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Photos by Dave Sotero



CEO Roger Snoble, Rio Hondo student Gabriela Baldovinos, Rio Hondo College Board President Angela Acosta-Salazar, President, and Metro Commute Services Director David Sutton

## Metro Teams with Rio Hondo College to offer Students Free Transit Passes

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 12, 2006) Metro has joined Rio Hondo College in announcing a new transit pass program called "Go Rio" that entitles full-time students to free transit passes in an effort to help promote public transportation at the Whittier community college.

Three transit agencies are participating in the program: Metro, Foothill Transit and Norwalk Transit. Rio Hondo is the first college to negotiate the transit pass program with three regional transit agencies. As such, it is the most comprehensive pass program of its kind in Southern California.

The program begins with the fall session and school officials report that more than 700 students have already taken advantage of the program.

The program is available free to students who take 12 units or more. It seeks to expand access to the college by lowering transportation costs, improving parking, and reducing traffic on the campus.



Metro Bus Operator Martin Mares, along with bus operators from Foothill Transit and Norwalk Transit, give the "Go Rio" program the thumbs up.

**Paying more for transportation**

With the increased price of gas, at some colleges students are paying more for transportation than they are for books. At Rio Hondo some students are paying more for transportation than for tuition.

Metro provides its transit passes to the college as part of its Institutional Pass Program headed by David Sutton, director of Metro Commute Services.

It offers special pass programs to large organizations such as colleges, universities and trade schools in efforts to promote transit use. These programs enable institutions to negotiate fare media arrangements for a specific term such as a semester or quarter. Other educational institutions that have participated include UCLA, Los Angeles City College and Pierce College.

"Metro's Institutional Pass Program gives Rio Hondo College students the convenience of an unlimited Metro Bus and Metro Rail pass," said CEO Roger Snoble. "Institutions of higher learning throughout LA County can work with Metro to get this pass program implemented at their schools to help reduce the stress or added expense of driving."

CEO Roger Snoble and Metro Commute Services Director David Sutton present "Go Rio" transit pass to Rio Hondo student Gabriela Baldovinos.

