

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING AUGUST 2016



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Rio Hondo College is off to a strong beginning for the 2016-17 academic year.

On Aug. 11, we held a grand opening for our Educational Center at Pico Rivera, which will bring the promise of higher education into local neighborhoods. The center is located across the street from El Rancho High School and offers night classes convenient for working families and high school students. The center is our third regional campus.

August also marked the announcement of a three-year, \$1.5 million grant to transform how we deliver basic skills instruction, the second of two such grants from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Together

with a \$2.62 million federal grant we are already using to expand our service capacity for underserved students, these grants will help Rio Hondo College re-imagine the possibilities for basic skills instruction and student support.

Rio Hondo College is also seeing the launch this fall of our Bachelor of Science degree in automotive technology. This major is the only one of its kind in Southern California, part of a historic state pilot program that is offering bachelor degree programs at 15 California community colleges.

The promise and possibilities offered by these programs were very much in evidence as we welcomed a rising number of new and returning students for our fall semester. I look forward to a year filled with many more triumphs.

▲ Rio Hondo College Bustles as Fall Semester Begins

Riky Shannon, Matthew Bowman and Santiago Guerrero, all recent graduates of La Serna High School in Whittier, regrouped outside the bustling Rio Café at Rio Hondo College on Aug. 22 to share notes about their first day as college freshmen.

"It's a big transition from high school to college. You really have to be on top of things," Guerrero said. "I never really had to study in high school, but I know I will in college."

The men joined thousands of fellow students in starting the fall 2016 semester at the community college's main campus in Whittier and educational centers in El Monte/South El Monte, South Whittier and Pico Rivera. Students clustered in small groups to share their first-day experiences, stopped at information booths for last-minute directions to classrooms and pored over new textbooks.

"It's an incredibly exciting day for us as well as for the students," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "There is so much energy on campus, so much hope and optimism as our students embark on their higher-education journeys with the help and support of our dedicated faculty, staff and administrators."

New this year is a Bachelor of Science program in automotive technology, the only degree of its kind at a community college in Southern California. Rio Hondo College is offering the four-year degree as part of a historic state initiative.

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Rio Hondo College is listed among the 2016 Top 25 Community Colleges for Hispanics for aiding students attain degrees by The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine. The College offers 24 degrees that guarantee graduates admission to California State University campuses.

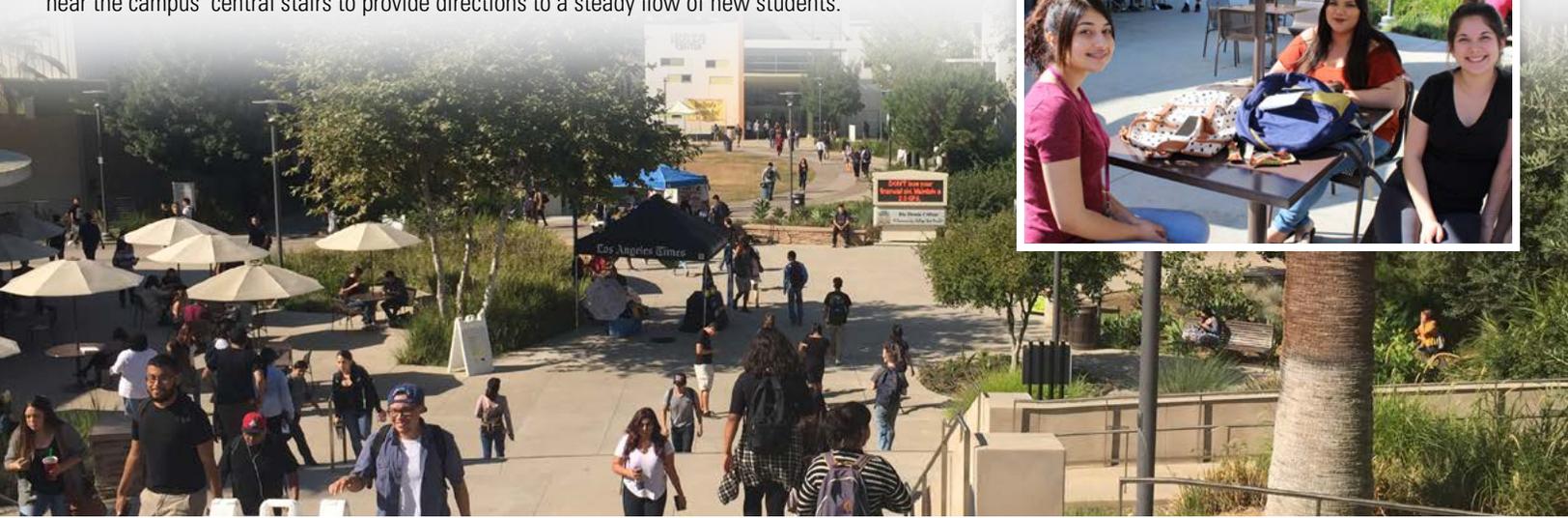
The College is also home to nationally recognized programs in nursing, firefighting and police services.

Jasmine Sosa, 20, a returning child development major, joined fellow South El Monte residents Nadine Gonzalez, a freshman, and Adrene Hernandez, a returning administrative justice major, to chat between classes on Monday. Sosa said her goals for the new semester were simple and clear: "Pass all my classes, again, and be organized."

Rosemead resident Meagan Mutuc, 20, a returning nursing student, said she remembered to arrive early Monday for her first class to ensure she could snag a prime parking space.

"I came at 9," Mutuc said. "I got a space right by my class."

New students also got a hand from Rio Hondo College administrators who positioned themselves near the campus' central stairs to provide directions to a steady flow of new students.



Board Report

Rio Hondo College trustees on Aug. 10 accepted a \$1.5 million grant for transforming basic skills instruction, authorized purchase of discount bus passes for students and recognized the wildland fire crew for combating fires over the summer.

The grant is one of three received by the College over the last year for improving student services, with a focus on helping first-year students. The three-year grant was awarded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Board members also authorized staff to purchase Transit Access Pass (TAP) cards, which provide full-time students with free access to six transit companies. The pass is funded, in part, by a \$9 fee students pay when registering. This year, for the first time, students who take 9 to 11.5 units are eligible to purchase TAP cards for \$135 a semester.



The Board of Trustees also watched a video recognizing the College's Facilities Services team for its contributions, were introduced to some of the members of the Leadership Academy Cohort 6 and to the Rio Spirit Song of Leadership Academy Cohort 3.



Rio Hondo Educational Center at Pico Rivera Provides Community with Convenient Access to College Courses

Local, state and national leaders praised Rio Hondo College's new educational center in Pico Rivera during an Aug. 11 ribbon-cutting ceremony as an invaluable community resource that will open the doors of opportunity for all residents.

RIO IN THE NEWS! [Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's Educational Center at Pico Rivera in *The Whittier Daily News*.](#)

The \$2.5 million center, which offers access to 25 day and evening courses for fall 2016, occupies a cluster of recently renovated buildings formerly used by the El Rancho Unified School District adult school. The College partnered with the District and the City of Pico Rivera to create the center, Rio Hondo's third regional campus.

"We look forward to the residents of Pico Rivera – of all ages and from all backgrounds – to richly benefit from the College's educational center," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

The project was praised by a half dozen representatives of Pico Rivera, El Rancho Unified, and state, county and national legislators. Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, a former Rio Hondo College trustee, said the center realizes a dream more than 20 years in the making.

Pico Rivera Mayor David Armenta, a Rio Hondo alumnus, said the center will not only help students access classes, but their parents as well, including single mothers.

El Rancho Superintendent Martin Galindo called the center a dream come true and El Rancho Board of Education President Aurora Villon lauded the partnership that brought the center into being.

U.S. Rep. Linda Sanchez celebrated the center's dual focus on academic courses and career technical education. She said her father taught her to weld just in case her pursuit of a college degree didn't work out.

Rio Hondo College Student Trustee Brandon Pablo Leon said the center creates opportunities for new and returning students.

"This educational center is just one less obstacle on the pathway to success," he said. "For so many returning students, it is investments like this that make it possible for them to complete their educational goals."

Preparation for the opening included a remodeling of the 27,750-square-foot educational center to add state-of-the-art technology to six classrooms, create a computer lab and establish a student study room. The center also offers assessment and counseling services and an administration building, allowing students to meet with counselors and sign up for classes on site.



College Community Joins National Night Out Events

Members of the Rio Hondo College community joined Norwalk residents in marking National Night Out on Aug. 6, marching from the city's Community Resource Center to Mayberry Park, where they visited information booths, enjoyed complimentary hotdogs and enjoyed a classic rock concert.



National Night Out is a crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW).

The purpose is to raise awareness of crime and drug prevention, increase participation in local anti-crime programs, and let criminals know that neighborhoods and the police force are working together to fight back.

The Mayberry Park gathering, hosted by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Norwalk Station, was attended by about 1,000 people.

Quartet of Alumni Share Successes during Lunch

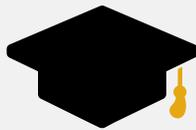
A quartet of Rio Hondo College alumni celebrated their progress in science and engineering fields during a recent lunch with Rio Hondo College Dean of Mathematics and Sciences Vann Priest and Chemistry Professor Irene Huang.

Aerospace engineer Justin Long works for Rocketdyne, building rockets for the U.S. space program. Chemist Melissa Chandra works at the Gill Corp., which manufactures components for Airbus and Boeing. Civil engineer Nicole Mi works in the transportation section of the L.A. County Department of Public Works. Graduate Jared Lodico is a Ph.D. candidate in physics at UCLA.



\$1.5 Million Grant Will Fund Basics Skills Instruction Transformation

Rio Hondo College has received a three-year \$1.5 million grant from the California Community Colleges to transform delivery of basic skills instruction in English and math, and align curriculum with courses taught at K-12 public schools and the California State University system.



The effort will draw on multiple measures for assessing student success and employ tools such as accelerated instructional pathways, tutoring and mentoring support to ensure students have the greatest opportunity possible to progress through the courses and complete their educational journeys.

For example, the College is creating a new math statistics pathway for students who are not pursuing majors in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) fields. The courses are expected to be available in fall 2017.

"This grant program is at the heart of our continuing effort to refine our approach to instruction to ensure all of our students succeed," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "Too often, students struggle with basic skills classes that can derail their pursuit of their dreams. We want to find ways to support them and accelerate their journeys."

Right now, the College is focused on providing the foundation for curriculum redesign and course alignment, with implementation expected in 2017-18. Also planned is a Districtwide K-16 College Readiness Summit in spring 2017.

The grant will complement a second grant-funded program underway at Rio Hondo. In June, the College received a \$2 million, two-year grant to help students at California State University, Los Angeles complete their basic skills requirements.

That effort includes offering courses and support to students who complete their freshman year without passing the classes as well as a program to assist students after they graduate from high school and before they begin college.

As part of this effort, Rio Hondo College is working with K-12 schools on aligning curriculum.

Rio Hondo College is the only community college in the state to receive both grants.

In 2015, the College also received a \$2.62 million, five-year grant for Hispanic-serving institutions. The grant is focused on expanding the College's capacity for serving Hispanic students. This summer, students in the program's first cohort attended an expanded math academy during the College's Summer Bridge program.

All three programs are aimed at improving delivery of basic skills courses and allowing a greater number of students to enroll in and complete transfer-level coursework in math and English.

Summer Bridge Program Helps New Students Prepare for First Year

Four hundred students representing graduates of more than 50 high schools participated in Rio Hondo College's two-week Summer Bridge program between July and August, an effort that helps incoming freshmen make the transition to college. Attendees toured the campus, networked with faculty and staff, received help in registering for classes, engaged in peer discussions and heard presentations from College deans and program staff.

The program featured a Math Academy that resulted in 25 percent of the students being re-assessed for math courses one to three levels higher.

Most of the Summer Bridge students will continue at Rio Hondo as full-time students for the 2016-17 school year, including many in the school's first cohort of *Avance* students. *Avance* was created in the last year as a way of expanding the College's capacity to foster student success by establishing a year-long integrated and connected success pathway for first-year students to persist into their second year.

Funded by a \$2.62 million, five-year federal grant, *Avance's* components include the summer Math Academy, a guaranteed first-year schedule, an enhanced college and life success course, a seminar course so students can explore discipline-based career paths and focus on a continued program of study, and directed counseling, coaching and tutoring.



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Serving the communities of

- El Monte
- South El Monte
- Pico Rivera
- Santa Fe Springs
- Whittier

and portions of:

- Norwalk
- Downey
- La Mirada
- City of Industry
- Los Nietos*
- East Whittier*
- South Whittier*
- West Whittier*
- Avocado Heights*

*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.

Specialty Auto Repair Courses Sell Out – Again

More than 80 students attended a series of sold-out specialty auto repair training courses held in early August at Rio Hondo College, marking the second time the program hit capacity this summer. The classes were held by South San Francisco (SSF) Technical, which trains European automotive specialists, and included topics such as BMWs, a vehicle review of the Porsche Cayenne and vehicle diagnosis of the Porsche Sports Car.

SSF Technical chose Rio Hondo due to the reputation of its auto repair program and facilities. Attendees visited from as far as the East Coast. SSF is expected to return in 2017 with additional classes.

Save the Date



1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 20:

Information session on Disney internship program, Career Center

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 22:

University Transfer Fair, Mid-Quad

6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 3:

California State University Application Workshop, Transfer Center

Noon Tuesday, Oct. 4:

California State University Application Workshop, Transfer Center

6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 12:

Board of Trustees Meeting, Rio Hondo College

8:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 15

Health Careers Open House Tech Quad

Hundreds Attend First Year Family Night to Support New Students



Members of more than 200 families attended Rio Hondo College's second annual First Year Family Night on Aug. 17, learning about campus services and how they could support new students.

Families were able to visit more than 20 student services resource tables, discuss financial aid with three banks and attend workshops on financial aid and supporting their children during the first year of college.

Four students each received a \$200 voucher for school books, funded by the Rio Hondo College Foundation: Karina Gonzalez, Bryan Altamirano, Joselynn Gossette and Jonathan Moreno.

Presentations were conducted in English and Spanish during the event, which was hosted by the Office of Outreach and Educational Partnerships, First Year Success Center (FYSC) and the Office of Student Life & Leadership.