* Good afternoon and welcome to this exciting announcement of our latest partnership with VIA

**VIA/Alamo Colleges/OLLU Press Conference  
Tuesday, February 22, 2 p.m.**

* I would like to thank them for helping us to make the U-PASS a reality
* I would also like to thank our board for their support of this initiative (recognize board members present, if any)
* The launch of the U-PASS is a celebration of mobility and access.  It's symbolic of our mission and our trajectory for the future.
* Access and social mobility are at the heart of what we do at the Alamo Colleges District.
* We work in tandem with many partners to provide affordable and accessible education to our community.
* Many students never attend college or leave early because of financial concerns
* 61% of students worry about not having enough money to pay for college
* 47% worry about paying monthly expenses
* The U-PASS will address these concerns by making it less expensive to get to class
* That’s important, because an associate degree from the Alamo Colleges means, on average, they will see an increase in earnings of $9,400 a year over those with a high school diploma and over $400,000 in their lifetimes.
* An associate degree can mean the difference between earning a living wage or struggling to make ends meet, purchasing a home instead of renting or saving for their children’s education.
* There are barriers – but, the Alamo Colleges has systems in place to help students overcome them, and the U-PASS is the latest way we are breaking down barriers to student success.
* For those who can’t afford a car or have only one for their family, the U-PASS will make getting to class easier without adding to the cost of college.
* The U-PASS also fits perfectly with our sustainability efforts by reducing the number of cars on the road
* And it means less need for parking space at the colleges and less traffic congestion for our neighbors
* We look forward to finding many more creative ways to help our student achieve the social mobility that a college education provides
* Thank you