



# START RIO...GO ANYWHERE

## MEDIA RELEASE

**3600 Workman Mill Road / Whittier, CA 90601**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
RELEASE DATE: **April 26, 2022**

CONTACT: Ruthie Retana  
(562) 463-3145

### ***Río Hondo College Receives ACLS/NEH Grant to Boost Anthropology and Humanities Programs***

**WHITTIER** – Río Hondo College’s Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project has received a \$157,000 grant from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), which will improve classroom facilities, provide more learning materials and boost interest in arts and humanities.

The grant was awarded by ACLS through the Sustaining Public Engagement Grant Program, which is part of the Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative. The SHARP initiative was enacted to help the U.S. recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Río Hondo College’s Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project is a teaching, research and community partnership project where students create clay figurines and narratives to represent themselves, their cultures and their families. The program is one of only 24 recipients of the grant, which will be disbursed over a 12-month period starting in Spring/Summer 2022.

Río Hondo College’s Professor of Anthropology Santiago Andres Garcia, M.A. and Assistant Professor of Chicano/a/x Studies Dr. Lizette “Lucha” Arévalo said the grant will also help pay for teacher salaries, a student liaison, public engagement and boost the public knowledge of Indigenous people and cultural understanding.

“The Mesoamerican-Clay Figurine Project of Río Hondo College has been instrumental to understanding the Indigenous Mesoamerican ancestry and lifeways of our large Latinx population,” Garcia said. “The money is also important because it gets students involved and excited about community work after a long two years of isolation. We are hoping that this program gets other faculty excited about the bridges that exist between students, health engagement, and communities outside of campus.”

Garcia said the grant will pay for a full lineup of public activities for the next year, including three public educational meetings, a book reading event, and a post-COVID-19 human health and medicine symposium. It will also pay for an upgrade to an existing cultural art installation in A205.

“The Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project is motivated by the social and educational injustices that students and teachers of color experience in the classroom, at home, and in the workplace,” Garcia said.

**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).*

The Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project has won various acknowledgements over the years, including a \$40,000 grant from the Mellon/ACLS Community College Fellowship in 2019, a \$10,000 grant from the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City and a \$4,500 grant from the HuMetricsHSS Community in 2022 to fund a new website. The project was also recognized by the American Studies Association with the Gloria E. Anzaldua Award in 2015.

“Congratulations to the Anthropology, Humanities and Chicano/a/x departments for earning this grant – your hard work and dedication are inspiring,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “The work of the Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project is important for boosting cultural understanding in our community and improving the lives of our students. I look forward to seeing all the amazing expansions this grant will provide to the project.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTION:**

**GRANT1:** (Left to right) Río Hondo College’s Professor of Anthropology Santiago Andres Garcia, M.A., Assistant Professor of Chicano/a/x Studies Dr. Lizette “Lucha” Arévalo and Pricilla Hernandez, curator for the Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project, were instrumental in obtaining a \$157,000 grant from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The grant will pay for materials, salaries, events and facilities to boost cultural understanding of Mesoamericans while also encouraging students to return to campus following the COVID-19 pandemic.

**GRANT2:** A selection of work from Río Hondo College’s Mesoamerican Clay-Figurine Project, which recently won a \$157,000 grant from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). These figurines are part of a standing curation project in A205, showcasing the work of the project’s students for the enjoyment of the College.

###