

GUEST COLUMN BY CYNTHIA TENIENTE-MATSON

Our role in protecting water

About 650 feet below the surface of San Antonio is a vital natural resource, the Edwards Aquifer. This karst aquifer supplies water to more than two million people



Cynthia Teniente-Matson

and feeds seven large springs and rivers within Texas. There are a variety of endangered and threatened species in the Edwards Aquifer and its supported habitats, such as caves and springs.

As we approach Earth Day on April 22, I am deeply aware that the Edwards Aquifer must be

protected in order to preserve not only the rare species found in and around it, but also its role in satisfying the thirst of San Antonio's growing population for another 300 years.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio (A&M-SA) has a critical role to play in the region when it comes to water resources. An important part of our long-term academic vision is developing our Water Resources Science and Technology program because we are mindful of the complexities involved in water supply and demand. We soon will offer a bachelor of science in water resources science and technology to prepare students who can help

solve the challenges posed by balancing growth and conservation.

Fortunately, in San Antonio, we also benefit from the work of organizations such as the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA), San Antonio River Authority (SARA) and San Antonio Water System (SAWS), which has gained recognition for its highly acclaimed water conservation efforts.

To learn more about A&M-SA's Institute for Water Resources Science and Technology, please visit tamusa.edu/academics/index.html

Cynthia Teniente-Matson, Ed.D., is president of Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

GUEST COLUMN BY ROBERT GARZA, PH.D.

PAC named among top in nation

As president of Palo Alto College, I've seen firsthand the incredible work that my colleagues do each day to support our students and our community.

On April 2, the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program announced that Palo Alto College was named a Rising Star award

winner of the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.



Dr. Robert Garza

From an original pool of over 1,000 community colleges nationwide, Palo Alto College has been able to achieve something many might not have thought possible when we opened in 1985: being one of the top one percent of community colleges in the nation.

I am proud to share that the Aspen Institute recognized Palo Alto College for our work in building clear pathways to degrees and transferability, exceptional student advising, and strong partnerships with K-12 systems, which have resulted in remarkable improvement in the graduation and transfer rate over four years, from 28 percent to 47 percent.

This recognition is more

than just an award. It validates the shared commitment of our dedicated faculty and staff in creating hope and opportunity for our students and our community. Without collaboration among colleagues throughout the Alamo Colleges District, K-12 school districts, and our industry partners, we would not be able to do what we do.

Keeping students first is a core value of Palo Alto College, and this collective thought has created a place where our community and students can achieve their dreams and aspirations for a better life.

Robert Garza, Ph.D., is president of Palo Alto College, part of the Alamo Colleges District.



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