Date: April 21, 2017

To: Ronny J. Coleman, Chairman
Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
c/o State Fire Training

From: Michael A. Garcia, Fire Service Training Specialist

Subject/Agenda Action Item: Rio Hondo Community College District (RHCC) Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) Reaccreditation

Recommended Actions: Recommend that Rio Hondo Community College continue as an Accredited Regional Training Program in the State Fire Training (SFT) System.

Background Information:

A re-accreditation site visit was conducted on March 23, 2017 at the Rio Hondo College Fire Academy located in southern Los Angeles County. The re accreditation evaluation was conducted by Michael A. Garcia, Fire Service Training Specialist-State Fire Training, assisted by Chief Jamie Hirsch Academy Director for Mt. Sac ARTP and Chief Bill Melendez Academy Director for El Camino Community College ARTP; Tracy Rickman Director Fire/Safety and EMS Education, Dr. Ygnacio “Nash” Flores, Dean of Public Safety, Don Mason, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Public Safety. For the exit interview, Teresa Dreyfuss College Superintendent/ President and Dr. JoAnna Schilling, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs participated. Chiefs Hirsch and Melendez did not participate in the exit interview process. A tour of the classrooms, training facilities and equipment cache, was conducted along with an opportunity to review SFT required records.

In 1988, the RHCC Fire Academy was accredited as an ARTP in the SFT system as part of the Greater Los Angeles Area Training Program. This is the fourth re accreditation, RHCC continues to provide a fire academy as well as pre-service and in-service training within Los Angeles County, and surrounding communities. They also deliver a stand-alone Wildland Fire Academy with great success, in cooperation with Cal FIRE and USFS. The RHCC is also a certified Field Training Facility for Hazardous Materials Emergency Response, accredited by Cal OES. RHCC is also an SFT approved Rescue Systems 1, 2, and Confined Space Rescue Technician training. Their local “truck academy” is typically full and gaining notoriety.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

A tour of the training facilities, located at RHCC (Santa Fe Springs Fire Department) indicated sufficient classroom space* with a functioning training tower.

“The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California.”
The RHCC Academy has enough tools, equipment and staff*, to conduct a Firefighter I Academy at the current location. Local demographics are consistent with the most recent census and information provided by RHCC in the self-assessment report.

RHCC like many Fire Academies indicates a low enrollment for under-represented groups based upon local populations, especially with regard to females. RHCC does attempt to recruit students identified in their diversity report, and attends various job fairs, open houses with literature (handouts) to engage the local area schools, in the search for additional diversity for the Academy program. RHCC is aware of changes in the Fire Fighter I curriculum and testing process now implemented statewide.

I was very impressed with the support of local agencies (Santa Fe Springs Fire Department, Chief Crook made a brief appearance to endorse the cooperation and working arrangement with RHCC, and the existence of a ISA between the two agencies). Support by College administration for continued operation of the program is outstanding.

*It has been identified that future expansion and delivery of SFM courses would be enhanced with an increase of classroom space at the Santa Fe Springs location. Staffing at the support level has been identified to add additional support staff, to meet additional demands with implementation of FF-1 testing and maintain local processing. College administration is aware of these program needs and are working diligently to meet these goals.

I was impressed by the level of hospitality extended to me and the team by Chief Rickman and everyone associated with the institution.

I am fully confident that the RHCC Academy will continue to meet SFT program requirements, and recommend approval of the RHCC continuing as an Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP).
Date: April 21, 2017

To: Ronny J. Coleman, Chairman
Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
c/o State Fire Training

From: Rodney Slaughter, Deputy State Fire Marshal III

Subject/Agenda Action Item: Reaccreditation of College of the Desert

Recommended Actions: Reaccredit College of the Desert as an Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP) in the State Fire Training (SFT) System

Background Information:

An accreditation site visit was conducted on January 25, 2017 at the College of the Desert main campus and the Roy Wilson Training Center located in Palm Desert, California. The site team consisted of Tracy Rickman, Rio Hondo College, Sam DiGiovanna, Glendale Community College and SFT staff. The team met with College of the Desert Fire Advisory committee members along with College administration; Dr. Pamela Ralston, Vice-President Student Learning, and Dean Zerryl Becker, Applied Science and Business. Both of whom enthusiastically support the Public Safety Programs.

The college was initially accredited in 2012 by STEAC and the State Board of Fire Services. The college has been in existence since 1963 but didn’t start offering fire technology classes until the 1980’s. The college is situated in the Coachella Valley and does not impact any other accredited academy.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

A tour of the training facilities revealed ample classroom and training ground spaces. The college has several classrooms, along with ample tools, equipment, props, and apparatus that can easily accommodate a Firefighter I (2013) training program. The college director himself maintains records in accordance to SFT procedures along with summative test and answer keys that are kept safely secured. The site team had observed two deficiencies in the program. The first was a lack of clerical support. This was previously identified by the college administration and is in the process of being resolved. The second deficiency was that the instructors had no area at the training facility nor on the campus for instructor preparation or storage. This is also being addressed by the college and is in the process of being resolved. The ability of the college to raise funds for worthwhile causes like student scholarships and the state of the art training facility demonstrates best practices. The site team and SFT staff support the reaccreditation of College of the Desert as an ARTP.