



A L A M O
C O L L E G E S

PALO ALTO COLLEGE

NEWS RELEASE

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Palo Alto College launches new academic preparation program for students

Palo Alto College has begun its first year of a partnership with the Puente Project, an academic preparation program that improves the college-going rate for educationally disadvantaged students by implementing three essential components – English, counseling, and mentoring.

Over 50 first time in college students are participating in the program's inaugural 2012-2013 year. Faculty and counselors were provided training directly from the Puente Project's training staff in a one-week immersion experience at University of California - Berkeley.

In the program's curriculum, students are required to take an accelerated writing course that incorporates Latino, Mexican/American, and other multicultural authors, experience and issues, through which students progress in one year to transfer level English composition

Students are also provided counseling with in-depth and sustained career and academic guidance to help retain students beyond their program year. Students are paired with a mentor who is trained in the Puente program to serve as a role model and support for the student's academic experience. Some of the mentors for the 2012-2013 class are representatives from H-E-B, City of San Antonio, Standard Aero, and Texas A&M University - San Antonio.

The program's interdisciplinary approach provides a focused, sustained, and engaging learning environment for students. Other elements of the Puente model include a peer support network among the participating students, and outreach efforts with family to create a college-going culture.

The Puente Project is open to all students, regardless of academic standing or financial status. Participants are tracked until they graduate with their Bachelor's degree. The average transfer rate for Puente students is 55 percent, compared to the 20 percent transfer rate for the average community college student. Approximately 70 percent of Puente participants graduate with a Bachelor's degree within four years.

The Puente Project began in California in 1981 with the mission to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees, and return to the community as mentors and leaders of future generations. For more information about the Puente Project, visit www.puente.net.

Palo Alto College, one of the Alamo Colleges, is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate degrees. With over 9,000 students, the College also offers short-term certificates and non-credit continuing education classes. The campus is located on the Southside 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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