

# FOCUS ON RÍO

January 2022

## President's Message



**Teresa Dreyfuss**

Hello Río Hondo College community,

As our students begin spring semester and are prepared to face obstacles that may come their way, we are reminded that every challenge is an opportunity to learn a valuable lesson.

Some may find it difficult to continue their education, whether it's gaining a certification, earning an associate's degree or transferring to a university. Others may struggle with the challenge of working, raising a family and attending school full-time.

We know that these obstacles, when faced, inspire many others

to complete their education. At Río Hondo College, we teach our students that their determination to finish what they started will lead to eventual success.

Our goal is to mold students into scholars, prepare and or retrain them for the workforce and develop their determination so that they can accomplish wonders.

Whether you are a first-generation college student, a full-time employee or a parent, we at Río Hondo College know that you can overcome the obstacles on your path and learn valuable lessons along the way.

## FLEX Day Ushers in 2022

Río Hondo College leaders re-affirmed their commitment to promoting success and providing additional support for all students during FLEX Day, a virtual welcome back event that introduced the new and exciting ways that the College has prepared for the spring semester.

FLEX Day, which attracted more than 340 employees and student leaders, was also a time to recognize the achievements of the College. Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss began the event by listing off the College's latest accomplishments such as a welcome for Tina Kuperman, the new Vice President of Human Resources, new managers, faculty and classified staff; vaccine mandates and vaccination clinics; the housing partnership between Río Hondo and Whittier College; and various grants to continue improving the College.

Río Hondo College's Classified Staff President Sandra Hernandez also outlined the College's latest partnership with Ready Education to deliver an App to



respond to risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hernandez said the App has a daily pre-screening process that approves non-sick students, staff and faculty to

*Continued on page 2*

RÍO  
HONDO  
COLLEGE



INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE

FLEX Day Ushers in 2022 ..... 1

College Joins Californians For All,  
Gaining Financial Support for  
Volunteerism..... 2

College Updates ..... 3

Remembering LACoFD  
Firefighter, Río Hondo College Alum  
Jonathan Flagler ..... 3

College Receives Award to  
Support Unhoused Students ..... 3

Whittier College to House Some  
Río Hondo College Students ..... 4

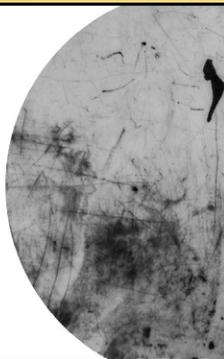
Snow Day at Río Hondo College ..... 4

Río Hondo College Gives  
State of College Address to  
City of Pico Rivera ..... 5

Río Hondo College Receives  
Honorable Mention from Academic  
Senate for California Community  
Colleges ..... 6

Save the Date ..... 6

## Adversity makes us **stronger**



### Mindfulness tips you can use in your classrooms

- Let's not forget what we just learned from Flower Darby's presentation
- Daily positive quotes to start off the class
- Start/end class by checking in on how students are feeling in the moment and acknowledging that
- Allow students a moment to take a few deep breath before/during/end of Class to be ready to learn
- Before class have soothing music while students are coming in
- Have a quick 1 min break to stand up/stretch so students can remain focus
- Take a moment to stop and notice how you are feeling before class



## FLEX Day Ushers in 2022

Continued from page 1

come onto campus when in-person classes resume.

"The App supports our efforts to prevent exposures from becoming an outbreak, with the ability to contact trace more efficiently and serves as a case management tool for vaccination submissions and review," Hernandez said.

She also mentioned the College's efforts to sterilize surfaces in between classes and new air filtration systems specifically designed to stop the spread of COVID-19.

College staff members then had breakout sessions, outlining COVID-19 updates, accreditation information, best practices for engaging with students, tips on becoming a mentor and practicing mindfulness.

"The last two years since I have come back to serve as Superintendent/President has been both challenging and inspiring," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said in her remarks. "I have seen how hard you all worked to continue our operations despite the challenges that we face from the pandemic. It's all to benefit our students, which is why we are here at Río Hondo College: for our students and their future."

# College Joins Californians For All, Gaining Financial Support for Volunteerism



Río Hondo College students will soon have the opportunity to earn \$10,000 toward their college education by participating in the recently launched Californians For All College Corps.

Río Hondo College is one of 45 institutions selected for the program, which

provides students with financial support if they participate in community service opportunities such as climate action, K-12 education, COVID-19 recovery and food distribution.

Californians For All College Corps was created to alleviate the rising student debt challenges faced by California students, which is estimated at \$147 billion according to [EdSource](#). The program was announced Jan. 18 by California Chief Service Officer and the head of California Volunteers Josh Fryday, California Governor Gavin Newsom and the leaders of California's college and university systems.

"Today is a historic day in California," Fryday said during the announcement. "The Governor, alongside the leaders of the world's top higher education systems, offered a monumental proposal to the next generation of Californians – if you step up to serve your community, we'll help you pay for college."

Up to 50 Río Hondo College students will be selected for the program each year, with AB540 Dreamer students also eligible for participation. Californians For All College Corps will provide up to 6,500 California college students with a stipend of up to \$10,000 a year if they complete 450 hours of community service during each one-year cohort.

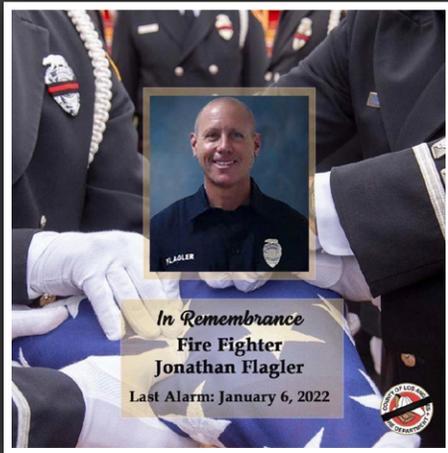
Río Hondo College joined the partnership thanks to the efforts of Board of Trustees Member Oscar Valladares and his contacts at California State University, Los Angeles, which formed the East Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley Consortium for the Californians For All program, a partnership with California State University, Los Angeles; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; East Los Angeles College, and Río Hondo College.

The first cohort will run from July 2022 to June 2023 and the second from July 2023 to June 2024.

Río Hondo College will focus its volunteerism in the areas of food justice and education through some of its existing programs such as Río Hondo RíoSource Room food pantry, the basic needs Center, which provides CalFresh Application Assistance and connections to community resources, and the LA Food Bank.

# College Updates

- Professor Shelley Spencer gave a presentation on Jan. 12, about the development of a biology 226 laboratory manual, outlining her work done during a sabbatical in 2020-21. This work resulted in new labs, a new digital work manual for students and training outlines, which will be provided to other faculty members.
- Río Hondo College praised Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering professor Leah Griffith for 40 years of service to the College and wished her well on her retirement. Griffith started as a part-time instructor in 1979 and became full-time in 1981.

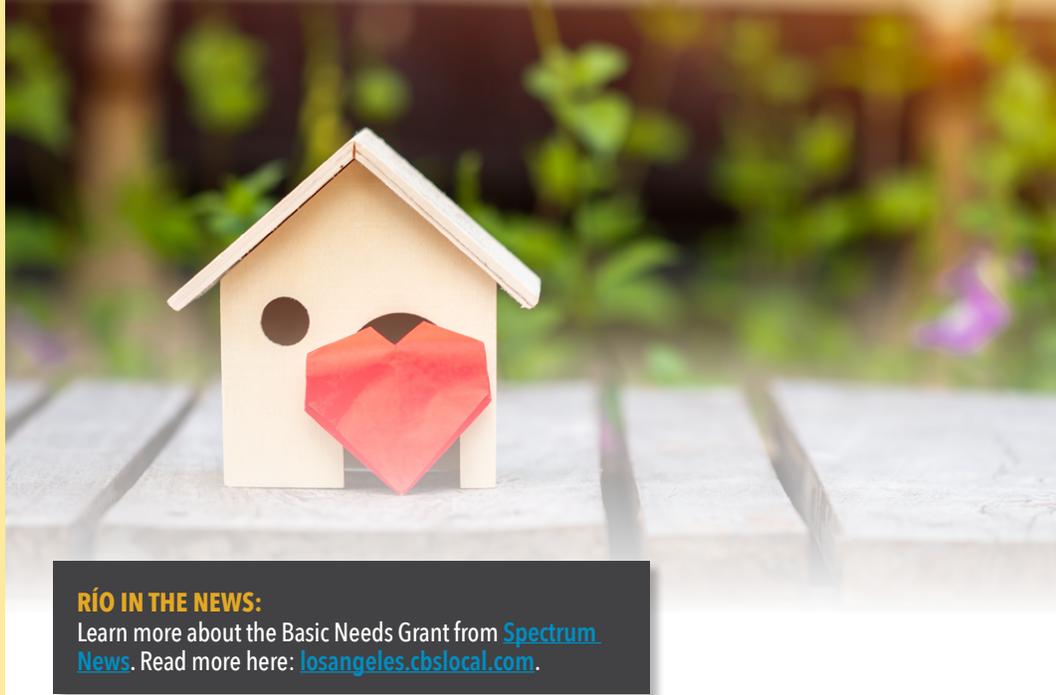


## Remembering LACoFD Firefighter, Río Hondo College Alum Jonathan Flagler

Los Angeles County Fire Department Firefighter Jonathan Flagler died on Jan. 6 from injuries sustained during a residential structure fire in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Flagler was honored as a firefighter and graduate of Río Hondo College's Fire Academy Class 56 by Fire Academy Director Andrew Grzywa.

"My family's and my thoughts and prayers are with firefighter Flagler, his family and friends as well as all of his fire family, and I'm sure you all feel the same," Grzywa said. "We will be committed to supporting all in any fashion we can."



### RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Learn more about the Basic Needs Grant from [Spectrum News](https://www.spectrumnews.com). Read more here: [losangeles.cbslocal.com](https://losangeles.cbslocal.com).

## College Receives Award to Support Unhoused Students

Río Hondo College has been awarded a nearly \$1 million grant to fund the Hope Scholars Program, a basic needs assistance project that provides holistic support services for unhoused and transitionally unhoused students.

The College was one of five schools nationally to be recognized with the Basic Needs in Postsecondary Education award by the Federal Department of Education. On Dec. 29, Río Hondo College received notification of the award, which will be utilized for the continued support of unhoused and transitionally unhoused students.

The total funds, amounting \$989,798, will increase staffing for the Hope Scholars Program. Funding will allow the Hope Scholars program to deepen community awareness and expand holistic support services for students, such as tutoring, success coaching, academic counseling, mental health services, financial literacy programs and more.

Additionally, since going remote due to COVID-19, the College has secured an additional \$2,494,293 in competitive funds to develop and increase supportive services, providing basic necessities and crisis intervention.

The project will also evaluate program effectiveness and develop a tool kit and webinar with partners from the Center for Equitable Higher Education and John Burton Advocates for Youth to support campuses across the nation in developing their own programs for unhoused students.

"The Basic Needs grant allows us the ability to scale up our efforts to support students experiencing these problems through the Hope Scholars program," said Dr. Earic Dixon-Peters, vice president of Student Services. "We believe our work changes lives."

The Hope Scholars Program at Río Hondo College supports unhoused and transitionally unhoused students with services and support such as temporary housing, counseling and registering for classes. Since introducing the Hope Scholars Program in the 2019-2020 academic year, Río Hondo College has seen a 184.3% increase in services provided directly to students, better ensuring their success and retention through the provision of basic needs.

"At Río Hondo College, we are dedicated to uplifting our students who, with the help of essential support services, can obtain success in college and beyond," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "This award will allow us to continue supporting our students in their pursuit of stable homes, reliable sources of food and mental health services that ensure they reach their full potential."

### RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Read more about the Whittier College Housing Partnership with Río Hondo College in the [Whittier Daily News](#) and [Mid Valley News](#).

WHITTIER COLLEGE CAMPUS CENTER

# Whittier College to House Some Río Hondo College Students

Río Hondo College is partnering with Whittier College to allow up to 26 of its students to stay in their College's residence halls in exchange for federal housing vouchers.

Final details on the program are still being worked out, Shaina Phillips, director of student life and leadership of Río Hondo College, said in an emailed statement. It could start within the next two weeks, she added.

Deanna Merino Contino, interim vice president for student life and dean of students at Whittier College, said her school would tap currently unused dorm rooms.

"We've always had the space," Contino said. "We thought it might be a good opportunity to partner with Río Hondo."

Río Hondo students will use re-housing vouchers, which are a public assistance program that allows housing services providers to assist eligible individuals with rental vouchers for a specific period of time, Phillips said.

Participating students will have been identified and granted rapid re-housing vouchers through community-based housing services programs such as Jovenes, Inc., Whittier First Day, Volunteers of America, and Salvation Army.

Whittier College will also provide reduced rates to students who run out of re-housing vouchers, in order to provide housing stability.

Río Hondo College Basic Needs and Student Holistic Services staff will work closely with students to provide case management and direct support, including identifying and assisting students who may want to participate in the Whittier College housing partnership program, Phillips said.



## Snow Day at Río Hondo College

The Río Hondo College Child Development Center made their annual Snow Day a reality again.

After a year of closures and COVID-19 restrictions, some fun in the snow is exactly what the children needed to create meaningful childhood memories with their peers. Traditionally held as a family event, this year the snow was enjoyed by enrolled children only.

The Child Development Center wishes to send a special thank you to participating families and RHC Student Life for their generous donation towards the purchase of the snow.



# 2022 State Of the College

Pico Rivera City Council  
January 11, 2022



## Río Hondo College Gives State of College Address to City of Pico Rivera

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss and Board President Vicky Santana presented the State of the College on January 11 to the City of Pico Rivera.

The presentation outlined major accomplishments and projects at the College, including free COVID-19 vaccine clinics for the community, police and fire academy graduates and increased support for the Aspen Institute program.

Río Hondo College received accolades from the City Council for our dual enrollment program, Río Promise, an ongoing partnership that has been instrumental in moving educational programs forward to benefit the residents of Pico Rivera.

### Campus Accomplishments Highlights

- The U.S. Dep. of Ed. awarded Rio Hondo College's Pathways to College Talent Search Program \$1,386,875.00 over a span of five years.
- With this Talent Search grant, Rio Hondo College will provide students at El Rancho High School with academic tutoring and advising on financial aid.
- El Rancho High School students will be supported to ensure they persist, succeed, graduate from El Rancho, complete a program of study and enroll in college.



### Student Basic Needs: \$1M Grant

- **Grab & Go:**
  - 3,274 Students Served
  - 15,603 Individuals including Household Members
- **Housing:**
  - 289 Nights at Hotel Emergency Shelter
  - 157 Housing referrals to Partner Agencies
  - 21 Housed with Jovenes, Inc.
  - 12 Housed with Partner Agencies
- **Mental Health Support and Partnerships:**
  - The Whole Child
  - Asian Pacific Islander with Disabilities of CA
  - East Los Angeles Women's Center
- **HHI Counts:**
  - Prior to pandemic, 86 students self-identified as lacking "fixed, stable nighttime residence"
  - Spring 2021, 249 students self-identified to the same question



## 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.



## Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT. VOICE.

## Río Hondo College Receives Honorable Mention from Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

Río Hondo College was recognized by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges for its exemplary Arts & Cultural programs, an honor given to only four community colleges out of 116 applicants.

The theme of this year's award was "Addressing Inequality in a Time of Crisis," which outlined the struggles of 2021 and how the College's Arts & Cultural programs provided a source of achievement to students and the community.

The awards were presented during the January 2022 Board of Governors for California Community Colleges meeting, where members of Río Hondo College's Arts & Cultural program were present.



## Save the Date

**Saturday, January 29 -  
Thursday, May 26:**  
Spring Semester 2022

**Wednesday, February 16:**  
Board of Trustees meeting

**Friday, February 18:**  
Lincoln's Birthday observed

**Monday, February 21:**  
Presidents' Day observed

**Wednesday, March 9:**  
Board of Trustees meeting

**Monday, March 14 -  
Friday, March 18:**  
Accrediting Commission for  
Community and Junior Colleges  
(ACCJC) virtual site visit

**Monday, March 28 -  
Friday, April 1:**  
Spring Break

**Saturday, May 21 -  
Thursday, May 26:**  
Finals week

**Monday, May 30:**  
Memorial Day

