



# START RIO...GO ANYWHERE

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ***Rio Hondo College Joins Los Angeles Partnership to Boost Student Success***

**WHITTIER** – Rio Hondo College and six other Los Angeles area community colleges will partner with the California College Promise Project (CCPP) to strengthen student support programs that boost graduation rates.

The seven colleges will form a Community of Practice (CoP) within the Los Angeles County Promises That Count initiative, a three-year effort to build on college Promise programs that waive first-year tuition and offer comprehensive programs of support services for new students.

The initiative is a project of WestEd, a multi-state research, development and service agency that works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity and improve learning. The effort is funded by the California Community Foundation.

“Rio Hondo College is excited to launch our new partnership as part of the Promises That Count initiative,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “We have worked vigorously for years to create an extensive menu of support services for our students. This partnership will expand and strengthen those efforts, all to the benefit of our students.”

Rio Hondo College launched its Rio Promise program in fall 2017. The College also offers a Summer Bridge program to orient new students and help them boost placement in basic skills classes. The College uses multiple measures to assess basic skills, which has accelerated student placement in math and English courses.

The College’s *Avance* program serves low-income and Latino students; the effort includes counseling courses that focus students on their individual pathway to graduation, transfer to four-year universities, and careers. A First Year Success Center serves as a clearinghouse for student support services. The College also runs a tutoring center, among other academic services.

## 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](http://www.riohondo.edu).*

In fall 2017, Rio Hondo College augmented its array of services to socioeconomically disadvantaged students by adding a food pantry and resource hub called the RioSource Room.

“Today’s college students face a host of critical challenges,” Board of Trustees President Madeline Shapiro said. “They often arrive unprepared for the difficulty of college-level instruction, they must juggle jobs and stressful home responsibilities, and far too many of them face food insecurity. Our programs are designed to remove these obstacles, so they can achieve their dreams.”

Too often, students in community colleges are unable to complete their education journeys, derailed by those obstacles, Shapiro said.

The Communities of Practice effort will include cross-sector teams from the seven college Promise programs with representation from K-12 and postsecondary education, as well as local civic, nonprofit and business leaders. They will work over 15 months to guide the continuous improvement of the student support features of each college’s program.

WestEd and other state and national partners – including the Campaign for College Opportunity and UNITE-LA – will provide technical assistance with cross-sector coordination, aligning Promise programs with existing student support programs, initiating and improving “just-in-time” interventions, strengthening mentoring and tutoring programs, and using data to inform program improvement.

On a broader level, all Los Angeles County community college Promise programs – including those not in the seven – will be invited to join an alliance to share best practices and strategies.

## **PHOTOS**

**RHC\_PROMISE\_1:** Rio Hondo College launched the Rio Promise in fall 2017, waiving first-year tuition and providing a host of support services for recent area high school graduates.

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