

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2015



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

The first two months of 2015 were momentous for Rio Hondo, and a strong sign that extraordinary things are in store for our College.

Rio Hondo's proposal for a four-year degree in automotive technology is one of 15 to receive an initial approval from the California Community Colleges Board of Governors. This is a great validation of how well we are pursuing our mission to ensure our students receive the best educational opportunities possible.

Our choice to submit a plan for automotive technology engaged a vast number of College faculty, staff and administrators, who had a tough task selecting the program from amid other strong contenders.

I am proud and grateful to everyone who contributed to this historic undertaking and look forward to Rio Hondo College being the only community college in the state to offer a bachelor's degree in automotive technology.

In addition, January marked the graduation of the 200th class of cadets from the Rio Hondo Police Academy under the leadership of Director Walter Allen III. Congratulations to Director Allen, Dean of Public Safety Dr. Nash Flores, Associate Dean of Public Safety Don Mason and the entire Public Safety Team for a job well done.

January and February also featured the first two of five community educational forums. The forums are a chance for the College to share information about the outstanding educational and career pathways, honors and transfer programs, and student services; and to gather feedback from the community.

The sessions, held at the Rio Hondo College El Monte Educational Center and the STEAM Academy/Burke Middle School, offered engaging and informative presentations and viewpoints. Community members joined in the discussion, leading to a new level of understanding of their needs. The College looks forward to the remaining three forums to help deepen the conversation.

Then, to cap matters off, Rio Hondo received news in February that the College's accreditation was reaffirmed for six more years. This is yet another message endorsing the strong work we've done together to promote student success in all of our programs.

Rio Hondo Chosen to Offer Four-Year Bachelor's Degree

Rio Hondo College is one of 15 California community colleges granted initial approval by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors in January to offer a four-year degree as part of a historic statewide pilot program.

The program will undergo additional review by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office before the Board of Governors considers final approval in March.

Thirty-four campuses sought approval of degrees in the program, authorized by Senate Bill 850 as a way to train a new generation of graduates for high-demand technical jobs that increasingly require bachelor degrees.

Rio Hondo College has proposed creating a Bachelor of Science degree in automotive technology that would position students for jobs in the automotive field and comparable posts at sea and rail transit companies.

"We are proud and humbled to be among those helping to lead this innovative new educational program," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Our selection is a testament to the strength of Rio Hondo's programs, especially our Automotive Technology Program."

RIO IN THE NEWS! Rio Hondo's selection as the only community college in the San Gabriel Valley region to participate in the pilot program drew an unprecedented level of media coverage from Telemundo, KTLA, KCAL and others. View further coverage from KNBC, the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*, *Whittier Daily News* and *Mid Valley News*.

Under SB 850, signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in early October, community colleges must launch their bachelor programs by 2017-18 and sunset them by July 2023. Programs could be started as early as fall 2015, and the legislature and governor may renew the pilot effort after review.

Rio Hondo's Bachelor of Science degree would build on the school's highly successful Automotive Technology Program, which draws 300 students annually for a series of certificate courses and two-year degree options. Enrollment in the program has climbed about 20 percent over the last five years as new components – including courses in alternative fuels – have been added.

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Board Update



Rio Hondo College's students in career technical education programs posted a 51 percent success rate in figures used for the 2014 California Community College student success scorecard, trustees

learned during the Jan. 14 board meeting.

The number is one of the strongest outcomes reported for Rio Hondo students tracked as a cohort over six years, according to Dean of Institutional Research and Planning Howard Kummerman.

"This is an area we're exceling in and where we're comparable to state figures," Kummerman said.

Kummerman provided a review of the 2014 report, noting the 2015 report is due out within a few months.

He added as a caveat that the students described by the report enrolled in 2007, long before Rio Hondo expanded programs designed to support students as they pursued their educational goals. For example, the College launched a First-Year Success Center in fall 2014.

"We expect, over the next few years, we'll see a shift as the numbers begin to reflect the programs we've launched in recent years," Kummerman said.

Kummerman said the College's Student Success Task Force has created student cohorts of its own that mirror those used by the community college system, allowing it to create interim success reports without waiting for final cohort statistics to be reported. The data will help the College to customize the support it provides as well as to monitor how those students meet Rio Hondo's institutional goals.

Commission Reaffirms Rio Hondo College's Accreditation

Rio Hondo College received a six-year Reaffirmation of Accreditation in February from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, a division of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

RIO IN THE NEWS! Read about Rio Hondo College's accreditation reaffirmation in the *Whittier Daily News* and the *Wave*.

The action came one month after the Commission reviewed the reports of a visiting team that conducted a four-day site visit in fall 2014 and a 353-page self-evaluation compiled by more than 100 faculty, staff and students at Rio Hondo College.

"This is a clear and public recognition of the strength of the programs Rio Hondo offers its communities and the spirit of service that drives our commitment to student success," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "We couldn't be more pleased with the Commission's validation of what we are achieving at Rio Hondo College."

Dreyfuss thanked Rio Hondo's Board of Trustees, administrative team, faculty and staff for their exhaustive efforts on behalf of the more than 20,000 students the College serves annually in the communities of El Monte, Whittier, South El Monte, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Los Nietos and unincorporated areas.

An oral report from the Commission's site visiting team had given the College 10 commendations, and praised Rio Hondo for exhibiting a "collegial spirit, along with enthusiasm for student success, which shines through all endeavors, action and activities."

The oral report specifically called out the College's multi-faced approach to ensuring student success, including its community partnerships and counseling programs. It also noted Rio Hondo's strong fiscal stewardship and the College's state and nationally recognized programs, including those in career technical education.

Howard Kummerman, Dean of Institutional Research and Planning, said Rio Hondo College continually pursues efforts to deepen the academic options it provides students.

"We are engaged in a number of programs to ensure our students have the greatest possible opportunities to succeed," said Kummerman, who serves as the College's accreditation liaison officer. "This reaffirmation of our accreditation is a striking endorsement that we are pursuing effective paths to reaching those goals."

Academic Senate President Vann Priest said the Commission's visiting team was right on target in citing the College's unified commitment to student success.

"That's our central strength – from faculty and staff to administrators and students. We all care deeply about this institution," said Priest, a physics professor who co-chaired the College's accreditation leadership and governance team.



RHC Fire Academy Coordinator Shares Passion, Experience with Students



Tracy Rickman has battled fires and aided people in crisis across the globe – as part of the U.S. Air Force, as an aerospace industry employee and as a Southern California city fire inspector.

These days, he shares his passion and experience with the students of Rio Hondo College, where an ever-expanding suite of emergency services programs coordinated by Rickman are marking the College as one of the nation's premier training grounds for firefighters and first responders.

"Our students come here motivated to be the best, and we offer guidance to ensure they achieve their goals," said Rickman, who coordinates Rio Hondo's emergency medical technician, homeland security, wildland and fire training programs. "We tell our students that if they're successful, then we're successful."

Rickman enlisted in the U.S. Air Force out of high school and served eight years as an Air Force firefighter. After his service, he worked for nearly eight years as assistant chief of operations and training for Northrop Grumman Corp.'s B2 division in Pico Rivera. Following that, he worked at the City of South Pasadena as a fire inspector for four years.

In 1997, he came to Rio Hondo, and over the last 18 years he has helped to expand the College's fire training programs.

In 2000, the College added its wildland fire academy. Today, the College's wildland hand crew works alongside the U.S. Forest Service during the fire season, gaining invaluable experience as they help dig fire lines with a variety of hands tools. In 2006, the College added its Annual Regional Truck Academy, which provides an intensive two-week program to experienced firefighters.

Now, Rickman is working on an outline for a two-year degree in homeland security with an emphasis on emergency management.

Still, his greatest pleasure in the job – part of what gets him up for the 4:30 a.m. controlled live-fire burns after 18 years – comes from the students.

"I get up in the morning excited to be here, excited to train these young people," he said. "I appreciate the opportunity to share my experiences, to share my stories and to ensure that when these students leave Rio Hondo, they have all the tools they need to be successful."

Firefighters Learn Advanced Techniques at Regional Truck Academy

Four dozen firefighters from across the nation hewed their way through structures with axes and chainsaws this week as they engaged in advanced training through Rio Hondo College's annual Regional Truck Academy in Santa Fe Springs. The 88-hour training program in January provided a mix of instructional lectures and visual hands-on exercises.

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



Rio Hondo Police Academy 200th Class Celebrates Graduation

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about the Police Academy graduation in the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*.

Rio Hondo College leaders and public safety officials from across Los Angeles are praising the graduates of Rio Hondo College's Police Academy Class 200 for their determination and commitment in completing one of the state's most rigorous training programs.

More than 400 guests and family members filled the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse for a Jan. 22 graduation ceremony that included performances by the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association Multi-Agency Honor Guard and Los Angeles Police Emerald Society Pipes and Drum Corp, and a keynote address by Gardena Police Chief Ed Medrano, former president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association.

The cadets completed more than 1,000 hours of training over 26 weeks in 43 areas, including firearm use and physical fitness in a program that carries the motto "Only the Strong Survive" and which is similar in some respects to a military boot camp.

"Each and every member of Class 200 has endured six months of intensive training," said Rio Hondo Police Academy Director Walter Allen III. "A typical journey: they started out with 46; there's only 19. Occasionally slipping and falling, none of them gave in and none of them gave up."

Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said the cadets join the ranks of hundreds of police officers successfully prepared by the academy since 1964.

Chief Medrano praised the College for its partnership with the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association in ensuring the rigor of the academy's training program. He said police departments today require more from officers than ever before.

"You're not only going to face the role of being a crime fighter, you will face the role of being a guardian, a protector, a social worker, a friend, a leader in your communities," Medrano said.

Class President Eric Reyes-Quintanar spoke about values learned during the program.

"We learned what the meaning of 'Only the Strong Survive' is. But more importantly, though, we learned how to become a family. We started this journey as strangers and we leave today as family," he said.

Dreyfuss handed the cadets their certificates, including Reyes-Quintanar. The cadet's eyes filled with tears during the emotion-filled exchange.

"It was a very touching moment," Dreyfuss said. "It brought home just what a significant accomplishment it is to graduate from this program."



200 Attend Annual Bentley Bash Tech Party

More than 200 architects, civil engineers and students considering those careers were treated to an intimate glimpse of the emerging technology and software critical to creating designs of the future during the seventh annual Bentley Bash, held Jan. 16 and 17 at Rio Hondo College.

Hosted by Bentley Systems, a worldwide leader in infrastructure development software, the Bentley Bash offered cutting-edge training, a peek at the latest Bentley products and a chance for prospective students in the College's Architecture, Civil, Engineering Design Drafting, Computer Assisted Design and Geographic Information Systems program to rub shoulders with professionals.

The event was co-hosted by Archway Systems, the Huntington Beach supplier of Bentley products whose strong relationship with Rio Hondo's ACEDD-CAD program makes the yearly tech party possible.

"This is an event that benefits the local community and helps current industry," said Rio Hondo Professor Jay Sunyogh, ACEDD-CAD program coordinator and lead instructor.

"Those joining the school get a tremendous value, a chance to learn skills that can get them jobs anywhere in the country. Others come to receive software training and catch a glimpse of the future."

More than 20 training sessions – from basic topics to advanced instruction – were held in various subjects. About a quarter of those attending were former Rio Hondo students returning for follow-up training.

It was the first visit to the campus for about half the attendees, and a number of those folks have expressed interest in Rio Hondo's ACEDD-CAD program, Sunyogh said.



Rio Hondo Launches Community Educational Forums

More than 100 community members and prospective students learned about Rio Hondo College programs and shared their perspectives College services Jan. 22 at the El Monte Educational Center (EMEC) during the first of five community educational forums.

The event featured a number of engaging discussions about Rio Hondo's offerings, including its new four-year Automotive Technology degree, First-Year Success Center and Pathway to Law School initiative. It was attended by College trustees, administrators, faculty and staff.

"These events are a critical tool to gain new insights into how well we serve our community and what we could do better," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "Our January forum was no exception: Community members provided us with excellent feedback."

Each session will begin with a short general address followed by a trio of breakout stations in which College leaders will share with community members about campus initiatives. During the forums, prospective students may meet faculty from the College's nursing, fire, police and auto technology divisions and staff from student services such as the Financial Aid Department and the First-Year Success Center.

The forums are the first held by Rio Hondo College since spring 2012, when a series of forums at local high schools provided community insight that helped validate deeper investments by the College into counseling and other support services for first-year students.

"We are thrilled to be able to provide this opportunity to our community, especially to students who now are considering their college options or will be in the future," said Madeline Shapiro, president of the Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees.

Each forum will run from 6 to 7:30 p.m., include a light snack, and a chance to win a Kindle Fire.

The remaining three sessions will be held as follows:

► **Thursday, March 19**

Whittier High School
12417 Philadelphia St., Whittier

► **Thursday, April 9**

Los Nietos Middle School
11425 Rivera Road, Whittier

► **Thursday, April 23**

East Whittier Middle School
14421 E. Whittier Blvd., Whittier



Popular Nursing Assistant Program Offers Advanced Training Classes

Rio Hondo College, home to one of the state's most successful community college nursing assistant certification programs, offers a rare opportunity for nursing assistants to deepen their training through a pair of special programs.

The programs offer for-credit training in the home health and acute care fields through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on clinical experience structured so students can also take other classes toward their earning degrees.

"Programs like this are rare at the community college level," said Nursing Instructor Patricia Luna, who also serves as the coordinator of Entry Level Nursing Programs. "They can give students a leg up in their careers and in their pursuit of advanced degrees."

Luna, a registered nurse with a Master of Science in Nursing as well as certificates in oncology and public health nursing, launched the certificated nursing assistant (CNA) program at Rio Hondo in 2008.

That first year, 15 students enrolled in a 16-week training course offered once a year. But the program quickly swelled to capacity, with 90 students now taking the course in fall and spring, thanks in part to a grant provided by the Arthur Rupe Foundation.

The program is also highly effective. In each of the last four certification testing cycles, 100 percent of Rio Hondo's students sitting for the state-administered exam passed the test. The most recent exams were given in December.

"It's really a credit to the students – their diligence and application of what they've been taught," Luna said.

Now, Luna is hoping to expand access to Rio Hondo's increasingly popular home health aide and acute care programs, which are open to community members who possess CNA status.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about the nursing program in the *Mid Valley News*.

The home health aide course emphasizes rehabilitative nursing care, family relationships and understanding the impact of long-term illness on the family as well as the client. Rio Hondo students conduct clinical work at El Encanto Healthcare and Habilitation Center in Industry. Students who pass the course will receive state certification for home health aides.

The acute care course emphasizes medical/surgical needs, orthopedics, pediatrics and obstetrics. The class includes communication, patient observation, reporting and recording training as well as reinforcement of the CNA basic-care procedures. Students conduct clinical work at Beverly Hospital in Montebello as well as at PIH Health and Whittier Hospital in Whittier.

Increasingly, California's highly crowded nursing degree programs are seeking students who have already CNA and other basic training levels, Luna said. CNA status also helps boost a student's chance of enrolling in Rio Hondo College's popular nursing programs.

In addition, high school students who have earned their CNA status are eligible for fee waivers at Rio Hondo, eliminating all program costs aside purchase of uniforms and physicals.



RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about the nursing program in *NTDTV*.

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RioHondo_College



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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

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 associate degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.



Save The Date

Community Educational Forums

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

Campus Calendar

2 p.m. Tuesday, March 3:

Baseball vs. Chaffey College

7 p.m. Thursday, March 5:

Fifth Annual Forensics
Showcase, Wray Theater

6 p.m. Wednesday, March 11:

Board of Trustees meeting

7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 14:

Musical performance of
"Dulce Et Decorum Est"
by Project Eranos, Wray Theater

Monday, March 30 to

Saturday, April 4:

Spring Break

RIO HONDO COLLEGE
Community Educational Forums 2015

Why Rio?

- Learn about Rio Hondo College's Student Services, Transfer Center, Honors Program, Career Pathways, Athletics and more.
- Meet faculty from our top-notch Nursing, Public Safety, Auto Tech, Kinesiology, Dance & Athletics divisions, and more.

QUESTIONS:
Call (562) 908-3403 or email outreach@riohondo.edu

Refreshments will be served. Opportunities to win prizes!

JAN 22 El Monte Educational Center
3017 Tyler Ave. • El Monte, CA 91731 (corner of Tyler Ave. & Concord St.)
District Area 1 - City of El Monte & District Area 3 - City of South El Monte & City of Whittier

FEB 19 STEAM Academy/Burke Middle School
8101 Orange Ave. • Pico Rivera, CA 90660
District Area 2 - City of Pico Rivera

MAR 19 Whittier High School
12417 Philadelphia St. • Whittier, CA 90601 (corner of Philadelphia St. & Whittier Ave.)
District Area 3 - City of South El Monte City of Whittier & District Area 2 - City of Pico Rivera

APR 9 Los Nietos Middle School
11425 Rivera Rd. • Whittier, CA 90606 (corner of Rivera Rd. and Alvarado Ave.)
District Area 4 - City of Los Nietos, City of Santa Fe Springs, City of So. Whittier & City of Tin. Rancho

APR 23 East Whittier Middle School
14421 E. Whittier Blvd. • Whittier, CA 90605 (corner of Whittier Blvd. & Catalina Ave.)
District Area 5 - City of East Whittier

Forums will be held from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Committed to Student Success Lifelong Learning
Educational Opportunity Diversity and Equity

Stay tuned for more Save the Date events in Arts & Cultural Programs, Communications & Languages, and Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics in the next President's Update.