

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**Presidential Candidate Beto O'Rourke To Serve As Paul Quinn College Commencement Speaker**

Dallas – April 24, 2019 – Paul Quinn College (Paul Quinn) announces Beto O'Rourke, 2020 presidential candidate and former U.S. Congressman, as commencement speaker for its 2019 graduation ceremony. The former congressman will address Paul Quinn's 130<sup>th</sup> graduating class on its campus in southern Dallas on Saturday, May 4, at 9:00 a.m.

Congressman O'Rourke's commencement address will be his third trip to campus over the last two years. He spoke at the opening of Paul Quinn's Summer Bridge Program on June 10, 2018 and returned to campus to hold a town hall with students and the south Dallas community on October 6, 2018.

"We are thrilled to have Beto return to campus to address our graduating seniors and help us send them to the next chapter of their lives," said Dr. Michael J. Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn College. "Beto has been a long-time friend to the Quinnite Nation and to HBCUs across the country, and we look forward to having him share this moment with our students and their families."

Paul Quinn College is the only Urban Work College in America, and the first minority-serving federally-funded work college in the Work College Consortium. By requiring residential students to work and allowing them to use part of their compensation to defray the cost of attendance and cutting tuition and fees by almost \$10,000, Paul Quinn has created a model where its students graduate without accumulating insurmountable debt.

"It is an all-time honor to return to Paul Quinn College and join the inspiring graduating class who continues to be our example of the leadership, power and joy we see in young people across America who are already guiding us on every important issue of the day," said O'Rourke. "We are smarter, stronger and better able to meet the challenges ahead of us because of the bold, innovative, transformational work occurring at Paul Quinn College and HBCUs across the country."

A native of El Paso, Texas, O'Rourke graduated in 1995 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Columbia University before starting a small technology business back home. O'Rourke served on the city council before representing Texas' 16th congressional district in the United States House of Representatives from 2013 to 2019 where he served on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, the House Armed Services Committee and the House Homeland Security Committee. He then ran an historic grassroots race for U.S. Senate where his campaign set a record for most votes ever received by a Democrat in Texas history. He is currently seeking the 2020 Democratic nomination for President of the United States and has already visited 12 states where he's held 103 town halls in 81 cities.

To request media credentials, email [anthea@minervaco.com](mailto:anthea@minervaco.com).

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### **About Paul Quinn College**

Paul Quinn College is a private, faith-based, four-year, liberal arts-inspired college that was founded on April 4, 1872, by a group of African Methodist Episcopal Church preachers in Austin, Texas. The school's original purpose was to educate freed slaves and their offspring. Today, we proudly educate students of all races and socio-economic classes under the banner of our institutional ethos, WE over Me. Our mission is to provide a quality, faith-based education that addresses the academic, social, and Christian development of students. Under President Sorrell's leadership, Paul Quinn has become one of the most innovative and respected small colleges in the nation and now serves as a model for urban higher education. *Fortune* magazine recognized President Sorrell's work and the College's transformation by naming him one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders. President Sorrell is also a three-time award winner of HBCU Male President of the Year by HBCU Digest, was selected as 2018-2019 President of the Year by Education Dive, and named by *Time* magazine as one of the "31 People Changing the South."

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