

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING NOVEMBER 2014



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

At this time of year, it is especially appropriate to thank members of our Rio Hondo College community for their tremendous commitment to our shared mission of delivering the best in higher education opportunities.

Each year, November represents a month of gratitude and reflection on sacrifice and commitment.

It begins with a very special celebration for us, our recognition of the sacrifices of our veterans for our freedom on the battle field. This year, in addition to our Veterans Day celebrations, we commemorated our armed forces with two moving plays created and

staged by members of the Rio Hondo College community.

November also marked a chance for members of the Rio Hondo staff to reflect on their efforts to provide training and education so that students can experience bright and successful futures. On Nov. 7, our team gathered at the Clarke Estate in Santa Fe Springs to renew our focus on that mission.

The All Staff Retreat, brought back after a multi-year hiatus, was a big success. The event was appropriately titled "We are Rio" and featured moving stories about how members of our Rio Hondo College family have touched and changed the lives of our students. It was the perfect way to recharge as we prepare for the challenges of the coming year.

I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday with your loved ones.

▲ Rio Hondo Takes Lead Spot in Statewide Display on Community College Spirit

Rio Hondo College was showcased as the first community college presented in a new "College Spirit/Mascot" photo series on the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

The collection of nine images began greeting visitors to the site Nov. 13. The banner series follows a back-to-school photo series in which the Chancellor's Office highlighted 85 colleges over seven weeks this fall, including Rio Hondo College.

Rio Hondo's image shows students, faculty, administrators and the school's Roadrunner mascot, Rex, beneath an arch of gold, orange and black balloons, and balloon letters spelling RIO.

The banner campaign will run through mid-December. At least 35 colleges will be featured before the campaign ends. It is a proud moment that Rio Hondo College was the first to be showcased.



Board Update..... 2

Law Panel Offers Legal Career Insights..... 2

Fiscal Services Expert Joins Rio Hondo Leadership Team..... 2

Rio Hondo College Pennants Inspire Students to Consider College..... 3

Rio Hondo Icon Still Teaching Lessons 22 Years After Retiring 3

Save the Date 4

Rio Hondo College stages 'Roll Call' 4

Rio Hondo College Dean named Moreno Valley College Vice President 4

School Spirit You Can Taste 5

Forensic Speech Contest Draws Record Number of Participants 5

IN THIS ISSUE

Board Update

Student Services

Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees unanimously approved a student equity plan on Nov. 12, spelling out how the College will target services over the next three years for students who need the most support.

Rio Hondo will strengthen recruitment of Hispanics and Pacific Islanders to better match the demographics of its service areas and add a variety of support services and programs to guide new students through courses of study.

Some efforts will target students over age 25, a demographic that faces the greatest challenges in completing courses and obtaining degrees, as well as disabled students, foster youth and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Other programs will focus on building stronger campus connections and helping to shepherd students toward transfer to four-year schools.

The College is expected to submit its plan, designed to be updated annually, to the Chancellor's Office prior to the Jan. 1 deadline.

Pilot Program

Trustees received an update on the College's application to become one of 15 community colleges to offer four-year degrees in a statewide pilot program. Rio Hondo signified its intent to select its automotive tech program for the degree in materials submitted Nov. 12. The College's Academic Senate reviewed three possible proposals in a lively debate before settling on the automotive program.



Support for Foster Youths

Trustees also received an overview of the College's programs for foster care providers, students in the foster care system and those who are transitioning out of the system. The Foster and Kinship Care Education program (FKCE) provides more than 800 hours of educational services for foster parents and relative/kinship caregivers and others who work in the foster care community.

Rio Hondo's Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success program (YESS), which includes the College's Connections Necessary to Experience College Transition (CONNECT), provides individualized assistance to more than 200 students a year. This fall, about 100 students are enrolled.

Foster youths receive such services as priority registration, counseling and life skills workshops and access to a youth mentor, computer and printer services and even a snack pantry.

In spring, 14 Rio Hondo students attended a Transitioning Age Foster Youth retreat held in Running Springs. The program included several outdoor team building activities and emphasized health and well-being. This fall, a new campus club called Leaders for Change has formed to advocate for current and former foster youths.

Law Panel Offers Legal Career Insights

A panel of four attorneys will share insights about law school and legal careers ranging from civil rights to entertainment law during a special panel discussion from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3.



The panel includes lawyers David C. Bell, Lazaro Cuevas, Ricardo Perez and Sandra Wootton. Additional topics include public defense, contracts, environmental law and litigation.

Rio Hondo College is one of the first in the state to offer a smoother pathway to six of California's top law schools through the California Community College system's Pathway to Law School Initiative, which launched this fall.

The College was chosen to participate in the program by the State Bar's Council on Access and Fairness for its leadership and student success indicators.

The Law Panel will be held in Room SS305 of the Student Services Building, Rio Hondo College, 3600 Workman Mill Road, Whittier. Admission is free. Parking is \$3. The event is cosponsored by the Pre-Law Society. For additional information, call 526-463-4619.

Fiscal Services Expert Joins Rio Hondo Leadership Team



Myeshia Armstrong

Rio Hondo's new Vice President of Finance and Business, Myeshia Armstrong, brings the College nearly two decades of experience in fiscal areas of public educational institutions.

Armstrong, who began Nov. 11, served most recently as the Director of Fiscal Services for MiraCosta Community College District in Oceanside. She worked at the district in several capacities, starting in 2005.

"Myeshia brings the knowledge and expertise to help Rio Hondo College address future

finance needs," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "We are so pleased to welcome her to our team."

Previously, she held posts at the California State University Chancellor's Office, El Camino College and Chicago Public Schools in Illinois.

Armstrong said her first step is to listen and learn the needs of the College.

"My role as the Vice President of Finance and Business is to support the vision and mission of Rio Hondo College," she said. "I look forward to providing leadership to the Finance and Business division while supporting all areas of the College."

Rio Hondo College Pennants Inspire Students to Consider College

I'm going to Rio Hondo College!

I'm going to Rio Hondo College

Nothing says college like a pennant – an idea the new Rio Hondo College pennant takes quite literally.

The pennant, distributed by Rio Hondo College to every class at El Monte's historic Valle Lindo School District, represents opening stages of a pilot effort by the community college to open youngsters' eyes to the possibilities of a higher education. The district serves students kindergarten through eighth grade.

"I'm going to Rio Hondo College!" reads the golden-hued pennant, designed by the College's marketing and communications team.

College leaders created the symbol to inspire students to consider their future educational options, including Rio Hondo's diversity of programs, student-centered services and strong educational opportunities.

"Every student should consider college as a pathway to success," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "And if our pennants can serve as a daily reminder that prompts them to consider college, and especially Rio Hondo, then that would be terrific."

The school started with Valle Lindo because college officials discovered just two Rio Hondo pennants on display at one of the district's two schools during September Back to School visits. Within a few weeks, Rio Hondo's communications team designed, created and delivered more than 60 new pennants.

Valle Lindo Superintendent Mary Louise Labrucherie said she's a believer.

"We have a pennant in every classroom. All of our teachers have put them up," Labrucherie said. "Hopefully, if the students see this pennant every day, it will inculcate into their minds that they will want to go there when they grow up."

Rio Hondo is working on plans to extend the pilot program to schools in each of the college system's five districts, and to creating additional versions of the pennants for different outreach efforts.

Rio Hondo Icon Still Teaching Lessons 22 Years After Retiring

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Yosh Nakamura at 411Whittier.com!



Rio Hondo College's Yoshio Nakamura taught high school and college students about creating art for more than four decades – sharing the unique perspectives that drove the dramatic images he created on canvas, on paper and through sculpture.

Now, 22 years after retiring as Rio Hondo's vice president of community services and institutional development, Nakamura continues to share important lessons on life and art.

Nakamura and his wife, Grace Shinoda Nakamura, are among a dozen Angelenos ages 59 to 100 whose philosophies and tips for aging gracefully are featured in the November edition of *Los Angeles Magazine*.

"The Rio Hondo community knows well that 'Yosh' still has much to offer to all those who know him," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "He is, has been and will continue to be a driving force for excellence for our students and faculty. This recognition and his many other honors are well deserved."

In the article, Nakamura, 89, cites a quote Chelsea Clinton in turn attributes to her grandmother: "It isn't what happens to you that is important. It's what you do when something happens to you."

It's a lesson Yosh Nakamura learned early on.

At age 16, he was interned with other Japanese-Americans at the Tulare Assembly Center, a converted racetrack near Fresno. He was later relocated to a camp in Arizona, where he reported for active duty in the U.S. Army in 1944. Nakamura served with the 442nd Regimental Team, a highly decorated unit of Japanese-Americans.

"All of us have been through hard times," Nakamura said. "I've been very fortunate to have people who have been there to help me out and give me a more positive outlook on life."

In 1963, Nakamura became the first fine arts chairman of the newly opened Rio Hondo College and, in a very real sense, found his home. Over the next 29 years, he added a series of administrative duties to his teaching role, becoming a dean and eventually a vice president.

These days, Nakamura doesn't seem to have slowed much.

Since retiring, he has dedicated himself to his art, but also found time to volunteer for a number of art-centered community groups, including Whittier's Art in Public Places Committee and Cultural Arts Commission.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Yosh Nakamura in *The Wave*!

On Jan. 1, he will join a handful of other veterans atop the City of Alhambra float in the 126th Tournament of Roses Parade. The Go For Broke float honors the Japanese-Americans who served during World War II.

Feb. 20-22, Nakamura will be one of two featured artists at the Hillcrest Congregational Church's 55th annual Festival of Fine Arts – an event he has been involved with since its inception.

On April 19, he will be inducted into the Whittier High School Hall of Fame – an honor that recognizes the scope of Nakamura's impact – a role so strong former students still stop him to say how much his classes influenced their lives.

Nakamura is also focused on an issue close to home. His grandson, Kai Nakamura, is struggling with a heart illness that is currently untreatable. But, in keeping with Yoshio Nakamura's trademark positive outlook, the family has turned to YouTube to raise awareness and funds to help find a cure.

[Click here to see their video appeal.](#)



Save The Date



Dec. 13

Last day of fall term

Dec. 22-Jan. 4

Open registration for intercession and spring semesters

Dec. 24-Jan. 1

College closed for winter break

Jan. 5

First day of intercession semester

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Holiday Sale

10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, Dec. 2-4
Rio Hondo College Art Gallery

Law Day Panel

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3
SS305, Student Services Building

Fall Play: Don't Drink the Water

8 to 10 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 4-6
2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7
Wray Theater

Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees Meeting

6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10
A102, Administration Building

Choral Concert: Jingle All The Way

7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12
Wray Theater

Rio Hondo College stages 'Roll Call'

Rio Hondo College's Division of Arts and Cultural Programs explored the experiences of America's military veterans Nov. 6 and 7 through *Roll Call*, a play by Alfred Lugo. The play takes place in a local Veterans of Foreign Wars hall, where young Latino vets just back from Vietnam come to grips with their experiences in the war and their reception back home. After the Nov. 6 performance, Lugo led a panel discussion with representatives of veterans and service groups on the mental health issues facing today's veterans, active-duty armed forces and their families.



Rio Hondo College Dean Named Moreno Valley College Vice President

Dr. Dyrell W. Foster, Rio Hondo College's Dean of Student Affairs, has been selected as the new vice president of student services for Moreno Valley College in the Riverside Community College District.

Foster, who joined Rio Hondo in 2011, earned a Master of Science degree in counseling from Cal State University, Long Beach and an Ed.D in higher education administration from USC.

Before arriving at Rio Hondo, he worked in various capacities for seven years at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut and for four years at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose.

At Moreno Valley College, he will serve as the chief student services officer and will be charged with comprehensive student services planning, policy development and budget development/management. Foster will start his new post Dec. 8.



School Spirit You Can Taste

Check out the new Rio Bistro menu at California Grill in Whittier. Starting in December, the Bistro provides a menu that celebrates Rio Hondo's Roadrunner spirit.



**EXPERIENCE GOODNESS WITH
THE RIO BISTRO**
EXCLUSIVE TO ALL RIO HONDO COLLEGE
STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF.

MEEP! MEEP! MUNCHIES ✦ HAPPY HOUR

\$5.00 Appetizers
Spinach Artichoke Dip, Chicken Strips, Buffalo Wings, California Skins, Calamari or Bruschetta

Drink Specials
\$2 Bud Light Drafts & \$7 Bud Light Pitchers
\$1 Off Imported Beers & \$2 Off Domestic Beers

BREAKFAST
Wrap Theater Breakfast Burrito - \$6.95
Your choice of bacon or sausage, hash brown potatoes and cheddar cheese wrapped up in a burrito for the perfect meal on the go before the long walk up the hill
Served with Orange Juice

Connect with Us on Social Media

 **RHCRoadrunners**

 **RioHondo_College**

 **@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

Forensic Speech Contest Draws Record Number of Participants



Nearly 250 students from nine high schools and area community colleges gathered Nov. 7 for Rio Hondo College's annual Forensics Speech and Debate Extramural, an all-day tournament that celebrates the best in argument, poetry and impromptu speaking.

This year's event was the largest in the program's history, drawing about 80 more students than in 2013 from such schools as Fullerton College, La Serna High School and California High School in Whittier, Bishop Alemany in Mission Hills, Servite High School in Anaheim, Santa Margarita Catholic High School in Rancho Santa Margarita, Sonora High School in La Habra and Gabrielino High School in San Gabriel.

"Our annual forensics debate tournament is a great example of how Rio Hondo reaches out into our community to inspire students, to engage them at a level that focuses them on the opportunities available here and from post-secondary education in general," said Rio Hondo Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss.

The debate tournament allows novice debaters in college to face off against high school students, helping to generate new levels of competition and inspiration. Competitions included a team parliamentary debate and individual speeches, featuring styles from humorous to poetry, impromptu to informative.

"It was really motivating," said Rio Hondo Speech Instructor/Forensics Coordinator Libby Curiel, the event's lead organizer. "I think the best part is to see that collaboration, growth and learning take place. It's not just an academic environment, it's an environment of academic excellence. And it's a lot of fun."

Curiel's students help stage the event, too, making it one of few to be put on by a two-person professional team and many student helpers.

"This is their first experience doing this. For them to see this aspect of the event was really special," she said.

More than 50 judges helped decide the contests, which ran from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; dozens of community donors helped supply students with drinks and snacks. Sponsors included Coca Cola, City of Industry, Ralphs Supermarkets, Paul and Cindy White, Costco, Hacienda Heights Pizza Co., Krispy Kreme Donuts, Starbucks Coffee, Domino's Pizza, Trader Joe's, Fresh & Easy, Sam's Club, Souplantation, Eddie Verdugo, Kimberly Valencia and Paul Sunpanich.

