

## Mesa Community College Named One of Top 150 Community Colleges in the Country

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Posted by: Melinda Dorning

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Washington, DC -- January 26, 2016 . Highlighting the critical importance of improving student success in America's community colleges, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program today named Mesa Community College as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2017 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and \$1 million dollars in prize funds, as well as Siemens Technical Scholars Program student scholarships.



The Prize, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges and recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and access and success for minority and low-income students.

Nearly half of America's college students attend community college, with more than seven million students . youth and adult learners . working towards certificates and degrees in these institutions across the country.

"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. "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."

Mesa Community College and 149 other community colleges announced today were selected from a national pool of over 1,000 public two-year colleges using publicly available data on student outcomes in three areas:

1. **Performance** (retention, graduation rates including transfers, and degrees and certificates per 100 full-time equivalent students)
2. **Improvement** (awarded for steady improvement in each performance metric over time)
3. **Equity** (evidence of strong completion outcomes for minority and low-income students)

"MCC launched 'Mission 2020' in 2009, with the ambitious goal of increasing student completion of degrees and certificates by 50 percent by year 2020," said MCC President, Dr. Shouan Pan. " We are well on our way to achieve that goal, and are resolved to continue our pursuit of educational excellence."

A full list of the selected colleges and details on the selection process are available at [www.aspenprize.org](http://www.aspenprize.org).

### Scholarship Opportunities

For the first time, the 150 Prize-eligible institutions are also invited to nominate exceptional students enrolled in their best middle-skill STEM programs for scholarships. Up to 50 Siemens Technical Scholars will be selected from programs that provide outstanding preparation for high-demand jobs in manufacturing, energy, health care, and information technology. A partnership between the Siemens Foundation and the Aspen Institute, the Siemens Technical Scholars Program intends to help our nation's community colleges and their business partners bridge the gap between projected shortages of skilled workers and the millions of high-demand jobs in these STEM industries. Scholarship winners and the programs that deliver rigorous training enabling their success will be announced in fall 2016. For more information and to view video profiles of 2015 Siemens Technical Scholars, go to: <http://as.pn/stscholars>.

The Aspen Prize is funded by the Joyce Foundation, the Siemens Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation.

The Aspen College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes. Through the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the New College Leadership Project, and other initiatives, the College Excellence Program works to improve colleges' understanding and capacity to teach and graduate students, especially the growing population of low-income and minority students on American campuses. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence).

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).

Mesa Community College is nationally recognized for its service-learning, civic engagement and innovative educational programs, which include university transfer, career and technical, workforce development, and life-long learning. Host to 40,000 students annually, MCC offers more than 195 degrees and certificate programs at its two campuses and additional locations. MCC's student body hails predominantly from the East Valley of Phoenix and includes Veteran, American Indian and International students who enrich the learning experience. Award-winning faculty are dedicated to student success providing the education and training that empowers MCC students to compete locally and globally. MCC is one of 10 colleges that comprise the Maricopa County Community College District. The District also includes the Maricopa Corporate College and two skill centers. For additional information, visit [mesacc.edu](http://mesacc.edu).

Mesa Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) <http://www.ncahlc.org>, 800-621-7440.

The Maricopa County Community College District is an EEO/AA institution and an equal opportunity employer of protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.

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