

**Remarks for David Etwiler
CEO, Siemens Foundation
Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence Ceremony
April 2, 2019**

Josh, thank you for that introduction. My thanks as well to the entire Aspen team for inviting me to play a role here today. We've enjoyed working with your team for nearly four years on issues we are passionate about--identifying and supporting outstanding community colleges through the Aspen Prize; identifying and supporting outstanding STEM associate's degree programs through the Siemens/Aspen STEM Community College Award; and identifying and supporting wonderful students achieving success in the classroom and in their careers through the Siemens Technical Scholars Award. It has been a great journey and I'm incredibly pleased to be here to celebrate with so many other like-minded people.

For those of you not familiar with the Siemens Foundation, we're all about STEM. Since our inception, we've invested over \$115 million in STEM education and workforce development initiatives. In 2015, in response to America's widening opportunity and income gap, we began a STEM workforce development program targeting young adults in the U.S. to prepare them for jobs in STEM fields that require less than a bachelor's degree, more than a high school diploma, and a strong technical skill set...something we creatively call the STEM Middle-Skill Initiative.

Why? Because across the country, we have a growing opportunity gap and these jobs pay \$53,000 a year on average, provide an accessible entry point into the middle-class, are limitless in terms of career and educational advancement and, importantly, American businesses are struggling to fill millions of these good jobs.

On top of this, and in the midst of a tight labor market, young adults in the U.S. continue to struggle to secure good jobs that support economic mobility.

- Nearly 5.5 million young adults age 16-24 in this country are not in school or working, losing ground on the crucial education, skills, and work experience they need to get ahead.
- Fewer students are completing degrees at both two-year and four-year institutions, even though 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education and training by 2020; and
- Millennials earn 20% less than their parents at the same stage of life.

One of the ways we're working to address these challenges is through partnerships with world-class organizations like Aspen's College Excellence Program to promote rigorous, high-quality standards in the community college sector, still the major postsecondary educational vehicle for students to acquire solid STEM middle-skill jobs in this country.

The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence is the national standard for institutional performance, recognizing schools and leaders who go above and beyond preparing their students for success in furthering postsecondary education and their careers.

And, through the Siemens/Aspen STEM Community College Award, we've had the privilege of seeing outstanding two-year STEM programs, many at colleges that are also being recognized as a finalist for the Prize. And I'd be remiss not to mention these dual-nominees:

- Broward College (Davie, FL);
- Miami Dade College (Miami, FL); and

- Mitchell Technical Institute (Mitchell, SD)

Congratulations. We commend your commitment to excellence and are so pleased to join Aspen and everyone in the room here today in recognizing you.

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Now, a few minutes on the real reason we're all here today - the students. Through the Siemens Technical Scholars program with Aspen, we have the privilege of meeting and highlighting some amazing young people who are demolishing barriers to achieve their college and STEM career goals. Whether it's in advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology or energy, we've met some of the best, brightest and most determined young adults in STEM community college programs across the country.

I'm proud to share the stories of two Siemens Technical Scholars today, whose achievements demonstrate the true value of excellent community college programs. By pursuing high-quality degrees that provide relevant skills for today's job market, these students look forward not only to launching successful careers for themselves, but also to giving back to their communities, making advancements in their fields of study, and inspiring others to do the same.

Let me tell you a little about these two students and then the Aspen team will share their videos.

First, you'll meet Edge, who is a Haitian immigrant and first-generation college student in Broward College's Nursing program.

The program, much like the college more broadly, has worked intentionally to ensure that learners from all backgrounds get access to high-quality instruction in high-demand fields.

Next, you'll meet Victoria, a Latina student attending Miami Dade's MAGIC program, where she is turning her love of drawing into a career in animation, a field that's growing every day, and like many others, becoming more digital by the minute.

Through Miami Dade College's MAGIC program, Victoria and her peers will be able to bring new, diverse perspectives to light through their creative storytelling.

Why student videos? We partner with the Aspen team to share these inspiring stories and to spread the word about the possibilities for young adults--particularly those from historically disadvantaged populations--in STEM technical careers and to erase any stigma about jobs requiring less than a bachelor's degree.

And, now, please join me in watching Edge's and Victoria's stories.

Thank you.

[Edj's Story (Broward College Nursing Program) -
<https://vimeo.com/289918872/4a9bfaee6c>]

[Victoria's Story (Miami Dade College MAGIC Program) -
<https://vimeo.com/289918970/04d2f90006>]