarify paths to student end goals, helps students select a program and stay on the path, and ensures quality learning. Pathways include specific course sequences, progress milestones, and defined learning outcomes.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual 'A Taste of Rio' Draws 500 Guests



A sold-out crowd gathered at Rio Hondo College on April 28 for the fifth annual "A Taste of Rio," sampling wine, beer and food from area restaurants while raising \$102,000 in total donations for student scholarships and support programs.

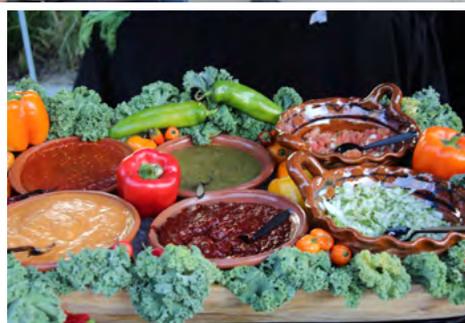
The event is organized by the Rio Hondo College Foundation, a nonprofit that supports the College.

Attendance hit more than 500, easily topping the anticipated 350 guests.

Sponsors included:

- ▶ **Cognoscente Level:** Del Terra; Westberg & White Architects.
- ▶ **Connoisseur Level Sponsor:** RBC Capital Markets.

- ▶ **Aficionado Level:** Coca Cola; Bank of the West; David & Jacqueline Brearley; Interior Office Solutions; Keenan & Associates; Longo Toyota/Lexus; PIH Health; The Solis Group.
- ▶ **Appreciator Level:** Amec Foster Wheeler; Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo; Beverly Hospital; Climatec; Credit Union of Southern California; Follett Bookstore; Pacific Western Bank; Supervisor Hilda Solis, L.A. County 1st District; Vavrinek; Trine, Day & Company; Whittier Union High School District.
- ▶ **Taster Level:** All Star Cable; ASCIP; Athens Services; City of South El Monte; Drs. Lyla and Les Eddington; Guida Surveying Inc.; Don and Marta Hannah; Don Jenkins; MAP Management; Sen. Tony Mendoza; Merrill Lynch/Bank of America; Payden & Rygel; Quinn Group; Republic Services; RHC Faculty Association; Rose Hills Memorial Park & Mortuaries; Judith Sanders; SchoolsFirst Credit Union; Simplex Grinnell; Utility Network Management; Whittier Hospital.



## Assembly Majority Leader Engages with Students

Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon connected with Rio Hondo College students during an April 13 visit as part of his Pizza and Politics series – an effort he is staging across his district this spring.



Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss provided welcome remarks and Student Trustee Brandon Pablo Leon moderated questions from the audience.

Rio Hondo College students asked the Majority Leader questions about a variety of topics including immigration, financial aid, student debt, homeownership, taxes, transportation, and state Assembly leadership. Special thanks go to Director of Student Life Shaina Phillips for hosting the event at the Student Union, Director of Government and Community Relations Russell Castaneda-Calleros and his staff for organizing the event, and to Associated Students of Rio Hondo College for publicizing the event to students throughout campus.

## Student Journalists Win News Awards, Receive Grant

Rio Hondo College's award-winning student newspaper, El Paisano, received a \$1,500 grant from the 8-Ball Welfare Foundation in April that will benefit seven to eight transferring and returning students, adviser Wendy Carrera announced.

The Foundation, which has provided grants to student journalists since the 1970s, was created to help struggling journalists in the 1950s.

Carrera, who is in her first year as the print, broadcast and online publication's adviser, secured the grant on behalf of her students.

"This grant offers us a wonderful opportunity to help these students pursue their journalistic and higher education dreams," Carrera said.

El Paisano's journalists were already celebrating after nine students won 14 awards on April 1 at the annual Journalism Association of Community Colleges competition in Sacramento. Students were honored for sports writing, opinion, news judgment, layout and webcast/broadcast news pieces:

- ▶ **Ramon Alvarado:** Honorable mention, sports writing; third place, social media;
- ▶ **Eric Munoz:** Third place, webcast/broadcast news; achievement in excellence award for news director for El Paisano Broadcast; third-place video story;
- ▶ **Diego Crespo:** First place, critical review; achievement in excellence award for editor in chief of El Paisano; third place, news judgment/broadsheet;
- ▶ **Noah Garcia:** Achievement in excellence award for editorship for El Paisano;
- ▶ **Malissa Myers:** Achievement in excellence award for editor in chief of El Paisano Digital; third place, video story;
- ▶ **Diana Juarez:** Fourth place, opinion writing;
- ▶ **Zackary Mejia:** Second place, critical review;
- ▶ **Pete Escobar:** Fourth place, news judgment/layout tabloid; and
- ▶ **Aaron Martinez:** Fourth place, sports photo.

## Pathway to Law School Hosts Panel of Lawyers

A quartet of Los Angeles area attorneys whose practices range from child advocacy, DUI and eviction to family law, bankruptcy and criminal law headlined a two-hour panel on law school and legal careers on April 13 at Rio Hondo College.

The panel was organized by Rio Hondo College's Pathway to Law School program, one of 28 such programs hosted across the state that guides students from community college, through four-year institutions and into law school.

The program targets underrepresented, first year students and partners with six California law schools.

Ricardo Perez moderated the two-hour panel, which featured speakers with a diversity of practices and backgrounds:

- ▶ **Blanca Pacheco, a Loyola Law School graduate:** Pacheco, who is also a Downey city councilwoman, specializes in living trusts, probate, DUI and eviction cases.

- ▶ **Devon Rios, a UCLA School of Law graduate:** Rios, who attended Rio Hondo College and UCLA, concentrates on special education and educational advocacy, including detained youth, foster youth and families seeking guidance on advocating for their children.
- ▶ **Noreen Barcena, a University of La Verne College of Law graduate:** Barcena earned a Bachelor of Arts from Pitzer College and has been practicing criminal defense, family law and immigration law since December 2012.
- ▶ **Claudia Osuna, a California Western School of Law graduate:** Osuna attended Cerritos College before transferring to UCLA, where she received her bachelor's degree. She earned her law degree in 2009. She is co-founder of Osuna & Dotson Law Firm, and specializes in family law and criminal defense.



## Speech and Debate Team Wins 3 Awards at National Tournament

The Rio Hondo Forensics Speech and Debate team earned three awards at the Phi Rho Pi National Collegiate Forensics Tournament held April 9-15 in Tysons Corner, Virginia. The team competed with strength and determination. Winning awards under International Public Debate Association rules were Jonathan Kaldas, bronze; Melissa De Leon, silver; and Patricia Hughes, bronze.

## Students, Volunteers Provide \$78,000 in Tax Assistance

Rio Hondo College's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program helped community members complete 314 tax returns between Feb. 10 and April 14, resulting in \$326,175 in tax refunds and \$112,599 in Earned Income Tax Credits.

Estimated savings to community members, whose average adjusted gross income about \$17,793, was \$78,000.

VITA is staffed by students enrolled in Accounting 97 who are IRS certified and supervised by Rio Hondo College instructors. This year, 10 accounting students worked in the program for credit; five alumni returned to assist.

Chairman Jerome Horton, chairman of the state Board of Equalization, visited the program during a Tax Day event and spoke to students about the benefits of the VITA program.



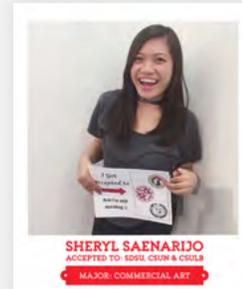
## Arts Division Celebrates Student Transfers

Rio Hondo College's Division of Arts and Cultural Programs is celebrating the transfer of eight students to design and art programs at California State University campuses across the state and the Otis College of Art and Design.

The comprehensive program offers degrees in digital animation, art, art studio, art history, graphic design, music, photography and theatre arts. More than 2,500 students are currently enrolled in classes.

Rio Hondo College maintains university articulation agreements that ensure a smoother transfer of credits to four-year institutions. Faculty members actively encourage students to continue their studies at such institutions.

"We are very proud of our students, many of whom come back to share their stories and accomplishments. We can't wait to hear from these students in the coming years," said Dale Harvey interim dean, Division of Arts and Cultural Programs.



## Volleyball Player Signs Letter of Intent

Rio Hondo College student Rachel Bustillos signed a letter of intent on April 17 to play volleyball for Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas. Bustillos will attend the college on an athletic scholarship.

Bustillos is a two-sport athlete who played on the softball team in 2015 and for the last two years on the schools indoor and beach volleyball teams, where she was an outside hitter and defensive specialist.

She is pursuing a degree in sociology and will graduate from Rio Hondo College with an Associate of Arts in child development. Bustillos attended Gabrielino High School, where she played softball, basketball and volleyball.



## Connect with Us on Social Media



RHCRoadrunners



RioHondo\_College



RioHondoCollege



Rio Hondo College YT Channel



bit.do/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 degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.

# Save the Date



### 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 10:

Board of Trustees meeting, Rio Hondo College

### 1 p.m. Sunday, May 14:

Choir Spring Concert, Sky Rose Chapel at Rose Hills Park

### 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 11:

Community Education Forum, Rio Hondo College Educational Center at Pico Rivera, 9426 Marjorie St., Pico Rivera

### 6 p.m. Thursday, May 25:

54th annual Rio Hondo College Commencement, Student Parking Lot A, Rio Hondo College

### 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Friday, May 12:

Crisis Response Scenario, Rio Hondo College

Rio Hondo College

## FREE Tuition for the First Year & Priority Registration

Requirements include: register as a full-time student (12 units or more), enroll in English and math (as required), submit a FAFSA/CA Dream Act application, among others.

Open to 2017 high school graduates from:

<b>El Monte Union High School District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arroyo High School</li><li>El Monte High School</li><li>Fernando R. Ledesma Continuation High School</li><li>Mountain View High School</li><li>Rosemead High School</li><li>South El Monte High School</li></ul>	<b>El Rancho Unified School District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>El Rancho High School</li><li>Ruben Salazar High School</li></ul> <b>Private Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>St. Paul High School</li><li>Whittier Christian</li></ul>	<b>Whittier Union High School District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>California High School</li><li>Frontier High School</li><li>La Serna High School</li><li>Pioneer High School</li><li>Santa Fe High School</li><li>Sierra Vista Alternative High School</li><li>Whittier High School</li></ul>
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[www.riohondo.edu](http://www.riohondo.edu)

Call the First Year Success Center (562) 463-6650 for details.