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Program to Help Students Overcome Obstacles to Launch *Just Us Girls* to focus on academic and personal success

WHITTIER, Calif. – Rio Hondo College will launch a new program designed to foster connections that contribute to the academic and personal success for women with an all-day event on **Friday, Oct. 17** in the Learning Resource Center Room 128.

The *Just Us Girls* kick-off event, scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., will feature food and prizes while promoting friendships and connections between Rio Hondo College students, faculty and staff.

Based on a similar program at California State University, Dominguez Hills created by Dr. Denna Sanchez – who currently serves as Psychological Services Coordinator for Rio Hondo College – *Just Us Girls*' goal is to promote relationship-building, networking and mentoring opportunities among female students and campus professionals.

“The sister program of *Just Us Girls* at Dominguez Hills has been successful over the last 10 years,” Sanchez said. “We had more than 1,000 students walk through our doors and many have gone on to graduate school, attained degrees and have successful careers.”

The Dominguez Hills program, *Latinas Juntas*, was the brainchild of Sanchez and colleague Monica Rosas-Baines. As psychologists on campus, they discovered a prevalent trend among female students: they often felt pressure, anxiety and insecurity.

“As psychologists working on a college campus, we understand the need for students to feel connected,” Sanchez said. “We routinely hear from our students about specific challenges and obstacles such as family, school and work

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responsibilities, relationships, and cultural issues, which often impede their progress.”

With *Just Us Girls*, students, faculty and staff will be able to address concerns and offer solutions through small- and large-group exercises to provide an atmosphere of dialogue, mentoring and problem solving.

Just Us Girls is offered as a mentoring event to support first-generation college students and is sponsored by a grant from the California Mental Health Services Authority.

“*Just Us Girls* and its mission align with the College’s Student Success Initiative,” said Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. “It is a perfect opportunity for our students to find a mentor and learn skills that would help them achieve their academic and career goals in a supportive and nurturing environment.”

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