



PRESS ADVISORY

3600 Workman Mill Road / Whittier, CA 90601 / 562-692-0921

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CONTACT: Valerie E. Martinez
Anne K. Turner
(562) 789-4047

***GO RIO* Wins Prestigious 2009 National Bellwether Award**

Whittier- The Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida bestows “Bellwether Awards” to outstanding college programs at the annual Futures Assembly. This year, Rio Hondo College’s innovative ***GO RIO*** program won first place in the Planning, Governance and Finance Category of the 2009 National Bellwether Award. Ted Martinez, Jr., Ph.D., Superintendent/President and Russell Castaneda-Calleros, Director of Government and Community Relations at Rio Hondo College delivered a presentation, including a video featuring ***GO RIO*** students, during the 10th Futures Assembly earlier this month. There were 10 finalists in the competition category.

Now in its third year of operation, ***GO RIO*** has enabled thousands of Rio Hondo College students to use public transportation to get to campus and to class, and thereby reducing vehicular traffic on campus, as well as reducing emission-based air pollution.

“The Board is thrilled that our ***GO RIO*** program has been nationally recognized,” said André Quintero, President of the Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees. “Rio Hondo College is committed to making public transportation available to our students. Convenient access to education is the first step in student success. ***GO RIO*** provides that for our students.”

By developing partnerships with local transit agencies to help subsidize student transit passes, the college helps make the ***GO RIO*** program available to full-time students. This past year, RHC’s own students voted to assess themselves a small fee to help pay for the program each semester.

“Receiving this accolade has reinforced that working with Foothill Transit, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, Montebello Bus Lines, Norwalk Transit, and sunshine Shuttle has enabled Rio Hondo College to forge a robust, unique partnership which can be replicated” said Ted Martinez, Jr., Ph.D., Superintendent/President. “The College will continue to create programs that ensure that higher education is affordable, available to all.”

The Community College Futures Assembly serves as a national independent policy think tank. Convening annually in January in Orlando, Florida, its purpose is to articulate the critical issues facing American community colleges and recognize innovative programs. The focus for the 2009 Community College Futures Assembly is change, with particular focus from the presenters and Keynote speaker on the theme “Leading Change.”

Located in Whittier, California, Rio Hondo College is a collaborative center of lifelong learning which provides innovative, challenging, and quality educational offerings for its diverse students and community. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu .

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