

FOCUS ON RÍO

December 2020

President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As 2020 came to a close, Río Hondo enjoyed national recognition on several fronts for the quality of our services for students.

In the first, our Child Development Center received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, recognizing the program's high-quality learning environments.

In the second, Río Hondo received a federal grant for a program that will create a pathway for local high school students to become teachers in

science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, helping to offer new opportunities while meeting a critical need in our schools.

I'm also proud of our journalism students for earning a slew of honors at two recent awards programs and would like to praise our CARE program for its annual Adopt-a-Child Holiday Gift event, held as a drive-through program.

In closing, please let me say I'm looking forward to our spring semester and the ongoing innovation of our faculty as they provide engaging and rigorous instruction to our students. As always, our students remain at the center of everything we do.

NAEYC Accreditation Recognizes Child Development Center as Among Nation's Best

Río Hondo College 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 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

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NAEYC Accreditation Recognizes Child Development Center as Among Nation's Best

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pursued an extensive self-study and quality-improvement process, followed by a 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](https://www.naeyc.org).

District Update

Trustees received an update on Dec. 9 for the College's current accreditation preparation process, which kicked off in spring 2020. A cross-disciplinary team is preparing key documents and revising timelines to ensure the College is ready for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges review.

The group is also working on a Quality Focus Essay (QFE), which is a key part of the College's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). The QFE will focus on two or three areas for further study, improvement and enhancement of academic quality designed to improve student outcomes. An initial draft is expected in late February 2021.

A first draft of the ISER is expected in March 2021, with the next quarterly report provided to the Board of Trustees in April 2021.

The Board of Trustees also recognized outgoing member Gary Mendez, who served four terms as a trustee representing Area 4, which spans Los Nietos, Santa Fe Springs, South Whittier and North Norwalk.

Government and Community Relations Director Russell Castañeda Calleros provided an update to the Board on the College's legislative priorities, which include expanding financial aid, increasing the number of bachelor degrees offered, enhancing support for students experiencing homelessness, improving enrollment opportunities for incarcerated students, supporting COVID-19 emergency response grants, increasing student aid, battling the digital divide, expanding mental health resources, backing support for undocumented students, promoting comprehensive immigration reform and backing affirmative action.

Construction managers Del Terra also informed the Board that its first phase of seismic upgrades for the College's L-Tower is currently 64 percent complete.

On Dec. 16, trustees held their annual reorganization meeting, with new and re-elected members taking the Oath of Office and trustees selected to serve as president, vice president and clerk for the coming year.

Pathway to Guide Students into Becoming STEM-qualified Teachers

Río Hondo College is creating a program to guide community college and K-12 students through an education pathway focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and back to local communities in much needed teaching roles.

Called the Community Partnerships for Teacher Pipeline (CPTP), the program is made possible by a three-year, \$2.9 million U.S. Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant that Río Hondo College will share with El Camino College, Cerritos College and the Center for Collaborative Education, which serves as the fiscal agent. Each college partner will receive about \$900,000 over the life of the grant.

"This is really a community grant because it will allow us to work with both K-12 and community college teachers as mentors in the classroom for students who are interested in STEM fields and who would like to go into teaching," Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

Students will be provided with a certificated teacher mentor in K-12 or community college, a success coach, workshops and hands-on classroom

while taking pre-credential coursework. The program also includes a focus on special education and early childhood education teaching roles.

The program intersects with the College's larger STEM strategy, which is aimed at boosting enrollment in the high-demand fields for a new generation of students. As a result, it will also address the shortage of qualified STEM teachers in the workforce.

"Our community is rich in diversity as well as skills in math, science and computer science that -- if directed into the teaching profession -- can immeasurably enrich our children's education," Dreyfuss said.

One-on-one support and the mentoring program will provide opportunities for participants to build positive personal relationships and develop employment knowledge and skills. The College also will work with California State University campuses, STEM and community organizations to build and scale teacher preparation pipelines with a community development approach.

Former Accounting Director Named Vice President of Finance and Business

Río Hondo College has welcomed back former Director of Accounting Stephen Kibui as its new vice president of finance and business, charged with overseeing all College financial, business and administrative functions.

Kibui, who was hired in October, briefly left the College to serve as vice president of administrative services at Compton College, where he also oversaw financial, business and administrative functions.

His career spans more than 20 years of financial management, auditing, consulting and business leadership. He is a Certified Public Accountant and holds a Master of Business Administration.

"I'm excited to rejoin the extraordinary finance team at Río Hondo, which has continued to ensure a remarkable level of fiscal stability for this College despite the frequent challenges from

such issues as the pandemic and funding system changes," Kibui said.

Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, who at one time also led the finance team, said Kibui brings the perfect mix of leadership and expertise to the role. He will be responsible for such operations as accounting, audit, budget, facilities, construction, information technology, purchasing and contracts management, and relations with external parties.

"Stephen will ensure that not only do we maintain our reputation for fiscal strength as we go forward, but also spark innovation into ways of improving our financial position as new challenges arise," Dreyfuss said. "We are so pleased to have him back with us."

Outside of work, Kibui enjoys soccer, tennis, jogging and cycling.





Foundation Receives \$53,500 in Donations, Names Board President

The Río Hondo College Foundation has received a \$15,000 donation for auto tech scholarships from the Greater Los Angeles New Car Dealers Association (GLANCA), one of several recent donations that will benefit students.

Henry Gee, the Foundation's acting executive director, and automotive instructor Steve Tomory received the grant from GLANCA Executive Director Bob Smith and Board member Jeanne Bower at Glendale Acura on Dec. 3. This is GLANCA's third donation, bringing its total contributions to \$35,000.

The Foundation also received the following gifts:

- Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation: Renewed funding for a \$30,000 Pritzker Foster Care Initiative to support Río Hondo College's Guardian Scholars program and Student Emergency Grants.
- NASA CA Space Consortium Grant: The Foundation received \$8,500 for the Physics Department to enhance science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) preparation and provide a bridge opportunity for 10 community college students to study STEM fields at the university level. Río Hondo was one of 10 California community colleges to benefit from the funding.

Bryan Tabizon, director of administration, cemetery operations and park superintendent for Rose Hills Memorial Park, assumed the role of Foundation Board President effective Dec. 11, 2020. Tabizon is a Río Hondo College alumnus.

The Foundation also named Director of Student Life and Leadership Shaina Phillips to represent College management and confidential staff on the Foundation Board. Her term runs from Dec. 11, 2020 to June 30, 2023.

El Paisano Staff Earns Journalism Honors

Río Hondo College's El Paisano news team has earned recognition for excellence in journalism from the Journalism Association of Community Colleges (JACC) and School Newspapers Online (SNO) that spotlights the news organization's online presentation, cartooning, multi-media and broadcast efforts.

JACC: Bryan Altamirano won honors for video journalism and multi-media, Jesus Manriquez for student ad design, and Madelyn Gastelum and Justin

Fuentes for editorial cartoons. In addition, the full staff was honored for Webcast/Broadcast and General Excellence of their online edition.

Best of SNO Awards: Clarissa Martinez won for her COVID-19 story and Bryan Altamirano won for a multi-media package on COVID-19 and El Monte testing facilities. In addition, the full staff won for Distinguished Website.

El Paisano is guided by Advisor/Coordinator Wendy Carrera.

South Coast Spring Sports Planned, Fall Season Canceled

The South Coast Conference, which governs athletics for 12 community colleges, has canceled its planned 2020-21 Spring I, which would have provided a shortened season for nine sports traditionally played in fall.

The cancellation is prompted by the recent surge in positive COVID-19 cases in Los Angeles County and affects men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's water polo, women's volleyball and men's and women's basketball. The season would have run from February to April.

A proposed Spring II season, for the traditional spring sports, remains on schedule to begin April 2021. The season includes baseball, softball, men's and women's swimming and diving, women's tennis, women's badminton, women's beach volleyball, and men's and women's track and field.

Colleges may still decide to opt out of the season by Feb. 26, 2021. The presidents of the South Coast Conference colleges met Jan. 6, 2021 and Feb. 3, 2021, to review conditions for the Spring II season.

Sports competitions in the conference halted in March 2020 because of the pandemic. No conference titles were awarded in spring because of the abbreviated season.

In addition to Río Hondo College, the conference includes, Cerritos, Compton, East Los Angeles, El Camino, Los Angeles City, Los Angeles Harbor, Los Angeles Southwest, Los Angeles Trade Tech, Long Beach City, Mt. San Antonio and Pasadena City colleges.

80 Children Receive Gifts during Annual CARE Adopt-a-Child Event

About 80 children received holiday gifts on Dec. 18 as part of Río Hondo College's annual Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) Adopt-a-Child event, held this year as a drive-through event to ensure safety.

Gifts for the children of some 40 students in need were donated by faculty, staff, administrators and CARE alumni. One alumnus, Nadine Hernandez, adopted 10 children by herself.

As part of a partnership with the Office of Student Life and Leadership, CARE students also received a food basket.



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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.



President Discusses Budget Strength during Podcast

Río Hondo College Acting Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss and the Board of Trustees president discussed the College's 2020-21 budget during the Dec. 10 California School News Radio podcast. The budget sets aside more than \$31 million for financial aid and increases general fund reserves, protecting jobs and supporting vital student services.



Save the Date

6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 27:
Board of Trustees study session, virtual

Friday, Jan. 29:
Spring FLEX training day, virtual

Saturday, Jan. 30:
Spring semester begins

6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10:
Board of Trustees meeting, virtual

Friday, Feb. 12, Monday, Feb. 15:
Campus closed for Presidents Day

6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18:
Board of Trustees study session, virtual