

# FOCUS ON RIO

JANUARY 2020

## President's Message



**Dr. Arturo Reyes**

Spring Semester is officially underway and with it begins a new chapter for Río Hondo College. In January, our faculty, administrators and staff rededicated ourselves to the mission of ensuring equity and access to the opportunities Río Hondo College offers for all members of our community.

During our bi-annual FLEX Day, we came together to discuss the challenges faced by our students and how each of us can take steps

to improve their chances of success. It was an invigorating, inspirational day that will result in action at all levels.

Our Board of Trustees is pursuing a legislative agenda that prioritizes the value of student equity, including championing more bachelor's degrees at the community college level, support for students who face food and housing insecurity and additional funding for educational programs and facilities.

At our administrative level, the College will be revising our educational master plan and facilities master plan to incorporate Student Equity values and our Guided Pathway program, which is designed to shepherd students from entry to graduation.

For our staff, it means providing support services, such as tutoring and financial aid to all students. Our equity work also focuses on students who are formerly incarcerated, foster youth, single mothers and members of underrepresented communities.

For our faculty, it will mean ensuring we engage effectively with all students in the classroom to maximize equity and opportunities to succeed.

Río Hondo College has a proud tradition of success.

Every year, our students earn more degrees and certificates and transfer in greater numbers to four-year colleges and universities. Yet, we also acknowledge the need to boost those numbers so that the rewards of higher education and new, high-demand careers reach all members of our diverse community.

Together, we can take the College to a higher level of service, support and success for our students, our community and our region.

## Mensaje del Presidente

El semestre de primavera está en marcha y, con él, comienza un nuevo capítulo para el Colegio de Río Hondo. En enero, nuestro cuerpo docente, administradores, y personal se dedicaron nuevamente a la misión de asegurar la equidad y el acceso a las oportunidades que el Colegio de Río Hondo ofrece para todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad.

Durante nuestra convocatoria, nos reunimos para hablar de los desafíos que enfrentan a nuestros estudiantes. También hablamos de cómo cada uno de nosotros podemos colaborar para mejorar las posibilidades de éxito para nuestros estudiantes. Fue un día estimulante y motivador que creará cambios en Río Hondo.

Primero, nuestra Mesa Directiva sigue una agenda legislativa que valoriza la equidad de los estudiantes, tal como más programas de licenciatura a nivel de colegio comunitario, apoyo para estudiantes con inseguridades alimentarias y de vivienda, y fondos adicionales para programas e instalaciones educativas.

En nuestro nivel administrativo, el Colegio revisará nuestro plan educacional para incorporar los valores de Equidad Estudiantil y nuestro programa de "Guided Pathways" (Caminos Guiados) que está diseñado para guiar a los estudiantes desde el ingreso al Colegio de Río Hondo hasta su graduación.

Para nuestro personal, significará proporcionar servicios de apoyo, desde clases particulares hasta ayuda financiera para estudiantes incluyendo los que han estado encarcelados, jóvenes en hogares de cuidado temporal, madres solteras, y miembros de comunidades menos representados.

Para nuestro cuerpo docente, significará asegurar que nos relacionemos de manera efectiva con todos los estudiantes en las clases para incrementar la equidad y las oportunidades para que tengan éxito.

El Colegio de Río Hondo se enorgullece de su tradición de éxito.

Cada año, nuestros estudiantes obtienen más títulos y certificados y se transfieren en mayor número a universidades de cuatro años. Pero también reconocemos la necesidad de aumentar esos números para que los beneficios de la educación superior y las nuevas carreras de alta demanda lleguen a todos los miembros de nuestra diversa comunidad.

Juntos, podemos llevar a nuestro Colegio a un nivel superior de servicio y apoyo para el éxito de nuestros estudiantes, nuestra comunidad y nuestra región.



|  |   |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| District Update.....   | 2 | College Honored for Assisting Formerly Incarcerated Students ..... | 4 | Tax Filing Aid Offered to Families in Need .....    | 6 |
| Electronic Aid Disbursement Garners ACE Award .....            | 2 | High School Counselors Gather for Annual Breakfast.....            | 5 | President Recognizes Scholar-Athletes, Coaches..... | 6 |
| Homeland Security Wins Recognition as Academic Discipline..... | 3 | Get your FREE 2020 Homecoming Tickets....                          | 5 | Save the Date .....                                 | 7 |
| Community Training Focuses on Inspiring Student Success.....   | 4 | Forensics Team Takes Home Fall, Winter Awards .....                | 6 | Homecoming 2020 Celebration Set for Feb. 21 .....   | 7 |

# District Update

Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees in January adopted a legislative agenda that focuses on ensuring equity in access to higher education for all students, including efforts to expand financial aid, boost the number of bachelor's degrees the College is allowed to offer, enhance support for students experiencing homelessness.

Other legislative goals including improving enrollment for incarcerated students and passage of a state ballot measure that would shift tax assessment methods as a way of boosting financial support for California education, including community colleges.

A second state ballot measure, also targeted for support, would add \$2 billion for community college facility needs. Trustees also approved the hiring and retirement of College employees in December and January.

In December, the trustees approved the hiring of Lisa Lewenberg as a project manager and Career Pathways specialist. In January, the board approved the hiring of Andrew Grzywa as director of Fire Academy.

Retirements in January included electrician Jaime Brenes, who served the College for 15 years; senior secretary for Institutional Research and Planning Rebecca Rayas, who served for 15 years, nine months; senior systems analyst Ming Chen, who served for 13 years, eight months; biology instructional lab tech Robbie Wright, who served for 34 years, five months; EOP&S Evaluator Irma Caballero, who logged 40 years of service.



## Electronic Aid Disbursement Garners ACE Award



Río Hondo College has won BankMobile's 2019 Achieving Campus Efficiency Award for recording an average electronic disbursement rate for financial aid of more than 90 percent – topping the average rate of 88.7 percent by institutions partnering with BankMobile.

In 2019, Río Hondo College issued 28,648 disbursements totaling \$24.2 million, with 96.33 percent by electronic direct deposit, virtually none by mailed check, 2.67 percent by default check. In all, 59.17 percent of students completed the refund selection process.

# Homeland Security Wins Recognition as Academic Discipline



A push by Río Hondo College and other supporters has secured recognition of the Homeland Security field as the newest academic discipline by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors.

The recognition, granted Jan. 13, means individuals who earn advanced degrees in the field will be considered qualified for instructional positions in the college system. It is seen as a significant endorsement of the multi-discipline field recently developed from other public safety fields.

"This recognition provides high-level validation for our Homeland Security Program, which prepares students for higher education studies, for entry-level positions and for advancing in fields where they are already established," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said.

A new labor market report from the Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence indicates about 2,900 jobs will be created annually in homeland security, making it a high-demand field.

Río Hondo College's program was approved in 2018 by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and builds on its nationally recognized public safety instruction. The College offers a Certificate of Achievement and an Associate of Science in Homeland Security. It is the only program in the region with a dual emphasis on Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

This spring, the College is offering the following courses:

- 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 203 Homeland Security: Leadership, Policy & Practice: (CRN 37988)



"Río Hondo College focuses on ensuring our students have the opportunity to study and train for the critical jobs in the economy of today and tomorrow," Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Laura Ramirez said. "Our Homeland Security Program exemplifies this commitment."

For information, email Homeland Security Program Coordinator [Dr. Ygnacio "Nash" Flores](mailto:Dr.Ygnacio.Nash.Flores@rio.edu) or call (562) 463-7733.



# Community Training Focuses on Inspiring Student Success

College administrators, faculty and staff came together on Jan. 24 for an exploration of ways they can assist students in their quest for academic degrees during the bi-annual FLEX Day.

The training day, held just before fall and spring semesters, discussed challenges faced by students that include food and housing insecurity, and how Río Hondo College can help students find their paths forward.

"With an equity mindset, we can ensure that every classroom will help ensure a pathway to success for every student," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said. "I hope our conversations about student success data help shape our equity work and result in innovative practices in every classroom and program at Río Hondo."

Reyes, campus leaders, faculty and staff at the event wore "Got 60" buttons as a way of keeping the focus on the 60 units needed for students to earn an associate degree.

He also emphasized the four pillars of the College's Guided Pathways system, which is designed to assist students from entry to degree: create clear curricular pathways to employment and further education; help students choose and enter their pathway; help students stay on their path; and ensure that learning is happening with intentional outcomes.



The College is updating its Educational Master Plan to integrate Guided Pathways and Student Equity efforts into a single comprehensive planning framework. The effort will also spark efforts for a Facilities Master Plan to support those initiatives.



# College Honored for Assisting Formerly Incarcerated Students

Río Hondo College has been honored with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' Outstanding New Program for its RISE Scholars Program, which assists formerly incarcerated individuals or those impacted by the criminal justice system achieve their higher education goals.

The College will receive the honor at NASPA's Latinx Knowledge Community at the group's 2020 Mena/Valdez Awards on March 31.

RISE - which stands for Reaching Institutionalized Students Through Education - provides students with one-on-one support during admissions, connects students with counselor and other services, offers a student equity book loan program, gives special tours and presentations on and off campus and provides help with applying to special programs and follow-up during the semester.

A recent program provided students with free record-clearing assistance clinic.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 MENA/VALDEZ AWARD RECIPIENTS**

- Outstanding Mid-Level Professional  
**Andrew Gonzalez**  
University of New Mexico
- Outstanding Faculty  
**Dr. Crystal Garcia**  
Auburn University
- Outstanding New Program  
**RISE Scholars Program**  
Río Hondo College
- Outstanding Senior Student Affairs Officer  
**Dr. Juan Guardia**  
University of Cincinnati
- Amigxialo  
**Kevin Krager**  
NASPA
- Outstanding Service  
**Dr. Janett Cordova**  
Interfaith Youth Core
- Community College Award  
**Dr. Edward Martinez**  
Suffolk County Community College
- Latinx Inclusion  
**Dr. Mariana G. Martinez**  
Mendocino College
- Outstanding Undergraduate Student  
**Elvira Garcia**  
St. John's University - Staten Island
- Outstanding Masters Student  
**Gabriel Rodriguez Jimenez**  
Indiana University Bloomington
- Outstanding Doctoral Student  
**Angel Gonzalez**  
San Diego State University
- Outstanding New Professional  
**Samuel Morales-Gonzalez**  
California State University, Fullerton

**2020 MENA/VALDEZ AWARDS**  
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020  
GOVERNOR'S SALOON B (HILTON HOTEL)  
7:30PM - 9:30PM

# High School Counselors Gather for Annual Breakfast



Nearly 150 counselors representing more than 50 high schools attended the Department of Outreach and Educational Partnership's annual Regional High School Counselor Breakfast on Dec. 11.

The 148 counselors in attendance learned about student programs and services, attended a resource fair representing 15 College departments and took part in breakout sessions on nursing, career technical education and Disabled Student Programs and Services.

Counselors were greeted by Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes and received campus updates from Dean of Student Success Dr. Melba Castro.

They learned about the College's new Scholars Hub and also heard testimonials from students within the special populations programs. The event provided an opportunity for Río Hondo College to share updates regarding Río Promise Early Registration Deadlines, Summer Bridge's changing programs and upcoming events tailored to first-time college students.



## Get your FREE 2020 Homecoming Tickets

Get your free tickets to our Homecoming festivities [here](#). The ticket includes free In-n-Out or tacos, rally towel, access to a beer garden (must be 21+), and much more!!

**2020 Homecoming**  
RIO HONDO COLLEGE

**Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**in Lot E (PE bldg.)**

**Get your free tickets**  
@  
<http://bit.ly/riohomecoming2020>

**Homecoming Activities**

|         |                     |
|---------|---------------------|
| 4 - 7pm | Food, music, & fun  |
| 5pm     | Women's game        |
| 7pm     | Men's game          |
| 8pm     | Half-time drawings* |

\* Special drawing prizes for current Rio Hondo Students include:

- 2 Chromebooks
- 1 iPad
- 1 Amazon Echo

Must be present to win!

# Forensics Team Takes Home Fall, Winter Awards

Río Hondo College Forensics Speech and Debate team is off to a sparkling start in 2020, competing in the year's first competition at the great Salt Lake Invitational at the University of Utah on Jan. 17-20 and trekking to Irvine for the annual Jannese Davidson Individuation at Concordia University on Jan. 25-26.

Utah's Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association Warm-Up served as a great half-season opener for the team, which put four teams into competition, earning more collective rounds than in the past five years combined.

- Parli Quarterfinalists: Carolina "Lina" Campillo and Edward Minasyan
- Río: Diana Macias and Victorhugo Herrera; Diana Laureano and Sergio Villa; Erika Sigala and Annael Mutton (CSULA)

The Concordia competition featured more than 25 universities and colleges.

- IPDA Silver: Sergio Villa
- Parli Octofinalist: Edward Minasyan and Carolina "Lina" Campillo, Diana Laureano and Erika Sigala
- Poetry Finalist: Sofelia Winkelman
- Extemporaneous Finalist: Ashley Sanchez
- Speaker Awards: Diana Macias



The team also did well at the Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association Fall Championship held at Moorpark College Dec. 6-9. Thirty-six teams participated in the final competition of 2019.

- Bronze IPDA: Erika Sigala
- Silver Parli Team: Edward Minasyan and Carolina "Lina" Campillo
- Poetry 4th Place: Sergio Villa
- Tournament Speaker Awards: Carolina "Lina" Campillo, 6th place; Sergio Villa, 8th place; Edward Minasyan, 10th place.

## Tax Filing Aid Offered to Families in Need



IRS-certified students from Río Hondo College will provide free basic income tax return preparation for individuals and families who earned \$56,000 or less in 2019 as part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

The program runs from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Fridays through April 10 at the El Monte Educational Center, 3017 Tyler Ave., El Monte. It will be closed Feb. 14 and March 27.

No appointment is needed. VITA volunteers will help prepare forms 1040, 1040A and 1040EZ, including standard and itemized deductions, and earned income tax credit. VITA does not handle Form 1040NR, married couples filing separately, Schedules C, D, E, F and SE, rental property or farm income.

Applicants for aid will need:

- Photo identification for all those on the return
- Social Security cards or taxpayer identification cards
- Birth dates for filers, spouse and dependents
- Wage and earnings forms (W-2, 1099, 1098)
- Deduction and credit information
- Forms 1095-A, 1095-B or 1095-C when applicable
- Copy of 2018 federal and state returns, if available
- Direct deposit information
- Other data: interest statements, day care records, day care tax ID number

## President Recognizes Scholar-Athletes, Coaches

Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes hosted a spring athletic luncheon for coaches and athletes on Jan. 22, sharing his pride in the students' athletic and academic accomplishments and thanking them for their dedication and hard work.

Reyes told the students that the College and its staff support their work to achieve their goals.



## Connect with Us on Social Media



## 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

**6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19:**  
Board of Trustees meeting, Río Hondo College

**8:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19 and Thursday, Feb. 20:** Senior Preview Days, Wray Theater and Campus Inn

**1:30 to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21:**  
Police Academy "All Class Reunion,"  
Police Academy

**2 to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21:**  
Nursing Reunion, S-208

**4 to 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21:**  
Homecoming Celebration 2020,  
Lot E, Athletic Complex

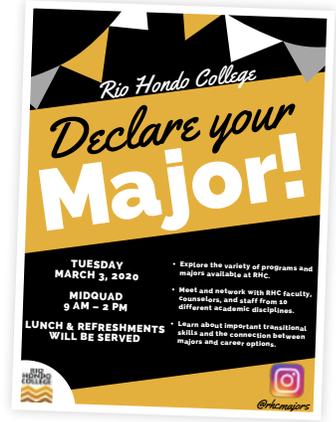
**6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26:** Board of Trustees study session, Río Hondo College

**Saturday, Feb. 29 to Tuesday, March 3:**  
Voting Center for Los Angeles County Election, Administration of Justice complex

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 3:**  
Declare Your Major Day, Mid-Quad

**6 to 9 p.m. Friday, April 17:**  
A Taste of Rio, Quad

**11 a.m. Friday, June 29:**  
Río Hondo College Golf Tournament,  
California Country Club



## Homecoming 2020 Celebration Set for Feb. 21

Río Hondo College will host Homecoming 2020 on Friday, Feb. 21 with reunions for the nursing program and the Police Academy, free food for the first 500 guests who sign up and a pair of basketball games by the men's and women's teams.

The event, which returned to the College in 2019 after years on hiatus, drew several hundred people for its reunions and the ball games. The 2019 event was held before the start of Spring Semester; organizers expect this year's February date to boost attendance as it will take place during the semester. The event will include opportunities to win popular door prizes.

The day will begin at 1:30 p.m. with "All Class Reunion" staged by the Río Hondo Police Academy, hosting former cadets from 1964 to 2020. The event drew about 100 people in 2019. At 2 p.m., the nursing program will host its alumni at a special celebration.

At 4 p.m., the activity will move to Lot E, where students and alumni will gather before the basketball games. Río Hondo College's women's team will play at 5 p.m., followed by the men's team at 7 p.m. Both games are against East Los Angeles Community College.

