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Re-elected Rio Hondo Trustees Take Oaths of Office; Board Selects 2016 Officers

WHITTIER – Re-elected Rio Hondo College Trustees Vicky Santana and Gary Mendez took their oaths of office during a festive Dec. 9 meeting in which the Board also selected a new president, vice president and clerk.

Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia administered the oath to Santana, whose Trustee Area 2 includes Pico Rivera and parts of Whittier. Santana is a manager for the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

Santana said the College made significant strides during her first term. She praised her colleagues for establishing an educational center in Pico Rivera that is set to open in 2016.

“We’ve come together, and it shows,” Santana said. “There’s a lot for us to do in the next four years and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues and making that happen.”

Several karate students collectively administered the oath for Mendez, who is starting his fifth term representing Trustee Area 4, which includes Los Nietos, Santa Fe Springs, South Whittier and north Norwalk. In addition to teaching karate for more than 25 years, Mendez is chief consultant of Urban Strategies, a governmental, public and political affairs firm.

Mendez said he is driven by his sense of Rio Hondo’s value to the community and noted that the College’s progress thus far has set the stage for the Board of Trustees’ next efforts.

“I’ve always believed in the hope, opportunity and success that we pass on to our students,” Mendez said. “We may have individual ideas that we contribute and we encourage them to surface, but everything we do on behalf of the district is as a one-unit organization.”

After a brief reception that included a choral performance, the Board named Mary Ann Pacheco as president for 2016. Pacheco was elected in 2013 to represent Trustee Area 3, which includes Whittier and South El Monte.

Area 1 Trustee Norma Edith Garcia was named as vice president. Garcia represents El Monte.

Outgoing President Madeline Shapiro, whose Trustee Area 5 includes east Whittier, was named as clerk. Trustees also thanked Shapiro for her year of service.

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