

2025

# PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT  
St. Philip's College

ISSUE  
**01**



## President's Message



One of the most rewarding aspects of my job as President of St. Philip's College is the honor of shaking hands with each student as they cross the stage at our commencement ceremonies every fall and spring. This past December, the college celebrated its 151st graduation at the Freeman Coliseum, conferring 1,391 degrees and certificates to 887 graduates.

Whether earning an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, or one of our many certificates, each student has written their own chapter in the legacy of St. Philip's College. Their success is our success, and it strengthens our mission to empower our diverse student population through educational achievement and career readiness.

Reflecting on how far St. Philip's College has come fills me with immense pride. From our college's beginning in 1898 as a sewing school for the daughters and granddaughters of emancipated slaves to becoming a multi-campus institution serving over 18,000 students and offering more than 100 degrees and certificates, including our newest program, the Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity. This transformation is nothing short of remarkable.

For 126 years, St. Philip's College has remained a beacon of opportunity, and we will continue to embrace our role as both a Historically Black College and Hispanic-Serving Institution, proudly serving the east and southwest sides of San Antonio and beyond.



## Graduate Spotlights



### Alayna Morgado

In Dec. 2024, Alayna Morgado walked across the stage to receive her degree in Respiratory Care Technology. Graduation was a celebration of academic achievement and a symbol of what she had overcome. Alayna grew up blocks away from campus, and the sight of the college has been a constant in her life, a pivotal landmark in her educational journey.



### Breeonna Stimpson-Leavitt

Breeonna Stimpson-Leavitt walked across the stage in Fall 2024, driven by her passion for science and career-building. “I knew St. Philip’s College was where the career-driven people were, those who weren’t messing around with college and had a goal in mind,” she said. “That’s what I wanted— to be involved in academics and career-oriented things to build my résumé.”



### Daveon Johnson

When Daveon Johnson arrived at St. Philip’s College, he knew it was the right place to achieve his dreams. Supported by faculty and staff, he grew academically and as a leader. As a White House HBCU Scholar and Collegiate 100 president, he championed leadership and men’s mental health awareness, leaving a lasting impact.



### Lizeth Garcia-Hernandez

Lizeth Garcia-Hernandez, St. Philip’s College 2024–2025 HACU Leader-in-Residence, graduated in December with an Associate of Arts in Business Management. She was born in Mexico and moved to Texas in January 2022 for educational opportunities. “I knew there was potential in business here,” she said. Lizeth plans to transfer to UTSA for Business Analytics after graduation.



### Shadara Quinn

Shadara Quinn’s journey to graduation symbolizes more than academic success—it honors the strength of women who persevere. Overcoming personal struggles, her love for books inspired her to pursue an English degree, aiming to become a librarian. After graduation, she plans to earn advanced degrees and inspire others through resilience.

## SPC at La Villita's Holiday Village



On Dec. 14, St. Philip's College was front and center as La Villita Historic Arts Village hosted its first annual "Holiday in the Village." This free, family-friendly event blended San Antonio's rich cultural history with holiday festivities, celebrating the legacy of St. Philip's College—founded in La Villita in 1898.

From 1 to 8 p.m., visitors enjoyed the excitement of the winter wonderland, with live music, festive foods, a holiday market, and interactive activities for all ages. The event, a collaboration between La Villita Historic Arts Village, Chef Johnny Hernandez's Kitchen Campus Foundation and St. Philip's College, offered a unique



*Shown here on stage: Chef Johnny Hernandez and St. Philip's College President, Dr. Adena Williams Loston. Show here from Left: Baking and Pastry Arts Program Director, Chef Cynthia De La Fuente CEPC, Team Candy Cane Cuties: Students Danielle Godina, Vivian Villanueva, Lawren Davis, and Chef Frank Salinas, Department Chair Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts.*

blend of history and holiday.

One of the event's highlights was the dedication of a life-sized Holiday Cottage, built by 20 students from St. Philip's College's Construction Technology program. The structure, standing 15 feet tall, honors the original site of the college, which began in La Villita over 126 years ago. The dedication was by Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President of St. Philip's College.

"This holiday project is a perfect example of our students applying their skills to bring history and culture to life. The structure that served as the first site of St. Philip's School still stands here at La Villita, and this project honors our college's rich legacy,"

said St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston.

The event also featured a Gingerbread House Competition, with three teams of Baking and Pastry students from St. Philip's College competing for scholarships. The competition, led by Chef Instructor Cynthia De La Fuente, allowed students to showcase their creativity.

La Villita holds a special place in St. Philip's history. Founded in 1898 as a vocational school, it has grown into a multi-campus college serving over 17,000 students and offering 47 workforce programs, including Baking and Pastry and Construction Technology.

## SPC Culinary Arts Students Prepare 15,000 Tacos for the SA Community

Over 20 students from four culinary arts classes at St. Philip's College gathered on Jan. 24 to prepare 15,000 tacos for the San Antonio community during the second annual Cowboy Breakfast, hosted by the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo and Spurs Give.

The students began preparations at midnight, using 23,000 eggs, 3,700 sausage links, 475 pounds of beans, 475 pounds of bacon, and 475 pounds of chorizo to fill 15,000 tortillas. The event, held from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. in Parking Lot 6 at the Frost Bank Center, marked the official start of the Bar-B-Que Cook-Off weekend and the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo.

Attendees enjoyed a wide variety of breakfast tacos and coffee for free. In a show of community support, a \$15,000 scholarship check was presented to the St. Philip's College Culinary Arts program during the event.

"I love being part of the Cowboy Breakfast because it brings back memories of my time as a student and volunteer. Now, as an instructor, I have the privilege of leading our college's participation. The event provides our culinary arts students a chance to showcase their skills and opens doors to scholarship opportunities," said Chef Instructor John Munoz.



*St. Philip's College students Paula Solorzano and Tracy Rice take a quick break from flipping tortillas to pose for a photograph.*



## St. Philip's College Honors Martin Luther King Jr.

On Jan. 20, 2025, St. Philip's College (SPC) joined more than 100,000 marchers in San Antonio's 38th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. March, one of the largest in the nation, to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Nearly 50 students, staff, faculty, and administrators braved the weather, with temperatures hovering around 25°F and windchills dropping to 20°F.

Despite the bitter cold, the SPC contingent marched with pride, leading the education section of the event. Their banner, proudly displaying the St. Philip's College name, stretched across the group as they completed

the two-and-a-half-mile route from MLK Drive to Pittman-Sullivan Park.

A week later, on Jan. 29, 2025, the SPC community continued commemorating Dr. King's legacy on-campus during their Martin Luther King Jr. Remembrance Ceremony & Solidarity March. The ceremony, hosted in the atrium of the Center for Health Professions, brought together students, faculty, and community members to reflect on King's impact.

The event opened with a welcome from Student Government Association President Alayna Morgado. Student and cheerleader

Taleah Faucett followed with a rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Guest speaker Stacey L. Adam Sr., a Converse city councilman, urged attendees to persevere, stating, "Keep going, no matter the obstacle." The ceremony concluded with Dean for Student Success Tommy Morris leading participants in "We Shall Overcome" as they marched to the Turbon Student Center.

Through both the citywide march and the on-campus remembrance event, SPC reaffirms its commitment to honoring Dr. King's legacy and ensuring his message of equality and justice remains alive.



*City Councilman Stacey L. Adams Sr. gave the keynote remarks at the college's Martin Luther King Jr. Remembrance Ceremony & Solidarity March on Jan. 29, 2025. Show here from left: Tommy A. Morris, Dean for Student Success, Educational Support Services; Stacey L. Adams Sr., Converse City Councilman; and Wesley B. Well, Vice President for Student Success.*

## St. Philip's College hosts its President's Lecture Series featuring CNN's Victor Blackwell



St. Philip's College (SPC) reintroduced its President's Lecture Series on Feb. 4, 2025, after a six-year pause, featuring CNN journalist Victor Blackwell. Held at the college's Watson Fine Arts Center, the free event welcomed students, faculty, staff, and the San Antonio community to engage with the host of First of All with Victor Blackwell and co-anchor of CNN This Morning Weekend.

Victor shared his personal journey, describing how his passion for journalism began at the age of nine in his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. He described how Paul Revere's story inspired him in the fourth grade: "He was a man who spread a message, who people listened to, and he made a difference." Watching local news anchor Al Sanders on the evening news also fueled his aspirations, and by 15, he had landed his first job at a radio station.

A proud graduate of Howard University, a Historically Black college and University (HBCU), he earned his bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism and was named one of the university's Top 150 Distinguished Alumni in 2016. Reflecting on his career, he stressed the importance of authenticity and resilience by encouraging SPC students to remember to ask themselves, "Am I betraying myself in this situation?"

Victor provided further insight into his approach to journalism by emphasizing the need for accuracy and fairness, sharing a powerful message: "Facts are negotiable. History is editable. But it's essential to tell a fair, balanced story." He discussed how his weekend show aims to elevate the voices of people of color, expanding the representation of marginalized communities in national media.

The President's Lecture Series at St. Philip's College began in 2002 and has since welcomed nearly 40 distinguished guest speakers from all backgrounds. Speakers include the original 1961 Mississippi Freedom Riders Hezekiah Watkins, and Patricia Baskerville Dilworth, LeVar Burton from Reading Rainbow, and former San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro.

## Project SURE Interns Present Current Projects



SPC Engineering Prototype Lab Interns from the Project SURE program recently met with College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston to present their latest projects, developed using new cutting-edge equipment, including a Prusa MK4S 3D Printer.

Project SURE, which stands for STEM Undergraduate Research Experience, designates its interns as Subject Matter Experts participating in engineering curriculum development, equipment testing and training, community engagement, and prototype development. The Project SURE program offers students real-world, career-workforce readiness experiences to enhance their skills and support their journey toward earning STEM degrees and transferring to universities.

Show here from left: SPC Engineering Prototype Lab Interns Hayaa Aziz, Carlos Gonzalez, and Alice Fritts, Grants Program Specialist Desiree Smith, Professor of Engineering and Engineering/Project SURE Program Director Dr. Marie-Michelle Saint Hubert, and St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena William's Loston.

## SPC Attends the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's 2025 Workforce Development Summit

St. Philip's College students Estrella Hahn and Montana Pozos, along with Director of Career Readiness and Experiential Learning Services James Cooper, attended the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's Inaugural Workforce Development Summit from Jan. 29 to Feb. 1 in Birmingham, AL.

The three-day event provided a platform to connect workforce-ready talent from Historically Black Community Colleges (HBCCs) with industry leaders and community stakeholders. The event aimed to deepen partnerships with various companies looking to recruit and invest in diverse, skilled professionals prepared for the demands of the job market.

Attendees engaged in a series of workshops, panel discussions, and networking sessions designed to enhance career development, leadership skills, and professional readiness. The summit also offered an opportunity for participants to gain valuable insights into workforce trends and the evolving landscape of industries ranging from healthcare to technology.

"I learned so much. There was such a strong sense of community, and I truly felt welcome. The summit was far beyond my expectations," Estrella said of her experience.

One of the summit's highlights was the presentation of need-based scholarships. Twelve attendees, including Montana Pozos, were awarded a \$15,000 scholarship to support their academic pursuits and career goals.

"I haven't even used the money; it has already relieved stress

and provided mental relief," said Montana. "It is solidifying my goals to become a dental hygienist and one day a dentist."

For St. Philip's College, participation in the Workforce Development Summit aligns with its mission to provide students with opportunities for success that foster career readiness and community engagement.



Show here from left: Estrella Hahn, Montana Pozos, and James Cooper, Director of Career Readiness and Experiential Learning Services.

## SPC Hosts Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the Georgene Irene Bias Book Collection



St. Philip's College (SPC) celebrated Black History Month on Feb. 26, 2025, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Georgene Irene Bias Collection at the college's library. The event honored the life of Dr. Bias, a librarian, educator, and advocate for academic excellence.

Dr. Bias began her career at SPC in 1959, rising to become a professor and head librarian. In recognition of her years of service, she was granted the title of professor emeritus.

Dr. Bias graduated from Phyllis Wheatley High School in 1943 before earning a bachelor's degree from Prairie View A&M University in 1947. She later obtained a Master's in Education in 1953, a Master's in Library Science in 1973 from Our Lady of the Lake University, and a Doctorate in Education from Nova University in 1982.

Her newly dedicated book collection serves as a resource for students, faculty, and researchers, providing insight into Black studies and the Black diaspora.

Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, attendees were invited to explore the collection and enjoy refreshments.





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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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