

FOCUS ON RÍO

May 2022

President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

Hello Río Hondo College community,

It is a bittersweet moment that I write my final President's Message to mark the end of my journey at Río Hondo College as I once again enter retirement. Yet, I am hopeful because the end of my journey also marks the start of yours, since many of you are graduating, entering the workforce, enrolling in four-year universities and changing the world for the better.

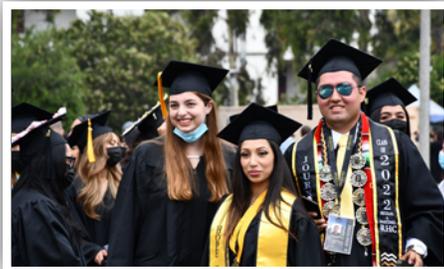
Every year, I am beyond proud of our students for their accomplishments and I cannot wait to see and hear the extraordinary heights you will all reach, thanks to the skills you all gained at Río Hondo College. We share a kinship now – we are both entering new phases of our lives together, and I know

that our futures, though uncertain, will be filled with success.

The years that I have spent here at Río Hondo College have been the most fulfilling and wonderful time of my entire life. It has been an honor and privilege to be your leader, and I can only hope that I have inspired my students to reach beyond what they think they can accomplish.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Río Hondo College Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, administrators and all of my supporters throughout the years. It is with your efforts and assistance that we were able to boost an already great college into an amazing place to learn. I will think of you all with great warmth and admiration, for all time. Congratulations everyone and good luck!

Río Hondo College Celebrates Academic Success with Graduating Class of 2022



Río Hondo College students were celebrated by the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, friends and family members as they decorated the College campus with adoring signs, bouquets of colorful flowers and congratulatory gifts celebrating the achievements of the Class of 2022.

This year, 1,700 students earned Bachelor of Science, Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees. Of those degrees, 1,157 are Associate Degrees for transfer, meaning they are eligible for admission to the California State University system. Furthermore, this signified the fourth class of students to receive B.S. degrees from the College; 21 Río Hondo College students received such degrees this year.

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RÍO HONDO COLLEGE

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Río Hondo College Celebrates Academic Success with Graduating Class of 2022

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During the ceremony, the College also announced four Student Success Profiles, which are special recognitions given to students who achieved above and beyond their goals. This year's Student Success Profile honorees were Emil Dominguez, a biochemistry major who will attend UCLA; Lenor Chavez, a social work major who will advance her studies at California State University, Los Angeles; Nelinda Cervantes Lopez, a communications major who will attend California State University, Fullerton; and Ruben Muñoz, a communications major who is matriculating to California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss spoke to students about the importance of hard work, relaying the story of how she emigrated from Taiwan, learned a new language and a different culture, and rose to prominence in higher education as the leader of Río Hondo College.

"Graduates – being here today, wearing your well-deserved caps and gowns, exemplifies the Río Hondo College motto 'Start Río, Go Anywhere.' You started at Río, you survived the pandemic and you can go anywhere," Dreyfuss said. "While some students balanced work, family and education, others overcame financial hardships, homelessness, food insecurities, and even loss of family members and loved ones. Your success is our success."



The College also honored valedictorian Megan Marentes, a biology major who will attend California State University, Fullerton in the fall. She is the daughter of Mexican and Salvadoran immigrants and a first-generation college student.

Marentes also served as an assistant biology lab technician and crochets octopus plushies in her free time to donate to premature babies in nearby hospital intensive care units.

The day's events also included remarks from Board of Trustees President Vicky Santana, Academic Senate President Dorali Pichardo-Diaz, Associated Students President Pricilla Mendoza, Vice President of Student Service Dr. Earic Dixon-Peters and a commencement address from Congresswoman Grace Napolitano.



"Graduates, as you move onto the next chapter in life, remember this: you are amazing," Santana said. "You are amazing because many of you are the first in your family to set foot on a college campus. Many of you are the first in your family to receive a diploma. And, all of you made major sacrifices to complete this journey with the steadfast discipline to attain this educational goal – all in the middle of the pandemic."

Mendoza shared her father's advice to dedicate herself and her career to doing something she loves. She said the advice is applicable to all Río Hondo College graduates and encouraged them to face their fears, overcome their challenges and to find their passion.

"You have all the power to strive for success," Mendoza said. "You made it to this point, but I encourage all of you to keep going to reach your full potential. Keep growing and keep accomplishing through your journey."

Santana also announced Dr. Kenn Pierson Geiger as this year's Fellow of the College, thanking him for his 25 years of service to the College as both a faculty member and an administrator. Pierson Geiger is in the Division of Communications and Languages, teaching most of the English and Literature courses offered, and as the primary instructor for the College's only upper-division general education English course, Technical and Professional Writing, for Río Hondo College's Bachelor of Science Degree in Automotive Technology curriculum.



Student Success Story

Thanks to assistance from Río Hondo College's citizenship classes, 39-year-old Guillermo Del Rio can now proudly call himself an American citizen.

Del Rio, who is married and has three children, took citizenship classes with teacher Giovanni Macia to prepare him for his citizenship test.

"(Macia) was an excellent teacher, he explained in detail the history of the United States, he is very dedicated to his work, very patient, he always answered all my questions and we even practiced the citizenship interview," Del Rio said. "Going to Río Hondo helped me a lot to achieve my goal. I decided to become a citizen of the United States because there are better opportunities here and I wanted to improve myself. I also wanted to be able to vote."

Del Rio gained his citizenship on March 31 and said he felt honored to be part of the United States.

Río Hondo College RISE Scholars Program Receives Grant to Expand Services for Justice-Impacted Students

Río Hondo College's Reaching Institutionalized Students through Education (RISE) Scholars program will receive significant additional funding to provide counseling, peer tutoring, mentoring and other services, thanks to a Rising Scholars Network grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO).

The CCCCO grant will provide more than \$460,000 – spread over three years – to the RISE Scholars program, an award-winning Río Hondo College academic initiative that seeks to educate and empower formerly incarcerated students or those impacted by the criminal justice system. This is the first year the RISE Scholar program has received the CCCCO grant.

"The CCCCO grant is a great step forward for the RISE Scholars program, as it will allow us to increase our services to accommodate an additional 30 students," Assistant Dean of Student Equity and RISE Scholars Cecilia Rocha said. "We will also be able to provide more community outreach to probation and parole officers, in-custody programs and other community-based organizations."

Established in 2017 by the Río Hondo College Student Equity Office, the RISE Scholars program partners with Los Angeles County agencies to reduce recidivism and improve educational outcomes for justice-involved students, providing support services – administered through the RHC Scholars' Hub – to help students navigate their educational and vocational pathways.

RISE provides one-on-one support with admissions processes, financial aid applications, scholarship forms, academic transfer-related documents and resume writing. Additionally, RISE offers meal and book vouchers, calculators and laptop loans. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, RISE hosted expungement workshops to assist qualified students in clearing their records.

"The RISE Scholar funding will allow students to receive more help, especially those who struggle to balance school and work, since the program will be expanding its services to provide more access to staff," Río Hondo College



student Karime Miramontes said. "This will be a tremendous benefit for all RISE scholars."

Río Hondo College was one of 20 colleges to participate in the 2019 Leadership Institute for California Community College Serving Formerly Incarcerated Students program, co-hosted by the CCCCO, the Stanford Criminal Justice Center and the Renewing Communities project. In 2020, RISE was recognized with the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Mena-Valdez Award for outstanding new program from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NAPSA).

Río Hondo College Administrators Join City of South El Monte for National Day of Prayer Event

Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, Board of Trustees Member Rosaelva Lomeli and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) Specialist Laura Verdugo joined City of South El Monte officials and dignitaries for a National Day of Prayer event on May 5.

The event, which was held at the El Monte Community Center, included an introduction from the City of South El Monte Mayor Gloria Olmos and a color guard presentation featuring the El Monte American Legion Post 10.

The event was sponsored by Athens Services, Transtech, the South El Monte/El

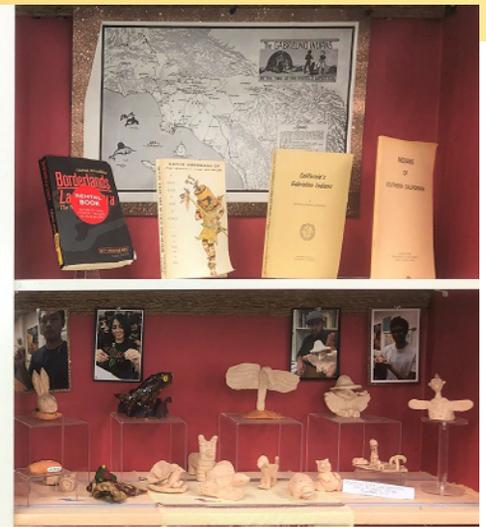
Monte Chamber of Commerce and the South El Monte Community Outreach Church.

Prayers for education, first responders/military, businesses, the community/families, government and the church were read by various community members, including retired Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Chief of Police Eli Vera, Valley Community Church Paster Ryan Clouse, Valle Lindo School District ASB President Julius Flores and South El Monte Community Outreach Church Pastor Charlie Corrum

RÍO IN THE NEWS:

To learn more about Río Hondo College's ACLS funding, visit [Community College Daily](#).

Funding Roundup



[Río Hondo College's](#) Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project will benefit from a \$157,000 grant from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The funding will help to improve classroom facilities, provide more learning materials, and boost interest in arts and humanities.

The project is a teaching, research and community partnership effort where students create clay figurines and narratives to represent themselves, their cultures and their families.

The project "has been instrumental to understanding the Indigenous

Mesoamerican ancestry and lifeways of our large Latinx population," said anthropology professor Santiago Andres Garcia. "The money is also important because it gets students involved and excited about community work after a long two years of isolation. We are hoping that this program gets other faculty excited about the bridges that exist between students, health engagement, and communities outside of campus."

The ACLS grant was awarded through the Sustaining Public Engagement Grant Program, which is part of the Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative.

Assessor Wins National Award for Innovation

The Los Angeles County Assessor's Office has won the prestigious 2022 National Association of Counties (NACo.) Achievement Award for its cutting-edge Appraiser Training and Workforce Development programs.

This award was given as a result of the partnership with the Los Angeles Community College District, Río Hondo Community College, Workforce Development Aging & Community Services, Department of Human Resources, and the Chief Executive Office, for the programs in real estate appraisal that provide the framework for lifelong pathways to success in government sectors. The award was in NACo's category of Personnel Management, Employment and Training.

"I am grateful and honored that our innovative programs have been recognized nationally and once again provide another example of how partnerships with private and public entities can and do work," Assessor Jeff Prang said. "Also, and perhaps more germane, the two programs create a pathway to positions we need filled."

Being the largest Assessor's Office in the nation, running optimally with a total compliment of more than 700 appraisers, the Assessor's Office needed to replace about 30 appraisers due to normal attrition through retirements, etc. There were some years, in fact, due to conditions beyond the Assessor's Office control that classes could not be launched, and positions went unfilled,

RÍO IN THE NEWS: Read more about Río Hondo College's partnership with the LA County Assessor and his award in this [special bulletin](#) or in the [Beverly Press](#).

increasing the workload and training demand in subsequent years.

The two new programs are set to rectify that dilemma. The first program is the appraiser training at West Los Angeles College. The goal here is to shift the Assessor's in-house classroom training for basic appraisal principles to the college classroom. Assessor staff will then be freed to focus on on-the-job training. A secondary goal is to create interest in assessment appraisal and County careers by opening the courses to the college's general student population. This will create a pool of candidates for future appraisal and other related positions.

The second program is the Appraiser Assistant Training Program at Río Hondo College. With the reintroduction of this program, this Assessor/College partnership reduces the time required to train appraiser assistants by providing job-essential assessment topics in the college classroom. This provides a direct pipeline of candidates for appraiser assistant positions, and careers with the Assessor's Office while still providing opportunities for upward mobility.

"By building inter-departmental and local community partnerships, a pathway has been created to provide employment, career advancement opportunities, and build a diverse and inclusive County workforce," Assessor Jeff Prang said. "It will further ensure that we can maintain an optimal level of personnel to do the important and necessary work of producing the annual Assessment Roll."

RÍO IN THE NEWS: Learn more about Río Hondo College's Involvement with #CaliforniansForAll in [The Mid Valley News](#).

Río Hondo College Encourages Volunteerism

Río Hondo College's Board of Trustees President and two of its Board Members met with California Volunteers Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday, State Senator Maria Elena Durazo and administrators of other local colleges to encourage more civic engagement through the #CaliforniansForAll College Corps.

The event, which was held at California State University, Los Angeles and livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook, brought together the program's biggest supporters to encourage more students to enroll, learn and earn money to pay for college.

"With the College Corps, students no longer have to choose between their passion or a paycheck, between their career or their community," Fryday said. "We have historic crises here in California; an existential climate crisis, growing economic, educational, and racial inequalities, mind-boggling food insecurities and we know our young people are looking for an opportunity to step up and be part of the solution."

Río Hondo College is one of 48 institutions selected for the #CaliforniansForAll College Corps program, which provides students with up to \$10,000 for college if they participate in community service opportunities for one year with approved organizations working in fields such as climate action, K-12 education and food distribution. Over the next two years, College Corps will provide financial assistance for 6,500 California students.

"The #CaliforniansForAll College Corps is a game-changing program," Board of Trustees President Vicky Santana said. "We at Río Hondo College are proud



to be a part of this program that drives student success while also helping our communities. We believe that the students who participate will walk away with deep, meaningful hands-on experience that will help shape both their careers and personal lives all while supporting them financially."

#CaliforniansForAll 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 Fryday, California Governor Gavin Newsom and the leaders of California's college and university systems.



Dreamer Resource Center Opens

Río Hondo College celebrated the soft opening of its new Dreamer Resource Center, which plans to be a haven for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students as they continue their educational journey, better themselves with social-emotional and financial assistance and seek to gain citizenship.





RÍO IN THE NEWS:

To learn more about Río Hondo College's Tesla START Program, visit [The Mid Valley News](#).

Río Hondo College Increases Tesla START Program Enrollment Numbers Thanks to New Pathway Involvement

Río Hondo College is meeting the high demand for more electric vehicle technicians by joining Tesla's Pathway to START Program – an intensive training course that prepares new high school graduates to enter the College's Tesla START program.

Launched in 2021, the Pathway to START Program places recent high school graduates into an eight-week online program to work with Southern California Tesla service centers, during which they learn the basics of servicing electric vehicles.

The highest-performing students are then recruited into the Tesla START program, where they gain hands-on experience and are hired directly by Tesla upon completion of the program. The current class, which has 13 students in total – four of whom are female, is the 10th cohort of the Tesla START program at the College.

"The Pathway Program was a really good chance for me to see how I like working on cars because I've never had this opportunity before," Lysander Zepeda said. "After the first section of the program, I was a lot more excited. I think the Tesla START program is a really great opportunity because I'm making a lot of new connections, learning the basics and the more I learn, the most I realize that Tesla is the right place to work."

Liliana Miguel Ojeda said learning virtually through the Pathway program was a great introduction to Tesla and it prepared her for the hands-on work expected at the Tesla START program at the Río Hondo College campus.

Professor of Alternative Fuels/Electric and Fuel Cell Vehicles John Frala said the Pathway to START Program is providing a shorter learning curve to teach students about servicing Tesla vehicles. Frala also said this program will enable more students to be accepted into the Tesla START program, creating new job opportunities to countless individuals in the future.

To date, 125 students have graduated from Río Hondo College's Tesla START



program, gaining employment with the prominent automotive company.

According to Frala, the Tesla START program is a major employer of female technicians, who account for roughly nine percent of graduates from Río Hondo College's program.

RÍO IN THE NEWS: Learn more about Río Hondo College's Early College Academy involvement in [The Mid Valley News](#).

District Celebrates First Early College Academy Graduates

South El Monte High School (SEMHS) celebrated its Early College Academy (ECA) class of 2022 with a Gala and Awards Night for students and their families, as well as teachers and administrators from Río Hondo College and El Monte Union High School District on May 17.

The event recognized the first cohort of the Early College Academy – 82 students who successfully completed SEMHS's dual enrollment program with Río Hondo College, earning up to 24 units of college credit while still in high school. The ECA program gives students the opportunity to complete Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) requirements and other college level courses such as American Sign Language, Chicano studies and sociology free of charge.

"I personally enjoyed being a part of the Chicano studies class," SEMHS senior Michelle Martinez, an ECA graduate who is attending UCLA in the fall, said. "It helped me gain a better understanding of my background and made me feel even more proud of my culture."

The celebration concluded with those in attendance proudly singing the SEMHS alma mater while a slide show of photos from the event played on the big screen.

"These students you see before you are not simply graduating high school but are already considered freshman in college," SEMHS Principal Dr. Jorge Morales said. "This spectacular achievement was made possible through the hard work and perseverance of our students, and also through the leadership and support of our District office, community partners at Río Hondo College, and our families. At South El Monte High School, we believe that every student is a success story."

After graduating from high school, ECA students may continue their education at Río Hondo College or transfer their credits to another college or university.

Currently, 400 students in grades 9-12 are participating in the ECA program at SEMHS. More information about this program can be found on the SEMHS website.

"This is a remarkable moment in EMUHSD history as we celebrate the first graduating class of South El Monte High School's Early College Academy," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "As a District, we are extremely proud of the dedication our students displayed while taking college level courses throughout their four years of high school. We also want to thank Río Hondo College for their partnership and commitment to ensuring our students are college and career ready."

College Celebrates Scholars' Hub Graduation

Río Hondo College celebrated its Scholars' Hub Graduation Ceremony on May 12, honoring the efforts of approximately 60 students' various academic accomplishments. This includes eight Queer Initiative, 14 Hope Scholars, and seven RISE Scholars students who graduated on May 27.

For many Scholars' Hub students, the completion of their educational dreams seemed like an insurmountable goal. These scholars had to overcome the odds of living through and surviving homelessness, incarceration, mental health crises, loss of hope and other academic challenges.

The Scholar's Hub team is very proud of its Class of 2022 graduates and cannot wait to see what is next for them as they transfer to colleges such as California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California State University, Los Angeles, California State University, Long Beach, California State University, Chico, California State University, Fullerton, California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, and University of California, Merced.





Río Hondo's CPTP Celebrates Future Teachers

Río Hondo's Community Partnerships for Teacher Pipeline (CPTP) recently celebrated future teachers who are part of the program through a series of campus events. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant, CPTP is an initiative to build a community-based teacher pipeline and strengthen the teaching profession by increasing the number of teachers of color.

The first event, held on May 5 as part of the Teacher Appreciation Week celebration, was an open house to introduce the iTeach Resource Center. The iTeach center – located at T102, Applied Technology building (AT on the map) – will serve as a temporary resource center for Río Hondo students aspiring to become teachers and starting their education path at Río. It will officially open in fall 2022; available hours will be announced at the start of the semester.

The second event was a celebration dinner held at Quiet Cannon in Montebello, honoring 18 future teachers in the CPTP program set to graduate from Río Hondo in May. It was the first CPTP celebration dinner held to celebrate the achievements, struggles, and resilience of CPTP students who will potentially move on to become teachers. The students received a medallion, a Future Teacher stole, and a certificate of participation as their families and administrators from the College cheered them on.

Many of the graduating students plan to transfer to a four-year university to complete their Bachelor of Arts and credential program, and hope to become teachers in their local communities.

The CPTP program connects future teachers from the local community in the Greater Los Angeles area to enhanced advisory mentors and success coaches while providing career development activities and stipends. To learn more about the CPTP program, contact Lea Martinez at lmartinez@riohondo.edu.



RÍO IN THE NEWS:

Read more about Río Hondo College's Student Athletes of the Year on [our website](#).

Soccer's Jackie Marin, swimmer Alexander Dimitriadis named Athletes of the Year

A pair of freshmen, women's soccer standout Jackie Marin and men's swimming All-American Alexander Dimitriadis, have been named the 2021-22 Río Hondo College Student-Athletes of the Year for their impressive accomplishments for the Roadrunners this past season.

Marin, originally out of Smidt Tech High School in Los Angeles, played a big role in another successful Río Hondo women's soccer season in the fall.

She was voted team captain and started all 20 games at center midfield for a Roadrunner squad that went on to capture a South Coast Conference championship and advanced to the finals of the Southern California Regional Playoffs. Río Hondo was ranked as high as No. 5 in the nation and ended the season second in the final state power points rankings.

Marin was a first-team All-South Coast Conference selection and earned All-Southern California honors after she totaled 22 points with 6 goals and 10 assists.

In the classroom, Marin was named a California Community College Soccer Coaches Association (CCSCA) Scholar-Athlete with a 3.50 grade point average.

"Jackie's success comes from her commitment to excellence on and off the soccer field," said women's soccer head coach Jennifer Tanaka-Hoshijo. "It's evident in her academic endeavors by earning over a 3.5 GPA since being at Río Hondo and on the soccer field as a captain for our top-10, nationally-ranked program. Jackie was instrumental in helping the team earn national, state, and conference awards for its soccer and academic successes. She has spent hundreds of hours training and at games, all while working part-time and finding time to enjoy her family, friends, and teammates. The coaching staff is very proud of Jackie."

Marin is the second consecutive women's soccer student-athlete to earn the honor after Serina Vargas was the 2019-20 selection. Due to COVID-19, Río Hondo did not participate in athletics during the 2020-21 season.

Dimitriadis, who also goes by the name Xander, recently wrapped up one of the finest seasons in recent memory for the Río Hondo College men's swimming and diving team.

He was the unanimous South Coast Conference Swimmer of the Year after capturing individual conference titles in the 200-yard IM, 400-yard IM, and 200-yard breaststroke while also pacing the 200-yard freestyle and 400-yard freestyle relay teams to impressive finishes.



His time of 1:54.86 in his championship swim of the 200 IM was the fifth fastest time in the state while his times of 4:07.31 in the 400 IM and 2:06.67 in the 200 breaststroke were both the seventh fastest statewide.

According to men's swimming and diving head coach Stephen Smith, Dimitriadis' times were all top marks since his coaching tenure began in 2016 and could likely be school records as well.

Dimitriadis, out of Esperanza High School in Anaheim, capped the year with another amazing weekend at the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) State Championships.

He went on to earn All-America honors in all three of his events. His best showing at state was a sixth-place finish in the 200-yard breaststroke with a time of 2:08.46. Dimitriadis added a ninth-place showing in the 200-yard freestyle (1:43.83) and finished 10th in the 200 IM at 1:56.09.

"I am very proud of what Xander was able to accomplish this year," said Smith. "Xander embodies what it means to be a Roadrunner. He is a good athlete, a good student, and a good person. Xander worked very hard all season and is deserving of all accolades, awards, and accomplishments this season."

Dimitriadis not only excels in the pool, he is also a key member of the Río Hondo Wrestling team. This spring he snapped a string of four consecutive wrestlers to be named Male Student-Athlete of the Year. Daniel Romero (2016-17), James Schmidt (2017-18), Diego Sanchez (2018-19), and Kahlil Tucker (2019-20) most recently received this honor.



Río Hondo College Hosts Volleyball Recognition Ceremony

Río Hondo College held a special congratulatory ceremony for its sophomore volleyball players for transferring to their next level of higher education. Ari Martinez will be attending California State University, Long Beach, Desteny Hernandez will attend California State University, Long Beach, Linda Saucedo will attend California State University, Fullerton and Ariel Garcia will attend Hope International University.





Río Hondo College Police Academy Graduation

On May 25, the Río Hondo Police Academy hosted a formal inspection for Basic Police Recruit No. 213, which consists of 29 sponsored recruits from 17 police agencies and 12 pre-service cadets seeking employment with a police agency. Shortly after the formal inspection, the Río Hondo Police Academy conducted a recruitment event, during which agencies reviewed the academy standing of their sponsored cadets and spoke with the pre-service cadets seeking employment. Some pre-service cadets received tentative job offers, pending the completion of employment background checks.

A Taste of Río Returns to Río Hondo College

WHAT:

Río Hondo College will host the return of its popular and lively A Taste of Río event – which invites guests onto campus for an evening of delicious foods, fine wines and craft beers, live entertainment and a silent auction.

This will be the first A Taste of Río event since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The event, which was created by the Río Hondo College Foundation, raises funds for scholarships to support students in achieving their educational goals. Presale tickets will be \$75 for general admission and \$125 for VIP passes.

WHEN:

6 p.m. Friday, June 17.
VIP preview begins at 5 p.m.

WHERE:

3600 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601

DETAILS:

To purchase tickets online and to learn more about A Taste of Río, visit <https://gorio.page/atasteofrio>.



Fire Academy Class 98 Celebrates Graduation

Río Hondo College honored Class 98 of its Fire Academy, celebrating 34 new firefighters who will gain employment in Santa Fe Springs, South Pasadena, Montebello, Monrovia, West Covina, City of Orange and Los Angeles.

Also honored during the ceremony was former Senior Drillmaster/Instructor and retired Los Angeles County Captain Guillermo Gonzales, who received a plaque from the Los Angeles County Fire Museum for his years of dedication.



RÍO IN THE NEWS:

For more information about how Río Hondo College is helping people accomplish their academic dreams, visit the [L.A. Times](#).

Latina Mothers, Daughters and the Pursuit of Higher Education — Together

When she was 27, Cecilia R. Escobedo was driving to work when she had a vision.

She saw herself working in a hospital, stitching up a wound and caring for others. By then, Cecilia, a high school dropout, hadn't been in a classroom for more than a decade. She and her husband, Gilbert, were working full time to raise their two daughters and two sons in South El Monte. She questioned whether she could handle it before attending Río Hondo College in Whittier in 2000. She prayed to God to help care for her family.

Before long, she enrolled in the nursing program. Cindy, the eldest daughter, remembers being 10 years old and joining her mother in the college library, doing homework or playing with 99 Cents Only coloring books as Cecilia pored over nursing textbooks and studied human anatomy.

There were many sleepless nights, Cecilia, now 48, recalled. She often fell asleep on a desk or couch, too tired to slip into bed. Sometimes she woke up from an unscheduled nap at the library.

What kept her going, she said, were thoughts of a better future for her family. Born in Michoacán, Mexico, she immigrated to the U.S. with her siblings and mother. But when her mother became injured and could no longer work, Cecilia dropped out of school to help pay bills. She was 16.

"Something I learned about navigating the education system: We have to work 10 times harder, be 10 times smarter and sacrifice ourselves 10 times [more]," she said of Latinas. In 2018, about 26% of Latinas held a college degree, compared with 51% of white women.

Those observations were not lost on Cecilia's daughter Cindy. Witnessing her mother's efforts made an indelible imprint on her own commitment to higher education, and also inspired what would become her doctoral dissertation.

Just one year after Cecilia earned her bachelor's degree in nursing at Azusa Pacific University, Cindy completed an undergraduate degree in political science at UCLA in 2015.

Mother and daughter continued their pursuit of higher education in tandem. In 2016 Cindy graduated with a master's degree in education. Her mother caught up one year later, obtaining her master's in nursing. And in 2021, the same year

Cecilia's doctorate in nursing practice was conferred, Cindy successfully defended her own dissertation and received her doctorate as well.

On June 11, Cindy will walk at UCLA's graduation in full doctoral regalia, and her novel dissertation – born of her own story – captures what it took to reach this milestone. Cindy chronicled the aspirations, challenges and joys of Latina mothers and daughters who pursued college degrees together.

Cindy identified nine working-class mother-daughter families consisting of 22 women – all but three of whom attended college in California at the same time. Some are one mother, one daughter, while others are triads like the Escobedo women – Cecilia and daughters Cindy and Abigail. The mothers are largely immigrants – from Mexico, Peru, Belize, Guatemala – while all but one of the daughters U.S. born.

But beneath the joy of achievement are complex journeys because for every mother who made sacrifices on the way to her degree, so too did her daughter.

For mothers, it meant balancing school nights and full-time jobs, straining to be there for family moments while succeeding as nontraditional students. For daughters, it meant caring for younger siblings while mom studied, becoming an extra pair of eyes on mom's essays and explaining meetings with academic counselors while trying to flourish academically on their own.

What distinguishes Cindy's research is how she delves into an uncharted area, said Dolores Delgado Bernal, a professor at California State University, Los Angeles who served on her dissertation committee.

She identified a collaborative and collective educational journey in which "educating oneself is educating the family," Delgado Bernal said. The mother-daughter duos defy the stereotype of "higher education being hierarchical and being individualistic. It's the opposite."

As Cindy writes in her dissertation: "This birth story is not crafted as a romanticized, feel-good tale about Chicana/Latina mother-daughter relationships. Rather, it is a complex narrative about Chicana/Latina mother-daughter struggle, resistance, love, and healing that transcends between generations of women who attended college individually and jointly."

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 to Offer Study Abroad Program in Madrid, Spain

WHAT:

Río Hondo College students will have the opportunity to expand their horizons through the study abroad program, which gives students enrolled in 12 or more units the opportunity to study in Madrid, Spain during the 2023 spring semester.

Study abroad students will enroll in general education classes, taught by faculty from Río Hondo College, Citrus College and Cuyamaca College and will live alongside students from eleven other local California community colleges.

WHEN:

Feb. 16, 2023 – May 13, 2023

WHERE:

Madrid, Spain

DETAILS:

For more information, please contact Professor Rebecca Green at rgreen@riohondo.edu.



Save the Date

Monday, June 6 – Friday, Aug. 12:

Full term dates for Summer 2022 semester

Monday, June 6 – Friday, July 8:

First half of Summer 2022 semester

Monday, July 11 – Friday, Aug. 12:

Second half of Summer 2022 Semester

6 p.m. Friday, June 17:

A Taste of Río Fundraising event

Monday, June 20:

Juneteenth – campus closed

Monday, June 20 – Friday, July 29:

Summer evening dates

Monday, June 20 – Friday, Aug. 12:

Summer 8-week dates

6 p.m. Wednesday, July 13:

Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

6 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 10:

Regular Board of Trustees Meeting