

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING JUNE 2015



## President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Even as we mark the end of the 2014-15 academic year with goodbyes to long-time friends and colleagues, our college community is hard at work preparing for what promises to be an extraordinary 2015-16 with new programs and projects to help our students pursue their career and educational goals.

We recently added our 19<sup>th</sup> associate's degree guaranteeing graduates acceptance at CSU campuses and priority consideration within their field of study. The degree, in philosophy, was approved in May by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's

Office. Meanwhile, our team is finalizing the details for six new Degrees for Transfer.

Fall will also see enrollment begin in lower-division courses in our four-year Bachelor of Science in Automotive Technology as well as the second year of our Pathway to Law School Initiative, which had a strong launch in 2014-15.

Together, these programs help to highlight the myriad ways in which Rio Hondo College helps guide students toward their ultimate goals, whether those require a career certification, four-year degree or even post-graduate study, such as a law degree.

They also demonstrate the commitment, once again, of the educators at Rio Hondo to continue innovating as we customize our program to serve as many student needs as possible.

## Rio Hondo College Alum Brings West to Life



A campfire's brilliant orange glow illuminates a congregation of Western critters gathered to share tall tales and even taller tails.

A cowboy's hat melds into the head of a barking dog while a cowgirl's boots rocket her into the sky.

A roadrunner races past a languorous tortoise against a yellow and brown desert.

Each image is different, but all are united in their whimsical style and wild appeal to

children in Joel Nakamura's new children's picture book, "Go West!"

Nakamura, a Rio Hondo College alum and son of former teacher and administrator Yosh Nakamura, focused his newest creation on the imagery and folklore of the American West, creating themes from his rich imagination and cleverly twisting clichéd ideas until they could speak anew.

"The west has always been a place of dreams," said Nakamura, 55. "It's a journey into the frontier of the imagination."

That's a destination with which Nakamura is intimately familiar.

The artist resides in picturesque Santa Fe, New Mexico with his wife and two children. But he started his artistic journey in Whittier.

Nakamura attended California High and, at the same time, began taking art classes at Rio Hondo College. After high school, he continued at Rio Hondo before attending the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, graduating in 1982. He launched a career as a commercial and fine artist, lending his vision to a variety of public and private projects.

For his new book, Nakamura hand-painted each tableau, adding texture and intimate details with his brush that are hard to replicate in the world of digital art.

The pages urge readers to Go West and discover an amazing world – one where "the birds run fast and time runs slow ... where the stars are bright and the moon is close ... where thorns and horns are everywhere ... where rocks tell stories."

Nakamura is excited about his latest foray into the fiercely competitive children's book market.

"In this book, I show the West in a way that is different and fun. The idea is that children will discover something new in the pictures each time they look it over."



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# Board Update

Rio Hondo College Trustees on June 10 learning of burgeoning interest in the College's Pathway to Law School, recognized a community duo for their service, reviewed the tentative 2015-16 budget and welcomed new representatives for faculty, staff and students.

## Distinguished Service Award

Trustees singled out Ruth and John Gonzales to receive the 2015 Distinguished Service Award for their unceasing efforts on behalf of South El Monte. Both are Rio Hondo College alums, as are their three children. And both have served their community in a variety of roles for decades.

John Gonzales, a bindery operator, was elected to the South El Monte City Council and elected as mayor in 1984.

Ruth Gonzales, a long-time teacher, was elected in 1995 to the Valle Lindo School District Board of Trustees – a post she still holds today at age 85. She also helped Rio Hondo choose one president and served on the College's El Monte/South El Monte Educational Center Advisory Committee. She also was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 2008.



## Pathway to Law School

The Pathway to Law School Initiative was launched in 2014-15 at Rio Hondo and 23 other community college campuses. But Rio Hondo's quick and comprehensive approach quickly drew the attention of not only students, but local, regional and national media as well as the participating other campuses.

Pathway Coordinator Vicenta Maffris told the board that the College is being sought out for its best practices by the other campuses even as it has drawn inquiries from more than 150 students.

The program helps students earn their two-year associate degrees at Rio Hondo, bachelor degrees at four-year universities and then three-year law degrees at one of six prestigious California law schools with which the College has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in what is known as a 2+2+3 program.

In its first year, program leaders gave more than 30 classroom presentations and nine information sessions, fielding an average of three inquiries a week. The program also received priority registration status for participants, helped form a student pre-law society and launched a website.

Rio Hondo also launched a new course in law and democracy, and staged two forums on the legal profession, including one this spring featuring a trio of local judges.

## 2015-16 Tentative Budget

Rio Hondo's tentative 2015-16 budget includes \$89.8 million in estimated expenditures and maintains a reserve of 7.6 percent. The College anticipates a 1.02 percent cost-of-living adjustment and 1 percent growth; increased operating funds are expected to cover rising retirement costs. The California legislature is committed to student success and equity, so the College expects funding to continue to rise in this area.

The College is expected to adopt the budget at the September board meeting.

## New Board Meeting Representatives Welcomed

Trustees also welcomed the 2015-16 leaders in the College's mission to provide its students with every possible avenue to success. They included:

- Melissa DeLeon, Student Trustee
- William Ashby, Associated Student President
- Robert Bethel, Academic Senate President
- Sergio Guzman, Faculty Association President
- Sandra Rivera, California School Employee Association Chapter President





# Poetry Lures Former Nurse into Teaching Career

Credit a college professor – several of them, in fact – for diverting Beverly Reilly from her plans to become a nursing administrator 29 years ago.

Reilly, an RN, had returned to college for a bachelor's degree after 25 years on the front lines of patient care. But when her Cal State Long Beach professor learned she had never completed her general education requirements in English, he urged her to attend a community college to obtain the credits.



That's where she fell in love with Walt Whitman's unique American voice, and where other professors recognized her blossoming love for the English word, and suggested a career change.

Reilly listened, launching a journey into academia that brought her to Rio Hondo College in 1998, and which in turn brought her students a wealth of new opportunities to find their own voices – opportunities that will continue long after her June retirement.

"I don't remember reading poetry a lot as a child," Reilly recalled. "I always thought poetry was elitist. And then I read Walt Whitman."

Reilly obtained her English credits, transferred to UC Irvine for her bachelor's degree and continued her schooling until she earned her master's degree from Cal State Long Beach in 1993. After four years of part-time work and three applications, she landed a full-time gig at Rio Hondo College.

"I love this campus," Reilly said. "It's beautiful up here on the hill, the teachers are dedicated and the students are filled with curiosity."

Helping to seal the deal: As she departed the campus one day, Reilly was captivated by the sight of a magnificent stag standing off the road, regally observing her as she passed.

Reilly taught composition classes, American literature and African-American literature. Urged by her department bosses, she also plunged quickly into activities outside of the classroom.

The first of these was a student literary magazine.

The idea came to her as she read through piece after piece of student work for her classes – writing too enthralling to remain hidden. So Reilly began pushing the idea of a literary magazine. Her infectious passion drew supporters, money and expertise. Before long, the River's Voice Literary Magazine came to be. Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, the magazine annually showcases student writing and artwork.

Reilly also left her stamp on the campus with her advocacy for instructors through the Academic Senate, which she led on three occasions. She helped create the 16-week semester, allowing for a winter session, and pushed for writing classes for non-writing majors to ensure all students emerged with the communication skills needed for their careers.

Her work with students through the Writers' Resource Center has also made its mark – allowing Reilly to share her passion for the written word far beyond the walls of her classroom, according to Dr. Robert Holcomb, Dean of Communications and Languages.

"Her ability to connect with people and provide campus leadership has been admirable," Holcomb said.

Reilly said she remains as committed today to Rio Hondo's mission as when she began. But, after a second full career, she thought it was time to give up the exhausting daily commute and full-time schedule.

Maybe, she notes, the extra time will allow her to devote new energy to her own writing – and perhaps yet another legacy will be in the making.

## Diversity Committee to Coordinate Outreach Effort

After the successful debut in spring of Rio Hondo's first-ever Men of Color Conference, the College is launching a diversity committee to pursue additional efforts to promote success among students who may struggle in their efforts to secure a college degree.

The diversity committee will host the College's first Women of Color conference in 2015-16, its second Men of Color Conference as well as efforts for returning and disabled students.

"This committee will help coordinate efforts to provide targeted services to our students and direct outreach as a complement to our first-year student center and other, existing programs designed to promote success for all of our students," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss.

The Men of Color Conference, for example, provided four workshops focused on specific hurdles to college and career success: finances, appearance, setting goals and identifying role models, said Dr. Sergio Guzman, Basic Skills Coordinator in Rio Hondo College's Office of Student Success & Retention.

The event, held May 8, drew 80 attendees.

"We held the conference after our review of student equity issues showed Men of Color faced greater challenges in completing their associate, bachelor and doctoral degrees," Guzman said. "We wanted to illustrate ways to overcome some of those challenges. It was the first time we've ever held such a conference – and we hope the program becomes an annual event."

Guzman said the diversity committee is expected to hold its first meeting over the summer.



# Rio Hondo Reviews Five-Year Construction Plan

Renovation of the library tower, the relocation of the campus Bookstore/Copy Center, and plans for a Rio Plaza form the current focus of Rio Hondo's ongoing efforts to improve and update the hilltop campus, according to the annual Five-Year Construction Report given in June.

## Approved and funded

Seismic and code upgrades for the 1966 library tower were approved for state funding in the 2014-15 budget cycle. The project, now in construction design stages, will improve accessibility, energy and fire safety. The interior will feature new elevators, fire alarms, and electrical, lighting, heating, cooling and data systems; the redesigned exterior will include contemporary glass panels.

Also in design stages are locally funded efforts to redesign the former Admissions & Records areas to relocate the bookstore and copy center, and plans to create a new entry area along Workman Mill Road dubbed Rio Plaza. Rio Plaza will provide the College with a new public face and serve as a multi-transit and information area as well as a welcome center for students and guests.

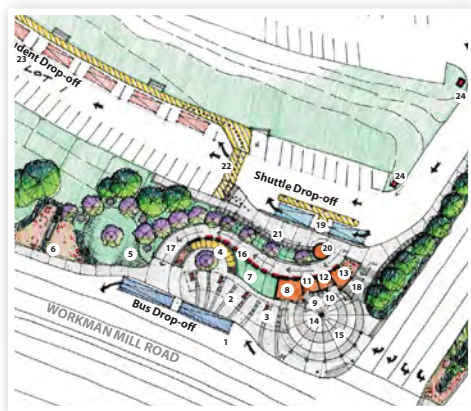
Two additional locally funded projects are in the conceptual phase: A Pico Rivera Educational Center and a remodel of the Science Building.

The College recently completed its Veterans Memorial and construction is underway to expand the soccer field to NCAA specifications and to improve accessibility. The field is expected to be ready for play by December 2015. Both projects were locally funded by Measure A.

## Awaiting state funding

Each year, the College is allowed to submit one project for state funding. This year, that project is the Fine Arts Center, if state bond funding is available. The new building, which will replace the 50-year-old Campus Inn, will form a performing arts complex along with the Wray Theater and Music Building.

The project, which College leaders hope to receive 50 percent funding from the state, is up for consideration in the 2015-16 budget cycle.



# Law Enforcement Officers, College Community Pay Tribute to Fallen Officer

Covina Police Officer Jordan J. Corder's name was added to Rio Hondo College's Police Academy Memorial Wall on May 27 during a moving ceremony attended by Corder's family, College leaders and dozens of law enforcement officers from across Southern California.



Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss welcomed guests assembled to honor Corder, 28, of Fontana, who died of injuries received when his motorcycle was struck by an SUV during a pursuit on Sept. 30, 2014. Corder was a 2008 graduate of the Academy's 185th class.

"The Rio Hondo Police Academy was founded in 1964 and it has a proud history of honoring its fallen officers," Dreyfuss said. "Jordan will be the 24th officer to be enrolled on the Rio Hondo Police Academy Memorial Wall and we will pay tribute to his sacrifice from this day forward."

During the ceremony, Rio Hondo College Associate Dean of Public Safety Don Mason gave a history of the memorial wall. The first name was posted in 1967; the most recent went up in 2005.

The ceremony, coordinated by Police Academy Director Walter Allen III, included a performance by the Los Angeles Emerald Society Pipe and Drum Corps as well as the traditional rendition of "Taps" at the program's conclusion.



View a video of the memorial wall induction.

# Save The Date



## Tuesday, Aug. 11:

Open registration begins for the 2015 Fall Semester

## 6 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12:

Board of Trustees meeting

## Friday, Aug. 21:

Fall FLEX Day

## Connect with Us on Social Media



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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.

# Philosophy Degree Becomes 19th Rio Hondo College Program to Guarantee CSU Admission

Rio Hondo College has added its 19th associate's degree guaranteeing graduates acceptance to a California State University (CSU) campus as a junior and priority consideration in selecting their field of study.

The Associate of Arts for Transfer (AA-T) in philosophy was approved in May by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office in accordance with SB 1400, which created the guaranteed pathway from community college to Cal State in 2010.

"With 19 Degrees for Transfer in place – and more in the works – Rio Hondo continues to expand the pathways to success for our students," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "We are especially proud of our program in philosophy, which admirably prepares students for the rigorous program offered by our CSU partners."

Rio Hondo's philosophy AA-T was developed by a team of faculty and administrators, including Dean of Behavioral and Social Sciences Rebecca Green, Professor of Philosophy Ted Preston and Associate Professor of Philosophy Scott Dixon.

"Our new degree will ease the transition for students who decide to pursue a philosophy degree at the Cal State system," said Kenn Pierson, Rio Hondo College Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Rio Hondo College staff, meanwhile, are hard at work finalizing up to six new transfer degrees. As with the philosophy degree, they will be reviewed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office before approval is granted.

In all, the California Community Colleges system's 112 campuses offer 1,787 Associate Degrees for Transfer and are working on 212 others. Rio Hondo is among 39 campuses to offer 19 to 25 such degrees.

## Rio Hondo College Associate Degrees for Transfer

1. Administration of Justice
2. Anthropology
3. Art History
4. Business Administration
5. Communication Studies
6. Early Childhood Education
7. English
8. History
9. Journalism
10. Kinesiology
11. Mathematics
12. Philosophy
13. Physics
14. Political Science
15. Psychology
16. Sociology
17. Spanish
18. Studio Arts
19. Theatre Arts