

# FOCUS ON RÍO

April 2021

## President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As we come to the end of our spring semester at Río Hondo College, I am honored to have become acquainted with so many wonderful students, including our soon to be graduates who are transferring to four-year universities and moving on to pursue their careers. I am proud to have been part of their journey.

Graduation is an integral part of one's academic life - it is a significant step that shows growth, poise and success. Our Río Hondo College family is proud of our students' achievements in completing this part of their academic career and we are excited to see the heights they will reach.

Our various programs and academies are positively brimming with young, upstanding professionals who are ready to reshape the world. Here at Río Hondo College, we pride ourselves in shaping students into professionals, preparing them for success in the workforce.

I am proud to deliver the latest issue of our Focus on Río e-newsletter, which highlights how our community continues to encourage our students to grow and triumph.

## Ángel García, a dreamer who works for the dreamers

"Río Hondo College, in Whittier, California, has a clear commitment to undocumented students. It even has an office, the Student Success & Dream Center, which is focused on providing a variety of services to this community.

A key person in this office is Ángel García, Student Services Assistant.

'We seek to create a safe space for undocumented students,' explains García, who together with administrators and educators helped create the center.

Considering that around 80% of the students at this university are Latino, the undocumented students who benefit the most from the center's services are obviously Latino, followed by Asians.

The center, which was established in 2016, supports these students through a network of educators, counselors, and other professionals who seek to educate and guide students regarding their rights to a college education and financial assistance to college that they can access.

'We have resources for everyone, but we focus on freshmen and undocumented students,' García clarifies.

Through the center, students can contact counselors who help explore academic goals, assist with registration, provide informational workshops, and explain how to fill out the complicated forms to receive financial aid.

In April, for example, the center scheduled activities related to test anxiety, how to control anger, and motivation to confront obstacles. But there are also activities specifically related to the undocumented, such as UndocuTalks Self-Care, Surviving the UndocuHustle and a UndocuScholar Conference."

**RÍO IN THE NEWS:**  
Read more in [Hispanic L.A.](#)



RÍO HONDO COLLEGE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ángel García, a dreamer who works for the dreamers ..... 1

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

Earn an Associate's Degree in Electric Vehicle and Fuel Cell Technology ..... 2

Something's Brewing: Fermentation Technology at Río Hondo College ..... 2

Río Hondo College Supports DACA Recipients during Upcoming Annual UndocuScholars Conference ..... 3

Fire Crew 77 Activated to Assist with Vaccine Distribution ..... 4

Río Hondo College Approves Superintendent/President Contract ... 4

Río Hondo College Cohort #9 Graduates from Tesla ..... 5

Río Hondo College Foundation Golf Tournament's Sponsorship Deals in Full Swing ..... 5

Save the Date ..... 5

# 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 IN THE NEWS:**  
Read more on [Río Hondo College News](#)

## Earn an Associate’s Degree in Electric Vehicle and Fuel Cell Technology

“The Electric Vehicle and Fuel Cell Technology Technician Associate of Science Degree is designed to prepare students to meet the emerging field of service and diagnosis of vehicles powered by electricity generated by plug-in electric, hybrid-powertrain or fuel cell generation.

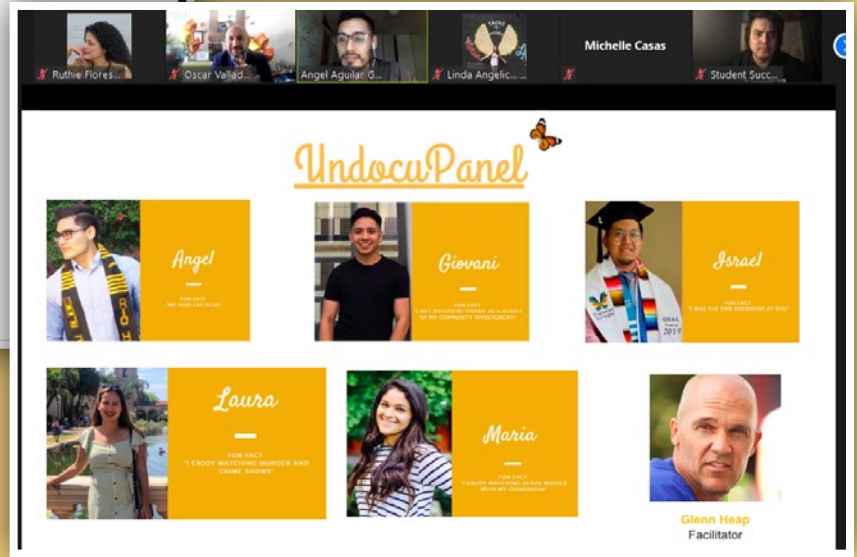
The green technology can be transferred from vehicles to stationary back-up power systems. Students will need to apply for ASE L-3 testing and pay all applicable fees to take the final ASE exam. This degree is intended to be the capstone of the Hybrid/Electric/Fuel Cell program.

To acquire the Associate of Science degree in Electric Vehicle and Fuel Cell Technology Technician, it is necessary to complete the graduation requirements of the College along with the courses listed in the curriculum tab.”

**RÍO IN THE NEWS:**  
Listen to [California School News Radio](#)

## Something’s Brewing: Fermentation Technology at Río Hondo College

Río Hondo College biotech professor Robert Bethel discusses the College’s Fermentation Technology course, which explores the science behind brewing beer with the goal of training the next generation of microbrewers.



# Río Hondo College Supports DACA Recipients during Upcoming Annual UndocuScholars Conference

Río Hondo College welcomed undocumented students, Dream Act advocates and civil rights activists, championing its support for a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients, during its 2021 Virtual UndocuScholar Conference.

With a theme of “Together We Dream,” the UndocuScholar Conference provided students with resources, advice and encouragement from Río Hondo College administrators, civic leaders and Río Hondo College alumni, focusing on the undocumented experience, the restitution of the Dream Act and the multitude of services for UndocuScholars at Río Hondo College.

The conference featured two keynote speakers, California 40th District Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard and California Dream Network youth organizer Melody Kligenfuss Arteaga, and remarks from Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, Río Hondo College Board of Trustees President Rosaelva Lomeli, Trustee and former Dreamer Oscar Valladares, an UndocuPanel, an immigration attorney, and a mental health expert.

Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, the first Mexican American woman to be elected to Congress and the co-author of the original Dream Act in 2001 (previously introduced as the Student Adjustment Act), delivered a keynote speech that touched upon the continuing struggle to bring equity to thousands of immigrant children who came to the United States without documentation.

“Members of Congress witnessed for themselves that Dreamers exemplify American values and a deep love for America – the only country you call home,” said Rep. Roybal-Allard. “As hard or as helpless as it may seem at times – never give up on yourself or your dreams. Don’t let the negative rhetoric and pressures,

which you and your family are unfairly subjected to, cause you to lose sight of your goals or value to yourself, your family, your community and your country.”

Dreyfuss emphasized the College’s commitment to providing high-quality education and services to UndocuScholars, her experiences as an immigrant who worked her way up from professor and business manager to becoming Río Hondo’s top administrator, and the fear she feels as an Asian-American woman.

“To our UndocuScholars, you are not alone. Río Hondo College is here to support you. We are committed to providing you with the resources and services you need through our Student Success and Dream Center. Río Hondo College stands for advancing social justice and equity for all, including our undocumented students,” Dreyfuss said. “As an immigrant from Taiwan, I’d like to share that the struggle and fear are real.”

The conference featured an UndocuPanel consisting of three Río Hondo College alumni, as well as alumni from Cypress College and Ventura College. The panel discussed cultural shock, imposter syndrome, the transfer process, DACA, internal and external struggles and the entrepreneurial spirit of immigrants.

Panelist Maria Baaz spoke about how her parents immigrated from Michoacán for a better life and how she used to help her mother clean houses while she was in high school and college, both of which instilled in her a strong sense of pride and drive for success. With encouragement from her teachers, Baaz applied for scholarships to attend Cal State Long Beach and eventually earned a master’s degree in counseling.



## Fire Crew 77 Activated to Assist with Vaccine Distribution

Río Hondo College's Fire Crew 77 has been deployed to Baltimore, Maryland to assist with COVID-19 vaccine distribution, providing aid to federal officials as they inoculate thousands of citizens against the virus.

Fire Crew 77 sent 15 members after being called into action by the United States Forest Service (USFS). During their stay, they provided logistical support – moving supplies, setting up and disassembling work and mobile vaccine sites and monitoring citizens during their 15-minute post-vaccine observation period.

"From the first day of the academy, fire service employees, including the members of Crew 77, are trained on how to deal with highly dynamic fire and life-threatening situations. This training translates well into dealing with all-risk situations, including a pandemic," Río Hondo College Fire Academy Director Andy Grzywa said. "The members of Crew 77 are excited and enthusiastic about

having the opportunity to be a part of such an 'unusual' first assignment during this fire season."

Grzywa said most of the members being sent to Maryland are recent graduates of Wildland Academy 24, while others are seasoned members – having participated in last fire season and refresher training courses. He said all members of Fire Crew 77 were eager to assist with such an important task and hope that their efforts will further solidify their reputation as outstanding members of the USFS.

Grzywa also said that members of Fire Crew 77 who have not already received their vaccines will have the opportunity to become vaccinated while on assignment.

## Río Hondo College Approves Superintendent/President Contract

"Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees unanimously approved Teresa Dreyfuss' contract as Superintendent/President during a virtual board meeting on March 24, extending her role of leading the College through June 2022.

Dreyfuss has been with Río Hondo College since 1987, serving in various roles such as senior accountant, vice president of finance and business, chief

financial officer and controller/ business manager before her first appointment as Superintendent/President in 2013.

Dreyfuss retired in 2019 but was reappointed as acting Superintendent/President by the Board of Trustees on July 18, 2020."

**RÍO IN THE NEWS:**  
Read more in [The Business Focus](#)

## 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 an educational and community partner committed to advancing social justice and equity as an antiracist institution that collectively invests in all students' academic and career pathways that lead to attainment of degree, certificate, transfer, and lifelong-learning goals.



## Río Hondo College Cohort #9 Graduates from Tesla

Río Hondo College celebrated the graduation of its ninth cohort of Tesla-trained automobile technicians during a ceremony on Friday, April 23.

The 11 graduates received more than 800 hours of training during the 12-week Tesla START program. They are now able to work as service technicians at Tesla service centers across North America.

The graduates are Michael Irwin, Julian (Jay) Wright, Antino Cruz, Salar Tafreshi, Martin Reyes, Jose Dimas-Alcaraz, Anthony Liang, Ricardo Nunez, Bryan Hazard, Sam Sawirs, Sherief Armanyous.

## Río Hondo College Foundation Golf Tournament's Sponsorship Deals in Full Swing

**RÍO IN THE NEWS:**  
Read more in  
[The Business Focus](#)

"The Río Hondo College Foundation's mission is to secure financial assistance for scholarships, programs, equipment and projects that meet the needs of the College's diverse student population. On Friday, June 4, you can enjoy a golf tournament at the California Country Club while supporting Río Hondo's mission. All golfers will enjoy tournament entry, a golf cart, one golf shirt, one gift bag, breakfast and lunch, beverages and snacks throughout the tournament."



## 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>

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

Summer school 2021 full term

Link for info: <https://bit.ly/3a6Rj1L>

### 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 9:

Regular board meeting

### 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 23:

Study session board meeting

### 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, make some noise, and drive-through campus where they will be met with cheers from staff and leadership. Grads will also receive care packages. For more details, visit: <https://www.riohondo.edu/event/commencement/>.