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November 16, 2016

Dear Rio Hondo College Community Students:

We care about you. We understand how you are feeling. The Rio Hondo College family is here to support you. In response to last Tuesday's presidential election -- and the events and rhetoric that have followed it -- we are writing to let you know that **we care deeply about all of our students**. We are especially concerned about students who are most vulnerable, including undocumented students. To those of you who are fearful, distressed, anxious, or unsure of what the future holds, **Rio Hondo College stands in solidarity with you and supports you**. We do not tolerate unwelcome or harassing conduct based on race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, among other characteristics.

We share our entire community's concern for the fate of our undocumented students and those whose relatives may be undocumented. Rio Hondo College's support of undocumented students is longstanding. As another expression of this steadfast support, the Board of Trustees, at last Wednesday's November 9 Board of Trustees Meeting, directed staff to explore the process by which our campus can be designated as a **sanctuary institution**. As a sanctuary college, Rio Hondo College would:

1. **Ensure student privacy** by refusing to release information regarding immigration status of our students, staff, and community members (see *Family Education Rights Privacy Act or FERPA*)
2. **Adopt a board policy which would prohibit cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials from entering campus without warrants** or proper documentation and refuse compliance with deportations or raids in the absence of extenuating circumstances (*ICE officials are subject to restrictions which classify colleges as "sensitive locations" per US ICE Memo RE: Policy Number 10029.2; FEA Number: 306-112-002b which can be visited at: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>*)
3. **Be a safe space** for kinship, conversation, and care for all of our students, staff, and community members

Making Rio Hondo College a sanctuary campus will protect the students and members of our community who are living in extreme fear and uncertainty. We will continue to explore how we can extend our support and will communicate other manifestations of this support in the days and weeks ahead. We will do everything we can within the law to protect our undocumented students, Muslim students, LGBTQI students, and all of our vulnerable students because it is the right thing to do and because we love our students.

As an educational institution, part of Rio Hondo College's calling is to be a center of lifelong learning for all. Rio Hondo College fulfills this vocation by boldly living our mission which is to remain "committed to the success of our diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities." We answer the call by responding with love, tolerance, and peace. Without question, we must reject all gestures, statements, and symbols of hate that appear on our campus, online, or elsewhere. Our words and actions matter, for they reveal our innermost thoughts and biases. **All of us are responsible for co-creating a college community of inclusion, equity, and justice.**

Rio Hondo College has been, is, and will remain an inclusive space in which all persons are welcomed with civility and invited to engage in constant learning and open dialogue. Our continuous care for students is what motivated us to become leaders in education. Love for students, when translated into concrete action steps like the ones mentioned above, will help us prevail in our collective efforts to maintain a safe, learning environment for all.

In solidarity,

Teresa Dreyfuss
Superintendent/President

Mary Ann Pacheco
President, Board of Trustees