The Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Teresa Dreyfuss as Superintendent/President effective July 1. Dreyfuss served as the Interim Superintendent/President since June 30, 2012, upon the retirement of Ted Martinez, Jr., Ph.D. Since coming to Rio Hondo College in 1987, Dreyfuss has also served as Vice President of Finance and Business, Chief Financial Officer, Controller/Business Manager, Business Manager, and Senior Accountant.

Dreyfuss noted that her goals during her time as Superintendent/President include: building on the structure established to prepare for the college’s next Self Evaluation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation set for October 2014; plan and implement the recommendations of the Student Success Task Force; complete the highly successful building program funded by voters in 2004 with the passage of Measure A; enhance the Rio Hondo College Foundation resources; and maintain good labor relations with the faculty and classified staff.

Dreyfuss has an MBA from the University of La Verne and a BA from the University of Chinese Culture. She has worked as a part-time instructor at both Rio Hondo and Los Angeles City College, teaching accounting and business classes for 10 years. She has also worked at Riverside Community College District as Director of Business.

The Rio Hondo College community gathered Thursday, March 14 for a time capsule installation ceremony as part of its year-long 50th birthday celebration. The time capsule was filled with 28 items reflecting what it was like for those attending and working at the hilltop campus during the 2012-2013 academic year. The capsule was encased in a structure beneath and behind the new showcase for the Phil Purnam memorial plaque.

When opened in 25 years, people will find: issues of the student newspaper, El Paisano; a RHC logo T-shirt; a 50th anniversary medallion and pin; a Rio Fest flyer; a college brochure; Facilities Fact; sports and cultural events schedules; campus life images on a disc; a cell phone (with a description of its purpose and use); a small pennant; a college mission statement document; photos of campus individuals; and student essays about their lives as students in 2012-2013.
President’s Message

It is my honor and privilege to begin this year as the ninth superintendent/president of this wonderful college. It is indeed a pleasure to meet with constituents in on- and off-campus venues, including our most recent satellite center serving the greater El Monte and South El Monte community.

We have already begun a series of evaluation activities that will prepare us for a comprehensive visit from an AACJC team in October 2014. I believe we have a sound structure developed by the Accreditation Leadership Team to guide us through a well-organized and documented process.

Simultaneously, we are working to advance college progress in meeting new state directives to increase the rates at which students complete programs, earn degrees and/or transfer. We are participating in an initiative to increase the number of options students have to complete an associate degree that is specifically designed to guarantee transfer to California State Universities, and are on track to have 16 of these “AAT” — associate degrees for transfer — in our curriculum offerings by fall semester 2014.

I am pleased to report that graduates of all high schools in our service area (El Monte Union High School, El Rancho Unified School, and Whittier Union High School Districts) are eligible for one-time priority registration this coming semester. Our Board of Trustees authorized this new process based on the results of a pilot program we developed with the El Monte Union High School District in 2011.

In this publication, you will learn more about recent progress of our facilities construction projects, known as Measure A, which was passed by local voters in 2004. Members of the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee continue to help guide the projects, and we thank them for their service.

As we begin our 51st year of instruction and service, I would like to thank our alumni, community friends and supporters for joining in our 50th Anniversary Celebration. We honored 17 individuals whose contributions over the years have helped make Rio Hondo College the strong and vibrant institution it is today. We value the support our community has provided since early visionaries first created Rio Hondo College a half-century ago.

Class of 2013 Celebrates 50th Commencement Ceremony

A crowd of cheering friends and family members looked on as the Rio Hondo College Class of 2013 became the 50th graduating class in the school’s history at the Annual Commencement Ceremony May 23 at the Rio Hondo College Soccer Field. Of the more than 1,000 graduates, approximately 600 participated in this historical event.

This year’s commencement speaker was Los Angeles County Sheriff Leroy D. Baca, who started his educational journey at East Los Angeles Community College. Baca advised students to have multiple passions in life, as those passions will drive new hopes and endeavors.

“I believe your community will be better for what you are doing today,” he said. Biology professor and long-time environmental activist Ray Williams was honored as a Fellow of the College. Williams recalled his 50-year experience teaching at the College through prepared remarks read by the Board President.

“I’ve always encouraged my students to get involved. I didn’t expect them to become environmental activists, but I have always used this as a motto. ‘Make it worthwhile in a positive way that you existed.’”

This year’s Commencement Ceremony was held in front of an updated backdrop, including a Jumbotron to make it easier for attendees to view the ceremony.

Now, first-time freshmen students will have the opportunity to develop a class schedule based on their academic needs and preferences, and a head-start on college success.

This past summer we accelerated orientation sessions for first-time freshmen, sponsoring half-day visits that included meetings with academic counselors and campus tours, as well as “how to” workshops for using the student data and record system, known as “AccessRio” for registration and other functions. The Summer Bridge Program also helped entering freshmen by providing math and English basic skills reviews, and a full range of activities designed to help improve opportunities for a successful entry to college life.
discovered her passion to help those less fortunate in the required general education classes, discovering along the years later she decided to return to Rio Hondo College dreamed of working to help children and families, so 25 difficult and she decided to leave college. Maria always said juggling motherhood and school was too community. However, after the birth of her two children, she was forward to completing a master’s degree. Maria Molina initially enrolled at Rio Hondo in 1981, after graduating from Mountain View High in El Monte. Her work at Hope House assisting with the care of disabled children was where she discovered her passion to help those less fortunate in the community. However, after the birth of her two children, she decided juggling motherhood and school was too difficult and she decided to leave college. Maria always dreamed of working to help children and families, so 25 years later she decided to return to Rio Hondo College where she started from square one. She enrolled in the required general education classes, discovering along the way that math was very difficult and discouraging. After working with her counselors and Disabled Students Programs and Services, Maria got the help she needed to pass the State’s math requirement. As a proud Rio Hondo College graduate, Maria will transfer to Cal State Los Angeles in the fall where she will pursue a degree in social work. She says that her time at Rio was challenging yet rewarding and she is proud of overcoming many obstacles to realize her full potential.

MIGUEL BANUELOS—Miguel Banuelos never considered himself as a student—he was kicked out of several high schools because of poor attendance, lack of interest, and behavioral problems, never graduating from high school. In 2006 his life changed course when he was involved in a devastating motorcycle accident that paralyzed him. After years of therapy and counseling, Miguel decided to take a different life path and enrolled in adult school and earned a high school diploma in 2008. Later, he enrolled at Rio Hondo College. At first, college was difficult, but with his persistence, hard work and supportive help from various Rio Hondo student service organizations, he is graduating with an AA degree in Business. As a Rio student, Miguel enjoyed his time as student ambassador for a RHC Student Mental Health Grant and as Treasurer and founding member of Active Mind, a club for mental health awareness. Miguel has been accepted into Cal State Los Angeles and is looking forward to completing a master’s degree.

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MARIA MOLINA—Maria Molina was born in Cambodia and moved to the United States with her mother and older sister at the age of 16. Enrolling as a freshman in high school, she always felt very fortunate and grateful for the opportunity to pursue education in this country. Not knowing the language, culture or customs of this country when she arrived, the transition was difficult at first. However, Maleta turned feelings of fear and isolation into commitment and determination to achieve “The American Dream.” She worked on her English skills and decided to enroll here at Rio Hondo College. Maleta was accepted into the 2012 Summer Medical Dental Program and is excited to use this program in her quest to become a Pharmacist. Maleta graduates today with an Associate Degree in General Studies: Emphasis in math and science. She applied to and was accepted into six UC’s, however she ultimately decided to transfer to UCLA where she will pursue a degree in Biochemistry.

CINDY PUGA—Although an honors student at La Serna High School, Cindy Puga always thought college was out of reach. As the daughter of a single mom and the first in her family to think about going to college, Cindy thought college would be too expensive and didn’t know how to go about enrolling in school. The daughter of a close family friend had attended Rio Hondo College and helped Cindy sign up for pre-med courses. Cindy liked how close Rio Hondo is to home and how helpful staff and counselors were in guiding her through the process. Cindy has thrived here, becoming an active member of the Pre-Health Club and MESA. She completed an internship last summer at UCLA and was selected for the Dean’s List. Recently awarded the Outstanding Student in Chemistry award, Cindy must now decide which university she will transfer to, with USC and UCLA high on her list. Cindy says that she now feels prepared to be a student at a university, thanks to her time at Rio Hondo College.

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JESUS LIZARRARAS—After graduating from Montebello High School in 2006, Jesus Lizarraras did what many of his peers did—he went straight into the working world. However, dissatisfied with his job with a national delivery company, Jesus decided to enroll in Rio Hondo College to further his interest in science and to meet new people. Becoming a serious student, Jesus joined the Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA) program and completed a rigorous science and math curriculum. Last month, Jesus was selected as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory Undergraduate Scholar for Rio Hondo College, nominated by his physics professor. Jesus says he most enjoyed meeting other RHC students with similar goals who pushed him to success. Jesus will likely transfer to Cal State Long Beach in the fall to pursue a bachelor’s in Engineering.

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FORENSICS STUDENT WINS GOLD AT NATIONAL TOURNEY

The Forensics Speech and debate team brought home one gold and two bronze medals after competing in the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament. Hosted by Los Angeles Valley College April 16-20 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills, the national competition drew more than 60 college teams and 400 students. Phi Rho Pi is the national Forensic Association for Two Year Colleges.

Months of vigorous preparation paid off for gold medalist Steven Villegas, 20, who competed against students from all over the country in Prose Interpretation. Vanessa Cazarez, 24, earned Bronze Speaker in Prose Interpretation and another Bronze Speaker in Dramatic Interpretation.

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Ceremony Marks Grand Opening of New El Monte Educational Center

Rio Hondo College hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 1 to celebrate the grand opening of the El Monte Educational Center, a satellite campus built to serve the El Monte and South El Monte communities.

The new state-of-the-art campus features four classrooms, a computer study room with computer stations, an open courtyard and parking.

In early April, Rio Hondo College offered the inaugural general educational curriculum schedule to students in the community. More than 200 students are taking advantage of 10 initial class offerings, citing convenience of location as a major factor in choosing to attend the center. According to Dr. Kern Pierson, Vice President of Academic Affairs, the center will accommodate approximately 15 classes for the Fall 2013 semester.

Construction of the center began in December 2011 and the project’s total cost was $3.8 million.

“This center will positively impact our community in many ways,” said Nick Salerno, superintendent for the El Monte Union High School District. “This great location will not only serve our youth, but also our adult learners. It can address the needs of our cities by offering work training programs to get residents working again.”

The transformation of Rio Hondo into a thoroughly modernized campus, including these two new satellite educational centers equipped for 21st century teaching and learning, was made possible through Measure A Bond funds endorsed by voters in 2004. Rio Hondo College opened the first educational satellite center in South Whittier in 2010.

College Ranks Second in State, Twenty-Third in Nation in Production of Associate Degree Graduates in Public Safety

Rio Hondo College ranks near the top of the leader board when it comes to training students to become first-responders and public safety leaders, according to Community College Week Magazine’s recent report.

According to the report, Rio Hondo College was second in California and 23rd nationwide in associate degrees awarded to students studying Security and Protective Services, which includes Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services programs.

In other rankings, Rio Hondo College is fifth in the state and 27th in the nation awarding associate degrees in all disciplines to Hispanic students. This represents a 49 percent increase over the 2010-11 school year. The College is also ninth in the state and 52nd in the nation in awarding associates degrees to all minorities in all disciplines – a total of 819 degrees, or a 48 percent increase from the prior year.

Women’s Sport Programs Earn Recognition

Rio Hondo College has a lot to be proud of when it comes to its accomplished women’s sports programs as student athletes from the soccer, tennis and softball teams scored top nods at the 2013 Foothill Conference Awards ceremony.

This year, the women’s soccer team is celebrating national recognition by the country’s second-largest soccer organization as the team includes an NSCAA Scholar-Athlete All-American. The team also boasts a Foothill Conference Player of the Year, Rio Hondo Female Student-Athlete of the Year, a nine-game winning streak, second-place finish in Conference and nine student athletes receiving at least a 3.0 grade point average this fall.

Nine soccer athletes will be transferring to four-year universities and professional programs for Fall 2013. The Rio Hondo women’s soccer program has now transferred more than 87 percent of its sophomore athletes to universities and professional programs since 2008, ranking the College as one of the top in the state.

Rio Hondo Women’s Tennis Team was once again named the Foothill Conference champion after going undefeated with an 8-0 record. That’s a three-peat and the team’s eighth championship in 12 years. The Foothill Conference is one of the most competitive tennis leagues in the California Community College tennis circuit.

The entire team received All-Conference Honors – five out of six players for singles, and all three doubles teams. It’s a first in Rio Hondo’s history! And at the helm of the Rio Hondo Lady Roadrunners was Coach Karen Unger, who has received the Coach of the Year award, making it the seventh time in her 12-year coaching career at Rio Hondo.

The Rio Hondo Roadrunners softball team finished third at the Foothill Conference awards, with a 7-2-3 conference record and overall record of 21-14-1. It’s the best record head coach Bianca Uquidi has held in the seven seasons she has been coaching at the College. The prosperous season led to Uquidi receiving the Coach of the Year Award for the first time.

*The Women’s Tennis Team receives recognition at the July 12 Board of Trustees meeting for earning the title of Co-Champions in the Foothill Conference.

*The Women’s Soccer Team receives recognition at the July 12 Board of Trustees meeting for earning the title of Co-Champions in the Foothill Conference.
Facilities Update

A major modernization and facilities construction program has transformed Rio Hondo College into a spectacular 21st century learning environment. The project began in early 2004 when administration developed a master plan to define the goals, budget, quality and schedule of the necessary improvements. The community expressed its support for the improvement program by approving Bond Measure “A,” authorizing $245 million for construction of new and renovated facilities. Bond funds are further leveraged with approximately $100 million of state facilities bond revenues.

The program focused on upgrading existing campus facilities and constructing new infrastructure to support the expanding College population; it also saw the construction of several new buildings to enhance learning for generations to come. Now completing Phase One, bond construction projects also enhance access to college classes in two satellite centers located in previously underserved areas of the District, South Whittier and El Monte.

RECENTLY COMPLETED

El Monte Educational Center

The four-classroom educational center, located in the city of El Monte, opened in April 2013, and serves the Greater El Monte and South El Monte communities. The open central courtyard with a translucent angled shade structure offers informal outdoor educational space as well as a public meeting area.

East Campus Vehicular Drop Off Zone

Located between parking lots B and C, drivers can pick up and safely drop off students with easy access to the Student Services Complex.

Lower Level Parking Terrace Stairs

A series of concrete stairways and pathways separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic through campus tiered parking levels. Students parking in these areas will be able to transit to and from the campus in a safer, more direct manner.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Physical Education and Aquatic Complex

The Physical Education building features weight training, dance studios, team rooms, fitness center, new locker room facilities and staff offices. Two new swimming pools will replace the existing aging swimming pool. One pool will meet NCAA requirements for both competitive swimming and water polo while a second training pool is suitable for educational programs.

Soccer Field Renovation

Currently in the design phase, the soccer field will be built to NCAA-standard dimensions with the field playing surface comprised of artificial turf. The new track will be a synthetic all-weather surface. The new field will also have new lighting that provides evening opportunities for soccer and track events. A new scoreboard will also be added for the soccer game events.

Softball Field Renovation

The renovated softball field will now meet NCAA standards and was repositioned in the existing area for improved solar orientation during games. The fields feature a new backstop, fencing, an upgraded scoreboard and state-of-the-art artificial turf that helps the College meet water conservation goals.

Book Store and Print Shop Renovation

Preliminary plans include relocating both the book store and print shop to the first floor of the Administration building with improved accessibility and convenience for students.
Rio Hondo College’s Math Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) Program had a record-breaking year with 183 participants, 26 of whom have successfully transferred to four-year universities, 93 percent of its students returning from the previous year, and 13 being accepted into prestigious and competitive research programs for the summer.

“In 2012-13, the students – 66 percent male and 34 percent female – made more than 15,500 trips to the MESA study center clocking in more than 22,500 hours receiving support in the areas of math, chemistry and physics through Academic Excellence Workshops (AEW). MESA students made up 39 percent of the enrollment in courses taken by Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) majors. “Because of the rigor of the coursework, the AEW is where it all starts,” said Dr. Gisela Spieler-Persad, the program director. “Trying to do it on their own in these STEM courses is very difficult if not impossible for students. In the AEW students learn how to work on difficult problems in groups and how to support each other. This leads to students forming study groups, working together and getting better grades. The most successful students are those who make use of all the program components.”

MESA students have also become more competitive as they are increasingly applying and landing summer Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) in STEM fields. Recent opportunities include research at Illinois State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Citrus Valley Health Partners, and more.

Fifteen students also attended the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research (SCCUR), which was held on Nov. 17 at CSU Channel Islands, where two RHC students presented their research from the previous summer. Eleven students also traveled to UC Davis for a two-day pre-health conference, and 10 attended other local conferences.

“Being part of MESA has encouraged me to do my absolute best in all my classes,” said one MESA student. “The AEW’s really helped me become a more confident student in my classes because I know that I am very fortunate to have MESA’s services.”

With the addition of the Federal TRiO Student Support Services STEM program in fall 2010, the programs have successfully supported RHC’s future STEM professionals’ quest for AA/AS degrees and successful transfer into four-year universities.

Students who attended additional sessions outperformed their peers by wide margins. The success rate for MESA students in spring was 80 percent, compared to 65 percent for others. MESA/TRiO students had only a 4 percent drop rate compared to non-MESA students’ 17 percent drop rate. Students who took two or three mathematics and science courses during the semester succeeded at a higher rate than their peers in all their courses.

“The reason that I have become a better overall, more motivated, confident student is because I am seeing what it takes to get to where I want to be,” said a student who has benefited from the MESA program. “It does not seem so distant anymore and I see that if I work harder and smarter I will accomplish my goals.”

**100%**

- **77%** MATH AEW Participants
- **63%** MATH Non-AEW Participants
- **79%** CHEMISTRY AEW Participants
- **55%** CHEMISTRY Non-AEW Participants
- **100%** PHYSICS AEW Participants
- **78%** PHYSICS Non-AEW Participants

**Success rates for students who attend Academic Excellence Workshops (AEW).**

**Engineering Majors**

- Mechanical 26%
- Electrical 20%
- Aerospace 7%
- Bioengineering 5%
- Chemical 8%
- Civil 18%
- Computer 4%
- Other 12%

**RHC MESA/TRiO SSS STEM Majors**

- Engineering 41%
- Physics 2%
- Computer Science 4%
- Chemistry 4%
- Biochemistry 9%
- Biology and Life Science 27%
- Other Science 4%
Attending Rio Hondo College is a Family Affair

Rio Hondo College alumni Eva and Jim Becker are prime examples of why it’s never too late to get an education.

Since 2001, Eva had steadily been working toward her nursing degree at Rio Hondo and completed the program in 2010 when she was 44 years old. Her husband, Jim, who was laid off from his job of 20 years in 2008, recently earned his third degree from the College and has launched a musical career at age 52.

Eva’s success has been a long time coming. Raised in a low-income East Los Angeles household by a single mother of four, Eva said Rio Hondo helped her beat the odds. She began going to the College in 2001, taking one class a semester while raising her children. She was admitted into the nursing program in 2008, juggling full-time school work with motherhood.

“At Rio Hondo, not only was I able to get my nursing degree, but I was hooked up with TELACU,” Eva said. “Through the Bridge to Nursing Program at TELACU, a nonprofit partner of the College, Eva was awarded a $10,000 scholarship to pay for books, exam fees and Kaplan prep courses to help pass the state nursing exam.

With the scholarship, Eva was able to work at White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles for two years. She graduated in 2010 and is now a registered nurse working in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center.

“It was a big blessing that I went to Rio Hondo and not another community college to do my nursing program,” she said.

As for Jim, being laid off was probably the best thing that ever happened to him.

“Jim took a variety of classes in media, social behavior, music and history.

“It was nice to go to school and be really hungry to learn again and fill my head with whatever people had to say,” Jim said. “The classes I took were insanely diverse. It was wonderful having that experience and being able to interact with young people who are discovering their lives, who they want to be and where they want to go in life.”

Jim has applied his degrees and what he learned at Rio Hondo to his budding music career, including performances with musicians Jim Brickman, David Cassidy, Rita Coolidge and others.

“A lot of those classes I took at Rio gave me the perspective to really diversify my guitar playing and music abilities to help me get this particular job,” he said. “It inspired me to hone my craft in a way that made me a better player and marketable player, so I don’t think I would have been able to do that without these classes.”

The Beckers have three daughters, two of whom have graduated from UCs and a third who recently graduated from California High School, where she was one of three valedictorians.

Priority Registration Now Available

to RHC District’s Entering Freshmen

The Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees recently expanded opportunities for priority registration for students who have met a number of criteria – including completing college orientation and assessment and developing an initial educational plan – starting in Spring 2014.

Active military and recently discharged veterans and current and former foster youth will have the earliest priority registration, followed by students in the Extended Opportunity Program and Services, Disabled Student Program and Services, incoming freshmen and then continuing students.

All of these students will be given priority registration if they have met the basic requirements, including: completing college orientation and assessment and developing an initial educational plan (for new students), or being in good academic standing without exceeding 100 units at Rio Hondo College, excluding basic English and math courses (for continuing students and locally Board-approved groups).

These changes are in addition to measures approved by the California Community College Board of Governors that will establish system-wide enrollment priorities that will ensure classes are available for students seeking job training, degree attainment or transfer and reward students who make progress toward their educational goals.

The implementation will begin with the registration period for the Spring 2014 semester, which commences this Fall in early December 2013.

Unsatisfactory progress for two consecutive terms will result in loss of priority registration. Students nearing 80 units should also carefully plan their remaining courses. Please be sure to see a counselor as soon as possible at the beginning of the Fall 2013 semester for assistance and guidance.

Academic Schedule

Apply and register early to get the classes you want!

Fall Classes begin August 24, 2013


Open registration for new students begins Aug. 19. Enrollment fees for California Residents are $46 per unit, as established by the California State Legislature.

Check out Virtual College classes for online options!

Parking permits for all campus lots required effective August 24.

www.riohondo.edu
KAREN GOTTLIEB

In 1983, Karen Gottlieb was accepted into the nursing program at Rio Hondo College. “I saw the hill and was very intimidated at the time,” she said. Many years later, RHC offered her the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong desire to teach at the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) level.

At her first full-time faculty position, Karen appreciates working in the College’s beautiful surroundings. “I really enjoy working with the people at RHC. Nurses are by nature good. The nursing faculty demonstrates this,” she said.

After working in the nursing industry for more than 20 years, Karen currently teaches both the Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) and ADN programs, and instructs the didactic and clinical program at local contracted hospitals. Karen finds nursing a captivating and diverse profession with countless opportunities.

“Our division is seeking national certification, so we are reviewing and revising our curriculum to meet the new standards,” she said. “This is a very exciting time to be teaching nursing, as well as it is being a nurse.”

In the past, Karen taught at Cypress College, Saddleback College, and Golden West College as adjunct in 2000 after completing her master’s degree in Nursing Administration and Education. “I then applied to community college students, who like me, are able to fulfill the bold ambitions that were possible to make sure my students succeed and I can make teaching efforts worthwhile,” she said.

Karen completed an Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) from Cerritos College, an ADN from Chapman College, a BSN and MSN from University of Phoenix, and an Ed.D from Argov University in organizational leadership. Dissertation research focused on nursing recruitment and retention rounds out her impressive scholastic journey.

DIANE HOLCOMB

As a counselor/coordination at the RHC Transfer Center, Dianne Holcomb works with students mapping out educational pathways leading to successful transfers to four-year universities. Holcomb assists the Transfer Center to facilitate campus-wide endeavors that promote transfer, including transfer fairs, transfer conference, application workshops and university tours, among others.

“The transfer process is truly a magical time for college students and their families, so it’s very rewarding to provide this type of student support service,” said Holcomb, who started her career at RHC in spring 2008.

While attending Cal State Los Angeles, Dianne earned a BS in business administration and an MS in rehabilitation counseling. She also worked for several years as a transfer advisor at El Camino College. As a general adjunct counselor, she served briefly at Santa Ana College and El Camino College.

Dianne finds the college transfer process intriguing because its components are highly defined by major and institution. Another enjoyable aspect is viewing the personal statement, which allows for a student’s uniqueness and creativity to shine.

Most of all, Dianne takes pleasure in connecting with students while facilitating the transfer process and observing them achieve their transfer goals. “What I like best is that I get to work with many first-generation college students, who like me, are able to fulfill the bold ambitions that were less available to previous generations.”

DAVID DAWSON

David Dawson appreciates the opportunities RHC has given him to be able to teach what he loves. Since childhood, David was constantly captivated with drawing, art and animation.

When attending Baylor University, a drawing professor noticed Dawson’s talents and showed him how to animate.

“I have always drawn and painted, even as a small child, and most of the time the images I created were of things in motion,” he said. “I instantly fell in love with the art form of animation.”

David is a full time animation instructor. He earned an MA in computer arts from Florida Atlantic University and a BA in visual arts from Baylor University. At the moment, he is teaching Animation 101: 3D Modeling and Texturing; Animation 110: 3D Animation and Simulation; Animation 120: 3D Rendering and Compositing; and Animation 130: World Building for Games. In addition, David has been working on game development for the past 13 years. Some of his most recent titles are “Backyard Baseball,” “Backyard Football,” “Game Party” and “Hotel for Dogs” on the Nintendo Wii platform.

While attending Cal State Los Angeles, Dianne earned a BS in business administration and an MS in rehabilitation counseling. She also worked for several years as a transfer advisor at El Camino College. As a general adjunct counselor, she served briefly at Santa Ana College and El Camino College.

Diane finds the college transfer process intriguing because its components are highly defined by major and institution. Another enjoyable aspect is viewing the personal statement, which allows for a student’s uniqueness and creativity to shine.

Most of all, Diane takes pleasure in connecting with students while facilitating the transfer process and observing them achieve their transfer goals. “What I like best is that I get to work with many first-generation college students, who like me, are able to fulfill the bold ambitions that were less available to previous generations.”

ALONSO GARCIA

“Zombie Professor” Alonso Garcia likes for his students to watch films that involve gore, screams and the walking dead, but not for the reasons one might think. An English professor at Rio Hondo College for the past six years, Alonso has been labeled the “Zombie Professor” by his students because of his use of zombie films to analyze the issues of capitalism and over-consumption in the United States.

“Horror films are utilized as subjects of critical thinking, disseminating how the horror film is much more than just a movie of gore and screams,” Alonso said. Horror movies, he said, serve as “a text that mirrors and evaluates political issues relevant at the time of its creation.”

These zombie films are just one way to embed student critical thinking. “The one thing that makes my discipline fascinating is the fact that I can be creative in the way I present my lectures to my students,” he said.

Prior to Rio Hondo College, Alonso attended East Los Angeles College before transferring to UC Riverside, where he earned a BA in English. He earned an MA in English at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The English professor was previously a teaching assistant at UC Riverside and briefly served as an adjunct English instructor at Santa Ana College.

At Rio Hondo, Alonso teaches English 35 Intermediate Composition for Developing Writers, English 101 College Composition and Research, English 201 Advanced Composition, Chicano Literature, American Literature and Introduction to the Novel.

Alonso said it is a privilege to work at Rio Hondo, where he gets the support and motivation he needs from the dean and his colleagues.