

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

MARCH 2019



President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Rio Hondo College in spring is almost overwhelming with the buzz of student and faculty activity delivering on our promise to help students realize their goals. There is so much to celebrate.

I'd like to celebrate three faculty members who have been recognized this spring for their dedication on behalf of their students: Lynette Nyaggah, Steve Hebert and Libby Curiel.

Each, in their own way, represents what sets Rio Hondo College apart and reveals the significant role that educators play in helping students achieve their goals.

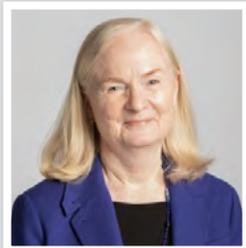
Dr. Nyaggah has been selected to receive the coveted Hayward Award – Rio Hondo College's second consecutive recipient. She has dedicated her career to assisting English learners and is a gifted and accomplished educator and a true champion for her colleagues.

Mr. Hebert, our dean of kinesiology, athletics and dance, and athletic director has been named Athletics Director of the Year by the California Community College Athletic Director's Association. Steve's passion on the field of play is a well-known factor in the success of Rio Hondo College athletics over the years. His passion as dean inspires his colleagues to do their best for their students every day.

Ms. Curiel's passion was demonstrated for our Board of Trustees in March when she presented her sabbatical research project on improving outreach and guidance for communications students. She has been honored by her selection as the regional coordinator for the Guided Pathways program, which seeks to improve student success in achieving their academic goals.

Three unique individuals, three unique approaches to helping out students – all contributing to the diverse excellence that is the hallmark of Rio Hondo College.

ESL Professor to Receive 2019 Hayward Award



Rio Hondo College professor Dr. Lynette Nyaggah has been named a 2018-19 Hayward Award recipient by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges in recognition for her commitment to students, College and profession.

The Hayward Award, established in 1989, goes to two full-time and two part-time faculty members annually. Recipients receive \$1,250 and a commemorative plaque.

"Lynette Nyaggah is a gifted professor and a passionate representative for her faculty colleagues," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "We are thrilled to congratulate her for this much-deserved honor."

Nyaggah teaches linguistics and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, drawing on her experiences living and teaching in Kenya to strengthen her connection with students.

"I do my best to meet students where they are, building on their diverse backgrounds and cultural schemata," she wrote in her nomination papers. "I recognize the differences in cultural writing traditions and prioritize providing a bridge to college-level writing conventions by making those conventions explicit."

For example, she encourages student collaboration and structures her lessons to support students at every stage of skill in English and their native languages.

"I am happiest when I see students spontaneously reaching out to help each other – evidence that the affective barriers impairing learning have been reduced. I am honored to serve and empower my students," Nyaggah said.

Nyaggah earned a Bachelor of Arts in linguistics at UC Berkeley and her Master of Arts and doctorate in theoretical linguistics at UCLA, specializing in African languages.

She has been teaching since 1976, starting at Cal State Fullerton. She has taught at K-12 public schools, Cerritos College and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. She joined Rio Hondo College in 1987.

She is serving her third and final term as president of the Community College Association, an affiliate of the California Teachers Association, in addition to serve as a CCA board member, treasurer and vice president.

This is the second consecutive year a Rio Hondo College professor has received the honor. Dr. Adam Wetsman was named a Hayward recipient in 2017-18.

"I'm grateful to Rio Hondo for the wonderful faculty and students who motivated me to do this work," Nyaggah said. "This honor belongs to us all."

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Board Report



Libby Curiel

Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees reviewed the 2018 Student Success Scorecard during its March 13 meeting, praising College administrators for achieving increased or improved outcomes for every metric within the report.

Substantial gains were measured in remedial English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, remedial English progress and student persistence while moderate gains were demonstrated in transfer-level math (2 year), transfer-level English (1 year), remedial math and CTE completion.

Persistence measures first-time students who intend to complete a degree or transfer, for whom performance rose by 10.3 percentage points from students entering in 2007-08 to those entering in 2011-12. The measure is considered a key indicator of student progress and achievement.

In addition, students who attended the College to build skills increased their earnings by \$26.9 percent over their baseline; gains varied by discipline, from 19.8 percent for Administration of Justice students to 105.1 percent for emergency medical services. Child development numbers rose 45.8 percent.

Trustees also received a sabbatical report from Professor Libby Curiel, who was recently appointed to be the Guided Pathways regional coordinator for the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Guided Pathways is an initiative across the system to assist students in reaching their goals and close equity gaps.

Curiel, a member of Rio Hondo College's Communications and Speech faculty, studied her department's degree and transfer performance to optimize outreach efforts.

She learned that 93 percent of students who earned a degree for transfer, which guarantees admission to a Cal State campus, transferred to four-year universities. Those chosen included Cal State Fullerton, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Dominguez Hills and San Francisco State University, as well as Chapman University, several UC campuses, University of La Verne and colleges outside of California.

Curiel surveyed students about their transfer plans and conducted a content analysis of all California Community Colleges communication department websites.

She rated them for their high-impact practices, including content and design. She also sought out area experts and worked with them to develop objectives to lead to better outcomes for students. Each collaboration became a Guided Pathways-type initiative.

In the end, she developed a template for a more effective website to encourage student enrollment and provide information outcomes, skills and career pathways, and showed how the plan would complement the College's Guided Pathways Initiative.



Re-Entry Conference Briefs Students on College Needs



Rio Hondo College hosted its fourth annual Re-Entry Career Success Conference on March 20, supporting non-traditional and adult students who are just starting college or returning after an absence of five years or more.

About 74 re-entry students attended the conference, along with community members and staff.

"It is critical that Rio Hondo College continues to address the unique needs of adult re-entry students so that you can all achieve your educational and career dreams," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said in remarks opening the conference.



"Today's conference helps lay the groundwork for what I envision will be a strong network of support for all adult re-entry students who are seeking a smooth transition back to college," she said. "We understand the challenges that come with striving to live a balanced life with family, work, and the demands of college."

The conference featured a College Resource Fair that offered a diverse selection of college services. Representatives of transfer colleges/universities attended the fair and highlighted programs friendly to working adults.

A financial aid workshop offered guidance for adult learners and a workshop on balancing educational priorities with family and workplace demands. Three members of the Board of Trustees also attended the event.





President Teresa Dreyfuss Honored as 2019 Distinguished Woman of the Year

Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss has been named a 2019 Distinguished Woman of the Year for the 57th Assembly District in recognition of her contributions to the community.

"I am proud and humbled by this honor," Dreyfuss said. "My goal has always been to serve Rio Hondo College and our communities with the utmost passion, to do my best to ensure the opportunity for higher education was available to everyone."

Assembly Majority Leader Ian C. Calderon, who represents the 57th District, honored 10 distinguished women during an event March 28 at The Clarke Estate.

"President Dreyfuss has dedicated many years of service to our community and to ensuring the success of countless students," Calderon said. "I am proud to honor her for her leadership and many contributions to the 57th Assembly District."

Dreyfuss was nominated by Pico Rivera Mayor Pro-Tem Gustavo Camacho and Huntington Park Public Works Director Daniel Hernandez for her role at Rio Hondo College and her commitment to supporting the community.

"I have worked with many great community leaders over the years, but Ms. Dreyfuss stands out for her leadership, experience, professionalism, integrity and her commitment to community," Camacho wrote in his nomination form.

"I believe she exemplifies courage, strength and vision through her accomplishments working at the College and in the community she serves," Hernandez wrote.

Dreyfuss, who will retire on June 30, has served Rio Hondo College for more than 30 years, starting in 1987. She started as a senior accountant and worked her way up to the leadership post. She was appointed permanently to the post in 2013 after a brief time as the College's interim superintendent/president.

During her service, she helmed a \$250 million construction program that remade the aging hilltop campus into a modern institution, as well as established three regional education centers to serve students close to their homes.

Dreyfuss, who holds an MBA from the University of La Verne, is an immigrant from Taiwan who has drawn on her experiences to inspire students to achieve their dreams. She has also served as an adjunct instructor at Rio Hondo College and other institutions.

She is a member of Soroptimist International of Whittier, Soroptimist International of South El Monte and El Monte, L.A. County Fourth District Consolidated Oversight Board, Los Angeles Orange Regional Consortia, the Whittier Historical Association, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officers and the American Association of University Women. She serves as vice chair of the City of Whittier's Sister City Committee and senior adviser to the L.A. Positive Chinese Association.

Dreyfuss has been praised for guarding Rio Hondo College's finances through the Great Recession, ensuring stability even when other institutions struggled, and increasing student graduation, completion and transfer rates during her tenure as superintendent/president.



Dean Steve Hebert Honored as CCCADA Athletics Director of the Year



Steve Hebert, dean of the Rio Hondo College Division of Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics (KDA) and athletic director, has been named Athletics Director of the Year by the California Community College Athletic Director's Association (CCCADA).

The award is a recognition of Hebert's "tremendous impact" on the association, according to a letter announcing the honor by CCCADA President Dan Clauss.

Hebert received the award at the group's Honoring Our Own Luncheon on March 28.

"I'm deeply touched by this recognition from my peers across the community college system's athletic association," Hebert said. "It's an incredible group of educators who are committed to ensuring our students reach their potential in the field of play and in the classrooms, so they can achieve their dreams."

Hebert, who holds a master's degree in education with an emphasis on physical education from Azusa Pacific University, taught and coached at area high schools from 1985 through 2001. He taught science and health courses while coaching football, basketball, golf, and baseball at schools in the San Gabriel Valley and Chino, where he also served as athletic director.

Hebert joined Rio Hondo College in 2001 as head basketball coach and P.E. instructor, but also taught numerous health and wellness and activities courses. He also served on the Academic Senate and the Curriculum Committee. He was a voting representative and president for the Foothill Conference and served as an athletic coordinator and as the California Community College Men's Basketball Coaches Association as a board member and president. He has chaired the Southern California Regional Playoffs seeding meeting for men's basketball since 2011.

In 2013, Hebert became dean of the KDA and athletic director. He presided over the opening of several kinesiology and dance facilities, including new tennis courts, a swimming pool, softball field and soccer stadium.

"Steve Hebert is an example of the deeply talented and incredibly committed team of educators who set Rio Hondo College apart," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "As his host of scholar athletes can attest, he puts students at the center of all he does. We are all fortunate to work with him."

School Administrators Honor Former College Trustee

Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss presented El Monte Mayor Andre Quintero with the Whittier Area School Administrators (WASA) Community Service Award on March 1 during the annual WASA Community Service Awards Breakfast.

The event was attended by more than 12 Rio Hondo College Administrators.

Quintero, a former two-term member of the Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees, praised the College's innovative approach to its mission, including its Pathway to Law School program and Rio Promise, which provides free tuition for two years to first-time, full-time college students.

Quintero has served as El Monte's mayor since 2009. As a member of the Rio Hondo College board, he battled student fee increases and worked to make Rio Hondo College a larger part of the community. He also advocated for outreach programs that encourage students to enroll in college.

During his tenure, the Board of Trustees adopted a Project Labor Agreement to provide a skilled workforce for construction projects using the College's modernization and expansion. The College also approved sustainability building design standards.

Quintero is a long-time proponent of the El Monte Promise, a forerunner program to the Rio Promise, which helped new students along their their educational journeys.

Quintero is a graduate of UCLA Law School and UC Riverside, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science.



Police Academy Trainer Saves Choking 1-year-old Girl

A Pomona police officer – and a Rio Hondo College Police Academy trainer – saved a choking infant girl in Pomona on March 31, according to media reports.

Jeremy Hunt, a Pomona police officer and part-time recruit training officer for the academy, was responding to an emergency call about 8 p.m. when he found a mother and father holding a 1-year old in distress.

Hunt grabbed the child, spun her onto her stomach and tapped at her back to dislodge the item. She began breathing again, according to Fox 11 News.

Rio Hondo College Police Academy Director Walt Allen III relayed the news during a campus meeting, noting his pride in the heroic act by one of the academy's trainers.

RIO IN THE NEWS: Check out the Fox 11 article on Pomona officer, Jeremy Hunt!





College Welcomes Seniors During Annual Preview Day

Rio Hondo College welcomed high school seniors from across the region for its Senior Preview Day on March 20 and 21. Students attended academic workshops, toured the campus and enjoyed lunch as they discovered the many academic and career-training programs available at the College.



Board of Trustees Opposes Census Citizenship Question

RIO IN THE NEWS: Check out coverage in the Mid Valley News!

Leaders at Rio Hondo College are urging community members to take an active role in advocating for a fair,

unbiased and accurate count of U.S. residents during the 2020 U.S. census, a critical tool for determining how federal funding is determined and voting districts are drawn.

The Board of Trustees passed two resolutions on March 13 – one opposing inclusion of a citizenship question in the 2020 census and a second supporting an accurate count, local outreach, assistance and promotion of census awareness.

The citizenship question effort is under legal review after a bevy of lawsuits and challenges by attorneys general in more than 17 states who argue that the question will create fear in undocumented communities, reduce participation by documented immigrants and skew counts of political districts in favor of conservatives.

The House of Representatives is holding hearings on the matter; the Supreme Court will hold a legal review on April 23 of a New York judge's ruling against the question.

The College's first resolution states that the citizenship question would lead to inaccurate data about Latinx residents, as well as the overall number of residents of the Rio Hondo College district. It encourages Congress members to combat the effort.

The second resolution states that Rio Hondo College is committed to working with government entities, including local school districts, to ensure an accurate count. The College will explore ways of working with faculty to include 2020 census information in classroom discussions and curriculum.

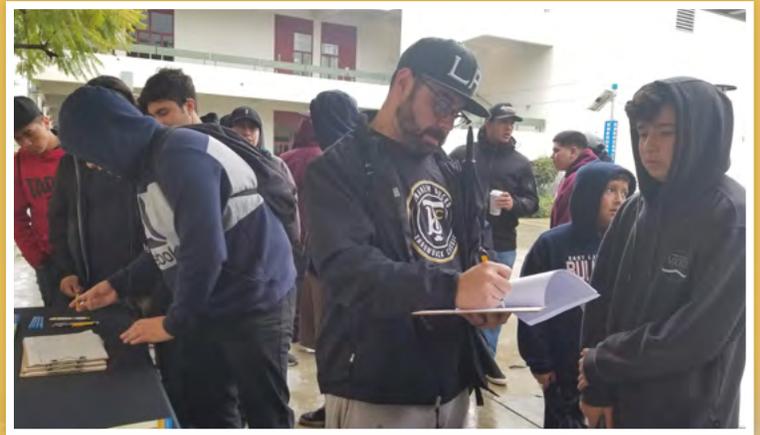
A presentation to the Board of Trustees by Lizette Escobedo, director of the National Census Program for the NALEO Educational Fund, stated that Latino youth is at high risk of being undercounted, based on 2010 census results. Undercounts are concentrated in 12 U.S. counties, including Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Diego.

CTE Division Hosts Open House for High School Students

The Rio Hondo College Career and Technical Education Division hosted more than 100 guests during its annual open house, held March 2.

Participants rotated through hands-on informational sessions and lab tours showcasing Rio Hondo's outstanding CTE programs, including alternative energy technology/electronics/home auditing, alternative fuels/fuel cell technician, the automotive technology Bachelor of Science, architecture, civil design engineering technology and GIS, Honda professional career training program specialization and hospitality management.

The event drew students and faculty from El Rancho Unified School District, El Monte High School and Montebello Unified's Applied Technology Center. Participants also attended a Student Success and CTE workshop, enjoyed a breakfast served by students from California High School's Hospitality Program and gathered in the Tech Quad to experience a demonstration of Tesla and Honda automobiles.



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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



9 to 11 a.m. Friday, April 12:

Part 1 of a Pathways for Citizenship event will feature updates on federal laws for childhood arrivals and special visas for crime victims, Science Building S136

9 to 11 a.m. Friday, April 19:

Part 2 of a Pathways for Citizenship event will feature marriage-based petitions, green cards and military pathways to citizenship, Science Building S136

Noon Wednesday, April 24:

Tesla START student graduation:

6 p.m. Friday, April 26:

A Taste of Rio. Purchase tickets at www.riohondofoundation.org

1 and 7 p.m. Thursday, May 9:

Evening of Dance Concert, Wray Theater

7 p.m. Friday, May 10:

Evening of Dance Concert, Wray Theater

10 a.m. Tuesday, May 14:

Groundbreaking for the new Rio Plaza transportation hub, Workman Mill Road at the main entrance to campus

5 p.m. Wednesday, May 22:

Nursing Pinning Ceremony, Lot A

5:30 p.m. Thursday, May 23:

Commencement Ceremony, Lot A

College Hosts 2019 CHOICES Conference

Nearly 200 young men from area high schools and middle schools visited Rio Hondo College on March 15 for the 2019 CHOICES conference, which provided speakers, workshops and a resource fair with information about how to make healthy choices in their personal and professional lives.



Jerry Tello (pictured below) gave a moving and dynamic keynote address. He is an internationally recognized expert in strengthening families, therapeutic healing and cross-cultural issues.

The event was hosted by Rio Hondo College's Office of Government and Community Relations, SPIRITT Family Services and Hispanic Outreach Taskforce.

Vice President of Finance and Business Yulian Ligioso offered welcoming remarks on behalf of the College administration. Also collaborating on the event were the offices of Marketing and Communications, Center for Career and Reentry Services, Outreach, Career and Technical Education, Student Psychological Services, Guardian Scholars, Facilities, Theatre Arts, Security, Audio/Visual and Campus Food Services.

