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CONTACT: Ruthie Retana
(562) 463-3145

Rio Hondo College Debate Students Win First-place Honors at 2019 Phi Rho Pi National Championships

WHITTIER – For the first time in 40 years, Rio Hondo College’s Forensics Speech and Debate Team won first-place honors in the annual Phi Rho Pi National Championships, held April 6-13 in Reno, Nevada.

The competition featured more than 50 teams from community and junior colleges across the U.S.

Rio Hondo College won gold in parliamentary-team debate and in debate following the International Public Debate Association format, in which individuals argue the merits of pre-established topic. Rio Hondo also won bronze in both categories, a bronze in the National Forensic Association Lincoln-Douglas style debate and a second-place speakers award.

“It’s a tremendous accomplishment,” Phi Rho Pi President Jeff Przybylo said.

Rio Hondo College Debate Coach Grant Tovmasian said the victory represents the culmination of years of training and effort by the College’s students, who placed third in the 2018 nationals.

“We are overwhelmed at this incredible achievement by our students, who earned these honors through countless hours of hard work,” said Tovmasian, a Rio Hondo College professor. “Their dedication to their craft speaks for itself.”

Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said the students exemplify the Rio Hondo College spirit.

“Our speech students capitalized on their opportunities at Rio Hondo College to go beyond their classes and apply academic lessons in one of the most competitive arenas available,” Dreyfuss said. “They represent the determination and dedication that is a hallmark of all our Rio Hondo College students.”

MORE

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.

Board of Trustees President Gary Mendez congratulated Tovmasian and his team, which includes coach Patricia Hughes.

“This is an achievement that will inspire not only the students who earned the victories, but their classmates as well. It makes it clear that, at Rio Hondo College, all dreams are within our reach,” Mendez said. “In addition to our pride in the students, we are also proud of the teachers and coaches who helped make their success possible.”

Rio Hondo College Forensics Speech and Debate Team honors

International Public Debate Association

Lina Campillo, Gold

Brandon Leon, Bronze

National Forensic Association Lincoln-Douglas

Ed Minasyan, Bronze

Parliamentary Debate

Edward Minasyan and Lina Campillo, Gold

Diana Laureano and Brandon Leon, Bronze

Speakers Awards

Edward Minasyan, Second Place

PHOTOS

RHC_SPEECH_1: For the first time in 40 years, Rio Hondo College’s Forensics Speech and Debate Team won first place honors in the annual Phi Rho Pi National Championships, held April 6-13 in Reno, Nevada.

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