



ASPEN INSTITUTE RECOGNIZES MITCHELL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE IN MITCHELL, SD, AS ONE OF TOP TEN FINALISTS IN NATIONAL PRIZE COMPETITION

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

**CONTACTS: Janae Hinson, janae.hinson@aspeninstitute.org, 202-726-2531
Gideon Hertz, ghertz@burness.com, 301-280-5734**

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 2, 2019 — Today, Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, South Dakota, was recognized in an award ceremony in Washington, DC, as one of the top community colleges nationally in the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. During the ceremony at the Newseum, Mitchell was honored for success in workforce preparation, a strong culture of caring for students, and a collaborative relationship with the K-12 sector. Mitchell also has a three-year graduation and transfer rate of 73 percent, which is among the highest in the nation for two-year institutions and the highest of the Aspen Prize finalists.

The \$1 million Aspen Prize, awarded every two years since 2011, recognizes outstanding institutions selected from an original pool of more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide. With a singular focus on student success, the Aspen Prize assesses institutional performance in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, high rates of employment and earnings for graduates, and equity in access and success for students of color and low-income students.

“Mitchell Technical Institute is committed to its rural community of 15,000 residents in eastern South Dakota, with a laser-sharp focus on preparing students to be successful in the good jobs that exist in the region,” said Joshua Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program. “Nearly all students benefit from programs with clear course sequences and extensive work-based and applied learning opportunities, resulting in high rates of graduation and employment.”

The Prize winners, Rising Stars, and finalists were announced by Aspen Prize Jury co-chairs Ángel Cabrera, president of George Mason University, and Kathy Warden, chief executive officer and president of Northrop Grumman. Cabrera and Warden led a distinguished Prize Jury of higher education experts to select the top colleges, part of a rigorous review process that included the examination of extensive data on performance and improvements in learning, graduation, workforce, and equitable outcomes, along with multi-day site visits to each of the ten finalists.

The College Excellence Program thanks Mitchell Technical Institute for participating in this year's Aspen Prize process, and for helping define excellence for community colleges nationwide. For more information on Mitchell Technical Institute and the national press release, visit: <https://bit.ly/2FK6HkM>.

###

The Aspen Prize is generously funded by ECMC Foundation, Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and Siemens Foundation.

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 and minority students on American campuses. The program is part of The Aspen Institute, which has a mission of fostering leadership based on enduring values and providing a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. For more information, visit <http://highered.aspeninstitute.org/> and www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered and follow [@AspenHigherEd](https://twitter.com/AspenHigherEd) on Twitter.

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.