



PRESS RELEASE

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Citrus College Advances to Next Stage of Prestigious Competition

Glendora, CA - Citrus College was once again affirmed as a national leader in higher education when it advanced to the next stage of the prestigious Aspen Prize for Excellence competition.

In January 2016, the college was notified that it had been named one of the top 150 community colleges in the United States by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. As such, it became a contender for the organization's \$1 million prize, which 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.

Citrus College moved to the second round of the competition following the submission of an application outlining institutional progress in completion outcomes, labor-market outcomes, learning outcomes, and equitable outcomes. Recently, the college was one of approximately half of the 150 community colleges in the second round that were invited to answer clarifying questions via telephone.

"I was extremely happy to learn that the Aspen Institute was eager to find out more about Citrus College and its efforts to increase student success rates," said Dr. Geraldine M. Perri, superintendent/president of Citrus College. "Being one of the select institutions asked to participate in a telephone interview is an honor. The college community appreciates having this opportunity to share more about the practices, policies, and initiatives that we have put in place to ensure that our students reach their academic and professional goals."

Using these interviews and round two applications, a finalist selection committee comprised of former community college presidents, respected researchers, and policy experts will select 10 institutions to

move on to the third round of the competition. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits at the top 10 institutions, and the \$1 million prize will be awarded in early 2017.

“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,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, in a January 2016 press release announcing the top 150 community colleges.

According to the Aspen Institute, the competition was launched in 2011 and takes place every two years in an attempt to further the national understanding of how community colleges can increase student success, despite the challenges they face.

Increasing student success is something that Citrus College has consistently done well. In recent months, the college was 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, Citrus College awarded more than 2,500 associate degrees, 1,200 certificates and experienced record-breaking transfer rates in 2015.

“The entire college community is committed to increasing college completion rates. The recognitions and honors we receive are delightful acknowledgments of this commitment,” said Mrs. Susan M. Keith, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. “Being recognized as one of the nation’s leading community colleges serves as an affirmation of the hard work we have invested in helping students reach their academic goals.”



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