Hello Rio Hondo College community,

I am thrilled to bring to you the December Focus on Rio issue, which celebrates the end of 2022 and showcases the multitude of achievements that made our entire College shine.

Recently, we had much to celebrate in terms of philanthropy – including an Adopt-a-Child Holiday Luncheon, where a community member and Rio Hondo College staff members donated more than $13,000 in gifts to Rio Hondo College students and their children. Our Rio Cares volunteers also donated their time and effort to providing meals at the Interfaith Food Center in Santa Fe Springs.

Our on-campus activities highlighted the support we are providing to our students. This included hosting Fox 11 News and Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday to tour our RioSource Room and see how our Californians For All College Corps students are addressing food insecurity in our community and earning up to $10,000 in scholarships for their work. We also welcomed more than 120 local high school counselors onto campus for a breakfast event to explain more about the financial, educational and support programs available to students when they attend Rio Hondo College.

Lastly, Rio Hondo College was named the recipient of a $3 million Title V grant to create an invention education and social entrepreneurship program – aimed at encouraging students’ social, emotional, academic and career development. This program will inspire anyone regardless of age, race, geography, and professional status to be an inventor and/or social entrepreneur.

I am very proud of these events and all of the excellence achieved by our Rio Hondo community in December!

I look forward to supporting our students, staff and administrators towards achieving our common goals. I believe we can all approach this new year with continued vigor, energy and passion in all of our interests.

Thank you and welcome to the new year.

Dr. Marilyn Flores
Superintendent/President

President’s Message

Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees Celebrated with Oath of Office Ceremony

Rio Hondo College honored its re-elected Board of Trustees members Oscar Valladares, Anais Medina Diaz and Rosaelva Lomeli with an Oath of Office ceremony at the Rio Cafe on December 14, 2022.

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Río Hondo College Board of Trustees Celebrated with Oath of Office Ceremony

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Valladares and Medina Diaz took the Oath of Office during the event, affirming that they will continue to fulfill the duties of Board of Trustees members and uphold the vision, mission and values of Río Hondo College. Lomeli, who was unable to attend the event, had her oath administered at a later date.

The ceremony included an introduction of the elected officials by Director of Government and Community Relations Dr. Russell Castañeda-Calleros and a few words by Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores.

“I know first-hand the hardships that our College students face – I’m excited for the opportunity to continue serving and building on the work that I’ve championed in the last two years,” Medina Diaz said. “In the past year, I’ve advocated for the basic needs of our students and sought partnership opportunities between the College and the City of El Monte and have been successful in finding housing opportunities for our housing insecure students.”

The oaths and congratulatory speeches were delivered by the Honorable Janice Hahn, Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Fourth District and the Honorable Hilda Solis, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, First District.

“Our great country gave this undocumented immigrant an opportunity and now I am living the American dream,” Valladares said. “I’d like to thank everyone for their support so that I might continue to lead Río Hondo College in good governance.”

During the reorganization meeting, the Board of Trustees selected Kristal Orozco to serve as president. Anais Medina Diaz will serve as vice president and Oscar Valladares will serve as clerk.

Río Hondo College Hosts College Corps Officials, Media for Info Event

Fox 11 News Reporter Elex Michaelson and Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday visited Río Hondo College on December 13, 2022 to see the positive impact of the Californians For All College Corps program.

Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores and College Corps Fellows Kal El and Adesola Tychus led the tour, during which they detailed how the College is providing up to $10,000 in scholarships to students who volunteer through Californians For All College Corps.

Río Hondo College is one of 45 institutions selected for the Californians For All College Corps program, which provides students with financial support for participating 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. During the visit, both El and Tychus gave Michaelson and Fryday a tour of the RíoSource Room, highlighting how they are providing students with food access.

RÍO IN THE NEWS: To learn more about Californians For All College Corps, the story can be seen here on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

During the event, Pla answered questions, shared personal anecdotes and provided free books to all attendees. Pla’s book is a story of the American dream that resonates across cultures and communities. Pla shared his story of being an undocumented student from Mexico who started his higher education journey at East Los Angeles College, then California State University, Los Angeles, before transferring to USC – where he earned a master’s degree in public administration. During his Q&A, he underscored that education is the great equalizer.

Child Development Center Hosts Contractor’s Café

The Rio Hondo College Child Development Center (CDC) along with the California Department of Education (CDE) Early Education Division hosted a Contractor’s Café event on December 19, 2022, with more than 40 contractors in attendance. The Professional Learning Community of Contractors were gathered to provide an overview of the most recent management bulletins and CDE updates. Another goal of the event was for attendees to collaborate, learn about each other and build a network system of support.
College Updates

Business Division Hosts Virtual Enterprises’ Competition

On December 13, 2022, Río Hondo College’s Business Division hosted Virtual Enterprises’ (VE) LA Regional Business Plan Competition. Business Division faculty and advisory members signed up to be judges for this event, where they evaluated high school students’ business plans, which included financial statements, marketing plans, business structure and operational planning.

Participation included 84 students from Carpinteria High School, Irvine High School, La Mirada High School, La Serna High School, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, Moorpark High School, Portola High School, South Pasadena High School, Thousand Oaks High School and Walnut High School.

Top-ranked student teams are moving on to the VE statewide competition.

Retirement Notices

During the December 14, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting, Río Hondo College congratulated Custodian Fernando Guevara, Lead Mechanic Richard Duran, Professor of 2D/3D Design Ronald Reeder and Professor of Nursing Patricia Luna on their retirement and thanked them for their years of service to the College.

- Guevara worked as a classified employee for 15 years and one month
- Duran worked as a classified employee for 25 years and 9 months
- Reeder worked as a full-time instructor for 16 years and three months
- Luna worked as a full-time instructor for approximately 15 years and three months

Río Cares Helps in Action

On November 12, 2022, Río Cares, a group of Río Hondo College staff, students, faculty and administrators volunteered at Interfaith Food Center (IFC) in Santa Fe Springs. They helped IFC prepare for a Thanksgiving food distribution for more than a thousand people.

The knowledge that they helped to feed people in their time of need, especially during the holiday season, was a source of pride. Río Cares encourages everyone to volunteer their time to serve others. If you would like to volunteer with Río Cares, please contact Angela Rhodes at arhodes@riohondo.edu.
EOP&S/CARE Host Adopt-a-Child Holiday Luncheon

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S)/Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) team hosted a successful Adopt-a-Child Holiday Luncheon on December 15, 2022.

In November, EOP&S/CARE Specialist Laura Verdugo received a call from Josue Alvarado expressing his desire to donate gifts to all of Río Hondo College’s CARE students and their children.

Alvarado was a CARE student 19 years ago and sought the help of Río Hondo College Board of Trustees Member Rosaelva Lomeli to make the donation luncheon a reality. Alvarado and Río Hondo College staff members gave away gifts such as purses, televisions, laptops, iPads, Nintendo Switch video games and more – totaling over $13,000 in gifts for the event.

During the luncheon, Alvarado shared his life as a single father while attending Río Hondo College and advised students to take advantage of all the support programs made available by the CARE program.

The keynote speaker for the event was Pico Rivera City Council Member Dr. Monica Sánchez, who emphasized the importance of higher education. Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores also spoke at the event, thanking Alvarado for his philanthropy while also praising the CARE program for its legacy of kindness and support.
Río Hondo College Welcomes High School Counselors for Breakfast Event

Río Hondo College hosted its annual Counselor Breakfast event on December 9, 2022 in the Learning Resource Center, welcoming 122 counselors from local high schools to share the resources available to students when they choose to attend Río Hondo College.

The event had 14 resource tables available to attendees, highlighting two years of free college through the Río Promise program, a four-year degree through automotive technology, a pathway to law school and more.

Attendees were also treated to panels about financial aid and testimonials from current students and alumni.

The student/alumni panel was led by Misael Torres, Río Hondo College alum and dual enrollment student from Mountain View High School; Martin Covarrubias, Río alum and Río Hondo College counselor; Luisa Mesones, Río Hondo College alum; and Anthony Carrillo, Associated Students of Río Hondo College vice president.
Río Hondo College MESA Students Connect with Industry Leaders During Annual Conference

Four Río Hondo College Math, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) students learned about job opportunities straight from company executives, mingled with working engineers and showcased their skills by creating products to assist communities impacted by COVID-19 at the MESA 2022 Student Leadership Conference, held October 28 and 29, 2022.

The conference, held at the Marriott Mission Valley in San Diego, featured attendees from more than 30 higher learning establishments. MESA and the event are meant to provide guidance to diverse students from underrepresented backgrounds as they enter science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and careers.

Beyond meeting with industry professionals, attendees also had a chance to develop a product or service aimed at addressing a problem caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted underserved communities.

Biochemistry major Donna Amaya, mathematics major Wendy Alvarez, robotics engineering major Armando Ramos and mechanical engineering major Fernando Padilla were chosen to represent Río Hondo College’s MESA program, along with Faculty Mentor Teddy Kidane.

Río Hondo College Partners with Lemelson-MIT to Boost Student Inventors, Entrepreneurs Support with $3 Million Grant

Río Hondo College is the recipient of a $3 million Title V grant to create an invention education and social entrepreneurship program, which aims to encourage students’ social, emotional, academic and career development.

The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to create a program known as Communities Uniting to Model and Build Regional Entrepreneurial Success (CUMBRES). CUMBRES will create a new degree pathway at Río Hondo College to inspire anyone regardless of age, race, geography, and professional status to be an inventor and/or social entrepreneur with a focus on LatinX students and adult learners.

Through a partnership between faculty at Río Hondo College and Lemelson-MIT, students will learn to commercialize their inventions and ideas while keeping societal benefits at the forefront. The program provides a safe and inclusive space for students to develop critical skills needed to create innovative, transdisciplinary solutions to problems that impact their communities.

The CUMBRES program, under the direction of Río Hondo College’s Dean of Business Gita Runkle, will encompass a high school dual enrollment component; a two-week invention summer workshop accessible to the community; a fully equipped makerspace lab; faculty training; and participation in MIT’s Eurekafest Invention Pitch conference. Participants in this program, depending on their career and academic pathway will receive a certificate of achievement for career advancement, an Associate of Science degree or complete an academic pathway to a four-year university degree from Río Hondo College.

“At the student level, CUMBRES will teach students the process of creating an invention that makes a social impact as well as how to get their invention patented and commercialized into a business,” Runkle said. “This program will ultimately impart essential critical thinking and problem-solving skills, curiosity, and imagination that every student needs to thrive in a post-pandemic work environment.”

In addition to MIT, other partners committed to the CUMBRES project and to creating academic pathways for Río Hondo College students in this area include: El Monte Unified School District; St. John Bosco High School; Cal State Long Beach, Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; UC San Diego Rady School of Management, Center for Social Innovation & Impact; UC Berkeley Haas Entrepreneurship Program; Cal State Los Angeles, College of Business and Economics; and, Michelson Institute for Intellectual Property.
El Monte Union Launches Sports Medicine Program

El Monte Union High School District students are receiving in-depth training in sports therapy and rehab thanks to the District’s new afterschool Sports Medicine Program, offered at Rosemead, South El Monte and Arroyo high schools.

In the winter of 2021, EMUHSD worked with a small group of students to develop the program and partnered with ATvantage Athletic Training to provide athletic training services to all comprehensive schools. Rosemead, South El Monte and Arroyo have created afterschool programs that allow students to learn from ATvantage athletic trainers and gain the skills and knowledge needed to enter the athletic training and sports medicine industry.

While enrolled in the program, students are taught a wide range of practices, like how to tape ankles and other joints for support, as well as basic stretching and other rehab procedures which are performed under direct supervision to help prepare athletes to perform to the best of their ability.

Based on their availability, students are assigned to practices and scheduled to help at games. During the fall semester, students receive hands-on athletic training at football, boys’ and girls’ cross country, and boys’ and girls’ volleyball practices and games along with other sports throughout the winter season. The on-field training jumpstarts students’ learning and provides relevant experience to help them further their education and pursue careers in sports medicine.

In addition to the afterschool Sports Medicine program, South El Monte High School students can develop their skills through the Healthcare Operational Support Services career technical education pathway, created in partnership with Río Hondo College, which offers an emphasis in sports therapy.

El Monte Union Students Gain College and Career Insight During Annual Conference

El Monte Union High School District students and families learned about how to succeed in high school, achieve their personal goals and prepare for college and career during the annual College and Career Family Conference, held October 22, 2022 at the Pacific Palms Resort.

The event, hosted in partnership with the District, El Monte City School District, El Monte Promise Foundation, Río Hondo College and the University of California, Irvine, welcomed more than 500 El Monte-area middle and high school students and families who participated in several information workshops, enjoyed a complimentary breakfast and received swag bags.

The conference featured workshops in both English and Spanish and covered topics such as College Financial Literacy, Financial Aid, A-G Requirements, Tutoring Services, Support Resources for “Dreamers” and Fostered Youth, California State University System and more.

The District’s Wellness Coordinators also emphasized the importance of mental health by leading workshops that provided families with more information on topics including the teen brain, how to motivate and reconcile with teenagers and suicide awareness and healing crystals.
CAREERS FOR A CAUSE

Social Services Pre-Apprenticeship Training

Careers For A Cause (C4C) is an 8-week pre-employment training program offered by Rio Hondo College to prepare area residents to compete for careers in social services. Participants will receive a stipend and case management to support their participation in the training.

On Campus (in person) Classes
1/30/2023 - 3/24/2023
Mon-Fri (10:30 am - 3:00 pm)

Please Click the Link or Scan the QR Code to Apply

Application Deadline
January 4, 2023

Program Contact: cperez@amityfdn.org
BACKGROUND
C4C American Recovery Plan (ARP) is a collaboration between Los Angeles County Departments of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Human Resources (DHR), and Mental Health (DMH), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Community Colleges, and Community Based Organizations to geographically expand the program from one LA County Supervisorial District to all five Districts and to enhance training outcomes by adding new supportive and employment services. The program goals are to ensure that persons facing marginalization are workforce ready and able to become economically self-sufficient, thus reducing homelessness and recidivism.

Program Description
Careers for a Cause (C4C) is an eight-week employment training program that supports individuals, with lived experience in homelessness and/or the justice system, build skills and connect to career pathways in the homeless services and social services field. Program participants must be 18+ years old and have a passion for helping underserved communities.

Program Components
- Engagement with Multiple Homeless Services Employers
- Connected to Current Homeless Services Job Opportunities
- Supplied with Personal Computer for Training and Job Search
- Mental Health First Aid Certificate of Completion
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Certificate of Completion
- First Aid/CPR Training and Card
- Paid Internship Availability
- Dedicated C4C Support Staff:
  - Occupational Therapist
  - Case Manager
  - Job Developer/Retention Specialist

Community Based Organization (CBO) Partners
The program will be delivered through Los Angeles County homeless services CBOs, Amity Foundation, Fathers & Mothers Who Care, and St. Joseph Center. These agencies provide C4C program coordination, HMIS software training, career counseling, case management, supportive services, housing assistance, job development services, mentorship, paid internships, and job placement/retention services.

Community College Partners
The C4C social services curriculum is administered by community colleges that are located within each LA County Supervisorial District. Those colleges include Compton College, East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles Southwest College, Pierce College, and Rio Hondo College. These educational partners collaborate with LA County and homeless services CBOs to ensure that C4C participants receive comprehensive supportive services and an optimal training experience.
Solis Sworn in for Third Time as Los Angeles County Supervisor

Hilda L. Solis, a lifelong resident of the San Gabriel Valley, was sworn in for her third and last term as Supervisor for the First District of Los Angeles County today. She was reelected in June 2022.

Supervisor Solis was sworn into office by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl (Ret.). Speakers during the ceremony included Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, Dolores Huerta, American labor leader and civil rights activist, and Jeanette Ellis-Royston, President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Pomona Branch, and Mike Eng, California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board Member, emceed the ceremony.

Before becoming Supervisor, Solis served as Secretary of Labor under President Barack Obama. Supervisor Solis was confirmed on February 24, 2009, becoming the first Latina to serve in the United States Cabinet.

Before that, Supervisor Solis represented the 32nd Congressional District in California, a position she held from 2001 to 2009. Supervisor Solis began her career working in the Carter White House Office of Hispanic Affairs and was later appointed as a management analyst with the Office of Management and Budget in the Civil Rights Division.

She was first elected to public office in 1985 as a member of the Rio Hondo Community College Board of Trustees. The first Latina to represent the San Gabriel Valley in the California State Legislature, Solis served in the California State Assembly from 1992 to 1994, and in 1994 she made history by becoming the first Latina elected to the California State Senate.

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.