

2025

# PRESIDENT'S NEWLETTER



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT  
St. Philip's College

ISSUE  
03



## President's Message

Over the past three years, our college has experienced remarkable milestones of growth in its 127-year history. From 2021 to 2024, St. Philip's College has welcomed nearly 5,000 new students, reaching a student body of over 18,000. Last academic year, the college experienced a 21% increase in student enrollment, which far outpaced the national community college growth rate of just 5.4%, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

This kind of growth is no accident. It's the result of strategic planning, a shared mission for student success, and a team committed to meeting students where they are. At the heart of this mission is the college's Welcome Center.

Nearly 100 employees work in the Welcome Center to support students through every stage of their journey. Together, they deliver critical services that guide students from college enrollment to graduation, providing assistance with services like registration, academic advising, financial aid, testing, and veterans' benefits.

The two-floor, 16,800 square-foot building is designed for student success. As soon as you walk through the doors, you're greeted by a reception team trained to triage and respond to a wide range of student needs, with efficiency, professionalism, and a smile.

The service is personal. The experience is intentional. And the impact is undeniable.



*St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston and Dean for Student Success, Enrollment Management Andres C. Arredondo stroll downstairs through the main hallway of the Welcome Center.*



*Student Success Specialist Marco Saldaña greets St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston and Dean for Student Success, Enrollment Management Andres C. Arredondo at the Circle Desk of the Welcome Center.*



*In the Welcome Center's Student Onboarding & Recruitment Office, Work Study student Neftali Rodriguez Aguilera and College Advising Corps member Desirae Ceballos walk St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston through the steps of student enrollment.*



## SPC Receives \$1 Million Gift from Valero



*St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston and Senior Vice President of Communications, Public Relations and Engagement Seymour Battle pose in front of the Valero sign inside the newly renovated Cybersecurity Innovations Center.*

St. Philip's College is proud to announce a \$1 million donation from Valero Energy Corporation. This generous donation went straight towards the support of the college's newly renovated Cybersecurity Innovations Center. This state-of-the-art facility is home to the college's first-ever baccalaureate program, the Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity. The generous gift was announced to the community at the opening ceremony during the college's 30th Annual CultureFest & Rib Cook-Off on May 1, 2025, and formally acknowledged at the Alamo Colleges District Board Meeting on May 20, 2025. In recognition of Valero's contribution, the company

has been granted naming rights to the Security Operations Center and the Cloud on the Ground in the Cybersecurity Innovations Center, signifying a new chapter in the enduring partnership between Valero and St. Philip's College. "Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this partnership since 2009," said Seymour Battle, Valero's Senior Vice President of Communications, Public Relations, and Engagement. "At Valero, we believe in improving the communities where we live and work. Thank you for being a beacon of light." To date, Valero has contributed a total of \$2.2 million to St. Philip's College, supporting workforce development and

educational initiatives across the campus. The Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity program is designed to equip students with the knowledge to combat cyber threats and comes as a strategic move to address the evolving landscape of digital security and to meet workforce demands. It will directly benefit approximately 1,000 area IT and cyber defense companies that rely on a strong local workforce to fill high-wage, high-demand jobs. This gift is a significant milestone in its mission to prepare top-tier cybersecurity experts to protect the nation's critical infrastructure and support San Antonio's growing tech industry.

## SPC Named All Star of the Year by Workforce Solutions Alamo

On May 28, 2025, St. Philip's College was named All Star of the Year at Workforce Solutions Alamo's Inaugural Impact Awards, held at the DoubleTree by Hilton San Antonio Airport.

The ceremony recognized employers, organizations and partners making significant contributions to workforce development across the 13-county region served by Workforce Solutions Alamo.

St. Philip's College was among the standout honorees for its exceptional commitment to training and equipping local residents for in-demand careers.

St. Philip's College was also a nominee for the Training Provider of the Year award, further demonstrating its influence as a leading institution in career and technical education.

Among other honorees, San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg received the Trailblazer Award for his leadership

in workforce development initiatives, particularly the Ready to Work program.





# SPC Celebrates 152nd Commencement Ceremony

On May 22, 2025, St. Philip's College hosted its 152nd Commencement Ceremony, celebrating over 800 students who crossed the stage.

Vice President for Student Success Wesley Wells welcomed guests and led the ceremony, which began with a formal posting of the colors by the Alamo Colleges District Honor Guard and the national anthem performed by Professor David Uminski.

Graduate Suzanne Meegan, a Culinary Arts major and Strada HBCU Scholar, delivered the invocation, reflecting on the graduates' journeys.

"Lord, may you lift up this class of 2025 as we prepare to walk this stage and take the world by surprise," she said.

St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston delivered opening remarks highlighting the college's growth of over 18,000 students and milestones of the college, including the launch of its first baccalaureate degree, the Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity.

"Tonight, we add to these celebrations," Dr. Loston said. "This commencement ceremony represents how far we've come since our founding in 1898 as a sewing school for the daughters and

granddaughters of emancipated slaves." The evening included the presentation of two honorary degrees. San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg was honored for his public service. A second honorary degree was awarded to Dr. Marie Pannell Thurston, a former employee and author of "St. Philip's College – A Point of Pride in San Antonio's Eastside."

The ceremony continued with the introduction of platform guests and student leaders, followed by the commencement address delivered by graduate Christopher Saucedo.

Introduced by fellow classmate and NASA MIRO CAMEE Intern Paul Judkins, Christopher inspired graduates, saying, "Adversity is guaranteed, but so is your strength. Graduating doesn't mean your story is over; it means a powerful new chapter is just beginning."

The ceremony concluded with a benediction from graduate Justin Navarro, who offered words of encouragement and hope.

"May we strive for excellence throughout life in everything we do," he said.

The Class of 2025 departed the ceremony as part of a 127-year legacy, ready to embrace the next chapter of their lives.





## CarFest – Unity in the Community & Noble Charities Foundation Student Tool Scholarship



On May 14, 2025, St. Philip's College hosted the CarFest – Unity in the Community & Noble Charities Foundation Student Tool Scholarship Recognition event at Southwest Campus. The program featured welcome remarks from Christopher Beardsall, Dean for Academic Success in Applied Science & Technology - SWC. Dr. Sharon Crockett-Ray, Director of Institutional Advancement, delivered a special recognition of donors. Scholarship presentations were made by Andrew Brooks and Celine Treviño from the Community for Automotive Professionals, followed by a Noble Charities Scholarship presentation from CEO Rene Capistan.

## Gunn Automotive Group Tools Scholarship



On May 21, 2025, SPC hosted the Gunn Automotive Group Tools Scholarship event. Five students received an 8-drawer toolbox and automotive tools with a total value of \$7,620. The scholarships were presented by Tony Ciaravino, Frank Napier, and Matt Kosub from the Gunn Automotive Group.

## SAABE and BOMA Annual Vendor Expo Trade Show

On May 29, 2025, St. Philip's College hosted the San Antonio Association of Building Engineers and the Building Owners and Managers Association of San Antonio for this year's Annual Vendor Expo Trade Show. At the event, nearly 100 industry participants were present, offering students exposure to the world of building operations, construction, facility management, and real opportunities for internships and employment. A check presentation was made to St. Philip's College to establish a scholarship.



## Celebrating SPC TX FAME Graduates



On May 29, 2025, TX FAME held a graduation event to celebrate its participants, including the Alamo Chapter Advanced Manufacturing Technology program at St. Philip's College. Through a partnership with the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME), students are sponsored by one of 17 local manufacturing companies, including Toyota, H-E-B, and Caterpillar. Participants work three days a week with their sponsoring company and attend classes two days a week at St. Philip's College Southwest Campus. Over five semesters, students earn an Associate of Applied Science in Advanced Manufacturing Technology while gaining hands-on experience.



## SPC Respiratory Care Students Compete at 2025 TSRC Conference



A team of students from SPC traveled to Lubbock to compete at the 2025 Texas Society for Respiratory Care Conference Sputum Bowl on June 9, 2025.

Three students competed: Tyra Williams, Kameron Spencer, Kaci Barnett, and Francisco Guillen-Chavez as the alternate. An additional six classmates attended to take part in the conference.

Faculty members Christian Baker and Jalissa Baker functioned as coaches, supporting the students as phone-a-friend experts. Students faced a challenging first round with difficult questions, placing them in a bracket where they had to compete against teams that included bachelor's and master's level students.

## The Links, Incorporated Donation



On June 11, 2025, at their 47th Western Area Conference, The Links, Incorporated, awarded \$10,000 to St. Philip's College. St. Philip's College is one of the nine HBCUs that are supported through their Western Area Scholarship Endowment Fund.

The Western Area includes over 3,400 members from 61 chapters, encompassing the states Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

The Links, Incorporated, is an international, non-profit corporation established in 1946. With over 17,000 members in 299 chapters, they are one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations.

## SPC Participates in City-Wide Juneteenth Parade

More than 30 students and employees from SPC participated in San Antonio's annual Juneteenth parade on Saturday, June 14, 2025. The college's cheer and dance teams brought energy to the 3.1-mile route from Sam Houston High School to Comanche Park No. 2.

"This has been an event I've participated in every year since joining SPC," said Dean for Academic Success, Health Sciences Christopher Metsgar. "It is a powerful reminder that strengthens the college's legacy."

Following the parade, attendees enjoyed food vendors, live entertainment, and networking opportunities at the 2025 Juneteenth Festival held at Comanche Park No. 2. San Antonio has commemorated Juneteenth since 1866, with the city's modern festival beginning in 1996. Juneteenth is a federal holiday in the United States. It is celebrated annually on June 19; the campus is closed.





## SPC Hosts Camp 98.6



St. Philip's College (SPC), in partnership with University Health, hosted Camp 98.6 from June 23 through June 25, giving high school students a firsthand experience in the world of healthcare.

The three-day camp welcomed over 40 high school students to gain experience with a local hospice company. They engaged in hands-on activities and simulations designed to introduce them to a variety of healthcare professions beyond traditional roles such as nursing and medicine.

"Camp 98.6 is designed to engage students in hands-on learning and real-world applications," said Christopher Metsgar, Dean for Academic Success, Health Sciences. "The dedication of

our faculty and staff ensures that each participant leaves inspired to make a difference in their communities."

SPC offers 19 health science programs, and the camp served as a platform to showcase those offerings while encouraging students to consider careers in the growing healthcare sector.

In addition to building practical skills, the event fostered networking among participants, helping them connect with peers who share a passion for making a difference through healthcare.

The college plans to expand the program in 2026 to a four-day format and increase its capacity to 100 students.

## SPC Announces Weekend Trades



St. Philip's College (SPC) has launched a new initiative to help students earn career-ready credentials on a flexible schedule.

The Weekend Trades, beginning in August 2025, allows students to complete training in high-wage, high-demand fields by attending classes exclusively on Fridays and Saturdays at the college's Southwest Campus.

The initiative was created in response to a growing demand in the fields of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), diesel technology, and electrical trades.

"In an effort to make these courses more accessible, we are now offering Friday and Saturday sections, with a vision to increase those offerings in the near future," said Chris Beardsall, Dean for Academic Success, Applied Science & Technology – SWC.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the electrical trades are projected to have 100,000 job openings between 2023 and 2033. After completing just three semesters, students earn credentials that position them for immediate job opportunities.

To kick off the initiative, SPC hosted a Weekend Trades Showcase on June 28, 2025. Prospective students met faculty, explored programs, completed enrollment steps, and registered for classes.

Representatives from Ready to Work were on hand to provide help to participants to determine their eligibility for the program. Additionally, Human Resources conducted on-site pre-screenings for faculty members interested in teaching in the Weekend Trades.



# ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT St. Philip's College

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## Upcoming Events

For more information on upcoming events and to receive the latest information on campus announcements follow us on social media.



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