



Aspen Institute Launches President and Trustee Collaborative to Improve Community College Student Success

New initiative partners with Texas, Michigan, and a national cohort of community colleges to strengthen board-president alignment and advance lasting student success reforms

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WASHINGTON, D.C., May 30, 2025 – Today, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program (Aspen) announced the inaugural participants in the Presidents & Trustees Collaborative—an initiative designed to strengthen board-president alignment in support of lasting reforms that improve community college student outcomes. This multi-year effort will begin with a national cohort of ten community colleges and two statewide partnerships with the Texas Success Center and the Michigan Community College Association. The cohort members and state partners will work with Aspen to scale high-impact board development and advance governance reforms that embed student success as a core priority and sustain meaningful change.

This multi-year initiative will engage college leaders through a series of in-person and virtual sessions focused on aligning governance practices with student success priorities. Guided by Aspen's trustee framework and lessons from Aspen Prize-winning institutions, participants will explore proven strategies for how boards and presidents can collaborate effectively to build long-term governance structures that drive student outcomes and set new standards for leadership accountability in the field.

In its first phase, the Collaborative is partnering with two statewide organizations. Work with the Texas Success Center will kick off this year, engaging their statewide cohort through 2025 and 2026. The Michigan Community College Association will begin its participation in 2026, supporting a statewide cohort the following year. These partners will work alongside Aspen to lead the field in governance reform that sustains student-focused change and strengthens the capacity of boards to guide their institutions through ongoing transformation.

The Collaborative is also partnering with ten colleges across the country. Those are:

- Cerritos College, CA
- El Camino Community College District, CA
- Forsyth Technical Community College, NC
- Monroe Community College, NY
- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, WI
- Santa Rosa Junior College, CA
- Tulsa Community College, OK
- UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ
- Vance-Granville Community College, NC
- Wor-Wic Community College, MD



“Over the last decade, we’ve seen that community colleges make the most progress when presidents and trustees are unified in purpose and aligned in strategy,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. “Through the Presidents & Trustees Collaborative, we’re advancing the field by working with colleges and statewide partners to strengthen that alignment—grounding governance in student success priorities, sustaining reforms through leadership transitions, and ultimately driving long-term improvements in student outcomes.”

By fostering deeper collaboration between presidents and trustees, the Presidents & Trustees Collaborative aims to embed student success into the very fabric of college governance. With support from Aspen and in partnership with leading institutions and statewide organizations, participating colleges will serve as national models for what it takes to sustain transformational change—and set a new standard for leadership and accountability across community colleges.

The Aspen Presidents & Trustees Collaborative is made possible by the generous support of Ascendium.

To learn more about the collaborative, visit higher.ed.aspeninstitute.org/programs/presidents-trustees-collaborative.

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The **Aspen Institute College Excellence Program** aims to strengthen higher education leadership and practice to improve student outcomes—with the ultimate goal of advancing economic mobility and developing talent for the good of each individual and society as a whole. For more information, visit [our website](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Bluesky](#), and [X](#).

The **Aspen Institute** is a global nonprofit organization whose purpose is to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve society’s greatest challenges. It is headquartered in Washington, DC and has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, as well as an international network of partners. For more information, visit aspeninstitute.org.