

2024 PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER



ALAMO
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St. Philip's College

ISSUE
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From left, Paulo Enriquez Castillo, Develyn Villars, St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston, Daveon Johnson, and MoRanda Dawson.

President's Message

Throughout my 17 years as college president, I have been deeply inspired by the countless student stories I have had the opportunity to hear. Each story illustrates how our college has positively changed the trajectory of their lives.

At St. Philip's College, education extends beyond the traditional classroom setting, with our wrap-around services empowering our students to succeed in all areas of life. Every story I hear reflects our students' resilience, dedication, and potential, giving hope to current and prospective students alike.

Whether guiding visitors on campus tours, engaging with donors or delivering speeches at conferences, I consider it my privilege and responsibility to amplify our students' voices. Sharing our students' stories fosters awareness, appreciation, and support for our college's mission.

Our student's diverse and personal experiences demonstrate the transformative power of education at St. Philip's College, instilling a sense of pride among our students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the broader community. These powerful stories reaffirm our commitment to student success and showcase the profound impact our college has had over its 126-year history.



SPC Hosts the 14th Annual Women in Non-Traditional Occupations Conference



From left, Dean for Academic Success, Applied Science & Technology - SWC Chris Beardsall, keynote speaker Danielle Bennett, and Director of Institutional Advancement Dr. Sharon Crockett-Ray.

St. Philip's College (SPC) hosted the 14th Annual Women in Non-Traditional Occupations (WINTO) conference at Southwest Campus on March 22. The conference provides female high school students with the opportunity to explore careers in male-dominated fields.

WINTO began in 2009 with a student club led by the late James Wright, then the Director of Phoenix Middle College. The club provided services and activities for students enrolled in non-traditional programs and helped build leadership skills.

Although Wright passed away on July 2, 2012, his legacy continues through WINTO and with The James H. Wright Endowed Scholarship. The \$500 scholarship is awarded to a full-time student majoring in the Allied Construction Trades each year. Wright's family attends the conference regularly.

This year's conference included a career fair and sessions on the advantages of choosing non-traditional careers. The keynote speaker, Danielle Bennett, also known as Diva Q, advocates for women in non-traditional occupations. She is a

certified barbecue and grilling expert, chef, pit master, celebrated TV host, best-selling author, and former world pork, bacon, sausage, wings, dessert, and grilling champion.

Diva Q expressed her excitement at the event, "Inspiring women is a key cornerstone of life. WINTO brings young women together, and the idea behind the event allows these ladies to connect with their future. My advice is to get out of your comfort zone."

SPC Participates in the 28th Annual Cesar E. Chavez March for Justice



On March 23, 2024, St. Philip's College (SPC) students and staff participated in the 28th Annual Cesar E. Chavez March for Justice alongside Congressman Joaquin Castro, Bexar County Judge Peter Sakai, Alamo Colleges District Board Trustee Joe Alderete, Jr., and thousands of others.

To prepare for the march, the Mexican American Studies Program, First Year Experience Program, and SPC Library hosted poster parties. Students created posters, viewed Chicano Movement films, and interacted with library guides.

The march began with welcome speeches by elected officials and a dove release. Carrying school banners and posters, the college community walked for two miles to honor the American labor leader and civil rights activist.

"Participating in the march hits close to home. As the grandson of migrant workers, the march embodies the values we should all practice: fairness and equality for all, regardless of what you do. I was proud to march with SPC," said Administrative Services Specialist Ryan Garza.

At the end of the march, there was a celebration with music, food trucks, and guest speakers at the Hemisphere Park.

St. Philip's College Hosts H-E-B Black Box Theater Groundbreaking



St. Philip's College (SPC) hosted the H-E-B Black Box Theater groundbreaking on Thursday, March 28, which will create a new wing of the Watson Fine Center.

Construction was made possible with the support of H-E-B. The company made a substantial \$1 million donation. Additional funds were allocated to the project from the U.S. Department of Education, Title III program.

"At H-E-B, we are longstanding supporters of education across the state, and we're proud to support SPC and its 126-year history," said Winell Herron, H-E-B Group Vice President Public Affairs, Diversity, and Environmental Affairs. "We believe in the profound impact education has, and we're committed to helping our partners in education provide opportunities that drive creativity and innovation." The impact of the theater will extend beyond its physical dimensions of 20,000 square feet and a full capacity of 200 seats. With the potential to serve over 1,000 SPC students, it will be a hub for artistic learning and innovation. Moreover, it will provide a platform for the community to engage with the arts.

St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston expressed enthusiasm at the groundbreaking, "This state-of-the-art facility will enhance our teaching and learning spaces and puts our students ahead of the curve when it comes to performance standards with acting, dance, music, and set design. This is another step towards breaking down barriers for SPC students, barriers in the arts industry, and barriers to providing increased access to the arts on the east side of San Antonio."



St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston and H-E-B Senior Manager of Public Affairs Monica Garza toss sand at the groundbreaking ceremony.



Wedding Cake Showcase

On April 23, the baking and pastry program hosted their wedding cake showcase. The event, held in the Tourism Hospitality and Culinary Arts Building, brought together students, their family members, college employees, alumni, and advisory board members to marvel at 16 students' cake skills for their final exam project.

Chef Instructor Cynthia De La Fuente emphasized her students' work by saying, "I have the honor of watching these students take all the knowledge we have deposited into them over several courses and use it to create art. It takes time management and dedication to create these cakes."

Each student spent 40 hours working on their cake while juggling jobs, home, and school.

To fulfill their course requirements, students presented exhibits featuring a round table covered in white linen, a framed menu displaying the cake flavor, and 20-40 portioned samples. Students also created a contract with a total retail price, portfolio, storyboard, sketch, and inspiration for their work.

"My cake reflects Korean Architecture. In 1997, my parents immigrated to the U.S. from South Korea, and my culture is a big part of who I am," said student Hannah Yoon.



Show here from left in the back row: Chef Instructor Cynthia De La Fuente, Edward Meriwether, Daniela De Leon, Lawren Davis, Nicolas Cuellar, Jasmine Jackson, Sophia Gonzalez, Claudia Muniz, and Daysi Rodriguez Guevara. Show here from left in the front row: Nancy Rico, Jenna Garza, Cristy Kantuncaamal, Hannah Yoon, Cecilia Ibarra, Eveida Rubio Lara, and Destiny Facio-Vargas.



French Student Visit



St. Philip's College hosted the Lycée hôtelier Guillaume Tirel, Paris Transatlantic Culinary Exchange from March 20, 2024, through March 29, 2024. Parisian guests, including English teacher and Sommelier Pierre "Peter" Steiler, Chef Odile Roblin, and 12 French students, toured the city of San Antonio, engaged in SPC Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts classes, and interacted with SPC students to broaden their experiences.

Spring 2024 Tiger P.A.W.S.



On May 1, St. Philip's College hosted the Spring 2024 Tiger P.A.W.S. (Personal Academic Writing Space) Literary Art Journal Publication Gala. Tiger P.A.W.S. is a visual and literary-arts journal comprised of SPC students' writing and artwork. It is directed by a student editorial staff, with the support and guidance of faculty and staff from the Communications and Learning Department.

SPC Hosts State HBCU Conference

On April 5 and April 6, St. Philip's College (SPC) hosted the Texas Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Conference Series, Democracy Schools. The event brought together nearly 200 students, faculty, staff, administrators, and political figures from the state.

The conference emerged from campus-wide student leadership initiatives at Huston-Tillotson University (Austin, TX.). The series seeks to renew visions of American democracy rooted in civic capacity, community traditions, and institutions.

The conference featured panel discussions, breakout sessions, and keynote addresses, ranging in topics from "HBCU Legacies: Empowering the Next Generation of Citizen Professionals" to "The Democratic Commitment to Change: Interrogating the Political Psychology of Race and Justice."

Notable speakers included San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Bexar County Commissioner for Precinct 4 Tommy Calvert, 436th District Court Judge William H. "Cruz" Shaw III, and State Representatives Ron Reynolds (Dist. 27), Jolanda Jones (Dist. 147) and Barbara Gervin-Hawkins (Dist. 120).

"The Texas HBCU conference was a year-long planning effort to ensure the agenda was engaging and interesting," said Dr. Joelle Nanivazo, the lead organizer, Assistant Professor of Economics, and Interim Chair of Social & Behavioral Sciences at SPC.

To conclude the conference, Vice President for Academic Success Randall Dawson delivered closing remarks, and Representative Ron Reynolds presented St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston with a state proclamation.



St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston presented the mayor of San Antonio, Ron Nirenberg with a gift for giving remarks at the conference.



Cameroon Study Abroad Spring 2024



From March 5 to March 18, a group of SPC students and employees visited Cameroon, Africa. During the visit, they were immersed in Cameroon's history and culture with a visit to Hospital Jamot de Yaoundé - the only hospital that treats mental illness in the country, a walking history tour of the Nyong River, a cultural dance performance at Minka Village, a visit to an ape wildlife sanctuary at Mefou - Yaoundé, and a scavenger hunt at the Queensway International College.

FYE End of Year Banquet



On May 2, St. Philip's College held the First Year Experience (FYE) End of Year Awards Banquet to celebrate FYE program students and honor a team of employees known as the FYE Warriors for their contributions to student success.

St. Philip's College 29th Annual CultureFest & Rib Cook-Off

On April 25, 2024, nearly 5,000 community members attended the St. Philip's College 29th Annual CultureFest & Rib Cook-Off.

This year, the college's official Fiesta event had several exciting new features. The San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo was a notable addition, providing a taste of the Wild West and offering attendees the opportunity to take photos with horses. Pies were introduced into the food competition, adding a new flavor to the event.

It wasn't just about food and fun, St. Philip's College continued its tradition of partying with a purpose with its grill raffle. Three hand-made, one-of-a-kind BBQ pits, created by students in the SPC Welding Club, were raffled off, raising \$7,000 for student scholarships.

Among the event's attendees were 650 high school students from the greater San Antonio area who attended the annual 2024 Spring Open House where they had an opportunity to explore the college's programs. Three students, Luis Escalon, the valedictorian from Holmes High School, Gabriel McKinley from Steele High School, and MiKayla Garcia from Young Women's Leadership Academy, received \$500 scholarships to attend St. Philip's College.

The event concluded with Fiesta Royalty Rey Feo joining St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston on the main stage for closing remarks. He expressed his commitment to education and his gratitude for having three of his four children start their educational journey at the college.



The Sam Houston Hurricane Marching Band leads the parade to begin the event.



St. Philip's College's Early College High School students carry flags from various countries and cultures during the parade.



The Tehuan Band of Mission Indians of San Antonio recite a blessing at the opening ceremony.



St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston and Fiesta Royalty Rey Feo give closing remarks for the event.

SPC's Sesquicentennial Commencement Ceremony

The 150th commencement ceremony of St. Philip's College took place at the Alamodome on Thursday, May 23, 2024. The graduation began with welcome remarks by Vice President for Student Success Wesley Wells, the posting of colors, and the national anthem.

Before conferring the degrees and certificates, a Posthumous Honorary Degree was awarded to the late A. Baker Duncan. The degree was accepted by Mr. Drew Cauthorn, former Chancellor of the Diocese of West Texas, and presented by Clint Kingsberry, Chair of the Alamo Colleges District Board of Trustees, Dr. Mike Flores, Chancellor of the Alamo Colleges District, and Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President of St. Philip's College. Graduates viewed a special congratulatory video message provided by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris.

The ceremony had nearly 600 graduate participants adorned in traditional cap and gowns, cheered on by family members, friends, and faculty.

Andres Arredondo, Interim Dean for Student Success and Enrollment Management, said, "It was an incredible honor. Serving as a reader of the names was a profound privilege. Witnessing the joy and pride on the faces of our new



graduates as they crossed the stage at the Alamodome was deeply moving."

Students played key roles as speakers at the commencement ceremony. Jabrasia Doss, the St. Philip's College White House HBCU Scholar, and a graduation candidate, delivered the Invocation. Alyssa Vasquez-Garza, a Student Success Intern and fellow graduation candidate, introduced the Commencement Speaker, Joe Harris, a Navy veteran and graduation candidate. Janel Sohl, also a graduation candidate, delivered the Benediction.



Spring 2024 Graduate Spotlights



JABRASIA DOSS

Jabrasia graduated in May with her Associate of Applied Science in Biomedical Engineering Technology. She was a 2023 White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities Scholar. In this role, she served as a student ambassador, ensuring information, resources, and opportunities were distributed to the SPC campuses and traveled to the White House.



ALYSSA VASQUEZ-GARZA

On May 23, 2024, Alyssa earned her Associate of Applied Science degree. Majoring in Business Management and Technology is the first step toward owning a food truck business. At SPC, she served as treasurer for the Tiger Network student organization and as a St. Philip's College Princess for the royal court.



SINCERE SPIVEY

After earning his Associate of Arts this May, Sincere plans to attend the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to work on his business management degree. At SPC, he has earned a place in the Early College High School (ECHS) National Honors Society and the Academic Decathlon. Additionally, this past October, he was honored as the St. Philip's College ECHS Homecoming King.



JOE HARRIS

This May, Joe earned his Associate of Science Biology Pre-Major. He plans to continue his education in the medical field as a respiratory therapist and later go to the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). At SPC, he was involved in the Blue Blazer Society, served as Vice President of Fellowship for Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society – Psi Kappa Chapter, and was president of the Bowling Club at Tiger Lanes.



JAIME PALMA

Jaime graduated with his Associate of Applied Science Degree in Advanced Manufacturing Technology in May. His employer paid for his classes in full through the Texas Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) program. Jaime plans to continue his studies at SPC in electrical engineering and then pursue his bachelor's degree at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA).



DIANA POLITRON

Diana graduated in May with a Welder/Welding Technologist, Associate of Applied Science. She currently interns as a welder's helper at Southwest Research Institute. After graduation, she plans to sell welding art and apply to the aircraft technician program at SPC. Her ultimate goal is to become an aerospace welder, working for NASA.

NAFSA Paul Simmon Award Celebration



From left, Irene Young, Chris Beardsall, Kelli Wilder, Dr. Joelle Nanivazo, Blossom Nduke, Marisela Eslora, Patrick Costello, St. Philip's College President Dr. Adena Williams Loston, Marissa Ramirez and Dr. Solomon Nfor.

On Monday, April 22, St. Philip's College students Blossom Nduke and Marisela Eslora were recognized for their significant contributions to our international education community at the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) Paul Simmon Award Celebration. Blossom is a 2024 Cameroon Student Abroad participant, and Marisela is an Alamo Global Ambassador 2024 and the winner of the Alamo Global Challenge.



PSI KAPPA Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society



The PSI KAPPA Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society at St. Philip's College achieved several milestones for the 2023–2024 Academic Year. The chapter was recognized as one of the Top 100 chapters out of 1244, PTK chapters and also received the distinction of being a Top Texas Chapter among the 91 Texas chapters. Members Emily Marin, Donyell Morehead, Richmond Trias, and Austin Greene were selected for the All-Texas Academic Team. Additionally, three members were named to the Texas Region District V Hall of Honor, including Maricela Eslora, Kristin Esser, and Joelynn Donnell.

Member Jaime Lopez completed a five-week online NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) course, earning him a spot on the Mission 2 Team: Exploration Simulation. Jaime was among hundreds of community college students who participated in the virtual experience. Highlighting our members' leadership, Joe Harris, outgoing Vice President of Fellowship, gave the keynote address at the Spring 2024 Commencement Ceremony, and Janel Sohl, former Vice President of Service, offered the commencement benediction.

Allied Health Pinning Ceremonies



The Occupational Therapy Assistant program celebrated its students' success with an event in the Bowden Alumni Center. Family members watched as the soon-to-be graduates took their oath and were presented with a pin on May 13, 2024.



The Health Information Technology program held a ceremony on May 13, 2024, to congratulate their graduating students with a certificate and pin. At the event, faculty members commended their graduates on their hard work during the program.



On May 9, 2024, the Radiology program held its pinning ceremony. Over 30 students participated in the event held in Turbon Center, Room 216. Graduates of the program were celebrated with pins, certificates, and cupcakes.



The Histology Pinning Ceremony took place on May 3, 2024, in the Center for Health Professions, Room 120. Congratulatory remarks were given by the Dean for Academic Success in Health Sciences Christopher Metsgar, and Program Director Aaron Herrera.



The Bowden Alumni Center was decorated with balloons to celebrate the Spring 2024 Physical Therapy graduates at their pinning ceremony on May 13, 2024. The event marked the student's program completion as faculty members led them with an oath.



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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.

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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