

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE NAMED AS ONE OF TOP 150 IN THE COUNTRY

*Nation's Signature Recognition of Excellence, Chosen from over 1,000 Community  
Colleges Which Serve Nearly Half of All Undergraduates in US*

**Washington, DC, January 23, 2014** –Highlighting the critical importance of improving student success in America's community colleges, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program today named Manchester Community College as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2015 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and \$1 million dollars in prize funds.

"Being one of 150 community colleges nationwide invited to apply for an award of this caliber is a distinct honor and celebrates MCC's commitment to our students and their success in higher education," said MCC President Gena Glickman.

Manchester Community College is the first Connecticut Community College to be nominated for this honor.

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 high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students.

"The Board of Regents congratulates Manchester Community College on this honor," said Board of Regents for Higher Education President Gregory Gray. "The work they are doing to strengthen higher education in Connecticut has benefitted so many students in our state-- as well as our economy on the whole. They are a critical part of our higher education landscape and ensuring college remains accessible, affordable, and accountable."

The Aspen Institute identified the top 150 community colleges through an assessment of institutional performance, improvement, and equity on student retention and completion measures. Together, the 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the Prize represent the diversity and richness of the entire sector:

- They are located in 37 states across the nation;
- They represent urban, rural, and suburban markets; and
- They encompass big community colleges and small community colleges—from Miami Dade College in Florida serving over 100,000 students to Carver Career Center in West Virginia serving fewer than 500 students.

A full list of the 150 community colleges is available at [www.AspenPrize.org](http://www.AspenPrize.org). Prize winners will be announced in early 2015.

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.”

The 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence was awarded to co-winners Santa Barbara City College (California) and Walla Walla Community College (Washington). Valencia College (Florida) was the inaugural Prize winner in 2011.

Manchester 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. The formula used to select the colleges was devised by expert analysts at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems in consultation with an expert advisory committee convened by the Aspen Institute. The data focus on student retention and completion, considered from three perspectives:

- **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)

To ensure full representation of the range and diversity of the sector, adjustments were applied with respect to mission, size, and minority representation.

Manchester 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. They must demonstrate that they deliver exceptional student results for all students – including those from racial minority

and/or low-income backgrounds – and also use data to inform decisions and continually improve over time.

Ten finalists will be named in Fall 2014. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data from states and transfer data from the National Student Clearinghouse. A distinguished Prize Jury will select a grand prize winner and a few finalists with distinction in early 2015.

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**The Aspen Prize** is funded by the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Joyce Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Lumina Foundation.

**The Aspen College Excellence Program** aims to identify and replicate practices and policies 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' and policy-makers' understanding of what is needed to teach and graduate post-secondary students, especially the growing population of low-income and minority students on American campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/cep>.

**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).

Students of any age who possess the desire to pursue higher education are welcome at **Manchester Community College**. MCC is proud of its academic excellence, new facilities, flexible schedules, small classes, low tuition and faculty with both academic and “real world” credentials. The college offers over 60 programs, transfer options, financial aid and scholarships, as well as access to baccalaureate degrees through guaranteed admissions programs with several universities. The main, park-like campus, which is easily accessible from I-84, is also the home of Great Path Academy, a middle college high school, serving grades 9-12. The college's second location, the Manchester Community College Arts and Education Center, opened in downtown Manchester in 2012. MCC takes pride in the quality of programs and the many ways it has helped students, families, businesses and community grow over the past five decades. Fifty Years Together. For Learning. For Life.