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Río Hondo College Dance Director Selected to Serve New Term on ACDA Board of Directors

WHITTIER – Río Hondo College Director of Dance, Dr. Alyson Cartagena, has been selected to serve an additional one-year term on the American College Dance Association (ACDA) Board of Directors, where she will continue to support both national and regional ACDA conferences and festivals for the Baja region, which includes Southern California.

Cartagena, known for her passion for dance education and for opening doors to community college students who are looking to earn a degree in dance and/or transfer to a four-year college or university, has already completed two consecutive three-year terms on the ACDA Board of Directors.

“It is an honor to continue in this role for the seventh consecutive year. Additionally, it is rewarding to represent all community colleges in our region and at the national level,” Cartagena said. “I am proud to support such an honorable organization. This is especially significant as ACDA celebrates its 50th year serving dancers in education.”

Cartagena came to Río Hondo College in 2006 and a year later was appointed full-time director of the College’s Dance, Yoga and Pilates program in the Kinesiology Division. Cartagena has worked to bring noteworthy advancements in dance education, including establishing an Associate of Arts program and a Dance Certificate program. She has also worked to include dance as part of the Kinesiology’s Fitness Specialist and Yoga Teacher Training programs.

Cartagena created 23 new courses at Río Hondo College (RHC) and revised the curriculum of several more, creating a dance program that is diverse, equitable and nurturing. Cartagena’s efforts have translated into a significant increase of dance students transferring to four-year universities.

“It’s so gratifying to see students come into our program, some with little or no experience, and work their way towards a degree or transfer,” Cartagena said. “Through our work with ACDA, RHC dance students can participate in regional and national performances, which has a tremendous impact on their ability to network with colleges and universities. When they step onto another campus, they can see themselves there. It allows them to dream big.”

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.

Río Hondo College's dance program has increased its profile by having peer-adjudicated, faculty- and student-choreographed performances included in ACDA regional conferences and national festivals, including the 2023 Baja Regional Conference, held in March at UC Irvine, and the 2023 ACDA National Festival, held in June at Cal State Long Beach.

In May, dance program students and faculty captivated the community with an intimate staging of solo and ensemble dances titled "Emergence," which featured RHC alumna Rivka Villanueva.

Cartagena has trained and performed with the American Dance Festival, International Ballet Competition, Ballet West, Harvard University and the Joffrey Ballet. She earned a BFA in Dance from Florida State University and MFA in Dance at UC Irvine. Cartagena has also toured professionally with Contemporary Dance/Fort Worth for four years and the Loretta Livingston Dancers for 10 years.

"Dr. Cartagena is a passionate and dedicated advocate of dance education, who works tirelessly to train, inspire and educate Río Hondo College students, and allows them the freedom to create their own works, several of which have attained regional and national praise," Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores said. "Congratulations to Dr. Cartagena for continuing to serve our students and advocate as an ACDA Board member."

PHOTO CAPTION:

ACDA: Río Hondo College dance students perform at the American College Dance Association (ACDA) 2023 Baja Regional Conference, held in March at UC Irvine. RHC Director of Dance Dr. Alyson Cartagena has been selected to serve an additional one-year term on the ACDA Board of Directors. Photo by Skye Schmidt @ACDA Baja 2023.

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