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Río Hondo College Board Welcomes New Trustee, Re-Elected Member During Annual Organization

(Whittier, Calif.) – Río Hondo College (RHC) welcomed new Board of Trustees member Yarisma Rocha and re-elected Trustee Kristal Orozco during an oath of office ceremony that preceded the Río Hondo Community College District (RHCCD) Board of Trustees meeting on Dec. 13.

Rocha and Orozco were each elected to four-year terms on the RHCCD Board to represent Trustee Areas 2 and 4, respectively, during the November general election. The Board also elected Oscar Valladares as the new president, while Rosaelva Lomeli was selected to serve as vice president and Yarisma Rocha assumed the clerk position during its annual reorganization meeting.

Anais Medina Diaz was recognized for her leadership and service as Board president in 2024 and presented with a gift of appreciation during the meeting. She will continue to serve as a Board member.

“Río Hondo College remains well-positioned with this Board of Trustees to continue our mission to empower students to achieve their personal, professional and educational goals,” said Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores. “All five members are passionate leaders in education and advocates for student empowerment who will help strengthen Río Hondo as a community-focused institution that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Rocha ran unopposed this November to represent the RHCCD Board in Trustee Area 2, which includes the City of Pico Rivera and West Whittier. She attended RHC as not only a first-generation college student but also a single mother and went on to transfer to the University of Southern California, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

As a former EOP&S/CARE and CalWORKS student, Rocha plans to use her position on the Board of Trustees to advocate for RHC students.

Rocha said her goal is to work to bring more resources, programs and opportunities to the college community, while continuing to ensure it remains a diverse and inclusive campus for all students.

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"I am deeply honored to serve on the Río Hondo College Board of Trustees and to represent the community that has played such an integral role in shaping my journey as a first-generation college student," Rocha said. "Río Hondo College changed my life, and I am committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of their circumstances, have access to the support systems they need to thrive."

Orozco was first elected in 2020 to represent the RHCCD Board in Trustee Area 4, which spans Los Nietos, Santa Fe Springs, South Whittier and North Norwalk. Since first being elected, she has worked to make higher education more accessible and to provide wraparound services needed to create equitable outcomes for all RHC students.

A first-generation college student, Orozco earned an associate degree from Pasadena City College, a bachelor's in history from Whittier College and a master's in higher education administration from Loyola Marymount University.

"It is inspiring to be re-elected to serve our community and continue expanding the equitable higher education opportunities at Río Hondo College," Orozco said. "I look forward to continuing this work alongside my colleagues as we strive to foster an environment where all students can succeed."

PHOTO CAPTION

RHC_BOARD1: From left to right: Río Hondo Community College District Board of Trustees Oscar Valladares, Kristal Orozco, Anais Medina Diaz, Yarisma Rocha, Rosaelva Lomeli and Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores (positioned third from the right).

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