IRSC NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR TOP TEN STATUS
IRSC Honored at Aspen Award Ceremony in Washington D.C.

Fort Pierce, FL, March 18, 2015 - Indian River State College’s status as one of the Top Ten Colleges in the U.S. was celebrated at the highest levels March 18th at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Dr. Jill Biden, prominent educator and wife of Vice President Joe Biden, joined the Aspen Institute to honor IRSC President Dr. Ed Massey and the nine other Aspen Award finalists from around the nation for their innovative and effective strategies to increase student success. As an Aspen Top Ten finalist, IRSC was selected from among 1,200 state and community colleges, following a rigorous review of data, strategies and outcomes related to student learning, degree and certificate completion, high rates of graduate employment, earnings for graduates, and exceptional access and success for minority and low-income students.

“IRSC was particularly singled out for supporting students from the moment they enroll through graduation and into the workforce,” said Dr. Edwin R. Massey, IRSC President. “We attained this recognition through the unwavering focus of our entire college on student success. I would like to commend our faculty, administration and staff for their daily commitment to excellence in quality of instruction, student services, academic support, learning environment and innovative technologies.”

IRSC student government association president Ashley Gilbert said, “At IRSC, I have been given every tool I need. That’s what this college is all about - student success – and it’s awesome that the outstanding efforts of everyone at IRSC to help students succeed have received this national recognition. Thank you, IRSC, for providing a supportive learning environment to every student who walks on campus.”
IRSC’s recognition as a Top Ten College was based on the following achievements:

- **College-Wide Focus on Student Success** – IRSC has increased the number of degrees and certificates awarded by 69% over a five year period. This significant increase is the result of continuous focus on quality of instruction, student services, academic support, learning environment and innovative technologies to ensure students complete a degree or certificate.

- **Extreme Affordability** – Recognizing that over 60% of IRSC students come from counties with a relatively low average income, IRSC takes an extremely proactive approach to keep college affordable through low tuition rates, exceptional scholarship support, and creative strategies such as a $10,000 Bachelor’s degree in STEM Teacher Education. As a result, IRSC has been ranked as the 4th Most Affordable College in the Nation (and 1st in Florida) by the U.S. Department of Education for the second consecutive year. Further, through careful financial planning, IRSC has not raised its tuition rate for the past two years.

- **Workforce Readiness Through Hands-on Partnerships** – Over 90% of IRSC graduates in career-based fields are placed directly in jobs related to their degree within one year of graduation. Students are job-ready through internships, practicums, capstone experiences, and service learning opportunities developed by IRSC in partnership with over 400 businesses, industries, schools, public agencies and medical facilities.

- **Leadership in Emerging Industry Job Creation** - IRSC is taking a national lead in creating new jobs in emerging industries, through establishment of industry/college partnerships in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) at the regional, state and national levels. IRSC has been selected by the National Science Foundation as the lead institution for three Regional Centers for Nuclear Energy, Laser/Fiber Optics, and Photonics (co-lead) bringing together 119 colleges/universities and over 4,600 industry and agency partners to develop industry-standard training programs that will fuel economic development with a highly skilled workforce. As one example, IRSC’s Power Plant Technology Institute with NextEra Energy has placed 159 graduates in jobs with salaries exceeding $55,000 per year, resulting in national recognition as one of the Top 5 Industry Partnerships by the American Association of Community Colleges.

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Indian River State College is a public, comprehensive college serving Florida’s Research Coast with campuses in Fort Pierce, Okeechobee, Port St. Lucie, Stuart and Vero Beach. IRSC has earned a statewide and national reputation for quality, innovation and responsiveness to community needs, inspiring over 30,000 people to enroll in courses each year. Every aspect of IRSC is focused on student success with small classes, one-stop student services, convenient campuses and online
programs, resulting in the College’s ranking as the 9th top public regional college in the South by U.S. News & World Report. Tuition is affordable, and IRSC students benefit from many opportunities for scholarships and financial aid. IRSC is designated as the “4th Most Affordable College” in the country by the U.S. Department of Education and has been selected as an Achieving the Dream college based on the College’s strong commitment to student success. For more information visit, www.irsc.edu or call 1-866-792-4772.

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The Aspen College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes. Through the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the New College Leadership Project, and other initiatives, the College Excellence Program works to improve colleges’ understanding and capacity to teach and graduate students, especially the growing population of low-income and minority students on American campuses. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence

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