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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ***Río Hondo College Partners with Whittier College to Solve Student Housing Issues***

**WHITTIER** – Río Hondo College solidified a partnership with Whittier College, which allows Río Hondo College students to stay in the Whittier College residence halls in exchange for re-housing vouchers, during the Dec. 8 Board of Trustees meeting.

The partnership between Río Hondo College and Whittier College aims to alleviate the housing issues faced by some socio-economically disadvantaged students. This partnership was approved to start in Spring 2022 and end June 30, 2026.

“My professional mission as a Latina educator is to pay it forward,” Whittier College Interim Vice President and Dean of Students Deanna Merino-Contino said. “Over time, Whittier College has worked to strengthen and streamline our CARE resources to support students with basic needs and housing insecurity. So, it was a natural partnership with Río Hondo College to provide this opportunity. Realizing that community is so important to achieving academic goals, we are pleased to partner with Río Hondo College in offering these students meaningful transformational experiences.”

The partnership will operate at little-to-no cost to Río Hondo College, other than the basic needs of staff to identify and refer students for housing.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for Río Hondo students and both colleges,” Board of Trustees President Vicky Santana said. “This partnership will help many of our students have a stable place to live, study and grow so they can succeed and complete their educational goals. Thank you to Whittier College for connecting with Río Hondo College and giving our students critical housing stability. I am a proud Río Hondo College trustee and Whittier College alumna, class of 1993.”

This new partnership will allow any Río Hondo College student with re-housing vouchers from third-party providers, such as Jovenes Inc. Center, the Salvation Army and Volunteers of America, to gain residence at the Whittier College dormitories. Whittier College will also provide reduced rates to students who run out of re-housing vouchers, in order to provide housing stability.

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

“I would like to thank Whittier College for making this partnership possible; this will benefit many students and our community,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “Housing is a basic need, and providing safe housing for our students means they can focus on their academics and prepare themselves to join the workforce or transfer to four-year universities.”

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