



SUPERINTENDENT/PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Dear Members of the Río Hondo College Campus Community,

August 20, 2020

As the Fall 2021 semester quickly approaches, many of you are preparing to return to campus. I understand that some of you may be experiencing anxiety and might be wondering what the campus has done and will continue to do to maintain our collective health and protect ourselves from COVID-19. This letter is intended to inform you of what has been done to keep you safe, to assure you this campus will remain a safe environment at which to work and/or study, and to encourage you to take steps to keep yourselves healthy.

PROTECTING OUR IMMUNE SYSTEMS WITH THE COVID-19 VACCINE

The most powerful tool at our disposal is to become fully vaccinated. Less than 1% of those fully vaccinated are infected with COVID-19. Also, less than 0.009% of those fully vaccinated become hospitalized (*Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Briefing, Aug. 6, 2021*). This means that the COVID-19 vaccine remains highly effective at protecting us from becoming infected and preventing those of us who do get the virus from becoming seriously ill and/or hospitalized.

COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATES

The Administration and the Classified Employees Union came to an agreement that all classified employees returning to campus this fall must provide proof of being fully vaccinated by **Friday, September 17, 2021**. Furthermore, the Administration and the Faculty Union will begin discussions to enter into a similar agreement. Terms of this agreement are pending as of the date of this letter.

PLANNING COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS

Two COVID-19 vaccine clinics were held in the community during the summer. Another vaccine clinic has been scheduled for **Wednesday, September 1** from **12pm to 4pm** in Parking Lot "C" at the main campus. If necessary, a follow up vaccine clinic for a potential second dose will be held in late September. Details for these vaccine clinics are forthcoming very soon.

SECURING VENDORS FOR COVID-19 TESTING

At the August 11, 2021 Board of Trustees Meeting, the Board authorized the District to enter into agreements with two testing companies to provide COVID-19 as needed.

MANDATING MASKS

All College personnel, vendors, guests, and students must continue to mask indoors and outdoors at all times to protect ourselves and others. This is in strict compliance with the LACDPH health officer order to continue fully masking, in light of the rise of the Delta variant during the summer. Masks will be made available for managers, faculty members and staff to share with others as appropriate.

PROVIDING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The District will continue to supply all necessary and required PPE, including masks and shields, to prevent potential exposure. Faculty members needing PPE for their classrooms and staff members needing PPE for their work areas can request them from their managers/supervisors who can request them from the Facilities Office.

PROTECTING THE AIR WE BREATHE

The purchase of ionization materials will allow the District to provide air purification to all spaces on campus and to all off site spaces. MERV 13 filters, which are an upgrade over the MERV 8 and MERV 11 filters used prior to COVID-19, have been purchased and installed. Enhanced filtration and ionization eliminate pollutants and improves the air quality in all indoor spaces.

PROTECTING THE SPACE WE SHARE

All high traffic and high touch common areas will be regularly cleaned and disinfected to limit the spread of COVID-19. Facilities staff will adhere to routine schedules to clean and disinfect common areas and objects. This includes, but is not limited to, copy machines, containers, counters, tables, desks, chairs, benches, door handles, knobs, drinking fountains, refrigerators, vending machines, rest room and bathroom surfaces, elevator buttons, and trash cans.

PROTECTING OUR CLASSROOMS

Disinfecting bottles, towel dispensers and hand-sanitizers will be installed in every classroom. Electrostatic sprayers will be used to spray the classrooms down after use. In addition, touchless soap dispensers and hand free paper towel dispensers will be installed in all restrooms. Three-foot physical distancing will be respected in all classrooms.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Outside the three-foot physical distancing protocol in the classrooms, we will respect six-foot physical distancing in all other locations on campus. Public health experts continue to cite physical distancing as an effective means of preventing infection, especially during times of increased community transmission.

SAFELY SERVING OUR STUDENTS

The Student Services Division will provide online and in-person services. Most offices will be on 8am-5pm Monday-Thursday, Fridays 8am – 2pm. Student should check the college website for operational hours for a specific office. A healthy balance will be achieved between providing excellent service to our students and maintaining safety for all faculty and staff. Stay tuned for more details regarding modified student services schedule and operating hours.

SAFELY REPORTING POSITIVE CASES

As has been the case for more than a year, any positive cases are immediately reported to the Office of Human Resources, which provides resources and support to employees or students who test positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, Human Resources works closely with the Office Government and Community Relations to provide information on positive cases and any close contacts required for all COVID-19 case reports that must be sent to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH).

RESPONDING TO POTENTIAL OUTBREAKS

Through this information gathering and reporting system, the Offices of Human Resources can determine if positive cases are linked – or not linked. The Office of LACDPH continues to define an outbreak as three or more linked cases within 14 days. If LACDPH determines that three or more positive cases are linked, medical experts from LACDPH will contact the District to investigate the cases and determine if a building or the entire campus should be shutdown.

PLANNING AHEAD

Be assured that our Administration and COVID-19 Taskforce will continue to monitor any new developments and identify steps required to maintain safety for all staff and students. Timely news will be shared if there are any changes or updates to our protocols. For more information on the District's latest safety protocols with respect to COVID-19, refer to the [COVID-19 Workplace Guide](#) and the [COVID-19 Prevention Program](#).

If there are any questions, please direct them to Reneé Gallegos at RDGallegos@riohondo.edu or Angie Tomasich at angie.tomasich@riohondo.edu. Either can help direct your inquiry to the appropriate department. By continuing to work together, following protocols, and protecting ourselves, we can maintain our collective health as a campus and safely serve our students.

Sincerely,



Teresa Dreyfuss
Superintendent/President