

to celebrate this distinguished honor once again and look forward to celebrating the success of our College and its students.”

According to a press release from the Aspen Institute: “The Aspen Prize spotlights exemplary community colleges in order to elevate will be announced in Spring/Summer 2023.”



OCC Named as One of 150 Colleges Eligible for Prestigious Aspen Prize


The Aspen Institute has named Orange Coast College as one of the 150 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation’s signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America’s community colleges. The colleges selected for this honor represent 15 percent of more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide, and are recognized as having high and improving levels of student success as well as equitable outcomes for Black and Hispanic students and those from lower-income backgrounds.

OCC has been invited to submit data and narratives as the next steps in an intensive data and practice review process, culminating in the announcement of the Aspen Prize winner in Spring 2023.

“We are honored to be recognized as a nationwide leader among two-year colleges,” said OCC President Angelica Suarez. “OCC would not receive such accolades without a tireless commitment to student success exemplified by our faculty, classified professionals and managers. We are thrilled



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OCC Marketing Dept. Wins



compared to their peers, including life circumstances that affect their educational goals” says TOP program coordinator Linda Bagatourian.

Resources aimed at supporting underserved student populations, such as first-generation Hispanic and Latinx students, include OCC’s Pirates’ Promise program, which grants two years of free tuition to all first-time college students taking 12 units or more, and OCC’s Zero-Textbook-Cost initiative, which offers students the option of taking classes that have no materials costs, such as textbooks. OCC also provides basic needs support through its Pirates’ Cove Food Pantry and Laptop Loan program.

“Our goal is to create an environment of inclusion and belonging for all OCC students, faculty, staff and administrators, and to engage in our planning and processes through a racial justice and equity lens,” says President Suarez. “This is a holistic approach that starts with our Education Master Plan, and is guided by the work of OCC’s participatory governance committees, as well as our Equity and Inclusion Task Force.”

Orange Coast College is the top transfer community college in Orange County for combined transfers to the California State University and University of California systems. In 2019-2020, associate degrees for transfer made up approximately 21.6 percent of all degrees awarded at OCC.

The Champions of Higher Education and Equity Champions

