



The Aspen Institute Selects 40 For Next Cohort of the Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship

*Aspen's Rising Presidents Fellowship Equips Future Leaders to Meet the Moment—
and Raise Student Outcomes*

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Washington, D.C., June 17, 2025 – The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program (Aspen) today announced the selection of 40 exceptional leaders from across the country for the 2025–26 [Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship](#). Rigorously selected from among over 120 applicants, fellows will learn from—and apply to their own contexts—lessons from over a dozen years of Aspen research about how to lead an institution to higher and more equitable levels of student success.

Many sitting community college presidents plan to retire in the next decade, creating an opportunity for college trustees and system heads to select leaders who have the skills and knowledge to achieve better outcomes for students. Aspen Presidential Fellows represent the next generation of diverse college leaders, including by institution and geography, representing 19 states and ranging from small rural to large urban colleges. The fellows will work closely with highly accomplished community college presidents and thought leaders over ten months to learn from field-leading research, examine demographic and labor market conditions in their communities, assess student outcomes at their colleges, and advance a clear vision for excellent outcomes for all their students while in college and after they graduate.

“Our research on excellent colleges reveals that they have a few big things in common: They have presidents who focus on a few large-scale reforms that transcend enrollment and completion goals and centrally focus on whether graduates are set up to succeed in the next stage of their lives—either the world of work or at a university where they aim to earn a bachelor’s degree,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. “This cohort of fellows is clearly committed to advancing student success and has the talent to lead transformational reforms. We are really looking forward to our year with them in the fellowship and bringing their talents into our alumni network.”

Rising Presidents Fellows are chosen based on their commitment to student success, the extent to which they exhibit the characteristics of excellent presidents revealed in [our research](#), and interest in pursuing a college presidency within five years of completing the fellowship. As Aspen Presidential Fellows, they join a network of over 430 forward-thinking peers—197 of whom are sitting college presidents—who are applying concrete, grounded, and innovative strategies to meet student success challenges at their colleges.

The Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship is made possible by the generous support of the Burton Family Foundation, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, College Futures Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation.



For bios and photos of all 40 leaders, visit [as.pn/RPF-C10](https://aspeninstitute.org/RPF-C10)

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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 www.aspeninstitute.org.