



Contact:

Mary Vermillion, Public Information Officer
360.383.3310 / pio@whatcom.ctc.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Jan. 30, 2014

WCC Named Among Nation’s Top Community Colleges *Aspen Prize nomination honors performance in key student outcomes*

BELLINGHAM, Wash. – For the second time in a row, Whatcom Community College (WCC) has been named among the nation’s top 150 community colleges by the prestigious Aspen Institute. The non-profit institute selected the colleges from a pool of more than 1,000 public two-year colleges that have demonstrated exceptional levels of student success. Of Washington state’s 34 community and technical colleges, Whatcom is one of six receiving this significant recognition.

“We are honored to be among the select colleges receiving this accolade,” said WCC President Kathi Hiyane-Brown. “We’re proud the Aspen Institute recognizes our faculty and staffs’ commitment to a student-centered approach, and that they’ve named us among national leaders who are implementing best practices to improve student success.”

The Aspen Institute identified the top 150 community colleges through an assessment of institutional performance, improvement, and equity on student retention and completion.

In addition to Whatcom, the nonprofit institute recognized the following Washington colleges: Columbia Basin College, Olympic College, Renton Technical College, Skagit Valley College, and Walla Walla Community College. Walla Walla won the 2013 Aspen Prize with co-winner Santa Barbara City College. As such, neither one is eligible to compete for the 2015 honor.

WCC Named Among Top Community Colleges in Nation

Page 2

The colleges have been invited to submit applications for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Awarded every two years, it is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. It recognizes exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students. Ten finalists will be named in fall 2014. Prize winners will be announced in early 2015.

Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college with an accomplished faculty and staff who serve 11,000 students annually. On its campus in Bellingham, WA, and through online courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills, and Community & Continuing Education classes. For more information, visit www.whatcom.ctc.edu.

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization. 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, Colo.; 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 about the Aspen Prize, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.

###