

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING OCTOBER 2014



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

My most sincere thanks and appreciation to the Rio Hondo College community members for their participation during the team site visit by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Thanks to those who were deeply involved and engaged over the last two years in the preparation of the development of the Accreditation Self Evaluation 2014 Report. Kudos to the members of the Accreditation Leadership Team, the co-chairs, writers/editors, administrative support staff, committee members, Board of

Trustees and to our staff who facilitated the team's requests before and during the visit. It was a busy week indeed.

On the last day of the visit, the Exit Report was delivered by Dr. Willard Lewallen, Superintendent/President of Hartnell College, who served as

team chair. During his opening remarks, Dr. Lewallen lauded Rio Hondo College for its collegiality, inclusiveness, sensitivity to diversity and equity and great sense of pride. On behalf of the team, he appreciated our openness, candor, cooperation, assistance and hospitality during their stay with us.

He reminded us that the written final report will be the official one and that the Exit Report reflects only preliminary findings. We anticipate receiving a draft copy of the team's report once it is sent to the Commission's office. At that time, we will have the opportunity to make factual corrections.

The Commission will review the report and issue a formal "action letter" after its meeting in January 2015.

A big thank you, once again, to the Rio Hondo College community for its diligence, support and attention to this important accreditation process that comes every six years.

Peers Honor Fran Cummings with First 'Distinguished Faculty' Award



Fran Cummings

It took a special educator to become the first in Rio Hondo College history to earn the Distinguished Faculty Award, and – by all accounts – that is exactly who received it.

At the Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees meeting on Oct. 8, Biology Associate Professor Fran Cummings held the distinction of being the first recipient of the award, a recognition by faculty of colleagues who consistently demonstrate excellence in teaching and/or counseling and service to the College.

"Fran has been one of the most active and visible leaders both in her division and across campus," said Academic Senate President Dr. Vann Priest.

Cummings started at Rio Hondo College in 1998 and has taught a wide variety of subjects within the department, including general biology, marine biology, environmental biology and human physiology. She even collects specimens from the wild so her students have living subjects for experiments.

Cummings has been instrumental in revamping the lab curriculum and maintaining equipment and materials for general education biology courses. She has also been involved in all aspects of the biology department, including ordering supplies, coordinating Student Learning Outcomes and mentoring part-time instructors.

Aside from her duties inside the classroom, Cummings has taken on many essential duties to help improve the College, including serving as a member of the Senate Executive Committee.

As curriculum chair, she was an active participant in multiple standards in the College's accreditation process, and has served as a guiding voice and presence in the Academic Senate.

"I have found being involved in committee work outside of the classroom is a great way to learn how a college functions and to meet other employees of the College outside of my own department and division," Cummings said.

In 2013, Cummings worked with Articulation Counselor Song Le Graham and full-time faculty members in multiple disciplines to usher in the creation of a number of associate of arts and associate of science degrees, helping the College surpass its goal of creating 16 AA-T and two AS-T degrees for a total of 18. Faculty members involved in the effort, in addition to Cummings, included: Vann Priest, Scott Dixon, Lorraine Castellanos, Adam Wetsman, Jill Pfeiffer, Lydia Gonzalez, Sheila Lynch, Marie Eckstrom, Eugene Blackmun, Ada Brown, Lisette Acevedo, Libby Curiel, Gil Puga, Blanca De Los Santos, Lydia Llerena, Kathy Pudelko, Jeannette Duarte, Jim Newman, Jennette Noriega, John Francis, Sondra Moe, William Korf, Michelle Pilati, Kevin Smith, Brian Brutlag, Melissa Rifino-Juarez, Irma Valdivia, Colin Young, Mariano Zaro and Sharon Bell.

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Board Update

The regular meeting of the Rio Hondo Community College District Board of Trustees on Oct. 8 began with a commendation for Biology Associate Professor Fran Cummings, the first recipient of the Distinguished Faculty Award, an honor bestowed upon faculty members who demonstrate excellence and commitment to their craft.



Also recognized were the College's new faculty and classified staff members, including: Angela Cheung, Scott Jaeggi, Irene Truong, Jose Arroyo, Raquel Flores, I Chen Liao, Alice Yu, Laura Garcia, Alejandro Guerrero, Maria Galvan, Ana Fonseca and Sergio Cabral.

After the introductions, Dean of Counseling and Student Success Dr. Mike Muñoz gave an update on the Student Success Initiative (SSI). Many strides have been made in the areas of assessment, orientation, educational planning and service plans.

Muñoz reported that Rio Hondo College is one of 12 California community colleges selected as a Common Assessment Initiative pilot program. In addition, a new plan has been put into place to follow up with at-risk students to encourage them to take the steps necessary to get off academic probation. Students will be able to take Counseling 105 in high school and basic skills completion.

Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Dyrell Foster also gave a presentation on the Student Equity Plan. The Student Equity Task Force met in April, May and July to review student success data regarding degree and certificate completion, transfer and course completion.

With that data, the task force was able to determine which disadvantaged student populations may be impacted by College policies, activities and procedures.

Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Kenn Pierson also reported that the visit from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) went very well, with the College receiving 10 commendations.

"The No. 1 commendation we received was that we exhibit a student-centered approach to learning and to serving students; a collegial spirit along with enthusiasm for student success, which shines through all endeavors, actions and activities," Pierson said.

LA Times Sports Writer Guest Lectures at Rio Hondo College



Known for being the first writer to report on Shaquille O'Neal's exit from the Lakers in 2004 and covering the Donald Sterling controversy, *Los Angeles Times* sports writer Broderick Turner hosted a discussion on Oct. 8 that explored pathways to journalism, the emergence of new media and other aspects of professional writing during his guest lecture at Rio Hondo College.

Turner's lecture was hosted by the Mass Communications Department and *El Paisano* student news media. The event was also open to the community and was of particular interest to students studying communications and related disciplines, as well as student athletes.

"We have so many students who benefitted from Mr. Turner's guest lecture," said Division of Communications and Languages Dean Dr. Robert Holcomb. "The world of journalism is changing drastically and it is essential that our students are prepared for those changes. Mr. Turner was very informative."

Turner's lecture was part of the Division of Communications and Languages Campus Event Series, which also includes a screening of documentary "Wrestling with Angels" with opening remarks from Academy Award-winning director Freida Lee Mock via iPhone on Nov. 6; the Fifth Annual Forensics Showcase featuring Emmy-nominated actress Carolyn Hennesy as moderator on March 5; and the Writes of Spring, two-day literary festival, on April 29 and 30.

GCR Brings Together College, Community Leaders at Open House



The Government and Community Relations (GCR) department hosted an Open House on Oct. 8, which brought together Rio Hondo College students, staff and faculty with community partners.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss was introduced by Government and Community Relations Director Russell Castañeda-Calleros to give welcoming remarks at the event.

Members of the Rio Hondo College community attended the warm, festive and educational reception and interacted with external partners, community leaders and representatives from the offices of different elected officials.

The inspirational words given by Trustee Mary Ann Pacheco and two of the newest GRACE students reflected the purpose of the College's GCR Office, that of being the "Gateway from the Campus to the Community." Government Relations Advocates for Community Events (GRACE) is the student advocate program for GCR.

STARSS Students Earn \$109,000 in Scholarships



More than 20 students who earned Scholarships to Aid Rio Hondo STEM Students (STARSS) celebrated on Oct. 4 with their families and faculty mentors at the Rio Café.

STARSS is a National Science Foundation scholarship grant for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) students. The awards ranged from \$4,000 to \$6,000. This year, students earned a total of \$109,000.

"This program allows students to work less and study more," said Dr. Vann Priest, adding that STEM college majors call for the completion of rigorous mathematics and science courses.

Priest outlined the future possibilities for STEM professionals, and Dr. Gisela Spieler-Persad shared with families why the students spent so much time at the Rio Hondo College MESA Center.

The students who received the STARSS scholarship include: Sarah Avila-Barnard, Daniel Bresenden, Angello Castro, Irene Chapa, Noe Gavidia, Rivver Gonzalez, David Guardado, Mikayla Nguyen, Joey Ojeda, Jason Otis, Cynthia Santana-Ramirez, Jaime Silva, Aidan Stephen, Gabriel Telles, Jesus Vargas, Crystal Xie, Paul Felix, Joshua Useda-Decter, Thao Luong, Armando Colon and Karina Pena.

College Launches Program to Help Students Overcome Obstacles

Rio Hondo College launched a new program designed to foster connections that contribute to the academic and personal success for women with an all-day event on Oct. 17.

The *Just Us Girls* kick-off event featured food and prizes while promoting friendship and connections between Rio Hondo College students, faculty and staff.

Based on a similar program at California State University, Dominguez Hills created by Dr. Denna Sanchez – who serves as Psychological Services Coordinator for Rio Hondo College – the goal of *Just Us Girls* is to promote relationship-building, networking and mentoring opportunities among female students and campus professionals.

"The sister program of *Just Us Girls* at CSU Dominguez Hills has been successful over the last 10 years," Sanchez said. "We had more than 1,000 students walk through our doors and many have gone on to graduate school, attained degrees and have entered successful careers."

The Dominguez Hills program, *Latinas Juntas*, was the brainchild of Sanchez and colleague Monica Rosas-Baines. As psychologists on campus, they discovered a prevalent trend among female students: they often felt pressure, anxiety and insecurity.

"As psychologists working on a college campus, we understand the need for students to feel connected," Sanchez said. "We routinely hear from our students about specific challenges and obstacles such as family, school and work responsibilities, relationships and cultural issues, which often impede their progress."

With *Just Us Girls*, students, faculty and staff will be able to address concerns and offer solutions through small- and large-group exercises to provide an atmosphere of dialogue, mentoring and problem solving.

Just Us Girls is offered as a mentoring event to support first-generation college students and is sponsored by a grant from the California Mental Health Services Authority.

"*Just Us Girls* and its mission align with the College's Student Success Initiative," said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "It is a perfect opportunity for our students to find a mentor and learn skills that will help them achieve their academic and career goals in a supportive and nurturing environment."



Rio in the Spotlight

Rio Hondo College was in the spotlight in October when it was featured on the homepage of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website.



Students Learn Valuable Lessons in Advocacy, Leadership

The Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC) sponsored students from the Pathways to Law School Pre-Law Society Club and ASRHC to attend the Voto Latino Power Summit in San Jose on Oct. 17 and 18.

The conference provided students with workshops on advocacy, leadership and media/tech so that they can enhance their skills to mobilize the community to address issues impacting them.

Students also networked with celebrities, government officials, community activists and other college students. Through their participation, the students are also able to receive digital badges that they can use with their digital resume. The students who attended were Joey Lujan, Alejandro Ramirez, Gilberto Sosa, Apollo Ayala and Andrew Carpeña.

From Oct. 17-19, the ASRHC also sponsored student senators Sean Burton, Javier Cano, Ivanna Vasquez and Amado Gonzalez to attend the California Community College Student Affairs Association (CCCCAA) Student Leadership Conference.

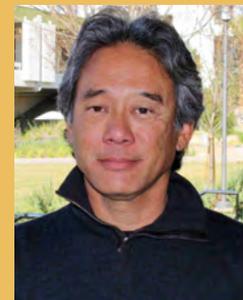
This year's theme was "Lights, Camera, Take Action – Taking a Starring Role in Leadership and Advocacy on Your Campus."

During the conference, students were offered workshops on advocacy, understanding underserved student populations, statewide issues impacting the California Community Colleges (CCC) and various leadership training. The ASRHC was able to network with students from nearly 50 different community colleges, representatives from the CCC Chancellor's Office and expert presenters.



DSPS Director Honored for Service

Disabled Students Programs & Services Director Mark Matsui received the 2014 R.J. Scuderi Award from the California Association for Postsecondary Education and Disability (CAPED), which recognizes exemplary service to CAPED and individuals with disabilities that the organization serves.



"Mark has spent his life dedicated to others so it's no surprise that he was the recipient of this prestigious award," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss.

Matsui has been the director of DSPS since 2012. Before coming to Rio Hondo College, he served as coordinator for the Disabled Students Programs and Services department at Long Beach City College (LBCC), a position he held since 1992. Prior to his tenure at LBCC, Matsui worked at California State University, Dominguez Hills, as coordinator of Disabled Student Services and Veterans Affairs, as well as the director of Student Programs and Housing.

Matsui has also served as vice president of the California Association for Postsecondary Education and Disability and on the board of directors for Disabled Resources Center, Inc. in Long Beach.

Accreditation Site Team Commends College During Visit

From Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, representatives from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) visited the College as part of its accreditation review process.

In its initial report, the site team gave Rio Hondo College 10 commendations. The team noted that as a whole, the College:

- Exhibits a student-centered approach to learning and to serving students; a collegial spirit, along with enthusiasm for student success, which shines through all endeavors, action and activities;
- Develops partnerships and relationships with a number of organizations, institutions and agencies that leverage resources in support of student learning and student success;
- Maintains a beautiful campus that supports quality learning for students and a quality working environment for the staff;
- Designs and constructs exceptional new facilities that support student learning and student success;
- Considers equity and access in naming its innovative service to students, "Express Counseling," rather than walk-in counseling, demonstrating a really wonderful sensitivity to diversity and inclusion;
- Uses technology innovatively and effectively manages and coordinates important institutional processes, for example SLOolutions and Plan Builder;
- Houses statewide and nationally recognized programs, such as homeland security, law enforcement and firefighting programs that provide pathways to educational attainment and employment;
- Produces quality publications that celebrate diversity, arts and culture;
- Is committed to support and promote professional development among all employees;
- Demonstrates sound financial acumen for its yearly operation. Fiscal stewardship is an especially noteworthy accomplishment in light of the substantial multiyear economic challenges California's community colleges have faced.

ACCJC will review the official report and issue a formal "action letter" after its meeting in January 2015.

Save The Date



Intersession and Spring 2015 Registration to Begin

- **Nov. 19:** Open registration
- **Jan. 5:** Intersession 2015 begins
- **Feb. 2:** Spring 2015 begins

For more information, go to www.riohondo.edu.

To find intersession classes, choose "Winter" from the menu selection.

Foreign Film Festival

9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 6, Wray Theater

Rio Hondo College Forensics Speech and Debate Team 2014 Extramural

The Extramural is an annual speech and debate tournament held each fall semester in which students from various speech courses and local high schools compete in speech events.

11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7.

Student Services Building, Room SS305

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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

Rio Hondo Presents Original Plays to Honor Veterans Day

Performances explore experiences of World War II and Vietnam veterans

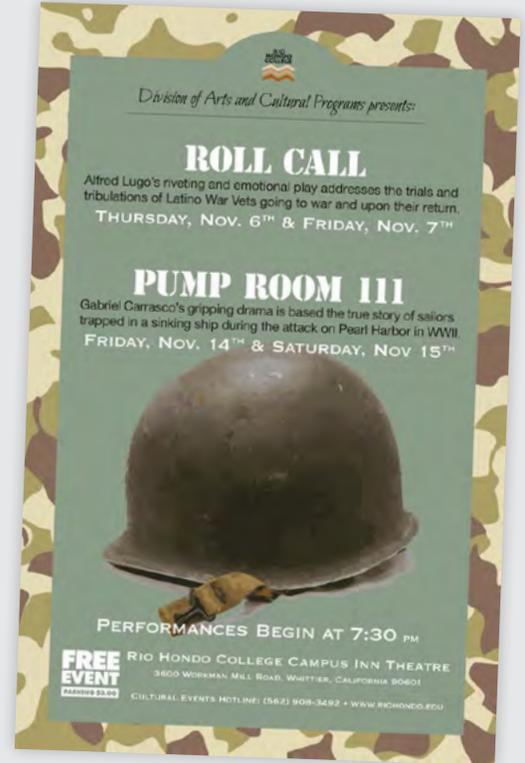
RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about RHC plays saluting veterans in the *Whittier Daily News!*

Rio Hondo College's Division of Arts and Cultural Programs is presenting two original plays written by members of the College community that explore the experiences of America's military veterans.

Roll Call, by Alfred Lugo, 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. Performance dates are Nov. 6 and 7 at Rio Hondo College's Campus Inn Theatre.

Pump Room 111, by Gabriel Carrasco, is set just before and during the attack on Pearl Harbor, and is based on the true story of men trapped inside a sinking battleship. The production will be staged Nov. 14 and 15 at the Campus Inn Theatre.

"Rio Hondo College has long worked to create a supportive environment for both veterans and active duty military personnel," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "We have a very active Veterans Club and a highly regarded Veterans Service Center, both of which have been really instrumental in putting on these shows."



RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about the plays in *Veterans Today!*

College leaders decided to add the performances to their annual observation of Veterans Day because this year marks the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I.

"We hope to capture the wide range of experiences that Rio Hondo veterans and their families have had over the last 100 years," said Chris Guptill, Dean of Arts & Cultural Programs. "There will be a display of uniforms, photographs and artifacts from World War I through today."

Gabriel Carrasco, who penned *Pump Room 111*, is a theater production coordinator for Rio Hondo College's Arts Division.

Alfred Lugo, who wrote *Roll Call*, served as a U.S. Air Force crewman in Vietnam. He has written and produced several documentaries about America's Latino war heroes. He currently serves as a member of the District's President Advisory Council.

Following the Nov. 6 performance of *Roll Call*, Lugo will moderate 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.

Both plays will be held at 7:30 p.m. The shows are open to the public and free of charge. Parking is \$3. For more information, call (562) 908-3492 or go to www.riohondo.edu/arts and click on the Arts & Cultural Events tab.

Women's Soccer Climbs in National Rankings

Rio Hondo's women's soccer team climbed to No. 14 in the Oct. 21 national rankings for junior college Division III teams and hung on to the coveted spot through Oct. 28's rankings by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

The team, which posted an 11-1-2 record as of the Oct. 28 rankings, also jumped two spots to reach No. 10 in the California Community College Athletic Association poll for Oct. 24 and is at No. 6 in the poll's Southern California regional ranking.



Five Films, Four Languages, One Day

Rio Hondo's Communications & Languages Division presents a day of free foreign films running from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Nov. 6 at the Wray Theater.

The series begins with a pair of Spanish language films. First, at 9 a.m., is "Sin Nombre" (Nameless), a Spanish documentary style film on the experiences of migrants who encounter gang violence, coyotes and other dangers as they cross into the U.S. Next, at 11:15 a.m., is "El secreto de sus ojos" (The Secret in Their Eyes), an Argentinian mystery tale.

At 2:30 p.m., "Les Choristes" (The Chorus) is a French tale of a music teacher whose unconventional methods inspire students at school dominated by harsh discipline. At 4:30 p.m., "Wrestling with Angels" is an American documentary about Pulitzer- and Tony Award-winning playwright Tony Kushner.

The day of films concludes at 7 p.m. with "Eat Drink Man Woman," a Chinese film about a master chef who has trouble reaching his self-involved children.