

# FOCUS ON RIO

WINTER 2020

## President's Message



**Dr. Arturo Reyes**

My first semester at Río Hondo College has come to a close, allowing a moment of respite before we work together on the challenges and opportunities that await in spring.

It has been an incredible six months as I've connected with our students, faculty, staff and community. I have learned a tremendous amount about what works at Río Hondo College. I have also learned about those areas where we need to continue to strengthen our processes.

I am extremely grateful for all of the feedback I have received from my visits with campus divisions and departments, community members, organizations, as well as with the leaders of our area K-12 school districts.

I would like to acknowledge our dedicated Board of Trustees, who champion student access and equity, inclusivity in hiring practices, enrollment and instruction, as well as fiscal transparency, and educational excellence among their District goals.

One of our most significant missions of a community college is ensuring that higher education is within the reach of all members of our community – especially those who face barriers and other challenges.

As superintendent/president, this mission is embedded in our efforts at every level of the College and throughout our instructional and support programs. Thank you for supporting this critical aspect of our mission.

The need for fiscal transparency is paramount. The funding formula for community colleges has changed and new weight has been placed on student outcomes. Ensuring our students meet their academic goals will also mean that we are meeting our financial goals – a synergy that is appropriate on many, many levels.

Last semester provided a number of opportunities to participate in campus life – including our week of support for undocumented scholars, Latino scholars and mentors through our LEGACIE program and our recent salute to women veterans, to name just a few. I am proud to lead an institution that supports veterans and underserved populations and which backs up that pledge with student support services.

I hope everyone has enjoyed a restful and peaceful holiday season, and I would like to wish each of you a productive and fulfilling new year.

I look forward to working with you in the months ahead as we continue to serve our students and community.

## Mensaje del Presidente

Mi primer semestre en el Colegio de Río Hondo ha llegado a su fin, permitiendo un momento de descanso antes de trabajar juntos en los desafíos y oportunidades que nos esperan en la primavera.

Han sido seis meses increíbles, ya que me he conectado con nuestros estudiantes, facultad, personal y miembros de la comunidad. He aprendido muchísimo sobre como funciona el Colegio de Río Hondo. También he aprendido sobre aquellas áreas donde necesitamos continuar fortaleciendo nuestros métodos.

Estoy extremadamente agradecido por todos los comentarios que he recibido durante mis visitas a las divisiones y departamentos del Colegio, miembros de la comunidad, organizaciones, así como con líderes de los distritos escolares K-12 de nuestra área.

Me gustaría agradecer a nuestra Mesa Directiva por su dedicación al defender el derecho a la educación superior y la igualdad para nuestros estudiantes, la inclusividad en las prácticas de empleo, la matriculación y la educación, así como

la transparencia fiscal y la excelencia educativa entre los objetivos del Distrito.

Una de nuestras misiones más importantes como colegio comunitario es asegurar que la educación superior esté al alcance de todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad, especialmente aquellos que enfrentan obstáculos y otros desafíos.

Como superintendente/presidente, esta misión está integrada en nuestros esfuerzos en todos los niveles del Colegio y en todos nuestros programas de instrucción asistencia estudiantil. Gracias por apoyar este aspecto crítico de nuestra misión.

La necesidad de transparencia fiscal es primordial. La fórmula de financiación para los colegios comunitarios ha cambiado y creado un nuevo desafío en los resultados de los estudiantes. Asegurando que nuestros estudiantes cumplan sus objetivos académicos también significará que estaremos cumpliendo nuestros objetivos financieros – una sinergia que es apropiada en varios niveles. **(Continúa en la página 2)**



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# District Update

Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees approved board goals and district priorities for the current academic year, discussed student life and leadership and received a report on campus safety during their meeting in November. In addition, the board recognized retiring staff and new hires.

Among the board's goals for the year are: strengthening its policy role; strengthening its professional development activities; strengthening partnerships with all levels of government; strengthening connections with the communities it serves and its knowledge of community issues; ensuring a strong and effective relationship with the College's president; and strengthening its ties with student leadership.

The board's district priorities broke into several categories, starting with student access and success. Río Hondo College will promote equity, diversity and inclusivity in operations; promote instructional practices that are culturally appropriate for students; strengthen the connection between career and technical education programs and labor market demand; close the achievement gap among disproportionately impacted student populations and close achievement gaps through transparency in student success data.

In addition, the board pledged to fully implement the California Community Colleges systems Guided Pathways Model, which is designed to help students complete their educational goals.

In fiscal areas, the board committed to initiatives that foster financial stability during the implementation of the state's new Student Centered Funding Formula and to provide transparency and fiscal responsibility in the budget development process.

Student Life and Leadership's director gave the board an update on the department's role in campus programs such as homecoming, Veterans Day, Women's History Conference, Senior Preview Days, A Taste of Río, Spring Fling and Commencement.

A key element of the program is the Associated Students of Río Hondo College, which helps coordinate co-curricular program, advocate for students and develop student leaders. ASRHC representatives also participate in shared College governance planning committees on many fronts, including instruction, equity and safety.

Student ambassadors also offer campus tours and represent the College. In 2018, these students completed 36 tours and participated in 22 campus and community events. In fall 2019, the ambassador corps swelled to 17 active members and 11 on the waitlist.

In addition, 25 students participate annually in the Student Leadership Institute, conducted as a partnership with Cal State Fullerton. The College's Social Justice Leadership Institute offers a second opportunity for growth for 25 students through a year-long program that includes five conferences and service hours around an annual focus. In 2019-20, that focus is on immigrant

rights, a partnership with the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance.

The Student Life and Leadership program also contributes to Río Hondo College's RíoSource Room, which serves as food pantry and resource service, student housing access, food giveaways during finals and providing students restricted to their homes or hospitals with advising and other services.



The group is currently working on a new service – The Scholars Hub – that would provide a one-stop shop for services for students who are housing insecure, formerly incarcerated, LGBTQIA, former foster youths and more.

The Board of Trustees also reviewed a report on campus emergency management and security operations, conducted between July 15 and Oct. 31. American Security Life Consultants reviewed campus and safety communications, annual security reports, the College's emergency operations plan and conducted on-site inspections of the main campus and satellite facilities.

The group also visited the campus and reviewed the surveillance and monitoring systems, among other efforts.

The consultants shared a number of recommendations, including establishing full functionality for the campus surveillance system.

The Board subcommittee on safety and college administration continues its efforts to improve security and safety with the following initiatives: develop an Emergency Plan; district-wide safety training; campus-wide external warning system; phones in all classrooms; complete door lock-out system; create and place Run/Hide/Fight posters in classrooms/offices; text message alert system default to "opt out" vs current "opt in"; roof-top numbering; collaboration with Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; updating District policies regarding safety and security; campus-wide brush/tree maintenance; and building numbering/painting.

The Board of Trustees congratulated Fire Academy Coordinator Tracy Rickman on his retirement and welcomed to the College administration and faculty Director of Facilities Rafael Gutierrez, mathematics instructor Nancy García and psychology instructor Francisco Sotelo. Gutierrez began Nov. 14; García and Sotelo begin on Jan. 24, 2020.

## Mensaje del Presidente

### (Continuación de la página 1)

El semestre pasado ha brindado una serie de oportunidades para participar en la vida estudiantil – tal como la semana de apoyo para estudiantes indocumentados, eruditos y mentores latinos a través de nuestro programa LEGACIE y nuestro reciente saludo a mujeres veteranas, por nombrar solo algunos eventos. Me enorgullece liderar una institución que apoya a los veteranos y a las poblaciones desatendidas y que respalda esa promesa con los servicios de apoyo estudiantil.

Espero que todos hayan disfrutado de unas hermosas fiestas, y me gustaría deseárselas a cada uno de ustedes un próspero y productivo año nuevo. En los próximos meses, espero con mucho interés, trabajar con ustedes para que juntamente continuemos sirviendo a nuestros estudiantes y nuestra comunidad.

# Students Support DACA Program at LA County Supervisor's Press Conference

Thirteen Río Hondo College students and staff attended a press conference coordinated by Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors member Hilda Solis in support of the federal Delayed Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on Nov. 12.

The date marks the start of a U.S. Supreme Court hearing of arguments for the program, which was launched by President Barack Obama via executive order.

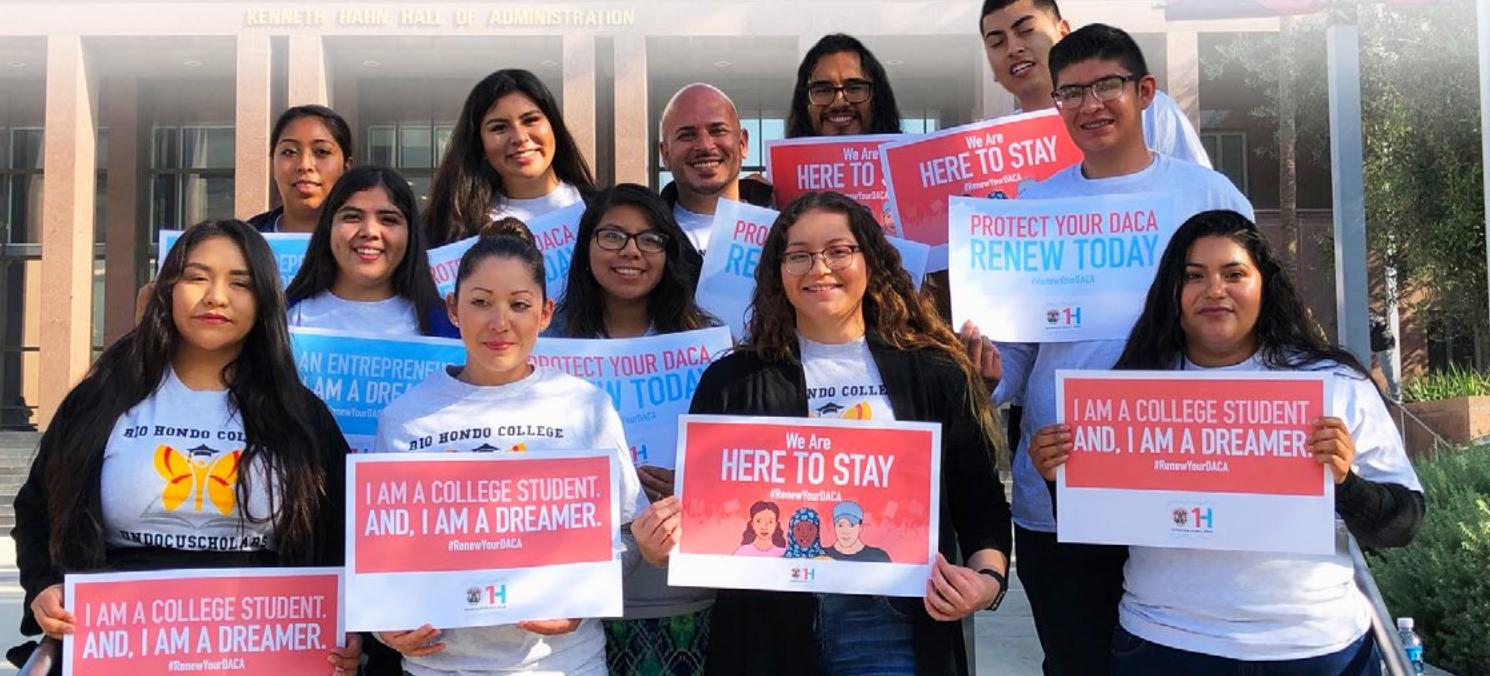
UCLA is the lead plaintiff in the case, filed nearly two years ago, which seeks to prevent the DACA program's elimination by President Donald Trump. A decision isn't expected until 2020.



DACA shields children brought to the U.S. by undocumented immigrants from deportation. DACA-eligible individuals are known as Dreamers, after failed federal legislation designed to provide a pathway to citizenship and California's own Dream Act.

Solis organized the press conference to raise awareness of how urgently DACA is needed. She joined the students in chanting "Here To Stay" and "Sí Se Puede" in solidarity with all 800,000-plus DACA residents nationwide.

"Río Hondo College stands with its DACA students, who thrive when they can focus on their studies without fear of deportation to a country they've never known," Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said. "We are proud of our students for standing up for the rights of all individuals to pursue their dreams."



## College President Offers Remarks at Parent Symposium



Dr. Arturo Reyes, superintendent/president of Río Hondo College, gave welcome remarks for the East Whittier School District's Parent Symposium. The Nov. 13 event was held at Liberty Plaza.

Reyes discussed how the College serves as an entry point for career and educational pathways and shared his background as a student and parent of two sons who attended community colleges en route to four-year universities.

Reyes also thanked leaders from each school for their involvement and encouraged them to continue engaging with their children's education and to remain vigilant about their own education.



# College Recognizes Contributions of Women Vets

Río Hondo College recognized Veterans Day on Nov. 12 with a campus event that honored women veterans for their service, a presentation of arms, a choir performance of the National Anthem and speeches by campus leaders and veterans.

"It's a tradition at Río Hondo College every year to honor our veterans for the service they give to our country," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes told the assembled crowd. "The Veterans Memorial on our campus reminds us of all the sacrifices that have been made so that we can be here today and enjoy our freedoms."

Reyes said the 2019 event selected women in service for special recognition as an acknowledgment of their many contributions.

Army veteran Antoinette Suarez-Harmonson, who served in the military for more than 25 years, discussed the significance of Veterans Day and the contributions of women to the military. Suarez-Harmonson entered the Air Force as a 1st sergeant and avionics technician and retired as a paralegal in the Judge Advocate General's department.

She said it was tough at first to adapt to the military's demands, but her parents – who both served – set an example and taught her the discipline she needed to succeed.

Suarez-Harmonson, who was divorced with three small children when she enlisted, was chosen as a leader during basic training and her flight of airmen were recognized as the honor flight, a significant achievement.

"Women are so needed in the military, whatever branch you decide to go in. There's nothing that says you can't do it," she said.

She also lauded women who served as generals and the examples they set.

"I am proud to be a woman in the military," Suarez-Harmonson said. "Women are a valuable part of the military. They bring fortitude and endurance into the halls of the military and they make great leaders. They bring strength and courage to jobs that the Pentagon said only men could hold."

1st Sgt. Janet Bretado of the Army's 240th Signal Co. also addressed the crowd. Bretado first enlisted in the Air Force and, after completing her tour, joined the Army for three combat tours in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan.



"Veterans Day is the time to honor all service members who served our country. Each veteran here is my hero," Bretado said.

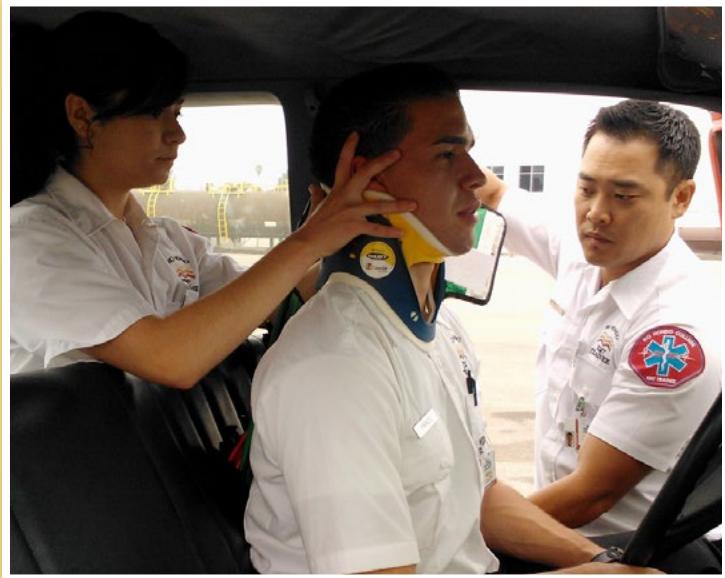
She encouraged guests to celebrate service members not only on Veterans Day, but by engaging with veterans and listening to their stories.

The event featured a Wall of Courage featuring pictures of veterans in thanks for their service.

In addition, the Río Hondo College Choir performed the National Anthem, the 40th Infantry Division Band performed music from each military branch as veterans stood to be recognized and the California National Guard's Veterans Honors Program performed a Presentation of Colors.



# Homeland Security Program Offers Preparation Guide for Area Residents



Río Hondo College is inviting area residents to learn the latest skills and techniques for preparing themselves, their family and their community to respond to natural hazards and acts of terrorism.

The training is part of the College's Homeland Security Program, a cutting-edge discipline now enrolling for spring semester 2020. Río Hondo College offers a Certificate of Achievement and Associate of Science in the discipline.

"Preparation is everything when it comes to handling everything from a wind-driven fire to an earthquake, flood or even a hostile action," Homeland Security Program Coordinator Dr. Ygnacio "Nash" Flores said.

The program was approved in 2018 by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and builds on Río Hondo College's nationally recognized public safety programs. The following courses are currently available:

- HMLD 101 Introduction to Homeland Security (CRN 35971)
- HMLD 102 Introduction to Emergency Management: (CRN 37253)
- HMLD 103 Terrorism and Violence in Society: (CRN 37290)
- HMLD 104 Emergency Planning and Response: (CRN 37417)
- HMLD 105 Hazard Mitigation in Emergency Management: (CRN 37908)
- HMLD 203 Homeland Security: Leadership, Policy & Practice: (CRN 37988)

"Homeland security expertise has never been in such high demand as it is today," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said. "This program teaches students and a new generation of public safety officials about the critical issues and tactics for ensuring safety."

Spring registration is open through Friday, Jan. 24. For information, email [Flores](#) or call (562) 463-7733.

## Spring Registration Opens

Open registration for new students is now underway for Río Hondo College's 2020 Spring Semester, including courses offered at regional educational centers in El Monte, South Whittier and Pico Rivera.

Overall, the College will offer a rich diversity of courses that span general courses that prepare students for four-year colleges and universities to career preparation and training in public safety careers. In all, the spring catalog includes 1,742 course options.

The College's regional centers bring instruction into the community, making it more accessible for residents.

Thirty classes are available at the El Monte Educational Center, including Introductory Psychology, Public Speaking, algebra, sign language, Mexican art and income tax preparation.

At the Río Hondo Educational Center at Pico Rivera, 33 classes are offered, including an anthropology class exploring religion, magic witchcraft and superstition, and history of rap and hip hop culture.

At the South Whittier Educational Center, 29 classes include an in Intro to Administration of Justice, a course on criminal procedures, Intro to Chicano Studies and real estate appraisals.

All centers offer courses in composition, math, history, college success and English as a second language.

Spring Semester runs from Jan. 25 through May 21, 2020.



Caring for our children  
also means ensuring  
**they get counted in  
Census 2020.**



#HazmeContar

# Volleyball, Soccer Team Conclude Stellar Seasons

Río Hondo College women's soccer and volleyball teams finished their seasons in November with notable accomplishments.

The volleyball team finished third in the South Coast Conference (SCC), advancing to playoffs. Four of the team's players earned All-Conference Honors.

Women's soccer finished the regular season undefeated, 8-0, bringing the SCC championship back to Río Hondo College before losing a heartbreaker to Saddleback in the playoffs.

The squad scored 52 goals and earned 12 shutouts, only allowing one goal in conference play.

Vivi Viramontes was named the SCC Offensive Player of the Year and Freshman Brianna Valdez was named the SCC Defensive Player of the Year. Eight other Roadrunners were named to the SCC First and Second Teams: first team: Serina Vargas, Alice Hernandez, Janessa Gallardo, Tori Galindo; second team: Taly Jimenez, Lismend Salcido, Eileen Rosales, Ana Ramos.

Several of the players have been nominated for All-American, State, Scholar-All-American, Regional and the Sophomore All Star Game.



# Speech and Debate Team Shines in Fall Forensics Contests

The Río Hondo College Forensics Speech and Debate Team competed in several tournaments in November, showcasing student talent in multiple events.

First, the team went up against a field of 22 teams at the fourth tournament of the season, the Beach Invitational at Cal State Long Beach on Nov. 1-3, with student teams earning laudatory honors. Honors included: Silver duo Kimberly Soto and Layla Gonzalez; prose individual events finalist Sofelia Wimkelman; extemporaneous individual events finalist Carolina "Lina" Campillo; and top speakers award-winner Carolina "Lina" Campillo.

Next, the team competed in back-to-back tournament at Irvine Valley College and Azusa Pacific University. Awards at those events included: extemporaneous individual events finalists: Carolina "Lina" Campillo, Frank Ramirez, Lessly

Gomez and Ashley Sanchez; impromptu individual events finalist Frank Ramirez; Parli team debate bronze award-winners Victorhugo Herrera and Sergio Villa; and tournament top speakers Victorhugo Herrera (second place) and Luis Licona (seventh place).

From Nov. 23-24, the team competed at the Griffin Invitational at Grossmont College. Twenty-one colleges and universities competed, with Río Hondo College advancing to the semifinals and finals in every division. The results were as follows: gold in IPDA, Carolina "Lina" Campillo; gold in parli team, Frank Ramirez and Sofelia Wimkelman; silver in parli team, Carolina "Lina" Campillo and Edward Minasyan; bronze in parli team, Victorhugo Herrera and Diana Macias; and gold in program oral interpretation and tournament top third speaker, Victorhugo Herrera.



## Assemblywoman Tours College Classes, Inspires Students



Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio met with Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Reyes, members of the Board of Trustees, students and staff on Dec. 2 during a visit that included tours of campus classes and facilities.

Rubio toured the Business Computer Lab with Dean of Business Gita Runkle, the Student Success and Dream Center with Dean of Student Success Dr. Melba Castro, the Forensics Speech & Debate Team class with Coordinator Grant Tovmasian and his coaches, and the Nursing Simulation Center with Dean of Health Science & Nursing Catherine Page. Director of Government and Community Relations Dr. Russell Castañeda Calleros and Director of Marketing and Communications Ruthie Retana joined the tours.

Rubio inspired DACA students with her own story of being an undocumented student until the age of 13.

## Students Learn Power of Social Media Branding

Students in three Río Hondo College courses learned how LinkedIn's social media site can help them learn new skills and to network professionally. The presentation was given by Lynda.com Relationship Manager for Higher Education Ryan Zervakos. Zervakos – who spoke with students in a Management 101 course while students from two other courses participated via Zoom webinar conferencing – says it is his mission to ensure students know why and how to use LinkedIn to brand themselves.



# College Celebrates 50th Anniversary of EOP&S



Educators, community leaders, alumni and students celebrated Río Hondo College's Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOP&S) 50th anniversary celebration on Nov. 14, lauding the program for its support of underrepresented students.

Alumni and students offered testimonials about the program's strength as they enjoyed a catered lunch and EOP&S T-shirts and buttons to mark the occasion.

EOP&S alumnus Ricardo Padilla shared his experience as a young immigrant from Mexico who faced adversity and poverty, but through hard work, dedication and the support of Río Hondo and its EOP&S counselors, accomplished his goals. Today, Padilla serves on the El Monte Union High School District's Board of Education.

"I could not have done this without Río Hondo College," Padilla said. "Thank you, Río Hondo College for what you did for my life and for my family's life!"

EOP&S provides academic, financial and personal support for low-income students whose educational and socio-economic situations might otherwise prevent them from achieving their higher education goals.

Río Hondo College's EOP&S program is the eighth-largest in the California Community Colleges system, serving 1,731 students in 2018-19 alone with \$750,000 in direct support, including book and meal vouchers and educational supplies.

Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said the program changes lives.

"I can truly say that EOP&S works, as I too was a beneficiary of a very similar program at the Cal State system, called EOP," Arturo Reyes said. "If it wasn't for the support I received from this program, I would not be standing here before you today."

Heba Griffiths, director of Río Hondo College's EOP&S program, reminded students that EOP&S and the College stand by them.

"We want you to know that we see your struggle and we stand by you to help you through whatever obstacle life throws at you," Griffiths said. "Today, we celebrate you as part of the EOP&S legacy. We celebrate your perseverance, grit and dedication to your education."

EOP&S alumnus Jordan Jaloma talked about being the first in his family to make it past ninth grade. With the help and support of EOP&S and Río Hondo, he transferred to Cal State Dominguez Hills to pursue a degree in psychology.

Students Jessica Garcia and Ericka Glenn spoke about the impact of EOP&S, including the family support received during difficult times.

"Every Friday, my son and I would go to the cafeteria and get pizza with the meal stipend we would receive, and I would pack up leftovers so we would have food for later that evening and the weekend," Glenn said. "I am eternally grateful. For the lawmakers that are present today, know that the funding you give to programs such as EOP&S have rippling effects and are truly enhancing our lives for the better."

Dr. Manual Baca, a former EOP&S director, also delivered an address on the program's legacy and the importance of ensuring it remains an active contributor to student success. Baca attended the College after serving in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. He later served as a Río Hondo College professor, student service manager, vice president of student services, interim dean for arts and business and interim president, in addition to serving two terms on the California Community Colleges Board of Governors.

Representatives from the offices of Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon, state Sen. Bob Archuleta and representatives for Assembly members Eduardo Garcia, Ed Chau and Blanca Rubio also attended the event.



## 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
- South El Monte
- Pico Rivera
- Santa Fe Springs
- Whittier

and portions of:

- Norwalk
- Downey
- La Mirada
- City of Industry
- Los Nietos\*
- East Whittier\*
- South Whittier\*
- West Whittier\*
- Avocado Heights\*

\*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



**8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10 and Saturday, Jan. 11:** Bentley Bash Competition, Campus Inn

**6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15:** Board of Trustees meeting, Río Hondo College

**8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22:** AUTO Competition/CTE Career Day, Tech Quad

**6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22:** Board of Trustees special meeting, Río Hondo College

**Thursday, Jan. 23:** Intersession 2020 ends

**Saturday, Jan. 25:** Spring Semester 2020 begins

## Holiday Performance Brings College, Community Together

Río Hondo College Dance Collective's ninth annual presentation of "The Nutcracker" was a huge success, selling out two shows at the Wray Theater on Dec. 8.

As the signature performances for the fall semester, the events featured more than 100 performers ages 3 to 23, including students from local schools who teamed with the dancers from the Collective, an ensemble of advanced students who are pursuing careers as dancers, choreographers or in another aspect of the field.

Participants included Dean L. Shively Middle School, Montebello High School, Edgewood High School, Yvonne Bells' children's class and Studio Danza. The show was choreographed and directed by Río Hondo faculty Dr. Alison Cartagena, Rachel Lopez and Carol McDowell. The program and featured Kayla Perez as Clara and Reyes Garcia as the Nutcracker.

In addition to raising funds for Río Hondo College's dance majors to attend the American College Dance Association Conference, the shows provided supplementary performance and choreographic experience for the Collective and members of the DANC 152 performance class.

The uplifting contemporary version of the show, which was created especially for children, showcased the growth of our students, as well as their hard work, dedication and grit, said Cartagena, the College's Dance, Yoga and Pilates Program outcome coordinator. The audience was very appreciative and some in attendance were moved to tears by the spirit of the performance.

A surprise guest, Santa Claus, made an appearance at the end of the show and the audience had an opportunity to take photographs with him and the dancers on stage.

