



Dec. 13, 2018

## Colleagues:

As we end another successful fall semester, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of you for the warm welcome I've received over the last few months as I began my service as president of Palo Alto College. The work you've done to continue supporting our students on their journey is evident in our many successes, including the highest number of degrees and certificates awarded – a total of 1,713 – in the 2017-2018 academic year and our record enrollment of 9,852 students in Fall 2018.

These achievements are a result of the continued journey toward performance excellence Palo Alto College has pursued over the last few years, and it's evident through our recognition from the Aspen Institute as one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation. As we look forward to the announcement regarding the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence in April, I would like to recap a few successes from Fall 2018:

- For the second year in a row, the Catch the Next-Ascender program was selected as one of five finalists in the Community-Based Organization category for the 2018 Examples of Excelencia award from Excelencia in Education, a national organization that focuses on Latino student success in higher education.
- Project Access – a program for students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities – was named one of five state-wide finalists for the 2018 Texas

Higher Education Star Award, which recognizes exceptional contributions toward meeting the THECB's 60x30TX education plan goals.

- Palo Alto College hosted the inaugural TEDxPaloAltoCollege, a locally organized event licensed by the TED organization, to offer a unique opportunity to create dialogue and provide a forum for sharing ideas, passions, and experiences featuring innovative ideas centered on the theme “Breakthrough,” communicated through a variety of live talks and performances from presenters including the co-CEO of Archie Comics, a forensic psychologist, a breakdancer, and a pioneering virtual-reality game designer.
- The first cohort of the new Healthcare Administration program launched with 30 students enrolled in Fall 2018; students will be able earn a 60-credit-hour associate degree or a 36-credit-hour certificate to fill the high demand for occupations in Bexar County's growing healthcare industry.
- Palo Alto College received a \$225,000 grant from the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education program to enhance education for high-technology fields and create an educational pipeline for Logistics and Supply Chain Management from high school to Palo Alto College to transfer institutions.
- At our annual scholarship fundraiser - ¡Una Nueva Celebracion! – we received a record \$1,000,000 in committed scholarship dollars for Palo Alto College students and employees, including more than \$815,000 from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to cover full-ride scholarships for students, research assistantships, and scholarships for employees pursuing master's or doctoral degrees.
- The Alamo Colleges District was named one of five recipients of the 2018 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and was the first community college system to achieve this level of recognition in the history of the program, which recognizes sustainable excellence through visionary leadership, organizational alignment, systemic improvement, and innovation.

In just a few weeks, we'll be back to start a new semester with our Spring 2019 convocation, with sessions beginning Wednesday, Jan. 9. A full schedule is available for viewing (NEED HYPERLINK).

This is an exciting time to be a part of the Palo Alto College family! I look forward to seeing each of you at our annual Holiday Luncheon on Friday, Dec. 14 at noon in the gymnasium as we come together to celebrate Palo Alto College's continued

commitment to keeping our students first.

Happy holidays to your and your family,

Robert Garza, Ph.D.

President of Palo Alto College



**ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT**  
**Palo Alto College**

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