



START RIO...GO ANYWHERE

MEDIA RELEASE

3600 Workman Mill Road / Whittier, CA 90601

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE DATE: Dec. 12, 2022

CONTACT: Ruthie Retana
(562) 463-3145

Río Hondo College Partners with Lemelson-MIT to Boost Student Inventors, Entrepreneurs Support with \$3 Million Grant

WHITTIER – Río Hondo College is the recipient of a \$3 million Title V grant to create an invention education and social entrepreneurship program, which aims to encourage students' social, emotional, academic and career development.

The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to create a program known as Communities Uniting to Model and Build Regional Entrepreneurial Success (CUMBRES). CUMBRES will create a new degree pathway at Río Hondo College to inspire anyone regardless of age, race, geography, and professional status to be an inventor and/or social entrepreneur with a focus on LatinX students and adult learners.

Through a partnership between faculty at Río Hondo College and Lemelson-MIT, students will learn to commercialize their inventions and ideas while keeping societal benefits at the forefront. The program provides a safe and inclusive space for students to develop critical skills needed to create innovative, transdisciplinary solutions to problems that impact their communities.

The CUMBRES program, under the direction of Río Hondo College's Dean of Business Gita Runkle, will encompass a high school dual enrollment component; a two-week invention summer workshop accessible to the community; a fully equipped makerspace lab; faculty training; and participation in MIT's EurekaFest Invention Pitch conference. Participants in this program, depending on their career and academic pathway will receive a certificate of achievement for career advancement, an Associate of Science degree or complete an academic pathway to a four-year university degree from Río Hondo College.

"At the student level, CUMBRES will teach students the process of creating an invention that makes a social impact as well as how to get their invention patented and commercialized into a business," Runkle said. "This program will ultimately impart essential critical thinking and problem-solving skills, curiosity, and imagination that every student needs to thrive in a post-pandemic work environment."

MORE

Río Hondo College is an educational and community partner committed to advancing social justice and equity as an antiracist institution that collectively invests in all students' academic and career pathways that lead to attainment of degree, certificate, transfer, and lifelong-learning goals. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

In addition to MIT, other partners committed to the CUMBRES project and to creating academic pathways for Río Hondo College students in this area include: El Monte Unified School District; St. John Bosco High School; Cal State Long Beach, Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; UC San Diego Rady School of Management, Center for Social Innovation & Impact; UC Berkeley Haas Entrepreneurship Program; Cal State Los Angeles, College of Business and Economics; and, Michelson Institute for Intellectual Property.

“CUMBRES is an exciting program that will have far-reaching impact for Río Hondo College and the East San Gabriel Valley region,” Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores said. “CUMBRES will immensely transform how our College approaches invention education and social entrepreneurship by increasing the access and diversity of those who invent and want to protect their intellectual property, while bringing solutions to our local communities through commercialization and business start-ups.”

###