



**TEXAS' PALO ALTO COLLEGE RECOGNIZED BY THE ASPEN INSTITUTE AS ONE OF THE TOP COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE NATION**

*\$1 Million Prize Recognizes Rapid Improvement in Student Outcomes*

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**WASHINGTON, D.C., April 2, 2019** —Palo Alto College in San Antonio, Texas, a finalist for the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, was recognized today with a Rising Star award for dramatic improvement, accompanied by a \$100,000 cash award. During an award ceremony at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., Palo Alto College was honored for building clear pathways to degrees and transfer, exceptional student advising, and strong partnerships with K-12 systems, which have resulted in remarkable improvement in the graduation and transfer rate over four years, from 28 percent to 47 percent.

“Palo Alto College has engaged in an impressive set of structural reforms over the past few years focused on building clear pathways to transfer and restructuring advising,” said Joshua Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program. “These reforms, which the college has extended into its work with high school students, have enabled Palo Alto to improve student success rapidly, delivering to more and more students what they want and need: a valuable degree.”

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, success after graduation in the labor market and transfer to four-year institutions, and equity in access and success for students of color and low-income students.

The 2019 Aspen Prize winners, **Indian River State College** (Fort Pierce, Florida) and **Miami Dade College** (Miami) will receive \$350,000 each. Aspen awarded three colleges with the “Rising Star” award for their strong record of improvement: **Palo Alto**, **Odessa College** (Odessa, Texas), and **Pierce College at Fort Steilacoom** (Lakewood, Washington). Each will receive \$100,000.

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 education, business, and civil rights 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 multiday site visits to each finalist school.

For more information on Palo Alto College and the national press release, visit:

<https://bit.ly/2FK6HkM>.

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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 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](http://www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered) and follow [@AspenHigherEd](https://twitter.com/AspenHigherEd) on Twitter.

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