



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
Palo Alto College



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Dr. Sarah Zenaida Gould, Executive Director, MACRI
[sgould@somosmacri.org](mailto:s Gould@somosmacri.org) | 210-810-4093

Jennifer Pue, Marketing & Strategic Communications Manager, Palo Alto College
jpue2@alamo.edu | 210-486-3881 (o); 210-392-0581 (c)

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Mexican American Civil Rights Institute (MACRI) Announce New Chair and Vice-Chair

[Images/Assets for Media](#)

The Board of the Mexican American Civil Rights Institute (MACRI) is pleased to announce that Dr. Robert Garza, President of Palo Alto College and Cecilia Elizondo Herrera, have been elected to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair.

Dr. Garza joined MACRI's board in January 2020 and served as chair of the Governance Committee. Dr. Robert Garza was appointed as the seventh president of Alamo Colleges District-Palo Alto College on July 25, 2018, by the Alamo Colleges District Board of Trustees. Originally joining the Alamo Colleges District in 1999, Dr. Garza held several positions during his tenure at Palo Alto College, including Dean of Community Development and Partnerships, Dean of Student Success, and Vice President of Student Success. During his inaugural year as president, he led the College on the journey toward being named a Rising Star of the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance in America's community colleges, and celebrated the achievements of the Alamo Colleges District and its five colleges as a 2018 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner. Dr. Garza holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University, a master's degree in public administration from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Texas at Austin.

"Palo Alto College has a history of understanding the importance of the Mexican-American culture and its impact on the San Antonio community," said Dr. Robert Garza. "The Mexican-American Studies program at Palo Alto College provides students with a deep understanding of the complex history and issues relevant to this population. Additionally, PAC celebrates the indigenous heritages of South Texas by hosting its annual Latinx Heritage Month for the community."

Ms. Herrera has served as the Chair of MACRI's National Advisory Committee since 2020 and joined the board of directors in January 2021. Cecilia Elizondo Herrera is a San Antonio native who began her public service career in 1979 working for the Alamo Area Council of Governments. She joined the Foreign Service in 1987 serving for twenty-five years, including appointments in Guadalajara, Melbourne, Washington D.C., Rome, Mexico City, Baghdad, Matamoros, and Caracas. After retiring from the Foreign Service, she became President and CEO of The Cisneros Center for New Americans, a non-profit assisting and empowering immigrants by fortifying a culture of learning and educational attainment in the Latino community and establishing a corps of future Latino leaders. She served as Chair of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber Alex Briseño Leadership Development Program and on the Steering Committee for the Chamber's Latina Leadership Program. She also worked with the University of the Incarnate Word as The Global Service Coordinator at the Ettlting Center for Civic Leadership where she assisted in the planning of service-learning trips abroad for the University's undergraduate and professional school students. She earned a BA in English and Political Science from Our Lady of the Lake University, completed post-graduate work at St. Mary's University in Public and Institutional Administration, and received an MS in National Security Strategy from the National War College at Ft. McNair in Washington, D.C.

"In a world where liberty, justice, and equality are at the forefront of every American's thoughts, I cannot think of a better organization than the Mexican American Civil Rights Institute to document, collect, organize, and disseminate the history of the Mexican American struggle for justice and equality to ensure a better future for all," said Cecilia Elizondo Herrera. "I am honored to be a part of this monumental endeavor."

Dr. Paul Ruiz and Dr. Gloria Rodriguez, MACRI's founding Chair and Vice-Chair, guided the organization from its early days, leading the organization through incorporation, securing seed funding from the City of San Antonio, and seeing the organization through its first years of operations. Dr. Garza and Ms. Herrera's appointments began on January 1, 2022.

About Mexican American Civil Rights Institute

Founded in 2019, the Mexican American Civil Rights Institute (MACRI), formerly the National Institute of Mexican American History of Civil Rights, is a national organization dedicated to collecting and sharing Mexican American civil rights history. For more information, contact Dr. Sarah Zenaida Gould at (210) 810-4093.

About Palo Alto College

Palo Alto College, part of the Alamo Colleges District, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and a recipient of the 2015 Texas Award for Performance Excellence, a finalist for the 2016 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and a Rising Star winner of the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. With over 10,000

students, Palo Alto College is accredited to offer associate degrees and short-term certificates. The College is located on the south side 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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