

# FOCUS ON RÍO

March 2021

## President's Message



**Teresa Dreyfuss**

March marked the beginning of spring – an energizing time full of new beginnings – bringing with it many exciting changes and causes for celebration at Rio Hondo College.

In the last month, we were proud to appoint a new student trustee and welcome a new Area 1 Trustee to the Board. These new additions will surely give more insight and support to our amazing community, improving the lives of everyone around us.

We were also lucky to host more engaging virtual events, to recognize outstanding individuals with awards, and to add new programs to our class offerings. These programs are providing cutting-edge and necessary skills to our students, preparing them for the workforce.

It is an honor to bring you our latest news as we continue to boost academics to our amazing students.

## New Río Hondo College Trustee Promises Equity, Support During Virtual Swearing in Ceremony

Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees welcomed Anais Medina Diaz as the Area 1 Trustee following a swearing-in ceremony during a March 24 board meeting.

Medina Diaz was sworn into office by her husband, El Monte Union High School District Board of Trustee Clerk David Diaz, during a virtual Zoom meeting. In attendance were Congresswoman Grace Napolitano and a representative for Assemblymember Blanca E. Rubio.

"I feel incredibly humbled to have received the vote and confidence of El Monte residents to represent them on the Río Hondo College Board of Trustees," Medina Diaz said. "I ran for office because I have a deep commitment to education, equity and community and I strongly believe that I wouldn't be in the position that I am currently in without my education and community."

The final ballot count, released by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Office on March 12 and certified on March 15, officially elected Medina Diaz to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Medina Diaz is a public information officer for the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in communications from the University of La Verne in 2010, after taking several classes at Río

Hondo College. Medina Diaz received a master's degree in strategic public relations from the University of Southern California in 2018.

"It is an honor to serve alongside Anais Medina Diaz. I believe she will be a powerful voice for the Río Hondo College community," Board of Trustees President Rosaelva Lomeli said. "Her passionate spirit is admirable and I think she's going to be a role model to many as she serves on this board."



Medina Diaz said she is looking forward to providing additional support to community members who are personally and professionally impacted by COVID-19, first-generation college students and Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders.

"I am proud to welcome Anais Medina Diaz to our Board of Trustees, and I know she is going to be a stellar trustee because of her love of the community," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "I look forward to working with her in making Río Hondo College even better than before."

RIO HONDO COLLEGE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

New Río Hondo College Trustee Promises Equity, Support During Virtual Swearing in Ceremony ..... 1

Grammy Award-Winning Composer Hosts Virtual Music Workshop for Río Hondo Choral Students ..... 2

Río Hondo College Students Break into Gaming Industry ..... 2

Río Hondo College Student Trustee Elected, Sworn In ..... 3

Fellow of Río Hondo College Award ..... 3

Principal for the Day ..... 3

Save the Date ..... 4

# Grammy Award-Winning Composer Hosts Virtual Music Workshop for Río Hondo Choral Students



Grammy Award-winning composer Eric Whitacre joined Río Hondo College choral students for a virtual music workshop on March 11, providing guidance for those seeking to pursue a career as a professional singer or music composer.

"It is important to show our students that industry leaders are just like them, normal people, who happen to be successful at what they do," Río Hondo College Choir Instructor Joanne Choe said. "Listening about

their journey to success gives our students hope, goals, guidance and inspiration. Eric did just that by treating everyone with such kindness, respect and honesty."

Whitacre discussed his influences, his early years as a student at the Julliard School of Music, moving to Los Angeles to work as a film composer, his initial successes in the music industry, the value of chance in the songwriting process, how to turn failure into success and the inspirations that led to the formation of his Virtual Choir project.

"My music is as much informed by the Beatles, Queen and Billie Eilish as it is Debussy, Bach and Mozart," Whitacre said. "You will never know enough about music to compose. There is always more to know. Just do your thing intuitively and more than anything: rely on your ear. Listen and write music that speaks deeply to you. Use your barriers and turn them into your superpower."

In 2010, Whitacre created the Virtual Choir project, a collaborative effort that combined the talents of nearly 200 singers performing his composition Lux Aurumque. With each singer recording their parts separately, Whitacre combined the performances into one video and posted it on YouTube, where it quickly went viral.

## Río Hondo College Students Break into Gaming Industry

Río Hondo College students are creating character models, gaining insight from professionals and developing skills that will help them break into the gaming industry – all thanks to the College's Animation Internship Program.

Over the last year, the animation program has paired Río Hondo College students with FarSight Studios, an independent developer and publisher of multi-platform video games. Several students worked on aspects of a new puzzle game called "Orbals," providing them a hands-on opportunity to hone their skills and gain industry experience.

"I am so proud of my students," said David Dawson, Río Hondo College's instructor of animation. "All of the students who worked on the game were excited and highly motivated to collaborate with FarSight Studios for this game and they knocked it out of the park."

Dawson, an 11-year veteran faculty of Río Hondo College, used his connections to build an internship program with FarSight Studios just before the COVID-19 stay-at-home order was announced in March 2020. During that time, students worked on various aspects of the game, including the creation of character models.

Thanks to the work completed by Río Hondo College's students, FarSight Studios is expanding the internship program to include more students, payment for work and titles for interns who worked on published games.

In addition, recent Río Hondo graduate Erin Malcom was hired full-time as a character artist at FarSight Studio, based on the strength of her work on "Orbals."

Río Hondo's animation program is teaching students how to use programs such as Substance Painter, Substance Designer and Maya to find work as animators. Students are also taught how to use the Unreal Engine, a type of software typically used in video game development. However, the Unreal Engine is also being used to create computer graphics by TV and film studios, most recently on shows like "The Mandalorian."

Dawson said that Río Hondo College students were so instrumental in getting "Orbals" created that the College will be getting a special mention in the game's credits when it launches next month on Steam, the Nintendo Switch and other platforms.





## Río Hondo College Student Trustee Elected, Sworn In

Madelyn Reasin-Bodden, has been elected by her peers to serve out the remainder of the 2020-21 term as the Río Hondo College Student Trustee.

Reasin-Bodden hopes that this position will further help her community and campus life by representing all students in an equity driven way. Reasin-Bodden has served as the Senator Chair of Cultural Diversity for the Associated Students of Río Hondo College (ASRHC) for the past two semesters and has planned and facilitated many events focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

During her tenure at Río Hondo College, Reasin-Bodden founded the Black Student Association and served on the student equity committee, the anti-racism committee and the COVID relief committee.

"I saw this position as a way to further help my community as well as represent all the students on campus," Reasin-Bodden said. "I'm community-minded and community-driven and would like to further continue my admission when I transfer from Río Hondo College, so I look forward to representing the marginalized student voices."

## Fellow of Río Hondo College Award

Shari Magnus was named this year's Fellow of Río Hondo College Award winner, following a unanimous decision made by the College's Board of Trustees.

Magnus was selected, posthumously, for her 45 years of service to the College – providing encouragement and support to her peers as the human resources coordinator.

The Fellow of Río Hondo College's Award was created in 1970 to recognize the stellar contributions of an individual in helping the College grow and develop and to improve the community.

## Principal for the Day

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss recently acted as Principal for a Day at Willow Adult Education Campus on March 9, meeting with students and participating in campus activities to see the school's amazing progress.

Dreyfuss virtually attended classes and a scholarship awards ceremony, surveying student success. Dreyfuss and other principals attended schools in the Bassett, Hacienda La Puente and Rowland Unified school districts to provide inspiration to students, encouraging them to pursue higher education. This year's Principal for a Day Theme is "Staying Connected for Student Success."

## 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.



# Save the Date

### Every Wednesday:

RHC Queer Initiative counseling, virtual

### Thursday, March 25 - Sunday, June 6:

Open registration for Summer 2021 semester. Link for info: <https://bit.ly/3a6Rj1L>

### Wednesday, April 28:

Study session

### 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Friday, April 30:**  
The 4th Annual UndocuScholar Conference. Register here: <https://bit.ly/3mFHcG6>

### Monday, June 7 - Friday, August 13:

Summer school 2021 full term. Link for info: <https://bit.ly/3a6Rj1L>

### Monday, May 24 - Friday, August 20:

Open registration for Fall 2021 semester. Link for info: <https://bit.ly/3a6Rj1L>

### Fire Academy 2021 Graduation:

The Fire Academy Class 96 graduation will be held on Thursday, May 27 at 9 a.m. at the Santa Fe Springs Fire Academy. The event will be private for cadets and Río Hondo College staff and leadership.

### Commencement

#### 2021 Update:

Degree candidates are invited to celebrate with an in-person on campus CARmencement parade and celebration on Friday, May 28 from 9 a.m. to noon. Graduates are encouraged to decorate their cars (rather than their caps), make some noise, and drive-through campus where they will be met with cheers from staff and leadership. Grads will also receive care packages. More details on the event, registration, and how the campus community can volunteer will be sent following the graduation petition deadline.

*You Are Resilient*    *Rio Hondo College Stands With You*    *Don't Stop Pursing Your Dreams*

*Together We Dream*    *United We Rise*

*You Are Not Alone*    *Here To Stay*

*Perseverance*    *You Have A Voice*

*Success*    *Courage*    *Resourceful*    **2021**    *Be the Change*    *Believe*    *Thrive*

**OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS, PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY.**

**When:**  
Friday, April 30th  
10 am - 3:30 pm

**Where:**  
Virtual Zoom Link

**Link for the Conference**  
<http://bit.ly/UndocuConference2021>

**Topics**

- UndocuPanel
- Immigration Attorney
- Mental Health
- Building Community
- Keynote Speakers
- & Much more

*Together We Dream*

**For more information, please call 562-463-6650 or email [UndocuScholars@riohondo.edu](mailto:UndocuScholars@riohondo.edu)**

**RIO HONDO COLLEGE**