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**ASPEN INSTITUTE RECOGNIZES
ANOKA-RAMSEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN COON RAPIDS, MINNESOTA
AS ONE OF TOP TEN FINALISTS IN NATIONAL PRIZE COMPETITION**

Today, Anoka-Ramsey Community College was recognized in an award ceremony in Washington, DC, as one of the top ten community colleges nationally in the bi-annual Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. During the ceremony at the Newseum, Anoka-Ramsey was recognized for:

- Offering high-quality teaching and preparing its students well for transfer into four-year colleges.
- Having the lowest cost, tuition, and fees of any public or private higher education institution in Minnesota.
- Achieving strong graduate and transfer rates, 16 percentage points above the national average
- Preparing students for transfer and bachelor's degree attainment at a rate nearly twice the national average

As noted in the Aspen Institute's extensive review, these impressive rates of student success stem in large part from the strong commitment by faculty and staff to continuously improve their teaching by assessing how well the college's 12,200 students are learning and then refining their teaching methods. Anoka-Ramsey's strong partnerships with local high schools create opportunities for students to start early and be successful in college. And investment in an undergraduate research program has motivated students to pursue a bachelor's degree, either at Anoka-Ramsey or a four-year college. Anoka-Ramsey's President Kent Hanson has ushered in an era of collaboration and culture of support that faculty and staff say brings out the best in them.

We thank Anoka-Ramsey for participating in this year's Aspen Prize process, and for helping define excellence for community colleges nationwide.

For more information on Anoka-Ramsey Community College, and the national press release, go to: <http://as.pn/1kr>.

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The Aspen Prize is funded by the Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, the Siemens Foundation, and Pearson.

The Aspen 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.