



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Palo Alto College named a 2020 AASHE Sustainability Award Winner**

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) announced Palo Alto College as the recipient of a 2020 AASHE Sustainability Award for outstanding achievements and progress in higher education sustainability. AASHE bestows its prestigious awards on the institutions and individuals that are helping to lead higher education to a sustainable future.

The College was honored for its Community Garden, which was established in 2019 as a space to grow food, cultivate community, and improve food security for students and the surrounding community. Programming at the Garden aims to create a culture of sustainability by including educational components to inform the community about nutrition and gardening techniques.

This year, AASHE received 450+ entries that resulted in 11 winners announced across four categories. Entries were judged on overall impact, innovation, stakeholder involvement, clarity, and other criteria specific to each category.

“The Community Garden has not only created experiential learning opportunities for our students, but it has enabled us to connect with our community to improve food security and promote healthy lifestyles,” said Dr. Robert Garza, president of Palo Alto College. “We are honored to accept the AASHE Sustainability Award as it is a testament to the partnerships established that continue to make an extraordinary impact in our community.”

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty, staff, and students have maintained the Garden, donating harvests to the San Antonio Food Bank. Over 1,000 pounds of fresh produce has been donated.

The Garden was funded as part of a five-year, \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education within the Project Impacto grant, which has supported various resources available through the College’s [Student Health, Advocacy, Resource, and Engagement \(S.H.A.R.E.\) Center](#). This project is an addition to other campus initiatives to provide healthy food to students and the community, including the on-campus food pantry and biannual Food Fairs, both supported by the SA Food Bank.

AASHE held a live awards ceremony on Dec. 3 at noon U.S. Eastern time to recognize and celebrate the 2020 winners. To date, more than 100 campuses have been recognized through this prestigious award program since its inception in 2006.

Palo Alto College, part of the Alamo Colleges District, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, is a Rising Star winner of the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, and is celebrating its 35-year anniversary. With over 10,000 students, Palo Alto College is accredited to offer associate degrees and short-term certificates. The College 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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