

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING DECEMBER 2014



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As 2014 draws to a close, I would like to express my gratitude to the Rio Hondo College family for your unwavering commitment to our students and the communities we serve. Because of your commitment, our year has been punctuated by moments of great collaboration, triumph and success.

Highlights of the year include witnessing our Freshman Success Center go into full swing, adoption of a Student Equity Plan that will target services where they are most needed,

seeing cadets of our Wildland Fire Academy help battle the devastating Colby blaze in Glendora and welcoming our Police Academy's 200th class.

Rio Hondo also signed a community pledge to help El Monte's youths achieve their full potential and more than 100 educators and students across the College helped prepare for our six-year accreditation review.

Rio Hondo was also chosen as one of the first community colleges in the state to participate in the Community Colleges Pathway to Law School Initiative, which helps smooth the journey to six of California's top law schools. The program, launched in the fall, enhances opportunities and advancement in the legal profession for diverse populations, particularly those that have been underrepresented.

In December, we added a capstone to those efforts with our official application to become one of 15 community colleges to pilot a four-year degree program. The Automotive Technology Bachelor of Science program designed by our Career and Technical Education team is an ambitious, comprehensive program that will not only benefit Rio Hondo students, but the state and nation's transportation industry.

It has been my pleasure to work together with you as a family as we achieved these and so many other successes, and there's no one I'd rather have at my side in 2015 as we pursue even greater achievements across our District.

Rio Hondo Submits Bid to Launch Bachelor of Science Degree in Auto Technology



Rio Hondo College has crafted a novel plan to train a new generation of tech-savvy transportation industry employees in its application to be one of 15 community colleges selected to offer four-year degrees through a statewide pilot program.

Students who complete the Bachelor of Science degree in Automotive Technology would position themselves uniquely for thousands of high-demand jobs in the automotive field or in similar posts at sea and rail transit companies.

"We've really tapped an area of strong interest. Students are already asking us how soon we could offer the program," said Mike Slavich, Rio Hondo College's Division Dean of Career and Technical Education programs. "It could be even bigger than we think."

In November, 36 colleges indicated they would apply to host one of the degree programs, which would launch by 2017-18 and sunset by July 2023.

The California Community Colleges Board of Governors is expected to select

up to 15 pilot schools by Jan. 21.

The pilot program requires community colleges to focus on high-demand tech-oriented fields, where it is estimated California needs 1 million more graduates to remain competitive. The legislation specifies such fields as health, biotech and public safety.

"Southern California offers an excellent market for these students' skills," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Our team has created an incredible program that, if adopted by the state, will be a true benefit not only to our students but to the state's economy for years to come."

The degree would equip graduates for posts with auto manufacturers, car dealers or aftermarket companies that modify vehicles – companies that typically demand four-year college degrees when hiring but which often have to train new employees because of the lack of comprehensive technical degree programs.

"These graduates would be well positioned not only for the auto industry, but also for jobs in the ports, airports and rail transportation systems," said Rio Hondo Professor Steve Tomory, who would be the faculty adviser for the program.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about the degree application in the *Los Angeles Times!*

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Board Update

Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees enjoyed a holiday musical interlude, recognized a departing public school superintendent and a retiring Rio Hondo administrator at its Dec. 10 meeting before selecting 2015 board officers and approving the College's 19th Associate of Arts for transfer program.



A trio of holiday favorites opened the board meeting, followed by the board's recognition of Nick Salerno, longtime superintendent of El Monte Union High School District. Salerno has partnered with Rio Hondo over his more than three decades as a public school leader.



Board members also bid farewell to Judy Pearson, Director of Admissions and Records. Pearson retired in December.

Trustees selected Madeline Shapiro as the College District's 2015

president, Vicky Santana as vice president and Norma E. Garcia as clerk. Santana served as president in 2014.

Board members adopted Rio Hondo College's 19th Associate of Arts for transfer program. The next step is approval from the Chancellor's Office. The program offers a degree in philosophy. Transferable programs guarantee California State University enrollment to community college students who otherwise meet admissions eligibility requirements.

In addition, completing the requirements of an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science transfer degree may bring a GPA bump when applying to an impacted campus or major.



Returning Student May Be College's Most Enthusiastic Cheerleader



William Ashby's first stab at college, at age 19, wasn't pretty.

At a college in north Los Angeles County, he enrolled in a hodge-podge of courses, had no idea what he hoped to achieve and eventually dropped out when tempted by a good-paying job.

Fast forward 20 years, and you'll find Ashby one of the most dedicated students at Rio Hondo College.

He's following a focused course of study, haunts his professors' offices, achieves nearly perfect grades and has dedicated himself to celebrating Rio Hondo through community service and social media.

So what's different?

"When I first started college, I just went to class to go to class," said Ashby, 40. "Now, I'm focused. College is the path to my ultimate goal, to become a counselor. That requires a high level of commitment."

A few factors brought Ashby to this realization, but perhaps the greatest was his son, William Jr., now 5.

"Now I'm not just thinking of my future," Ashby said. "I'm thinking of his future."

Ashby realized when William was 3 that he'd held 20 years of dead-end jobs, from real estate agent to loan officer, from overseeing loan modifications to working for law offices. Some jobs paid well – and some paid really, really well. But they weren't fulfilling.

Returning to college meant a major dip in financial status, but the reward of a stable career helping people and, in turn, helping show his son a strong life path, trumped the lure of a quick buck.

A resident of La Puente, Ashby said he considered more than one junior college. He quickly found Rio Hondo to be a warm, family-oriented community where people look out for each other. Nearly every week, he meets a staff member who provides him with some critical help.

His plan is to finish at Rio Hondo next year and transfer to a four-year college to complete his training to be a counselor.

And those grades? Aside from a B in an online history class that gnaws at Ashby even today, he's aced class after class, taking every opportunity to connect with his teachers along the way.

In his first year, Ashby was hired by the College as a student assistant.

The job brought him right into the center of campus life, working alongside student senators and the executive council of the Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC). Now in the second year of his three-year program, he serves as the ASRHC senator for community service – a role he has wholeheartedly embraced.

Students familiar with Rio Hondo's efforts can quickly pick out Ashby, broad grin lighting up his face, as he manages blood drives, arranges speakers for a domestic violence awareness event, fundraises for an AIDS walk or gathers cans of food for needy families.

He pitches ASRHC programs during his own classes, finds time to visit evening classes – students who may not have strong connections to the school because of their schedules – and regularly pops in at club meetings to promote community service events.

And Ashby isn't shy about shouting his praise for the support his efforts receive via his already iconic Twitter handle, Proud Student@IHeartRioHondo.

"I really love this College and I genuinely want to help people know just how wonderful a place it is," Ashby said.

Toy Donations from Rio Hondo College Students, Staff Help Brighten Children's Holidays



Rio Hondo College's Associated Students gathered more than 100 new toys during a collection drive in early December, helping to brighten the holidays for children in California's Central Valley.

During the drive, students were urged to provide unwrapped toys in specially provided gift boxes, identifying them for boys or girls and by age. Of especially concern was the need for toys for boys ages 10 to 12.

"It was really important for us to be able to provide toys so these children had something to open on Christmas, something that would be a smile on their faces," said Rio Hondo student William Ashby, who serves as the ASRHC senator for community service.

Toys were distributed by Navidad en Baja, which provides toys to needy children in the Central Valley as well as in border cities in California and Mexico.

Ashby said the drive followed the group's highly successful canned food drive, which generated more than 300 cans of food in November.

Rio Hondo College Students Donate 175 Bags, Suitcases and Backpacks to Foster Youths

A push to benefit foster youths generated more than 175 backpacks, suitcases and other luggage during the Rio Hondo College Leaders for Change's first Case of Hope collection drive.

More than 70 of the bags were distributed during a special Dec. 6 lunch event held at Rio Hondo College by the club with the rest given away the following week in response to a flurry of requests from foster youths and caretakers.

Many foster youths transitioning from home to home often carry their belongings in trash bags and must leave behind treasured personal possessions. In addition, youths who "age out" of foster care aren't provided luggage when they must leave their foster homes.

"We want to provide children and youth in foster care with something, even if it's small, that they can keep with them, something stable of their own that can hold their stuff," said Leaders for Change President Erika Murillo, a former foster youth.

The idea came from club member Rachel Chavez, a second-year Rio Hondo Drug Studies and Human Services double major who is interning with Concept 7 Foster Family Agency in Whittier.

"Through my internship, I learned about the social stigmas associated with foster youth and thought about how awful it would be to leave home or show up at a new home with just a trash bag full of personal belongings," Chavez said.

Leaders for Change, formed this fall, collaborated with the staff of Rio Hondo's Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) and Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success (YESS) programs, which provide foster youth with priority registration, counseling and life skills workshops, youth mentors, computer and printer services and other support.

Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said the drive is emblematic of how Rio Hondo students view their role in the community.

"I'm very proud of our students for seeing this need and addressing it so swiftly and effectively," Dreyfuss said. "Many of these students are in Rio Hondo study programs that will take them into careers in social service and child welfare. This experience underscores the lessons in compassion that are as much a part of our vocational training as academics."



17th Annual CARE Lunch Brings Holidays to Families of Disadvantaged Students

Being a single parent can be financially challenging around the holidays. Add to that the costs and responsibilities of being a college student with scarce financial resources, and it can be overwhelming.

That's why Rio Hondo College's Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) hosted its 17th annual "Adopt-A-Child" event from Dec. 17 at the Rio Café on campus.

The festive holiday luncheon – a Rio Hondo tradition – is an opportunity for economically disadvantaged students with young children to enjoy a holiday celebration, complete with a visit from Santa Claus, and to receive gifts courtesy of the Rio Hondo College community.

For some, it represents the only holiday celebration they may have.

The CARE program is part of the College's Extended Opportunity Program and Services office (EOP&S), dedicated to aiding students who face economic and educational challenges. CARE serves low-income, single-parent students who are challenged by attending school full time while raising children.

About 80 full-time student-parents with more than 120 children participate in the program.

"Our CARE holiday event is one of many great examples of how Rio Hondo College supports students in ways that go beyond academics," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss.

Each year, the EOP&S office sets up a Christmas tree decorated with holiday cards from CARE students with photos and pertinent information about each child. Faculty, staff and community members are invited to "adopt" a child by taking a card from the "Giving Tree" and returning a wrapped gift to place underneath. The gifts were given to the children at the holiday luncheon.

"It's always a moving experience to see how this event lights up children's faces and brings so much hope to families," said Heba Griffiths, Director of EOP&S/CARE.

This year, former Rio Hondo student Antoinette Nolasco, who participated in the CARE program, shared her experiences during the lunch.

When Nolasco enrolled in Rio Hondo College in 2002 – a single mother of children ages 6, 5 and 3 – she was terrified.

"I didn't even know how to format a paper," she recalled. "I remember coming home from school to little ones who needed my attention, and having to do homework. That was hard."

Rio Hondo's CARE program provided Nolasco with priority enrollment, individual educational and personal counseling, financial assistance with books and school supplies, lunch vouchers and access to self-help workshops.

"Because of the CARE program, I was able to get the support I needed to get through



college," Nolasco said.

With that support, Nolasco earned an Associate of Arts degree from Rio Hondo, a Bachelor of Arts in Human Services from The University of Phoenix, and a Master of Social Work from Azusa Pacific University.

"I used to have a social worker. Now I am one," she said.

Save The Date



Monday, Jan. 5: Intersession begins

6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 14:
Board of Trustees meeting

Monday, Jan. 19: College closed
for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Thursday, Jan. 22: Graduation of 200th
class from Rio Hondo Police Academy,
San Gabriel Mission Playhouse

Thursday, Jan. 29: Intersession ends

Monday, Feb. 2: Spring semester begins

Community Educational Forums

6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22:
Community Educational Forum, El Monte
Educational Center, 3017 Tyler Ave., El Monte

6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19: Community
Educational Forum, STEAM Academy/Burke
Middle School, 8101 Orange Ave., Pico Rivera

6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19:
Community Educational Forum, Whittier
High School, 12417 Philadelphia St., Whittier

6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 9: Community
Educational Forum, Los Nietos Middle School,
11425 Rivera Road, Whittier

6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 23: Community
Educational Forum, East Whittier Middle School,
14421 E. Whittier Blvd., Whittier

Sports Events

2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27: Women's tennis
scrimmage vs. Fullerton College at Fullerton

2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27: Women's softball
vs. L.A. Mission College at L.A. Mission

Tuesday, Jan. 27 to Thursday, Jan. 29: Men's
baseball plays in the South Coast Tournament

2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29: Women's tennis
scrimmage vs. San Diego Mesa College at
SD Mesa

Noon Saturday, Jan. 31: Men's baseball
vs Glendale College at Rio Hondo

Friday, Jan. 30, Saturday Jan. 31: Women's
softball plays in Glendale Tournament

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 **#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

Holiday Celebrations

Rio Hondo College held its annual Holiday Open House on Wednesday, Dec. 10. More than 200 guests dropped by to share holiday cheer and greet College leaders. On Dec. 4, approximately 135 Rio Hondo College family members also attended the Faculty Holiday Luncheon at Swiss Park. The food was delicious and the program was short and sweet.



Rio Hondo Receives \$120,000 for Teacher Training in STEM Fields

Rio Hondo College has been selected as one of 10 community colleges to receive \$120,000 each to help improve recruitment and training of teachers in science, technology, math and science (STEM).

As part of the program, the College will provide students with opportunities to be teacher assistants in STEM courses, develop internships and work-experience courses, promote teaching as a career pathway for students in Career and Technical Education courses, and collaborate with the University of California and California State University systems to streamline transfers of students who wish to be teachers.

California's demand for new math and science teachers in the next 10 years is expected to exceed 33,000, far surpassing the number of STEM teachers that the state is expected to produce. In addition, an estimated 51,500 openings for elementary school teachers and 31,100 jobs for secondary school teachers will occur statewide between 2010 and 2020.

Additional grants are expected to follow the initial award, including competitive grants focusing on software coding and programming skills.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about the grant in the *Whittier Daily News!*