



# A PROMISE DELIVERED

RIO HONDO COLLEGE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



2018

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## VISION STATEMENT

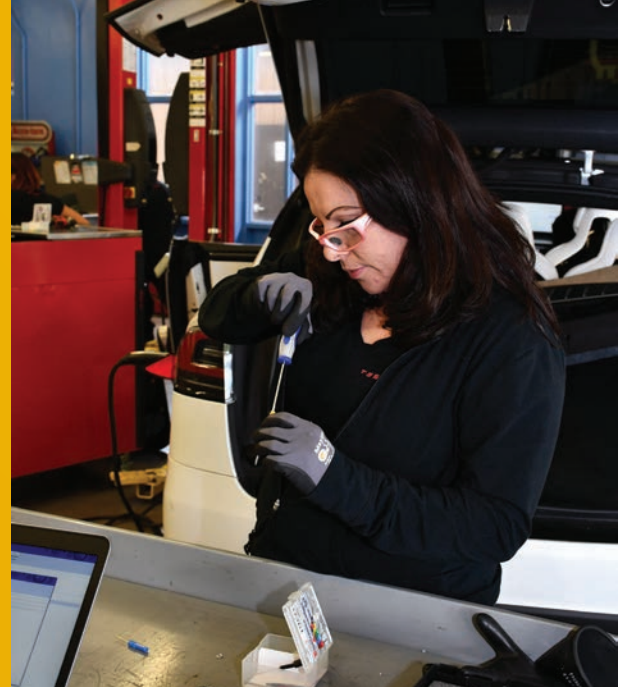
Rio Hondo College strives to be an exemplary California community college, meeting the learning needs of its changing and growing population and developing a state-of-the-art campus to serve future generations.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Rio Hondo College is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.

## ACCREDITATION

Rio Hondo College is fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Teresa Dreyfuss**  
Superintendent/President

## Our Promise

Rio Hondo College changes lives. It's really as simple as that. The evidence is all around us – in the students who are pursuing their dreams, in the faculty members who are so passionate about their jobs, and in our staff and administrators who have made this College their life's work.

I know, because I feel the same way.

I started at Rio Hondo College more than 30 years ago. Like many of our students, I was an immigrant to this country seeking to find my own place, my own home.

I found that at Rio Hondo College, where my hard work was recognized and rewarded. Today, I have the privilege of helping lead this extraordinary institution as it creates change for so many others.

Take, for example, Emilio Cardona-Gonzalez. He's featured in an article on these pages about his journey from construction worker to Tesla auto technician – a journey sparked by the guidance of his teachers.

Or consider Dr. Adam Wetsman, an anthropology professor who was honored with the Hayward Award, which recognizes his excellence in the classroom and his advocacy on behalf of his colleagues.

Celebrate Yoshio Nakamura, one of the first faculty and administrators to set foot on this campus. Today, at 93, he is continuing to draw accolades for his service after spending so many years inspiring students with his vibrant art and commitment.

And then there is Rio Hondo College's nursing program, which earned a Gold Star from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for placing so many of its graduates in nursing posts with excellent salaries.

Each is a story of achievement made possible by the incredible atmosphere of possibility that represents Rio Hondo College. They also highlight the superlative spectrum of opportunity available at our College.

We say it a lot at this campus – Start Rio, Go Anywhere – a truth that never becomes old.

This is my last year at Rio Hondo College. I will be passing the reins on to someone new. I am thankful there are so many talented faculty, administrators and staff here who are dedicated to the same ideal and who will support my successor just as they provided invaluable support to me.

And that's because, like me, they know that Rio Hondo College changes lives.

**“RIO HONDO COLLEGE DELIVERS ON THE PROMISE OF ACCESS TO COLLEGE, GUIDANCE TO PURSUING ACADEMIC AND CAREER GOALS, CLASSROOM AND PERSONAL SUPPORT, AND ASSISTANCE IN PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION AND JOB PLACEMENT. IT'S A PROMISE WITH THE POWER TO TRANSFORM LIVES.”**

# HIGHLIGHTS:

## A TAPESTRY OF ACHIEVEMENT

IN 2018, RIO HONDO CONTINUED ITS TRADITION OF ACHIEVEMENT, SECURING HONORS IN RECOGNITION OF ITS SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS, PROVIDE STELLAR ACADEMIC AND CAREER TRAINING PROGRAMS AND ENSURE ACCESS TO COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS ACROSS THE REGION.

- ▶ Rio Hondo College became the first Los Angeles County community college to expand free tuition to second-year students through its Rio Promise program.
- ▶ The College awarded 622 degrees for transfer that guarantee admission to California State University campuses – a 12 percent jump from 2017.
- ▶ Career and Technical Education programs received a Gold Star for the nursing program, Silver Star for the automotive technology program as well as seven Bronze Stars from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Strong Workforce Stars Program, recognizing Rio Hondo College's ability to place graduates in careers with strong wages based on their fields of study.
- ▶ Academic programs added Associate of Science and Certificate of Achievement fields of study in the fast-growing area of Homeland Security.
- ▶ The College expanded and created new programs to support undocumented students and their families through a three-year grant-funded initiative, with \$125,000 allocated for the first year.
- ▶ The College received a Bobby Salcedo Esperanza Award from the El Monte Promise Foundation, recognizing an extensive outreach program, summer programs for K-12 students, classes at local high schools, concurrent enrollment opportunities and tutoring for local schoolchildren.



# 2018 CAMPUS PROFILE

## Degrees and Certificates

1,822 Associate Degrees  
2,317 Chancellor-approved Certificates

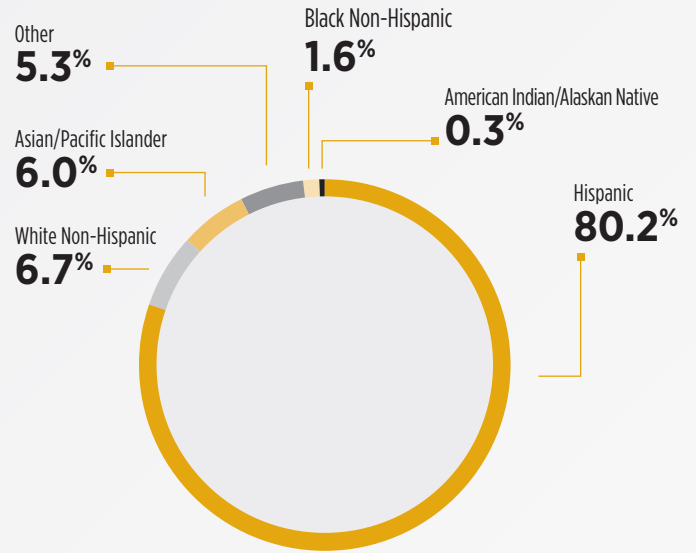
▶ **4,139** Total Program Awards

## Enrollment Status

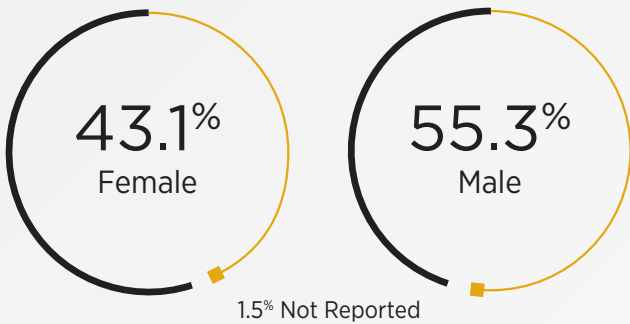
Part time — 15,606  
Full time — 4,263  
Non-credit — 1,876

**Total Enrollment — 21,945**

## Ethnicity



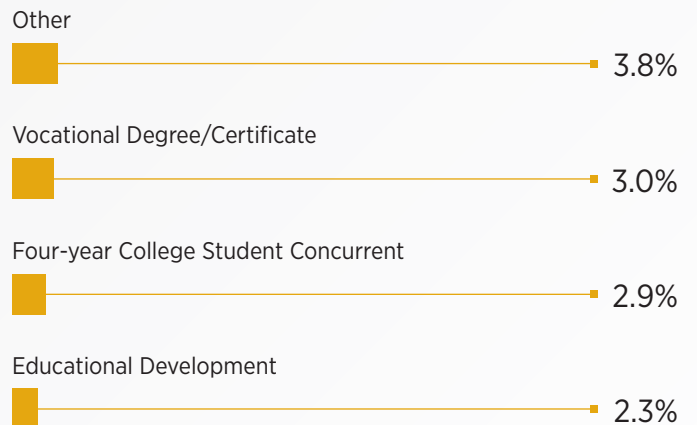
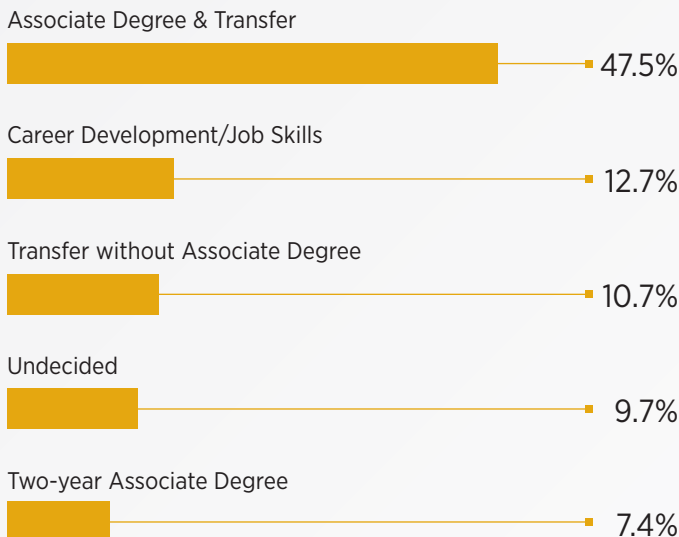
## Gender



## Median age



## Educational Goals



**12,322** Students Receiving Aid — **\$31.96M** Aid Amount

# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS



## **Professor Captures Writing Honor ▶**

Spanish Professor Mariano Zaro won the Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing's 2018 Writing Contest with a short story titled "[Niñamiel/Honeygirl](#)," receiving free tuition and housing for the group's exclusive weeklong Summer Seminar. Zaro,

who serves as co-adviser to Rio Hondo College's Creative Writing Club, used the opportunity to review his writing techniques, collaborate with fellow writers and receive guidance on his work.

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## **Film Professor Praised for Rosa Parks Documentary ▶**

Rio Hondo College instructor and filmmaker Angela S. Williamson, Ph.D., screened her first documentary in 2018 – "My Life with Rosie," about her cousin Rosa Parks – which won the grand prize for best documentary

at the Culver City Film Festival and the audience award for best documentary at the Silicon Beach Film Festival. Three additional screenings were held at the Action on Film International Film Festival, the Hollywood Dreamz International Film Festival and the Silver State Film Festival.

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## **Rio Hondo Honors 2018 Fellow of the College ▶**

Rio Hondo College honored as its 2018 Fellow of the College Dr. Jennifer Fernandez, who retired after serving 42 years as an educator. Over 31 years, Fernandez served Rio Hondo College as a counselor, professor, director of

student development, coordinator of the College's South Whittier Educational Center and interim dean of student affairs.

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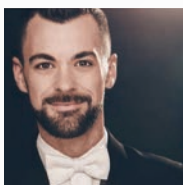


## **Speech and Debate Coordinator Receives National Award ▶**

Professor Grant Tovmasian received the Collie-Taylor Coach Fellowship Award for outstanding coaching at the 2018 Phi Rho Pi National Championships for forensic speech and debate. "Students discover that they

possess not only the right but the ability to express what they believe in," Tovmasian said. "Once that happens, they are driven to express themselves better."

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## **Fulbright Scholar Leads Rio Hondo Choirs ▶**

Steven Salts, an internationally distinguished Fulbright Scholar of choral music, joined the Choirs at Rio Hondo College in 2018. Salts has directed choirs throughout the United States and Europe, including performances at Westminster Abbey, four basilicas in Rome

and venues in New York City and Los Angeles.

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## **Legendary Administrator Honored for World War II Service ▶**

Former College vice president Yoshio C. Nakamura, 93, who served as a staff sergeant in World War II, was honored by the Los Angeles Dodgers, by Rio Hondo College and was named grand marshal of a Whittier

holiday parade. Nakamura was interned by the U.S. with other Japanese Americans. He served as part of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, which was composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

After the war, Nakamura earned BFA and MFA degrees from USC and began teaching at Whittier High School. When Rio Hondo College was established, he was hired as the founding instructor and chair of the Fine Arts Department. He retired as a vice president of Rio Hondo College in 1992.

In 2018, he was honored as Military Hero of the Game by the Dodgers, given special recognition at Rio Hondo College's annual Veterans Day commemoration and served as grand marshal for the 65th annual Uptown Whittier Christmas Parade, which draws about 15,000 viewers.

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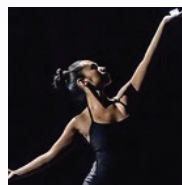


## **Professor Receives 2018 Distinguished Faculty Award ▶**

Rio Hondo College's Board of Trustees awarded the 2018 Distinguished Faculty Award to Professor Katie O'Brien, who does triple duty as an Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S) counselor

and coordinator of the College's staff development and FLEX program. O'Brien co-wrote the curriculum that re-established counseling as a teaching department, designed summer readiness curriculum for first-time college students, crafted a training program for peer advisers and created a learning community that paired basic math and Counseling 101.

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## **Award-winning Choreographer Joins College Dance Program ▶**

Award-winning choreographer Vanessa Kanamoto joined Rio Hondo College's dance program in 2018, teaching a combination of entry-level and advanced courses. Kanamoto, who holds a Master of Fine Arts from UC

Irvine, taught Dance Conditioning and Alignment in fall 2018, serving as the College's guest choreographer and working with advanced students in Rio Hondo's Dance Collective. Kanamoto's work "Shikata ga nai" was chosen as a Gala Concert Winner at the American College Dance Festival and was one of two pieces selected for the national festival.

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# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

“WINNING THE HAYWARD AWARD IS A GREAT HONOR, ONE THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT RIO HONDO’S GREAT STUDENTS, SUPPORTIVE STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION, AND DEDICATED TEACHING COLLEAGUES,”

## Campus Leader Honored for Commitment

Rio Hondo College anthropology Professor Adam Wetsman, Ph.D., received a 2018 Hayward Award from the California Community College system in recognition of his excellence in teaching, professional activities and commitment to students.

The Board of Governors award, which is sponsored by the Foundation for California Community Colleges, goes annually to four faculty members who are nominated by their peers across the 114-campus system.

“Winning the Hayward Award is a great honor, one that would not have been possible without Rio Hondo’s great students, supportive staff and administration, and dedicated teaching colleagues,” Wetsman said.

The award is named for former California Community College Chancellor Gerald C. Hayward. Winners were presented with the award at the California Community College’s Board of Governors meeting in March 2018, with the system’s president, chancellor and Academic Senate president.

Wetsman has served as president of Rio Hondo College’s Faculty Association and Academic Senate, as well as serving in other roles with both groups. He is currently the negotiation chair for the faculty association. He also serves as president of the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC).

As a teacher, he has dedicated himself to ensuring his students have all the materials they need to succeed, even writing low-cost textbooks, securing \$50,000 in funding for a student anthropology lab and creating hours of audio-video lectures that mirror class presentations to facilitate student learning.

“I am continually in awe of Adam Wetsman’s impeccable reputation with students,” 2018 Academic Senate President Michelle Bean said. “I am honored to work with him.”

Wetsman also led development of Rio Hondo College’s anthropology transfer degree and assisted in developing general education courses as part of the College’s new Bachelor of Science in automotive technology.



# STUDENT SUCCESS



## Forensics Speech and Debate Team Places 3rd in National Tourney

Rio Hondo College's Forensics Speech and Debate Team placed third at the 2018 Phi Rho Pi National Competition, one of the program's strongest showings. The team competed against 30 other schools in its division during the tournament, sponsored by Phi Rho Pi, the national forensic association for two-year colleges. Rio Hondo College's third-place finish is based on points earned by its nine competing students across three styles of debate.

"Overall, this was a very strong year for us," Rio Hondo College professor and debate coach Grant Tommasian said. "That stems from our approach – our goal isn't focused on awards, but on pushing each other to succeed and to be better."

## Student Performs for National Dance Group

Rio Hondo College student David Bernal performed a solo piece titled "Cocoon" in the American College Dance Association's (ACDA) Gala Concert on Jan. 26, 2018. "This is a huge success for our small program," said Dr. Alyson Cartagena, who directs Rio Hondo College's dance program.

Bernal was chosen for the Gala based on his performance during the ACDA's Baja regional conference, a four-day festival that featured four adjudicated performances, master classes, workshops, lectures and three informal concerts. Three national judges selected Bernal to perform at the Gala Concert at Cal State Dominguez Hills.

"David's athletic and sinuous solo was a mesmerizing performance and received a standing ovation," said Cartagena, who along with Rachel Lopez acted as rehearsal director.

## Soroptimist International of Whittier Awards Scholarships to Students

Five Rio Hondo College CARE students received scholarships from Soroptimist International of Whittier during the group's annual Live Your Dream Scholarship Luncheon on April 17, 2018. The contest recognizes female students for overcoming life challenges in pursuit of their education. Scholarship winners were Valentina Higgins, \$5,000; Krystal Galarzo, \$2,500; Stephanie Saenz, \$2,500; Charlene Pena, \$2,500; and Linda Pedroza, \$2,500.

In addition, 10 other CARE students who applied for the Live Your Dream Scholarship, but were not selected as finalists, also received awards at the lunch – thanks to a donor who awarded each student \$500 to encourage them to keep trying.

## Student-athlete Serves as Wellness Ambassador

Jordan Midyette, a Rio Hondo College student-athlete and kinesiology major, was selected to serve as a student wellness ambassador for the 2018-19 academic year by the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Only 15 students from across the state were chosen.



Ambassadors learn about statewide mental health and wellness resources and provide peer outreach at their community college campus to connect students with resources and support services, raise mental health awareness and reduce stigma.

Midyette obtained a bachelor's degree in sociology from UC Santa Cruz and enrolled at Rio Hondo to expand her educational and career opportunities, obtain the fitness specialist and coaching certificates and participate on the women's volleyball team.



# STUDENT SUCCESS

## Rio Promise Expands to Second Year

Rio Hondo College became the first community college in Los Angeles County to offer two years of free tuition to new college students in 2018 when it expanded the Rio Promise program.

The program launched in 2017-18 with 447 full-time, first-year students from local public high schools. In 2018-19, the numbers more than quintupled to 2,364 students after the College expanded the program to students from all high schools. An estimated 498 students qualified for the second-year program.

In all, the program has saved students a staggering \$2.35 million.

“Part of our mission as a community college is to eliminate barriers that prevent students from realizing their academic and career dreams,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “This expansion of the Rio Promise helps us to deliver on that mission.”

That’s certainly true for Ixel Camacho, who joined the Rio Promise in 2017 and returned as a second-year Scholar when the program expanded in fall 2018.

Camacho, a La Serna High School graduate, said her acceptance at Rio Hondo College has kept alive her dream of studying game animation and art at UC Santa Cruz.

“The Rio Promise has helped me attend these first two years of college without loans,” Camacho said. “When I didn’t get into UC Santa Cruz out of high school, I had to consider my options for other schools. Attending Rio means I can still pursue that goal.”

Camacho said her other options out of high school, including her acceptance at Cal State campuses, would have taken her far from home and made it financially impossible for her to transfer to Santa Cruz.



First-year Rio Promise Scholar Jared Walraven, a 2018 Pioneer High School graduate, said he wasn’t sure what he wanted to study in college. Thanks to a Rio Hondo College counselor, he learned he could explore his options locally, benefit from free tuition and earn a degree that would help him toward his goal of attending USC.

“The Rio Promise has really paved the way for me,” Walraven said. “The counselors at Rio Hondo College are very supportive, the professors are easy to talk to and the priority registration has ensured my classes are just what I need. The free tuition has allowed me to focus completely on my studies as I started college.”

Walraven is pursuing his associate degree in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Since he is exploring options, he said his community college journey may take him three years – an option he couldn’t have afforded at a more expensive public or private college.



“RIO HONDO IS SO CLOSE. I REALLY LOVE THE SCHOOL AND THE ENVIRONMENT.”

# OUTREACH

## College Offers K-12 Tutoring to Community

Rio Hondo College is offering a tutoring program for area public schools in its Adopt-A-School program, providing college students who are studying child development and related fields to assist K-12 students during and after school.

The program was piloted in spring 2018 at Scott Avenue Elementary in East Whittier City School District. It has since been expanded to include Dean Shively Middle School and New Temple Elementary in the Valle Lindo Elementary School District, Dexter Middle School and Orange Grove Elementary School in Whittier City School District and Graves Middle School in South Whittier Elementary District.

The Adopt-A-School program started with providing information on College programs during Back-to-School Nights, offering campus tours and connecting students with cultural programs at Rio Hondo. Each year, the College hosts about 250 middle school students for Discover Rio, a day of exploration of higher education opportunities.

"This effort is all about making a difference in the lives of students in the community – whether that's when they arrive at Rio Hondo College or ensuring that college is an option when the time comes," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said.

On a rainy day in fall, Rio Hondo College students Carolina Castillo, Samantha Martinez and Angela Yerena helped Scott Avenue Elementary fifth-graders brainstorm arguments for why the school



would benefit from longer recess or a vending machine. Later, the three college students offered small group tutoring in math and one-on-one assistance in reading. Some tutors stayed until after school to assist students with their homework.

Yerena, who is studying child development, began volunteering during the pilot effort.

"I'm going to be a preschool teacher, so I thought it would give me experience before I went into the career. I wanted to see if teaching was what I really wanted," she said. "Now, I know I can do it. I really enjoy working with the kids and seeing them learn."

In addition to existing partners, five schools are slated to join the program.



# CAREER TECH

## Tesla Partnership Underscores CTE Strengths

Rio Hondo College launched the nation's second Tesla service technician training program in 2018, training two cohorts of students who immediately secured high-paying positions with Tesla service facilities upon graduation.

The College's program was the first in California, offering 800 hours training over 12 weeks in the skills needed to work on electric vehicles as well as the soft skills that help with obtaining employment. Tesla provides the curriculum, instructors, equipment and job opportunities so students can smoothly transition from the program to full-time employment at salaries of over \$20 an hour, full benefits and company equity.

Students included three women and seven men in the first cohort, which graduated May 23, 2018, and three women and 13 men in the second cohort, which graduated Nov. 9, 2018.

Emilio Cardona-Gonzalez, who was part of the second cohort, works as part of Tesla's Tactical Response Team, traveling among service centers to boost efficiency and troubleshoot. Cardona-Gonzalez said he took his first class in automotive tech as an elective so he could fix his own car.

"I was working construction after high school when I decided to major in criminal justice," Cardona-Gonzalez said. "But then Professor John Frala introduced me to hybrid and electric vehicles. It really sparked my interest in climate change and spurred me to focus on electric vehicles."

Cardona-Gonzalez was continuing his studies and working as an entry-level technician for Toyota when Rio Hondo College launched the training. After he joined the program, members of the Tactical Response Team encouraged him and fellow students to apply to work for their group. He did so that day.

"We cover everything from the factory to the service centers and delivery. It's a very satisfying job - every day there's something new and different," Cardona-Gonzalez said. "You've got to be on your toes. It keeps me challenged."

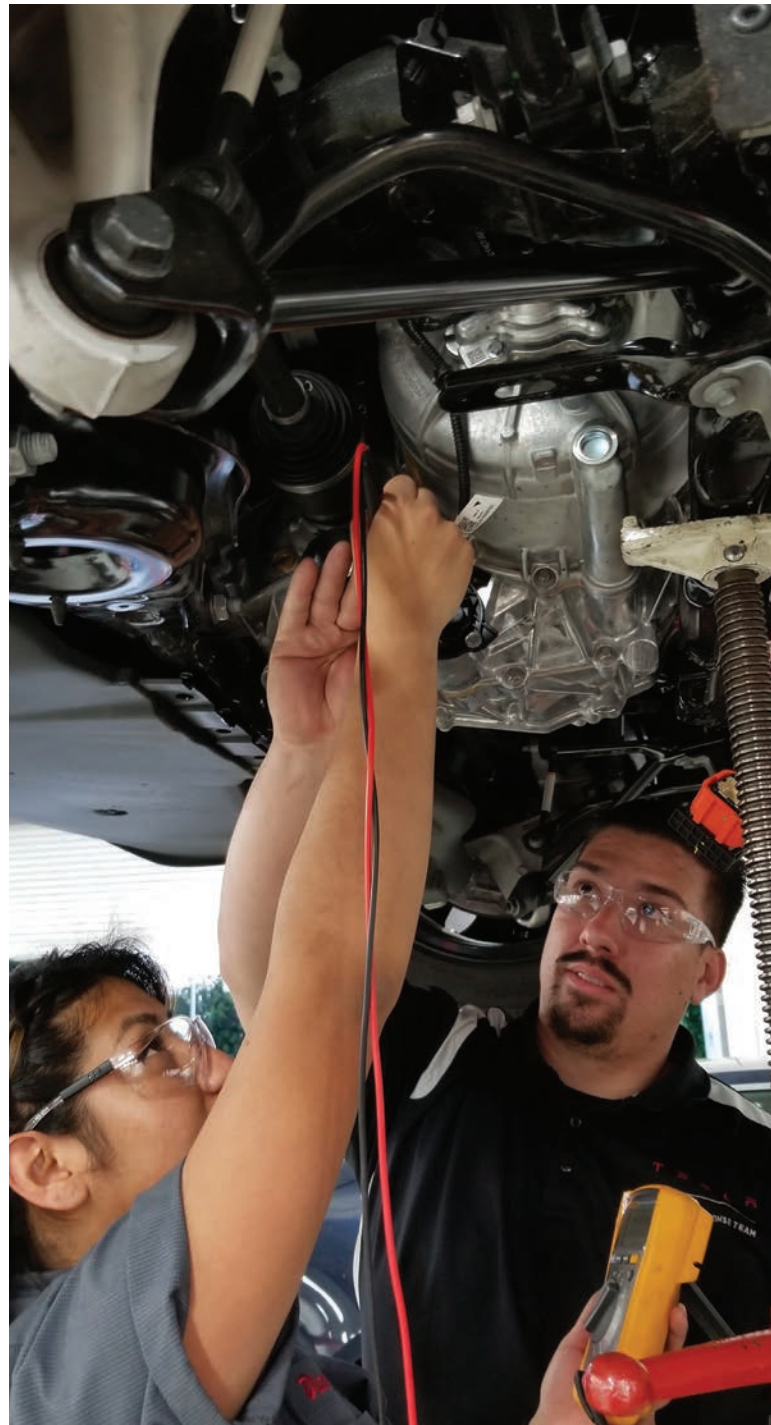
Cardona-Gonzalez, who has traveled from San Diego to Salt Lake City to coach Tesla techs, said he is taking classes at Rio Hondo College to complete his Associate of Science degree in automotive technology.

Natalie Dovalos-Flores, who was part of the first cohort, works as an instructor for Tesla at its second California training program at Evergreen College in San Jose. Flores said her instructors nurtured her interest in teaching - something she hadn't considered when she first started college.

"It's a great opportunity they provided me," Flores said. "My instructors saw that I had a passion and drive for teaching and they really nurtured it."

Flores, a single mom, said her path to auto tech started when she decided to overcome her anxiety over check-engine lights.

"When I had to change a tire on my car, I did it, and conquered my fear," she said. "Then, I decided to go further and started working on my own car. Along the way, I gained a real liking for it."



"WE COVER EVERYTHING FROM THE FACTORY TO THE SERVICE CENTERS AND DELIVERY. IT'S A VERY SATISFYING JOB - EVERY DAY THERE'S SOMETHING NEW AND DIFFERENT...YOU'VE GOT TO BE ON YOUR TOES. IT KEEPS ME CHALLENGED."

# A LASTING LEGACY



## Retiring Superintendent/President Leaves Lasting Mark

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss, who is retiring June 30, helped lead Rio Hondo College through the Great Recession, execute close to \$300 million in construction projects, open three regional campuses and create a historic four-year degree in automotive technology.

Dreyfuss started at the College as a part-time faculty member in 1987 and rose through the ranks to become interim superintendent/president in 2012, assuming the post permanently a year later. She announced her plan to step down to administrators, faculty and students in August 2018.

She set her last day as June 30, ensuring enough time for a seamless transition in leadership.

“Teresa Dreyfuss is one of those rare individuals who understands both the fine details and the big picture,” said Madeline Shapiro, who served as the 2018 Board of Trustees president. “Her financial acumen ensured the campus was financially strong regardless of the economy, and her passion and leadership have translated into a legacy of success for Rio Hondo College and its students. She will be greatly missed.”

In her roles as senior accountant, controller/business manager, chief financial officer and vice president of finance and business, Dreyfuss focused on ensuring the

College’s fiscal stability. During the Great Recession, Rio Hondo College avoided layoffs and furloughs, an achievement attributed to Dreyfuss’ careful planning.

An immigrant from Taiwan, Dreyfuss often cited her journey to the presidency as a way to inspire Rio Hondo College students with their potential to succeed.

“I came to this country as an immigrant and discovered a place at Rio Hondo College, one of the most creative and dedicated communities I have ever experienced,” Dreyfuss said. “I love this College and what it has become.”

Mary Ann Pacheco, a Rio Hondo College professor and faculty leader for 38 years, as well as a former trustee, said Dreyfuss has always been deeply committed to the success of the College.

“For more than 30 years, Teresa Dreyfuss poured her heart and soul into Rio Hondo College. She guarded its finances, ensuring the College was strong even when others struggled. She promoted success for its students, knocking down barrier after barrier. And she celebrated her faculty, staff and administrators with the compassion that comes from long association and deep appreciation,” Pacheco said.

“She cares deeply about Rio Hondo College. I have tremendous respect for her and all she has accomplished over the years,” she added.

Dreyfuss said she will spend her post-RHC time with her family, including her mother, and traveling.

“Rio Hondo College has been a second family to me. I appreciate the opportunity Rio Hondo College gave to me to grow in my career and help lead this incredible institution,” Dreyfuss said.

## Achievements

- ▶ Comprehensive transformation and modernization of campus facilities
- ▶ Expansion of college services to include three regional campuses
- ▶ Pathway to Law School program
- ▶ Historic four-year Bachelor of Science in automotive technology
- ▶ Rio Promise providing two years of free tuition for new, full-time college students
- ▶ 27 degrees guaranteeing transfer admission to California State University
- ▶ Revenue boosted by \$5 million during revisions in the new community college funding formula
- ▶ Full WASC accreditation through 2022

# A FOUNDATION OF SUPPORT



## Donors Make a Difference at Rio Hondo

Rio Hondo College appreciates the amazing donors who support scholarships, programs and projects through their generous gifts to the Foundation. In 2018, students received 215 individual scholarship awards totaling more than \$110,000. Scholarships helped offset the costs of books, supplies, transportation and fees. Ten new scholarships were established and funded by generous individuals and organizations.

The 2018 fundraiser, "A Taste of Rio," brought together more than 550 supporters from the campus and community. Guests enjoyed fine wine and gourmet foods, opportunity drawings and live entertainment, and raised \$107,000 for Rio Hondo scholarships and programs. Special gifts supported Rio Hondo's Guardian Scholars Program (current and former foster children), veterans and nursing students. A grant enabled Boys & Girls Club members to enjoy a week of "Camp Rio," experiencing their first taste of college life.

## 2018 Rio Hondo College Foundation Donors

### Gifts \$25,000+

BCM Foundation  
Edison International  
Foundation for California  
Community Colleges/Osher  
Pritzker Foster Care Initiative  
Albert and Bettie Sacchi Foundation

### Gifts \$10,000+

Del Terra Real Estate SVC, Inc.  
Westberg + White, Inc.

### Gifts \$5,000+

Pat Ballew  
California Resource  
Management Association  
Charitable Adult Rides  
& Services, Inc. (CARS)  
Coca-Cola  
Follett Higher Education Group  
Maurice Meysenburg  
Dianne Pellissier  
Rio Hondo College  
Auxiliary Services Org.

### Gifts \$2,500+

Bank of the West  
Jacqueline Brearley  
California Domestic Water Company  
CWDL Certified Public Accounts  
John E. DeWitt and Robin DeWitt  
Edison International YourCause, LLC Trustee  
Henry Gee\*  
Yuko Houston  
In N Out Burger Foundation  
Interior Office Solutions (IOS)  
Don Jenkins\*  
Keenan and Associates  
Longo Toyota-Lexus  
Yoshio Nakamura\*  
John Peel\*  
PIH Health  
The Solis Group  
Christine Tellez  
Neal Welland\*  
Wood (John Wood Group PLC)

### Gifts \$1,000+

Jose Arroyo\*  
Robert Bethel\*  
Eleanor Bewley\*  
Gary L. Curtis \*  
Firouzeh Daryoush\*  
Teresa Dreyfuss\*  
Dr. Carmella Franco\*  
Rebecca Green\*  
Dr. Sergio Guzman\*  
Donald Hannah\*  
Steven Hebert\*  
Scott Jaeggi\*  
Terry Keller\*  
Patricia A. Luna\*  
Mark Matsui\*  
Gerson Montiel\*  
Delia Morales\*  
Loy Nashua\*  
Cynthia Nickell\*  
Mary Ann Pacheco\*  
Catherine Page\*

Dr. Marijane Paulsen\*  
Shaina Phillips\*  
Dr. Vann Priest\*  
Dr. Laura Ramirez\*  
Richard J Ramirez\*  
Cecilia Rocha\*  
Carlos Rodriguez\*  
Rotary Club of Whittier\*  
Barbara Salazar\*  
Judith Sanders\*  
Ana Victoria Santana\*  
SchoolsFirst Credit Union\*  
James Smith\*  
Bryan Tabizon\*  
Jose Uribe\*  
Gary Van Voorhis\*  
Mahlon Woirhaye\*

*\* President's Circle Members give \$1,000 or more in unrestricted gifts annually. Members receive recognition and invitations to special events.*



# 2018 COMMENCEMENT

## Student Achievement Sets Records

California State Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon congratulated graduates at Rio Hondo College's 55th annual Commencement Ceremony on May 24, 2018 and urged them to "make a difference."

"We have to look out for each other," Calderon said during the event's keynote speech. "You've all killed it to get here today, but the work doesn't stop here. The fight always goes on. ... Now go out there, make a difference and remember that if you can do this, you can do anything."

The ceremony recognized 1,399 students who earned an estimated 2,001 academic degrees, including 653 degrees for transfer, which guarantee admission to the California State University system. Both figures top the College's numbers for 2017.

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss told students that the sacrifices they made to achieve their degrees were worth it. She said she understood the sense of accomplishment that comes from achieving their degrees, comparing it to her journey as an immigrant to the U.S. from Taiwan to becoming the College's president.

2018 Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC) President Martin Covarrubias – who helped develop Rio Hondo College's food pantry program, the RioSource Room – said students faced many challenges during their time at Rio Hondo College. For him, that moment came when his grandfather died.

"My world came crashing down, so fast, I couldn't snap out of it and be the positive person I am 24/7," he said. "But I finally did because I remembered my dream as a little boy: that of always wanting to do big things, things like this."

In fall, Covarrubias transferred to UC Riverside as a liberal studies major.

Rio Hondo College leaders also paid tribute to the many veterans and active duty military who attend the College.

Valedictorian Bailey Garcia received the College's Marie I. Pellissier Award. Garcia earned a 4.0 GPA while taking part in the Extended Opportunity Program & Services (EOP&S), Guardian Scholars and Peer Advisory Leaders and serving as ASRHC treasurer. He will study philosophy at UC Berkeley in preparation for attending law school and pursuing his dream of starting a nonprofit.



## Outstanding Students

Rio Hondo College honored three outstanding graduates who overcame challenges en route to earning their degrees.



◀ Brenda Coronel, a low-income single mother of a 3-year-old daughter, survived an abusive past to pursue a degree in psychology. Coronel dropped out of Rio Hondo College during her first year but returned determined to succeed. She earned a 3.66 GPA while working part time and serving as a student leader. Coronel transferred to UCLA.



◀ Yarisma Rocha, a single mother whose 5-year-old battled leukemia since infancy, earned a business degree with a 3.85 GPA. She transferred to USC's Marshall School of Business.



◀ Jason Hoang's parents were refugees after the Vietnam War and his mother worked at a sweatshop. When he was 13, his family lost their home during the housing crisis and he suffered from depression as they shuttled from home to home.

Hoang was determined to obtain an education so he could leave poverty behind, earning a 4.0 GPA and serving as a Peer Advisory Leadership mentor. Hoang will attend UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business.



# FACILITIES, FINANCES, ACHIEVEMENTS

## Measure A Bond Funds Spending

To ensure Measure A funds were spent properly and effectively according to the project list approved by the voters of the College building program, Rio Hondo College completed independent annual financial and performance audits as called for under Proposition 39. Since the passage of Measure A in 2004, the District's bond financial audits have culminated in clean or unmodified opinions. Bond performance audits verified that bond expenditures were only for specific projects developed by the Board of Trustees and approved by the voters, in accordance with the requirements of Proposition 39. For 2017-18, the sample evaluated just



under \$467,000, or 55 percent of total expenditures, covering specific construction projects, vendors and expenditure amounts. An external audit also verified the establishment of the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee,

which met regularly during the year. Total bond expenditures for fiscal year 2018 were \$844,000, with bond expenditures year-to-date since inception of \$176.5 million.

## Facility Improvements

Rio Hondo College is continuing an aggressive program of campus improvements that includes a major seismic retrofit to its L Tower and a transit hub called Rio Plaza. In 2018, the College celebrated the grand opening of its expanded bookstore and printshop.



**Bookstore/printshop:** The \$1.3 million project expanded the bookstore from 4,109 square feet to 6,682 square feet; the print shop grew from 937 square feet to 1,760 square feet. A grand opening celebration was held in February 2018.



**L-Tower:** The College, primarily using state bond funds, constructed a fire access road, added new fire hydrants and underground fire water lines and demolished the 53,906-square-foot building's interior to allow access to structural columns and beams in preparation for the seismic upgrade. The \$28.7 million project is expected to be completed in 2020.



**Rio Plaza:** Construction drawings and a California Geological Survey report for the 40,096-square-foot project have been submitted for review. Once the documents are approved by the Division of the State Architect, the College can award a contract through a bidding process for the \$3 million project. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2019.

## Fiscal Solvency

Rio Hondo College's general fund contingency reserve for fiscal year 2017-18 was approximately \$9.2 million, or 9.1 percent of general fund expenditures. For fiscal year 2018-19, the state budget allocation includes a 2.71 percent (about \$2 million) in a cost-of-living adjustment, amounting to total apportionment funding of approximately \$74.5 million. Total general fund budgeted revenues and expenditures for 2018-19 are \$116.3 million and \$116.5 million, respectively, with an estimated ending reserve of \$8.9 million or 7.7 percent of general fund expenditures.



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“WE ARE ALL INDIVIDUALS SEEKING TRANSFORMATION - PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT WE ARE TODAY TO DISCOVER WHAT WE WILL BECOME TOMORROW. RIO HONDO COLLEGE’S PROMISE TO THE COMMUNITY IS TO BE A PARTNER IN THIS JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY.”

- Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss

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