

### III. Contributing to the Region's Quality of Life

A regional education provider designation defines the educational responsibilities of an institution, but most public colleges typically have some level of engagement in their community without that specification. An engaged institution is one in which its members provide voluntary and professional service as part of a broader responsibility to apply their knowledge toward the betterment of society. Often times, faculty research addresses issues that are defined by the community and simultaneously involves college students in the process of learning. In other cases, sharing knowledge in the K-12 classroom links higher education with its elementary and secondary partners. Service clearly is expanded well beyond the confines of department and college committees and into professional associations that offer expertise and talent that enhance a region's quality of life.

Quality of life is a value-laden notion that refers to the status, or well-being, of a region's population when compared to others. Though a nebulous concept, indicators exist that measure a region's quality of life, among them being the cultural environment in the broadest sense of the phrase. In addition to its educational role, a college frequently serves as a focal point for the social and cultural environment of a region, thereby making it a more attractive place in which to live. This chapter highlights the many forms that Mesa State's programs, outreach activities, and volunteerism take and include:

- educational activities (e.g., high school outreach, athletics, lectures and forums, in-service programs for teachers, community education);
- cultural programs in art, music, theatre, and dance;
- professional expertise shared by faculty and staff through community service and research;
- volunteerism performed by students and AmeriCorps participants; and

- college facilities made available to the public (e.g., Tomlinson Library and the College Center).

Without a doubt, the impact of these programs and activities is varied, but they share a common denominator: bettering the quality of life of Western Colorado.

## Educational Activities and Programs

### High School Outreach Activities Sponsored by Academic Programs

The influence of the college's academic programs extends beyond the traditional classroom environment. Mesa State College faculty and students participate in a

number of outreach activities that enhance the education of school children, teachers, and citizens of the region.

The following events illustrate that point:



- Each year Mesa State hosts the Western Colorado Regional Science Fair. Faculty and students serve many roles from fair director to judges to logistical support. On average, 300 middle school and high schools students, teachers, and parents from thirteen counties around Western Colorado participate.
- Faculty in the mass communications program hosts a Media Day where 200-300 students from eight to 12 high schools around Western Colorado attend a day of workshops and competitions. Over 100 prizes are awarded for excellence in high school journalism.
- Math Extravaganza is a yearly event hosted by the faculty and students in mathematics. Approximately 100 students from seven high schools in the region come to Mesa State for a day of classes and workshops, culminating in a competition where prizes are awarded for excellence in mathematics.
- The Mesa State College Writing Conference features workshops and lectures by guest writers as well as faculty and majors in creative writing. The conference also includes a writing contest with a \$1,000 scholarship to Mesa State as the prize. This conference is open to high school students on the Western Slope, and generally, between 200-300 attend.
- Faculty and students in the nursing and human performance and wellness departments participate in numerous health fairs held throughout the region each year.

- Mesa State hosts History Day, a regional history competition for middle and high school students. Over 90 students and their parents attend. Mesa State faculty, students, and community members serve as judges for the competition.
- The music department hosts a number of competitions and festivals that bring over 1,000 middle and high school students from around the Western Colorado region to Mesa State's campus each year. The Fall Choral Invitational and Best of the West Select Band involve 160 high school musicians who take master classes with Mesa State faculty and perform joint concerts with Mesa State choirs and bands. The Colorado West Music Festival is a three-day event that averages 500 middle and high school students per day on the campus for competitions and performances.
- Every year, the theatre department holds a one-act play contest for high school students. Between 50 and 100 students from 6 - 8 schools come to compete. Since 2002, the department has sponsored a summer dance festival for teens and adults that includes two public performances, one presented by the festival attendees and faculty and the second by the Colorado Ballet.

## Intercollegiate Athletics and Summer Camps

As one of the college's most visible programs, intercollegiate athletics frequently has been a significant contributor to the area's quality of life, as well as an effective means for attracting the region's residents to Mesa State College. The men's program at Mesa State, with 191 players, includes baseball, basketball, football, and tennis. For Academic Year 2004 - 05, 113 women played basketball, cross-country, golf, soccer, softball, tennis, or volleyball.

The most obvious effect that the program has on the region is that it provides spectator sports. According to MSC's Department of Athletics, approximately 44,650 individuals attended games in 2003 - 04, led by basketball and football. Involvement in the region, however, extends well beyond those competitions. For example, one of the most popular activities is the summer camp program, which taught baseball, basketball, football, soccer, and volleyball skills to 4,540 campers last year. These experiences develop participants' athletic knowledge and team concepts under the supervision of college personnel. Other examples of activities in which the athletic program is involved in the community are:



- offering a reading program and math tutoring in local elementary schools;
- partnering with Grand Junction Parks and Recreation for free, hour-long football, basketball, and baseball clinics for 150 – 200 youth;
- teaching softball athletic skills and sportsmanship to 30 children who are physically challenged through the Challenger Program;
- building and maintaining an outdoor sand volleyball court at the Tree House as well as volunteering hours; and
- hosting a middle school mini-tennis tournament for area schools, with two teams from each school competing in a tournament following the three-week training.

Mesa State additionally hosts numerous regional high school competitions in tennis, basketball, and wrestling, while the annual tennis tournament welcomes over 400 participants from the Grand Valley as well as out-of-state.

### Lectures and Forums

Mesa State builds on the expertise and interests of its faculty by sponsoring guest lecturers who bring their own unique scholarship, diversity and opinions to the community. The following is a partial listing of guest lecturers who presented at the college during Academic Year 2003 - 04:

- Ann Cooper, executive chef and director of wellness and nutrition for the Ross School in East Hampton, New York;
- Maryo Ewell, noted community arts advocate and former associate director of the Colorado Council on the Arts;
- John P. Alsobrook, a pharmaceutical industry consultant and affiliate faculty member of the Yale School of Medicine;
- Joseph Kempler, Holocaust survivor;
- David Horowitz, president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture and nationally-known writer, editor, and political commentator;
- Craig Childs, award-winning author, noted naturalist, adventurer and desert ecologist; and
- Rich Kelley, trumpet player for Boston Brass.

## In-Service Activities for Teachers

Mesa State College, through its Extended Campus Program, initiated in-service programming for teachers in spring 2004 serving 215 professionals.

The following is illustrative of the offerings:

- “Quality Childcare” – 12 students in Montrose funded through a state childcare grant.
- “The Valued Link” – a cooperative program with the Uncompahgre BOCES for 63 students in paraprofessional educator training.
- “AP Vertical Training in Mathematics” – a cooperative program with the Colorado Department of Education for 27 students. A similar program in English was offered for 16 students.
- Library Education course – a cooperative program with the Regional Library system in Grand Junction.



A dramatic increase in programs and participants is anticipated for the current academic year, with classes scheduled at new sites in Delta, Nucla, and Hayden High Schools.

## Center for Economic Education and the Bureau for Economic and Business Research

The Mesa State business programs are active in the community, with many of their efforts directed at helping educate secondary teachers through the Center for Economic Education. The center was established to provide a link between Mesa State College, primary and secondary school districts, and the business community on the Western Slope. It also serves as a resource for K-12 economics teachers by providing workshops, seminars, curriculum development, information, and materials. The center presents 2 - 4 workshops each year, with about 20 Mesa County Valley School District 51 teachers typically attending each.

The Bureau for Economic and Business Research produces a quarterly newsletter distributed to 1,200 businesses and individuals in the community. The newsletters include an article of interest to the business community and present historical economic trend data and forecast leading and price change indicators.

## Community Education

Mesa State College offers a wide array of courses that significantly expand the college's reach to audiences whose interests and needs are beyond those of the traditional academic environment. In Academic Year 2003 – 04, the college's Community Education Center enrolled nearly 1,700 adult learners in 174 personal enrichment and professional development community education classes. Personal enrichment encompassed diverse topics that included health, astronomy, yoga, nutrition, identity theft, photography, personal finance, software training, and organizational skills.

In recent years, the center has added customized business training for dozens of area businesses, such as specialized classes that provide company employees with skills in new software or on-site instruction in conversational Spanish. For example, conversational Spanish classes were given to 75 employees from St. Mary's and Community Hospitals and at Ute Water. Another 60 employees of St. Mary's took basic computer courses. Yet a third example is the result of an agreement between the college and the Associated Landscape Contractor of Colorado (ALCC) whereby UTEC serves as one of 17 training and testing centers used by ALCC to train individuals for landscaping careers. The availability of a test site in Grand Junction not only allows easier access for Western Slope residents, but also offers the opportunity for local landscape contractors to upgrade their professional skills and become Certified Landscape Technicians (CLT). The first session was held in June 2001, and annual sessions have averaged 46 attendees from around the state.

## Cultural Programs: the Fine and Performing Arts

For many, cultural programming is one of the most obvious measures of quality of life, and in that context, Mesa State College has been a major contributor, serving as the center of culture in Western Colorado for decades. Mesa State has a variety of programs in the fine and performing arts, all of which offer high quality cultural

experiences to students and to the larger community. Many of the college's graduates then become the mainstays of the regional arts community. Programs in art, music, theatre and dance provide regular events for the public. The arts combined result in over 20,000 visits to campus for cultural events.

### Art

The Johnson Art Gallery, located in the college center, provides a dedicated space for art exhibits open to students, faculty, and the Grand Junction community. The gallery hosts four types of shows:



student shows, faculty shows, invitationals, and juried shows of professional artists. It has an active schedule, averaging ten to twelve shows each year, providing both Mesa State College and the community at large with artistic cultural experiences. More than 40 people a day wander into the gallery. Senior studio art majors are required to have an exhibit during the spring before graduation. Along with these exhibitions, gallery talks, receptions to introduce the artists, and critiques are available to the students.

Each show is accompanied by a reception for the public, with the artist(s) present to speak and answer questions. Reception attendance is usually between 70 and 110. Between reception attendees and gallery visitors, more than 8,000 people a year take advantage of the art department's shows.

Many art education graduates remain in Western Colorado and teach art in the public schools. Recent Mesa State art education graduates have taken jobs in Mesa County, Rifle, Plateau Valley, and Debeque. The department has hosted the Western Slope Art Education Conference for renewal or graduate credit. Last year 85 art educators from 22 Western Slope communities attended.

### Music

In 2003 the Moss Performing Arts Center opened, giving Mesa State not only more classroom and other student spaces, but more public performance spaces as well. The new facility is home to the 288-seat Recital Hall, the only public building in the Grand Junction area built specifically with acoustics for musical performance. The college schedules music performances in the 600-seat Robinson Theatre as well. During the course of the academic year, the department offers over thirty performances to the community. Nearly 4,300 tickets were sold for concerts during the 2003 - 04 season.

The Music at Mesa Guest Artist Series brings in 4 - 6 nationally or internationally prominent musicians annually. Faculty ensembles and student ensembles make up the rest of the 25 performances on the annual concert schedule. Student groups include six large performing ensembles: Chamber, Concert, and Women's Choir, Symphony Orchestra, Wind Symphony, and Jazz Band. The Holiday Concert alone fills the Robinson Theatre. Other concerts command audiences of generally between 100 and 200 people. The choirs also perform annually with the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra.



The applied teachers from Mesa State hold the principal positions in the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra (GJSO), and the symphony's director teaches for the college's music department. Mesa State's music faculty organized and continue to perform in the Western Colorado Jazz Orchestra (WCJO), the newest group in the Grand Junction Musical Arts Association. The group performs contemporary and classic jazz big band repertoire with the highest professional standards. Just as the GJSO presents musical works from the western classical music tradition, the WCJO similarly performs musical works from all eras and styles of the American jazz tradition.

The department is host to a number of special events during the year, many of which are for K-12 teachers and students. These include the Colorado Bandmasters' Association Honor Jazz Band, All-State Choir Auditions, the Colorado West Music Festival, the Best of the West Select Band, the Sonatina Festival, and solo and ensemble contests in strings, choir and band. The faculty serves as resources for music teachers around the region, and they often adjudicate and hold clinics in high schools across the state.

### Theatre, Music Theatre, and Dance

The four annual main-stage productions of Mesa State's theatre program have been central to the region's theatre life for decades, since the time that the college's productions were the only show in town. In the last ten years the community has become home to many more theatrical organizations. More often than not, however, they depend on the college's graduates and current students for much of their talent. Despite the competition, the college is still home to the Western Colorado's big productions and straight plays.



In 2003 - 04, the audience number totaled nearly 6,300 for the four main-stage productions: "Chicago," "Les Liaisons," "Trojan Women," and "Fortinbras." Beginning in 2004, the experimental theatre began offering less-known, more unusual performances. Also in 2003, the Rocky Mountain Theatre Festival came to Mesa State, bringing more than 500 college students from the Rocky Mountain region to compete and participate with local students.

Dance faculty and students also present two concerts a year. The concerts are perennially popular with the community. Last year 1,500 people attended one of four nights of concerts.

## Professional Expertise Shared by Mesa State Faculty and Staff

Faculty at Mesa State College have the primary responsibility for the formal education that occurs in the classroom. The faculty's collective knowledge transfers a body of knowledge that enables the college to offer eight vocational certificate programs, 17 associate-level programs (either for transfer or in an applied science area), 29 baccalaureate programs, and a master's degree in business administration. But a significant role that has an equally important bearing on the college's service region is the faculty's participation in research on, or service to, the local community.

College faculty are engaged in a myriad of research projects. Funding varies from nationally-competitive agencies (e.g., National Science Foundation) to local, private support, to college resources. The list found in the "Contributions" section of this report offers a sense of the variety of research projects in Western Colorado communities in which the faculty is engaged. The list also documents the significant volume of community service provided each year by faculty to elementary and secondary schools in the 14 Western Slope counties.

The college's staff, as well as its faculty, frequently share their expertise with numerous civic groups and serve on community boards. The compilation of contributions should be viewed as a sampling of the lectures, performances, seminars, adjudicated contests, and workshops in which the faculty and staff participate, as it is quite likely that this summary understates their collective contributions.

Finally, six educational presentations are made each year by faculty to the campus community and the public through the Faculty Colloquium Series. Sample topics from the series include Fulbright scholars discussing their experiences abroad in Norway, Belgium, and Hungary, as well as faculty presenting research on subjects such as: measurements of the ancient Maya; diaries from early American history; Spanish poetry; agents of bioterrorism; and the effects of livestock grazing on plant cover, water runoff, and sediment production.



## Volunteerism

### Community Service by Scholarship Students

Some Mesa State College scholarships require that the recipients perform community service hours. Fifty hours per academic year is the typical contribution. The service is supervised volunteer work for organizations serving the general public, and enables students to use their skills and talents while

helping others in the community. Examples of locations where volunteers have provided community service are hospitals, senior centers, daycare facilities, police and fire departments, and federal, state or city government offices. Nearly 400 students completed 17,500 hours of community service in FY 2003 – 04.

### AmeriCorps

Mesa State's AmeriCorps Program is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service and was established through a grant to the college in 1997. The program serves incarcerated, homeless, expelled, pregnant, physically- and mentally-challenged, and academically-delayed youth at approximately 20 sites within Mesa County. The program is beginning its eighth year with a mission "to develop and support interagency collaborative efforts that strengthen available resources to youth in Mesa County" and relies on approximately 35 volunteers annually.

The AmeriCorps Program started a tutoring and mentoring program at seven sites in 1997. By its sixth year—2003—the program had expanded to 38,900 documented hours of community service, volunteered at 12 non-profit agencies and six school sites. Over 10,000 youth participated in at least one Mesa State AmeriCorps function. The tutoring and mentoring program exceeded its goal of providing direct service to at-risk youth. Other accomplishments of the program include:

- supporting the creation of Tree House, a drop-in and referral center for teens;
- developing a support group for young fathers at Dos Rios;
- providing outdoor recreation experiences for 50 youth with severe physical and mental challenges;
- developing a readers' group for 16 incarcerated girls;
- linking adult writers' groups as mentors for 29 young writers at four alternative schools;
- assisting eight expelled youth to start a farmer's market;
- initiating a mentoring program at the homeless shelter;
- developing an education component at Hope Haven, a home for pregnant teens, which led to 37 youth receiving a GED or high school diploma; and

- designing a collaboration between the local school district, three non-profits and the detention center to provide wrap-around services to 137 youth.

AmeriCorps members also organize and participate in community service days. In 2003, the program was instrumental in collecting and shipping more than one and one-half tons of supplies to U.S. troops stationed overseas in honor of Colorado Cares Days. The Tree House—providing after school programs to 275 middle school youth—was selected as the 2004 Colorado Cares Days project site. As part of the project, AmeriCorps members planted gardens, installed a patio, painted the facility, and provided patio furniture.

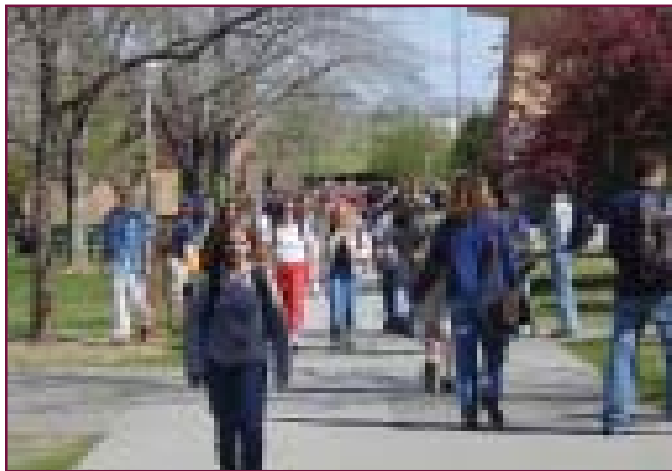
### College Services and Facilities Available to the Public Tomlinson Library

Tomlinson Library, dedicated in 1986, contains over 190,000 volumes. It includes a large government documents collection and world class geology library and is equipped with state-of-the-art computer technology. The library brings a growing collection of resources to the Western Slope that is unmatched within the 250-mile radius that extends to Denver and Salt Lake City, Utah. Developed largely to support the college's instructional and research needs, the library's staff, facility, and technology serve a far broader clientele, numbering more than 350,000 patrons during FY 2003 - 04. The library engages in a number of activities in Western Colorado illustrated by the following:

- loaning materials to citizens throughout the region through Interlibrary Loan. During FY 2003 - 04, over 1,000 items were loaned to 57 libraries on the Western Slope.
- implementing new technologies. College employees consult routinely with other libraries' staff and travel throughout the region to provide training and helping libraries establish procedures.
- offering five to ten library instruction classes annually to external organizations, such as regional high school classes, Grand Junction Business Incubator, in-service teacher training for District 51, and to other local organizations on a request basis.
- hosting library training programs for the public library and the district. Each year, the library hosts a series of national teleconferences for librarians from the region.



- delivering library sciences courses through the college's Center for Teacher Education. These classes are attended by working paraprofessionals employed in schools or public libraries in Glenwood, Telluride, Montrose, Delta, and Mesa counties. The courses are highly rated and improve the quality of library services through better-trained staffing.
- participating in the "One Book, One Community" project. Co-sponsored with the public library and the school district, this project promotes literacy.



### W. W. Campbell College Center

The Campbell College Center is home to two dining facilities, as well as the college bookstore, student government, art gallery, outdoor program, game room, and the Cultural Diversity Center. It also contains Liff Auditorium and several meeting rooms that are made available to the public for a nominal fee. During FY 2003 – 04, approximately 325 businesses (local and non-local), individuals, and non-profit agencies used space in the college center, accommodating 18,500 visitors.

### Concluding Remarks

Mesa State College is responsible for and involved in a wide-range of activities and programs that have a significant impact on the surrounding region's educational, social, and cultural environment. Whether it is the obvious contributions ranging from the availability of recreational and cultural events to providing opportunities above and beyond the traditional academic offerings, the college is clearly an active and proactive participant in the region. Though often subtle and sometimes amorphous, it is clear that there are a great many contributions made by Mesa State to the quality of life experienced by the residents of Western Colorado.