



NEWS RELEASE

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Palo Alto College tops off its newest building by placing the final beam

[Images](#)

Alamo Colleges District-Palo Alto College hosted a topping out ceremony to celebrate a milestone in the construction phase of the new bond-funded Rio Grande building, which will be the largest building on campus once completed in Fall 2022.

As part of a long-standing tradition, a topping out happens when the structure of a building is being completed by placing the last beam on the highest point. Such ceremonies date back to 700 A.D. when workers began placing a small evergreen tree on a new structure to mark building progress. It was also thought to serve as a good luck omen.

“We are so thankful that our community continues to invest in Palo Alto College and the Alamo Colleges District,” said Dr. Robert Garza, president of Palo Alto College. “This new multipurpose building will enhance our students’ college experience while preparing them for future careers. During these unprecedented times, it is encouraging that our students continue to pursue higher education for a brighter future.”

Painted white, the beam was signed by students, faculty, administrators, city officials, construction workers, and special guests. In addition, a tree, a Texas flag, and a United States flag were placed on the beam. As an added touch, two staff members who served at Palo Alto College and passed away during the COVID-19 pandemic were honored by having their photos adhered to the beam. Their memory along with these signatures will be part of Palo Alto College’s history for generations to come.

In 2017 Bexar County voters approved a \$450 million bond for the Alamo Colleges, with \$66 million allocated to capital improvement projects at Palo Alto College. This joint-purpose building will serve as the primary entry point to campus and be home to a new Student Engagement & Welcome Center. It will also include specialized spaces for various academic programs to expand training for high-wage, high-demand occupations in our region, including advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, robotics, cyber security, logistics, dental hygiene, science labs, and criminal justice.

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 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.

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