

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

AUGUST 2017



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Our 2017-18 fall semester got off to a heavenly start – with an eclipse that drew more than 1,000 students fascinated by this celestial phenomenon. It was such a symbolic way to begin the year, demonstrating that Rio Hondo College students are driven by a spirit of intellectual curiosity that will support them as they pursue their higher education goals.

We also greeted students with new programs, increasing our degree offerings, adding support

services and expanding our service at our three educational centers across the District.

This is also our first semester offering the Rio Promise, in which we waive first-year tuition for 2017 graduates of high schools in the College's service area.

The program includes participation to some of our hallmark student support programs, including Summer Bridge and a fall semester counseling course that will help students make the transition to college.

I'm so excited by all of the amazing opportunities our dedicated teams of educators are creating at Rio Hondo College! It all emphasizes our mantra, that if you start Rio, you can truly go anywhere in life.

College Welcomes Students for 2017-18

Rio Hondo College welcomed more than 14,000 students for fall semester classes on Aug. 21 during a festive day that included information booths, staff on hand to guide new students and a viewing of the solar eclipse hosted by math and science professors.

"The first week of school is always a magical time on campus," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "The students are full of energy and so ready to learn. It's great to see them as they begin their higher education journeys."

This fall marks the first semester that the College has waived tuition for freshmen who graduated in 2017 from high schools in its service area through a program called the Rio Promise.

The program includes extensive support for students as they pursue their academic goals, which now span 53 associate degrees, 24 associate degrees for transfer, 79 certificate programs and a Bachelor of Science in automotive technology.

The College also added hospitality courses and an orthopedic technician program this year and recently received a National Science Foundation grant to expand training for technicians in its groundbreaking automotive technology program.

Students can take courses at the main Whittier campus or at one of three educational centers across the District.

Anthony Nakato, 17, a 2017 graduate of La Serna High School in Whittier, is attending as part of the Rio Promise program.

"It was a great opportunity, especially with the Rio Promise program. It's going to give me a good start." -Anthony Nakato

Nakato attended Rio Hondo College's Summer Bridge program, offered three times in July and August. The program provided an intensive orientation to campus programs and services, and math workshops to strengthen skills and boost class placement.

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"I felt nervous before the program," he said. "Afterward, I felt confident. It was an amazing experience."

Nakato, who will study nursing, said the math workshops determined that statistics, or Math 130, was the best fit for his math instruction. He said the program also connected him with mentors and taught him how to navigate College services, including counseling and financial aid.

Freshman Jesse Wang, 18, said she is also excited to be part of the Rio Promise. An El Monte High School graduate, Wang is deciding whether to major in animation or computer technology.

"I've seen so much support from the College and everyone has been so nice with helping me decide what classes to take – I've had an amazing experience at Rio Hondo so far." -Jesse Wang.

Helen Claros, 18, who graduated from Downey High School in 2017, said she chose Rio Hondo College because of its Pathway to Law School program, which guides students through community college to four-year colleges and then to law school. Rio Hondo is one of 24 California community colleges to participate in the program.

"I want to be a lawyer. I wanted to come somewhere that will actually help me more with what I want to do," Claros said. "I had no idea they had amazing resources here."

Sophomore Jonathan Cheng, 19, has his sights set on entering the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program. Cheng said he's received thorough support from teachers, school counselors and from the College's Summer Bridge program.

"Last year, the Summer Bridge program helped me get priority registration to get me on my path for the ADN program and a better math class placement," Cheng said. "It's amazing to know that Rio Hondo College has so many teachers and staff who are willing to support students as they pursue their goals."

Cheng said he plans to transfer to a Cal State or UC to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's First Week of School in the *Whittier Daily News*.



Board Report

Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees bid farewell to faculty and staff with more than 22 years of service at its August meeting and received an update on an outreach program involving local middle and elementary schools.

Barbara Mikalson, a professor of economics hired Jan. 1, 2001, retired with 16.5 years of service on Aug. 11.

Margie Muñoz, an instructional division secretary hired in March 2000, retired with more than 17 years of service. Muñoz was hired as a clerk typist in the Assessment Center. In 2005, she shifted to the Counseling Center and in 2011 joined the Health and Science Division. She was promoted to her current position in the Division of Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics in July 2012.

Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee gave an update on the College's Adopt-a-School program to trustees. The program brings Rio Hondo College faculty, administrators and staff to nine area middle schools and two elementary schools. In 2016-17, the program included hosting students for Rio Hondo College's second annual Discover Rio Day, visits at back-to-school nights, tutoring and goodie bags provided to schools in spring.



In 2017-18, College leaders look forward to continuing to participate in back-to-school nights, attend career and college events, parent panels and other school events to provide information about higher education and Rio Hondo College, host the third annual Discover Rio Day and provide tutoring services.

Trustees also learned from Rio Hondo College's counseling team about its high school and community outreach efforts.

National Science Foundation Grant Funds Alternative Fuels Tech Program

Rio Hondo College is collaborating with Central Oregon Community College on a \$778,000, three-year National Science Foundation (NSF) project as part of its Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program to develop a safety certification program for technicians who work on electric and fuel cell vehicles.

The NSF/ATE funding is the second received by Rio Hondo College's innovative Alternative Fuels Technology Program, a leader in training students and industry technicians to work on alternative fuels vehicles.

"There's tremendous demand from the industry for technicians capable of working on high-voltage vehicles," said Professor John Frala, who heads Rio Hondo College's Alternative Fuels program. "This is a national safety certification project – together with Central Oregon, we're the only ones taking on this challenge."

The project will likely include setting up a classroom at each college to beta-test developed concepts with collaboration from industry experts.

Rio Hondo College has strong industry support from companies such as Toyota, Ford, GM, Honda, Tesla, Proterra, as well as from large transit fleets across the U.S., Frala said. Proterra, which builds electric buses in the region, will likely allow the colleges to use its resources for testing and certifying technicians, he said.

This funding builds on other training programs developed by Rio Hondo College in partnership with the Southern California Transit Training Consortium (SCR TTC).

In 2015, Rio Hondo College received \$200,000 from the NSF/ATE for a three-year project to create and evaluate work-based training tools for alternative-fuels technology students. That grant led Rio Hondo College to create

an Associate of Science degree in electric/fuel cell vehicle technology that graduated five students with A.S. degrees and 10 students with certificates of achievements in May 2017.

These 15 students were immediately hired by Proterra, Tesla, Jaguar, Land Rover, LA Metro, and Toyota.

"They went right from Rio Hondo College into jobs paying \$22 or more an hour. As a result of the NSF/ATE funded projects and the quick job placements, word is getting out about the strength of Rio Hondo College's alternative fuels program," Frala said.

Rio Hondo College Superintendent /President Teresa Dreyfuss praised Frala for his leadership.

"John is a pioneer in the field of alternative fuels. His innovative approach and forward-thinking attitude draws opportunities like this that benefit our students and community," Dreyfuss said.

Frala is a member of the state's Green Team, an advisory group dedicated to creating a series of hydrogen refueling stations known as the California Hydrogen Highway.

Rio Hondo College also offers a four-year Bachelor of Science Degree in automotive technology as part of a California pilot program allowing community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees. Rio Hondo is one of only 13 Community Colleges approved in the state. This year, the program's second cohort of students will begin studies.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's Alternative Fuels Technology Program in the *Whittier Daily News*.



College Reaches 8,000-plus Students through Educational Centers

Rio Hondo College has brought higher educational opportunities to more than 8,000 community members over the last eight years through a trio of innovative educational centers, according to recently released figures.

This fall, the College is deepening course offerings in math, English and childcare instruction at the centers as part of a continuing effort to tailor instructional programs to meet community needs.

"We are constantly reviewing the needs of our community members so we can be as responsive as possible," said Yolanda Emerson, who oversees the centers. "Our goal is to make it possible for residents to complete as much of the general education requirements through our centers as possible, and to sculpt programs that meet specific needs and requests."

The centers were opened in phases starting in 2009-10 to bring services to residents who could not always make the trip to Rio Hondo College's main campus.

The first site to open was the South Whittier Educational Center, which welcomed one class and 49 students in 2009. By 2016-17, the center was serving 958 students in 45 classes.

The El Monte Educational Center followed in 2012 with nine courses and 238 students, building on the lessons learned in South Whittier. In 2016-17, El Monte served 908 students in 39 classes.

The newest center is the Rio Hondo Educational Center at Pico Rivera, which opened in fall 2016. In its first year, the center served 796 students in 38 classes even as crews put the finishing touches on the center's renovation.



"Pico Rivera's astounding success is a testament to the importance of bringing our mission to provide access to higher education to our many communities," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "The convenience of all of our educational centers eliminates barriers to student success."

College leaders study which classes appear most popular and consult with area high school principals and assistant principals as they strive to ensure the centers provide the strongest program possible.

Pico Rivera, now starting its second year, and El Monte are expanding English and math course offerings, which are popular draws at all the educational centers and the College's main campus in Whittier.

At South Whittier, Rio Hondo is offering an expanded program in child development after tracking community interest in the field.



Multiple Measure Placement Pilot Goes Full Scale

Rio Hondo College boosted math placements for incoming students in fall 2016 after deploying a pilot program that uses multiple measures to assess student skills, rather than relying on a single placement test.

More than 7,000 incoming students were assessed under the new system, which included overall high school GPA and an analysis by Rio Hondo College counselors of high school math courses completed.

As a result, 9.3 percent of students were placed into transfer-level math classes – the highest placement possible – up from 2.6 percent under the old system.

The second highest level of math placement also received a boost in student placements, while the three lowest levels saw a drop in student placements.



The same system was used for English placements.

"Our multiple measures pilot effort was a complete success, showing that a more nuanced approach to assessing our students' capabilities can help propel them to success," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "Now, our next step is to expand efforts like this that support our students as they pursue their higher education goals."

Low placements in math and English have been cited as causes for derailing college pursuits, especially among students at California's community colleges.

Rio Hondo College participates in several related efforts to strengthen student support, including a Summer Bridge program that allows students to get a jumpstart on math instruction and a program to support students at California State University, Los Angeles who are struggling with basic math and English skills.

Professor Named to Board of American College Dance Association

Dr. Alyson Cartagena, who directs Rio Hondo College's dance program, has been named to a three-year term on the National Board of Directors of the American College Dance Association (ACDA) for the Baja region. The region, which spans Southern California, is one of 13 represented on the Board.



"We are immensely proud of Alyson's achievements, which now include this prestigious post," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "Her talent enriches our entire College community."

Cartagena, a professional dancer and choreographer as well as a Rio Hondo College professor in the Dance, Yoga and Pilates department, said she hopes to promote the needs of community college dancers during her term, which runs through June 2020.

"I'm so honored to have been selected. Most of the directors are teaching at four-year universities and it's vital for the community colleges to be represented regionally and nationally," Cartagena said. "We need to support the issues of concern to community colleges, which include helping to elevate our students' skills to prepare them for the rigor of dance programs at four-year institutions."

ACDA's primary focus is to support and promote the wealth of talent and creativity that is prominent throughout college and university dance departments. Almost 400 institutions of higher education hold memberships in the association. Approximately 6,000 students, faculty and guest artists participate in ACDA events annually.

ACDA's sponsorship of regional conferences and the biennial national college dance festival are the primary means for college and university dance programs to perform outside their own academic setting, receive adjudicator feedback, and gain exposure to the diversity of dance in higher education throughout the country.

Board members steer national ACDA policy and are instrumental to the strength and development of dance in the academy. The duties and responsibilities of ACDA board members require that they attend the annual Board of Directors meeting as well as their regional conferences.

Cartagena, who earned a Master of Fine Arts in Dance at UC Irvine and a Doctorate of Education at Brandman University, said many of Rio Hondo College's dance students discover their passion for the art at community college.

"They need opportunities to hone their skills, which can be a challenge since community colleges don't have the capacity to allow students to repeat courses," Cartagena said. "One way we do that is through our dance productions."

Cartagena stages four dance productions each year at Rio Hondo and has coached the Rio Hondo Dance Collective – the College's most advanced student dancers – to present their work at the American College Dance Association's annual regional conference since she arrived at the College in 2007.

"Many four-year institutions offer fewer productions and more competition for performance slots than Rio Hondo. We are invested in helping our students prepare for that next step, providing more opportunities to be on stage performing," she said.

This year, 30 dancers will perform in the College's fall production, Works in Progress, including 12 members of the Collective.

Cartagena, who has taught at community colleges and four-year universities around the region, also pursues her own dancing passion. She danced professionally for 10 years with Loretta Livingston and Dancers, an L.A. based troupe, and for four years with Contemporary Dance/Fort Worth.

This summer, she danced in Maine as part of Susan Douglas Roberts' "Measuring Time" production. The production included a choreographer who is a fellow ACDA board member as well as dancers from universities across the nation that are part of ACDA.

Now, Cartagena and fellow dancers and choreographers who teach at area colleges and universities are exploring the idea of creating their own collective in Laguna Beach.

"We all love dance and want to keep our professional skills alive," she said.

"It's also a great message to send to our students – dance is a perpetual passion."



Students Honored for Celebrating Rio Hondo College through Videos

Four students were honored for creating one- to three-minute videos celebrating Rio Hondo College as part of a contest created and promoted by the College's Marketing and Communications department.

Dubbed "Why I Love Rio Hondo!," the contest drew entries from more than 20 students in less than a month.

The top four student video contest winners all received cash prizes as a financial incentive from the President's Office.

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the winning videos



The winners are:

- ▶ **Fourth place:** Jesse Carmona
- ▶ **Third place:** Albert Lopez and Brayan Altamirano, co-producers
- ▶ **Second place:** Jerome Pantaleon
- ▶ **First place:** Justin Chow



In addition to the contest prize, Chow also landed a summer internship at the Marketing and Communications Department.

Gallery Show Celebrates Latino Artists

Featuring works by Luis G. Hernández, Margaret Griffith, Maria Rendón, Albert Lopez Jr., Ruben Millares, and Lino Martinez, the 2017 SUR:biennial exhibit will run from Sept. 7 to Oct. 13 at the Rio Hondo College Gallery, with a reception on Sept. 12.

SUR:biennial is a multi-venue exhibition presented in conjunction with Pacific Standard Time: Latin American & Latino Art in LA that includes showcases at Cerritos College Art Gallery and Torrance Art Museum. Focusing on artists influenced and/or impacted by cultures from south of the U.S. border, SUR aims to expand Los Angeles' importance as a critical epicenter in today's decentralized art scene.

The three venues in the predominantly Latino communities on the east side of Los Angeles were chosen, as they are often overshadowed by art venues farther west.

The event is intended to present a challenge to traditional understandings of the spaces in which Latin American culture and experience exist.

The artists' videos, paintings, installations and performances declare the limitations of the physical and constructed spaces of home, text, *barrio*, body and art gallery. The works explore the possibilities of invisibility, flexible boundaries, open constructions and imagined spaces.

Through a series of thematically linked exhibitions, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA will present a variety of important works of art, much of them new to Southern California audiences. While the majority of exhibitions will have an emphasis on modern and contemporary art, there also will be crucial exhibitions about the ancient world and the pre-modern era.

With topics such as luxury objects in the pre-Columbian Americas, 20th century Afro-Brazilian art, alternative spaces in Mexico City, and boundary-crossing practices of Latino artists, exhibitions will range from monographic studies of individual artists to broad surveys that cut across numerous countries.

College Hosts Eclipse Viewing Party

Armed with special-purpose solar filters, glasses and pinhole projection setups, more than 1,000 Rio Hondo College students and staff stared in amazement at the magnificence of a solar eclipse – the first time this type of celestial event has been visible in the contiguous U.S. since 1979.

Eclipses occur due to a special coincidence of the moon and sun being the same angular size. Since the sun is 400 times wider than the moon, but also 400 times farther away, they can sometimes coincidentally appear to be the same size. California was not along the line of total eclipse, but still provided gazers with a partial eclipse starting at 9:05 a.m. and ending at 11:44 a.m.

"The eclipse viewing was a major success – our teachers and staff did an amazing job with setting up the different telescopes and providing students with eclipse information," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "It was exciting to see students show an interest in astronomy and this event was a perfect opportunity to get them interested in pursuing a degree in science."

Dean of Mathematics and Sciences Dr. Vann Priest's department hosted the viewing. For more than two hours, students, staff and faculty crowded the school's quad area to get a glimpse of the eclipse.

The department purchased 800 solar eclipse viewing classes – twice the number it originally ordered – that were scooped up by 9:30 a.m. Those who got the glasses shared them with dozens of people who did not. Others waited in line to view the event through astronomical binoculars or checked out the moon's shadow via a pinhole projection.

"I thought 800 would be enough," Priest said. "But we could have ordered another 400."

When the eclipse reached its peak at 10:21 a.m. Rio Hondo College Observatory Director Christopher Soto urged viewing party attendees to put on their solar filter glasses.

"It was great to have so many students show an interest in the eclipse because we think it could stir up enduring interests in studying astronomy, the school's observatory and for science in general," Soto said. "It's a huge boost on campus to see this many students get excited about science."

During the event, Soto positioned an observatory telescope fitted with a special solar filter. Nearby, a kiosk provided information about the eclipse, including how eclipses work, where to see the eclipse throughout the U.S. and astronomy classes available at Rio Hondo.

Computer science major Chilong Zhou, 32, said a teacher dismissed class early to allow students time to see the eclipse at its pinnacle. Zhou was one of the hundreds of students who lined up to view the eclipse through the telescope.

"It was really nice that they let us out early because it's been such a long time since the last solar eclipse happened," Zhou said. "It's an exciting event and I didn't want to miss it."

Student Luis Lopez of Pico Rivera said the viewing event was a terrific idea. A physics major, he came to the lower quad after a morning class in time to snag a pair of glasses. When it came to describe the eclipse, Lopez was overwhelmed.

"I can't put it into words. It just gives you goosebumps," he said.

The next annular solar eclipse visible in the continental U.S. will occur Oct. 14, 2023, while the next total solar eclipse will take place April 8, 2024.



RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's Eclipse Viewing Party in the *Whittier Daily News*.

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 **#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



Now through Friday, Oct. 13:

SUR:biennial art show, Rio Hondo College Gallery

11:30 a.m. Monday, Sept. 18:

Constitution Day, Lower Quad

10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20:

Fall Job Fair, Mid Quad

7 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 21:

Fall Transfer Fair, Mid Quad

6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 30:

Nuestras Raices dance performance, Wray Theater



6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11:

Board of Trustees meeting, Rio Hondo College

10:18 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18:

The Great California Shake Out, Rio Hondo College

College Hires Quartet of Deans

Rio Hondo College has hired four new deans to lead efforts in health and nursing, library services and business programs:



Grant E. Linsell
Dean of Arts & Cultural Programs



Catherine L. Page
Interim Dean of Health Science and Nursing



José Aguiñaga, Ed.D.
Dean of Library and Instructional Support



Gita Runkle
Dean of Business and Contract Education

Linsell comes to Rio from Mt. Hood Community College, where he served as director of instrumental studies for four years. He previously led the wind and percussion program at Willamette University and was direct of bands at Minot State University.

He holds Master of Arts in instrumental conducting from the University of Oregon and a Ph.D. in wind ensemble conducting from Arizona State University.

Page, who most recently served as assistant director of Rio Hondo College's Associate Degree Nursing program, has been on the College's faculty since 1990. She holds a Master of Science from USC. She has served as a mentor for new faculty and coordinated a revision of a new concept-based curriculum. She also works as a wound ostomy continence nurse at PIH Health Hospital in Downey, and has collaborated with several area colleges and hospitals.

Aguiñaga comes to Rio Hondo College from Glendale Community College, where he has been on the library faculty since August 2005. He also teaches an online class as an adjunct faculty member at Northern Arizona University. He holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University, a Master's of Public Administration from Cal State Long Beach and previously worked as a librarian in social science for Cal State Long Beach.

Runkle most recently worked at Santa Monica College, serving first as its director of the Small Business Development Center and more recently as an associate dean for Santa Monica's Emeritus Campus. She has also worked at Miami Dade College in Florida and New York University. She holds an MBA from USC and a Master of Arts in higher education from NYU.