

FOCUS ON RIO

SEPTEMBER 2019

President's Message



Dr. Arturo Reyes

I'd like to begin this Focus on Río by thanking the entire Río Hondo College community for so warmly embracing me. I've been incredibly welcomed since my arrival – a reflection of our community's openness and good nature.

I've been asked many times since I arrived about my goals and vision for Río Hondo.

My first goal is to listen – to our staff, administrators, faculty, students and

community. My goal is to learn from all of you so we can work together to create a shared vision that will guide us toward success. That's because, in the end, this isn't about me, or even Río Hondo. It's about our obligation to lift up our community and ensure our students can secure the futures that will bring them happiness and success.

On Aug. 19, I had the tremendous privilege of connecting with our students on their first day of school. I was deeply encouraged by their decision to start their higher education journey at Río Hondo, their eagerness to learn and their determination to overcome barriers to succeed.

As you know, our students can choose from a number of community colleges as well as Cal States, University of California campuses and private universities. The fact that they chose Río Hondo College is a source of pride and responsibility for all of us.

They are entrusting us with their futures.

I try to keep this in mind every day. We live in a time when many of our students face challenges. Many are marginalized by others; they may not have a place they call home and could be **food insecure**. But they fight back and pursue their dreams with resilience and desire.

This drive is one of their greatest assets, one that I hope continues to define them during their time with us and after, and one that I hope inspires all of us to go the extra mile to welcome them, guide them and let them know we care about them as individuals as well as about their goals.

It's amazing work that all of you do. I'm proud to be joining you on this journey together. You have my pledge that I will devote my utmost effort to our shared success and that you will find me accessible, attentive and responsive to the needs of this great institution and community.

Here's to a great fall semester and a great 2019-20 academic year!

Mensaje del Presidente

Me gustaría comenzar este mensaje agradeciendo a toda la comunidad del Colegio de Río Hondo. La cálida bienvenida desde mi llegada ha sido increíble: un reflejo de la apertura y la buena naturaleza de nuestra comunidad.

Muchos me han preguntado varias veces desde que llegué sobre mis metas y visión para Río Hondo. Mi primer objetivo es escuchar a nuestro personal, administradores, facultad, estudiantes y comunidad. Mi objetivo es aprender de todos ustedes para que podamos trabajar juntos y crear una visión compartida que nos guíe hacia el éxito. Por eso, al final, no se trata de mí, ni de Río Hondo. Se trata de nuestra obligación de elevar nuestra comunidad y garantizar que nuestros estudiantes puedan lograr un futuro que les traera felicidad y éxito.

El 19 de agosto tuve el gran privilegio de conectarme con nuestros estudiantes en su primer día de estudios en Río Hondo. Su decisión de comenzar su jornada de educacional superior en Río Hondo me animó profundamente. Por igual me inspira su afán de aprender y la determinación de superar las barreras para tener éxito. Como saben, nuestros estudiantes pueden elegir entre una serie de colegios comunitarios así como

universidades de cuatro años. El hecho de haber elegido el Colegio de Río Hondo es motivo de orgullo y responsabilidad para todos nosotros.

Están confiando su futuro en nuestras manos.

Tomo esto en cuenta todos los días. Vivimos en una época en que muchos de nuestros estudiantes enfrentan desafíos. Muchos son marginados por otros; pueden no tener un hogar, ni dinero para la alimentación. Pero se defienden y persiguen sus sueños con persistencia y deseo.

Este impulso es una de sus mayores características que espero siga definiendo durante su tiempo con nosotros y después, confiando que nos inspire a todos ir más allá al darles la bienvenida, guiarlos y hacerles saber que nos importan como individuos, así como sus metas.

Es un trabajo increíble que todos ustedes hacen. Estoy orgulloso de unirme a ustedes en esta jornada. Les prometo que dedicaré mi mayor esfuerzo a nuestro éxito compartido y que me encontrarán accesible, atento y sensible a las necesidades de esta gran institución y de la comunidad.

¡Les deseo un excelente semestre y un excelente año académico 2019-20!

RIO HONDO COLLEGE



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College Welcomes 15,000-plus Students for Fall Semester

Río Hondo College, led by new Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes, greeted many of the more than 15,000 new and returning students to the 2019-20 fall semester on Aug. 19, with guidance and a message of support as they launch or continue their educational journeys.



"It's one of the most exciting days of the year – seeing all these new faces eager for the opportunities presented by a Río Hondo College education," Reyes said. "It's a thrill and a privilege to be a part of that experience."

Reyes started as Río Hondo College's 10th superintendent/president in July, pledging to ensure that all members of the community receive the opportunities made possible through a college education.

The College offers a wide array of student support services, including two years of free tuition for full-time students who recently graduated from high school, a summer bridge program and orientations to help prepare students for the transition to college, counseling and financial aid, as well as ongoing guidance as students plan their paths from community college to four-year universities

or career fields. Special programs assist students who face socio-economic challenges, who were formerly incarcerated, are heads of households or are former foster youths.

A new element of student support services, unveiled this fall, is the Serenity Room, a meditation space created by the College's Guardian Scholars program in partnership with Student Health & Psychological Services. Guardian Scholars is the College's program that advocates for foster youth. The Serenity Room will hold an Open House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26.

The Serenity Room, located in Student Health & Psychological Services Room SS230, contains fountains, aromatherapy, candles, relaxing music, yoga mats, and comfortable cushions. Meditation is an important self-care practice that helps decrease stress in the mind and body, increase concentration, fosters self-compassion, and alleviates anxiety.

The Serenity Room was sponsored by an In-N-Out and MENDS grant. For more information, call 562-908-3438.

The new semester also features offerings in the College's Homeland Security degree and certificate programs as well as access to transfer-level math and English courses along with instructional support.



Board Report



Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees at its Aug. 14 meeting received an update on the [Veterans Service Center \(VSC\)](#), approved a plan that will allow students who receive federal Work Study aid to serve as tutors for local students.

The VSC is a one-stop shop that provides a full range of support services designed to assist veterans with their transition into higher education. Veterans often

face challenges in balancing their return to community, family needs, work and the time spent away from school. The center assists them in navigating school registration and offers financial resources and a place where others understand their challenges.

Veterans bring assets and diversity to Río Hondo College, including their leadership, maturity, motivation, discipline, sense of honor and integrity.

In 2018-19, the center provided counseling to nearly 3,000 students, computer use to nearly 4,000 students and meal vouchers to more than 200. Just under 200 students received financial aid and 68 were loaned calculators.

The College's program for tutoring – sponsored by the Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans Services Department – will allow College students to tutor children who are part of the [El Monte Promise Foundation](#) in math, reading, English and science. The foundation, a partner to the College, assists school children in the region in realizing their dreams of higher education. The agreement will allow Río Hondo College students to tutor El Monte Promise students through Aug. 14, 2022.

Trustees also accepted a \$300,000 grant from the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Office of Diversion and Re-entry College and Career Bridge Program. The funds will support the Río Hondo College RISE Scholars Program, which offers support to formerly incarcerated students.

EOP&S Welcomes Students, Provides Support and Supplies

Río Hondo College's [Extended Opportunity Program and Services](#) (EOP&S) and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) Program held two events in August to welcome and support students – the fourth annual Welcome Back to School Books & Burgers on Aug. 9 and the group's annual Welcome Back event on Aug. 13.

Each received an amazing turnout of students.

Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes, Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee, Executive Dean of Student Affairs and Student Equity Loy Nashua welcomed students to the event.

"I am delighted you are here today, taking time out of your summer to get a head start at Río Hondo College," Reyes said during the Aug. 13 event. "Your decision to attend today's CARE Welcome Back Orientation is an important one. You will learn about the different resources and services our CARE program has to offer to support your success. You will be able to navigate the campus with more ease, make new friends and reconnect with old ones."

Students received books, EOP&S supplies, met with counselors, scheduled counseling appointments and had a chance to meet classmates and staff.

EOP&S offers programs and services that meet the educational needs of students who face language, social and economic challenges and which encourage student growth, development and successful participation in collegiate life.

CARE is a multi-agency program sponsored by the California Department of Social Services, State Employment Development Department and the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges as a supplemental component of EOP&S to provide educational support services and activities for students who are academically under-prepared, welfare-dependent and single heads of households.

The event was made possible through assistance from teams in accounting, audio visual, the bookstore, CalWORKS, counseling, success/outreach, equity, facilities, library services, marketing, security, student life and leadership, and student affairs.



New College Leader Connects with Facilities Team

New Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes breaks bread over lunch with the College's hard-working Facilities staff.



Budget Forums Offer Transparency to Campus Community

At the direction of Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes, Río Hondo College hosted its first 2019-20 campus-wide budget forum on Aug 28, sharing information about the College's finances and opening the budget process to the entire campus community in the spirit of transparency.

"Our goal is that, with this new level of transparency into our finances, we can empower our campus community to prioritize our goals behind student success and equity," Reyes said. "This open dialogue allows us to work together for collaborative solutions to increase student access, support and success."

College administrators shared financial information with the campus community during the budget forums, peppered with questions and answers.

Information encompassed the College's budgeting calendar, which includes passage of the state budget, adoption of a tentative Río Hondo budget and a final budget. The process includes setting enrollment targets and a process for reviewing priorities, needs and allocating resources.

California Community Colleges follow a new state funding system called the Student Centered Funding Formula. The formula provides a base allocation reflecting enrollment.

A supplemental allocation is given for students who receive financial aid such as a College Promise Grant, Pell Grant or are covered by AB 540 that allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition.

Finally, colleges receive a student success allocation tied to the number of students who earn associate degrees, credit certificates, transfer to four-year universities/colleges, complete transfer-level math and English in their first year or who complete nine or more career education units and attain the regional living wage.

Additional forums were held Sept. 4 and 5.



Students Present Original Play at 2019 Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Río Hondo College California Repertory brought its summertime paean to Christmas to the world stage, showcasing the original work at the 2019 Edinburgh Festival Fringe from Aug. 3-6 and 8-10.



"The Hollywood Summer Christmas Show," is an original play written by Río Hondo College theatre Professor William Korf with songs and dancing inspired by a child's love of the mid-winter holiday.

The play is set in a 1949 Hollywood radio station during the golden era of radio. The play follows the comic attempts of a group of actors to present a summer radio show. Hilarity ensues as they start the show with the wrong script and a fun and heart-warming Christmas show is presented.

Korf wrote the play after his daughter, Ava, recreated Christmas in July 2017. Ava Korf plays one of the actor's daughters, a recognition of her influence in the play's creation.

"I always wanted to do a Christmas show, but the timing never worked out," Korf said. "And then one day in the middle of a hot July, my daughter Ava shut herself in her room for 4 hours. She emerged having built and painted a cardboard Christmas tree complete with wrapped presents. She announced it was 'Christmas in July' and we proceeded to have a wonderful 'holiday' afternoon. I realized I could finally do my longed-for Christmas Show... in the summer!"



This was the eighth time Río Hondo College appeared at the Fringe since 1976. College actors have performed over 25 shows in those appearances and received two Fringe First Awards.

This one-act, 75-minute comic romp, which featured a dancing, singing and acting ensemble of 22 Río Hondo College students, was performed at Paradise in Augustine.

The show premiered at Río Hondo College in summer 2018.

College President Attends Local Chamber Events

Río Hondo College hosted an interactive Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce Business Mixer, with Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes providing welcome remarks and meeting business owners and leaders from the community.



"Although I am new to Río Hondo, I can already appreciate the strength of Río Hondo College's relationships with the surrounding community," Reyes told the 50 Chamber guests. "Río Hondo College offers an impressive list of career and technical education programs designed to prepare our students for the area's workforce."

He encouraged guests to share information with their networks about the College's programs.

Río Hondo College outreach team members Monica Chavez Gonzalez and Mayra Campos were joined by Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes at the eighth annual Back-to-School Event sponsored by the El Monte/South El Monte Chamber of Commerce on Aug. 10.

The event, which took place at the El Monte Valley Mall, enabled school districts, nonprofit organizations, health providers and social service agencies to provide back-to-school supplies and giveaway items to hundreds of children and families from the El Monte and South El Monte communities.



Faculty, Staff and Administration Prep for 2019-20 Year

Río Hondo College's staff, administration and faculty on Aug. 16 held their annual FLEX Day gathering to prepare for the start of fall semester, welcoming new members of the campus community and discussing the importance of student outcomes.

New Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes kicked off the event by sharing his educational journey and encouraging teachers to ensure all students feel welcomed at Río Hondo College.

"Remember to take that extra effort to validate the existence and the attendance of our dreamers and all of our marginalized communities," Reyes said.

The professional development training event featured a series of workshops that touched on issues from impacted student populations, assisting students in distress, the College's Guided Pathways, student services, guidance for undocumented students and changes in curriculum.

Observatory to Hold Fall Star-gazing Nights

Río Hondo College will hold free [star and planet gazing](#) on Friday nights this fall at the Gordon D. Crowell Astrophysical Observatory, which houses one of the largest telescopes available to the public through Southern California.

Events are being held at 7 p.m. Oct. 4 and 18, 6:30 p.m. Oct. 25 and 6 p.m. Nov. 1, 15, 22 and Dec. 20.

The observatory, which was partly funded by the National Science Foundation, opened in 1972. Its current telescope is a Meade LX200GPS, 16-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope.

Guests should arrive 15 to 20 minutes early and park in Lot C in front of the Child Development Center. The walk to the observatory is about half a mile uphill. Flashlights are not required. Viewing is contingent on clear weather. For information, call (562) 692-0921, ext. 3742.

Foundation Receives \$5,000 from Credit Union of Southern California

Credit Union of Southern California (CU SoCal) donated \$5,000 to the Río Hondo College Foundation as part of its commitment to supporting the community of Whittier. For more information about CU SoCal, visit www.cusocal.org.



Caption: Pictured are (left) Vice President, Business & Talent Development, Melissa Manning, (center) Río Hondo College Foundation Interim Executive Director Henry Gee and Credit Union of Southern California President and CEO Dave Gunderson.

College Gallery Takes Part in SUR:biennial Shows



Río Hondo College Art Gallery is presenting *Cuentista*, an art show that is part of a broader display of work focused on the geographical, cultural and artistic borderlands between Los Angeles and the board areas south.

The project, called SUR:biennial, was founded in 2011, and explores complex notions of globalization and exchange. Shows are independently curated and showcase recent and newly commissioned works by local and international artists

influenced by the cultures and artistic traditions of Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

The 2019 show will be located across seven locations. Río Hondo College's show will run through Thursday, Oct. 3.

RIO IN THE NEWS: [Learn more about the art exhibit from the California School News Radio podcast.](#) Also, *The Whittier Daily News* promoted the reception for the exhibit in the College Gallery.

Río Hondo College will feature works by Danielle Cansino, Teresita de la Torre, Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Manuel López, Álvaro D. Márquez, Sergio Daniel Robleto and Jaklin Romine. The show is co-curated by Robert Miller and Lydia Espinoza.



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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

Río 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

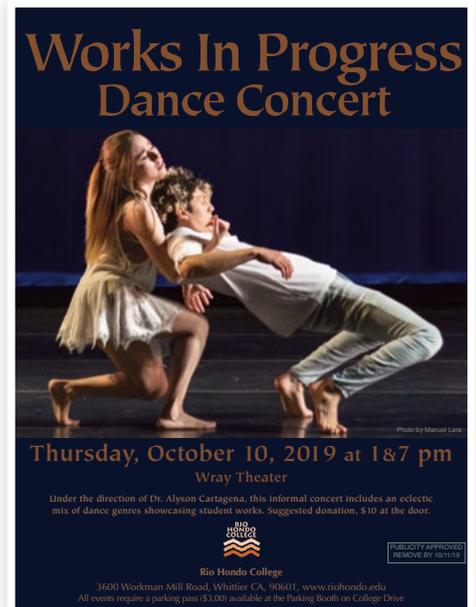
Now to Thursday, Oct. 3: *Cuentista*, an art show that is part of the regional SUR:biennial presentation, Río Hondo Gallery

6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9: Board of Trustees meeting, Río Hondo College

1 and 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10: Works in Progress Dance Concert, Wray Theater

4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10: LGBTQIA+ Coming Out/Joteria Night, Student Union

10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 14: Selena Appreciation Event, Student Union



763 Students Attend Welcome Days Orientation

Río Hondo College hosted more than 760 students during two Freshman Welcome Days events in August.

The events, designed to provide intensive orientations for first-time students, were held on Aug. 2 and Aug. 9 for nearly 800 students. The events also featured welcoming remarks from new Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes.

Each event included a student panel, a campus tour and workshops on financial aid, guidance for navigating the first year of college and team building. A resource and lunch followed the workshops.

During each event, Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee discussed how to succeed during the first year of college.

