



NEWS RELEASE

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Palo Alto College named partner finalist for national *Excelencia* Award for successful college-readiness program

Catch the Next, Inc. Dream Catchers Program (CTN), a college-readiness program at Alamo Colleges District-Palo Alto College (PAC), has been named a finalist for the 2017 Examples of *Excelencia* award from *Excelencia* in Education, a national organization that focuses on Latino student success in higher education. PAC is the only CTN affiliate in San Antonio, in partnership with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to increase the retention and completion rates of underserved students to close the achievement gap for Latino students.

The annual Examples of *Excelencia* awards recognize programs that use evidence-based practices to improve educational achievement for Latino students in higher education from each of four categories: associate degree programs, baccalaureate programs, graduate programs, and community-based organizations. After a review of 160 nominations from 25 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico, *Excelencia* announced that CTN is among the 19 finalists across all categories and one of five finalists in the Community-Based Organization category for 2017.

CTN faculty and administrators implementing the program participate in a year-long professional development sequence starting with a week-long summer institute at the University of Texas at Austin, followed by fall and spring session institutes to improve the educational outcomes of Latino and other underserved student populations. CTN's learning approach combines literacy across disciplines, intensive student services, and community engagement through mentoring. At PAC, students in the CTN program are 99 percent Latino. The average rate of students earning an A, B, or C grade for English courses for PAC CTN students is 77 percent, compared to 62 percent of overall PAC students.

The Alamo Colleges District is also a finalist in the associate degree category for AlamoADVISE, a case management advising model implemented at the five colleges in the district to facilitate and support student transition from outreach to credential completion. A national announcement and presentation of *Excelencia* winners is scheduled for Oct. 5 in Washington, D.C.

Excelencia in Education is a Washington, D.C.-based national organization that accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support academic achievement. Founded in 2004, *Excelencia* in Education builds networks of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly-educated workforce and civic leadership. For more information, visit www.edexcelencia.org.

Palo Alto College, part of the Alamo Colleges District, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and a recipient of the 2015 Texas Award for Performance Excellence and a finalist for the 2016 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. With over 10,000 students, Palo Alto College is accredited to offer associate degrees and short-term certificates. 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.

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