



WHITTIER UNION

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 22, 2025 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier Union Students Get Early Start on College Through Río Hondo College Partnership

WHITTIER – Whittier Union students are getting a head start on their college education through a free dual enrollment partnership between the District and Río Hondo College (RHC), which allows students to take after-school courses for credit that are transferable to University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) schools.

Beginning in their freshman year, Whittier Union students at all seven high schools can take one dual enrollment class per semester, plus summer school, and earn up to 30 college credits by the time they graduate. Students are encouraged to take courses that will qualify them for RHC's Honors Transfer Program, which is designed to increase students' chances of attending a four-year university.

The dual enrollment partnership is fueled by two California Department of Education (CDE) grants, the College Career Access Pathway (CCAP) and Middle College and Early College (MCEC) grants, which total nearly \$1 million. The CCAP provides funding and support for dual enrollment programs throughout the District, while the MCEC establishes a pathway at Pioneer High School that can lead to a student earning an associate degree by the time they graduate high school.

"Our goal is to target underrepresented and at-risk students who may not be aware of these programs, and provide equitable access to college education at the high school level," RHC Dean of Student Equity and Achievement Cecilia Rocha said. "In coordination with our Honors Transfer Program, if a student fulfills all the requirements, they could transfer to a UC school within two years."

All classes are taught by RHC professors at the school site. Tuition is waived and textbooks are provided for free.

Whittier High School Class of 2024 alumna Chloe Carrancho said she was thrilled to be accepted to UC San Diego when she graduated, but declined to attend the school, preferring to enroll at RHC and enlist the services of the Honors Transfer program. Her goal is to eventually get accepted to UCLA or UC Berkeley.

Carrancho, who is on a pre-law track, graduated from Whittier with a 4.2 GPA, having completed 11 Advanced Placement (AP) classes, along with 16 dual enrollment credits.

"Attending Río Hondo College is a great option, especially if you're unsure if a college campus is a good fit for you, or you are not happy with your choices," Carrancho said.

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"There is a lot of flexibility, you learn time management skills, the clubs are great, and the Honors Program is amazing. I would recommend this program to anyone who is serious about college but wants time after high school to sort everything out."

To qualify for the Honors Program, a student must earn a score of 3 or higher on their AP English Language exam or take English 101 and earn a "B" or better the summer prior to attending RHC. Though enrollment in the program does not guarantee admission, nearly 100% of students who complete the Honors Transfer program have been accepted to a four-year college or university, while 81% of program students applying to UCLA have been accepted.

Once in the program, students must complete five honors courses with a "B" grade or better and achieve an overall transferable GPA of at least 3.2. Accelerated programs are encouraged, such as the Summer Scholar Transfer Institute (SSTI), a three-week course at UC Irvine that introduces students to dorm life and provides opportunities for networking.

RHC's Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) program offers qualified students admission to six participating UC campuses, as well as the University of La Verne. The UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) provides a pathway for transferring to UCLA, but cannot guarantee admission. Students in the Honors program also receive priority registration.

"Once a student joins the Honors Transfer Program, they have a variety of programs and initiatives to choose from that will facilitate their education plan," RHC Honors Transfer Coordinator Dr. Ea Madrigal said. "We also encourage extracurricular activities, like on-campus leadership or community service programs. These are resume-builders for the students."

Students and families who are interested in participating in the Dual Enrollment program should contact their school's guidance counselor, Horizon office, or visit the school's dual enrollment web page for more information.

"Dual enrollment accelerates the pace of education for students while saving them money, and is available to all Whittier Union students," Whittier Union Superintendent Dr. Monica Oviedo said. "We encourage all our students to take dual enrollment courses, which will provide them with great benefits, no matter what their post-secondary plans are. Thank you to Río Hondo College for supporting our students with these amazing programs."

PHOTO CAPTION

WUHS_DUALENROLLMENT: A Whittier Union Class of 2025 graduate celebrates her decision to attend Río Hondo College during a Commitment Day event.

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OUR MISSION

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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