

2024 PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
St. Philip's College

ISSUE
04

President's Message



This past semester, St. Philip's College achieved remarkable growth, reaching a record-breaking enrollment of over 17,000 students. Our mission to empower students is supported by providing comprehensive wraparound services that assist them throughout their academic journey, recognizing that the path to higher education is rarely linear.

Through the Student Life department, we offer engaging activities that enhance the college experience, build a sense

of community, instill pride, and create meaningful connections across campus. From men's and women's basketball and cheerleading to women's volleyball, and more, we provide a wide range of opportunities for students to stay involved and engaged.

An essential part of our support system is the Student Advocacy Center, which offers a range of services to help students navigate challenges beyond the classroom. These services—counseling, case

management, emergency aid, and access to community resources—help reduce stress, improve focus, and boost academic performance.

As we continue to grow, I am excited about the future of St. Philip's College and the opportunities it holds for our students. We remain committed to fostering a culture of success that will leave a lasting impact on both our students and the community we serve.



Homecoming Week 2024

St. Philip's College was alive with Tiger pride as Homecoming Week, themed "Feels like Home... Tiger Strong," brought the community together for nearly 20 events from Oct. 10 through Oct. 18, 2024. The week-long celebration was filled with excitement, tradition, and campus spirit.

Event highlights include the Royal Court Showcase, Greek Stroll Contest and Comedy Show, Divine 9 Greek Photo Shoot, and SPC History Trivia-Kahoot. Homecoming Week culminated on Oct. 18, 2024, with the highly anticipated Blue and White Dinner and Dance, where the St. Philip's College Royal Court was announced.

During the festive evening, St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston crowned Alyssa Vasquez-Garza as SPC

Queen and Tyrik Hall as SPC King, marking a memorable moment for students, employees, alums, and community members.

"The SPC Homecoming celebration is more than a tradition; it's an opportunity to rebuild the Alumni and Friends Association, strengthen community ties, and promote the college's educational mission," Dr. Loston continued, "This evening is about coming together as a family of alumni, students, faculty, staff, and neighbors to celebrate our heritage."

Homecoming serves as a time for reflection and celebration, reminding all of the 126-year legacy of St. Philip's College as a haven for education in San Antonio's East Side.



At the homecoming game on Oct. 17, Dr. Loston was presented with a bouquet of roses by the men's basketball team. Shown here, from left: Randall Dawson, Vice President for Academic Success, George H. Johnson, III, Interim Vice President for College Services, Dr. Adena Williams Loston, College President, and Wesley B. Wells, Vice President for Student Success.



The St. Philip's College Cheer Squad perform at the college's inaugural Royal Court Showcase on Oct. 10.



Shown here, from left: SPC ECHS Queen Breanna Davis, SPC Princess Felicia Andrews, SPC Queen Alyssa Vasquez-Garza, SPC President Dr. Adena Williams Loston, SPC King Tyrik Hall, SPC Prince Kenny LaFond, and SPC Duke Kiinbej Terrazas. Not present, SPC ECHS King Antonio Lopez.

SPC hosts Rey Feo Scholarship Reception



Rey Feo LXXV, John S. McFadden, Sr., poses for a photo with St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston, sharing his crown.

On Sept. 17, 2024, St. Philip's College (SPC) hosted the Rey Feo Scholarship Reception, awarding 121 students \$100,000 in scholarships for the Fall 2024 semester. At the event, a surprise donation of an additional \$100,000 was announced for the Spring 2025 semester.

The Rey Feo Foundation has partnered with St. Philip's College for the past two years, showing their strong belief in the power of education and a commitment to helping students reach their full potential. This partnership has had a lasting impact on SPC students.

With this donation, SPC awarded scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 each to part-time and full-time students. At SPC, 83.5% of students rely on financial aid, grants, loans, and scholarships, making donations like the Rey Feo Scholarship crucial for student success.

The event was graced by the presence of Rey Feo LXXV, Mr. John S. McFadden, Sr., and his Royal Court, who were dressed in their custom-made outfits. This marked their final appearance in this capacity.

The opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Sharon Crockett-Ray, SPC Director of Institutional Advancement, followed by a welcome and overview of the college from SPC President Dr. Adena Williams Loston. Jennifer Barbaro, Executive Director of the Rey Feo Scholarship Foundation, provided insights into the occasion's significance and presented a certificate to each student recipient at the event.

"The Rey Feo Trades Scholarship has awarded \$149,000 in scholarships to deserving students in 2022, with a \$400,000 pledge in future scholarship funds. We appreciate this generous opportunity afforded to SPC students," said Dr. Crockett-Ray.

The award recipients are enrolled in one of the college's 30 workforce program areas, which prepare students for high-demand, high-wage careers in the region. The curriculum aligns with the needs of today's job market, ensuring graduates are well-equipped for success.

Student Spotlight: Christopher Saucedo



Christopher Saucedo, a Psychology pre-major at St. Philip's College (SPC), is building an impressive academic resume focused on research in neurodiversity, with an emphasis on Autism. For the last two years, he has conducted research with the goal of raising awareness about the disparity in undiagnosed neurodiversity among students at community colleges.

As part of the American Heart Association (AHA) Scholars Program for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), he will share his findings at SPC and Northwest Vista College (NVC) with the broader health community at the AHA Conference in Dallas in April 2025.

Christopher recently attended the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Conference in Colorado, where he represented SPC as one of the few community college students participating in the HSI Scholars Program. This prestigious program supports undergraduate students in biomedical and health sciences at HSIs, preparing them to address health disparities in Hispanic communities.

At SPC, he completed the First Year Experience (FYE) Program as part of its pilot cohort, finishing in Spring 2024. The FYE Program at St. Philip's is designed to support first-year students by helping them develop essential skills for academic success.

"FYE provided me with the tools, resources, and mindset to be successful," Christopher said. "It gave me a solid foundation to understand the college culture and offered a platform to encourage other students."

Christopher's journey at SPC exemplifies his commitment to research, leadership, and community service, with the goal of creating opportunities for all students to thrive.

SPC Hosts Hispanic Heritage Salsa Invitational



Pictured here are the third-place winners of the salsa competition, Ava Heartman and Avery Ales.

On Oct. 8, 2024, local high school seniors showcased their culinary skills at St. Philip's College (SPC) for the Hispanic Heritage Month High School Culinary Salsa Invitational. The students competed to create the best salsa, earn top honors, and vie for scholarships funded by The Original Mexican Restaurant Kangaroo Court Inc. for a panel of judges, and the SPC community.

Each team was required to bring raw ingredients and create their salsas from scratch, utilizing dry pantry items and culinary tools provided by the St. Philip's College Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts department. Judging criteria placed a strong emphasis on originality and creativity, encouraging students to think outside the box with their salsa recipes.

The People's Choice Award went to Sol Olvera and Lindsay Rocha from O'Connor High School in Helotes (Northside ISD). The judges awarded scholarships to the top three teams:

- **1st Place:** Kayden Flores and Alex Rosarios from Marshall High School in San Antonio (Northside ISD) (\$500 scholarship each)
- **2nd Place:** Julian Faz-Doran and Brianna Ozuna from Holmes High School in San Antonio (Northside ISD) (\$250 scholarship each)
- **3rd Place:** Ava Heartman and Avery Ales from Alamo Heights High School (AHISD) (\$125 scholarship each)

The following high schools participated in the competition: La Vernia, Karen Wagner, Samuel Clemens, O'Connor, Byron P. Steele, Alamo Heights, Roosevelt, John Marshall, Jubilee Lake View, Jourdanton, and Holmes. The annual event is part of Hispanic Heritage Month, which concluded on Oct. 15.

Project SURE Student Spotlight: Arbara Ezebb

“I’ve come a long way. My educational journey has been filled with emotions, but I’m happy and proud to have accomplished so much. I’m a living testimony to single mothers in IT—that you can do it,” said Project SURE student Arbara Ezebb.

Project SURE (Scaffolding Undergraduate Research Experiences) is a four-year initiative funded by a \$1.25 million NSF HBCU-UP grant. The program aims to elevate STEM education by equipping students with the skills to transfer to four-year universities and pursue STEM degrees. Through classroom experiential learning, applied research, internships, and summer research opportunities, students gain hands-on, career-relevant experience.

Arbara graduated with an associate degree in Information Technology Cybersecurity in May 2024 and is on track to earn her Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity degree from St. Philip’s College in Spring 2027.

“Dr. Saint Hubert reached out to me during the pandemic to join the program,” she said. “It helped me network with professionals in the STEM and IT fields, meet new people, and gain the skills I needed to advance my career.”

The program offers participants stipends to assist with school expenses and connects students with financial resources that help with food and housing needs. Arbara credits her involvement with Project SURE for helping her network with her current employer, Accenture Federal Service. Four months after



completing her internship with Accenture Federal Service at St. Philip’s College’s Eastside Education Training Center (EETC), she began as an Engineer Tester for the company.

She encourages other students to embrace the opportunities Project SURE provides. “My advice would be to go for it and don’t be afraid to ask questions. They are there to help you reach the career you want.”

SPC Earns 2024 VEERA– Gold Level

St. Philip’s College earned the 2024 Veteran Education Excellence Recognition Award (VEERA) – Gold Level by the Texas Veterans Commission, recognizing the college’s dedication to providing exceptional educational services to veterans and military-connected students.

St. Philip’s College has held this prestigious recognition for the past four years, demonstrating its consistent efforts in fostering the academic success of its veteran students.

“This statewide award highlights our commitment to excellence in providing services to our military-connected students,” said Veronica Griego, Senior Coordinator of Student Success at the Veterans Affairs Office. “The college has held this recognition, setting us apart as a higher education institution with best practices.”

The application process for the VEERA award is highly competitive, involving rigorous eligibility criteria. Applications are first screened by the Veterans Education Department to ensure compliance with the Texas Education Code. Then, an award committee conducts a more comprehensive evaluation.

The VEERA program features three levels of recognition, reflecting the range of services provided to veteran students and their families. Gold-level awardees achieve a minimum overall evaluation score of 90%.



Show here, from left: Adrian Jackson, Director of Marketing and Strategic Communications, Gina Hasso, Tommy Morris, Dean for Student Success, Educational Support Services, Laura Koerner, Texas Veterans Commission Chairwoman, Vincent Garcia, Dr. Adena Williams Loston, St. Philip’s College President, Andres C. Arredondo, Dean for Student Success, Enrollment Management, and Wesley Wells, Vice President for Student Success

President's Gala Highlighting Culinary Arts



On Nov. 22, 2024, St. Philip's College welcomed community partners and donors to the President's Gala, showcasing the talents of its Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts students. The event, held on campus, featured a gourmet menu prepared by student chefs. Culinary Arts student Tjwonna Prince presented the evening's courses and wine selections.

St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston delivered the welcome address, setting the tone for the evening. This was followed by an overview of the Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts Program presented by Chef Costello, who also introduced the student chefs.

The evening's menu included an impressive array of dishes, beginning with an amuse-bouche of Duck Confit Ravioli, followed by Sweet Potato and Carrot Bisque. Two palate cleansers—Lime Granita and Cucumber Mint Sorbet—were served between courses. The seafood course featured Pan-Seared Halibut with Smoked Almond Romesco and Roasted Broccolini, while the meat course consisted of a House Dry-Aged New York Strip with Bourbon Mushroom Demi and Potatoes Dauphine. The meal concluded with a Spinach and Apple Salad, followed by a decadent Almond Citrus Cake with Chocolate Ganache and a Sugar Cloud. The wines served throughout the evening were donated by the Ron Yates Winery.

Students were front and center during the gala, with HBCU Scholar Daveon Johnson and Presidential Scholar Christopher Saucedo delivering remarks. They highlighted their educational journeys and expressed gratitude for the community's support.

St. Philip's College continues to inspire and elevate its students, preparing them for careers in the culinary and hospitality industries, a testament to the college's commitment to excellence.



Shown here, from left: Christopher Saucedo, Presidential Scholar, and Daveon Johnson, HBCU White House Scholar.



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Upcoming Events

For more information on upcoming events and to receive the latest information on campus announcements follow us on social media.



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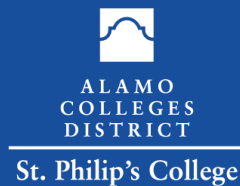
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For more information, scan the QR Code below or visit: alamo.edu/spc/culturefest



St. Philip's College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate degrees and certificates. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of St. Philip's College.



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