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## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### ***Río Hondo College Welcomes Secretary of Education, Congresswoman to Campus to Hear Student Stories***

**WHITTIER** – Río Hondo College students had the opportunity to converse face-to-face with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, relaying their own personal stories about housing and food security and discussing what elected officials can do to provide further assistance.

Cardona and Sánchez met with six current and former Río Hondo College students, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss and the College's Board of Trustees, then went into a roundtable discussion with students and Dreyfuss on March 29 about topics such as the Hope Scholars Program, transportation and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hope Scholars is a Río Hondo College program that provides food and housing support to unhoused and transitionally unhoused students.

"We look to our community colleges for our future workforce. These students can succeed at anything they can dream and imagine – if they're given the proper support system," Sánchez said.

Cardona said his main goal in visiting Río Hondo College and talking to students was to bring the stories back to Washington, D.C. and advocate for more funding for programs like Hope Scholars.

"In my visits to different states I am always inspired by the stories of our students as well as their resilience, their drive to continue to succeed despite whatever challenges they might face," Cardona said. "I think it's really important that our higher education institutions evolve to make sure they can meet our students where they are."

Martin, Río Hondo College Hope Scholar success coach and Azusa Pacific University student, said meeting with Cardona and Sánchez was exciting, because it was an opportunity to talk directly with the people who can make the changes that will help millions.

"I hope that you take back our hearts with you to show others what we're doing here at Río Hondo College," Martin said, addressing Cardona and Sánchez. "Housing and homelessness will always be an issue so we need to talk about it together, but we're not going to get there without 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).*

Río Hondo College alumna and Hope Scholar Housing Peer Navigator Brianna said talking with Cardona and Sánchez was a chance to advocate for countless future Hope Scholar students.

“We at Río Hondo College are grateful that we have leaders such as Congresswoman Sánchez and Secretary Cardona advocating for our College, students and community,” Dreyfuss said. “Their work means our community has a chance to succeed and grow and this visit is an important step towards helping our students realize their full potential.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**VISIT1:** Río Hondo College Hope Scholar students and staff members, as well as Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss meet with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, where they spoke about supporting the basic needs of students such as housing and food.

**VISIT2:** Río Hondo College student Marlene greets Congresswoman Linda Sánchez with a hug following a roundtable discussion about student support needs. Sánchez and U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona visited the College to talk directly with students about their experiences regarding housing and food security.

**VISIT3:** From left to right: Río Hondo College alumna and Hope Scholar Housing Peer Navigator Brianna, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss engage in a roundtable discussion about student support programs and how they address student’s basic needs.

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