President’s Message

I am proud to see so many Río Hondo College students achieving their dreams and improving themselves on a daily basis. I am also delighted to know that whenever any of our students succeeds, they are also lifting up the communities they live in.

Building a stronger community is a selfless deed and our students are constantly working to make life better for everyone around them. They are accomplishing this transformation through art, social justice, politics, teamwork, safety and academics.

It is inspiring to see our students reaching for new heights and bringing their communities with them. At Río Hondo College, our students are not just working for themselves – they have a larger perspective and they are working for the greater good.

Teresa Dreyfuss

Río Hondo College Students Celebrate Culture, Create Día de Los Muertos Altar

Río Hondo College students are delivering vibrant expressions of Chicano/a and Latino/x culture through their work on a Día de Los Muertos altar, which is on display at the Self Help Graphics & Art exhibition in Los Angeles, ‘Everything Connected: Land, Body, Cosmos.’

The exhibition, which runs through Nov. 24, is part of an ongoing partnership between Río Hondo College Arts and Cultural Programs and Self Help Graphics & Art – a community arts center that encourages and promotes Chicano/a and Latino/x artists.

Río Hondo students Art Aguilar, Meliza Lopez, Emily Lopez and Esbeidy Nuñez created the altar to acknowledge the meaning of Día de Los Muertos, or Day of the Dead – a celebration associated with the joyful observance of death and life. The altar was created under the direction of master altaristas Ofelia...

Continued on page 2
Río Hondo College Students Celebrate Culture, Create Día de Los Muertos Altar

Continued from page 1

Esparza and Rosanna Esparza Ahrens, and Río Hondo College’s Assistant Professor of Photography Miyo Stevens-Gandara.

Stevens-Gandara, who was also selected as the commemorative print artist and curator of the event, said the Día de Los Muertos theme was chosen to celebrate the intersection of art and culture for the student artists.

“Día de Los Muertos gives our community a chance to remember our ancestors and loved ones together,” Stevens-Gandara said. “It’s an opportunity for students to proudly celebrate their heritage, family traditions and cultural practices, but it’s also a time to reflect and share memories and experiences together, regardless of cultural background.”

The art piece displays a dinner table, decorated with symbolism to show each artist’s view into Chicano/a and Latino/x culture – including symbols for fertility, rebirth, pain, feminism, inclusivity, family and togetherness.

“It feels nice to see people admiring my work,” Nuñez said. “During the exhibition opening, I saw two guests looking at the altar and they specifically complimented my portion.”

Esparza and Esparza Ahrens said it was a joy to work with the students and see a new generation of artists collaborate, flex their creativity and build something that can speak to many people.

Beyond the altar, the exhibition offers guests a blend of visual and performance art to accentuate the feeling, sights and sounds of Día de Los Muertos.

Guests can visit the exhibition through Nov. 24 at Self Help Graphics & Art, located at 1300 East 1st St. in Los Angeles. Appointments can be made here.

Río Hondo College Recognized in Top 100 Lists in Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine

Río Hondo College has been recognized by Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine, placing them in the Top 100 Colleges and Universities for Hispanics list and highlighting the College’s rigorous academics and sterling degree programs.

Using information from the California Department of Education’s database for the 2019-20 school year, the publication awards institutions that are committed to serving Hispanic/Latino students’ needs.

Río Hondo College boasts enrollment of 21,559 Hispanic/Latino students committed to a four-year program, 1,659 total associate degrees granted to Hispanic/Latino students and 131 Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences Degree programs, resulting in the following category rankings for 2019-2020:

- Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences Degrees – Sixth;
- Total Enrollment 4-year Schools – 14th; and
- Total Associate Degrees Granted – 24th.
Río Hondo College’s Virtual Undocumented Student Action Week Celebrates 20-Year Anniversary of Landmark Civil Rights Legislation

Rio Hondo College’s Student Success and Dream Center celebrated its undocumented community during Virtual Undocumented Student Action Week, held from Oct. 18-22, heralding the 20-year anniversary of the landmark State of California civil rights legislation AB 540.

The week provided the College’s undocumented community access to information and resources and encouraged them to share their personal journeys.

The celebration included a virtual Art Gallery of stories, poems and paintings; UndocuFamily Night, which provided information on immigration and mental health; UndocuTalks, with topics ranging from identity to social justice; UndocuScholar Panel, where graduate students shared their stories; and an AB 540 virtual conference, hosted by the nonprofit Immigrants Rising.

Enacted in 2001, AB 540 guarantees that undocumented students pay the same in-person tuition rate as California residents for community college, Cal State and University of California schools. Prior to the legislation, undocumented students were subject to nonresident tuition fees.

The highlight of the Student Action Week was a presentation on UndocuFamily Night by the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), a nonprofit civil rights advocacy organization, which provided bilingual information on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA); information on pending congressional legislation; who is and is not qualified to give immigration advice; what an undocumented person’s rights are when approached or detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); what a valid United States District Court warrant looks like; when to present a red card asserting your Fourth Amendment rights; and how to prepare your family legally and financially.

CARECEN services include DACA renewals and initial requests, DACA assistance fee, advance parole, family-based petitions, naturalization, special immigrant juvenile status, U-visas, removal and deportation defense in immigration court, and more. Students who wish to make an appointment with CARECEN can contact the Dream Center. The Dream Center also offers legal workshops to educate students and the community about past and current laws.

Additionally, Río Hondo College Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Glenn Heap discussed the importance of self-care, and detailed ways to detect and combat depression. Heap also shared a page from an undocumented student’s journal filled with optimistic passages, as an example of healthy and loving self-talk.

The virtual Art Gallery featured poems and paintings created by anonymous Río Hondo College undocumented students. One art piece depicted a red rose painted over a lavender background, with leaves representing services provided by the Dream Center. The text accompanying the painting stated, “I think of myself not just as a dreamer, but as a dream chaser.”

UndocuTalks presented an overview of the undocumented experience, centering on the struggles of undocumented status and starting college, and directing students to the Dream Center for support. The importance of self-care was emphasized, especially when students experience financial stress, fear of deportation, and anxiety about the future. The Dream Center provided wellness tips and techniques such as meditation, grounding, breathing exercises and journaling.

Student Action Week concluded with an UndocuScholars Panel where graduate students shared their experiences, highlighting their educational journey and struggles, what age they were when they found out they were undocumented and how it affected them, their primary challenges in pursuing higher education and what advice they would give to undocumented students.

“I want to challenge students to go beyond a bachelor’s degree, grad school or med school,” Río Hondo College Counselor Angel Aguilar Garcia said. “You never know what’s in the future, so go out there and meet your goals. Don’t let anything stop you from pursuing aspirations in life.”
Volvo Trucks North America accepted a 2021 Climate Leadership Award for the Volvo LIGHTS (Low Impact Green Heavy Transport Solutions) project in Southern California. The “Innovative Partnership” award was presented by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) and The Climate Registry (TCR) during a virtual event to showcase and recognize exemplary corporate, organizational, and individual leadership in reducing carbon pollution and addressing climate change in their operations and strategies.

“Being a climate leader and advocate for ambitious action means taking the steps today that set up opportunity for the future,” said Nathaniel Keohane, president of C2ES. “The Climate Leadership Awards recognizes only those that aim high and have plans in place to achieve their goals. Volvo LIGHTS has shown exactly that kind of foresight and set an example among its peers.”

The Volvo LIGHTS project is a collaboration between 14 public and private partners to develop a blueprint to successfully introduce battery-electric trucks and equipment into the market at scale. The project is led by Volvo Group North America and South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD), along with partners NFI Industries, Dependable Highway Express (DHE), TEC Equipment, Greenlots, Port of Long Beach, Port of Los Angeles, Southern California Edison, CALSTART, the University of California, Riverside CE-CERT, Reach Out, Río Hondo College, and San Bernardino Valley College.

Río Hondo College Earns Innovative Partnership Award from Volvo

Volvo Trucks North America accepted a 2021 Climate Leadership Award for the Volvo LIGHTS (Low Impact Green Heavy Transport Solutions) project in Southern California. The “Innovative Partnership” award was presented by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) and The Climate Registry (TCR) during a virtual event to showcase and recognize exemplary corporate, organizational, and individual leadership in reducing carbon pollution and addressing climate change in their operations and strategies.

“Being a climate leader and advocate for ambitious action means taking the steps today that set up opportunity for the future,” said Nathaniel Keohane, president of C2ES. “The Climate Leadership Awards recognizes only those that aim high and have plans in place to achieve their goals. Volvo LIGHTS has shown exactly that kind of foresight and set an example among its peers.”

The Volvo LIGHTS project is a collaboration between 14 public and private partners to develop a blueprint to successfully introduce battery-electric trucks and equipment into the market at scale. The project is led by Volvo Group North America and South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD), along with partners NFI Industries, Dependable Highway Express (DHE), TEC Equipment, Greenlots, Port of Long Beach, Port of Los Angeles, Southern California Edison, CALSTART, the University of California, Riverside CE-CERT, Reach Out, Río Hondo College, and San Bernardino Valley College.

Río Hondo College Career and Technical Division Students Tour SoFi Stadium

Río Hondo College’s Career and Technical Division had the opportunity to coordinate an industry site visit to tour SoFi Stadium in Inglewood on Oct. 25.

Faculty instructors Jose Millan and Farrah Nakatani and CTE Job Developer Aaron Perez were accompanied by some 40 Architecture, Civil, and Engineering Design (ACEDD) students as they experienced the architectural style and the sustainable design of the stadium, famously used by the Los Angeles Chargers and Los Angeles Rams.

ACEDD students learned about the various details that went into the design of the $5.5 billion stadium – from the canopy overhang roof design structure being built separately from the “bowl” of the stadium for earthquake safety purposes, to the unique designs of the locker-room for each of the two NFL teams housed under one roof.

After the tour of the Stadium, students ran through the 60-foot tunnel hype room onto the turf, kicked field goals, threw footballs, ran the 40-yard dash and tested their jumping abilities.
Mini Día de los Muertos Altars Liven Up Campus

A selection of miniature Día de los Muertos altars were installed onto Río Hondo College's lower quad during the last week of October, just in time for the cultural celebration.

The altars were created by Río Hondo College students and master altaristas Ofélia Esparza and Rosanna Esparza Ahrens. The altars symbolize life and death – the two main focuses of Día de los Muertos.
L Tower Renovations Viewed by Superintendent/President, Board of Trustees and Student Trustee

On Oct. 20, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, along with the Río Hondo College Board of Trustees and Student Trustee, toured the L Tower to see the renovation progress. The Program Manager of Del Terra reported that Phase I will be substantially completed in a few months. Upon completion of Phase I, design of Phase II will commence.

Río Hondo College Speech and Debate Wins Big at Recent Tournament

The Río Hondo Forensics Speech and Debate team competed at a travel tournament at Point Loma Nazarene University Oct. 2 – 3, winning in the following categories:

**Top Speakers**
1st Dulce Santana (Novice Parli)
5th Sean Perez (Junior Parli)
6th Deron Rouse-Wells (Junior Parli)
8th Brandon Sanchez (Novice IPDA)

**Semi Finalists in Parli Debate**
Brandon Sanchez and Dulce Santana
Ethan Sepulveda and Cayden Casillas

**2nd Place in Dramatic Interpretation**
Ethan Sepulveda

**Finalist in Prose**
Dulce Santana

**Special thanks to coaches**
Patricia Hughes and Alexander Cadena
Río Hondo College Alternative Fuels Student Wins Record Scholarship Awards

Río Hondo College student Cecilia Ledesma has been named a Pep Boys scholarship winner, earning her a $10,000 scholarship to aid her in finishing her degree in Electric/Fuel Cell Vehicles.

Ledesma, who also became a mother this year, received a special call directly from Pep Boys vice president of service Integration to congratulate her and welcome her into the company’s Los Angeles office to receive her check.

Ledesma also received $6,500 in scholarships from the Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium, earning her a total of $16,500 for her educational journey. Her hard work and determination has earned her interviews at Tesla, XoS and Pep Boys for service positions.