



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **STEM scholarships available at Palo Alto College through \$650,000 grant from National Science Foundation**

Alamo Colleges District-Palo Alto College, a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) since 2000, has been awarded a \$650,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S-STEM) program to provide academic scholarships for experiential STEM research opportunities and increase the number of students in Biology and Biosciences programs who transfer and graduate with a bachelor's degree in a STEM field. This is the first NSF award received by Palo Alto College since the College was founded in 1985 and is part of a larger effort towards improving access to STEM-related programs.

"The S-STEM project aligns with our commitment to providing a first-rate education for economically disadvantaged students looking to pursue a career in STEM," said Dr. Mike Flores, president of Palo Alto College. "As champions of community access, we are grateful to the National Science Foundation for empowering us to educate talented students who will become the future workforce of our city."

Over the grant's five-year award period beginning Sept. 1 2017, Palo Alto College will provide financial scholarships for eligible students who are academically-talented, demonstrate financial need, and pursuing degrees in Biology or Biosciences programs. The grant will also support tutoring services, cohort-building extracurricular activities like field trips and university visits, and the implementation of Projects of Discovery (PODs) — a sustainable course-based approach for involving community college students in interdisciplinary research experiences.

"Ensuring access to educational opportunities will strengthen the economy, drive technological advancement, and allow citizens to overcome socioeconomic challenges that are influenced by education inequality," said U.S. Representative Will Hurd, who co-chairs the Congressional Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Caucus and represents several colleges designated as HSI, including Palo Alto College. "Palo Alto College is committed to encouraging more Hispanic students to pursue STEM degrees, because they know that this benefits the students, the communities, and our economy."

The success of this grant award is an outcome of working collaboratively with Science Foundation Arizona through the KickStarter Process (under the National Science Foundation through Grant No. HRD-1450661), which is a technical assistance program that prepares and positions Community College HSI's to compete successfully for federal funds with focus on student recruitment and retention in STEM fields.

The National Science Foundation is a federal agency created by U.S. Congress in 1950. With an annual budget of \$7.5 billion, the NSF is the funding source for approximately 24 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities.

Palo Alto College, one of the Alamo Colleges, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and a recipient of the 2015 Texas Award for Performance Excellence. With nearly 9,000 students, Palo Alto College is accredited to offer associate degrees, short-term certificates and non-credit continuing education classes. The campus is located on the south side of San Antonio at 1400 W. Villaret Blvd. at I-410 and Texas Hwy 16 and online at [alamo.edu/pac](http://alamo.edu/pac).

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