



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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**College of the Desert Named One of 150 Top U.S.  
Community Colleges Eligible to Compete for  
\$1 Million Aspen Prize**

*Prize for Community College Excellence Recognizes Outstanding Achievements that Result in  
Community College Student Success*

**PALM DESERT, Calif.** — College of the Desert was named today one of 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the [Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence](#), the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. College of the Desert was selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize.

"College of the Desert is honored to be considered for such a prestigious prize," said Superintendent/President Joel L. Kinnamon, Ed.D.

"As the fastest-growing community college in California with record-breaking numbers of students achieving certificates and degrees for the past three years, we are very proud of our students' successes, our constant self-analysis, and our continuous improvement as an institution of quality higher education. As the Coachella Valley knows, we have a great story to tell and we can't wait to share it nationally."

Awarded every two years since 2011, the Aspen Prize recognizes institutions with outstanding achievements in four areas: learning; certificate and degree completion; employment and earnings; and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students.

College of the Desert will move forward to the next round of the competition for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence by submitting an application to be reviewed through a rigorous evaluation for a spot on the top ten Aspen Prize finalists list. Top ten finalists will be named in May 2018. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data. A distinguished Prize Jury will select a grand prize winner, finalist(s) with distinction, and rising star(s) in spring 2019.

Previous winners of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence include: Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, South Dakota (2017); Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida (2015); co-winners Santa Barbara City College in Santa Barbara, and Walla Walla Community College in Walla Walla, Washington (2013);

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Valencia College in Orlando, Florida (2011 inaugural Prize winner). According to the Prize rules, former winners are not eligible to reapply this cycle.

**The 2019 Aspen Prize** is funded by the Joyce Foundation and the Siemens Foundation.

**The Aspen Institute 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 Siemens Technical Scholars Program, 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 <http://highered.aspeninstitute.org/>.

**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).

**College of the Desert (COD)**, located in Palm Desert, is an accredited community college serving eastern Riverside County, California. The College was established in 1958 and leads the region in providing quality, higher education, technical training and lifelong learning opportunities, in response to the dynamic needs of our diverse community. The College serves more than 15,000 students each year and is the number one source of transfer students to California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus. For more information, visit [www.collegeofthedesert.edu](http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu).

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