

For fifth time running, Lee College named an Aspen Prize Top 150 U.S. Community College

\$1 million prize for community college excellence recognizes outstanding achievements

BAYTOWN, TX — Lee College was named today as one of the top 150 community colleges in the United States eligible to compete for the \$1 million 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance in American community colleges.

This is the fifth consecutive time that Lee College has been selected an Aspen Prize Top 150 Community College from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide.

"Everything we do at Lee College is centered on serving our community and providing a quality education that empowers our diverse students to confidently navigate their futures," said Pres. Dr. Dennis Brown. "Our recognition as a Top 150 Community College and eligibility to compete for the Aspen Prize is a testament to the leadership and commitment of our Board of Regents, and the value and impact of the work that our talented faculty, staff and administrators do for our students everyday. We truly believe that every Lee College student can be successful."

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

Lee College 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. After the top ten finalists are named in May 2018, the Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each finalist and collect additional qualitative data. A distinguished Prize Jury will select a grand prize winner, finalists with distinction and rising stars in spring 2019.

Estimates from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce suggest that out of the 11.6 million jobs created in the post-recession economy, 11.5 million require at least some college education. The vast majority of students who enroll in community colleges do so because they believe that post-secondary education will provide them a path to rewarding work, stable employment, and family-sustaining wages.

"Especially in the current social and economic climate, it is exceptionally important that our nation's community colleges develop the diverse talent needed to fuel democratic engagement, social mobility, and economic opportunity and growth," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. "Through this competition we're working to inspire other institutions across our country to ensure more students succeed in college and their lives beyond those campuses."