

FOCUS ON RÍO

President's Message



Dr. Arturo Reyes

Over the last month, Río Hondo College – along with communities across the globe – has faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus.

Río Hondo College has taken every effort to mitigate exposure to COVID-19 and remains committed to supporting the health, safety and success of our students, faculty and staff.

We launched a rigorous online instruction program in March that will run throughout the duration of spring and our summer session, declared a state of emergency and massively expanded remote access to student services.

While this pandemic has the power to obscure our other triumphs, it is important to celebrate our achievements as symbols of our commitment to our students and community.

This issue of Focus on Río showcases many of the unique qualities that make Río so extraordinary – from our Police Academy graduates to our

Speech and Debate team, from our community supporters and outreach programs to our faculty's transition to online instruction and student classroom performance.

During this unprecedented time, faculty have shared stories of students who, despite experiencing hardship caused by current events, continue to excel academically and astound us with their resilience.

These stories include that of a high-achieving student who is homeless and lacked access to certain resources amid virus-related closures. A faculty member took initiative, ensuring the student had the support needed for physical comfort and academic success, while staff and administrators took further action to support other students in such situations. Meanwhile, the student has continued to thrive in his classes.

Such unwavering commitment to provide extraordinary support during this crisis typifies our remarkable College culture of care and personifies our mission. As we endure this health crisis together, I am convinced our collective will and dedication will prevail above all adversity and any future challenges.

Mensaje del Presidente

Durante el último mes, el Colegio de Río Hondo – al igual que las comunidades de todo el mundo – se ha enfrentado a retos sin precedentes debido a COVID-19, la enfermedad respiratoria causada por el novedoso coronavirus.

El Colegio de Río Hondo ha hecho todo lo posible para disminuir la infección de COVID-19 y sigue comprometido a promover la salud, la seguridad y el éxito de nuestros estudiantes, cuerpo docente y personal.

Lanzamos un riguroso programa de instrucción en línea en marzo, que seguirá durante la primavera y el verano, declaramos estado de emergencia y ampliamos el acceso remoto a los servicios de apoyo a estudiantes.

Aunque esta pandemia tiene la fuerza de ocultar nuestros logros, es importante celebrar nuestros éxitos como símbolo de nuestro compromiso con nuestros alumnos y nuestra comunidad.

Este boletín de Enfoque en Río muestra muchas de las cualidades únicas que hacen que Río sea tan extraordinario: desde nuestros graduados de la Academia de Policía hasta nuestro equipo de Discurso y Debate, desde nuestros partidarios en la comunidad y programas de comunitarios hasta la transición a la instrucción en línea por nuestro cuerpo docente y el rendimiento de los estudiantes en las clases.

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Río Hondo College Board of Trustees Declares State of Emergency to Combat COVID-19

Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees declared a state of emergency on March 16, providing Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes with greater flexibility to formulate a response to issues related to COVID-19.



The action was taken during a special meeting called specifically to address the issue. The emergency declaration ensures Reyes will have more authority to determine the best path forward, including modifying activities, programs and courses, up to and including keeping the College open to essential personnel.

Single Mothers Receive Soroptimist Aid

Single mothers in Río Hondo College's Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) program have received \$20,000 in aid from Soroptimist International of Whittier as part of the group's annual "Live Your Dream" awards.

The students are facing greater struggles than usual with food security during the coronavirus crisis.

The group typically awards about five annual Live Your Dream scholarships, which can be used for a variety of needs, to single mothers, during a special lunch. This year's lunch was set for April 14, but because of the pandemic, the group contacted the winners – Río Hondo College CARE students – and delivered the awards to their homes.

The club donated \$15,000 to students Jennifer Wirkus, Rose Rivas, Shavon Morishita, Vanessa Sandoval and Lenor Chavez. An additional \$5,000 received from an anonymous donor was split among 10 additional Río Hondo College CARE students who had applied for the scholarships.

Soroptimist members also brought food gift cards.

This is the seventh consecutive year that the Soroptimist International of Whittier awardees have all been Río Hondo CARE students. The group also steps up to support the students in other ways, including helping one student pay burial expenses for a sibling.

District Update



Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees met several times in recent months, making preparations for the impact of COVID-19, taking a position on a major regional public transportation route and reviewing information on building projects.

The board also received updates on a professor's sabbatical and workforce training programs and engaged in study sessions on board operations and the District's budget.

The board added its voice of support to a proposal to extend Metro's Eastside Gold Line along Washington Boulevard instead of a route along Highway 60, saying the first option is easier to build and provides robust ridership opportunities.

The light rail extension would run through Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs and end in Whittier – all communities served by Río Hondo College. The area is densely populated with low-income, mostly Latino residents.

Metro had been studying the possibility of lines along both routes, but its staff recommended focusing instead on just the Washington Boulevard route after studies discovered challenges with the Highway 60 route.

"The Washington Boulevard route provides the best option for serving our community, allowing 20,000 residents to take public transit in their daily travels and removing thousands of cars from our roads," Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said.

The Washington Boulevard option would complement the College's existing GO RÍO bus pass program, which offers discounted riding on area public transit. Many of the College's students rely on public transit to get to classes.

The College's resolution states that the Washington Boulevard route could be accelerated so that it would be open in time for the 2028 Olympics.

The route would boost ridership, connect neighborhoods, spur economic development and strengthen partnerships with local jurisdictions, according to the resolution.

In addition, the trustees said they support the creation of a feasibility study to evaluate other transit options to serve the needs of the San Gabriel Valley.

Gil Puga Jr., a professor of speech, presented a report on his sabbatical focused on public speaking, including his updates to a textbook on oration. Puga also visited the Nobel Prize Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, crafted guides to overcoming anxiety, on speaking skills for tour guides, and improved Spanish fluency.

Trustees also received an update on the seismic retrofitting of the "L Tower," the College's tallest building. Steel columns are 80% complete, structural steel beams are 60% complete, buckling restraining bracing is 50% complete and mechanical screen framing is 95% complete.

Trustees learned about the California Strong Workforce Program, which is focused on maximizing employer engagement, strengthening career pathways, increasing opportunities for work-based learning, supporting professional development, addressing the needs of business and industry and aligning curriculum.

The program has provided funding to the College to support programs such as animation, graphic design, business management, computer information technology, auto technology, architecture and drafting, geographic information systems, fire technology, wildland fire and emergency medical technician program, nursing and fitness programs, among others.

In addition, trustees took time to review their own operating practices and brush up on strategies for collaboration with each other and the College's superintendent/president.

Trustees also received a thorough budget presentation from the interim vice president of finance and business.

Expanded Services, Online Platforms Ensure Student Success During Remote Instruction



Rio Hondo College is providing a full menu of online services to ensure students receive the support they need while completing spring classes via online instruction, especially those most vulnerable and marginalized.

Services include remote counseling, online tutoring, financial aid assistance, psychological services, food pantry distribution, Chromebook loans, access to free Office 365 and internet, guidance for undocumented students, and access to local, community-based support.

The College launched online learning on March 16, limiting campus to essential personnel only. The online instruction period was later extended to include all of spring and summer sessions.

RIO IN THE NEWS: See coverage of our drive-through pantry in the [Whittier Chamber of Commerce Newsletter](#).

As the campus transitioned to online instruction, the Student Success and Dream Center provided 355 students with resources, including free legal services, counseling sessions, Chromebook loans and assistance with financial aid. The College loaned 400 Chromebooks and backpack cases to students, and laptops to faculty and staff, as well as 100 wifi hotspots.

In April, the College launched a special webpage to support remote learning – www.riohondo.edu/remoteservices – and open Zoom rooms at www.riohondo.edu/remoteservices. The College is also exploring ways of celebrating its Class of 2020 while ensuring the safety of students and staff.

Student Services Programs

Departments across the College are offering live chat on webpages and virtual office hours through Zoom to make communications for students more accessible. Check for specific details on services and links to academic departments and service programs at www.riohondo.edu/student-health-services/coronavirus/#students.

Food assistance: The RioSource Room – a combination pantry and resource location – is providing free, prepackaged “grab ‘n groceries” for students at a campus drive-through location from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesdays. More than 800 students were served in just four days through the service. Contact: studentlife@riohondo.edu, (562) 908-3427.

Counseling Center: Reach out to counselors at counseling@riohondo.edu or (562) 908-3410.

Online Tutoring: The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) and Writers’ Resource Center (WRC) are providing free online tutoring support for English composition and many other general courses. Go to www.riohondo.edu/communications-and-languages/labs/learning-assistance-center-lac for details.

Connectivity: Students who need Chromebook loans can call the library at (562) 908-3416.

EOP&S/CARE: Students and single parents served by the Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOP&S) and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) can set up online appointments with counselors. Contact: eops@riohondo.edu, (562) 908-3423.

Dreamers and Undocumented Students: Rio Hondo College is continuing to support undocumented students, including providing group psychological counseling at 11 a.m. Fridays. In collaboration with the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), the College is providing free legal services. Contact: dreamers@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-7023.

Student Health & Psychological Services: A team of counselors is responding to messages at dsanchez@riohondo.edu and (562) 463-7302 and providing group counseling to undocumented students at 11 a.m. Fridays. Students in crisis should seek emergency aid at (800) 273-8255 or Exodus psychiatric urgent care at (323) 442-6018.

CalWORKs: The program provides cash aid and services to eligible families with children at home. Contact: dsilva@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-7313.

Center for Career & ReEntry Services: Programs for adult learners who return to college after a prolonged absence. Contact: careercenter@riohondo.edu, (562) 908-3407.

Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSP&S): Provides assistance accessing College programs. Contact: DSPS@riohondo.edu, (562) 908-3420.

Guardian Scholars: Assists students formerly in foster care. Contact: msaenz@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-7472.

Financial Aid: The Financial Aid Office is responding promptly to messages at (562)-463-3370 and financialaid@riohondo.edu.

Registration for Summer and Fall: Summer and fall registration are open. Fall registration starts April 22. Students in special programs, such as EOP&S, CARE and DSP&S, may have earlier registration dates. Contact: admissions@riohondo.edu, (562) 908-3415.

Transfer Admission Policies: UC and CSU systems have eased admission policies for transfer students. Among the changes is the opportunity to satisfy some courses with pass grades instead of letter grades. More information is available at UC and CSU websites. For assistance, connect with the Transfer Center at (562) 463-4619, transfercenter@riohondo.edu or live chat on the transfer website.

Outreach and Educational Partnerships: The College is continuing efforts to collaborate with K-12 school districts and community partners. Contact: outreach@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-4693.

PASS Program: Provides support to first-generation, low-income students and students with disabilities. Contact: trioprograms.rhc@gmail.com, (562) 463-3216.

RISE Program: Assists formerly incarcerated students or those impacted by the criminal justice system. Contact: risescholars@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-7765.

Transfer Center: Provides guidance for students seeking to continue their education at four-year universities and colleges. Contact: transfercenter@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-4619

Veterans Service Center: Provides a one-stop shop for services for veterans, including a place to connect with fellow veterans. Contact: veteranscenter@riohondo.edu, (562) 463-3117.

Student Affairs: Umbrella for student services programs ranging from CalWorks to Guardian Scholars, DSP&S to PASS. Contact: lnashua@riohondo.edu, (562) 908-3498.

The College also is providing students with information on community-based resources, including assistance with housing and food insecurity. For more information, visit www.riohondo.edu/student-health-services/coronavirus.

Soccer Team Celebrates Stellar Season

The Río Hondo College women's soccer team marked the end of a successful 2019 season during its recent banquet, bringing together more than 120 attendees to celebrate the achievements of the nationally ranked team.

The team closed the season with a 15-2-3 overall record and a perfect 8-0 record in South Coast Conference (SCC) play, earning the SCC championship. The Roadrunners earned 12 shutouts, scoring 52 goals and allowing just one goal in conference play. Ten players received an All-SCC recognition and were honored at the banquet.

SCC Conference Awards

- SCC - Offensive Player of the Year - Vivian Viramontes
- SCC- Defensive Player of the Year - Brianna Valdez

SCC- All-First Team Members

- Alice Hernandez
- Janessa Gallardo
- Tori Galindo
- Serina Vargas

The women's soccer team also earned the United Soccer Coaches Association Team Academic Award, its seventh in the program's history. Six players were honored by the California Community College Soccer Coaches Association (CCCCSA) for earning more than 24 units and a 3.3 GPA or higher. During the fall semester, 17 women's soccer student-athletes achieved a 3.0 GPA or higher, and seven of those earned a 3.5 GPA or higher.

SCC - All-Second Team Members

- Ana Ramos
- Eileene Rosales
- Lismed Salcido
- Taly Jimenez



CCCCSA Scholar-Academic Team

- Serina Vargas
- Serena Rosas
- Janessa Gallardo
- Taly Jimenez
- Toni Gonzalez
- Janelle Piraino

3.0+ GPA

- Janessa Gallardo
- Brianna Valdez
- Isabel Rivera
- Lismed Salcido
- Sarah Mansur

- Toni Gonzalez
- Jasmine Vital
- Danielle Moore
- Kealani Ng
- Ana Ramos

3.5+ GPA

- Alice Hernandez
- Serina Vargas
- Taly Jimenez
- Cheyenne Tucker
- Eileene Rosales
- Serena Rosas
- Lauren Enriquez



CTE Open House Highlights Professional Pathways

More than 100 people gathered to learn about Río Hondo College's pathways to professional success during the Career Technical Education (CTE) Division Open House and Family Day event, held in March. Attendees explored hands-on informational sessions on architecture, alternative energy, automotive technology, civil design technology, engineering design drafting, heavy equipment technology and hospitality management.

Information booths also highlighted pathways in environmental technology, geographic information systems, and STEM-CTE Teach. Río Hondo College's CTE programs prepare students for future success by providing them with the knowledge and skills that are critical for employment in a variety of fields.

For more information on CTE programs, contact the CTE Division at 562-908-3460.



Staff 'Reflection & Renewal' Program Garners Statewide Accolade

Río Hondo College received statewide recognition for its commitment to professional development, earning the Staff Development Award at the annual California Community College Council for Staff Development conference in March.

The College's Reflection & Renewal program was awarded the Innovative Activity Award, recognizing the College's excellence in an innovative staff development activity. Reflection & Renewal invites staff to spend reflective and focused time using tools like the arts – as well as individual and small group reflection – to encourage introspection, collegiality and a renewed sense of purpose.



Scholars' Hub to Serve 'Most Vulnerable Students'

Río Hondo College hosted an open house for its new Scholars' Hub, a one-stop shop for specialized programs supporting students who are housing insecure, formerly incarcerated, LGBTQIA+ or former foster youths.

"The Hub provides a home base for students who face special challenges to their pursuit of higher education," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said. "It provides a safe place to study as well as for tutoring, workshops, success groups and a host of tools to help them achieve their academic goals.

The Hub includes on-site application assistance for Cal Fresh and Medi-Cal, support programs for California's most impoverished community members.

"These services will ensure our most vulnerable students have a safe learning environment and the tools necessary to finish a course of study or transfer to a four-year university," Reyes said.

The Hub received funding assistance from Student Equity, the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' Office of Diversion and Reentry.



Transfer-level Math and English Completions Rise

Río Hondo College has adjusted its approach to instruction in English and math, moving more students into transfer level courses and seeing a jump in the number successfully completing those courses.

The switch, mandated by Assembly Bill 705, went into full effect in fall 2019. In math, successful transfer-level course completion jumped from 325 students to 536, though the percent of successful students dropped by 9 percent. In English, completers grew from 895 students to 1,222, but success rates dipped 2.5 percent.

College is reviewing the fall data to see what additional services can support student success.

Homecoming 2020 Features Reunions, Hoops, Free Food and Prizes

More than 500 students and alumni joined Río Hondo College to celebrate Homecoming 2020, an event that included reunions for nursing program, former basketball players and the Police Academy, free food for the first 500 guests, and men's and women's basketball games.

The event included commemorative T-shirts and rally towels, tacos, In-N-Out burgers, prizes and more.

Homecoming returned to the College in 2019 after a hiatus since 1997.

"Nothing brings together a community like a good, old-fashioned Homecoming celebration," Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee said. "Since Río Hondo College doesn't have a football team, we decided to hold the event around our basketball games. Go Roadrunners!"

The Police Academy launched the day's events with an "All Class Reunion," hosting former cadets from 1964 to 2020, including a graduate from the very first class.

The College's nursing program hosted alumni at its own special celebration. Roadrunner basketball players also held a reunion.

Students and alumni arrived for free food and socializing before the basketball games. Alumni received decade pins and all guests received rally towels.

The day concluded with the women's and men's basketball teams playing East Los Angeles Community College.



Senior Preview Days Host More than 1,100 Students

Río Hondo College hosted 1,118 high school seniors from 31 schools on Feb. 19 and 20 for its annual Senior Preview Days, which offered an interactive preview of key programs, services and application steps.

Students were bused in from schools districts in Whittier Union, El Rancho Unified, El Monte Union, and from out-of-district schools from San Gabriel Valley, Hacienda La Puente, Bell Gardens, Downey, Baldwin Park, Bassett and Montebello.

Students attended academic breakout sessions on major options facilitated by deans and faculty members, attended a resource fair during lunch and toured the campus with members of the Associated Students of Río Hondo College.

Students also learned about the Río Promise, which provides new, full-time students with free tuition for their first two years.

Presenters included Transfer Center Counselor Coordinator José Lara, Student Success and Dream Center Counselor Coordinator Ed Henderson and Dean of Student Success Dr. Melba Castro.



College Honors Pathway to Law School Mentors during WASA Breakfast

Río Hondo College honored lawyers Maria Dolores Torres and Ricardo Pérez with the 2020 Whittier Area School Administrators (WASA) Community Award during the annual WASA breakfast.

Torres and Pérez, co-founders of Ferias Legales, established a mentorship program by pairing attorneys and judges with Río Hondo College's Pathway to Law School students. The program guides students who wish to become lawyers from community college, through a four-year university and into a California partnering law school.

Torres and Pérez were also honored for providing pro-bono legal services in the community.

"They are well-deserving of this community recognition," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said.



Students Learn about Transfer Options

More than 25 representatives of CSU and UC campuses as well as private and independent colleges and universities joined Río Hondo College for its Spring 2020 Transfer Fair, providing information on admissions, majors, housing and support services.

During the event, students signed canvases that will be displayed at the Transfer Center with their name, university choice and transfer year. Lunch and cupcakes were provided.



New Fire Director Draws on Experience as Arson Investigator, Police Detective and Fire Administrator



Andrew E. Grzywa, the new director of the Río Hondo Fire Academy, brings more than 35 years of experience as an urban firefighter, wildland firefighter, arson investigator, police detective, fire agency executive and instructor to the post – in addition to being a graduate of the Río Hondo College program.

Grzywa, hired by the Board of Trustees in January, succeeds Chief Tracy E. Rickman, who helped lead the academy for 22 years.

"Chief Grzywa's extraordinary experience – including his investigatory skills developed as an arson inspector and police detective – provide a unique blend of skills that will offer strong new directions in the growth of our well respected fire training program," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said. "He also has a great detail of knowledge about how our program operates."

Grzywa received an Associate of Science in fire technology and administration of justice from Río Hondo College. He earned a Bachelor of Science in business

management from University of Redlands and a Master of Arts in criminal justice from American Military University.

In 1985, he started his career as a wildland firefighter in San Bernardino County. He joined the La Habra Fire Department later that year, serving as a battalion chief and investigator over the next 20 years. During that same time, he became a reserve police officer and police officer for the La Habra Police Department, including service as a detective.

He joined the Los Angeles County Fire Department in 2005, serving in posts that included acting fire marshal for the Fire Prevention Division. He has also worked as a private fire investigator and private detective.

He has taught at Río Hondo College since 1989.

"It's a privilege and an honor to join the leadership team at Río Hondo College," Grzywa said. "This program launched my career and has been my home as an instructor for so many years. Together, we're going to build on Tracy Rickman's legacy and take the program to even higher levels."

Police Academy Celebrates 39 Graduates of Class 209



Río Hondo Police Academy recently celebrated the graduation of 39 cadets from Class 209 who will immediately enter service in 18 Southern California departments.

The event, which included 16 chiefs of local departments, featured addresses by Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes and state Sen. Bob Archuleta, an academy alum and former Montebello police officer.

The academy's 26-week training program combines intense classroom instruction and physical training. It is considered one of the most rigorous programs in the state. Students must master more than 42 learning domains that encompass such topics as constitutional law, domestic violence, human trafficking, firearms training, and de-escalation training.

"I'm proud of each and every one of you," Reyes said.

Archuleta reminded the cadets that their badge brings both honor and the responsibility to protect and serve their communities.

"You have joined the family of law enforcement," he told the students.

"You have the privilege of representing your family and the privilege of representing your community."

Class President Alexander Lopez thanked his instructors, Academy Director Walter Allen III and the family and friends who supported the cadets during their training.

"This class knew it had to work together in order to make it through the academy," Lopez said. "We accomplished that and more, but it was not easy."



We all have differences in backgrounds and experiences, but what mattered the most during the academy is how we got through those differences. We became a family of brothers and sisters and all sought the same goal."

The ceremony included awards for superior performance. Lopez received the Lifetime Fitness Achievement Award as well as recognition for setting a new record on the academy's "Nike Hill" challenge, beating the previous record for the three-mile trek by almost two minutes.

The Scenario Testing Recognition Award went to Matthew Sustayta, who scored 100 percent on all 14 scenarios in which cadets are tested on their application of skills. The Marksmanship award went to Christopher Freas. The Academic Achievement Award went to Christopher Chennault, who also received the Honor Cadet Award.

Allen awarded the Bill Cloon Most Inspirational Cadet Award to Gabriel Murphy-Richard.



Cadets

Alhambra Police Department: Officer Sean DeGuzman, Officer Dimitri Ramos, Officer Alexis Reyes, Officer Nery Rodriquez, Officer Matthew Sustayta

Arcadia Police Department: Officer Jose Regalado-Zamora, Police Recruit Solomon Burke, Police Recruit Hyun Chung

Baldwin Park Police Department: Officer Kevin Ramirez, Officer Steven Trinidad

Bell Gardens Police Department: Officer Behzad Varas

Covina Police Department: Officer Esteban Ortega, Police Recruit Christopher Freas

Culver City Police Department: Officer Julian Espitia, Officer Kywan Owens, Officer Ignacio Villanueva, Police Recruit Sergio Lopez

El Monte Police Department: Officer Jordan Cano, Officer Josue Martinez, Officer Maribel Rojas, Police Recruit Kyle McLay

El Segundo Police Department: Officer Michael Drohan, Officer Brandon Mendoza, Officer Joanna Ramirez, Police Recruit Nathan Quezada

Glendora Police Department: Officer Jacob Gaudet

Montebello Police Department: Officer Anthony Martinez, Officer Juan Martinez, Police Recruit Jennifer Ramirez

Pasadena Police Department: Officer Christian Goretti, Officer Gabriel Murphy-Richard, Officer Jacob Younan

San Gabriel Police Department: Officer Dominic Salmon, Police Recruit Morgan Smith, Police Recruit Fred Valles

Santa Paula Police Department: Officer Christopher Chennault, Officer Yvette Solis

Vernon Police Department: Officer Teresa Flores

Westminster Police Department: Officer Alex Lopez

College Foundation Awards Nearly \$160,000 in Scholarships

The Río Hondo College Foundation awarded nearly \$160,000 in scholarships to 236 students during a scholarship reception at the Campus Inn.

The figure is the highest ever given at a single event in Foundation history.



RIO HONDO COLLEGE



50 Students Receive \$500 Hahn Scholarships

Sixty RíoHondo College students received \$500 Hahn Scholars Scholarships during a Feb. 27 reception that provided the recipients with a chance to network with their peers, learn about financial literacy, and accept their scholarship award.

Dean of Student Success Dr. Melba Castro and Luis Jacobo Manriquez, student services assistant for the Student Success and Dream Center, congratulated the students on their hard work and accomplishments.

Community California Foundation representatives Kelly King and Cheng Ung and Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn representative Ivan Sulic recognized the students for their commitment to academic success.



Speech and Debate Team Shines in Competition

Two students from the Río Hondo Forensics Speech and Debate team qualified for the annual National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence, held March 7-9 at McKendree University in Illinois.

The students, who debate together, are Edward Minasyan and Carolina "Lina" Campillo. Campillo is the student trustee on the College Board of Trustees. Their team is ranked 19th.

In addition, the forensics team brought home a series of individual and team awards at February competitions.

On Feb. 7-9 the team competed against nearly 30 other colleges and universities at Point Loma Nazarene University and Palomar College.

- **Gold NFA-LD:** Diana Macias
- **Bronze NFA-LD:** Edward Minasyan
- **Quarterfinalist Parli Debate:** Victorhugo Herrera and David Colin
- **Silver Impromptu:** Erika Sigala
- **Team Awards:** 4th place, sweeps



On Feb. 14-16, the team competed in its 16th tournament of the season at the Tabor-Vanitsky and Southern California NFA-LD and IPDA Championship at Cerritos College.

- **Bronze IPDA:** Zoe Villalpando
- **Bronze NFA-LD:** Carolina "Lina" Campillo
- **Bronze Parli:** Diana Macias & Carolina "Lina" Campillo
- **Gold Dramatic Interp:** Victorhugo Herrera



College Provides Tax Filing Help to Families in Need



IRS-certified students from Río Hondo College provided 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 ran from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Fridays through March 6 at the El Monte Educational Center, helping dozens of community members with their filing.

Unfortunately, the remainder of the program was canceled as part of efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19.

College Hosts Science Olympiad

Nearly 1,400 students from 50 high schools and 40 middle schools took part in the Los Angeles Regional Science Olympiad at Río Hondo College in February. Students competed in a variety of science and engineering events while their parents cheered them on. The effort to stage the event involved a collaboration among many members of the Río Hondo College staff and faculty.



College Enrollment Edges Up

Before the coronavirus crisis began, Río Hondo College's spring 2020 enrollment had climbed 3.5 percentage points from spring 2019 in all divisions, with growth seen in almost every division of the College. In all, students filled 39,010 seats, or about 81.85% of the College's capacity.

"I'm especially pleased that growth is being seen across the College, a demonstration that our message of access and opportunity is reaching the community," Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes. "We will continue to do everything we can to show our community that Río Hondo College can provide them with the tools they need to succeed in higher education and in their careers."



Río Hondo College Spotlights in Media Coverage

Río Hondo College was highlighted by multiple media outlets in February, including items that focused on its financial aid services and fire services training.

Money Management International: Interviewed Río Hondo College Interim Director of Financial Aid David Levy about errors students make when choosing a college.

PA Times: Published an article on leadership authored by former Fire Academy Chief Tracy Rickman along with Río Hondo College Homeland Security Program Coordinator Dr. Ygnacio "Nash" Flores and Professor of Administration of Justice Don Mason.

Yahoo! Finance: Interviewed Professor John Frala about Río Hondo College's partnership with Tesla to train technicians for the rapidly growing electric car manufacturer.

Fleet Equipment: Wrote about Río Hondo College's partnership with Volvo on electric vehicle repair and service technician training programs.

Pasadena Now: Touched on Río Hondo College's successful GO RÍO! bus pass program.

Connect with Us on Social Media

 **RHCRoadrunners**

 **RioHondo_College**

 **RioHondoCollege**

 **Rio Hondo College YT Channel**

 **bit.do/riohondocollege**

 **rhcroadridders**

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.

Mensaje del Presidente

(Continuación de la página 1)

Durante este tiempo sin precedente, el cuerpo docente ha compartido algunas experiencias de estudiantes que, a pesar de pasar por dificultades causadas por los acontecimientos actuales, continúan sobresaliendo académicamente y nos sorprenden con su gran capacidad de recuperación y ánimo.

Estos relatos cuentan de un estudiante excelente que no tiene hogar y no tiene acceso a ciertos recursos debido a los cierres relacionados con el virus. Un miembro del cuerpo docente tomó la iniciativa, asegurándose de que el estudiante tuviera el apoyo necesario para su comodidad física y su éxito académico. Esta ayuda incluyó proveer vivienda, refugio, y comida. El personal y los administradores han tomado más medidas para apoyar a otros estudiantes en situaciones similares. Mientras tanto, el estudiante sigue con éxito en sus clases.

Este compromiso inquebrantable de proporcionar apoyo extraordinario durante esta crisis refleja nuestra ética de colaboración y servicio que da vida a nuestra misión. Mientras toleramos juntos esta crisis de salud, estoy convencido que nuestra buena voluntad colectiva y dedicación se impondrán sobre toda adversidad y cualquier reto que se nos presente.

Long-time Custodial Services Dept. Employee Retires

Hector Villa, who served more than 30 years with the Río Hondo College recently retired. Villa was joined by his colleagues as they honored his legacy of hard work and dedication.

