



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / RELEASE DATE:** Sept. 25, 2024 / **CONTACT:** Dalilah Davaloz 562-692-0921

## ***Río Hondo College Appoints Local Leader, Law Enforcement Veteran as First Police Chief***

**Whittier, Calif.** – Río Hondo College (RHC) has taken a significant step in enhancing campus safety by appointing local leader and law enforcement veteran Todd Rogers as the first police chief of its newly established Police and Campus Safety Department, the newest police agency in Los Angeles County.

The RHC Police and Campus Safety Department has operated under an interim police chief since its founding in July 2023. The Río Hondo Community College District (RHCCD) Board of Trustees formed the department as part of the college's commitment to fostering a safe, secure and welcoming learning environment. Chief Rogers, whose hiring was approved at the board's Aug. 14 meeting, will be officially sworn in at the board meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Chief Rogers has more than three decades of law enforcement experience, including 32 years with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. He spent four years as assistant sheriff and six years as commanding officer of the Carson Sheriff's Station. He served as the founding director of the Regional Community Policing Institute in California, and worked several patrol, jail and training assignments throughout his career. Chief Rogers was also elected to the Lakewood City Council in 2001 and is currently serving as mayor.

"The Río Hondo College Police Department is the newest law enforcement agency in Los Angeles County, and collectively our goal is to build a department the entire college is proud of and will ensure the continued safety for our students, staff and community," said Chief Rogers.

The College's dedicated, on-campus officers will build partnerships with the college community while significantly reducing emergency response times, thanks to their expert knowledge of the campus. The College has begun the process of recruiting additional sworn and professional staff for the department.

The department will work closely with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Whittier and El Monte Police Departments, and other allied public safety agencies to ensure the safety of the College and all RHC educational centers throughout its service territory.

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The Police and Campus Safety Department also plans to collaborate with the RHC Police Academy, offering employment opportunities, including possible internships for academy graduates until they are hired into peace officer positions.

The board unanimously voted to move forward with establishing an independent campus police department as part of the College's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of its students, faculty, staff and the public at its May 2023 meeting.

"For more than a year, the board and I have worked together with the campus community and the College's administration to establish a Police and Campus Safety Department that is guided by a guardianship mentality and community policing model," said Anais Medina Diaz, RHCCD board president. "We are proud to establish a safety department that understands and protects our diverse campus community and is grounded in principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and anti-racism."

As part of the adopted resolution, RHC will form a Public Safety Advisory Committee made up of students and faculty to provide input in policing matters. The department will operate under a "community policing model" grounded in principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and anti-racism, while also committing to regular training on community policing practices, anti-bias, cultural responsibility, conflict avoidance and de-escalation.

"Chief Todd Rogers is a respected leader who brings a wealth of experience with him to Río Hondo College and is the perfect person to lead us in what is a pivotal moment in our history," said Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores. "The founding of the Police and Campus Safety Department reinforces our commitment to being a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone who steps foot on our campus. To succeed, our students must feel safe, welcomed and secure on our campus and that was our guiding principle in this decision and everything we do here at Río Hondo College."

To learn more about RHC, visit [www.riohondo.edu](http://www.riohondo.edu).

#### **PHOTO CAPTION**

**RHC\_ROGERS:** Todd Rogers, a local leader and law enforcement veteran with more than three decades of experience, has been named chief of Río Hondo College's newly established Police and Campus Safety Department. It marks a historic milestone in the College's 60-plus-year history and creates the newest police agency in Los Angeles County.

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