

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING AUGUST 2014



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

One of the biggest joys of working for an educational institution is gearing up for the beginning of the academic year, and this year is one of the most exciting yet.

I would like to welcome you all to the 2014-15 academic year. While the summer has given opportunity for many of our students to take much-needed family vacations, work a little more to make extra money, or prepare for a brand-new year, the faculty, staff, administrators and students worked diligently to prepare for this very moment.

I would especially like to thank the Student Life & Leadership department for hosting Freshmen Welcome Days. Being a Freshmen in college can be daunting enough, but having to navigate a new campus, learn how to use new resources and trying to find a place to fit in can add extra pressure.

With Freshmen Welcome Days, nearly 500 students took campus tours, learned to utilize AccessRio and were introduced to campus clubs and organizations.

This year, we are very pleased to launch a very exciting initiative: the Pathway to Law School. In partnership with the Council on Access and Fairness of the State Bar of California, Rio Hondo is one of 24 community colleges in the state to offer a pathway that will enable students to attend one of the region's top six undergraduate institutions and their partner law schools.

In that same "law and order" vein, the Rio Hondo Police Academy Class 200 has had a stellar start. Nearly all spaces have been filled with cadets seeking a career in law enforcement. Thirty-six male cadets and six female cadets make up the first class at Rio Hondo College Police Academy operated under seasoned law enforcement veteran Walter Allen III.

With so much on the horizon, I can say without a doubt that the 2014-15 year is going to be full of academic accomplishments and student success.

▲ New Student Body President Aims to Give Back



Incoming Associated Students of Rio Hondo College President Alejandro "Alex" Ramirez has many goals he wants to accomplish this academic year, all in an effort to give back to the place that has given him so much.

"I ran for ASRHC president to give back to my College," Ramirez said. "I also believe that the student voice on campus is very important and must be heard to improve the quality of our service."

Ramirez, 19, has several goals he seeks to meet during his tenure as ASRHC president. He wants to create a safer campus for specific student groups such as AB540 students, as well as members of the LGBTQ community, and to create an environment where his peers can grow as students and leaders.

The Schurr High School graduate is currently a member of the Society of Chicano and Native American Scientists and is taking general studies courses with an emphasis in math and science.

Ramirez's goals are to graduate with a bachelor's degree in economics and earn a master's degree in urban planning from a college of his choice.

"I would like to end up working for low-income communities and help them grow economically and socially," Ramirez said.

In his spare time, Ramirez plays computer games such as Dota 2 and League of Legends, and is always game for the next Netflix marathon.

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Board Update



At the Aug. 13 Board of Trustees meeting, attendees were treated to a presentation on the progress and success of the Rio Hondo College Foundation.

Foundation Executive Director Howard Kummerman and Foundation Board President Neal Welland's PowerPoint presentation encapsulated a successful year and touched on what will be happening this year.

Kummerman and Welland reported that the Foundation is working on a \$500,000 annual budget of restricted and unrestricted funds. The Foundation also boasts \$2.6 million in net assets that includes \$2 million in an endowment and funding from Title III, Title V, Osher and McCabe.

The Foundation launched a fundraising effort that highlighted student success stories and special events such as "A Taste of Rio" and the gala dinner to support student scholarships and programs, as well as President's Circle events. The program has awarded more than \$350,000 in scholarships to nearly 500 students and solicited more than \$200,000 in grants for College programs and scholarships.

Kummerman and Welland, along with Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss also gave a commendation to Rich Casford, past president of the Foundation.

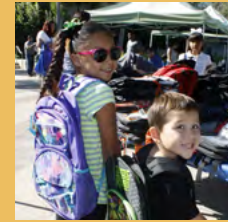
Casford serves as president and CEO of Whittier Mailing Service, Inc. and was elected to the Rio Hondo College Foundation Board of Directors in January 2008 and elected president the following year.

"Rich has raised the bar for the Foundation by heading up the strategic planning committee, working on the bylaws and working with the executive committee to restructure the Rio Hondo College Foundation," Welland said. "He leads by example by giving selflessly using his time and talents."

Other highlights from the meeting include:

- Dr. Kenn Pierson gave an update on the Accreditation Self-Evaluation Report, noting that it is complete and the College is gearing up for its visit with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges in late September/early October.
- Del Terra Assistant Program Manager Jerome Quemada gave the Board an update on building projects, including the upcoming replacement of a retaining wall at the Physical Education Complex scheduled for completion in September; the replacement of retaining wall guardrails at the softball field; and a mechanical upgrade to the fitness center. Quemada also gave updates on the upcoming soccer field renovation, the bookstore/print shop remodel, the Veterans Memorial and the Rio Plaza.
- The Board discussed the possibility of using some Board meeting time on a few occasions to visit different areas on campus, including classes and student services locations.

College Hosts 'Cool' Event for Local Families



Nearly 75 San Gabriel Valley families attended the eighth annual School is Cool event on Aug. 6 at Rio Hondo College.

Hosted by CARIÑO Partnerships for Families Collaborative, which is spearheaded by SPIRITT Family Services and funded by First 5 LA, School is Cool is designed to support families by helping them prepare for a successful school year.

Community organizations were on hand to provide students with backpacks and school supplies. The groups also offered information to parents about resources available to families throughout the school year, including vaccination referrals, mental health services and parenting tips.

"The benefits of School is Cool are two-fold," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Children receive the necessary supplies and information for a successful school year, and they are also exposed to a college campus. Students who are exposed to higher education at an early age are more likely to see it as a potential goal for themselves."

The CARIÑO collaborative consists of local agencies working to prevent family violence and ensure the safety and healthy development of children and families in the San Gabriel Valley and Pomona areas.

New Pathway to Mark Notable Year at Rio Hondo College

Rio Hondo College kicked off a year of firsts on Aug. 23 when classes commenced.

This year, Rio Hondo College is one of only 24 community colleges in the state to launch a Law School Pathway, which will enable students to set a course to one of six top law schools in the state, including USC's Gould School of Law, Loyola Law School, the University of San Francisco School of Law, Santa Clara University School of Law, and law schools at UC Davis and UC Irvine.

"For many students, a legal career is not just a goal, but a lifelong dream," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Many don't know where to start, so offering this program will put them on the right path toward that dream."

The Pathway to Law School initiative – which sees students through community college and undergraduate four-year universities – is designed for underrepresented and first-generation college students interested in attending law school and pursuing careers in the legal field.

The initiative, sponsored by the Council on Access and Fairness of the State Bar of California, benefits students by exposing them to different careers in law and offering networking and learning opportunities with attorneys and law school students.

For more information on Pathway to Law School, students are encouraged to enroll in COUN 101 for the fall semester. For more information, contact Vicenta Arrizon Maffris at (562) 463-7022, or vamaffris@riohondo.edu.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Read more about Rio Hondo College's Law School Pathway in the Los Angeles Times!

College Hosts 'Freshmen Welcome Days'

First-time students at Rio Hondo College learned to navigate the campus, how to get involved and started building a pathway toward their success at Freshmen Welcome Days from Aug. 18-21.

Rio Hondo College hosted a breakfast for about 125 students at each of the four days, and welcomed nearly 500 students who signed up to participate in the event. The students then broke into groups to start their tours.

Students took a tour of the campus so that they are able to identify buildings and special service locations as well as learned to use AccessRio, the College's online service center where students can check email, register for courses, communicate with faculty and have access to other student services.

"Freshmen Welcome Days is a great opportunity for students to acclimate to the rigors of college life without feeling pressure," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Some of the most stressful moments in a first-year college student's day are finding their classes, parking and locating vital student support services. With Freshmen Welcome Days, students become more prepared and ready to get to work."

While students learned the nuts and bolts of academic life at Rio Hondo College, they also learned about student involvement, including leadership opportunities, hearing from a student panel and learned to use OrgSync, a web-based one-stop shop for student clubs and organizations.

Also on the tour was a stop at the new First-Year Success Center that offers first-time college students resources to help them thrive in their first year, which is crucial in a student's overall academic success. Such services include counseling, creating educational plans and helping with registration and financial aid.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Read more about Freshmen Welcome Days in the Whittier Daily News!



New Administrative Leadership to Foster Student Success

The start of the new school year at Rio Hondo College also welcomes positive change as three new directors have been hired to oversee some of the College's most vital departments while a position has been revised to ensure students flourish at every level.

"The steps to fill these positions included proactive recruitment and a comprehensive review and application process to assess each candidate's background, experience and qualifications required to be successful," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "We hired a top-notch team to start the new academic year – a team that cares about student success and their role in achieving this goal."



Dr. Mike Muñoz

Kicking off the academic year in his new position as Dean of Counseling and Student Success – a position revised to ensure the implementation of the College's Student Success Initiative – Dr. Mike Muñoz provides leadership and direction for general counseling services and activities that include the Transfer Center, Career Development Center, First-Year Student Success Center and High School Outreach and Educational Partnerships.

Formerly the Associate Dean of Student Services, Muñoz directed the College's Student Life & Leadership department, which included the Associated Student Body and Inter Club Council, high school and community outreach for 16 service area high schools, and educational partnerships such as GEAR UP and Early College Academy.

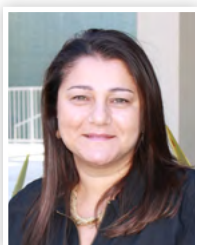
Muñoz holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and social behavior from the University of California, Irvine and a master's degree in counseling from Long Beach State, where he also earned a doctorate in educational leadership with a specialization in community college leadership.



Yvonne Gutierrez-Sandoval

New Director of Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans' Services Yvonne Gutierrez-Sandoval holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Pitzer College and a master's degree in higher education administration from Claremont Graduate University.

In the past, Gutierrez-Sandoval worked as director of extended learning at the University of La Verne and senior associate director at the Office of Financial Aid at Pitzer College. Her duties included providing administrative and professional leadership and direction for extended learning; spearheading the establishment of experimental Federal Pell Grants for short-term training programs and ensuring compliance with regulatory and student financial aid agencies.



Heba Griffiths

Heba Griffiths, an experienced administrator with more than 16 years in higher education, has been tapped as director of Extended Opportunity Programs and Services/Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (EOP&S/CARE).

Griffiths has spent her career serving and advocating for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and promoting educational equity. She has worked at the community college and university levels, as well as community-based organizations, including Pasadena City College, UC Santa Barbara and The East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU). Most recently, she served as the Interim Dean of Student Life at Pasadena City College. Griffiths holds two

bachelor's degrees; one in sociology and another in law and society from UC Santa Barbara. She also holds a master's degree in education with an emphasis in counseling and guidance from Point Loma Nazarene University.



Stephen Kibui

Lastly, Stephen Kibui started his new post as Director of Accounting on Sept. 3. Kibui holds a Master's of Business Administration from Newman University in Wichita, Kan. and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Strathmore College in Nairobi, Kenya.

Since 2004, Kibui – a Certified Public Accountant – worked as a supervisor for Vasquez & Company LLP, one of Southern California's venerable accounting firms. While at Vasquez & Company, Kibui was in charge of financial, federal and state compliance for school accounting services and was responsible for auditing Rio Hondo College for about five years. He is thoroughly familiar with California Code of regulations for Title IV and education code requirements on compliance with educational institutions.

Rio Hondo Takes to the Airwaves



As part of a new effort to inform the community about the educational programs, degree and certificate opportunities at Rio Hondo College, the Marketing and Communications department launched radio ads on Power 106 – the No. 1 radio station among 18- to 24-year-olds who seek to re-enter the educational system. To listen to the ad, click [here](#).

Connect with Us on Social Media

 **RHCRoadrunners**

 **RioHondo_College**

 **@RioHondoCollege**

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

College Gears Up for Accreditation Visit

During summer 2014, Rio Hondo College officials took several steps forward in the accreditation self-evaluation process, including completing the writing, revising and editing the 348-page *Self Evaluation Report*.

In July, the Board of Trustees reviewed and signed off on the report after several readings and special board meetings. Copies were then mailed in a timely manner to members of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' (ACCJC) site team, who will be visiting the campus Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Thanks to the work of scores of people – and a few very special employees who were unflagging in their commitment during the “11th Hour” – the College met its submission deadline.

Now, College officials are focused on preparing for the campus for the site team visit. On FLEX Day, faculty members were briefed on expectations for the visit. Breakout sessions were held, introducing an “Accreditation 101” booklet and featuring “Accreditation Jeopardy,” a fun activity to re-familiarize faculty with basic facts and processes related to accreditation and Rio Hondo College.

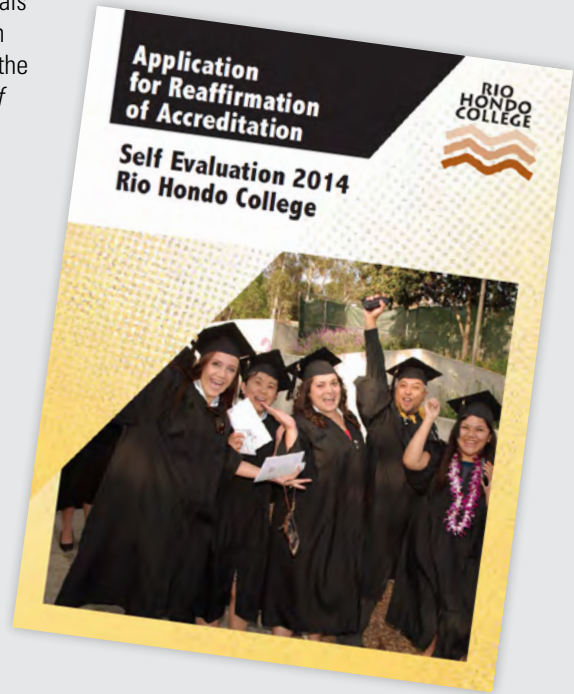
Multiple copies of the submitted report – as well as computers displaying the College’s updated accreditation website and digital evidence used in the report – were available for faculty members to review. Further discussion also ensued in afternoon division meetings among faculty members and their deans.

In weeks to come before the site team visit, classified staff, student leaders and Board of Trustees members will be further briefed on the impending accreditation visit. An accreditation “Survival Guide” will offer all campus constituencies more details on how the team visit will be conducted and how interaction with campus members might occur.

As designed, the accreditation process—which happens once every six years—is an opportunity for the College to reflect on what it does. The process has provided an opportunity, once again, for the College to conduct a thorough evaluation of its educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

In the spirit of accreditation, the College has participated in the goal of “continuous improvement.” Ideas are already being discussed about how to keep the focus on accreditation alive at Rio Hondo College even after the team has visited and issued their findings.

The College is committed to a successful accreditation experience this time, and in the future, for the good of our institution and students.



SAVE THE DATE

WHAT: Poncho Sanchez and His Latin Jazz Band to Headline Latino Heritage Fiesta.

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 20 from 1-5 p.m. Poncho Sanchez and His Latin Jazz Band to perform at 4 p.m.

WHERE: Rio Hondo College Lower Quad

Click [here](#) to read more about the Latino Heritage Fiesta in The Wave Newspapers!