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Rio Hondo College Promise Offers Free Tuition, Support Services to Area High School Graduates

WHITTIER – Rio Hondo College will offer free first-year tuition and priority registration to 2017 graduates from three area public school districts and district area private schools as part of the Rio Hondo College Promise, which deepens a host of support programs that drive student success.

The roots of the Rio Hondo College Promise stretch to 2011, when the College created its El Monte Pledge – which helped students from El Monte and South El Monte pursue higher education goals. That initiative included priority registration and assistance with four-year college transfers.

The new effort builds on other innovative Rio Hondo College programs as well, such as a summer bridge academy that helps orient students to the challenges of higher education, counseling, tutoring and other academic support initiatives that have become a hallmark of the College.

College officials will present the program at two events on Thursday, May 4: a 9 a.m. VIP reception for elected officials, school administrators and representatives of university partners and a 10 a.m. presentation to 200 high school students from Whittier Union, El Monte Union and El Rancho Unified school districts, the three area public districts.

“The Rio Hondo College Promise captures the heart of our pledge to ensure members of our community have the ability to pursue their higher education dreams,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. “It’s a promise that’s never been more important.”

Rio Hondo College has long been at the forefront of providing innovative student support. Its El Monte Pledge led to the creation of the El Monte Promise Foundation, which helps create a guided path from cradle to college for area 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.

Rio Hondo College also provides more than 20 degrees that guarantee transfer to California State University campuses, partners with UC Irvine to ease student transfers and offers a Pathway to Law School Program that guides students from Rio Hondo College to four-year institutions and then to law school. The College even has a four-year Bachelor of Science program in automotive technology as part of an historic state program.

The College is also developing programs to help students who struggle with basic skills. A trio of grants totaling more than \$6 million are funding efforts to create stronger pathways through math and English language arts classes, as well as boost capacity for providing support programs.

Such programs can provide critical support for community college students, many of whom arrive without strong academic backgrounds and who often juggle family responsibilities, work and schooling.

As part of those efforts, the College has expanded a math academy offered through its summer bridge program – a tool that can help students leapfrog in skill levels. The academy is offered free to Rio Hondo College Promise students, who also benefit from priority registration for classes.

“It’s no secret that the dream of college has become harder and harder for our neediest community members to achieve,” Board of Trustees President Norma Edith Garcia said. “Tuition has skyrocketed at the University of California and Cal State systems, and private school tuitions are through the roof.”

Garcia said the availability of low-cost, local, open-access community colleges is crucial to strengthening the region’s economy.

“Ensuring that students have the access and means to pay for college is fulfilling the American Dream and widening the doors of opportunity for all,” she said. “This is the role of Rio Hondo College – and one we are delivering on through our new Rio Hondo College Promise.”

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