As Rio Hondo College buzzes back into activity for spring semester, I find myself excited about all of the wonderful work being done around our campus. In our classrooms, students are benefiting from the dedication and expertise of an unmatched faculty. Our campus is a whirlwind of new construction as we complete years of upgrades and improvements. Our instructional program represents a deepened commitment to ensuring our students find their paths to success.

As you know, I’m in my final few months as superintendent/president after announcing my retirement in August 2018. After taking some time for reflection during our annual FLEX Day, I am now focusing my energy on Rio Hondo College’s incredible drive to the future.

This month’s update captures a small taste of that – from our first homecoming in 22 years to a dynamic FLEX Day centered on the needs of our students, from a record number of scholarships awarded by the Rio Hondo College Foundation to events celebrating our partnership with local schools and our business community.

As always, I stand amazed and humbled to be a part of this incredible community.

Regional Counselor Breakfast Sets Record Attendance

Rio Hondo College and the Office of Outreach & Educational Partnerships hosted more than 180 high school counselors and other educators at the sixth annual Regional Counselor Breakfast on Jan. 18. The record number of guests — who represented schools from Whittier, Santa Fe, Pico Rivera, El Monte, South El Monte and the larger San Gabriel Valley — learned about the two-year Rio Promise, which offers free tuition to first-time college students. Rio Hondo was the first community college in Los Angeles county to offer free tuition for two years.

They also received updates on the new English and math placement procedures, financial aid, honors program, transfer services and the Self-Discovery Assessment Program.

Counselors attended one of three breakout informational sessions given by the Public Safety, Business, and Communication and Languages divisions. The sessions highlighted the Fire Academy, Wildland Fire Academy, Police Academy, Accounting, Business and Cybersecurity Program, Journalism Program and the Speech and Debate Team.
Board Report

Rio Hondo College’s Board of Trustees reviewed their 2019 legislative agenda, commended Disabled Students Program and Services Director Mark Matsui and received an update on the presidential search during their Jan. 9 meeting.

The legislative report, provided by the Office of Government and Community Relations, recapped 2018 efforts, including meetings with state senators and Assembly members, letters of support for key bills, an educational advisory meeting with Assembly Majority Leader Ian C. Calderon and a Pizza and Politics event hosted at the student union with Calderon. At the federal level, Rio Hondo College prepared for meetings with U.S. Rep. Linda Sanchez, taught advocacy workshops for students meeting with Sanchez, U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano and U.S. Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Paul Rubio, as well as coordinated a visit from Sanchez for the Fire Academy’s 50th anniversary.

In 2019, the College will advocate at the state level in regard to the new California Community Colleges funding formula, community college promise programs – which offer free tuition – the overhaul of the Student Aid Commission and extension of the historic Bachelor of Arts programs at community college campuses.

At the federal level, advocacy may include the reauthorization of the higher education aid, passage of a DREAM Act for students brought to America as children without documentation and support for veterans.

The annual Capital Advocacy Day was held on Jan. 28 and a National Legislative Summit follows on Monday, Feb. 11 through Thursday, Feb. 14.

At the meeting, Matsui, who is retiring, was commended for his seven years of service to Rio Hondo College.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by John D. Gonzales, former mayor of South El Monte.

College Hosts Wake Up Whittier Event

On Wednesday, Jan. 16, Rio Hondo College hosted Wake Up Whittier, the monthly mixer for the Whittier Area Chamber of Commerce at the Campus Inn.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss welcomed chamber and community members and celebrated the collaborative partnership between the chamber and Rio Hondo College. During her remarks, she invited all those who attended to the Foundation’s Annual “A Taste of Rio” fundraiser on Friday, April 26. She also emphasized that Rio Hondo College is here to serve and support local business professionals.

Several College departments attended the event to provide information, brochures and fliers about the resources they provide to students, including the Center for Career and Re-Entry Services who promoted its Spring Job, Internship and Resource Fair scheduled for Wednesday, April 17, as well as representatives of the Career and Technical Education Division, Continuing Education, the Child Development Center and Office of Government and Community Relations.

Whittier Area Chamber of Commerce President Gary Lee Martinez presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Rio Hondo College for hosting the first Wake Up Whittier of 2019.

Trustees also reviewed a timeline for their search for a successor to Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, who retires in June.

The plan includes creation of a recruitment brochure and development of an executive search website https://www.riohondo.edu/presidential-search. A search committee, to be formed in February, will select first-level interviewees on March 22, conduct interviews in April and recommend four to six candidates for review by the Board of Trustees in May. The board is expected to choose a candidate between May 20 and June 7 with a start date of July 1.
College Welcomes Community to 1st Homecoming in 22 Years

Rio Hondo College welcomed alumni, community members and area leaders to its first Homecoming celebration in 22 years on Jan. 11, an event that honored both academic and sports programs.

The free event, presented by the Rio Hondo College Foundation, featured reunions for the Police Academy and nursing program, pre-game activities and support for Rio Hondo College in its men’s basketball game against Cerritos College.

Program graduates were greeted by Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss and Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee. Seven of the 12 directors of the Rio Hondo College Foundation were also on hand, as were members of the Board of Trustees.

The Police Academy celebration was attended by more than 160 graduates. The event was kicked off by members of Class No. 207 who graduated the previous day. One reunion attendee graduated from the academy in 1965 in No. 10; another graduated the same year in Class No. 14. Graduates attending included eight area police chiefs: El Monte Chief David Reynoso, Vernon Chief Anthony Miranda, Covina Chief John Curley, West Covina Chief Marc Taylor, Hermosa Beach Chief Sharon Papa, Compton Chief William Wu, San Bernardino School District Chief Joseph G. Paulino and retired Monrovia Chief Joe Santoro.

At the nursing reunion, the College presented class photos from each year – including the first class of licensed vocational nursing students in 1964. Also on display were the programs from the Pinning Ceremonies each class has held. Alumni enjoyed reminiscing and viewing the class photos, especially the changes in uniforms and caps over the years.
Police Academy Celebrates Graduation of Class 207

Rio Hondo Police Academy hosted a graduation ceremony for 39 recruits in Class No. 207 in front of a crowd of more than 600 at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse on Jan. 10.

The event’s keynote speaker was Hermosa Police Chief Sharon Papa, who presides over the Los Angeles County Police Chief Association and serves on the Rio Hondo Police Academy Advisory Board. Fifteen additional police chiefs attended, pinning badges on graduates for the following agencies:

- Alhambra Police Department
- Alameda Police Department
- Azusa Police Department
- Cal State LA University Police Department
- Cal State Northridge Police Department
- Glendora Police Department
- El Segundo Police Department
- Huntington Park Police Department
- Monrovia Police Department
- Montebello Police Department
- Pasadena Police Department
- Pomona Police Department
- South Gate Police Department
- West Covina Police Department
- Westminster Police Department

Truck Academy Trains Professional Firefighters

Fifty firefighters from across California hewed their way through structures with axes and chainsaws and carved up cars during an advanced training course in January at Rio Hondo College’s annual Regional Truck Academy. The Regional Truck Academy, launched in 2006, offers professionals a mix of instructional lectures and hands-on exercises, including forcible entry into burning structures, structure ventilation, high-rise operations, elevator rescues, rope rescues, thermal imaging, auto extraction and rapid intervention tactics.
The Rio Hondo College Foundation provided more than 175 scholarships worth more than $65,000 to over 100 students during its Fall 2018 Scholarship Reception on Jan. 18 in the Campus Inn. Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss gave welcome remarks. The figures top those for the Fall 2017 reception; a spring reception will be held in May. The students were very grateful.

The scholarship recipients include:

- **A Taste Of Rio Fund A Scholarship Fall Freshman Scholarship:** Javier Cano Jr. Rodriguez, Rudy Sanchez
- **Achieving the Dream Scholarship:** Andrea Hernandez
- **Ad Williamson Memorial Fall Scholarship:** Laurence Rivera
- **Assistance League of Whittier:** Lorenda Drylie, Tyrance Greene, Valentina Higgins, Karen Marron, Samantha Rajsavong, Maria Rios, Kimberly Salazar
- **BC McCabe Foundation Nursing Scholarship:** Lorraine Montano
- **BC McCabe Foundation Veterans Scholarship:** Kyle Jordan, Damiano Peper, Jasmine Soriano, Talitha Wirtz
- **Bradt Family Scholarship:** Natasha Gonzalez
- **BVR Scholarship:** Valentina Higgins, Kimberly Salazar
- **Carol Young Brooke Foundation Scholarship:** Sergio Rodriguez
- **Diane & Maurice Meysenburg Fall Scholarship:** Vanessa Mariscal Madero
- **Dr. Alex A. Sanchez Presidential Scholarship:** Oscar Martin
- **Dr. Rose Marie Joyce Scholarship:** Martha Rayo Osuna
- **EMSEM Chamber of Commerce Book Scholarship:** Jesse Casillas, Karen Marron, Tania Nunez, Celene Perez, Rudy Sanchez, Carlos Alberto Villa Rodela, Jesse Wang, Yuren Wang
- **Greg Garza Memorial Fall Scholarship:** Corrine Rivera
- **H.H. Joh Construction Scholarship:** Anthony Reynaga
- **James F. and Margaret L. McIntosh Memorial Scholarship:** Celene Perez
- **Jess Carreon:** Milani Atanante
- **Joe Olmos Humanitarian Scholarship:** Reyes Cabral
- **Osher Initiative for CA Community College Students:** Kevin Alvarado, Zachary Alvidrez, Candice Artechi, Milani Atanante, Marisol Avelar, Charinamae Blank, Khylan Bolden, Jose Calderon Chang, Peter Camacho, Alvaro Casales Gil, Jesse Casillas, Anthony Contrado, Dana Cordova, Mark De La Vega, Briana Franco, Jordan Garcia, Eduardo Gonzalez, Melody Greer, Luis Gutierrez, Andrea Hernandez, Karina Hernandez, Valentina Higgins, Clara Jacobo, Jordan Jaloma, Kyle Jordan, Vanessa Moriscal Madero, Karen Marron, Oscar Martin, Rogelio Martinez Olguin, Cassey Matranga, Luisa Mesones, Shivon Morishita, Veronica Murillo, Tania Nunez, Roy Partida, Damiano Peper, Celene Perez, Austin Preciado, Samantha Rajsavong, Ralph Ramirez, Monica Ramirez, Victoria Ramos, Anthony Reynaga, Maria Rios, Corrine Rivera, Laurence Rivera, Kimberly Salazar, Rudy Sanchez, Lorraine Santos, Kevin Skinner, Jasmine Soriano, Jose Velasquez, Jesse Wang, Yuren Wang, Talitha Wirtz
- **Passport Rio:** Charles Wang
- **PIH Nursing Scholarship:** Valentina Aleshina, Michael Apodaca, Jennie Ayala, Katherine Ceballos, Ilse Fabela, Nadia Garcia, Jane Hau, Amber Hernandez, Asiya Iqbal, Kathleen Lopez, Raziel Terrazas, Marleen Valle, Susan Zhong
- **Rio Hondo College Counselor's Open Door Scholarship:** Carlos Alberto Villa Rodela
- **Rio Hondo College Follett Bookstore Fall Scholarship:** Reyes Cabral, Julissa Estrada, Melanie Guzman, Valentina Higgins, Rogelio Martinez Olguin, Monica Ramirez, Kimberly Salazar, Diem Truong, Yuren Wang, Dylan Zuver
- **Rio Hondo College Management/Confidential Council Scholarship:** Julissa Estrada, Guadalupe Padilla
- **Robert Birnbaum Memorial Scholarship:** Mark De La Vega
- **Southern California Edison STEM Scholarship:** Zachary Alvidrez, Jonathan Barajas, Vianey Barragan, Erick Beltran, Nicholas Betancourt, Charinamae Blank, Reyes Cabral, Peter Camacho, David Colin, Luis Cruz, Krystopher De Lira, Stephanie Estrada, Briana Franco, Moises Gongora, Giován Gonzales, Eduardo Gonzalez, Moises Gonzalez, Giovanni Gutierrez, Nancy Guzman, Andrea Hernandez, Matthew Vaughn Mangoba, Albert Mendoza, Dama Navarrete, Christopher Neely, Giovanni Pablo, Abner Palma, Albert Ramirez, Christopher Reyes Gonzalez, Emilio Salazar, Kevin Skinner, Thien Truong, Mauricio Valadez, Jorge Vargas, Dylan Zuver
- **Southern California Edison Veteran’s Scholarship:** Felipe Aceves, Jonathan Barajas, Alvaro Casales Gil, Frey Chaires, Freddy Diaz, Zeff Farias, Juan Gonzalez, Andy Jomarron, Kyle Jordan, Leopoldo Lopez, Gregorio Navarro, Damiano Peper, Gerardo Pineda, Kevin Skinner, Jasmine Soriano, Aracely Sosa, Donna Stubblefield, Janet Torres, Jose Valencia, Talitha Wirtz
- **Wetsman Family Anthropology Scholarship FALL:** Kimberly Salazar
- **Yoshio C. Nakamura Fall Scholarship:** Sergio Rodriguez
Speech and Debate Team Places 4th

Rio Hondo College’s Forensics Speech and Debate team took the fourth-place sweepstakes at the 2019 Jannese Davidson Invitational at Concordia University Irvine on Jan. 26-27.

The team, competing against a field of 23 other teams, also earned individual awards: IPDA Gold: Carolina Campillo; IPDA Silver: Edgar Minasyan; IPDA Bronze: Brandon Leon; PARLI Cold: Edgar Minasyan and Melissa Gonzalez.

The team was assisted by coaches Patricia Hughes, Alex Cadena and Matt Grisat.

College Welcomes New Team Members

College leaders welcomed the following new administrators, faculty and staff during spring FLEX Day:

► Brenda Beza, project manager of personal and academic support services
► Caroline Durdella, dean of institutional research and planning
► Margaret Fernandez, grant manager of career technical education
► Michael Garabedian, dean of library
► Felicia Johnson, director of facilities services
► Shawn Smith, executive director of human resources
► Marissa Berru-Licon, faculty, mathematics
► Brenda Harlow, Faculty, computer information technology
► Wendy Huang Jimenez, faculty, nursing
► Andrea Kirton, faculty, nursing
► Diego Silva, counselor/coordinator CalWORKS
► Diana Barboza, account clerk, accounting
► Jessica Barrios, financial aid assistant
► Joshua Boies, Fire Academy training and operations specialist, public safety
► Mayra Campos, student services assistant, outreach & matriculation services
► Monique Cortez, scheduling technician, instructional operations
► Jeanette Encinas, senior custodian, facilities services
► Corinna Jaramillo, senior financial aid assistant
► Gloria Paniagua, custodian, facilities services
► Lizette Perez, clerk typist, human resources
► Antonio Ramos, custodian, facilities services

College Hosts Lunar Eclipse Viewing for Area K-12 Students

Rio Hondo College hosted a lunar eclipse viewing party for more than 200 students and their families from Whittier City School District, East Whittier School District and South Whittier School District from 6:30 to 10 p.m. Jan. 20.

The event, also attended by Rio Hondo College students, was co-hosted for the local school districts by the Whittier Astronomical Society, which provided telescopes and volunteers. On Jan. 20, the sun’s rays reflected on the surface of the moon, coloring it red – leading to the name “Blood Moon.”

The excitement of the crowd hit a high point as the eclipse reached totality about 8:50 pm.

In addition to the night sky viewing, adults and children participated in informative lectures and fun workshops. Raffles and prizes added to the festive night.

The next total lunar eclipse will be in May 2021.
College Faculty, Staff and Administrators Gather for Spring FLEX Day

On Friday, Jan. 25, Rio Hondo College faculty and staff received updates on campus initiatives and explored ways to maximize student opportunities for success during the Spring 2019 FLEX Day, a professional development day to launch the semester.

FLEX Coordinator Katie O’Brien opened the event by encouraging the College to meet students where they are at—a theme that also characterized the keynote address and a series of breakout sessions.

After the new managers, faculty and staff were introduced, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss showcased the College’s accomplishments from the last semester, and milestones and successes dating back to the beginning of her term in 2013.

This FLEX Day marks Dreyfuss’ last such presentation before she retires on June 30. She highlighted the following accomplishments in which Rio Hondo College:

- Expanded Associate Degrees for Transfer from three to 16 by September 2014, and then to a total of 27 in 2018.
- Honored 1,399 students in May 2018 for earning an estimated 2,001 academic degrees, including 653 degrees for transfer, which guarantee admission to the California State University system. Both figures top the College’s numbers for 2016-17.
- Raised state apportionment revenue by $5 million from revisions of the California new community college funding formula compared with the first new funding formula simulation released by the Chancellor’s Office.
- Added a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in automotive technology. The first class will graduate in May.
- Earned a Silver Star for the automotive technology program from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office for boosting earnings by 104 percent and helping 100 percent of graduates find employment in jobs similar to their field of study.
- Created partnerships with major auto firms, including a 12-week technical training program with TESLA that launched in spring 2018. Rio Hondo College has graduated two classes of TESLA service technicians.
- Earned full WASC accreditation, ensuring the next accreditation review will not occur until 2022.
- Oversaw major construction projects funded by $245 million in Measure A bond passage with additional $100 million from the state bond, which includes: Applied Technology Building, Learning Resource Center, Student Services Building, Student Union, Administration of Justice Building, Fire Academy, PE Complex, soccer field and educational centers with new construction or remodeling.
- Launched the Rio Promise in 2017 and expanded it in 2018 to include a second year of free tuition for first-time college students, making Rio Hondo College the first in Los Angeles County to make such a pledge.
- Secured a Pathway to Law School program, one of only 28 programs recognized across the state to guide students from community college to a four-year university and into a top law school. This program graduated its third cohort in 2017-18.
- Received the Diversity Champion Award from California LAW for excellence at the 2018 Pathway to Law Summit.
- Posted a 100 percent job placement record for the Wildland Fire Academy, where cadets are also involved in battling California’s wildfires.
- Restored the Police Academy to full operation, including two classes annually. The academy, now considered one of the most rigorous in the state, graduated 63 students in 2018 who are serving as police officers in more than 20 departments.

The keynote speaker for FLEX Day, Phase Two Advisory Founder Melinda Karp—a nationally recognized expert on smoothing transitions of students to college—led a discussion on the Guided Pathways program, which is designed to assist students in pursuing their academic goals.

In her address, Karp reviewed data on student outcomes and discussed the challenges that can derail student success, such as unclear paths to career goals and a lack of monitoring of student progress. The California Community Colleges Guided Pathways program is designed to ensure students have clear curricular paths, receive aid in discovering their path, help keeping on course and guidance to ensure they are learning.

The effort also aims to address equity gaps that identify some students succeeding while others are facing challenges. Some of the adjustments include organizing programs into “meta-majors” in which programs are linked to jobs and further education in high-opportunity fields.

The system will help to integrate the College’s learning infrastructure and allow curricular content and faculty collaboration to span departments.
Vice President to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) has named Rio Hondo College Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee as one of two recipients of the 2019 Fred Turner Award for Outstanding Service to NASPA.

The lifetime achievement award is named for a past chair of the NASPA Board of Directors and former chief student affairs officer at the University of Illinois. It honors a NASPA member who has served in leadership roles at the state, regional, national or international levels of NASPA, and who has been a member for at least 10 years.

NASPA, which is active in 25 countries and eight U.S. territories, represents 15,000 members in the student affairs profession.

“Henry Gee is a superlative representative of Rio Hondo College in all that he does, and he does so much on behalf of our students,” Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “I congratulate him on this well-deserved honor.”

Gee has served in higher education for 40 years. He has served in his current position for 15 years, in addition to recently taking on the task of interim executive director for the Rio Hondo College Foundation. He previously served 10 years as dean of student affairs at Santa Ana College and 15 years in roles at Azusa Pacific University.

As part of NASPA, he has served regionally and nationally in roles ranging from the New Professionals Network for Educational Equity and Ethnic Diversity to annual conference committees, regional conference committees and the NASPA Foundation Board. He also served as Region VI director for NASPA. For 19 years, he has served as co-facilitator for the Leadership Program for Higher Education, a program sponsored by the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education and the Leadership Education for Asian Pacific Islanders Knowledge Community.

“Henry Gee is the epitome of a servant leader,” said Lori M. Ideti, Ed.D., interim vice chancellor for students at University of Hawaii at Manoa and the 2017 Fred Turner award winner. “He has given of himself selflessly: always putting students first, prioritizing the greater good of outstanding student service; and lifting up students, new professionals, and colleagues. The profession is truly enriched because of Henry Gee and his contributions through the years.”

Gee is a first-generation college student. He is married with two children, a son who earned a degree from Cal Poly Pomona and a daughter who is studying marketing communication at California Lutheran University.

Guardian Scholars Event Highlights Resilience

Rio Hondo College’s Guardian Scholars Program kicked off spring semester with a Student Conference on Jan. 22 entitled “Resilience: Never Give Up” for about 50 new and continuing students.

Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee welcomed students during morning remarks and Marquis Williams, author and Cal State University Northridge Guardian Scholars Alumni, offered a keynote speech that recounted his story of resilience. The program focused on perseverance and the importance of connecting with key supporters as well as services off campus.

Students received a signed copy of Marquis’ book, “Beating the System: My Life in Foster Care.” President Dreyfuss gave closing remarks that included her own story of resiliency.

Students enjoyed lunch, received college supplies and received updates on available Guardian Scholars Program services, therapy services available for the first time in partnership with Psychological Services and through the MENDS grant, and book and emergency funding assistance through John Burton and Pritzker Foster Care Initiative through Rio Hondo’s Foundation.

The event followed a Dec. 7 celebration for the holidays among students and staff at Disneyland. Students first enjoyed an interactive workshop throughout the park while focusing on goal setting, achieving your dreams, teamwork and leadership skills. Students then spent the rest of the day making memories, building friendships and having fun in “the happiest place on Earth.”

The memorable day was made possible by the Pritzker Foster Care Initiative Grant and the Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success (YESS) funding.
Serving the communities of

- El Monte
- South El Monte
- Pico Rivera

and portions of:

- Norwalk
- Downey
- La Mirada
- City of Industry
- 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.

Student Housing to Replace Shuttered Library

The Whittier Daily News reports that Los Angeles County wants to build 27 apartments for low-income Rio Hondo College students at the site of the former South Whittier Library.

The county has entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement with the nonprofit LINC Housing Corp. of Long Beach for the plan, which would replace the 17,000-square foot library closed in 2016.

Tickets for the program, which is being staged by the Rio Hondo College Foundation, are free.