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### **Highline Leader Selected for Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship**

**Dr. Jamilyn Penn Recognized with Sought After Honor**

DES MOINES, Wash. — The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program (Aspen) announced today that Dr. Jamilyn Penn, Vice President for Student Services at Highline College, is one of 39 leaders selected for the 2024-25 [Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship](#). Applying lessons from over a dozen years researching exceptional community colleges, the Aspen fellowship aims to select and prepare the next generation of presidents who can lead institutions to higher and more equitable levels of student success.

Many sitting community college presidents plan to retire in the next decade, creating an opportunity for college trustees and system heads to select leaders who have the skills and knowledge to achieve better outcomes for students. Aspen Presidential Fellows represent the next generation of college leadership: this incoming class of Aspen Rising Presidents Fellows is 58 percent women, and 55 percent are people of color. The institutions they represent are also diverse, located in 20 states, from small rural colleges to large urban campuses. The fellows, selected through a competitive process, will work closely with highly accomplished community college presidents and thought leaders over ten months to learn from field-leading research, examine demographic and labor market conditions in their communities, assess student outcomes at their colleges, and advance a clear vision for excellent and equitable outcomes for students while in college and after they graduate.

“My selection not only acknowledges my past achievements but also signals my readiness to contribute to future leadership,” Dr. Penn said. “This is an amazing opportunity that I eagerly embrace. Being accepted into Aspen Rising Presidents validates my potential and inspires me to develop it further.”

Rising Presidents Fellows aspire to enter a college presidency within five years of completing the fellowship. As fellows, they join a network of over 350 forward-thinking peers—175 of whom

are sitting college presidents—who are applying concrete, grounded, and innovative strategies to meet student success challenges in their colleges.

According to Dr. Penn, a Steilacoom, WA resident: “College presidents today face multifaceted challenges, including evolving student demographics, financial constraints, and the imperative to adapt to rapidly changing educational landscapes. My diverse leadership experiences uniquely position me to address these challenges.”

“With so many community college presidents taking or nearing retirement, Aspen has a heightened sense of urgency to develop new leaders who are committed to systemic change,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. “Community colleges have a unique opportunity to advance the talent communities need and enable the economic mobility that draws so many students to higher education. I am confident that these fellows can realize that promise—and in turn advance the entire field—by taking the lessons from the highest performing colleges and preparing to bring those lessons to their first presidencies.”

The Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship is made possible by the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Burton Family Foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the College Futures Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and JPMorgan Chase. For bios and photos of all 40 leaders, visit [highered.aspeninstitute.org/meet-the-rising-presidents-fellows](https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/meet-the-rising-presidents-fellows).

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**Attachment:** Photo of Dr. Jamilyn Penn.

**Links within this release:**

- <https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/risingpresidents/>
- <https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/meet-the-rising-presidents-fellows/>
- <https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered/?viewAsMember=true>
- <https://twitter.com/AspenHigherEd>
- <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/>

**About Highline College**

Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves 14,100 students. With more than 75 percent students of color, Highline is the most diverse higher education institution in the state. The college offers a wide range of academic transfer,

professional-technical education, basic skills and seven applied bachelor's degree programs. Alumni include former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, internationally acclaimed author Ann Rule, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida, Dr. Tom Jackson, president of Cal-Poly Humboldt and retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and nurse Sandra Cravens Robinson.

### **About the Aspen Institute**

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program supports colleges and universities in their quest to achieve a higher standard of excellence, delivering credentials that unlock life-changing careers and strengthen our economy, society, and democracy. We know it takes visionary college leaders to achieve this higher standard and we make it our mission to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and research-backed tools to inspire change, shift practice, and advance the capacity of colleges to deliver excellent and equitable student outcomes. For more information, visit their [website](#) and follow them on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization whose purpose is to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve society's greatest challenges. It is headquartered in Washington, DC and has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, as well as an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).