

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

OCTOBER 2017



## President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

October marked a month of significant milestones and recognitions for Rio Hondo College, all carrying the same theme: service to students.

Rio Hondo College was honored with a Diversity Champions Award in recognition for our extraordinary Pathway to Law School program, which guides students from community college, through four-year universities and to one of the six partnering California law schools.

The award recognizes our success with the program, which graduated 24 students in spring 2017.

Just a day later, the College celebrated the opening of a food pantry and students resource center called the RioSource Room. This service, which grew out of years of planning, will help our neediest students continue their

education without the chilling fear of going hungry.

That challenge is a reality for far too many of our students and I'm proud of the collaboration between our Associated Students of Rio Hondo College and our Food Access Task Force for leading the way to this much needed service.

Our students also collected more than 3,000 letters of advocacy for replacing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that is being phased out by the Trump Administration. That number speaks to the incredible compassion of our campus community.

Finally, we also hosted a visit from students of a local school district who are in out-of-home and foster care placements. These students also need compassionate support so they have every opportunity for achieving their college and career goals. I'm proud that Rio Hondo College is taking the initiative to be a part of the solution.

## ▲ RioSource Room Serves Students Challenged by Food Insecurity



Rio Hondo College on Oct. 24 launched a combination food pantry and resource room – dubbed the RioSource Room – to combat student food insecurity that a survey shows challenge a staggering 47 percent of the College's students.

*"This is a very exciting day. The RioSource Room is an example of what is possible when the whole community works together, from faculty and staff, to students, and our community partners. Together, we'll make a difference in the lives of our students."* -Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss

The pantry culminates efforts by the College's Food Access Task Force and the Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC) to combat food insecurity on campus for the last two years. Those efforts include a fall 2016 survey, snacks made available for students on their way to classes, Food Break stations during finals week and free groceries at the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

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# Board Ratifies Faculty Agreement

Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees on Oct. 11 adopted board goals for 2017-18 that feature a focus on strengthening and enhancing the College's commitment to a campus culture that integrates equity, diversity and inclusivity even as leaders work to close the achievement gap among student populations.



Board goals also included engaging actively with student leadership and sparking an ongoing and meaningful conversation across the College about the definition of effectiveness.

The Board of Trustees also approved an agreement with SunLine Transit Agency to partner with the College's National Science Foundation effort on fuel cell technology training. SunLine is a demonstration site for the ZERO Emissions demonstration program under the Federal Transit Administration. The agency will help create a demonstration program for the College's technology repair and workforce development effort.

The trustees also approved a plan to work with Jovenes, Inc. to provide support to emancipated foster youth, youths exiting the probation system and others who are homeless or face homelessness. The effort will include accessing resources to help these students to pursue and complete higher education efforts while ensuring they have stable homes.

The trustees also recognized the third- and fourth-place winners of the recent "Why I Love Rio Hondo College" video contest. Albert Lopez and Brayan Altamirano took third place; Jesse Carmona placed fourth.

# RioSource Room Serves Students Challenged by Food Insecurity (continued)

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The launch included a town hall highlighting the impact of food insecurity, defined as a lack of access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Rio Hondo College students surveyed in fall 2016 said they worry over feeding themselves and families, including 35 percent who skip meals because they lack money. More than half the surveyed students who receive financial aid said they spend at least some of those funds on food.

The RioSource Room, located in the Administration building next to the Rio Hondo College Bookstore, will serve as a drop-in pantry for students who need food while on campus or groceries to take home. It will also host information about local nonprofit and community resources, including state food aid, shelters, health providers and mental health services.

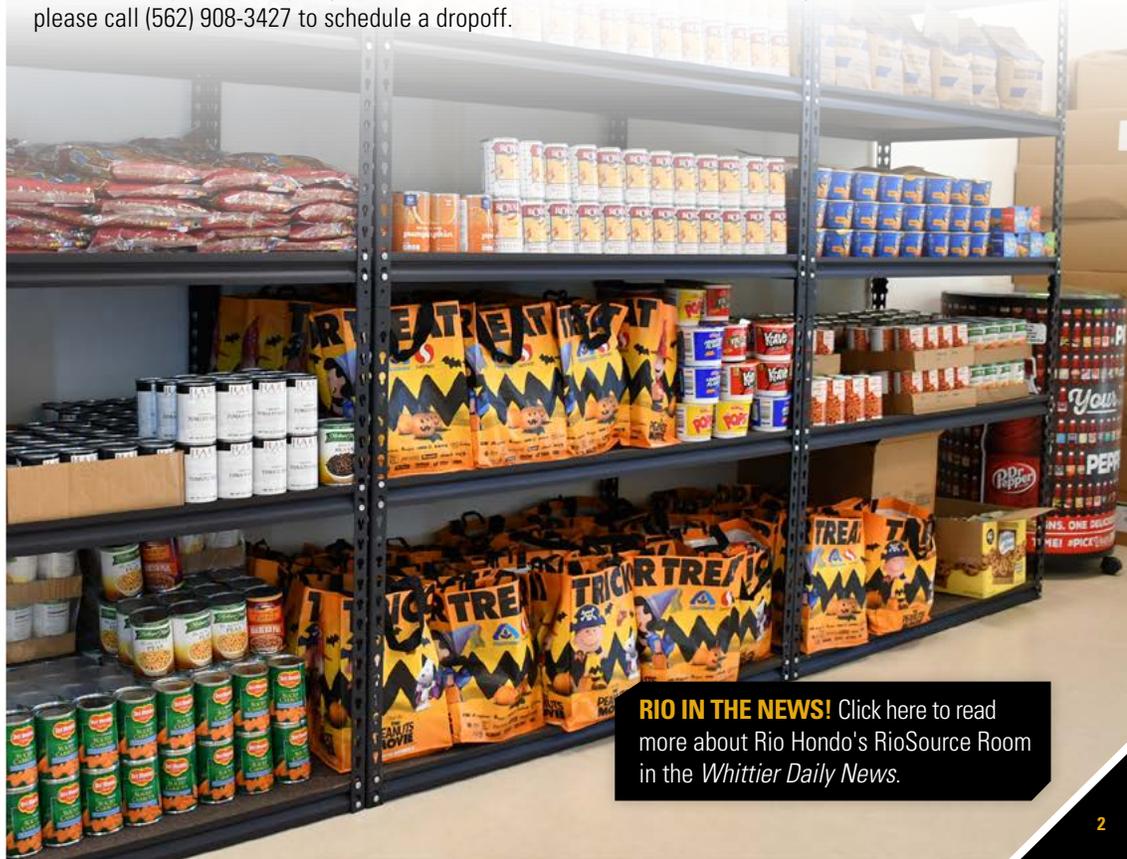
The pantry will be supplied with aid from Food Finders, Heart of Compassion and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church Food Bank, which have donated items for past food efforts. President Dreyfuss pledged \$25,000 from the College as ongoing support.

Andrew Gonzalez, ASRHC president in 2016-17, led efforts to create the pantry. Gonzalez, who transferred to Cal State Fullerton, returned for the opening. He shared how, while homeless, he once slept in his car and showered at Rio Hondo College.

Martin Cuvarrubios, the current ASRHC president, thanked President Dreyfuss for pledging financial support and for allocating the space for the resource room.

"We all know space is hard to get at Rio Hondo College," he added.

The event included comments from Student Trustee Pariss Youngblood and Board of Trustees member Madeline Shapiro. Grocery bags of food were handed out to students following the event. For donations, please call (562) 908-3427 to schedule a dropoff.



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

# LA Fire Hires Record Number of College Cadets

Seven graduates of the Rio Hondo Fire Academy have been hired by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), a historically high number that College leaders say testifies to the strength of Rio Hondo College's training program.

The graduates, who attended Rio Hondo College as part of different academy classes, were all part of a single LAFD new employee training class of 45 that graduated on Sept. 14.

Hiring by urban fire agencies is a highly involved process that requires a series of applications, written exams, physical ability tests and interviews before candidates even qualify for placement on a hiring list. Hundreds of applicants contend for each spot.

LAFD's intensive four-month training classes represent the best of the best who survive the process.

"This is exceptional," said Capt. Scott Jaeggi, a Rio Hondo College fire technology and emergency medical technician instructor. "It is so competitive. We've had two or three in the same training class before, but never seven. They were all great students when they were with us and they

are a great representation of the quality of firefighter we turn out."

The seven students, their Rio Hondo Fire Academy class and their new assignments are:

- ▶ Jonathon Smith, Class 66, Fire Station 13-B, Korea Town
- ▶ Jose Gomez, Class 87, Fire Station C, Korea Town
- ▶ Daniel Martinez, Class 80, Fire Station 95-A, LAX/Hotel District
- ▶ Patricia Ochoa, Class 86, Fire Station 94-C, South LA
- ▶ Kenneth Sjogren, Class 85, Fire Station 35-B, Hollywood
- ▶ Greg Marx, Class 39, Fire Station 26-B, West Adams
- ▶ Eric Sepulveda, Class 84, Fire Station 75-A, Mission Hills

"Congratulations to these fine young firefighters, who are embarking on a career in public service at one of our nation's most accomplished fire departments," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "Their selection serves as a declaration of the quality of training we provide at the Rio Hondo Fire Academy."



## Pathway to Law School Program Wins Diversity Honor

Rio Hondo College has received the third annual Diversity Champion Award from California LAW for excellence in building its Pathway to Law School program, which guides students in pursuing dreams of becoming lawyers and judges.

The award, announced in October, will be awarded Feb. 24, 2018 at the annual Pathway to Law Summit at the University of San Francisco.

California LAW – the acronym stands for leadership, access and workforce – serves as statewide coordinator and chief navigator of the Pathway to Law School program launched in 2015 to guide underrepresented, first-generation students interested in pursuing legal careers. The program includes 28 community colleges and six California law schools.

"Thank you so much for your commitment to the Pathway to Law School program through innovative and creative ways of keeping Rio Hondo Pathway students engaged and inspired to achieve success in the law," California LAW Executive Director Leslie J. Cunningham wrote in her announcement.

"Your accomplishment of graduating 24 certified law pathway scholars in spring 2017 made the Rio Hondo pathway program a true frontrunner for the Diversity Award," Cunningham wrote.

The nonprofit group is committed to creating a pipeline of diverse students from high schools, community colleges, four-year institutions and law schools into law and law-related fields so the profession reflects the state's diversity.

"This award is truly an honor," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "We are committed to creating a pathway to legal careers for our students, and this award recognizes the excellent strides being made in that effort."

Rio Hondo College's Pathway to Law School program includes seven classes, activities and internships to expand students' understanding of the skills and education they will need for law school. This year, Rio Hondo College added mentorships with local advocates to its list of activities, which includes a mock trial team and the Pre-Law Society.

"This program really helps students by exposing them to different activities and experiences other campuses can't provide," said Ryan Serrano, a second-year Pathway participant. "I'm glad Pathway is receiving recognition for preparing tomorrow's attorneys and politicians."

Serrano, who is captain of the mock trial team and president of the Pre-Law Society, said his goal is to enter the political arena – inspired by his work canvassing for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 presidential election.

"It was a life-changing experience," Serrano said.

For now, he's preparing for a mock trial competition in February and revitalizing the Pre-Law Society with a program of speakers that include local lawyers and state political leaders.

# College Día de Los Muertos Altar Honors Loved Ones

Rio Hondo College campus community members added their personal touches to a Día de Los Muertos altar created by Los Angeles artist and storyteller Ofelia Esparza, one in a series of fall events highlighting Latino culture.

Esparza, a master altar builder, gave a talk to more than 175 campus and community members in early October about the cultural significance of the Latin American celebration of the dead.

She then led a workshop on constructing altars, assembling a vibrant display filled with orange and purple paper flowers in the lobby of Rio Hondo College's Wray Theater.

"This is a magnificent work of art that will grace our campus through the season, emphasizing Rio Hondo College's strength through diversity," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "I encourage everyone to take in the power of the display and to contribute something significant to them."

Día de Los Muertos, celebrated on Nov. 2, represents a combination of Aztec cultural traditions and Catholicism.

Rio Hondo College's altar features paper flowers constructed by workshop participants, as well as personal images of family members.

Students, staff, faculty and administrators added their own artifacts, mementos, photographs, objects, flowers, saints and candles.



# College Hosts Visit from Students in Out-of-home Placements

Forty Mountain View School District students – all from out-of-home placements or foster care residents – visited Rio Hondo College on Oct. 25 to learn about programs and services.

It is the first time such a large group of students from out-of-home placements has visited the College campus. Students ranged in age from 5 to 14.

The event, hosted by Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success in collaboration with the Guardian Scholars Program, included lunch at the Rio Café and a visit with Rex the Roadrunner, Rio Hondo College's mascot.

Students divided into three groups to explore arts and cultural programs, health science and nursing and career and technical education programs before taking a campus tour.



# Campus Holds Earthquake Drill



Rio Hondo College conducted an Earthquake and Evacuation Drill at 10:18 a.m. Oct. 18 on the main campus as well as at all educational centers and fire academy (pictured below). Faculty, staff, and students practiced the duck, cover, and hold procedure for one minute before evacuating to their assigned emergency assembly points throughout campus.

Campus building emergency coordinators (BECs) and building emergency leaders (BELs) assisted all drill participants during the drill by sweeping

buildings and campus areas to ensure everyone safely evacuated. Notifications through the college Berbee, Blackboard Connect and fire alarms informed faculty, staff, and students of important information and prompted campus evacuation. Campus evacuation took only 15 minutes, an indicator of a successful drill.

Fire Academy faculty and Pico Rivera sheriff's deputies volunteered their time during the drill as evaluators. College leadership will improve emergency preparedness using feedback and data gathered through a post drill survey. The College will also use video footage gathered from three drones during the drill to evaluate evacuation patterns. The College plans to conduct additional drills during spring semester to prepare the campus for potential emergencies.



# Students Advocate for DACA Replacement

Rio Hondo College students in October collected more than 3,000 letters of advocacy supporting U.S. policies that would allow the children of undocumented immigrants to remain in the country to pursue college education and careers without fear of deportation.

The letters – which far topped an original goal of 50 letters – were intended for delivery to three members of the U.S. House of Representatives who have yet to support the 2017 Dream Act, which would enact immigration protections.

The act is a response to the Trump Administration's decision to phase out President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which was created through executive order. The order allowed children brought to America without documentation to remain without fear of deportation, to receive college financial aid and to hold jobs.

Oct. 16-20 was set as DACA Advocacy Week by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, but Rio Hondo College students and leaders began efforts in Mid-September, just a shortly after the Trump Administration's Sept. 5 phase-out announcement.

Rio Hondo College's Government and Community Relations department worked with the club Students Without Borders (SWB), to deliver 1,000 letters to U.S. Rep. Ed Royce, R-Fullerton, in early October. The event, covered by local media, included a dialogue with staff and interviews with journalists.

But efforts to deliver equal numbers to representatives Mimi Walters, R-Laguna Beach, and Dana Rohrabacher, R-Costa Mesa, were unsuccessful – Walters' office was locked; Rohrabacher informed the group that he wouldn't meet with non-constituents.

That news sparked a partnership between Rio Hondo College and community colleges in Orange County – Irvine Valley College and Saddleback College – that might result in Orange County-based advocacy targeting Walters and Rohrabacher.

"Our students have been working extremely hard to have their voices heard on this issue that has the potential to create new opportunities for so many," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "They are taking direct action, making a difference in their own educational paths and in the lives of others."

## 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



**8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16 to Saturday, Nov. 18, 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19:**  
“[Our Country's Good](#),” fall play, Wray Theater

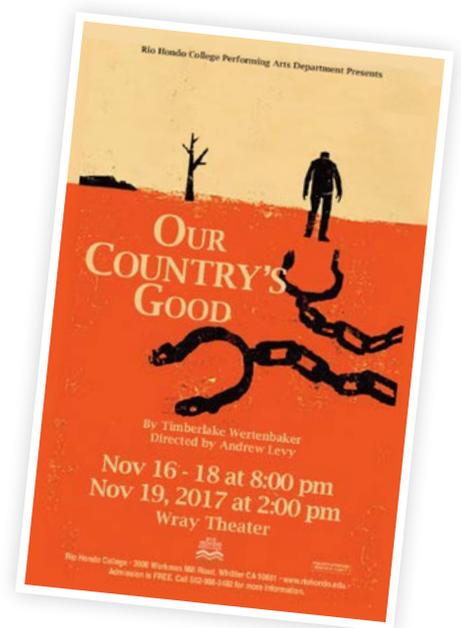
**7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17:**  
Observatory public night viewing,  
Rio Hondo College Observatory

**7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20:**  
The Art of Indigenous Resistance: Inspiring the  
Protection of Mother Earth, Wray Theater

**7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21:**  
Frank and Friends jazz performance  
with Rio Hondo College guitar professor  
Frank Accardo, Wray Theater

**7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30:**  
Fall concert by RHC Concert and Chamber Choirs,  
Ariel Ramirez' Spanish Mass, “Misa Criolla,” and  
a feature of Haydn's “Te Deum,” Wray Theater

**10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday,  
Dec. 5 to Thursday, Dec. 7:**  
Holiday student art sale, Rio Hondo Gallery



**2 and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10:**

RHC Dance Collective stages “The Nutcracker,”  
Wray Theater

**7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5:**

Electronic Music Showcase Concert, Room M109

**6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 13:**

Board of Trustees annual reorganization meeting,  
Rio Hondo College

## Holiday Dance Program Celebrates Local Students

The Rio Hondo Dance Collective will present its seventh annual holiday program, staging a contemporary version of “The Nutcracker” at 2 and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10 with 26 dancers from Rio Hondo College as well as more than 80 from area schools and the Rio Hondo College Child Development Center.

The Dance Collective is an ensemble of advanced students in the Rio Hondo dance program who are pursuing careers as dancers, choreographers or in another aspect of the field. This is the Collective's third year of engaging area students in the holiday show. Participating schools include Whittier High School, Edgewood School, Montebello High School, Dean Shively Middle School and Hadley School.

The production is streamlined to one hour to create a more enjoyable experience for parents with young children. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door; children 5 and under are free. Proceeds benefit the Collective and its participation in the 2017 American College Dance Association, a national program of workshops and performances for U.S. colleges and universities.

The event will include food and gifts for purchase, including homemade tamales. Audience members can take photos with dancers following the performance.

