

# FOCUS ON RÍO

January 2021

## President's Message



**Teresa Dreyfuss**

COVID-19 has generated substantial new challenges for community colleges across the state, but those challenges also represent opportunities for new growth and innovation on the part of our administrators, faculty and staff.

Our Rio Hondo College team addressed some of these challenges and opportunities during a recent professional development day as we prepared for spring semester 2021 – our third semester featuring remote, online-based instruction due to the pandemic.

Among the challenges we are facing is a slight decline in enrollment witnessed across the state. At Rio Hondo College, we are launching an intensive outreach program to connect with students who have not re-enrolled since fall 2020. Our

program includes personal contact as well as incentives, such as Chromebook giveaways.

We know the opportunity available to our community through education is without peer, and we want to ensure our community takes full advantage of these offerings.

I am confident that the strength of our academic programs, diversity of offerings, extensive support services, and our talented and dedicated faculty is a combination that drives success for our students.

Thankfully, with vaccines being distributed and COVID-19 cases declining, we are optimistic about a near future when we are all back on campus together. But until then, we are committed to delivering the best possible education and student services online.

## College Announced Enrollment Outreach Plan during Flex Day Training

Río Hondo faculty, staff and administrators gathered for a completely virtual and asynchronous professional development day on Jan. 20, announcing an enrollment campaign and discussing the drive to design online courses with an "equity lens."

The biannual Flex Day was themed "Continuing on the Path in Times of Crisis: Caring for our Students, Supporting Each Other."

The event included several joint sessions, breakout sessions for different departments and an introduction of new staff and members of the Board of Trustees.

Among the challenges identified for the College is a dip in enrollment experienced across the California community college system that is likely driven by COVID-19, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss shared with attendees.

Dreyfuss said a four-pronged effort has been launched to combat the decline, including individual outreach to students from fall who did not re-enroll for spring, a drawing for Chromebooks and bookstore vouchers and an outreach campaign by Student Success Teams.

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# District Update

Members of the Board of Trustees reviewed a presentation on District bond measure options that included an overview of existing borrowing and options for future efforts to complete critically needed campus projects.

Currently, the College has one major bond-funded project underway – the seismic retrofitting of its iconic L-Tower. Installations of steel beam supports and restraining bracing is near completion. The overall project is about 65 percent complete.

Earlier in the month, the trustees also congratulated Human Resources Assistant Helia Gomez and Facilities Senior Secretary Elizabeth Haney upon their retirement.



## College Announced Enrollment Outreach Plan during Flex Day Training

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In her message, Dreyfuss shared with the team of educators, administrators and staff that the College is fiscally strong and healthy, with a 25.4 percent general fund reserve in the 2020-21 budget.

Enrollment, like that at many community colleges, declined slightly during the year, Dreyfuss said.

Dreyfuss also provided updates on the College's COVID-19 response program, plans for an upcoming accreditation review and an assurance about the strength of the College's fiscal resources.

### 4 Pillars of Guided Pathways: *We all play a part!*

Pillar 1 Clarify the Path	Pillar 2 Enter the Path	Pillar 3 Stay on the Path	Pillar 4 Ensure Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore careers and salaries on Career Coach to link back to Rio Hondo programs</li> <li>Explore programs on our Pathways site with sample ed plan maps for all majors</li> <li>Improved homepage navigation and landing pages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New "Apply Now" Get Started pages on the website</li> <li>Improved financial aid webpages</li> <li>First year for students and staff doing all onboarding remotely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Success Teams for each of 11 Areas of Interest to serve students not in special programs</li> <li>Teams include a lead counselor, team counselors, classified staff, success coach, librarian, and dean</li> <li>Planning to add faculty lead role in ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Outcomes webpages and closing the loop process</li> <li>Equity-minded classroom practices</li> <li>Faculty referrals for Success Teams and Early Alert</li> <li>Ongoing professional development for faculty and staff</li> </ul>

**2021 Best Colleges for an Associate Degree by Salary Score**  
By the GradReports team | Updated January 25, 2021

Every year, students across the country enroll in associate degree programs to advance their careers and earn higher salaries. To help students maximize their investment in higher education, we created a comprehensive ranking list that highlights schools whose alumni earn higher salaries overall. We used schools by our proprietary Salary Score based on alumni earnings in their first jobs after graduation. The scores reflect their mean alumni salaries compared to peers of the same program at other colleges, and take into account student enrollment in each program. These rankings are intended to highlight strong colleges that prepare students for high-paying careers regardless of their field of education. Our rankings list most offers and provide data for at least five associate programs. Read our methodology to learn more.

After evaluating alumni salaries at the associate degree level at nearly 700 community colleges, technical colleges, and other institutions, we found that 87% of the top 100 schools are public colleges. College graduates performed especially well, with eight of the top 25 colleges located in California.

Associate degrees are a popular option for job seekers looking to earn their first professional, students with specific career goals, or students who want to save money, either on their degree or in the first two years of their undergraduate education.

**KEY INSIGHTS:**

- 87% of the top 100 schools offering associate degrees are public colleges
- The median Salary Score for public nonprofit colleges is significantly higher than the score for for-profit colleges (4.94 points higher)
- Non-tenure-track graduates tend to report well with an associate degree - while the rates are lower for the national average for each of these 5 cases is listed for associate degree alumni salaries, with a median Salary Score of 72.37

Rank	College	Location	Salary Score	Score Change
#33	Anne Arundel Community College	Anne Arundel (MD)	\$12,740	83.40
#34	Río Hondo College	Whittier (CA)	\$6,624	83.25
#35	Arapahoe Community College	Littleton (CO) (and 2 others)	\$15,006	82.74
#36	Dunwoody College of Technology	Minneapolis (MN)	\$22,046	82.61
#37	Kapiolani Community College	Honolulu (HI)	\$8,280	82.51
#38	Salt Lake Community College	Salt Lake City (UT)	\$12,206	81.91
#39	Tacoma Community College	Tacoma (WA)	\$9,706	81.65

# College Ranks 34th for Graduate Salaries

Río Hondo College has been ranked 34th on a new list of 2021 Best Colleges for the first-year salaries earned by its associate degree earners.

The list, called GradReports, is issued by Optimal, a company that provides reviews of colleges and careers, including financial data regarding cost and earning potential. To generate the list, the company compared the salaries of over 4.6 million graduates to determine salary scores for more than 885 college degrees.

Degrees are ranked at the associate, bachelor's and master's levels.

Median salaries at Río Hondo College peak at \$74,950 for registered nursing, human development, family studies and related services. Employment rates peak at 95% for criminal justice and corrections graduates. The list also includes Río Hondo's popular vehicle maintenance and repair program, which has a median salary of \$46,090 and an employment rate of 92%.

**RÍO IN THE NEWS:** Read more in the [Press Telegram](#)

## Fire Academy Graduate Named Downey Fire Chief

Dan Hurlock, a graduate of the Río Hondo College Fire Academy, was sworn in as Downey's fire chief in a virtual ceremony on Jan. 5.

"I've worked for the Downey Fire Department for 20 years and am very proud to serve the city I grew up in," Hurlock told the Press Telegram. "It's humbling to be selected as the next fire chief and I'm very thankful that city management and city council have confidence in my leadership."

Hurlock joined the agency in 2000.

**RÍO IN THE NEWS:** Read more in the [Fountain Valley Patch](#)

## Police Academy Graduate Serves as Homeless Liaison Officer

Nicole Brown, a graduate of the Río Hondo Police Academy, has been praised for her compassionate approach to serving the homeless as a liaison for the Westminster Police Department.

Brown, who has served the department for about a year, works with fellow liaison officer Roland Perez.

# A Pandemic Can't Stop Hands-on Learning



Every summer for more than 11 years, Río Hondo College has hosted a CTE Career Exploration Camp for area middle school students.

The ongoing challenge: help students see the broad range of technical career opportunities available and the paths of study in higher education that will lead to them. Camp organizers want students to think outside the box and look toward career options they often have not thought of such as drafting, civil design, architecture, and other career/technical areas.

In rising to this challenge, organizers have relied on one crucial tool: hands-on learning.

But 2020 has layered complications on top of complications for educators everywhere. Río Hondo College faced a new twist to the old challenge: provide hands-on experiences to students when teachers could not even be in the same room with them.

## College Launches Cloud Computing Program

Río Hondo College is guiding students on how to become professionals in the field of information technology (IT) thanks to its cloud computing program.

The program teaches students about computing programs such as Linux and Python and certifies them on various methodologies needed to work in IT. Students who pass the program receive a certificate of achievement in computer information technology/cloud computing practitioner, which will open a new world of opportunities for them.



## Women's Basketball Team Leads SCC Scholar-Athletes List

Five Río Hondo College women's basketball players are among 16 South Coast Conference athletes recently named to the 2020-21 California Community College Women's Basketball Coaches Association Academic All-State Team.

Río Hondo was represented by freshman Jocelyn Aquino, 3.51 GPA, sophomore Jessica Barrera, 3.71, sophomore Amanda Lee, 3.73, sophomore Amy Navarro, 3.82, and freshman Sally Smith, 3.86.

In all, 116 players from 41 colleges made the list, which is usually presented at the organization's Banquet of Champions. The pandemic has canceled this year's championship event.

## Connect with Us on Social Media



## 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.

# CTE to Showcase Programs through Video Series



With students learning remotely and the campus closed to visitors, Río Hondo College's Career and Technical Education program has launched a series of videos to showcase its programs this spring. The group is pre-recording tours of facilities to combine with live Q&A sessions toward the end of February, recognized as CTE Month.

To see the catalog of videos, visit the [CTE YouTube page](#)



## Save the Date

**Monday, Feb. 15 to May 27:**  
Spring Late Start Class Schedule

**6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24:**  
Board of Trustees study session, virtual

**3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 22:**  
Activism Never Sleeps, Río Talks presented by Dr. Angela Sadler Williamson, virtual,  
<http://bit.ly/RioTalks-Activism-Never-Sleeps>



**SPRING 2021**  
**Late Start Classes**  
**February 15 - May 27**

**GET AHEAD, REGISTER NOW!**  
A list of classes is available at  
<http://bit.ly/RHC-Spring2021-SH>