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PALO ALTO COLLEGE

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **PAC's retiring President to speak at Palo Alto College Commencement**

Palo Alto College's first woman president, Dr. Ana M. "Cha" Guzmán – who is retiring in August 2012 as the longest-serving President – will be the commencement speaker to celebrate the College's 25<sup>th</sup> Commencement Ceremony. The ceremony is scheduled at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 10, at Freeman Coliseum.

Nearly 300 of the college's 785 graduates are expected to participate in the ceremony where they will receive Associate degrees and Certificates of Completion. In addition, students in the Gateway to College program who have completed their high school requirements will be recognized. Palo Alto College, one of the Alamo Colleges, now serves more than 9,000 students.

Dr. Guzmán became president of Palo Alto College in August 2001 after serving as Executive Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Administration and Community Relations at Austin Community College. Under Dr. Guzmán's leadership, the College has produced record enrollment numbers and doubled the number of degrees and certificates in the past five years. In addition, new workforce programs have been added, helping PAC become a primary workforce trainer for Toyota, its suppliers, and the Southside.

Dr. Guzmán has been in educational administration for more than 40 years and is a leading voice for Hispanic Americans in education.

The U.S. Senate confirmed Dr. Guzmán in June 2011 to a four-year term on the National Security Education Board (NSEB). The 13-member panel develops criteria for scholarships and grants for students who express an interest in national security issues or pursuing a career in a national security position. They recommend to the Secretary of Defense which countries and academic disciplines need to be emphasized, including foreign languages and cultures that need to be taught in United States educational institutions.

While at PAC, NBC News invited Dr. Guzmán to participate at the Education Nation Summit 2010 in New York City, a groundbreaking conversation about the state of education in America. She was honored with the Ford Salute to Education in 2005 and was named to the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame in 2006. She currently serves on the Governing Board of the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities.



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Palo Alto College will award an honorary Associate degree to Cindy Taylor, former President of the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. During her 21 years as President of the Chamber, Ms. Taylor had an active role in conceptualizing, planning, and implementing numerous efforts that contributed to the economic development of the Southside.

While with the Chamber, Ms. Taylor secured \$350 million in housing investments for South San Antonio. She also leveraged \$22 million in funds for the development of the Mission Trails and spearheaded efforts to bring Texas A&M University – San Antonio to the southern sector of the city. She also secured \$155 million in economic development grant funds for South San Antonio and chartered the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Ms. Taylor is currently President and CEO of The Cindy Taylor Group. She serves on the Steering Committee for SA 2020, a vision plan for the future of San Antonio, led by Mayor Julián Castro. She is also a founding member of Coalition 4 Economic Growth, and she is a member of the San Antonio Business Coalition and San Antonio Conservation Society. Ms. Taylor has been honored with several awards from various community organizations, including the San Antonio Business Journal Women in Leadership Award, Association of Women in Communications Headliner Award, and Harlandale Hall of Fame Community Service Award.

Palo Alto College is a fully accredited community college located on the Southside of San Antonio, and awards associate degrees, short-term certificates and offers non-credit continuing education classes. The campus is located at 1400 W. Villaret Blvd. or online at [alamo.edu/pac](http://alamo.edu/pac).

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