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Rio Hondo College Awarded \$2 Million Grant to Help Ensure College Success for Struggling Students

WHITTIER – Rio Hondo College has been awarded a total of \$2 million over two years to work with area high schools, adult schools and California State University, Los Angeles to improve the chances of college success for students with challenges in English and math.

The grant is one of five totaling \$10 million awarded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for basic skills pilot programs across the state.

“Our plan will help students whose struggles with college-level English and math requirements can be overwhelming,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “Many of these are first-time college students who may give up on their college dreams when confronted by these issues.”

At Cal State L.A., more than 66.1 percent of incoming freshmen test below college level in English or math. This is similar to remedial challenges at Rio Hondo College, which also enrolls a large population of first-generation college students who may lack cultural, familial or financial support. Students who do not complete remedial classes in a year tend to drop out or are disenrolled.

Rio Hondo College will target up to 2,500 Cal State L.A. students for remedial instruction, tutoring and other support each year. Students will take summer courses after high school to build skills before freshman year, receive aid in spring of their freshman year to complete remedial programs and enroll in summer classes after freshman year if they need additional help.

Rio Hondo College will deliver services by expanding three programs that have proved successful in helping students with remedial course challenges.

MORE

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 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.

Rio Hondo's two-week Summer Bridge program includes an academic workshop that boosts student math preparation. Students can test into more advanced courses at the program's conclusion. The program also provides students with additional tools for managing the transition to college. It serves about 330 students annually.

Next, Rio Hondo College offers a two-week math booster program called Springboard. Two-thirds of the students involved in pilot programs offered during winter intersession have tested at one to two math courses higher than they started.

Gateway Tutoring, the third program, provides supplemental instruction through peer tutors who assist with in-class activities and hold group-tutoring sessions outside of class. The program serves about 730 students annually.

Rio Hondo College also will work with area high schools and adult schools to ensure that their curriculum in English and math aligns effectively with Rio Hondo and Cal State L.A. This will include a review of student academic records.

"This new partnership will offer an avenue of hope to students who face greater challenges than most in their quest for a degree," Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees president Mary Ann Pacheco said. "It is part of our mission to help ensure the students in our community obtain the skills needed to achieve their dreams."

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