

Alamo Community College District Fall Convocation
Summary Excerpts from Address
Henry Cisneros, Chairman, CityView
August 20, 2007

Chancellor Leslie; President Zeigler of San Antonio College; Presidents of the other Alamo Community Colleges: St. Philips, Palo Alto, Northwest Vista, and Northeast Lakeview; Vice Chancellors; Administrators; Faculty and Staff:

I once heard the Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta say: “To touch the future, to touch immortality, you must associate yourself with causes bigger than yourself, causes that last beyond your time.” EDUCATION is such a cause. Thank you for your personal commitment to the education profession.

I have always had a special respect for community colleges across the nation and for the Alamo Community Colleges in particular. So I appreciate the chance to say a few words on the topic assigned me today:

“Why the Alamo Community Colleges Must Become the Best in the Nation.”

I will address that assignment, but first let me say that the Alamo Community Colleges are already good:

- A. Measured by graduates, such as Henry B. Gonzalez, U.S. Congressman; numerous lawyers, doctors and other professionals. In my personal circle of family and friends: my brother, Tim Cisneros, architect; my dentist, Dr. Daniel Arredondo; and my wife, Mary Alice Cisneros, District 1 Councilwoman. You are already good.
- B. Viewed by key locations across the San Antonio area: the accessibility of new campuses. You are already good.
- C. Judging by the quality of the capital plant: architectural designs, classrooms, laboratories, auditoriums, parking facilities, public spaces, and landscaping. You are already good.

D. Measured by for example, flexibility of course offerings to meet market needs: at the Port of San Antonio and at Toyota. You are already good.

So, why must the Alamo Community Colleges Become the Best in the Nation?

1. Because San Antonio cannot advance without excellence in its human capital development.

The contemporary world is being shaped:

By advances in technology

- Telecommunications and computing advances
- New materials sciences
- Health care and the biosciences

By increasingly sophisticated utilization of financial capital.

By wise application of human understanding:

- Languages
- Dispute resolution
- Personal care
- Inclusive leadership

Why must ACCD be the best?

2. Because San Antonio has world class opportunities we have never had in our city's history:

- Firms that are world leaders: AT&T /Valero/Clear Channel/USAA/ Toyota
- National firms with major operations in our city: Tesoro/WAMU/Microsoft/Toyota suppliers
- Growing sectors of the San Antonio economy: Military/Biotech/Agro-Bio/Tourism

Why must ACCD be the best?

3. Because San Antonio is moving up in the hierarchy of American cities:

America's World Cities:

- New York

- Los Angeles
- Washington
- Miami
- Houston
- Chicago
- San Francisco

America's Regional Centers:

- Atlanta – Southeast
- Dallas – Southwest
- Boston – New England
- Seattle – Northwest
- Denver – Rocky Mountain Region
- Minneapolis – North Central

Significant Economic Centers:

- Salt Lake City
- Kansas City
- Cleveland
- Philadelphia
- Portland
- Columbus
- Detroit
- San Antonio

It is no accident that among the fastest rising cities are those which have built their momentum in major part based upon the quality of their community colleges:

- Dallas
- Phoenix
- Miami

Why must ACCD be the best?

4. Because creating a modern, inclusive, fluid social structure requires broad access to quality higher education. Community colleges are great generators of opportunities.

During the Civil War, the Morrill Act of 1863 was a national commitment to public higher education. The modern equivalent of that Morrill Act commitment is broadened access. In contemporary terms that means:

- Affordable education
- In-city availability of quality curricula
- Building the educational bridge to private sector opportunities

Why must the ACCD be the best?

5. Because San Antonio can be the country's best example of the New America. Our city can fulfill its destiny to be a special place:

- Beyond its architecture
- Beyond its food and ambience
- Beyond its family-friendly environment
- Beyond its multi-cultural celebrations
- Beyond its capacity for constructive dialogue
- Beyond its bridging of generations

It must also be a City of Education. An example of San Antonio's understanding of the importance of education is the widespread support for the San Antonio Education Partnership.

In developing a reputation as a City of Education, our most important building-block is the Alamo Community College System. San Antonio needs:

- A Unified ACCD board leadership with vision, goals, and ambitions.
- The highest quality ACCD administrative team to pursue far-reaching goals.
- Community support for the needed revenues and capital expenditures.
- Extraordinary faculty efforts to reach each student

In summary, we need special energies, creative thinking, “outside-the-box” initiatives, and a culture of progress based on the conviction that “the sky is our only limit.”