

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2018



## President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As we conclude our Thanksgiving holidays and prepare for the winter break, I would like to take a moment to emphasize my thankfulness for the Rio Hondo College community.

This campus is more than a place of business. It is a shared community where talented and dedicated staff, faculty and administrators work together to ensure our students have every opportunity for success as they pursue their dreams.

In November, we celebrated the success of members of our community on many fronts – our

graduates from the Tesla START program and the Fire Academy. We also celebrated the contributions of members of our community, including veterans such as Yoshio Nakamura, a former professor and administrator at Rio Hondo College.

More celebrations are in store as we close out 2018, including our annual performance of "The Nutcracker" in collaboration with area schools and other efforts to benefit those in need across our wider community.

Thank you for being part of these endeavors and doing your part to create this sense of community.

## ▲ Rio Hondo Fire Academy Graduates Class 91

Class 91 of the Rio Hondo Fire Academy graduated 50 cadets on Nov. 3, retaining all but seven cadets who started the course in August.

Already, one firefighter has been hired by the Chevron Fire Department, 13

others started new jobs on Nov. 5 at the cities of Santa Fe Springs, Monterey Park, Monrovia, Downey, Arcadia and Pasadena as reserves, and seven more are going through pre-hiring background checks with local fire agencies.



IN THIS ISSUE

Board Update.....	2	College Honors Veterans, Former Administrator .....	3	200-plus Students Attend Business Division Conference .....	5
Rio Hondo Student to Serve as Wellness Ambassador.....	2	2nd Cohort of Tesla START Students Graduate .....	4	Save the Date.....	6

# Board Update



Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees recognized outgoing members Mary Ann Pacheco and Madeline Shapiro at its board meeting on Nov. 14.

Pacheco, who was elected in 2013, was a full-time professor of English at Rio Hondo College for 37 years. She served Trustee Area 3, which includes Whittier and South El Monte.

Shapiro, who was first elected in 2009, has been a teacher in the East Whittier City School District for more than 24 years. She represented Trustee Area 5, which includes East Whittier.

During the meeting, the Board of Trustees also held a study session to discuss its 2018-19 board goals and objectives, institutional goals and objectives and aligning district and board goals with the Vision for Success.

The Board also accepted a supplemental grant of \$115,722 for its Avance program, which seeks to support Hispanic students. The funds are provided under federal Title V, targeting Hispanic Serving Institutions.



## Rio Hondo Student to Serve as Student Wellness Ambassador



Jordan Midyette, a Rio Hondo College student-athlete and kinesiology major, has been selected to serve as a student wellness ambassador for the 2018-19 academic year by the Foundation for California Community Colleges.

Only 15 students from across the state were chosen.

Ambassadors will learn about statewide mental health and wellness resources and provide peer outreach at their community college campus to connect students with resources and supports, raise mental health awareness and reduce stigma.

Midyette will be trained through a combination of in-person and online trainings. She attended an all-expense paid two-day training in Sacramento on Nov. 8-9.

She will be required to participate in extensive professional development and experiential learning opportunities, complete a series of milestone goals around peer-outreach on campus, share mental health and wellness materials, plan a health and wellness event or activity, work with a faculty adviser, participate in monthly calls with fellow student ambassadors, and will receive a \$750 stipend.

Midyette obtained a bachelor's degree in sociology from UC Santa Cruz and enrolled at Rio Hondo to expand her educational and career opportunities, obtain the fitness specialist and coaching certificates, and participate on the women's volleyball team.



# College Honors Veterans, Former Administrator

Rio Hondo College commemorated Veterans Day with a Nov. 13 celebration that honored World War II veteran and former College vice president Yoshio C. Nakamura and featured guest speakers and a presentation of the Rio Hondo College Veteran Memorial Coin to attending veterans.

The event, which took place at the Veterans Memorial on the Rio Hondo College campus, included a display of a military vehicle and remarks by College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, veteran Kevin Skinner and Nakamura.

"As the Superintendent/President of Rio Hondo College, I'd like to thank all of our veterans for your dedication and service to our country," Dreyfuss said. "Every time we are on campus, we are reminded of our veterans' sacrifices by the presence of our Veterans Memorial. Our College believes the veterans in our community have provided us with an invaluable service, one that cannot be repaid, only honored."

Skinner talked about the importance of military service men and women standing watch to shield the nation. He also praised Nakamura for his service.

"He served his post with honor and, when he returned home, his service to others did not cease," Skinner said. "Mr. Nakamura you are a hero and you represent the finest qualities of what an American should be."

Nakamura recounted the impact of his internment as a junior in high school with other Japanese Americans, first at the Tulare Race Track and later at the Gila River camp in Arizona, after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"My most humiliating experience of my life was the walk from

the train station to the race track with local residents looking at the spectacle, with armed soldiers with fixed bayonets along the road," he said.

Still, Nakamura reported for active duty as an enlisted reserve, went through basic training and joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in France. The team was composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry and became the most highly decorated unit in U.S. military history for its size and length of service. He was discharged as a staff sergeant.

After the war, Nakamura earned BFA and MFA degrees from USC and began teaching at Whittier High School. When Rio Hondo College was established, he was hired as the founding instructor and chair of the Fine Arts Department. He retired as a vice president of Rio Hondo College in 1992.

Nakamura has been honored for his service with the Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, European, African-Middle Eastern Ribbon with 3 Battle Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation with Oak Leaf Cluster, the French Legion of Honor Medal and, with other Japanese American veterans of World War II, the Congressional Gold Medal in 2011.

**RIO IN THE NEWS:** Read more about Vet's Day  
▶ **Whittier Daily News**



*Rio Hondo Community College District*  
**The Flag of the United States of America**  
is presented to  
**Staff Sergeant Yoshio Nakamura**  
*442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team*  
*In appreciation of your commitment and dedication to your service in the*  
*Armed Forces of the United States of America*  
*Rio Hondo College, the Board of Trustees, and Veterans*  
*are proud that they which was issued over Rio Hondo College*  
*November 9 - November 13, 2018*  
*Presented this 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2018*  
*Teresa Dreyfuss, Superintendent/President*



# 2nd Cohort of Tesla START Students Graduates

Rio Hondo College celebrated the graduation of its second cohort of Tesla-trained automobile technicians – 13 men and three women – in a special ceremony on Nov. 9.

The students are among the first in the nation to complete a 12-week Tesla START program that includes more than 800 hours of training. The program provides students with the skills to work on electric vehicles and be hired as service technicians at Tesla service centers across North America.

Rio Hondo College was the first in the state and the second location in the nation established by Tesla for the technician training program.

“Rio Hondo College is proud to be in the vanguard of automobile technician training,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “Our alternative auto fuel technology programs – which include our Tesla START training – represent some of the most innovative and forward-thinking career training available.”

The graduation ceremony took place in the Rio Hondo College Automotive Shop. The event – emceed by Dean of Career and Technical Education Mike Slavich – featured remarks from President Dreyfuss, Vice President of Student Affairs Laura Ramirez, Tesla Director of Southern California Field Services Michael Ojaghian and Tesla START instructor Timothy Olesjick.

Rio Hondo College, which also offers a rare Bachelor of Science in automotive technology, has been recognized by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office for its ability to secure jobs for a high number of graduates in automobile technology at strong, livable wages.

Rio Hondo College began offering the Tesla START program in spring 2018. Tesla provides the curriculum, instructors, equipment and job opportunities so students can smoothly transition from the training program to full-time employment.

The program teaches technical skills as well as the soft skills needed to gain employment. Upon graduation, Tesla recruiters work with students on

placement at a Tesla service center. Rio Hondo College’s first cohort of 11 students graduated in May 2018, with each student immediately placed in jobs at Tesla service centers with a starting salary in excess of \$20 an hour, full benefits and company equity.

“Tesla is working with some of the best automotive programs in the country to train students on electric vehicle technology and to prepare them for a career at Tesla,” Tesla’s Michael Ojaghian said. “Students graduate with a full-time job, certification and the skills necessary to succeed on day one in the growing electric vehicle industry and to become future leaders at Tesla.”

All students in the new cohort have been placed in jobs in service centers from Colorado to Hawaii:

- Jason Amador – Costa Mesa Delivery
- Danielle Blazek – Costa Mesa
- Emilio Cardona-Gonzalez – Tactical Response Team
- Rodrigo Cervantes – Santa Monica
- Conor Douglas – Santa Monica Mobile Service
- William Khai Nho Duong – Hawaii
- Marc Elizarraras – Denver
- Oscar Garcia – Burbank
- Ivann Gregorio – Costa Mesa
- Alejandro Lopez – Las Vegas
- Kory Miller – Costa Mesa
- Lucero Ramirez – Pomona
- Diana Reyes – Buena Park
- Daniel Robles – Buena Park
- Dalton Verwolf – Buena Park
- Jake Zerbe – Buena Park

Rio Hondo is one of five colleges in the U.S. where the Tesla START program is offered. The latest training program to come on board – California’s second – is being set up in Northern California at Evergreen Valley College. Rio Hondo’s first class of graduates was the second overall in the nation to complete the Tesla START program; the new class is the nation’s seventh graduating class.



Pictured (l-r): Front row: Conor Douglas, Diana Reyes, William Khai Nho Duong, Danielle Blazek, Joy Trichos (TESLA); middle row: John Frala, Timothy Olesjick, Marc Elizarraras, Emilio Cardona-Gonzalez, Rodrigo Cervantes, Kory Miller, Lucero Ramirez; back row: Ivann Gregorio, Jason Amador, Michael Nally (TESLA), Dalton Verwolf, Michael Ojaghian (TESLA), Alejandro Lopez, Oscar Garcia, Jake Zerbe, Daniel Robles, Tony Sciarra (TESLA).

# 200-plus Students Attend Business Division Conference

Rio Hondo College's Business Division on Nov. 14 hosted a Business and Computer Tech Conference for more than 200 students that explored education and career paths, including a career fair and mock interviews.

The conference, held in the Campus Inn, featured a panel discussion with representatives from Ernst & Young, IBM, Harlow Technologies, Los Angeles Venture Association, Quinones & Co. and the Small Business Administration.

Panelists shared information about their organizations and their own personal career journeys – ultimately, giving students encouraging words of advice on pursuing their education and career paths.

On behalf of the Rio Hondo Community College District Board of Trustees, President Dreyfuss thanked Dean of Business Gita Runkle for her vision and leadership in creating the event. Dreyfuss also congratulated student attendees for investing their time in learning more about business and the field of computer technology.

More than 10 organizations participated in the career fair, including: America's Job Center, Outfront Media, and Panda Restaurant Group.

Accountemps and OfficeTeam conducted mock interviews and provided students with valuable feedback on their resumes and interviewing skills.



## Connect with Us on Social Media

 **RHCRoadrunners**

 **RioHondo\_College**

 **RioHondoCollege**

 **Rio Hondo College YT Channel**

 **bit.do/riohondocollege**

 **rhcroadrunners**

## 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



**1 and 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9:** Rio Hondo College Dance Collective presents "The Nutcracker," in association with local schools, Wray Theater

**6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12:** Board of Trustees Oath of Office Ceremony, Rio Café, followed by the Board Meeting at 7 p.m. in the Board Room

**Monday, Dec. 24 through Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019:** College closed for winter break



Save the date for Rio Hondo's first homecoming in **22** years!

FRIDAY

**01.11.19**

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.  
Rio Hondo Gymnasium

Men's basketball game to follow.

# SAVE THE DATE

Details and RSVP information to follow soon.



**RIO HONDO COLLEGE**

The Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees cordially invites you to the

**OATH OF OFFICE Ceremony 2018**

**Norma Edith García**  
*Re-elected*  
*Representing Trustee Area 1 – El Monte*

**Rosaelva Lomeli**  
*Elected*  
*Representing Trustee Area 3 – Whittier and South El Monte*

**Oscar Valladares**  
*Elected*  
*Representing Trustee Area 5 – East Whittier*

**Wednesday, December 12, 2018**  
**Rio Hondo College Rio Café**  
6:00 p.m. (Oath of Office)  
Reception to immediately follow  
Parking in Lot C

R.S.V.P. required for catering purposes at (562) 908-3403 or [myriarte@riohondo.edu](mailto:myriarte@riohondo.edu)