

# Menlo College Celebrates Launch of Latino Leadership Program with Elected Leaders and Campus Community

*New program strengthens Menlo's commitment to preparing Latino students for leadership in business, government, and beyond.*

ATHERTON, CA, UNITED STATES, February 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Menlo College](#) officially launched its new [Latino Leadership Program](#) on Friday, February 20, 2026, with a campus-wide celebration that brought together students, faculty, alumni, and distinguished public officials in the Student Union on the College's Atherton campus.



Congressman Sam Liccardo with Menlo College students in the Latino Leadership Program.

The event marked a significant milestone in Menlo's continued commitment as a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution. Latino students now represent 41 percent of the College's domestic student population, and the new program reflects Menlo's investment in cultivating leadership and professional preparation for students of all backgrounds.

“

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*Congressman Sam Liccardo  
(CA-16)*

The College welcomed Congressman Sam Liccardo and Assemblymember Marc Berman as in-person guest speakers. Each addressed the audience from the podium, offering reflections on public service, representation, and the responsibility of empowering emerging leaders in diverse communities.

Speaking to students about the power of mentorship and community, Congressman Sam Liccardo (CA-16)

emphasized the importance of support systems in leadership journeys.

“I didn’t get here alone. Every step in my journey was shaped by mentors and community. This Latino Leadership Program ensures the next generation of leaders has even stronger support,” said Congressman Liccardo. “Latinos belong at the head of boardrooms, classrooms, courtrooms, and the halls of government. These students need to embrace their full potential, not merely what others imagine for them.”

Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park) followed with remarks highlighting the role of inclusive leadership in strengthening democracy and uplifting communities.

“Our democracy is strongest when our leadership reflects the very best of who we are, a state that believes in diversity, opportunity, and uplifting voices. At a time when our Latino community is under attack, it is critical that we create opportunities to prepare the next generation of leaders who know their communities and are determined to both represent and defend them,” said Assemblymember Berman. “Congratulations to Menlo College on launching the Latino Leadership Program to provide our future leaders with a platform for their voices and equip them with the tools necessary to shape a brighter future for all.”

Attendees also viewed a special message from U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, who recognized the significance of the program’s launch and Menlo College’s leadership in expanding educational opportunity.

“Thank you to everyone who helped get the Latino Leadership Program off the ground, and to this inaugural co-hort. I’m so excited to watch what you build in the years ahead, as you help shape our future that’s stronger, fairer, and more representative of who we truly are as a State,



Assemblymember Marc Berman, Menlo College President Steven Weiner, and Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Political Science Dr. Melissa Michelson.



Menlo students listen to guest speakers at the Latino Leadership Program launch.

and a Nation,” said Senator Alex Padilla.

The Latino Leadership Program was developed under the leadership of [Dr. Melissa Michelson](#), Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Political Science. It builds on Menlo’s longstanding commitment to Latino-focused coursework and mentorship. For more than a decade, courses such as Latino Politics and Latino Literature have resonated with students across disciplines who recognize the growing influence of Latino communities in the United States.

“Our designation as an HSI reflects the changing demographics of our student population. I am proud of the work Menlo faculty have done to better serve our Latino students and their communities through ongoing changes to the curriculum,” said Dean Michelson. “This program, and the proposed minor, will help all of our students develop the cultural competency and leadership skills to better serve their communities.”

The February 20 celebration marked the beginning of the program’s first chapter as Menlo College prepares for its Centennial celebration in 2027. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students, and community members are encouraged to learn more about how the Latino Leadership Program is shaping Menlo’s next generation of changemakers.

Learn more about the program:

<https://menlo.edu/degree/latino-leadership-program/>

Contact Information:

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About Menlo College:

Menlo College is a small private, nonprofit college founded in 1927 with a mission to “ignite potential and educate students to make meaningful contributions in the innovation economy.” Situated in the heart of Silicon Valley, Menlo College offers undergraduate degrees in business and psychology, as well as three graduate degrees: a Master of Science in Information Systems, a Master of Science in Financial Technology, and a Master of Arts in Sport and Performance Psychology. Menlo is designated as both a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-Serving (AANAPISI) Institution.

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