



## Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **NEW RIO HONDO COLLEGE RESOURCE FOCUSES ON FRESHMEN**

*Recent high school grads offered valuable assistance at Freshman Success Center*

*Whittier-* As students at Rio Hondo College gear up for the first day of the spring semester on Jan. 25, new and returning freshmen can find a new resource to help them through the sometimes complex world of higher education.

The Freshman Success Center, which opened in fall 2013, offers first-time college students resources to help them thrive in their first year, which is crucial in a student's overall academic success. Such services include counseling, and help with registration and financial aid.

"Studies show that students who do well their first year in college are more likely to receive their degrees and transfer. We want to ensure every student who attends Rio Hondo College has all the resources they need," said Acting Dean of Counseling and Student Success Dr. Mike Muñoz. "The Freshman Success Center is a new tool we are utilizing to fulfill our goals within the Student Success Initiative."

The Student Success Initiative was borne from the Student Success Act of 2012, which funds community college services like orientation, assessment, counseling and advising. In early January, Gov. Jerry Brown released his proposed 2014-15 budget showing an 11.4 percent increase in funding for community colleges with a special emphasis on student success.

Rio Hondo College's plan to implement the Student Success Initiative includes focusing on transfer and workforce preparation; being more responsive to student need and the economy; and increasing student success rates for certificate and degree completion, as well as transfer to four-year institutions.

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“Unfortunately, recent high school graduates have lower persistence, graduation and transfer rates than any of our students, yet they are the largest group of students at Rio Hondo College,” said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfus. “By focusing resources toward their needs, we will have a better chance to increase their success, thus increasing the success of the College as a whole.”

The Freshman Resource Center is designed to manage a cohort of roughly 1,800 students and ensure they declare a program of study and develop an educational plan during their first year. Other services offered by the center include Freshmen Welcome Days and Freshman Success Seminars

The center is also available to help students develop their educational plans and provide assistance with their AccessRio portals, which is the College’s information system where students can access registration, campus email, library resources and more.

“The Student Success Taskforce has helped the College lay out a blueprint for fulfilling the criteria within the statewide initiative,” said Board of Trustees President Vicky Santana. “We are confident that these goals will be met with innovative programs – such as the Freshman Success Center – and the expertise of our knowledgeable staff and faculty.”

The Freshman Success Center, which has so far assisted more than 1,000 students, is located in the Student Services building, room 350. The center is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Friday.

PHOTO CAPTION: New students receive assistance at the new Freshman Success Center at Rio Hondo College.

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Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to associate degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit [www.riohondo.edu](http://www.riohondo.edu).

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