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MEDIA RELEASE

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Rio Hondo College Hosts Second Annual Dreamers Conference for Undocumented Students

WHITTIER – Rio Hondo College will host Dreamers Conference 2019, themed “Together We Dream,” from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. **Friday, April 5** – the first of a trio of events designed to assist undocumented students to pursue their dreams.

The conference is open to all students who support equity and their undocumented classmates, as well as to the community.

It will feature remarks by Board of Trustees President Gary Mendez; a keynote address by Board of Trustees Vice President Oscar Valladares; a Dreamers Panel; an immigration update; resource fair; college finance presentation; mental health presentation; a second keynote from Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights California Dream Network Statewide Youth Organizer Melody Klingenfuss and an “Undocumented and Unafraid” rally.

The event will be followed by Pathways for Citizenship on April 12 and April 19, events that teach students about different pathways to residency and citizenship.

“Rio Hondo College is committed to ensuring all our students have the opportunity to pursue their goals for education, regardless of residency status,” Board of Education President Gary Mendez said. “This Dreamers Conference is part of our commitment to providing students with the resources and support they need to achieve those goals.”

Valladares, a former Dreamer, grew up in East Los Angeles after arriving from Guatemala as a child. He is a deputy public conservator with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.

The Dreamers Panel will be facilitated by Counselor Edward Henderson and includes a Rio Hondo College Student, a Cal State Dominguez Hills graduate student, a Cal State Los Angeles alumnus and a Cal State Long Beach graduate student.

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Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, 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. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

Immigration updates will be provided by Yesenia Acosta, an immigration attorney with the Law Offices of Scott Warmuth.

Klingenfuss was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala and grew up on the frontier with El Salvador. She holds a master's degree in nonprofit leadership and management from USC.

The resource fair will include representatives from Cal State Dominguez Hills, Cal State L.A., Cal Poly Pomona, UC Irvine, UC Santa Cruz, UCLA, UC Riverside, UC Merced, UC Davis, University of La Verne and Whittier College, as well as multiple departments and services from Rio Hondo College. Also attending will be representatives of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the office of U.S. Rep. Linda Sanchez, Community Health Alliance of Pasadena and Peace Over Violence, a legal advocacy project.

"This second annual Dreamers Conference does more than re-affirm Rio Hondo College's commitment to serving all of our diverse student body," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "It makes it clear that our commitment is an ongoing, everyday promise we will deliver on every front. Education is everyone's right."

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