



NEWS RELEASE

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Palo Alto College breaks ground on campus Vineyard & Hops Yard

[Images](#)

Alamo Colleges District-Palo Alto College hosted a ceremonial groundbreaking at the future site of its Vineyard and Hops Yard and unveiled plans for a new experiential learning opportunity for students. With a target completion of Spring 2022, the yard will allow students the opportunity for hands-on instruction to learn more about how the unique Texas climate impacts the harvest season in support of the high-demand industry.

In Spring 2020, the College launched its Viticulture and Enology program to give students the opportunity to join the wine industry in Texas – an industry that generates nearly \$13.1 billion in economic activity. The program allows students to earn a 60-credit-hour Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Viticulture and Enology.

This unique program puts a focus on the labor side of the workforce as opposed to the entrepreneurial aspect. Current students enrolled in the program are provided a thorough, scientific understanding of the wine-making process, hands-on experience with lab analyses, and also get exposure to winery equipment and operations, including behind-the-scenes tours at local wineries.

“This program is unique among colleges and universities in South Central Texas and the addition of the vineyard and hops garden will help graduates with the hands-on experience needed for a successful career in the Texas wine industry, and eventually the beer industry when we grow hops,” said Dr. Robert Garza, president of Palo Alto College. “As the winemaking industry booms in Texas, there is a growing need for more skilled labor at vineyards and wineries.”

For those with a burgeoning interest in wine and looking to further develop their pallet, Palo Alto College is hosting a four-week course starting Thursday, August 19 with local partners: Pedernales Cellars, Bending Branch Winery, Ron Yates Wines, and Duchman’s Family Winery. Taught by Professor Joseph Coppola and Dr. Raymond Pfang, participants will learn about the characteristics and the finer points of appreciating Texas wine. Participants must be 21 years old and can register [here](#).

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, a finalist for the 2016 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and a Rising Star winner of the 2019

Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. With over 11,000 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.

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