

# Ponce selected for Aspen honor

BAYTOWN, TX — Dr. Christina Ponce, Vice President of Student Success, Workforce and Resource Development at Lee College, has been awarded the prestigious Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence.

The Aspen Institute, an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, yesterday announced that Ponce joins the inaugural class of the Aspen Presidential Fellows, a diverse group of 40 extraordinary leaders with the drive and capacity to transform community colleges to achieve higher levels of student success.

Over the next decade, the majority of current community college presidents are expected to retire. At the same time, increasing numbers of students are flocking to community colleges to earn degrees that lead to good jobs, but too few actually graduate. The Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence aims to equip college leaders with the tools they need to dramatically improve student outcomes. The Fellowship is a highly selective yearlong program to prepare leaders aspiring, or recently appointed, to the community college presidency. Fellows will participate in a series of innovative seminars and ongoing mentorship focused on a new vision for leadership, delivered in collaboration with Stanford University faculty and top community college leaders.

“Dr. Ponce arrived at Lee College and immediately put her considerable skills, talents and higher education experience to work in developing new and innovative strategies to expand and enhance our students’ success,” said Dr. Dennis Brown, President of Lee College. “Her selection as an Aspen Presidential Fellow speaks to her belief in the importance and value of community college education, and her commitment to ensuring community colleges will continue to serve and support students for generations to come.”

Ponce was selected through a rigorous process that considered her abilities to take strategic risks, lead strong teams and cultivate partnerships and focus on results-oriented improvements in student success and access.

The 2016-2017 Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Experience Fellows hail from 17 states and 30 community colleges. They will begin their program in July 2016 at Stanford University with anticipated completion in spring 2017. Applications for the second class will be available by Sept. 30, 2016.

The Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Greater Texas Foundation, Joyce Foundation and Kresge Foundation.