



**Aspen Institute Names Moorpark College as a Top 150 U.S. Community College
Eligible for 2021 Aspen Prize**

\$1 Million Prize Recognizes Excellence in Equitable Outcomes for Students in and After College

CONTACTS:

James Schuelke, Moorpark College, 805-553-4013 (jschuelke@vcccd.edu)

Brooke McDonald, The Aspen Institute, 202-736-5834 (brooke.mcdonald@aspeninstitute.org)

(Moorpark, CA) November 6, 2019 —The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program has named Moorpark College as one of 150 community colleges nationwide eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation’s signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America’s community colleges. Based on strong and improving student outcomes—including learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity—only 15 percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize.

“We are honored to be recognized by the prestigious Aspen Institute,” said Moorpark College Interim President Dr. Julius Sokenu. “Moorpark College is a national leader in student success. We’re proud of our record of excellence, including our top ranking in California for student completion and the success of our Career Education and online programs. This recognition is a testament to our hardworking students, as well as the talented faculty and staff who make Moorpark College a special place to learn and work.”

The 150 community colleges named this week were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39 states in urban, rural, and suburban areas, serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector.

Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

“Community colleges play a vital role in developing talent and enabling social mobility across the country, and it’s critical for them to get better at what they do,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. “We’re pleased to see evidence that these institutions are improving, that more are delivering on their promise. We’re also pleased

to play a role in honoring outstanding community colleges and sharing what works to ensure great outcomes for students—through graduation and beyond.”

The top 10 finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in spring 2021.

"Moorpark College has long been a leading institution for higher learning in the nation," said Ventura County Community College District Trustee Bernardo M. Perez. "By training workers in our award-winning Career Education programs and helping students transfer to UC, CSU and private universities at some of the highest rates in the nation, Moorpark College is transforming lives and building a stronger community."

For a full list of the top 150 eligible institutions and to read more on the selection process, visit www.highered.aspeninstitute.org/aspen-prize.

About Moorpark College

Moorpark College is one of three colleges in the Ventura County Community College District and annually serves more than 14,000 students. Founded in 1967, Moorpark College is fully accredited and has the highest six-year completion rate within the California Community College System. The Campaign for College Opportunity named Moorpark College a 2019 Champion of Higher Education for the Associate Degree for Transfer Pathway. It is also a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. The college's signature career/technical programs include nursing, radiation technology, biotechnology and journalism. The college's America's Teaching Zoo is the only associate's degree exotic animal training program in California. To learn more, visit MoorparkCollege.edu or follow @MoorparkCollege on social media.

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The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, especially for the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit <http://highered.aspeninstitute.org/> and www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered and follow @AspenHigherEd on Twitter.

The Aspen Institute is a community-serving organization with global reach whose vision is a free, just and equitable society. For 70 years, the Institute has driven change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the world's greatest challenges. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute has offices in Aspen, Colorado, and New York City, and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.

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