

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING JUNE/JULY 2017



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Our campus was abuzz this summer as Rio Hondo College staged some of its most important programs of the year – a summer "camp for members of the local Boys & Girls Club, a CTE Academy for area seventh-graders and events designed to welcome and orient our new freshmen.

All these programs celebrate Rio Hondo College's mission to provide access to higher education and offer students the support essential to succeed.

This is because higher education isn't a static object – it's a dynamic process that begins by communicating the idea and promise of higher education to our community's young students. We inspire them with an idea of what they can accomplish and then show them a path to realizing those dreams as early as middle school.

That's why our summer programs for local young students are so important. In our summer camp and academy, we introduced young students to Rio Hondo College's popular programs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) – career fields that are booming across the world.

We also recognize that once students take that first step into higher education, it's critical that they have all the tools available to succeed. We held a series of events to welcome our incoming freshmen and provide them with information on comprehensive support services that are becoming a hallmark of a Rio Hondo College degree.

We also offered our Summer Bridge program to 425 students. This in-depth program combines orientation seminars with intensive instruction in math and English. Many of the students significantly advanced their math course placements just through those workshops.

Together, these programs set the stage for what promises to be one of our most exciting years yet when fall semester begins Aug. 19.

Summer Bridge Program Helps 425 Students Excel

Rio Hondo College's 2017 Summer Bridge program drew 425 students for an array of activities offered three times over to orient the students to the rigors of higher education and to give them a chance to improve basic skills.

The program helps build an understanding of Rio Hondo College's services, connects students with each other and allows them to explore their goals. It supports both the new Rio Promise program that offers support and first-year tuition waivers to 2017 graduates of high schools in the College's service area as well as *Avance*, a program for supporting Latino students.

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Among the activities, students worked with math faculty for two hours a day and with English faculty for an hour a day in special workshops.

The instruction enabled 77 students to advance from one to three math levels, achieving placement in classes more advanced than they would have through an initial assessment or even the College's nuanced multiple measures placement for basic skills class.

Other workshops included information on services for low-income and under-served student groups, information on the College's innovative First Year Success Center, financial aid, the Rio Hondo College Transfer Center, health and psychological services and the college's Career Center.

Students also learned about the journey ahead of them through panels of students and deans, and attended a fair featuring more than 24 academic and career programs.



Rio Hondo College Foundation Celebrates Successes

The Rio Hondo College Foundation on June 22 celebrated its 2016-17 successes, including raising \$102,000 from the ever-growing A Taste of Rio event, providing \$20,000 for 10 mini-grants and other awards to college programs and awarding \$150,000 in student scholarships.



"This was truly an incredible year for the foundation," Executive Director Howard Kummerman told Foundation members and guests gathered at the College's Learning Resource Center. "Thank you for your support and partnership as we all work together to foster success in our students."

Kummerman, who is also Rio Hondo College's executive dean for institutional research and planning, detailed the foundation's successes one by one. He also noted that the foundation brought on three new board members, helped campus programs raise thousands of dollars, brought in more than \$50,000 in endowment and estate gifts, and boosted faculty and staff giving by 60 percent.

Kummerman acknowledged foundation Director of Development Cynthia Nickell, Scholarship Coordinator Jessica Perea and Foundation Assistant Martha Amador for their efforts over the last year.

College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss gave a special thank you to President's Circle Donors, who give \$1,000 or more – calling them the "bedrock of the foundation." Twenty such donors attended the reception, including five who recently made their first such contribution.

She also thanked Westberg + White for a \$2,000 President's Circle Contribution and Luis Rojas and Gustavo Camacho for Del Terra's \$5,000 President's Circle contribution.

"I wish to thank you for your continued commitment to the students at Rio Hondo College," Dreyfuss said.



Board Report

Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees reviewed a plan to revise its student equity strategic plan and approved a series of promotions and new administrative hires in June, including two new vice presidents.

The equity plan pledges to eliminate achievement gaps among disproportionately impacted students – identified as students who face challenges with access, course completion, basic skills, degree completion and transfer success.

Trustees received an update on the student populations that significantly face those challenges:

- ▶ Access: Latina/o, low-income, female, veteran students;
- ▶ Course Completion: Latina/o, foster students;
- ▶ Basic Skills/English as new language sequence: Latina/o, male students;
- ▶ Degree Completion: Latina/o, male students;
- ▶ Transfer: Latina/o, male, disabled students.

The College's equity team is recommending that Rio Hondo prioritize equity, diversity and inclusivity initiatives on campus, boost the College's capacity to college and analyze real-time data and encourage faculty, staff and administrators to demonstrate commitment to serving disproportionately impacted student populations.

It also recommends high-impact professional development for staff, administrators and faculty, as well as continuing campus dialogue on student equity.

Rio Hondo College is a designated Hispanic-serving Institution with an 82.7 percent Latino student population.

The trustees approved new employees and promotions for staff, too.

New posts include:

- ▶ Vice President, Academic Affairs: Dr. Laura Ramirez **(See related story)**
- ▶ Vice President, Finance and Business: Yulian I. Ligioso **(See related story)**
- ▶ Executive Dean, Counseling and Student Equity: Dr. Mike Muñoz
- ▶ Executive Dean, Institutional Research and Planning: Howard Kummerman
- ▶ Executive Director, Human Resources: Loy Nashua
- ▶ Full-Time Tenure Track Veterans Counselor/Coordinator: Arely Castaneda
- ▶ Full-Time Tenure Track General Counselors: Julio Flores, Angela Sotelo, Diana Valladares, Christine Waugh.

In July, the Board of Trustees commended student volunteers from the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier, naming Gabrielle Martinez as Youth of the Year, with members Walter Martinez



Student Trustee Paris Youngblood and family members pose with President/Superintendent Teresa Dreyfuss.

members were given certificates from Rio Hondo College for their efforts, while their adviser, Ryan Shepard (pictured below), praised his students' participation in club activities, academic excellence and community service efforts.

Since being named as Whittier's Youth of the Year recipient, Gabrielle Martinez has served as a representative to China through the efforts of the Los Angeles Alliance of Boys & Girls Club. Martinez will also compete for a \$5,000 scholarship and the California Youth of the Year title, and the possibility of becoming the Pacific Region Youth of the Year and the National Youth of the Year, which includes up to \$140,000 in scholarship funds and the chance to meet U.S. President Trump.

Board members also gave a special commendation to Dr. Jennifer Fernandez, who retired after serving Rio Hondo College for 31 years and four months. Fernandez was applauded for her years of service and helping students while serving in a variety of roles, including director of student activities, a counselor for the Fire and Police Academy and Administration of Justice programs, the Whittier Educational Center coordinator and interim dean of student affairs.

Rio Hondo College web developer Albert Bretado gave video presentations on the College's Camp Rio and Summer Bridge program.

The first video shined a light on the College's second annual Camp Rio program, which invited 50 elementary and middle school students from the Boys & Girls Club onto the campus for science and career tech information and physical fitness activities.

The second video presentation highlighted the efforts of the Summer Bridge program, which provides incoming freshmen with transitional activities to prepare them for the rigors of college life. The video showcased the program's tours, math and English workshops and counseling opportunities.



College Hires Two Vice Presidents



Rio Hondo College has hired two new vice presidents who bring decades of leadership and financial acumen to the administrative team.

Dr. Laura Ramirez is the new vice president of academic affairs. She brings a background rich in community college leadership, an understanding of high school curriculum, including accelerated learning programs, oversight of academic departments and

leadership on construction projects. Her former post was as vice president of academic affairs for East Los Angeles College (ELAC).

“Dr. Ramirez understands the demands of community colleges, including the challenges faced by our high schools and the need to effectively connect with our community as we build our programs and services,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “We’re very excited she is joining us.”

“I’m thrilled to be part of the exciting mission at Rio Hondo College,” Ramirez said. “This is a college that is taking bold steps to ensure our students have the best possible opportunities to pursue their higher education dreams.”

She received an Associate of Arts degree from ELAC, a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from UCLA, a Master of Science in analytical chemistry from Cal State Fullerton and a doctorate of education in community college leadership from Cal State Fullerton.

Her previous posts include serving as science department chair and an instructor from 1999 to 2002 at Don Bosco Technical Institute, where she developed Advanced Placement chemistry programs and participated in a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation self-study.

Her career then shifted to community college, with three posts at ELAC. First, Ramirez served from 2002 to 2006 as a department chair and professor for ELAC’s chemistry department, where she again participated in the accreditation process. For the next six years, she worked as the ELAC dean of academic affairs and career technical education.

In September 2012, she became ELAC’s vice president of academic affairs. In this post, she supervised 12 academic deans, led or supervised instructional and workforce programs, developed collegewide collaboration initiatives, and provided insight and leadership for \$100 million in construction projects.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Dr. Ramirez in the *Norwalk Patriot*.



Yulian I. Ligioso is the College’s new vice president for finance and business, with more than 24 years of working for several California community colleges in finance and fiscal management.

Ligioso most recently served for six years as vice president for finance and administration for Solano Community College District, starting in 2011. The post included budget development and finance administration as well as a broad range of administrative duties, including oversight of bond construction, information technology, campus police, and service on campus negotiating teams.

“Mr. Ligioso brings a great wealth of experience and knowledge of community college finances to Rio Hondo College. We are fortunate to have a financial expert of his caliber on our team,” President/Superintendent Teresa Dreyfuss said.

While at Solano, Ligioso helped secure \$12.3 million in federal funds for a 2.5-megawatt solar farm and implemented other energy initiatives, saving the District about \$1 million year and securing rebates of \$1.2 million.

“I’m extraordinarily pleased to be joining the talented team of administrators, staff and educators at Rio Hondo College,” Ligioso said. “I look forward to working in and overseeing Rio Hondo College’s Finance and Business Division and to serving our students.”

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Mr. Ligioso in *Community College Daily*.

Ligioso earned his Bachelor of Science in business administration/accounting from USC and became a certified public accountant two years later. He earned his MBA from University of the Pacific and is currently studying for his Ed.D. at Brandman University.

His career included stints at accounting giant Ernst & Young – then one of the “Big Eight” – and other private companies before Ligioso began working for Yosemite Community College District as an adjunct faculty member and an accounting/business manager. He then joined Ventura County Community College District as a college business manager and adjunct faculty member.

In 2001, Ligioso joined Marin Community College District as director of fiscal services, a post he would hold for seven years. He served briefly as San Jose Evergreen Community College District as vice president of administrative services at Evergreen College, followed by two years in the same role for Chabot-Los Positas Community College District’s Chabot College.

Freshmen Receive Orientation on College Programs

Rio Hondo College provided new students with financial aid information and support guidance during Freshman Welcome Days. The series of three separate orientation days provided by the College’s First Year Success Center featured information on transferring to a four-year university.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo’s College Programs in the *Whittier Daily News*.



Area Middle School Students Explore Careers at CTE Academy

About 100 area seventh-graders assembled car engines, built radios, crafted bridges, learned First Aid and CPR, and explored the potential of 3-D printing from July 17 to 21 during Rio Hondo College's seventh annual CTE Academy.



The program allowed students from area school districts to explore science and technology career fields under the supervision of a cadre of Rio Hondo College instructors and students in Rio Hondo College's Career and Technical Education (CTE).

"This academy is a great way for Rio Hondo College to share its expertise with students who are just beginning to consider their college and career goals," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "It's exciting to see how these courses can help students discover their strengths."

The academy focused on health science, engineering and automobile technology – all Rio Hondo College fields of study.

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

Each day included hands-on activities. For example, in the small-engine project, students broke down and assembled a car engine. Along the way, they learned electrical theory, calculations and application. In structural design, they will construct and test the strength of bridges.

Watch ABC7's coverage of Rio Hondo College's CTE Academy



The program has grown considerably since its first year, when 30 students were welcomed to Rio Hondo College's campus. This year, the College expanded its instruction in health to three modules and added the program on 3-D printing.

The academy culminated on July 21, when the students presented their projects, toured the Rio Hondo campus and received information on college and career success.

Students hail from nine middle schools: Little Lake School District's Lakeside and Lake Center middle schools; Mountain View School District's Madrid, Monte Vista and Kranz middle schools; Valle Lindo School District's Dean L. Shively Middle School; and El Rancho Unified School District's Rivera and North Park middle schools and the STEAM academy.



College Hosts Members of Boys & Girls Club

Rio Hondo College hosted more than 40 members of the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier at Camp Rio in June, a weeklong exploration of an array of academic programs, including science, career technical education and physical fitness activities.

The program, piloted in 2016, engaged children ages 11-13 in exciting, academic-focused summer activities designed to inspire interest in college attendance. Activities included workshops on solar power, drone technology, public safety careers, poetry, American Sign Language, origami and hip-hop dance.

The program also offered a soccer clinic, a basketball skills session and a swim at the campus pool.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's Camp Rio in the *Whittier Daily News*.



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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.

Save the Date



5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 10:
First Year Family Night, Rio Hondo College

6 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 9:
Board of Trustees meeting, Rio Hondo College

Saturday, Aug. 19:
Fall semester begins

Wildland Fire Academy Crew Aids U.S. Forest Service

Rio Hondo College Fire Crew 77 was activated on July 7 to support U.S. Forest Service crews in the Angeles National Forest. The activation ran for 14 days.

The team consists of 14 men and two women from Rio Hondo College's Wildland Fire Academy who will serve as seasonal wildland Type II crew members, charged with assisting with all aspects of fire more monitoring, suppression and control.

The crew was called up three times in summer 2016 to help the U.S. Forest Service. First, the team helped fight the Burro Fire, Pine Fire and Sage Fire. On its second rotation, the crew fought the Soberanes Fire. On the third rotation, the crew battled the Market Fire.

Rio Hondo College's Wildland Fire Academy is highly regarded within the industry, with 100 percent of graduates finding posts with wildland fire agencies. The program is overseen by Rio Hondo College Wildland and Fire Coordinator Tracy Rickman, who also serves as chief of Crew 77.

RIO IN THE NEWS! Click here to read more about Rio Hondo's Wildland Fire Academy Crew in the *Whittier Daily News*.

