



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Palo Alto College and Texas A&M University-San Antonio Partner to Enhance Transfer Student Success**

Palo Alto College and Texas A&M University-San Antonio (TAMU-SA) have been selected to participate in the inaugural Aspen Institute College Excellence Program and American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) “Transfer Student Success and Equity Intensive (TSSEI)” cohort to create a more seamless transfer experience for students. TSSEI is a one-year initiative that creates more equitable advances in practices and policies while further improving existing efforts for transferring students from community colleges to four-year universities.

“We are very excited to participate in this initiative with Palo Alto College,” said Texas A&M University-San Antonio President, Cynthia Teniente-Matson. “It is important for us to strengthen relationships to ensure our transfer experience is student-centered. This initiative will allow us to increase access, student success, and equity in our outcomes—all are institutional priorities for Texas A&M University-San Antonio.”

The cohort consists of monthly workshops and consultations with experts to identify and understand critical transfer outcomes and equity-driven data. TAMU-SA and Palo Alto College leaders will expand upon these strategies to make the academic pathway from community college to bachelor’s completion seamless for students.

The TSSEI workshop series provides a 12-month series of workshops aimed at accelerating transfer reform. The participating institutions will consult with higher education experts to identify and utilize critical transfer outcomes and equity data.

“Initiatives like this are important for students who want to start their higher education path by earning an associate degree with the intent to transfer to a four-year university and complete a bachelor’s degree,” said Dr. Robert Garza, president of Palo Alto College. “The TSSEI program will allow us to collaborate and learn from our peers on a national scale to improve the transfer experience and improve student success. We are grateful for this opportunity to collaborate with the Aspen Institute, AASCU, and TAMU-SA on our collective mission to ensure students are successful at completing their degree and achieving their goals.”



Palo Alto College and TAMU-SA are one of the 30 two-year and four-year institutional teams selected from a pool of 97 institutions and three systems from 25 states for the inaugural cohorts of the TSSEI, which is funded through support of the Ascendium Education Group. Other Texas teams include:

- Amarillo College and West Texas A&M University
- Austin Community College and Texas State University
- San Jacinto College and University of Houston-Clear Lake

For more information about transfer options, visit [highered.aspeninstitute.org/transfer-intensive](https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/transfer-intensive).

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#### About Palo Alto College

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](http://alamo.edu/pac).

#### About Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Established as a stand-alone university in 2009, Texas A&M University-San Antonio is a comprehensive four-year public university that reflects the culturally diverse, heritage-rich community it serves. Situated on nearly 700 acres in south San Antonio, the University offers 33 undergraduate degrees and 16 graduate degrees to nearly 7,000 students. A&M-San Antonio is home to the Henry G. Cisneros Institute for Emerging Leaders and the Cyber Engineering Technology/Cyber Security Research Center. The University holds the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation and is one of only 24 higher education institutions in the U.S. to have received the Seal of Excelencia certification from Excelencia in Education for its support of Latino student success. More than 75 percent of A&M-SA students identify as Hispanic, and 73 percent are the first in their family to attend college. A&M-San Antonio is a military-embracing institution; in 2020, Military Times ranked the University No. 35 in the nation for “Best for Vets: Colleges.” Visit [tamusa.edu](http://tamusa.edu) for more information. #onamission

#### About The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices and leadership that significantly improve student learning, completion, and employment after college — especially for the growing population of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds on American campuses. For more information, visit <https://www.highered.aspeninstitute.org>



#### About The American Association of State Colleges And Universities (AASCU)

The AASCU Division of Academic Innovation and Transformation (AIT) supports member institutions in their mission to prepare students to lead productive and fulfilling lives. Driven by an understanding that today's colleges and universities need to prepare students for work, life and citizenship in local, national, and global contexts, AIT's programming focuses on civic engagement, international education, student success and teacher education. For more information, visit <https://www.aascu.org/AcademicInnovationandTransformation/>

#### About Ascendium Education Group

Formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation to help fulfill the promise of the landmark Higher Education Act of 1965, Ascendium Education Group has helped millions of learners pursue postsecondary education. Over the years, we have grown to become not only the nation's largest federal student loan guarantor, but also one of its most active and respected postsecondary education philanthropies. The funds Ascendium uses for grants have been accumulated over our 55+ year history of helping borrowers successfully repay their student loans on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. Besides being a national philanthropy, Ascendium is a federal student loan guarantor and a provider of financial wellness services. <https://www.ascendiumphilanthropy.org/about-us/>