

NEWS RELEASE

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NORTHWEST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE NAMED AS ONE OF TOP 150 IN THE COUNTRY

Highlighting the critical importance of improving student success in America's community colleges, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program has named Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges. NCC is now 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 for every American” 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 for community colleges nationwide.”

Dr. Alethea Stubbe, President of NCC, commented, “Student success matters to all of us. It is an honor to be one of the top 150 community colleges in the nation recognized by the Aspen Institute for the fourth time in a row. This illustrates that the College provides excellence in its educational programs and services not only regionally, but nationally. With the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of Northwest Iowa Community College there has never been a better time to celebrate and be proud of NCC's mission, students, and the impact NCC alumni make in our communities and around the world. At Northwest Iowa Community College – Your Success is Our Story.”

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

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

Northwest Iowa Community College has been invited to submit an application containing detailed data on degree/certificate completion (including progress and transfer rates), labor market outcomes (employment and earnings), and student learning outcomes.

This is the fourth time in a row NCC has been recognized by the Aspen Institute as a College of Excellence. NCC was previously recognized in 2011, 2012 and in 2014 (when they switched to a two year selection process). A full list of the selected colleges and details on the selection process are available at: www.aspenprize.org.

Ten finalists will be named in fall 2016. 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 and a few finalists with distinction in early 2017.

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. 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 College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve college 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. The Aspen Prize is funded by the Joyce Foundation, the Siemens Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation.

Quick facts about NCC:

- 11,500+ College Alumni since 1966, of which over 7,411 live in Iowa
- 100% Placement Rate for College Alumni
- Average first-time wage of our 2013 graduates was \$17.45/hour
- 40+ Programs of study including career & transfer and applied technology

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- NCC offered 447 scholarships totaling \$329,154 to our students last year. To receive your free copy of the NCC Viewbook or schedule a campus visit, contact the Admissions office at studentservices@nwicc.edu, call 712-324-5061, 800-352-4907. Or visit our website at nwicc.edu. At NCC – Your Success is Our Story.