President’s Message

As the winter holidays draw near, I’d like to once again express my deep gratitude for our Río Hondo College community and all you do to support our students in their pursuit of degrees and career goals. Never has our mission been so critical as it is today, with our society challenged by a health pandemic and an uncertain economy. These challenges make the accomplishments of our team even more notable.

Our child development leaders, for example, just earned national certification, a strong affirmation of their dedication to starting the children of our community on their academic paths.

At the same time, our police and fire academies have each celebrated the graduation of cadet classes. Each program is recognized as among the best across the nation, with many cadets already hired by local agencies or in the process of being hired. Congratulations to these students, whose commitment to community is a model for us all.

November also offered us an opportunity to hold a town hall on our 2020-21 budget, allowing us to demonstrate the solid fiscal foundation that allows our team of educators to serve our students.

Please enjoy the upcoming break with your families, stay safe, and return refreshed for our winter intersession and spring semester!

Teresa Dreyfuss

President’s Message

Accreditation Recognizes Child Development Center as Among Nation’s Best

Río Hondo College's Child Development Center has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children.

NAEYC Accreditation is a rigorous and transformative system that uses 10 research-based standards to collaborate with early education programs to recognize and drive improvement in high-quality early learning environments.

“We’re proud to have earned the mark of quality from NAEYC and to be recognized for our commitment to reaching the highest professional standards,” Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. “This is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our entire Child Development Center team.

The College has provided childcare programs since the 1960s, moved into its current facility in 1996. The Center provides a state preschool at its Pre-School Laboratory that is free to qualifying families. The center has four classrooms and three playgrounds.

Operating under modified hours and capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the center currently serves a maximum of 14 students in each classroom. Students at the center are ages 2 to 5.

“We believe that every child should be provided with a diverse and responsive environment,” Child Development Center Director Dr. Shireetha Gethers said. “Our program provides an engaging, child-centered and developmentally appropriate environment that fosters personal growth and academic development.”

To earn NAEYC accreditation, Río Hondo College Child Development Center pursued an extensive self-study and quality-improvement process, followed by a

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District Update

Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees reviewed the College’s strategy for spending $8 million in state and federal CARES Act grants over the next two years to help students achieve their goals, approved new hires and promotions, and received an update on construction efforts.

The funds will be used for student grants, assistance with the transition to online learning and to pay expenses to mitigate learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The student-centric approach includes funds for additional success coaches, counselors, laptops with accessibility software, additional sessions for lab courses as well as basic needs grants, bus passes, emergency housing, food pantry, Wi-Fi access and mental health aid. Funds will also go to faculty development in distance teaching and virtual programming transitions, personal protective equipment and other safety efforts.

In all, the plan allocates $6.4 million of the grant funds.

The board also approved employment of Victor Kowalski as a full-time biology instructor, Angel Obregon as executive director of human resources, Donald Gordon as director of financial aid, scholarships and veterans services, and Adam Wetsman as dean of behavioral and social sciences. Cecilia Rocha was promoted to assistant dean of student equity and RISE Scholars and Francisco Suarez was named assistant dean of adult education.

In addition, the board hired Henry Wangidjaja as director of accounting.

The board also commended the following 27 faculty members who were granted academic rank in spring – an action delayed by the pandemic.

**Professor**
- Anderson, Kenneth - Communications and Languages
- Dixon, Scott - Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Gottlieb, Karen D. - Health Sciences and Nursing
- Karmiryan, Ruzanna - Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Lindy, David - Career and Technical Education
- Mora, Juana - Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Valdivia, Irma - Behavioral and Social Sciences

**Associate Professor**
- Arroyo, Jose - Disabled Students Programs And Services
- Chaundry, Amtul Mujeeb - Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering
- Gardos, Alexander - Arts and Cultural Programs
- Hughes, Sean M. - Career and Technical Education
- Truong, Irene - Library
- Valladares, Diana - Counseling

**Assistant Professor**
- Smith Candida, Celestine - Communications and Languages
- Irwin, Erin - Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering
- Flores, Julio Rene - Counseling
- Lara, Jose Alfonso - Counseling
- Muir, Russell - Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics
- Ramirez, Claudia - Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering
- Ramirez, Elizabeth - Counseling
- Romero-Morales, Maria - Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Ryan, Mutsumo - Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering
- Smith, Stephen - Kinesiology, Dance and Athletics
- Stevens-Gandara, Erin Miyo - Arts and Cultural Programs
- Vaca, Christian - Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering
- Villanueva, Viviana - Counseling
- Waugh, Christine - Counseling

An update on College construction programs indicated that phase 1 of the L-Tower Seismic Upgrade is 63 percent complete.

Accreditation Recognizes Child Development Center as Among Nation’s Best

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site visit by NAEYC assessors to ensure the program met each of the 10 program standards and hundreds of individual criteria. Accreditations run for five years.

In the 30 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. More than 7,000 programs are accredited by NAEYC – less than 10 percent of all childcare centers, preschools and kindergartens nationally.

“Earning NAEYC Accreditation makes Río Hondo College Child Development Center an exemplar of good practice for families and the entire community,” said Kristen Johnson, senior director of Early Learning Program Accreditation at NAEYC.

For more information about NAEYC Accreditation, visit the NAEYC website.
Town Hall Showcases 2020-21 Budget Strength

Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss hosted a town hall on Nov. 30 to present the College’s 2020-21 budget, which bulks up reserves and will allow for hiring to fill vacant positions.

The College managed to strengthen its budget despite seeing no new funds from the state and no cost-of-living adjustment as well as the need to pay step-and-column raises for faculty and staff.

The budget, which was adopted Oct. 29, sets aside $31.3 million in General Fund Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves. Overall, the College projects to receive $92.2 million in revenue and spend $91.4 million.

More than 100 people attended the town hall via Zoom.

Forensics Speech and Debate Team Shines in Fall Contests

The Río Hondo Forensics Speech and Debate team is finding success during its fall competitions, including the 2020 PSCFA Warm-Up Online Tournament held Oct. 3-4 and Diablo Valley College’s “The DVC Thing” tournament held Nov. 20-22.

Some 25 colleges and universities competed at the warm-up event, providing a great season opener while more than 41 competed at the Diablo Valley College online contest.

Here are Río Hondo College’s placements:

**PSCFA Warm-Up**
- Superior award in Informative Speech: First Place, Ashley Sanchez
- Excellence in Informative Speech: Second Place, Alyssa Gomez; Fourth Place, Dulce Aguirre

**Diablo Valley College**
- Finalist in Dramatic Interpretation: Christina Pena
- Finalist in Impromptu: Amarah Hindi
- Bronze in IPDA: Dulce Aguirre

Special thanks to coaches and assistant judges Patricia Hughes, Alex Cadena and Edward Minasyan.
Río Hondo College educators are staying connected while working remotely through a series of activities designed to simulate or augment the daily interactions that occurred when they all worked on campus.

The effort, launched by the acting Superintendent/President’s Office along with campuswide leadership in November, features virtual water cooler discussions – short Zoom sessions to shoot the breeze – as well as a weekly social network competition, monthly Zoom Happy Hours and Lunch Hours and Zoom Yoga/Meditation/Mindfulness Sessions.

Human Resources will also provide additional events and workshops to support employees deal with stresses related to the pandemic’s impact.

“Our goal is to help keep alive the incredibly strong culture of campus collaboration and personal support that has long been a hallmark of Río Hondo College,” Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

“We may be working remotely, but it doesn’t mean we have to be remote from each other. This is an amazing team – from our faculty to our staff and administrators.”

The water cooler sessions seek to mimic the casual interactions that happen when people work in a bustling office. Staff, faculty and managers are encouraged to make time for short Zoom sessions to catch up with office mates.

Already, the teams have started the weekly social media competition, which encourages individuals to post or like photos representing a new theme each week, such as one in November asking for holiday-related festivities. The person/picture with the most likes at the end of the week wins.

The inaugural Yoga session was hosted by Marketing and Communications Director Ruthie Retana, who is also a certified yoga instructor, on Nov. 19, with future sessions set for spring 2021.

Río Hondo College celebrated the graduation of 46 cadets in Fire Academy class No. 95 on Nov. 14 with a socially distanced gathering at the Río Hondo Regional Fire Training Center in Santa Fe Springs.

The class includes nine cadets sponsored by agencies in La Habra Heights, Long Beach, Monterey Park, San Gabriel and Santa Fe Springs as well as 12 cadets who are in the hiring process with other agencies. The class includes one woman.

“Your commitment to becoming a firefighter and taking on the responsibility as a ‘protector of society’ brings great joy and pride to your family, friends and to the Río Hondo College community,” Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

Río Hondo College’s Fire Academy is known across the nation for the strength of its programs, which include the urban firefighting training, wildland firefighting, emergency medical technician and advanced truck company training.

The urban program runs 14 weeks and meets all Fire Academy Standards and Training requirements.

Río Hondo College is the No. 2 ranked community college in California in providing degrees in homeland security, law enforcement, firefighting and related protective services.
Río Hondo Police Academy celebrated the graduation of 49 cadets in Class No. 210 during a special drive-through ceremony held Nov. 5 on campus that followed COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines.

The event featured the Los Angeles Police Emerald Society Pipe and Drums Corps, a presentation of colors by the Pasadena Police Department Honor Guard and an invocation by Covina Police Chaplain Ron Butler.

"After six long months of intensive training amid very restrictive COVID-19 conditions, the cadets of Class 210 have earned the right to graduate from the Río Hondo Police Academy, joining the ranks of hundreds of police officers and police chiefs who have come before them at the Río Hondo Police Academy since 1964," Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

Cadet training covers constitutional law, criminal law, domestic violence, traffic enforcement, emergency vehicle operations, tactical first aid and CPR, mental health, lifetime fitness, firearms, among other subjects mandated by Peace Officer Standards and Training.

The cadets represent 23 police departments from Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties, who sponsored their instruction.

Class President Jullian Silva noted the unique circumstances surrounding the training, which began in early March but was halted briefly by the pandemic. When the class resumed in May with new precautions, 17 new cadets joined – from many walks of life.

"Our oldest officer in the class is 43 years old and fulfilling a lifelong goal," Silva said. "Our youngest is 21 and is living the dream. Our class includes veterans, EMTs, realtors, students and the list goes on. But no matter our past profession, we all came here with a common goal, and that was to become a police officer and to serve our communities in a way we have never done before."

Academy Director Walter Allen III reminded the cadets of the grave responsibility they inherit.

"You are the new guardians of our great democracy charged with tremendous responsibility and authority to enforce the law," Allen said. "It will be important that you use this newly acquire power with the highest ethical standards, compassion, care and wisdom."

The event was attended by Río Hondo College Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, members of the Board of Trustees, Division of Public Safety Dean Mark Yokoyama and Río Hondo Police Academy Advisory Board Members Anthony Miranda (chief of the Vernon Police Department) and David Reynoso (chief of the El Monte Police Department).

Chiefs from 21 additional police agencies also attended.

**Cadets**

- Officer Spencer Shepard, Officer Vianney Garcia, Officer Jullian Silva, Officer Javier Covarrubias, Officer Beatriz Rueda, Police Recruit Alyssa Barrera, Officer Carlos Maldonado, Officer Emmanuel Castillo, Officer Janae Moreno, Officer Tadeo Gonzalez Garcia, Officer Peter Choi, Officer Anthony Kardosh, Officer Bryan Rico, Police Recruit Salvador Herrera, Officer Marshall Kang, Officer Kimberly Izaguierre, Officer Jacob Gil, Officer Ashley Crenshaw, Police Recruit Derek Lau, Officer Emma Olague, Officer Carlos Perez, Police Recruit Christopher Lopez, Officer Christopher Calaguing, Officer Jennifer Mero, Police Recruit Taylor Maricle, Officer Judy Chen, Officer Bryan Gonzalez, Officer Jeremiah Nava, Officer Gerson Pleitez, Police Recruit Alberto Mejia, Officer Byanna Fierro, Officer Robert Jaramillo, Officer Nikolas Kaldaras, Officer Eric Riddle, Police Recruit Araceli Salazar, Officer Destiny Ruiz, Officer Christopher Rodriguez, Officer Daniel Duarte, Officer Julio Mora, Officer Tyler Williamson, Police Recruit Jose Yamasaki, Officer Sebastian De La Torre, Officer Avelardo Ocampo, Officer Georgina Vargas, Officer Ederson Gramajo, Officer Cynthia Maciel, Officer Melissa Legget and Officer Virginia Granados Martinez.
Río Hondo College students placed in the top five California Community Colleges for their responses to a statewide media preferences survey – the only Los Angeles County community college to do so.

Some 539 Río Hondo College students took the survey – well past the College’s goal of 400. Students who took the survey were entered into an opportunity drawing to win a Chromebook and Río Hondo College laptop backpack.

The survey measured how students consume media as a way of helping the College enhance its recruitment efforts.

Student Maricruz Camacho Ramirez was announced as the winner on Election Day.

College Ranks in Top 5 for Student Survey Responses

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