



in the Media

January 29, 2016

Citrus College Recognized as National Leader, Will Compete for Prestigious Award

By Stacy Armstrong

Citrus College has been named one of the top 150 community colleges in the United States by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. As such, it will be competing for the organization's prestigious \$1 million Aspen Prize for Excellence.

The prize, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among community colleges. This is the second consecutive invitation to compete that Citrus College has received.

"It is an incredible honor for Citrus College to once again be recognized by the Aspen Institute," said Dr. Geraldine M. Perri, Citrus College superintendent/president. "The organization's College Excellence Program works to identify practices and policies that significantly improve student outcomes. By naming Citrus College as one of the nation's top community colleges, the Institute validates our outstanding record of degree completion and student success."

According to the Aspen Institute, Citrus College was selected from a national pool of more than 1,000 public two-year colleges based on an assessment of institutional performance, improvement, and equity. As one of the top 150 community colleges, Citrus College will submit a formal application for the 2017 Aspen Prize for Excellence.

After all of the nominees submit their applications, a committee of higher education experts will select 10 colleges to advance to the next round of the competition. The Institute will then conduct site visits and collect information to determine a winner. The \$1 million prize will be presented in early 2017.

The purpose of the Aspen Prize is to recognize institutions that have experienced exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students.

"Community colleges have tremendous power to change lives, and their success will increasingly define our nation's economic strength and the potential for social mobility in our country," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program in a press release. "This competition is designed to spotlight the excellent work being done in the most effective community colleges, those that best help students obtain meaningful, high-quality education and training for competitive-wage jobs after college. We hope it will raise the bar and provide a roadmap to better student outcomes for community colleges nationwide."

Citrus College's nomination is the newest addition to a long list of institutional accomplishments. In recent months, the college has been named one of the nation's top degree and certificate producing two-year institutions by *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* and *Community College Week* magazines. In addition, more than 2,500 associate degrees and 1,200 certificates were awarded to the Citrus College Class of 2015.

"The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence is one of the most prestigious community college competitions in the nation. Being invited to participate is a great honor for Citrus College that was made possible by the college community's commitment to completion," said Mrs. Susan M. Keith, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. "Recognitions such as this inspire us even more to continue our efforts to increase the numbers of students who meet their academic goals."

A full list of the 150 community college nominees is available at <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/college-excellence/2017-eligible-community-colleges>.