

FOCUS ON RÍO

September 2021

President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As Superintendent/President of Río Hondo College, I can truly say that with each passing month, my pride in this institution continues to grow, as do our reasons to celebrate. This month, I would like to focus on the partnerships that our College has with various companies and organizations, which provide ongoing excellence to our community.

With each partnership we create, Río Hondo College and its students grow smarter, more skilled and better suited to

accomplish wonders in their lives and careers. Our collaborative efforts yield more opportunities for our students and foster innovation, which is our community's greatest resource.

This issue of Focus on Río provides a glimpse into the ways our College continues to make connections with others, ensuring that every one of our students is achieving their goals and building toward a brighter future.

Río Hondo College Reopens, Revamps Child Development Center

Children are smiling and playing while learning about horticulture, math, art and conflict resolution at Río Hondo College's Child Development Center, which has revamped and reopened following a year of virtual learning.

The Child Development Center, which reopened its doors in July, has updated its classrooms and safety procedures, and has new leadership in place to provide a stronger foundation for children.

The Center updated its safety procedures to include temperature checks for all visitors, spaced out learning areas and deep cleaning of classrooms three times a day. Students also adhere to mask requirements and are taught cleanliness during their lessons.

Cindy O'Neill, who has 16 years of experience in the early childhood field, was appointed director of the Center in July after serving as its administrative coordinator since 2019.



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RÍO HONDO COLLEGE

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Río Hondo College Reopens, Revamps Child Development Center



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"People often don't realize that we're teaching these children the foundations of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) - they learn about engineering by playing with construction blocks or horticulture by helping grow corn or plants," O'Neill said. "Children learn socio-emotional skills that support children's behavior as well."

O'Neill has a Bachelor of Arts in child development and a master's degree in early childhood development from California State University, Long Beach. She is currently enrolled in an Ed.D. program for educational leadership at the University of Southern California.

The improvements have led to an outpouring of praise from community members and students who use the Child Development Center resources.

"The Child Development Center provides a warm, rich and diverse environment that has allowed my child to grow exponentially socially and academically," said Sarah Ramirez, a Río Hondo College student and mother. "Enrolling my daughter is one of the best things I've done for her."

Space for more students is available at the Child Development Center, which offers full-time childcare from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Río Hondo College Accepts Award to Promote CalFresh Outreach Program

The Río Hondo College Board of Trustees approved acceptance of a grant to boost public awareness for the CalFresh Outreach Program, which helps low-income households increase their food-buying power to meet their nutritional needs.

Río Hondo College was one of 54 colleges selected for the grant as part of California State University, Chico's CalFresh grant expansion. The grant will provide Río Hondo College with \$432,726 to promote CalFresh between Oct. 1, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2024.

These funds will pay for outreach methods involving social media, classroom presentations, space at the RíoSource Room (food pantry), campus events and

grocery giveaways to show students how they can take part in the program.

Río Hondo College will receive \$145,288 between Oct. 1, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2022, \$133,913 between Oct. 1, 2022 and Sept. 30, 2023 and \$153,525 between Oct. 1, 2022 and Sept. 30, 2024.

This grant will support basic student needs through food access and assisting students with their CalFresh applications. By being able to reduce barriers to basic food needs, students who are disproportionately impacted will have a higher likelihood of staying enrolled and will therefore be able to meet their educational goals and ultimately, obtain a college degree or transfer.

Support for the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021

HR 1177, the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, was introduced by Congresswoman Linda Sánchez to fix a dysfunctional immigration system, expedite family reunification, and facilitate border management. With California Community Colleges Undocumented Student Action Week scheduled for October 18-22, it is important for our colleges to support this bill.

Our immigration system has been broken for many years. This bill creates a pathway for citizenship for immigrants, eliminates “three-and-ten-year bars,” which has kept families apart, and allows immigrants with approved family-sponsorship petitions to join their family in the U.S. on a temporary basis while waiting for green cards.

RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Read more from the [Community College League of California](#).

We are pleased that this bill is inclusive of all types of families who are impacted by our current immigration system. The U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 eliminates discrimination against LGBTQ+ families by permitting citizens and legal permanent residents in binational, same-sex relationships to sponsor their permanent partners for immigration to the U.S. and to serve as qualifying relatives for other immigration benefits and purposes. The bill also protects orphans, widows, and children, and provides equal treatment to stepchildren in case there is death of a sponsor. These provisions will benefit our students at Río Hondo College who come from families in these circumstances.

Río Hondo College Adopts Balanced Budget for 2021-22 School Year

The Río Hondo College Board of Trustees adopted a balanced 2021-22 budget during a board meeting on Sept. 8, setting aside ample funding for student financial aid. Unrestricted and restricted general fund reserves are \$34.8 million combined.

The adopted budget allocates about \$23.4 million for student financial aid from the Restricted General Fund and approximately \$27.5 million from the Financial Aid Fund. \$47.9 million from the COVID-19 Emergency Fund are budgeted under restricted general fund revenue. The unrestricted and restricted general fund revenues combined is \$173.3 million, while expenses total \$172 million. For the 2020-21 budget, the College's unrestricted and restricted combined revenue was more than \$115.9 million, while expenses totaled roughly \$114 million.

California's Student-Centered Funding Formula provides colleges with 70 percent of their funding based on full-time equivalent student (FTES) numbers, 20 percent as a supplemental allocation and 10 percent as a student success allocation.

In addition to federal COVID-19 emergency student aid funds, Río Hondo College's financial aid funds include the Pell grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Direct Loan, Cal Grant and emergency relief grant scholarships, totaling some \$27.5 million in awards for students.

College employees will also benefit from a 5.07 percent state cost-of-living adjustment. Faculty, administrators and confidential salary increased by 6.07 percent and classified increased by 7.5 percent, which includes a 2.43 percent conversion from 50 percent medical premium cashback.

Río Hondo College set aside \$7.3 million in the Public Agency Retirement Service (PARS) pension obligation trust fund for future escalating costs and set aside a trust fund of \$67.5 million for other retirement benefits, fully meeting the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligation. Río Hondo College is one of the few community colleges in California that offers retiree and one dependent life time medical benefits.



RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Read more from the [Los Angeles County Assessor's Office](#).

A New Job Partnership

The Los Angeles County Assessor's Office has conceived an innovative jobs training program with the Los Angeles Community College District and Río Hondo Community College District that has constructed a direct pipeline to good-paying County jobs.

Furthermore, the Assessor's Office has entered into these partnerships with the local community colleges because it produces an actual pathway to employment designed to bolster the workforce not only in the Assessor's Office but in other County departments as well.

They are the **Real Estate Appraiser III Certificate Program** at West Los Angeles College and the **Appraiser Assistant Training Program** at Río Hondo College.

Both of these new programs fall under the category of “first-of-its-kind,” as articulated by the Los Angeles Community College District; and most importantly, they fill the need of replacing those 30 or so valuable appraisers that leave the Department each year through retirements, job relocation, among other attrition factors. Our September Newsletter spotlights these remarkable programs.



Río Hondo College Inspires Business Acumen in High Schoolers at Entrepreneur Camp

Río Hondo College motivated 30 area high school students to hone their management skills and creative thinking abilities during Entrepreneur Camp Río, a two-week camp that teaches students the ins and outs of business ownership.

The camp, which ran through Aug. 6, challenged students to think beyond their typical curriculum by diving into the world of finance, marketing and free enterprise. It was created through a partnership between Río Hondo College's Business Division and the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) to inspire the next generation of young business tycoons. The camp was funded through a \$20,000 California Community College Strong Workforce Grant, allowing all students to participate at no cost.

NFTE, an educational non-profit organization, aims to inspire students to pursue their entrepreneurial goals through project-based learning. The camp was taught by certified NFTE instructors, who outlined what it takes to create and maintain a business. Students also developed and pitched unique business plans for a competition, with the top three winners receiving cash prizes from Western Governors University.

Whittier High School sophomore Erik Villa won second place for his mobile dialysis e-cart business idea, which caters to dialysis patients with mobility issues. Villa said he was inspired by his father, who suffers from kidney disease and other illnesses.

"I developed an invention that I believe can help many people," Villa said. "My invention has a deep connection with me, so I was eager to have people interested in my product and see how passionate I am about it."

Villa said he learned invaluable project development and business management skills thanks to Entrepreneur Camp Río and plans to someday develop his idea into a real business.

Mark Keppel High School junior Kylie Lam saw the Entrepreneur Camp Río as a great way to fine tune her management skills, oral presentation abilities and overall professionalism. Lam won first place during the camp's competition for a bubble tea company business pitch.

"As a business major who is undecided on which path to take in the industry, I signed up for this camp hoping that it would give me a feel of what it was like to be an entrepreneur," Lam said.

Entrepreneur Camp Río Coordinator Ivan Leon said he was thrilled to help inspire students to start their own businesses by encouraging their future goals and ideas.

"I think it is imperative to offer a program such as this; it encourages innovation, financial freedom and the further well-being of our economy," Leon said.



Río Hondo College Hosts Laptop Giveaway

Río Hondo College's Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) students were given free laptops during a distribution event on Sept. 30, thanks to a generous donation from Soroptimist International of Whittier along with the Credit Union of Southern California.

This was the third donation received by the program to address the academic needs of students practicing distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Río Hondo College Vote Center Attracts Hundreds

Río Hondo College served as a Los Angeles County vote center from Sept. 11 - 14 to give students and community members the opportunity to vote in the California gubernatorial recall election. The pop-up vote centers were created through the Office of Government Community Relations as a collaboration between the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office and several on-campus departments.

The Learning Resource Center's 2nd floor multi-media room served as the space for the vote center. This vote center, and many others like it, were

part of the Voting Solutions for All Peoples (VSAP) Program, which aims to maximize access to polling places in over 200 locations and facilitates early voting before Election Day. More than 500 people visited Río Hondo College's to cast their votes and more than 170 hand-delivered their votes to the vote center team. Furthermore, between Aug. 12 and Sept. 14, a VSAP ballot box was placed in Lot 2 to accommodate convenient ballot drop-off. A total of 234 ballots were collected at the VSAP ballot box.





RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Read more about issues in higher education at the [Diverse Education website](#).

Study Reveals Transportation Assistance Helps Community College Students Succeed

For years, higher education and student advocates have believed that difficulty in accessing transit, or its prohibitive costs, have had a measurably negative impact on student outcomes, particularly at community colleges. Now there is finally scientific evidence to back it up.

A study, conducted by The Hope Center for Community College and Justice and DVP Praxis, a research and evaluation firm focused on higher education, has shown that students with access to discounted or free transit performed better in student retention, credits earned, and completion, than those without an assisted transit card.

The study was conducted at Río Hondo College, a community college and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), in Whittier, California. Río Hondo partnered with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency to create a deeply discounted Universal College Student Transit Pass, or U-Pass, funded

almost entirely by a \$7 fee all students pay at the start of their semester. Students can apply for a free U-Pass to use whenever it's needed: to get to work, take their kids to school, or shop for groceries at the supermarket.

Río Hondo's director of government and community relations, Dr. Russell Castañeda-Calleros, coordinated the \$7 amount with the LA Metro, and student advocacy groups. The collaboration resulted in a 95% discount compared to the price students usually pay per semester, which Castañeda-Calleros estimated to be about \$2,000.

The College Board's student budget for 2020-2021 estimated an average commuter student can expect to spend a fifth of their total living expenses on transportation. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of students who attend a community college do not live on campus, and only 16% of students live on campus at any institution in the U.S.

Connect with Us on Social Media



RHCRoadrunners



RioHondo_College



RioHondoCollege



Rio Hondo College YT Channel



bit.do/riohondocollege



riohondo_college



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 Hosts Vaccine Clinics

Río Hondo College held two free, walk-up COVID-19 vaccination clinics to maintain the safety of our campus and public health of our community. The clinics, which were held in collaboration with Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, offered attendees the FDA-approved Pfizer vaccine. Sixty-five doses were administered at the September 1 event and 100 doses were administered at the September 29 event.



Save the Date

6 p.m. Tuesday, October 12:

Virtual Board of Trustees meeting on Zoom

2 - 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 21:

Virtual Town Hall meeting

Saturday, August 21 - Saturday, December 11:

Full term dates for Fall 2021 semester

Saturday, August 21 - Friday, October 15:

First half dates for Fall 2021 semester

Saturday, October 16 - Saturday, December 11:

Second half dates for Fall 2021 semester

RIO HONDO COLLEGE

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

THURSDAY OCT. 21, 2021 2:00-3:30 p.m.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Dr. Don Miller
VP Academic Affairs – Faculty

Dr. Earic Dixon-Peters
VP Student Services – Students

Stephen Kibui
VP Finance & Business – Management & Confidential

Dr. Lisa Norman
Acting Vice President, Human Resources/
Compliance Officer/Title IX – Classified

BUDGET UPDATE

Teresa Dreyfuss
Superintendent/President

Zoom Meeting ID: 634 1288 934