

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING OCTOBER 2016



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

If I were to choose one word to capture October 2016, it would be pride. The month illustrated many of the reasons we have pride in our success in providing students with a range of high-quality educational options.

Take our Automotive Technology Program. Professor John Frala and his team never cease to innovate. Their latest degree targets hybrid/electric vehicle/fuel-cell technology. This groundbreaking option has drawn attention from industry leaders seeking employees before the

major is even off the ground and won the 2016 Clean Air Award from the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Equally amazing are the incredible advances in programs supporting our students. Student Success and Support Program leaders are connecting with more students at area and surrounding high schools, ramping up

workshops on campus, guiding students through registration challenges and offering videos on important success-related subjects.

Next, it should come as no surprise that our 2015-16 women's soccer team has been honored for excellence in the classroom. Coach Jennifer Tanaka is well known for advocating success on and off the field for her students. The team, which made it to the state finals, received a National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Team Academic Award.

Finally, student actors rehearsed throughout the month for a production of "The Laramie Project," a highly demanding play that highlights the real-world issues facing members of our LGBTQ community. The show stands not only as a testament to the strength of our theatre arts program, but also to the compassion and understanding demonstrated by our students.

As always, I am honored to be an integral part of such an extraordinary college campus community with talented faculty and staff.

Accreditation Team Representatives Praise College

Accreditation team representatives, who granted Rio Hondo College a six-year accreditation in February 2015, praised the College during a follow-up visit on Oct. 20.

The team from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges included Hartnell College Superintendent/President Dr. Willard Lewallen; Cuyamaca College assistant professor of English Lauren Halsted; and College of the Redwoods Community and Economic Development Executive Director Ahn Fielding.

The team started its interviews at about 9:30 a.m. with Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss; Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. JoAnna Schilling; Dean of Institutional Research & Planning Howard Kummerman; Academic Senate President Robert Bethel; Dean of Educational Centers Yolanda Emerson; and Dean of Behavioral and Social Sciences Rebecca Green.

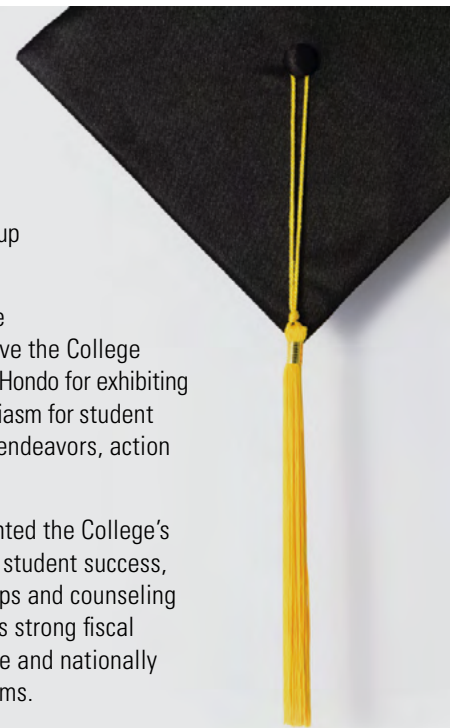
Dreyfuss met Lewallen before and after the interviews. He praised the College's follow-up report and said the interviews went well.

Rio Hondo College now awaits a written report summarizing the team's visit.

The original action taken by the accrediting commission re-affirmed Rio Hondo College's accreditation for six years, and asked for follow-up reports on specific initiatives.

At the time, an oral report from the Commission's site visiting team gave 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 highlighted the College's multifaceted 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 career technical programs.



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Board Report

Rio Hondo College trustees learned Oct. 12 about how the College's Student Success and Support Program has boosted interactions on area high school campuses, improved technology guides for students as they enroll and streamlined support efforts once students arrive on campus.

Among the early impacts of the effort: new enrollments from feeder high schools are up 21.9 percent from 2014, with a 40.9 percent leap for schools outside the College's service area.

The information, presented by Dean of Counseling and Student Success Dr. Mike Muñoz, shows improvement at all levels of the program.

First, Rio Hondo College has provided on-site services at 25 feeder high schools, including assessment, orientation and educational planning.

Next, the Student Success and Support Program has improved guidance on the College's AccessRio system, offering students a to-do list to ensure they not only tend to basic registration challenges, but also embrace the need for long-term educational planning.

The team also aligned campus success workshops to provide a comprehensive campus-wide calendar and website for support activities. Workshops now offer free food and recognize students who attend five events in an academic year as incentives.

Finally, the group has created a **series of videos** highlighting the College's First Year Success Center, Counseling Center, transfer requirements, students who are undecided in their majors and profiles of recent high school graduates and adult re-entry students as models.

The Board of Trustees watched a **video** featuring the Human Resources Department, part of an ongoing effort to show appreciation for Rio Hondo College staff.

The board also commended Irene Torres, scheduling technician for instructional operations, for her 37 years of service. Torres started as a clerk typist on Sept. 17, 1979, advanced through several positions and became a scheduling technician in July 1995.

Health Career Presentations Draw 80 Students



More than 80 students, their parents, teachers and advisers came to Rio Hondo College on Oct. 15 to learn about career opportunities in health fields, such as the College's upcoming orthopedic technician program.

Eleven community colleges across the Los Angeles region presented information on programs that included nursing, dental assisting, dental hygiene, dental technician, medical assisting, health informatics, respiratory therapy and diagnostic medical imaging.

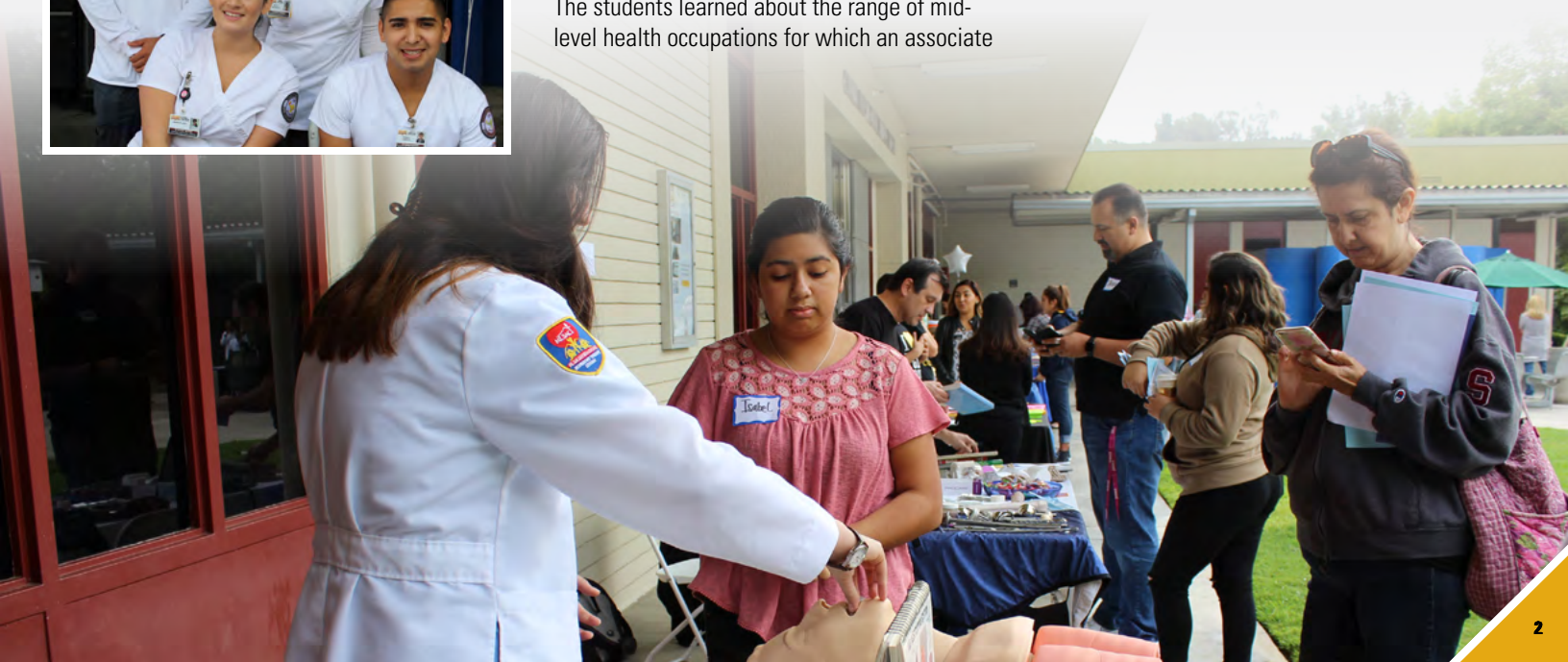
Rio Hondo faculty and counselors shared detailed information about the orthopedic technician program, including hands-on experiences.

The students learned about the range of mid-level health occupations for which an associate

degree can lead to well-paying career, and how a community college transfer degree can guarantee admittance to California State University programs for continuing education.

Rio Hondo College hosted the event as part of a Deputy Sector Navigator, Health – L.A. grant, which is part of the California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy Initiative.

In addition to events like this, the Deputy Sector Navigator works to align K-12 pathways, promote community college health programs, and provide services to industry, all while building community partnerships to meet the healthcare workforce needs of the future.



Rio Hondo College, Automotive Technology Professor Receive 2016 Clean Air Award

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's 2016 Clean Air Award in *The Whittier Daily News*.

Rio Hondo College and automotive technology professor John Frala received the 2016 Award for Clean Air Education and Outreach in recognition of the College's groundbreaking Associate of Science degree in hybrid/electric vehicle/fuel-cell technology.

The degree is California's first to serve the growing market in advanced alternative-fuel technology, part of a suite of complementary majors in the College's innovative automotive technology program. The degree was designed by Frala, a leader in a statewide effort to create a Hydrogen Highway to support expanded use of alternative-fuel vehicles.

The award was presented by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, which honored a handful of businesses, individuals and public agencies for contributing to cleaner air in the region.

"We are extraordinarily proud of John and his team in the Automotive Technology Department," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "Their impressive work on the cutting edge of this technology creates opportunities for our students to explore an exciting and lucrative new career field."

Rio Hondo College's Associate of Science (AS) in hybrid/electric vehicle/fuel-cell technology, approved in spring, teaches students about electrical systems, chemistry, physics and applied mathematics, demonstrating the growing slate

of academic skills required by today's automotive repair industry. Students who receive degrees are trained to safely handle high-voltage vehicles.

"I'm excited to be a part of such a dynamic faculty at Rio Hondo College and pleased to share this award with my colleagues who are dedicated to opening new career vistas for our students as a result of our creative curriculum," Frala said.

Frala sits on the Green Team, a state advisory group dedicated to creating a series of hydrogen refueling stations known as the California Hydrogen Highway. He began developing the concept for the new AS degree four years ago.

Progress on the AS degree received a boost when Frala's team led Rio Hondo College in securing a \$200,000 National Science Foundation grant in May 2015 to develop alternative-fuels training.

Frala said Rio Hondo College's automotive programs are quickly gaining recognition across the state and nation for their innovative and forward-looking approaches. He said companies began inquiring about graduates from the AS program almost as soon as it was approved.

This fall, the College also launched a Bachelor of Science program in automotive technology as part of a historic state initiative to provide four-year degrees at select community college campuses. The auto tech major is unique to Southern California.



Rio Hondo College and automotive technology professor John Frala received the 2016 Award for Clean Air Education. Click here to watch a video about the College's winning program.



Tennis Tournament Set for Nov. 19

The Rio Hondo College Women's Tennis Team is hosting The Unger Games, a round-robin tennis tournament at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 19 at the Rio Hondo College tennis courts.

All participants will play with a variety of randomly chosen partners, but for at least one of the rounds they may choose their own partners. Prizes will be awarded to the top two finishers and snacks and drinks will be available for purchase.

Parking will be free next to the courts. Gates open at 9 a.m. for those who want extra warm-up time.

Entry fees are \$10 for high school or college students, \$15 for all others. For tickets, to make donations or get additional information, contact Coach Karen Unger at kunger@riohondo.edu.

President Dreyfuss Gives Keynote for Business and Professional Women's Event

Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss shared her journey from Taiwan to leadership of Rio Hondo College in an Oct. 22 keynote address to the Sierra Mar District of the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Fall Conference.

Dreyfuss also fielded questions about Rio Hondo College during the event at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Monterey Park, using the opportunity to tout the College's programs and student success.

Dreyfuss was accompanied by Director of Government and Community Relations Russell Castañeda-Calleros, who gave a presentation about statewide ballot propositions on the Nov. 8 ballot.

"Our guests unanimously agreed this was the best BPW program they'd ever attended," said Esthela Torres de Siegre, an El Monte Union High School District trustee who is a member of the Sierra Del Mar BPW.

The mission of the Sierra Mar District is "to promote and support equity for working women in all phases of their lives and to promote personal empowerment and professional development." The group's objectives are "to advocate on state and national legislative issues of importance to women, to promote personal and professional development for women and to foster connections among women to promote BPW and its members."

Women's Soccer Team Honored for Academic Success

Rio Hondo College head coach Jennifer Tanaka's women's soccer team not only excels on the field, but also in the classroom. Her 2015-16 squad that reached the CCCAA State Championship final game is being honored with a National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Team Academic Award for exemplary performance in the classroom.

To qualify for the award, the team must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher for the entire academic year. Rio Hondo achieved a 3.07 team GPA, making this the third consecutive the Roadrunners have earned the honor.

"The coaching staff and I are very proud of our athletes continued excellence in the classroom," Tanaka said. "A great education is for life and we are happy to see that we work as hard in the classroom as on the field."

A total of 893 soccer teams (315 men, 578 women) from throughout the U.S. have earned the NSCAA Team Academic Award. Rio Hondo is one of just four California community college women's soccer programs to earn the honor.

"Our Rio Hondo women's soccer team has proven that you can win at the highest level and still earn high academic honors at the same time," said

Steve Hebert, dean of kinesiology, dance and athletics/athletic director. "These young ladies are terrific examples of what a 'student-athlete' should strive to be. Last season ended with a state runner-up finish and a national ranking. Coach Jennifer Tanaka and staff also deserve credit for their part in the victories on the field and supporting our student-athletes' academic progress at the same time."

Leading the way on the field and in the classroom for the Roadrunners were sisters Maritza and Janeth Acuna. Maritza was named the NSCAA Junior College Scholar National Player of the Year after achieving a 4.0 GPA. Janeth was also honored by the NSCAA as a second-team Scholar All-American.

For their play on the soccer field, Janeth earned first-team NSCAA All-American honors while Maritza was a second-team selection. Both attend UC Irvine and compete on the Anteaters' women's soccer team.

The 2015 Roadrunners compiled an impressive 17-2-4 overall record and advanced to the state championship final for the first time in school history. The team closed the season ranked No. 8 in the final NSCAA national poll.



Save the Date



9 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 17:

Adopt-a-School Discover Rio Day, Wray Theater

9:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 19:

The Unger Games, a round-robin tennis tournament, Rio Hondo College

12:45 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1:

Faculty Holiday Luncheon, Swiss Park

Connect with Us on Social Media



RHCRoadrunners



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

'The Laramie Project' Strives to Awaken Community to the Destructive Power of Intolerance

Director Kirk Vichengrad has waited years to stage a production of "The Laramie Project," and says it seems fitting it is happening on the heels of the tragic killing of 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando and amid one of the nation's most tumultuous presidential elections.

"The Laramie Project" chronicles the life of the town of Laramie, Wyoming in the year after Matthew Shepard, a gay man who attended the University of Wyoming, was beaten, tortured and left for dead in 1988. Shepard died six days after the attack from severe head wounds.

The killing drew national attention to hate crimes and led to the 2009 Shepard Act, which makes crimes motivated by actual or perceived sexual orientation a federally recognized hate crime.

"This is a story that is more topical than ever and it's so relevant, especially on a college campus," said Vichengrad, a Rio Hondo College adjunct professor of theatre arts. "In this climate of social unrest and uncertainty, it's important we hold up a mirror to ourselves and say this what we look like and ask what are we going to do about it."

Vichengrad said the play – performed on campus Nov. 3-6 – is designed to awaken its audience to the damaging power of intolerance – especially relevant after the June attack in which a 29-year-old security guard killed 49 people and wounded 53 others at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. The incident is the deadliest attack against LGBTQ people in U.S. history.

The play follows a documentary style with dialogue taken from hundreds of interviews conducted with Laramie residents by the Tectonic Theater Project following the 1998 murder. The original three-act play included eight actors playing 60 parts. Vichengrad's version had two acts and spread the intense roles over a class of 20-plus students, giving greater access to roles.

Some, like Kechia Bejarano, portray up to five different characters.

"I fell in love with this show in high school," said Bejarano, who earned an associate of arts in theatre arts but stayed another semester to perform in the play and serve as stage manager.

Bejarano's characters include a sympathetic town resident, a lesbian University of Wyoming professor and a Mormon school teacher – all emotionally compelling roles.

"It's been incredibly fulfilling on so many levels, especially in light of recent events, such as Orlando," Bejarano said. "Having these moments when you can sit in someone's truth and honestly and sincerely feel it has been so beautiful."

Vichengrad said he has watched as the play worked its magic on the cast.

"It's really amazing. I can see it in the students that they are very motivated and aware, knowing that they are doing something that goes beyond a typical school play," he said.

During the play's run, the Wray Theater lobby served as an informational center on issues related to gender and sexual orientation. A portion of concession proceeds benefited the **Matthew Shepard Foundation**.

"This production celebrates what makes Rio Hondo College such a contributing member to our community and society: an effort led by an adjunct professor, performed by students and focused on an issue that is of huge relevance today," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

