

FOCUS ON RÍO

August 2020

President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

I'd like to welcome all our students and welcome back our talented and dedicated faculty, staff and administrators as we tackle what is perhaps the most challenging year of our history – higher education in the time of COVID-19.

This pandemic has pushed Río Hondo College to higher levels of creativity and service as our faculty members innovate new ways to inspire and engage students and our support teams devise ways to meet a constantly evolving set of student needs.

Our innovations include efforts like the Business Division's new digital badge

program, which helps students gain skills for careers and demonstrate those skills on online platforms via digital badges. Our online service expansion is also an industry leader, as evidenced by the recognition it has earned from the RP Group.

On both fronts, the message is clear Río Hondo College is here for our students and our community, no matter what challenge we face.

As a result, I believe we are poised for an incredible year during which Río Hondo College's vast strengths in and out of the classroom will be on full display for our students and community.

As you know, I've recently stepped back into the post as Acting Superintendent/ President, and I'm proud to be a part of the exciting efforts underway at our College. I look forward to a fruitful collaboration in the weeks to come!

College Welcomes Students with Remote Learning, Enhanced Services

RÍO IN THE NEWS: Read more about the College's recognition for student services at the [RP Group Impact & Insights publication](#).

Río Hondo College launched the fall 2020 semester on Aug. 15 with an enhanced online learning model, centering the academic and personal needs of students and supporting educators as they take on the new year.

After intense planning over the summer, the College developed a plan that focuses on student feedback and supports learners through an increase in technology resources, academic and mental health counseling, and specialized assistance for student groups.

"We are delighted to offer a robust, comprehensive online learning plan that will guide us as we continue remote instruction," Acting Superintendent/ President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "I would like to thank our entire team of educators, administrators, classified staff and faculty who work tirelessly

to ensure that the needs of our students are met and they have every tool necessary to succeed, regardless of what is happening in our world."

Educators received professional development with pertinent research and information on engaging students during online learning and socio-emotional resources to make sure students feel nurtured, safe and valued.

The College's response to the new services required by the pandemic has been recognized by the RP Group Impact & Insights publication. The publication noted the College's expert modeling of collaboration that united a large cross-section of educators.

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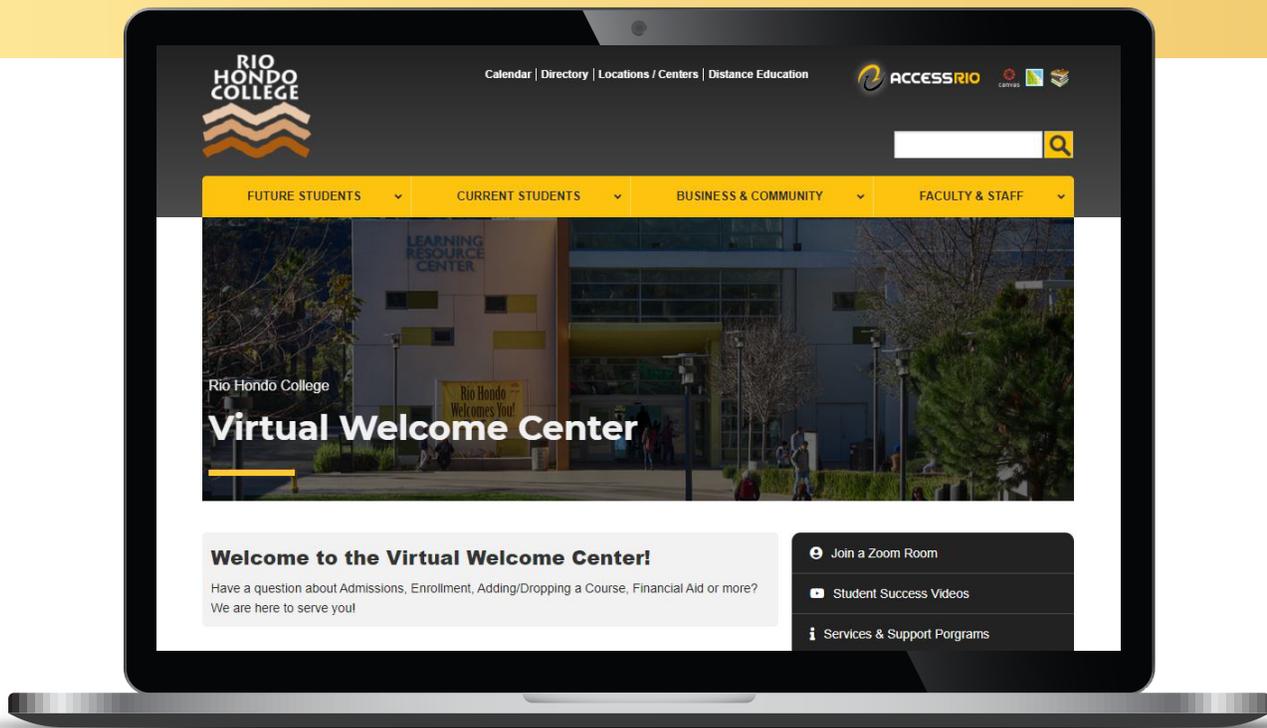
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College Welcomes Students with Remote Learning, Enhanced Services

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Led by Río Hondo's student success team, educators identified three main areas of support: academic, basic and community (the ABCs). The ABCs resource plan initiated an increase in technology resources, including an expanded capacity for Zoom and Canvas lectures.

Students can access Chromebooks, calculators and hotspots from the library check-out service during the first three weeks of the semester and by appointment after Saturday, Sept. 5. The College also launched its [virtual welcome center](#), complete with Zoom rooms and live chats to support students.

Río Hondo's website integrated new career and program exploration to provide clear academic paths, including information on each degree and certificate with sample educational plans and timeline of completion for full-time students.

Building on the successes from spring 2020, Río Hondo's Scholars Hub continues to provide students with supportive, trauma-informed and holistic services. Scholars Hub is offering remote resources during fall 2020, including specialized counselors, tutoring, workshops, book grants, educational supplies and advocacy and referral services to community-based agencies and public assistance partners.

Scholars Hub is home to some of the most underrepresented and underserved students on campus, including former foster youth (Guardian Scholars), unhoused and housing insecure students (HOPE Scholars), formerly incarcerated students (RISE Scholars) and LGBTQIA+ students.

New certificate courses have been added in fall 2020, offering students interested in the field of architecture the opportunity to explore theory and design, drafting and residential design.

For in-person programs such as fire, police, nursing and automotive technology, personal protection equipment is provided for all individuals on site, including masks, gloves, face shields and hand sanitizer.

Through the RíoSource program, drive-thru grab & go groceries will be provided every other week.

The RíoSource location center also will be open once a week, enabling students to order groceries using disposable menus and pick up their orders from a designated location to ensure a contact-free experience. Directional signs, distance markers and footprint stickers will help direct shoppers.

During remote instruction, students can access mental health counseling, including individual and group counseling, and referrals to mental health resources. Students can make an appointment by calling 562-463-7302 or emailing dsanchez@riohondo.edu.

If you know of a student who is experiencing a mental health emergency, a few key resources are the following:

- 24-hour Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK
- Crisis Text Line: 741741 with the word "COURAGE"
- Exodus Urgent Care Center: 323-276-6400
- LA Department of Mental Health Crisis Counseling: 855-952-9276 or 211

Río Hondo College continues to grow opportunities that support students on their educational paths. The College was awarded two federal TRiO Student Support Service grants, totaling about \$ 2.8 million and will be distributed over five years, for the renewal of the TRiO PASS Program and the MESA/TRiO STEM grant. These programs provide comprehensive services such as financial aid and scholarship support and career and academic counseling.

District Update

Río Hondo College trustees received an update on the College's building program and will continue the process of appointing Citizens' Oversight Committee members as terms expire.

A facilities master plan presentation on Aug. 12 recapped 30 projects planned under the auspices of Measure A, a \$245 million bond measure passed by the community in March 2004.

Completed projects ranged from new police and fire facilities to campus efficiencies and upgrades, from community-based satellite campuses in El Monte, South Whittier and Pico Rivera to the new Learning Resource Center, P.E. Complex and Veterans Memorial and projects underway for a commuter center and the L Tower seismic retrofit. A few of the projects - including upgrades to campus lighting, new laboratories and signs - remain to be addressed.

The presentation also discussed the possible need for additional or expanded facilities for health information technology, computer science, paramedic training, occupational therapy assistant, physical therapy assistant, business administration and career development.

The College is seeking applicants to serve the remaining term of trustee Norma Edith García, who stepped down from the governing board in July. The board expects to conduct interviews and appoint a new member in September. The member will serve until García's term ends in December 2022.



Child Development Center Reopens

Río Hondo College's Child Development Center (CDC) reopened to children in July, helping to meet the early education and childcare needs of families in the community.

The center redesigned its classrooms and program to support physical distancing while preserving critical developmentally appropriate practices.

In addition to small group sizes and engaging activities, the program features cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day. An outdoor classroom has been reimagined to allow children to spend more time learning about nature - and effort assisted by donations from Ricardo's Nursery in Long Beach.

"The CDC staff are excited to be back to serving the members of our community who need it most," said Dr. Shireetha Getters, the center's director.

START RIO...GO ANYWHERE

Río Hondo College Board of Trustees Seeks Applicants to Fill Vacancy in Trustee Area 1 through December 2022

WHITTIER – Río Hondo College Board of Trustees is seeking applicants to serve the remaining term of trustee Norma Edith García, who stepped down from the governing board in July.

The board expects to conduct interviews next month and appoint a new member in late September. The member will serve until García's term ends in December 2022.

To be eligible to serve as a member of the governing board, applicants must:

- Be 18 years or older;
- Be a citizen of the United States;
- Be a resident of the Río Hondo Community College District Area 1, which includes El Monte;
- Be a registered voter in the State of California;
- Not be disqualified from holding a civil office by the Constitution or the laws of the State of California.

Declaration of Appointment Process

Individuals interested in being considered for the appointment must submit a Declaration of Appointment form and a brief resume to:

Río Hondo Community College District
President's Office, A-101
3600 Workman Mill Road
Whittier, CA 90601
Email: RDGallegos@richondo.edu

The Declaration of Appointment form can be obtained from the District website under the President's Office www.richondo.edu/board-vacancy. It must be received by the President's Office by 5:00 p.m., Thursday **Sep. 3, 2020** - no forms will be accepted after 5:00 p.m.

For more information about the vacancy, call (562) 908-3432. Specific questions regarding residency in Area 1 may be directed to the Los Angeles County Registrar/Recorder/County Clerk website at www.socinfo.net.

RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Read more about the Digital Badge program on [ProvenReady](#).

Digital Badge Program Helps Students Refine Job-seeking Skills

Río Hondo College's adoption of a digital badge program to boost student success in seeking jobs has been praised by ProvenReady, an online platform dedicated to helping students enter the workforce.

The platform spotlights Río Hondo College counselor Vanessa Chavez, who guides students as they seek employment. Chavez works in the College's Business Division, where she handles educational planning, graduation criteria and career placement.

Chavez learned about the need for the program during an employer advisory board meeting. ProvenReady partner NexusEdge shared how digital badges can be earned by students as they gain specific skills, and then posted to forums such as LinkedIn.

Meanwhile, Dean of Business Gita Runkle was learning about ProvenReady's digital platform from the Los Angeles regional directors of employer engagement for the business & entrepreneurship, advanced transportation and logistics, and global trade sectors.

Chavez led an effort to create content for seven career readiness modules in fall 2019 and worked with NexusEdge founder and CEO Eddie Lin to put them onto the ProvenReady platform. The modules cover:

- Interview skills
- Resume creation
- Informational interviews
- Professional associations
- Cover letter creation
- Networking
- Workplace etiquette

"These are good topics that any student should know," Chavez said. "This stuff is not rocket science, just packaging it in a way students want to read and learn about it."

After completing each module, students take a quiz to earn a digital badge, a micro-credential they can add to their LinkedIn profile, portfolio, signature line, and/or website.

About 50 students completed at least one module as of summer 2020, and 15 students completed all seven. Chavez recognized those students who completed all the modules by calling to congratulate them and creating sashes that they could wear during virtual commencement ceremonies in the spring.

Student Erick Pineda, who completed all of the career prep badges before graduating from RHC, wore his sash for his graduation pictures. He completed the badges to boost his resume as he prepares to enter the business world.

The modules are incorporated in the digital badge initiative at ProvenReady, with analytics showing many high school students who had access to the badges through ProvenReady also engaged with Río Hondo's career-readiness badge series, serving as another way to connect Los Angeles high school students to the community college system.





Roadrunner Crew Re-activated to Battle California Wildfires

Río Hondo College's Roadrunner Hand Crew 77 was activated for the second time this summer by the U.S. Forest Service, deployed first to fight the Texas Fire and then to assist efforts against the rapidly expanding Lake Fire, both in the Angeles National Forest.

The crew began its activation on Aug. 5. It was previously activated to backfill behind crews in June.

The crew, created by the College's Wildland Fire Academy, is staffed by a team of graduates from recent cadet classes, including Victor Apodaca, Nicholas Casimiro, Nicolas Demonte, Evan Espinoza, Yulfiano Gerwynaldo, Daniel Ingelmo, Jesse Jimenez, Marcus Manty Ortiz, Ilunga Mulonga, Diego Rodriguez, Alan Perez, Eduardo Reyes, Hector Samayo and Andrew Salinas.

"The young men and women of our Roadrunner Crew exemplify the best of Río Hondo College," Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "They have volunteered to join the front lines in a fight on behalf of our entire state.

Their dedication is inspiring."

A Type II hand crew, the team assists with all aspects of fire monitoring, suppression and control, including digging fire containment lines. In past years, the crew has been called up multiple times a year to assist with firefighting across California. The crew has battled fires in Yosemite National Park and helped fight the devastating Ferguson Fire.

Each crew member must meet or exceed U.S. Forest Service requirements for seasonal wildland firefighters. Students also must pass an arduous physical fitness regime. Río Hondo College, which has fielded the crew since 2002, is well known for its Wildland Fire Academy, which typically places every graduate from every class.

"Despite the pandemic, the Roadrunners of Crew 77 continue to aggressively move forward, protecting the residents of Southern California and the valuable resources of the Angeles National Forest," said Chief Andy Grzywa, academy director.

College Hosts Blood Drive

Thanks to campus volunteers and all those who donated blood, Río Hondo College surpassed its goals, collecting 27 units during a blood drive held Aug. 26 in collaboration with the American Red Cross.





College Leaders' Fall Plan Emphasizes Care, Compassion

Río Hondo College leaders on Aug. 14 emphasized the need to show care and compassion to students struggling with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic while delivering online instruction in fall 2020-21.

The message was the core focus of FLEX Day, an annual training program held just before classes began for fall semester.

Faculty and staff leaders praised College employees for their swift and effective shift to online instruction in spring 2020 but said the new year will require a redoubled focus on the needs of students.

"Showing our students compassion and that we care about their successes is important during a regular semester, but it's beyond important during a pandemic," Academic Senate President Dr. Kevin Smith said.

Research shows that showing care and compassion for students not only directly benefits their well-being but that it also can accelerate academic success.

Smith said the challenges of the coming year will extend beyond instruction as the College also prepares for an accreditation review and continues to expand use of Open Education Resources, which are designed to increase access to instructional materials and remove barriers for low-income students.

Faculty Association President Rudy Rios told faculty members that as hard as it was for them to convert to online instruction in spring, the challenges faced by students are even greater as they grapple with the impacts of COVID-19 on their lives.

California School Employees Associate chapter President Sandra Hernandez, whose organization represents the College's support staff, praised her team for its speedy transition to the new program and extensive support of the instructional process.

"We, the classified staff of Río Hondo College have stood up, whether you know it or not, and looked this unprecedented pandemic in the eye, and made it

blink," Hernandez said. "Classified staff switched over in a matter of hours to a completely new reality of exclusively serving students online."

Hernandez noted that classified staff prepared all tools, online and otherwise, for the online delivery of instructions even while custodians deep-cleaned campus facilities, groundskeepers kept the campus pristine and technology and facilities staff responded to hundreds of work orders. Meanwhile, payroll, registration and other teams delivered a seamless transition for students and staff by ensuring their systems continued without glitches.

"Some would say it's passion, but what it actually takes to get through these turbulent times is purpose," Hernandez said. "Your purpose is what defies hopelessness, helplessness and negativity. This is what will get us and our students through this fall, one day at a time."

FLEX Day was organized by Dr. Alice Mecom, dean of the Division of Communications and Languages, who said the focus on care and compassion is essential as students face new uncertainties in their lives.

"We are in positions of opportunity, impact and influence," Mecom said. "We can make a difference in our students' lives and our students need our support."

Faculty and staff spent the rest of the day in sessions focused on showing students their care and concern, ending the day in division meetings in which they developed new care strategies.

"I would like to thank our entire leadership team for this keen attention to the needs of our students as we prepare for what will likely be the greatest challenge we have ever faced as educators," Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

"I'm pleased to say that not only is our team up to the task, but they are consummate professionals who will go above and beyond all expectations to deliver a truly amazing learning experience to our students," Dreyfuss said.

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.

RÍO IN THE NEWS: Read more about the Consortium on the [PR Newswire](#).

Community College Consortium Hosts Job Site for Area Employers

Río Hondo College is part of a community college consortium that is providing free access to employers to a job site targeting Los Angeles-area community college students and alumni.

The [Los Angeles County Community Colleges Jobs Consortium website](#) allows employers to register once and post an unlimited number of jobs for job seekers from Río Hondo as well as from Antelope Valley College, East Los Angeles College, Glendale Community College, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles Harbor College, Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Los Angeles Valley College, Pierce College, Santa Monica College and West Los Angeles College.



"The consortium is a direct pipeline to our county's emerging job seekers," Río Hondo College Career Development Specialist Cynthia Patino said. "Our students are highly skilled and have been well prepared to reach their career goals! Many of our graduates are working adults who have added new skills and are now ready to step into jobs located in Los Angeles County."

Statistics show that approximately 306,000 undergraduates attend Los Angeles County community colleges.



Save the Date

Noon Friday, Sept. 4:

Transfer Center virtual tour of CSU Fullerton

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 9:

Transfer Center Virtual College Fair

6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 9:

Board of Trustees regular meeting via Zoom, Río Hondo College

8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 11:

9/11 Virtual Memorial

Noon Friday, Sept. 11:

Transfer Center virtual tour of CSU Dominguez Hills

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 16:

Latinos Empowered Guided and Cultivated in Education (LEGACIE) workshop via Zoom

Noon Friday, Sept. 18:

Transfer Center virtual tour of CSU Los Angeles

6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 23:

Board of Trustees study session via Zoom, Río Hondo College

Noon Friday, Sept. 25:

Transfer Center virtual tour of CSU Whittier College

Noon Friday, Oct. 2:

Transfer Center virtual tour of Grand Canyon University, San Francisco State

Noon Friday, Oct. 9:

Transfer Center virtual tour of Claremont Colleges, Cal Poly Pomona

11 a.m. Monday, Oct. 12:

Indigenous People's Day, virtual

1 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12:

Undocumented Student Week of Action: Get Social Mixer

10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 13:

Undocumented Student Week of Action: You're not Alone Gallery

5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 14:

Undocumented Student Week of Action: UndocuFamily Night

1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15:

Undocumented Student Week of Action: UndocuRio Talks

10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 16:

Undocumented Student Week of Action: UndocuScholar Student Panel

Noon Friday, Oct. 16:

Transfer Center virtual tour of Long Beach State, Azusa Pacific University

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 21: Latinos Empowered Guided and Cultivated in Education (LEGACIE) Mentor Mixer via Zoom

Noon Friday, Oct. 23:

Transfer Center virtual tour of USC

Noon Friday, Oct. 30:

Transfer Center virtual tour of CSU Northridge, UC Santa Barbara