

# Change with Excellence: A Self-Study of Mesa State College



Presented to  
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and Schools



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## **Preface: The Self-Study**

Many institutional studies are undertaken for a single purpose, written by only a few individuals, and read by only a few more. This *Self-Study Report* has several purposes, was produced by many persons, and already has been read by many more.

### ***Purposes of the Self-Study***

The primary purpose of the *Self-Study Report* is to support Mesa State College's bid for continued accreditation from The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. On November 10-12, 2003, an Evaluation Team will visit the College. They will have read the *Self-Study Report* and other documents to help in their evaluative process.

The *Self-Study Report* has additional audiences and is available to everyone in a variety of forms, including an internet site. The majority of faculty members, staff, and administrators have come to Mesa State College since the last Self-Study in 1994. Their involvement in the study, and their opportunity to read the completed *Self-Study Report*, helped them gain a greater understanding of their institution.

Similarly, current students learned more about the College while participating in the Study. Prospective students and their families might find it useful in determining their college choice. Many members of the Mesa County community also were involved in shaping the Self-Study. In the process, they and others in the community learned more about the College.

Finally, the Report will serve as a guide to the future, not just a recounting of the past. Along with other documents, such as Mesa's *Academic Master Plan*, the *Self-Study Report* will help to ensure that Mesa State's excellence will continue while the College changes.

## **Organization of the Self-Study Report**

The *Self-Study Report* is organized around its primary purpose. Chapter One provides a brief history of Mesa State College and describes the College's responses to past accreditation reports, as required by the Higher Learning Commission. Continued accreditation also requires that Mesa State College meet 24 General Institutional Requirements. Appendix A demonstrates fulfillment of those basic expectations.

An additional continuing-accreditation requirement is that Mesa State College provide supporting evidence that it meets five criteria. Evaluations of the evidence for each criterion form a chapter in the *Self-Study Report*. The chapters are in a different order than that suggested by The Higher Learning Commission because criterion four seemed the best conclusion to this portion of the study.

- Chapter Two: Criterion One, "Mesa State College has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education."
- Chapter Three: Criterion Five, "Mesa State College demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships."
- Chapter Four: Criterion Two, "Mesa State College has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes."
- Chapter Five: Criterion Three, "Mesa State College is accomplishing its educational and other purposes."
- Chapter Six: Criterion Four, "The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness."

Each of the criterion-related chapters concludes with a summary of the strengths, challenges, and suggestions addressed in the chapter.

Most information in the Self-Study is correct through fall semester, 2002. In some cases, more recent information has been added. All colleges

undergo constant change, but that has been especially true of Mesa State College recently. A change in governance of the College, changes in administrative personnel, and uncertain financial times, necessitate an update of conditions. This brief discussion is included as Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight is a formal request to the Higher Learning Commission for a change of status to allow the College to expand the number of sites at which it offers programs and to recognize the change in governance. The body of the Self-Study Report concludes with Chapter Nine, which includes Mesa State College's formal request for continued accreditation status.

Throughout the report, sources of information are indicated in MLA format. All citations are listed in the References section at the end of the report. Documentation will be available to The Higher Learning Commission Consultant-Evaluation Team in a Resource Room on campus.

### ***The Self-Study Process and People***

Many individuals, both on and off campus, were involved in the Self-Study process. The College President initiated the procedure with an announcement in spring of 2001. Preliminary discussions regarding the Self-Study began in the summer of 2001. In the fall, two faculty members were selected as potential project coordinators in cooperation between the Academic Vice President and the Faculty Senate President. They met in the fall and early spring with the Academic Vice President and the Director of Campus Planning.

In late April, 2002, one of the two faculty members was named Self-Study Coordinator. He, along with the three others who had been involved, then attended the Higher Learning Commission meetings in Chicago. This group then selected other members of the Executive Committee and five committee chairs.

Each committee chair took responsibility for a *Self-Study Report* chapter dealing with one of the five criteria. With help from members of the Executive Committee, the Chairs selected the members of their own



faculty also were involved. Prompted in part by the strong support of the President and Vice Presidents, and then the Interim President and Vice Presidents, the amount of cooperation was quite remarkable.



## **Chapter One: Introduction**

The first section of this chapter provides a brief history and profile of Mesa State College. The remainder of the chapter provides the College's responses to the 1993-1994 accreditation report, the 1996 focused review, and the 2002 change of status request.

### ***Mesa State College History and Profile***

Community participation and support, continuous struggle, and change with excellence are the hallmarks of the history of Mesa State College. In 1899, members of the greater Grand Junction community approached the Colorado State Legislature with a plan to create a local college district. Then, as now, Grand Junction was the largest town on the western slope of Colorado, separated by the Rocky Mountains from the larger population centers that stretch along the Front Range from Fort Collins to Boulder, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo.

Separation from centers of population and political power has long left Grand Junction residents with a sense of isolation and independence. There has been the perception that the interests of their community are often forgotten as Colorado's resources flow to the Front Range. Such appeared to be true in the early part of the twentieth century.

It was not until 1925 that enabling legislation was passed, establishing Grand Junction Junior College, and the first thirty-nine students were matriculated. The new college survived on county, city, community, and private donations until the Mesa Junior College District was formed in 1937 and the move to its present location began. On that occasion, Clifford Houston, a leading supporter of the College District, commented:

The history of Mesa College is characteristic of its community. It is a story of struggle, hardship and sacrifice. . . Mesa College grew like its community, inch by inch. . . The crusade for a college in Grand Junction is an epic story, recalling memories of community spirit and cooperation unmatched before or since (In Morton, 56).

In 1940, Houston Hall was completed. Now, much renovated, it remains the main classroom building on campus.

Growth and change continued when, in 1967, Mesa College was designated an Area Vocational School by action of the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education. Mesa College was recognized throughout Colorado as an excellent community college, offering both terminal vocational programs and transfer associate degrees (Morton).

Residents of Mesa County and the entire western part of Colorado had long wanted Mesa College to offer baccalaureate degrees. State legislation enabled that change, and the first baccalaureate degrees were offered in 1974. The Mesa Junior College District was dissolved and assets were transferred to the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado. Mesa College joined Metropolitan State College in Denver, Western State College in Gunnison, and Adams State College in Alamosa in the state college system. In 1988, the official name of the Institution was changed from Mesa College to Mesa State College.

Transfer agreements and other arrangements with western slope community colleges have long been part of Mesa's mission. In 1991, Mesa State College was given authority over the Montrose Higher Education Center. Many courses are now offered in this community about sixty miles from Grand Junction. A unique arrangement was born in 1991 when Mesa State and the local School District 51 agreed to the formation of the Grand Valley Board of Cooperative Educational Services. This board governs the operation of the Tilman M. Bishop Unified Technical Education Campus (UTECH), where technical and vocational programs are offered to both high school and college students.

Agreements with other colleges and universities resulted in several graduate programs being offered in Grand Junction, but many local residents wanted Mesa State College to have its own graduate offerings. In 1994, twenty years after the College first awarded its own baccalaureate degrees, the State Legislature authorized limited graduate programs. Mesa State now offers

a master of business administration degree. A masters program in education is in the planning stages, and others are being discussed seriously.

On July 1, 2003, the State Colleges in Colorado system was dissolved and oversight of Mesa State College was transferred to an independent Board of Trustees. The legislatively defined role and mission of Mesa State College continued to include offering a limited number of graduate programs, undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business degree programs, maintaining a community college component, and offering vocational and technical programs (House Bill 03-1093).

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has defined Mesa State's service areas according to its various missions. In its role as a baccalaureate and graduate institution, the Institution serves the entire state of Colorado. As a community college, it serves Mesa County as well as Delta, Montrose, San Miguel and Ouray Counties. In Gunnison and Hinsdale Counties, Mesa State College cooperates with Adams State College in Alamosa. For vocational programs, the College serves Mesa County (See Figure 1.1).

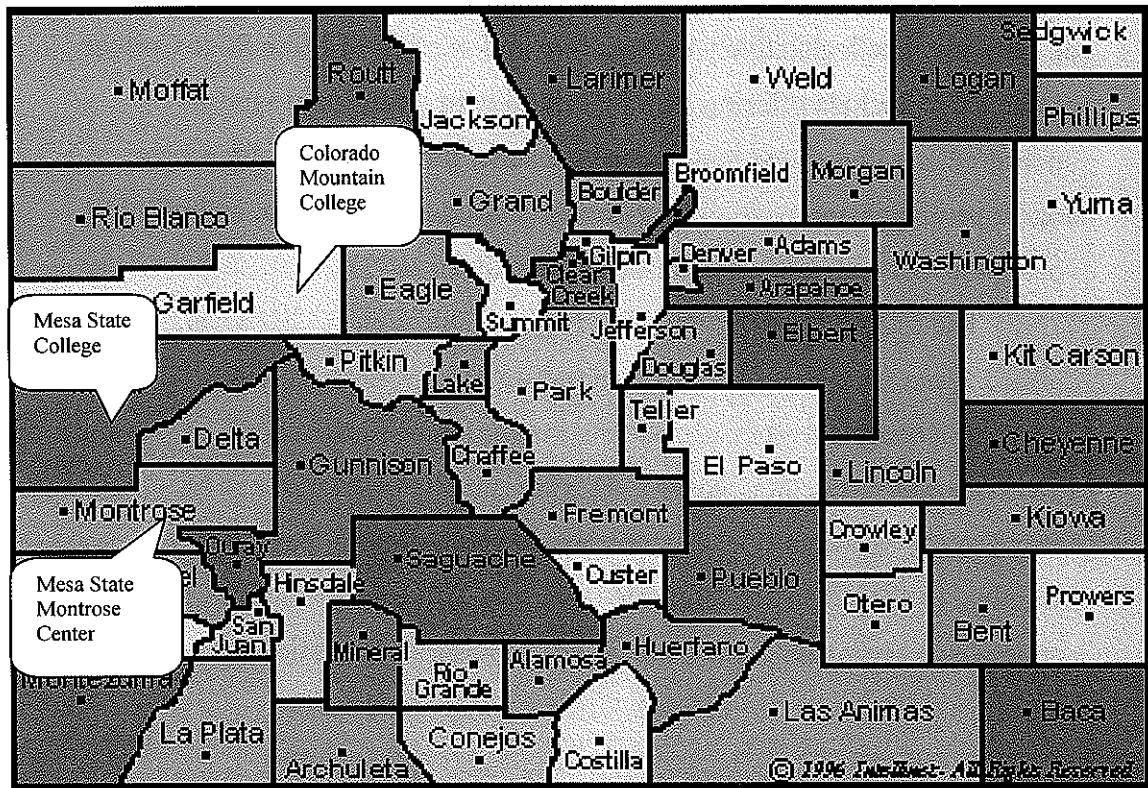
In fall of 2002, 207 full-time and 126 part-time faculty members at Mesa State College served 5,500 students. Most students originate from Mesa County, which has some 122,000 residents, and from the less populated surrounding areas. Both the College and the area's population have grown rapidly in recent years, and more changes are anticipated.

In spring of 2002, Mesa State prepared a statement for the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel for Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. That document, *Role and Mission Statement*, suggested that Mesa State continue its mission to change with excellence through the pursuit of:

- Designation of Mesa State as a "Regional Education Provider."
- Creation of the "Western Colorado Community College."
- Implementation of additional graduate programs in specialized professional disciplines.

- A name change of the institution to Mesa State University.

**Figure 1.1: Mesa State's Main Campus, Off-Campus Sites and Counties**



Only one of the College's suggestions to the Blue Ribbon Panel has been implemented. The Regional Education Provider status was granted by legislation (House Bill 03-1093). The CCHE provided some clarification of that role in June, 2003 (CCHE-REP Regional Education Provider). Debate continues about how Mesa State should continue to perform its multiple missions. Proposals for graduate programs in education are in various stages of development. The name change to University has had little legislative support.

The College continues to face a variety of challenges. In September of 2002, Mesa State's President announced his resignation

effective December 31. The Vice President for Academic Affairs was named the Interim President until such time as the new board completes a presidential search.

Unfortunately, Mesa State also is currently experiencing its most serious budgetary crisis since becoming a state college. This is not a crisis of Mesa's making, but is a statewide, and even a nationwide, problem in higher education. It results from a combination of a downturn in the economy and political decisions made by the people of Colorado and their elected leaders. The College has already changed in response to the crisis. Maintaining its excellence under such circumstances is a serious challenge. Much more about these issues will be discussed in other sections of this *Self-Study Report*.

Mesa State College has strong community support and a student body that is growing in both numbers and in quality. Its faculty and staff are dedicated to creating a challenging intellectual environment. Its excellence is in its people.

### ***Accreditation History and Responses***

In its various forms, Mesa has long been a fully accredited institution. This section briefly reviews that history, then focuses on the 1993-94 accreditation and its responses. The 1996 Focused Review is addressed, followed by a brief discussion of the 2002 change in status.

#### **Accreditation History**

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools fully accredited Mesa College as a community junior college in 1957. Accreditation at the baccalaureate level was granted in 1974 and was renewed in 1979.

In 1989, the *Report of a Visit to Mesa State College* resulted in continued accreditation, but with the following requirements:

- Reports Required: In the 1990 fall semester, the institution [will] submit a progress report on the implementation of a streamlined department, school, and academic support structure.

- **Focused Evaluation:** In the 1992 spring semester, the institution [will] undergo a focused evaluation on the areas of program and course proliferation and the development of an academic planning model.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** In the 1993-94 academic year, the institution [will] be scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation (28).

A number of changes at Mesa State College followed the 1989 North Central Association Report, including reorganization of academic schools and departments, significant changes in degree structure, and a sudden mid-year replacement of the College President. The report required in 1990 was completed and was accepted by the North Central Association as satisfying that requirement. The Focused Evaluation was satisfactorily completed in 1992 (*Report of a Visit to Mesa State College*).

### **The 1993-94 Report and Mesa State's Responses**

The 1993-94 process resulted in full accreditation and scheduled the next comprehensive evaluation for the 2003-2004 year. It did, however, require that "By July 1, 1995, the College shall submit a detailed plan for assessment activities that conforms to NCA assessment requirements" (*Report of a Visit to Mesa State College, Feb. 21-23, 1994:36*). The required report was submitted in June of 1995. More about the assessment issue will be detailed later in this section—and indeed, throughout this *Self-Study Report*.

The 1993-94 Report offered advice and suggestions that were not requirements or conditions of accreditation. Several strengths also were identified. The Report also specified concerns that needed to be addressed before the next NCA comprehensive visit. In the following section, Mesa State's response follows each italicized quote from the accreditation report.

#### **Advice and Suggestions from the 1993-1994 Report**

*1. The College should offer a full complement of career placement services for students.*

Mesa State College now has a full-service career placement office. The Advising and Career Center, a division of Student Services, currently is

staffed with one full-time employee, the Coordinator of Placement Technology and Marketing, and one part-time employee. Both of these positions are funded by student fees.

Student placement services include job listings and information about job search skills, as well as workshops on resumes, cover letters, and job interviewing. Employers' services help employers fill job openings. Much of the service is available online. In the 2002-2003 academic year, the Advising and Career Center posted over 22,000 positions in the online job matching system, and over 1600 individuals registered for job posting notification (Student Services Summary).

*2. The College should seriously consider establishing an office of institutional development to encourage major institutional grant writing and to conduct an ambitious fundraising campaign.*

The Office of Institutional Advancement was established in 1998. The Director left the college in September of 2002. The position remained vacant until a half-time Director was hired in June, 2003. The office also has included a Publicity Coordinator, a Director of Marketing and Publications, a Webmaster, a Director of Alumni Relations and Alumni Program Assistant, and an Administrative Assistant.

Institutional Advancement works closely with the Mesa State College Foundation, which was founded in 1961 as a scholarship development organization. The Foundation has since raised over \$15 million for Mesa State College. A new Foundation director was hired in September of 2002. The Foundation currently provides scholarships for about 250 students annually and provides a short-term loan fund for students. To relieve overcrowding on the land-locked campus, the Foundation's Campus Expansion Campaign, in cooperation with the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County, has purchased over 40 adjacent properties since 1997.

On July 1, 2000, Mesa State College hired a full-time Director of Sponsored Programs, who reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.



The Office of Sponsored Programs' mission is to provide support to faculty and other college personnel in obtaining and administering external funds for research and other scholarly activities. Research at MSC includes explorations that lead to the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge, the development of new applications of existing knowledge, the development of new paradigms for teaching and learning, and the related creative activities in the fine arts. By July 1 of 2003, a total of \$2,675,216 had been awarded through this Office (Awards\_DB).

*3. The College should make an effort to fund a lecture series inviting speakers to address issues of concern to students, faculty, and staff.*

The Lectures and Forums Committee handles requests for speakers. Actual annual expenditures for this purpose averaged \$21,410.50 between 1994 and 2002, but dropped significantly the past two years (Financial and Administrative Services Report).

The Center for Teaching and Learning provided some opportunities for discussion of teaching issues, but that budget has been decimated by recent budget cuts. The Cultural Diversity Board, with the Lectures and Forums Committee, sponsors the annual Unity Fest, profiling ethnic dances, foods, speakers, and other activities.

During the academic year, the Academic Affairs Office sponsors monthly forums that provide an opportunity for faculty members to discuss their work. These are open to the public, and are often reports from scholars who have recently returned from sabbaticals. A number of other forums are available for speakers. The math and physics disciplines each offer a weekly lecture series throughout the year. The Association of Computing Machinery has brought in a guest lecturer of national renown for each of the last three years. The Hydrology Series has brought in guest speakers to address critical water issues. The Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences offers an annual Jose Peer Memorial Lecture; the Wayne Aspinall Lecturer Program has, for the last twenty years, brought in nationally reputable faculty for five

weeks each spring. The International Relations Club hosts forums on various issues of interest to the College community.

*4. Considering the high concentration of Hispanics in Colorado, the College should consider offering a Spanish major.*

A Spanish minor was offered for the first time in 1995. The Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado approved the concept paper for a Spanish major in October, 2002. CCHE Approval to implement the program is expected in fall of 2003.

*5. The College should examine the frequency with which courses are offered to ensure that students can complete their degree in a more timely manner.*

In 1994-95, Mesa's Office of Academic Affairs began publishing the *Handbook for Advising*. The book is annually distributed to all faculty and others on campus who have an advising function. Requirements for all degrees and concentrations are included. For each program, there also is a suggested course sequence for the first two years of a student's enrollment.

In 2001 the Colorado Commission on Higher Education mandated that, with few exceptions, a student must be able to complete a baccalaureate degree in four years by taking 15 credit hours each semester. By February of 2002 each program at Mesa State had completed a suggested course schedule for freshman through senior years. If a student follows that schedule, graduation is possible in four years. Only about one-third of students actually complete a baccalaureate in four years, but it is not because course sequencing makes that impossible.

*6. Given the success of the pilot advising project, the College should consider making the program permanent.*

That project has evolved into the Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) Program. In the summer, incoming freshmen and transfer students participate in SOAR, attending academic advising sessions

and a campus orientation session. They also register for their fall classes. Faculty, staff, and upper-class students participate in the program. Parents of traditional age students are encouraged to attend a full slate of activities. This program has been given at least partial credit for recent enrollment increases.

*7. The College should consider initiating an employee recognition program.*

Classified staff initiated their "Employee of the Month" program in 1994. Nominations are solicited campus-wide, and recipients are chosen by a classified staff committee. Winners are publicized by campus-wide email, in the "What's Happening at Mesa State" monthly e-zine, on the classified staff web site, and by placement of a large poster in a public area near the employee's workplace. A display case in the College Center posts the recipients' pictures. They also are given gift certificates to the MSC bookstore. In addition to the monthly recognition, a Classified Staff of the Year award is given at the annual awards ceremony. Winners of this award receive a \$1,000 Institutional credit. Many recent recipients have elected to use at least part of their award for scholarships (Classified Employee of the Month).

At the annual awards ceremony, and again at graduation, winners of four Faculty Awards are announced. Winners, who are chosen in a process established by the Faculty Senate, are given a monetary grant to spend in the institutional manner they choose. One award each is given for outstanding work in teaching, scholarship, and service (\$1,000 each). An overall Distinguished Faculty Award (\$2,000) is also given. Names of the winners are engraved on plaques located outside the President's office, where pictures of recent winners also are displayed. Photos of earlier recipients of the award are on display in the President's outer office.

Mesa's *Professional Staff Policy Handbook* provides for a Special Recognition Award for administrators (Section 13.4.D.). Because the award has not publicly been given, however, most administrators do not appear to be aware of such a possibility (Self-Study Exempt Survey).

8. *The College should not consider implementing any new academic programs without sufficient faculty, staff, and equipment services.*

This suggestion harks back to the “course and program proliferation” concern from the 1989 NCA report. The most important program addition has been the 1996 implementation of the master of business administration, as discussed in the next section of this *Self-Study Report*.

Mesa’s new degree structure was formally in place beginning in the 1992-1993 academic year. As Table 1.1 indicates, Mesa State College now offers fewer certificate and associate programs.

**Table 1.1: Number and Type of Program, 1992-93 and 2002-03**

<u>Type of Program</u>	<u>1993-94</u>	<u>2002-03</u>
Certificate	12	5
Associate	15	12*
Bachelor	19	19
Bachelor Concentrations	29	56
Master	0	1
<small>*Liberal Arts awarded AA and AS and counted twice in the total.  Sources: Mesa State College Catalog 1993-1994, Mesa State College Catalog 2001-2002 (10-11), Handbook for Advising 2002-2003 (19-22) and the Institutional Research Fact Page.</small>		

Though the College still offers the same number of bachelor programs, new programs have been added as old programs were dropped. A BA in human performance and wellness and a BS in environmental restoration and waste management were added in 1994-95. In 1995-96, the BA in selected studies and the BS in parks and recreation resource management were deleted. The BA in economics was deleted in 1998-99. In 2000-01, the BS in environmental restoration and waste management was replaced by a BS in environmental science and technology. The BS in computer information systems was added in 2001-02.

Some expansion has occurred at the level of concentrations within the bachelor degrees. Typically, a new concentration results primarily from

repackaging of existing courses, without significant addition of new courses or new resources.

Proposed additions or deletions of programs result from interactions among the academic vice president, deans, chairs, and faculty. The Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate must approve all additions or deletions of degrees, concentrations, or minors. In each case, advocates for the change must demonstrate that the college has sufficient resources to institute the change. They must also suggest how the change might affect other programs and the institutional goals set out in documents such as the *Academic Master Plan*.

### **Salient Strengths from 1993-1994 Report**

*1. The Board of Trustees is knowledgeable about the College and committed to its continued development.*

Members of the Board of Trustees were dedicated to the success of each institution in the State Colleges in Colorado system. In recent years, however, the Board was not as successful as it had been previously in acquiring the needed state resources from a budget-strapped State. Knowledge and commitment of the new independent board is expected.

*2. The President and his administrative team, along with the faculty and staff, share a common vision for the college.*

“Mesa State College values teaching, learning, and student-faculty interaction” (Mesa State College. . . Shaping the Future). This broad vision continues to be shared by all, as indicated by the *Academic Master Plan* and other planning documents.

*3. The physical facilities and grounds are well maintained, creating an environment supportive of the College’s educational goals. The College Center is of particular note.*

Mesa State remains proud of its physical facilities and grounds, even during the recent construction on campus. However, budget constraints have cut into maintenance, and some evidence of that is becoming apparent.

*4. There clearly is a high level of commitment and dedication of the faculty to undergraduate teaching.*

Faculty members remain committed to teaching and to students, even during the current financial difficulties. Survey data indicate that 90% of Department Chairs agree or strongly agree that "Student learning is the primary focus of activities" in their department. With that focus, 93.9% of faculty members agree or strongly agree that they get satisfaction from their jobs (Self-Study Chair Survey, Self-Study Faculty Survey).

*5. The non-teaching staff are enthusiastic about the mission of the College and their role in fulfilling that mission.*

As with faculty, classified and exempt staff members believe Mesa State is a great place to work. They believe that Mesa State is a better college now than it was five years ago, and that it will be even better five years from now (Self-Study Classified and Exempt Surveys).

*6. Continuing Education is a multi-faceted operation which serves a wide variety of constituents in its service area through credit and non-credit courses and programs.*

As a separate entity, Continuing Education has been phased out, partly because of the growth in alternatives such as the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation programs. The Mesa@Night program, which now coordinates the evening and weekend courses, primarily accommodates working students who are seeking a degree at Mesa. The UTEC Community Education Center continues to offer a variety of personal interest and improvement classes.

*7. The virtually universal access of faculty to personal computers that are networked is a significant strength.*

Information Technology generally has done a great job of providing networked computers to faculty. Service has improved so that all faculty members now have the option of accessing their work files from home and from all permanent classrooms.

A goal of Information Technology is to keep personal computers on a four-year update cycle. Limited funds, however, have made that goal difficult to achieve. Some faculty members have computers that are so outdated as to be almost useless. In 2002, some faculty members whose computers broke down had difficulty getting them replaced. This causes particular difficulty when so much of the college business, such as distribution of preliminary class rosters and grade reporting, has gone paperless.

*8. Both the quality and variety of the food provided in the dining facilities are impressive.*

Campus Dining is now contracted to Sodexo, which continues to provide quality and variety.

#### **Concerns in 1993-1994 Report**

*1. Although efforts at assessment are substantial in scope and cost, there is no system of review or approval in place to assure that all assessment efforts can measure accurately what they are designed to measure, and do so with minimum necessary cost.*

As required by The North Central Accreditation Report of 1994, an *Assessment Plan* was submitted in June 1995. This Plan detailed the progress made in assessment at that time and suggested how assessment efforts might be improved.

Efforts at assessment continue to be substantial in scope and cost, and progress has been made in developing an effective system of review and approval. A major step was taken with the development of the *Academic Master Plan*. Development of the *Academic Master Plan* actually began in

1997, when a campus-wide effort resulted in the adoption of the document *Mesa State College: A Shared Vision*. The *Vision* summarized the College's core values and traditions:

Mesa State College is dedicated to excellence in teaching. Our success is measured, in part, by placing students and student learning at the heart of our purposes. Our academic program should strive for the highest standards of academic excellence, and be responsive to the changing and increasingly complex needs of students, the disciplines they seek, and the professions they serve. There is also a recognition that ongoing scholarship is as critical to maintaining that excellence as it is to providing high quality service to public agencies, private enterprise, and to the citizens of Colorado (3).

The statement went on to delineate five goals with a number of indicators each, some more measurable than others. More important than the specific indicators was the firm determination to keep teaching and learning at the heart of the Institution. Mesa State College had long developed facilities plans and other plans, but the new approach suggested that the college community develop an academic plan that would drive other decisions.

In that spirit, work began in the summer of 2000 on the *Academic Master Plan*. An eleven-member Master Plan Committee, chaired by the Academic Vice President, coordinated the process. Working groups involved a total of 42 faculty members, administrators, staff, and students. Another 56 persons were involved in focus groups and community advisory committees for the main campus, Montrose Campus, and UTEC.

The Faculty Senate was heavily involved in forging a finished document from the working group statements. The Senate approved it on September 6 of 2001. The Mesa State College Associated Student Government also was involved, and resolved to support the document on September 27, 2001. Shortly thereafter the *Academic Master Plan* was approved by the Trustees.

The *Academic Master Plan* was designed to be a working instrument that could itself change while it both guided and measured change. The *Plan* established the following goal as its guiding principle: "To maintain and foster



an academic community where a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff can participate in creative and intellectual activities” (16).

With that broad goal in mind, the *Academic Master Plan* established more specific goals and measurable objectives in the five areas of students, faculty, programs, process, and support. As an example, a goal under the program area was: “To implement an academic program development plan that prioritizes and guides existing programs as well as the identification and design of new degree programs” (28). One of the objectives related to that goal was: “To create a standing committee to annually review and recommend program priorities, especially in response to retirements and other normal faculty turnover” (28). Another objective was “To continuously review all programs offered paying particular attention to those with fewer than ten students enrolled. Programs which are not part of the core offering of the College and which do not meet expectations for enrollment growth and long-term health will be repositioned or eliminated” (29).

One response to the *Academic Master Plan* has been the creation of a new campus committee that has the responsibility of overseeing the progress of the College with respect to the goals and objectives set forth therein. One of the faculty members on that committee was named the new Assessment Coordinator for the College. These developments more firmly establish an effective system for campus-wide assessment.

The *Academic Master Plan* has resulted in other changes as well. The *Facilities Master Plan Amendment* stated:

The information provided in this document amends the Mesa State College *Facilities Master Plan* submitted and approved in 1999. This document... provides updated statistics and developmental information related to specific facility needs and priorities of the institution. The basis for revision is the recently completed and submitted 2001 Mesa State College *Academic Master Plan* (5).

The *Academic Master Plan* also affected technology planning. The *Technology Master Plan Amendment* stated:

This document amends the Technology Master Plan [...] of the 1999 Mesa State College *Facilities Master Plan*. The basis for revision is the recently completed and submitted 2001 Mesa State College *Academic Master Plan* (5).

As a result of the development of the *Academic Master Plan*, the vision document was updated in 2002. That new document—*Mesa State College...Shaping the Future of Western Colorado*—provides general direction for the College. Documents such as the 1995 *Assessment Plan* and The *Academic Master Plan* provide solid grounding for establishing and monitoring the Institutional assessment system. In spite of efforts thus far, however, the campus is increasingly aware of the need to improve its assessment system. Much more will be detailed about assessment in later chapters of this *Self-Study Report*, especially in Chapter Five.

2. *There is a relatively low level of scholarly production by faculty. The College should institute formal expectations of faculty for scholarly contributions to their disciplines. Such expectations may well be flexible and include forms of scholarship other than publication of books and of articles in appropriate journals. But there should be clearly articulated expectations that faculty must be professionally engaged beyond the boundaries of their particular teaching assignments.*

**Table 1.2: Scholarly Production in Previous Five Years, 1992 and 2002**

<b>Type</b>	<b>1992</b>		<b>2002*</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Faculty</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Faculty</b>
Books and Articles (Nonrefereed in parentheses)	93 (48)	14%	727 (315)	38%
Presentations of Scholarly Papers	53	33%	787	66%
Memberships in Professional Organizations	143	30%	602	92%
Funded Research Grants or Contracts	13	5%	124	29%

\*Discrete categories were used in the 2002 survey, with the highest category as "9 or more." An estimate of 11 was used for cases in that category in calculating totals.  
Sources: 1993-1994 *Comprehensive Self-Study Report* (99-102) and Self-Study Faculty Survey 2002 (Questions 102-113).

Given the heavy teaching loads and expectations for service, the improvement in scholarly production since the 93-94 report is quite remarkable. Information in Table 1.2 comes from the Self-Study survey. Percentages include part-time as well as full-time faculty.

Part of the increase in scholarly production is due to the new Office of Sponsored Programs, which helped bring in nearly \$2.7 million in research funds since July, 2000. Faculty turnover and growth also contributed. Of the 157 tenured and tenure-track faculty members in 2002-2003, 99, or 63 percent, were hired since 1992. These newer faculty members, while still focused primarily on teaching, have generally been more involved in scholarly activities.

Scholarship is an increasingly important part of the merit system of pay increases, and it is increasingly being considered an important aspect of promotion and tenure decisions. This increase in scholarly output is exciting, but both the faculty and the administration have expressed the importance of keeping the focus on teaching and student learning.

More campus-wide recognition is now being given to scholarly activity. The library includes a display of recent faculty publications. Each school maintains a list of faculty who have contributed to scholarly work or are otherwise listed as experts in particular fields that might be of interest to the wider community. Until recently, very little about faculty scholarly activity was mentioned in the media. The campus e-zine, *What's Happening at Mesa State*, and the Mesa State *Mosaic* has begun to mention scholarly activity by faculty. The student newspaper *The Criterion*, and the local newspaper, the *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, rarely carry such stories.

*3. The planned renovation and addition to Wubben Hall are absolutely critical to maintaining high quality in the sciences and engineering. Facilities in art, music, theatre, and dance are also in need of attention.*

The renovations and additions to Wubben Hall were completed in 1999, significantly expanding and updating classrooms and laboratories. The

new Fine Arts building also houses a much-improved mass communications facility. The Walter Walker building was significantly renovated and expanded, becoming partially usable in the fall of 2002. A generous private donation provided funds to help finish the building. Now named the Moss Performing Arts Center, the complex houses art, music, theatre, and dance, along with an improved Walter Walker reception area and the William Robinson Theater.

*4. The College has not integrated strategic planning throughout the schools, academic departments, and administrative units in a meaningful way.*

As indicated in Concern Number 1, planning has become an ongoing, open, and cumulative process in recent years. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning has produced reports that are consistent with each other and are widely available to the entire campus community. Facilities planning has long been an active process, but *Mesa State College...Shaping the Future of Western Colorado* and the *Academic Master Plan* now provide context for other planning efforts.

Since 1998, Deans have been required to submit their five-year and one-year goals and objectives to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, for example, the process begins at the discipline level, goes through the Department Chairs, and then to the Dean. Part of the Dean's annual evaluation is based on achievement of those goals. The *Academic Master Plan* is to provide guidance for the school and departmental planning processes. The annual evaluation of individual faculty members is moving toward a system that also is tied in with departmental and school goals.

### **The 1996 Focused Review**

In 1994, Mesa State's Role and Mission expanded to include the offering of limited graduate programs. North Central Association policy requires an on-site visit to a campus when a different degree level is added,

Another assessment-driven change is the addition of “leveling courses” designed to assist students who did not have an undergraduate business degree. These are condensed and combined versions of undergraduate courses. While listed as graduate courses, they do not fulfill course requirements for the MBA degree.

*2. A scholarly activity plan that ties into the faculty’s evaluation procedure needs to be developed for the business faculty. This plan should clearly articulate the expectations that the graduate business faculty must be professionally engaged in.*

Initially, the plan was that graduate faculty would have a formal expectation to demonstrate more scholarly activity than non-graduate faculty. Although those who teach graduate courses remain very productive in scholarship, the formal expectation no longer exists. This is, in part, because everyone who teaches a graduate course also teaches undergraduate courses, so it became unclear in individual cases whether a faculty member should meet the graduate or undergraduate faculty expectations.

*3. An MBA advisory committee should be created immediately to support and offer advisement to this new program.*

An advisory committee was formed and was useful in the first few years of the program. Although the formal committee has become inactive, connections to the local business community remain strong.

### **The 2002 Change of Status**

The Higher Learning Commission requires Commission approval to extend accreditation to a new instructional site at which an institution provides a degree program. In the summer of 2002, Mesa State College prepared two such requests for institutional change, both of which would help Mesa State fulfill its mission as a regional educational provider. A two-member team

conducted a site visit November 4-6, 2002. The team's report was sent to MSC in January, 2003. Approval for the changes was granted by the Commission on March 31, 2003.

#### **Request for Institutional Change - Montrose Campus**

Enrollment at the Montrose campus has increased steadily since Mesa State assumed authority over the Montrose Higher Education Center in 1991. Coursework applicable to MSC degrees has been offered both by part-time staff and full-time Mesa faculty through real-time distance learning. The change allows Montrose to serve as a degree site that will initially offer associate of arts and associate of sciences degrees (*Request for Institutional Change - Montrose*).

#### **Request for Institutional Change - Colorado Mountain College**

Mesa State College has long worked cooperatively with Colorado Mountain College, especially with the Spring Valley Campus in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. This change establishes that campus as a site to offer the BA in liberal arts elementary education with an English emphasis (*Request for Institutional Change - Colorado Mountain College*).

#### **Strengths, Challenges, Advice and Suggestions from the 2002 Reports**

The Higher Learning Commission Report commended the strong leadership at Mesa State and the strong support both at Montrose and Colorado Mountain College. The commitment of faculty and staff to student success was also noteworthy. In addition, the College was praised for the financial discipline that allowed it to offer a high level and quality of educational opportunities.

The site-visitation team mentioned assessment of student achievement, especially in general education, as a challenge. The College also is concerned about this and is working on the problem. Chapter Five of this *Self-Study Report* will explain the assessment plans in more detail.

Another challenge mentioned was the need to better integrate off-campus faculty into the College community. The relevant academic

departments need closer associations with off-campus faculty. The College has not yet established a mechanism for doing this.

The site team made three suggestions. First, the College should find incentives to encourage two-way distance learning between the off-campus sites and the main campus. The new distance-learning classroom, finished in summer of 2003, should make distance-teaching more attractive, but other incentives have not yet been developed.

Second, the College should pursue the objective of having full-time faculty at the Montrose Center. Mesa State's *Academic Master Plan* includes the goal of placing permanent faculty at the Montrose Center, but the budgetary exigencies make that difficult at this time.

Finally, the team suggested that additional public relations strategies should be developed to increase public awareness of MSC's educational opportunities in Montrose. A press release was sent out to the local media in June, 2003. Some radio ads are planned for July and August, 2003.

## **Chapter Two: Mesa State College has Clear and Publicly Stated Purposes Consistent with its Mission and Appropriate to an Institution of Higher Education**

Mesa State College serves a variety of constituents in many ways. In addition to fulfilling its role and mission as a liberal arts institution granting associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees, Mesa State also offers technical training and vocational programs at the Tilman M. Bishop Unified Technical Education Campus (UTECH). In its newly designated role of Regional Education Provider, Mesa State is reaching out to communities all around the western slope, expanding citizens' access to education at many levels and in many disciplines. The College provides a wide range of educational opportunities for people with many different educational needs and goals over a large region of the State of Colorado.

This chapter very briefly explores the history of the College's evolution into such a diverse institution and examines the ways in which it establishes and evaluates both long- and short-range institutional and educational goals. The chapter describes the processes the Institution has established to evaluate its purposes and make decisions appropriate to its role and mission.

This chapter also details the many ways in which the College communicates with the citizens of the Western Slope so that it can be sure it is addressing their needs as it plans for the future. Finally, the chapter assesses the College's dedication to freedom of inquiry for faculty and students and its commitment to excellence in teaching and learning in all that it attempts to do, from technical and vocational training through master's degrees, in programs both on and off campus.



## ***The College's Role and Mission***

Mesa State College's role and mission has evolved significantly since it was established as a community college in 1925. In 1974 its community college mission was expanded to include offering baccalaureate degrees; in 1994 it was authorized to offer limited graduate degrees; and, in 2002, it was designated as a Regional Education Provider. Mesa State College's mission, as most recently established legislatively, is stated as follows:

There is hereby established a College at Grand Junction, to be known as Mesa State College, which shall be a general baccalaureate and specialized graduate institution with moderately selective admissions. Mesa State College shall offer undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business degree programs and a limited number of graduate programs. Mesa State College shall also maintain a community college role and mission, including vocational and technical programs. Mesa State College shall receive resident credit for two-year course offerings in its commission-approved service area. Mesa State shall also serve as a regional education provider (House Bill 03-1093).

Legislative Mission Statements are brief and general. They require further elaboration of core values, ongoing purposes, and the means of implementing these stated purposes.

It became clear in the mid-1990's that the College was moving toward an expanded role both in offering graduate programs and in providing for higher education needs at off-campus sites around western Colorado. The College recognized that it needed to update and re-state both long- and short-range goals. Further, there was a need to articulate goals with much greater specificity in terms of measurable performance objectives. The Institution also needed to assign responsibility for meeting those objectives to appropriate entities within the College community. In order to change with excellence, the College needed to become very clear about what needed to change and about how to implement and monitor success in the implementation of these changes.

The College also recognized the need to review the effectiveness of any changes it made and to establish procedures for amending processes already set in motion. The last few years have seen concerted efforts toward these ends.

**Mesa State College's current goals include:**

Providing adequate resources and policies to support institutional development and high quality programs for students, faculty, and staff.

Maintaining a highly qualified faculty and staff.

Enhancing the College's role as a Regional Education Provider.

Providing facilities and equipment for a growing population of students, faculty, and staff.

Managing an overall projected enrollment growth rate of 2% per year.

**Other key strategic initiatives for the College include:**

Providing skill training, professional development, and technological integration for students.

Continuing to flourish as the cultural center of the region.

Meeting the demand for graduates in specific areas such as teaching and health professions.

Providing leadership and expertise supporting western Colorado's natural resources and public policy issues.

Adapted from *Mesa State College: Shaping the Future of Western Colorado*.

*Mesa State College: A Shared Vision* was developed in 1997 and updated in 2002 as *Mesa State College...Shaping the Future of Western Colorado*. It serves as the College's public statement of its ongoing purposes and long-range goals. These statements delineate "Core Values and Traditions," restating overarching purposes in a more focused and organized way.

The latest statement is organized around the articulation of goals in the following five areas: student enrollment, faculty and staff resources, programs, facilities and equipment, and institutional development. Specific means of achieving goals in each category are spelled out. This contrasts with the earlier statement of purposes, which simply gave a seven-item list of programs and community services offered by the College.

The initial 1997 statement served as the foundation for even greater specificity in the articulation of goals, especially short-range goals, in the *Academic Master Plan*, completed in 2001. In the *Academic Master Plan* long-term goals such as “attracting and retaining a highly qualified faculty” were translated into sub-goals such as “providing competitive levels of pay and benefits.” Sub-goals were then translated into specific, measurable short-range objectives such as achieving certain average faculty salary packages within three years (43). The *Academic Master Plan* served as the foundation for other documents, such as the *Facilities Master Plan Amendment* and the *Technology Master Plan Amendment*, which articulated long- and short-term goals for these branches of the college community. Together these plans will enable the College to direct its decision making, measure its progress toward objectives, and undertake any needed revisions in its goals or objectives in a conscious, organized manner.

As a result of the clarity of purpose and planning provided by the *Academic Master Plan*, the College was able to respond quickly in 2001 to the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel when the Panel requested an updated statement of the College’s future evolution. This led to the College’s recent designation as a Regional Education Provider (REP).

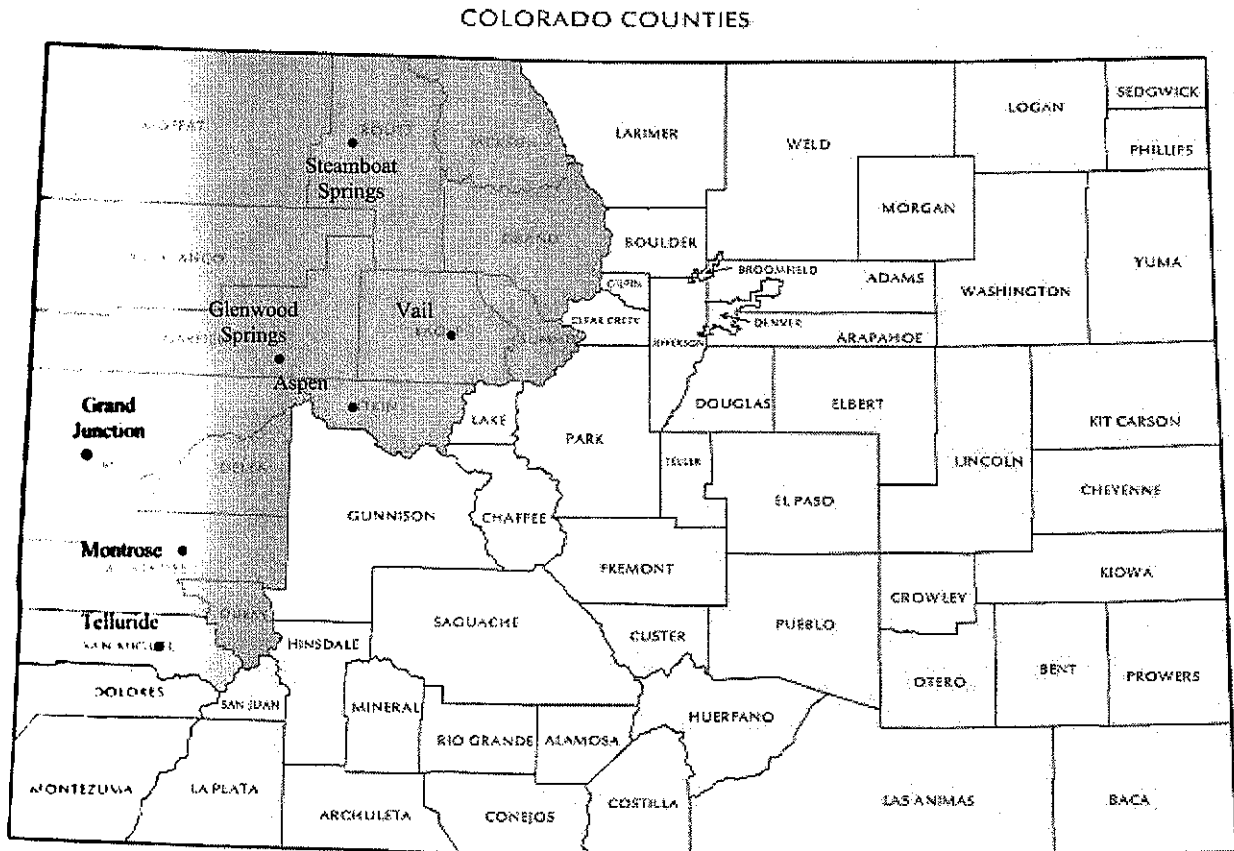
According to legislation (House Bill 03-1093), colleges designated as Regional Education Providers

[will] have as their primary goal the assessment of regional educational needs and, in consultation with the Colorado

Commission on Higher Education, the allocation of resources for the purposes of meeting those needs.

The legislation authorizes the CCHE to set policies related to REPs. In June, 2003, CCHE established some processes and procedures (CCHE-REP). Each REP must, for example, develop a plan “to assess the undergraduate and graduate educational needs of its region” (Regional Education Provider). Initiatives to meet the defined needs may include (a) extension of existing programs; (b) creation of new undergraduate programs; (c) development of partnerships with two-year institutions; and (d) facilitation of the delivery of graduate education through existing graduate institutions.

**Figure 2.1: Mesa State’s Educational Provider Region (Shaded Area)**



Map Compilation: Colorado Division of Local Government, 2003

CCHE also determined the geographical boundaries of the States’s Regional Education Providers. Mesa State’s region includes 13

counties in their entirety: Moffat, Routt, Jackson, Grand, Summit, Eagle, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Garfield, Mesa, Delta, Montrose, and Ouray. San Miguel County is shared with Fort Lewis College. MSC's area, about the size of the state of West Virginia, includes the rapidly growing resort areas of Aspen, Glenwood Springs, Vail, Steamboat Springs, Breckenridge, and Telluride (See Figure 2.1).

Just as the College will continue to impact the region, the surrounding community has included the College in its own planning. During 2001, the Grand Valley 2020 Vision Steering Committee, made up of representatives from the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, the City of Fruita, and the Town of Palisade, developed *The Grand Valley: A Community Vision for the Year 2020*. Using individual and network contacts, chat sessions, and "village" gatherings, the consultants and Steering Committee were able to create a vision of the Grand Valley's future. As part of the overall statement, Mesa State's future is described as follows:

What was Mesa State College is now a University and is nationally recognized for its cutting edge curriculums, events center, and research activities. The University acts as a magnet for attracting intellectual capital that in turn generates new opportunities for diversified prosperity compatible with, and improving upon, our natural and human landscape. Health care delivery including affordability and accessibility is recognized as a model for the nation. Medical research centers in collaboration with Mesa State University and other international health science centers, attract top professionals and practitioners to the Valley... (iv).

As the legislature has expanded the College's Role and Mission, Mesa State has evolved toward greater specificity in stating its long- and short-range goals. It also has developed processes for re-thinking those goals. It is in a position to respond in a flexible and comprehensive manner to budgetary crises, changes in governance, and any other pressures for either short-term adjustments or long-term changes. While the College is prepared to respond to change, there are several factors that

could raise the level and nature of the challenges it may have to face. For example, legislative decisions could restructure funding for higher education in ways that might require further adjustments in planning at the College.

### ***Process for Evaluating Institutional Purposes***

Since completion of the 1993-94 NCA Self-Study, the processes for evaluating institutional purposes have changed somewhat. At that time the process tended to rely on priorities created by individual departments or planning units (*Report of A Visit, 1994*). Mesa State College now uses the *Academic Master Plan (AMP)* as the foundation and springboard for establishing, modifying and evaluating its purposes. To facilitate the implementation and ongoing modifications to the AMP, the Academic Master Plan Committee evolved into the Academic Master Plan Oversight Committee. This Committee reports to Faculty Senate, and includes representatives from each of the schools on the main campus, the School of Applied Technology, and students. The chair of this Committee must be a current member of the Faculty Senate. The committee does not now, but probably should, include a representative of the Montrose campus.

The Academic Master Plan Oversight Committee endeavors to keep the Institution and its constituencies focused on the priorities established by the AMP. Furthermore, this Committee serves as the initial contact point for any constituents wishing to propose changes, additions, or deletions to either the priorities or the goals and objectives stated in the AMP.

### ***Decision-Making Processes Appropriate to Stated Mission and Purposes***

Mesa State College employs decision-making processes appropriate to its mission and purposes. The *Academic Master Plan* assigns responsibilities to groups for accomplishing specific goals and

objectives. At the beginning of each fall semester, each of the areas responsible for implementing various objectives in the *Academic Master Plan* reports to the Academic Master Plan Oversight Committee on the progress made toward those objectives during the previous year. The Committee reviews the progress made on achievement of goals and objectives, and reports to Faculty Senate. The report then passes to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the College President, the Trustees, and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

Consequently, the decision-making processes currently used to accomplish the College's purposes include specific groups that have ties to the goals themselves. For example, to meet goals tied to student enrollment, three sub-committees were formed: Marketing and Recruitment, Retention, and Administrative Processes/Policies.

Shared governance is a strong tradition at the College and contributes to the decision-making processes. Faculty, staff, and students are well represented on College committees, on the President's Council, on the Budget Advisory Task Force, on the Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force and through Faculty Senate initiatives. Community members work with the MSC Foundation on various advisory boards and task forces and, in an advisory capacity, to the President of the Institution.

The Fee Allocation Process, by which student fees are distributed, provides an example of a major decision-making process in action (Institution Plan for Student Fees). The Fee Allocation Committee (FAC) is made up of a representative from each of the five student boards that, in turn, represent twenty-nine constituent committees. Three advisors work with this group: the Budget Director, the Director of Housing and College Center, and a faculty representative. Each board makes a presentation to FAC for each of its affiliated clubs, organizations, or departments about their proposed fee increases for the new two-year cycle. Each

representative fields questions regarding proposed changes in their allocations.

When all of the boards have made their presentations, FAC works to create an acceptable proposal of student fee uses. This proposal is sent in the form of legislation to the Associated Student Government (ASG). ASG must approve the proposal in its entirety for the new fees to be forwarded to the College's administration. Should ASG not approve the proposal, a conference committee is formed from representation of ASG and FAC to work out a new proposal. Again, the proposal is submitted to ASG for approval. When approved by FAC, ASG, and Mesa State's administration, the proposal is presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.

### ***Understanding of Stated Purposes***

Mesa State College uses several approaches to ensure that its constituencies understand the College's mission and purposes. First, the College widely distributes information regarding its philosophy, purpose, and goals. Information on these topics is readily found on the College website (<http://www.mesastate.edu/main/about/mission.htm>) and in the Mesa State College *Professional Staff Policy Handbook*, the State Colleges *Handbook for Professional Personnel*, and the *Academic Master Plan*.

The College also uses surveys to assess constituent understanding of its purposes. Examples of such surveys include focus-group surveys conducted for the *Academic Master Plan*, the Entering Student Survey, and the Graduating Student Survey. Though Mesa State has plans to inventory the community's understanding of the College's role and mission, budget constraints have prevented these plans from being carried out. The recently completed surveys for this Self-Study provide clear evidence that classified staff, exempt staff, and faculty understand the role and mission, and believe that MSC is adequately fulfilling its stated role and mission (See Table 2.1 and Table 2.2.).



**Table 2.1. Responses to MSC Faculty/Staff Survey Statement "I have read the role and mission of Mesa State College."**

	<u>CLASSIFIED</u>		<u>EXEMPT</u>		<u>FACULTY</u>		<u>TOTALS</u>	
	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Disagree	3	3	0	0	7	4	10	3
Disagree	6	6	1	1	15	8	22	6
Agree	70	75	46	62	109	55	225	62
Strongly Agree	15	16	27	37	66	33	108	29
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2.2. Responses to MSC Faculty/Staff Survey Statement "The College is adequately fulfilling its stated role and mission."**

	<u>CLASSIFIED</u>		<u>EXEMPT</u>		<u>FACULTY</u>		<u>TOTALS</u>	
	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Disagree	1	1	0	0	3	2	3	1
Disagree	13	15	9	13	15	9	37	11
Agree	66	75	47	65	119	69	232	70
Strongly Agree	8	9	16	22	34	20	58	18
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100</b>

### ***Efforts to Keep the Public Informed***

Mesa State College works diligently to maintain clear two-way communications with many publics. Numerous publications and methods are employed to continually update the public on Mesa State's goals and to gather feedback from the public to monitor strengths and areas of concern.

Communication with the general public is accomplished through the catalog, viewbook, course schedule, student handbook, and newly enhanced website. Several advisory committees, such as the President's Community Advisory Group, the Montrose Advisory Committee, and the Latino Advisory Panel communicate regularly with representatives from the general public.

A major radio campaign was utilized to debut the upgraded website to the community at large in August 2002. A section called

“Mesa in the Community” was added to the new homepage to provide information specifically for community members who otherwise might not have much contact with the College.

In January 2001, the Mesa State Department of Public Relations was split from a one-person office (Director of Public Relations) to a two-person communications team (Director of Marketing and Publications and Director of Media Relations). The split allowed the Department of Institutional Advancement to better focus the public messages delivered by the College. In early 2002, a permanent full-time Webmaster position was added. These additions have enhanced Mesa State’s ability to convey campus information to an unlimited number of locations.

Mesa State not only informs but also involves the public in the drafting of educational and institutional initiatives. Community members, students, and legislators are active participants and reviewers in documents such as the *Academic Master Plan* and this *Self-Study Report*. Through regular meetings with the Community Advisory Panel, the President stays informed about, and responds to, concerns from community members.

The Mesa State Director of Media Relations provides press releases, public service announcements, media advisories, and direct story contact with news directors, editors, and reporters around the region. Copies of press releases issued by Mesa State College since 1/1/2002 are available in the Resource Room. Several media outlets regularly cover Mesa State College (see Table 2.3).

Additional news coverage of Mesa State has appeared in national and international media outlets including National Public Radio, the BBC, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Arizona Republic*, *London Times*, Associated Press, the *Miami Herald*, *Horse Magazine*, KSL Television (SLC, UT), ESPN, The History Channel, Discovery Channel, and *Archaeology* magazine.

**Table 2.3: Media Outlets that Regularly Cover Mesa State College**

*Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, daily newspapers serving western Colorado  
*Business Times of Western Colorado*, bi-weekly business newspaper  
*Fruita Times*, weekly newspaper serving Fruita area  
*Palisade Tribune*, weekly newspaper serving Palisade area  
*Criterion*, Mesa State weekly student newspaper  
*Denver Post*, daily statewide newspaper  
*Rocky Mountain News*, daily statewide newspaper  
*Montrose Daily Press*, daily newspaper serving Montrose area  
*Life and Times*, monthly arts/entertainment magazine serving western Colorado  
 KKCO Television, NBC affiliate serving western Colorado  
 KJCT Television, ABC affiliate serving western Colorado  
 KREX Television, CBS affiliate serving western Colorado  
 KMSA 91.3 FM, Mesa State student radio station  
 KNZZ 1100 AM, news station based in Grand Junction serving Four Corners region  
 KJoy 92.3 FM, adult contemporary station serving western Colorado  
 Moose Country 100.7 FM, country station serving western Colorado  
 KTMM 1340 AM, sports station serving Grand Junction  
 Magic 93.1 FM, top-40 station serving Grand Junction  
 KEKB 99.9 FM, country station serving Grand Junction  
 KMXY 104.3 FM, top-40 station serving Grand Junction  
 KKNN 95.1 FM, rock station serving Grand Junction  
 KBKL 107.9 FM, oldies station serving Grand Junction  
 KUBC 580 AM, full service station serving Montrose  
 KKXK 94.1 FM, country station serving Delta/Montrose  
 KSTR 96.1 FM, classic rock station serving Grand Junction  
 KPRN 107.9, Colorado Public Radio (news)  
 KAFM, Colorado Public Radio (music).

All football games, baseball games, and men's and women's basketball games are covered live by local radio stations. All sporting events also are generously covered by local radio, television and newspaper reports.

Because alumni have the potential to provide the College with both financial and political support, Mesa State has recently stepped up its efforts to communicate with its alumni through the Office of Alumni Relations. Mesa State produces *Mosaic*, the Mesa State College alumni magazine. The magazine is published twice a year and mailed to alumni, donors, trustees, and legislators.

### ***Support for Freedom of Inquiry***

The Trustees' *Handbook for Professional Personnel* states, "The Trustees endorse the principle of Academic Freedom understood as meaning freedom to discuss academic subjects fully, freedom to engage

in research and to publish the results of research, and freedom to write or speak as citizens without fear of institutional censorship or discipline, provided individuals do not represent themselves as speaking for their institutions” (III-1).

Mesa State College supports freedom of inquiry by all members of the Mesa State community. Professional development funds are provided for conferences and faculty development workshops, the Lectures and Forums Committee brings outside viewpoints to campus, and policy statements, such as *Mesa State College...Shaping the future of Western Colorado*, directly state a commitment to the freedom of inquiry. Additionally, the John U. Tomlinson Library provides access to a variety of information sources, including extensive Internet databases, providing information for study and inquiry.

In the Self-Study Faculty Survey, a majority of respondents answered that they either strongly disagreed (49%) or disagreed (37%) with the statement “I have sometimes felt that my academic freedom has been limited because of my political views or my stand on certain issues.” That 9% agreed and 5% strongly agreed might be cause for concern. The Faculty Senate or some other body could pursue the matter further to see if an institutional problem exists.

### ***Commitment to Student Learning and Teaching Excellence***

Mesa State College is an institution committed to excellence in teaching. The faculty at Mesa State demonstrated this dedication to teaching excellence in their Faculty Senate Statement in the *Academic Master Plan*:

First and foremost, our goal is for teaching to remain our top priority. We believe that classroom instruction and interaction is our primary mission, and hope that Mesa State College will continue to be known for the quality of its teaching, learning, and student-faculty interaction. Regardless of how governance may change, it is crucial that we always have the opportunity and support to maintain and advance the quality of our teaching (40).

The College's commitment is expressed as the first core value in *Mesa State College...Shaping the Future of Western Colorado*: "Mesa State College is dedicated to excellence in teaching."

Annual faculty evaluations, including assessments by students, determine effectiveness in promoting student learning (*Mesa State College Professional Staff Policy Handbook*, Section 8). Tenure and promotion decisions are made after evaluating a candidate's performance in several categories, but the *Handbook* clearly states, "[t]eaching performance is most important" (Section 8.1).

The Institution both rewards and supports quality work. The Center for Teaching and Learning offers workshops to provide information about tools and techniques that can be used to enhance teaching efforts. Each year one faculty member is awarded an Outstanding Teaching Award, one an Outstanding Service Award, one an Outstanding Scholarship Award, and one an overall Distinguished Faculty Award.

Faculty may apply for Academic Enrichment funds to develop special learning opportunities at MSC. Proposal requests of up to \$1000 are solicited twice a year. These funds have been used to develop new cutting-edge courses on topics such as DNA sequencing and several field-oriented courses. Field courses have allowed Mesa State faculty and students to learn and work in places such as tropical rainforests in Costa Rica and Ecuador, the Mississippi River Region of Louisiana, and Anasazi archeological sites in the Four Corners Region.

Faculty members are required to hold regularly scheduled office hours, and frequently spend many additional hours meeting with students. Students are assigned faculty advisors to work with them individually as they move through degree program requirements. Many students also do internships or honors theses, working with faculty one-on-one.

The College commitment to excellence in teaching and learning has paid off in student satisfaction. On the MSC Graduating Student Survey, sampled graduates rated the College significantly above national averages in several questions related to teaching and learning. They included “Course content in your major field”; “Instruction in your major field”; “Out-of-class availability of your instructors”; “Attitude of faculty toward students”; and “Class size relative to the type of course.” The category in which MSC most exceeded national averages was “Availability of your instructor.”

### **Strengths**

Mesa State College maintains a clear purpose and comprehensive set of goals. The goals, described in the *Academic Master Plan*, have been crafted and revised over time to ensure that the Institution will not only survive, but also that it will continue to thrive in the midst of changes in structure and staff.

Mesa State’s strengths are firmly rooted in dedication to teaching and student learning. The College boasts an extraordinarily dedicated faculty that consistently contributes a great deal of time and effort to one-on-one student interactions to facilitate student learning and to the Institution in terms of service, through its involvement in shared governance.

This commitment to teaching and learning is accurately and widely publicized, and is showing positive results. Mesa State draws significantly increasing numbers of students each year. Mesa State has been the fastest growing baccalaureate institution in the State of Colorado over the past ten years.

### **Challenges**

Mesa State faces the twin challenges of a very broad mission and of a transition period into its new role as a Regional Education Provider. Because the College serves technical, vocational, associates,



## **Chapter Three: Mesa State College Demonstrates Integrity in its Practices and Relationships**

Mesa State College conducts itself with integrity and adheres to the highest ethical standards in all of its practices and relationships, both internal and external. The College describes various institutional relationships with its constituencies, including grievance procedures, in student, faculty, and staff handbooks. It has established policies and practices for the resolution of internal disputes. The College has articulated policies and practices consistent with its mission related to equity of treatment, non-discrimination, and affirmative action. Mesa State College is committed to developing and retaining a diverse educational community. Transcripts and other student records follow commonly accepted practices. Institutional publications accurately and fairly describe the Institution. Relationships with other institutions of higher education are conducted ethically and responsibly and appropriate support is shared with other institutions. The College has policies and procedures in place to regulate and monitor intercollegiate athletics and student associations, as well as oversight processes for monitoring contractual arrangements with the government and other organizations.

Mesa State represents itself to its many publics as an institution that can provide a variety of services to meet the diverse needs of the citizens of the western slope. The Institution has based its reputation on teaching, with a focus on small class size, personal relationships between teachers and learners, and



convenient locations for access to services. Through the years, the College has successfully met the standards it set for serving the public. However, in times of limited resources, the College needs to continually monitor itself to be sure that it does not compromise its reputation or its services as it works to meet current and continuing economic challenges.

### ***Student, Faculty, and Staff Handbooks***

The College and its former governing board, the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado, have published several handbooks: *State Colleges in Colorado Handbook for Professional Personnel*, *State Colleges in Colorado Trustee Policy Manual*, and *Mesa State College Professional Staff Policy Handbook*. The *Handbook for Professional Personnel* was last amended in fall, 2003. The *Trustee Policy Manual* was last updated in June 2003. The *Professional Staff Policy Handbook* was last updated in May 2002. Each handbook describes the College's policies and procedures applicable for faculty and administrative staff. One of the first tasks of the new governing board will be to address and approve new handbooks and policy statements.

The State of Colorado, Department of Personnel and Administration, publishes the *State Personnel Rules and Procedures* and *The Classified Staff Handbook*, which govern classified staff. The College also publishes a *Student Handbook* that is revised annually. Actual practices sometimes deviate from the handbooks because they become dated after publication and occasionally do not reflect applicable standards and guidelines. For example, the current *Handbook for Professional Personnel* indicates that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a faculty committee, but actually, in accord with federal regulation, it is an administrative committee.

### ***Resolution of Internal Disputes***

Results of the Self-Study Surveys found that 64% of classified staff, 77% of exempt staff, and 66% of faculty agree or strongly agree that the College has adequate processes and procedures for dealing with adverse employment decisions. Also, 52% of classified staff, 69% of exempt staff, and 54% of faculty agree or strongly agree that Mesa State College's processes and procedures for dealing with adverse employment decisions work effectively. These results are of some concern for Mesa State College. The College believes that this response merits further investigation and has outlined its approach in the challenges and recommendations sections at the end of this chapter.

#### **Faculty and Administrative Staff**

All grievances, appeals, and complaints concerning faculty or administrative staff follow prescribed guidelines described in the faculty and staff handbooks. These guidelines are designed to provide confidential and fair resolution. Internal policy establishes an informal grievance process wherein mediation leads to resolution. Formal grievance procedures are available to those seeking resolution where none was achieved through mediation. These processes are outlined in the *State Colleges in Colorado Trustee Policy Manual* (Section XIV).

Appeals may be filed by an affected professional if the allegation is based on a dispute over a decision by another in a supervisory position and if that decision potentially adversely and unfairly impacts the professional's career or well-being. The appeals procedure is outlined in the *Mesa State College Professional Staff Policy Handbook* (Section 20.7).

Complaints alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment by a colleague or other fellow professional that do not

involve an adverse personnel decision are referred to a committee as outlined in the Mesa State College *Professional Staff Policy Handbook* (Section 20.7).

### **Classified Staff**

If a dispute or grievance is directed against a classified employee of Mesa State College, an attempt is made to resolve the dispute at the lowest level and as informally as possible.

Provisions governing notice, process, mediation, settlement and arbitration are included in the *Employee Handbook* and in the *State Personnel Board Rules and Director's Administrative Procedures* (Chapter 8). In most situations the grievance will be addressed initially within the institution. For the internal process, the Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services will typically issue the final institutional response. Within a limited time frame after the grievance has been decided, the employee may pursue the grievance to the State Personnel Board. This Board operates outside the Mesa State College personnel administration and is a function of the State Department of Personnel and Administration.

### **Students**

Student grievances are governed by policies outlined in the *Student Handbook* (16; 35-36; 93). The Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management provides leadership in student grievance resolution. Internal resolution of grievances is encouraged; mediation and other resolution techniques are employed.

## ***Equity of Treatment, Nondiscrimination, and Affirmative Action***

The Mesa State College 2002-2003 Diversity Plan and 2001-2002 Diversity Report indicates that “Mesa State College is committed to providing opportunities for full participation in our academic community by all individuals, regardless of cultural or geographic origin, gender, religion, linguistic heritage, or other characteristics. Only in creating a community representative of the broader societies in which the institution exists can the goals established by the Diversity Plan be met” (A-48).

Several specific goals and objectives guide the continuous improvement model under which the Mesa State College Diversity Plan operates (A-51—A-56).

**Goal 1. Recruit, retain, and graduate a student population reflective of the population of the state and the region.** The racial/ethnic composition of the student body in comparison to the state and the county can be seen in Table 3.1. Trends in the racial/ethnic composition of the student body since fall 1992 can be seen in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.1: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Colorado, Mesa County, Faculty, and Students, in Percents**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<u>Colorado*</u>	<u>Mesa County*</u>	<u>MSC Faculty</u>	<u>MSC Students</u>
White	77.3	89.0	91.2	83
Hispanic or Latino	14.9	8.4	2	8
Black or African American	3.5	0.4	0.5	2
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7	0.6	1.5	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.3	0.6	3.4	2
Other/Two or more races	1.4	1.1	1.5	5

\*Colorado and Mesa County race information taken from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, 18 years and over.

The College's student population is more diverse than the county in which it resides. With comparison to the State's demographics, several racial/ethnic groups (American Indian or Alaska Native) are well represented while others (Hispanic or Latino) are underrepresented, but steady growth in these areas is occurring. To increase minority enrollment, MSC has employed urban-based recruiters in Denver and Las Vegas. The student population is 57% female and 43% male, compared to the Colorado population that is 50% male (U.S. Census).

**Table 3.2: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Students, Percents, Fall 1992-Fall 2002**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Hispanic, Latino	6	5	6	7	8	7	7	7	7	7	8
Black, African American	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Amer. Ind, AK Native	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asian, Pacific Islander	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Non-Resident Alien/Unknown	5	6	6	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	5

### **Goal 2. Recruit and retain a faculty and staff**

**population reflective of that of the state and the nation.** The racial/ethnic composition of the faculty in comparison to the state and the county can be seen in Table 3.1. Trends in the racial/ethnic composition of the faculty since 1998 are depicted in Table 3.3. The percentage of female faculty members has remained relatively stable, at about 40%, since 1998.

The College is pleased with the progress made toward building a faculty and student body that are reflective of the state and local demographics. The College recognizes, however, that some areas, such as Hispanic faculty and students, are still underrepresented and further recruiting efforts must be employed.

**Table 3.3: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Faculty, Percents, 1998-2003**

<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b>	<b><u>1998- 99</u></b>	<b><u>1999- 00</u></b>	<b><u>2000- 01</u></b>	<b><u>2001- 02</u></b>	<b><u>2002- 03</u></b>
White	95	90	91.1	90.1	91.2
Hispanic or Latino	0.5	2.4	2.9	2	2
Black or African American	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.5	3.9	3.9	4	3.4
Other/Two or more races	0	2.4	1	1	1.5

To help with the recruitment of underrepresented groups the College recruits faculty and students by advertising with professional organizations and employing recruiters in large urban areas. Many student groups, including the Polynesian Club and Native American Student Council, help with minority recruitment by going to area high schools, reservations, and community events to recruit students and talk with high school academic advising counselors. Additionally, several special events, such as the Cultural Diversity Weekend, are conducted throughout the academic year to help with the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups.

**Goal 3. Foster a campus environment that supports a diverse community of students, faculty and staff.** The College supports programs that bring visiting scholars and lecturers to campus. The Wayne N. Aspinall Lectureship, offered each spring semester, is sponsored by the School of Humanities and Social

Sciences, along with the Wayne N. and Julia E. Aspinall Foundation. It provides the College with a national- or international-caliber scholar to lecture on many diverse experiences and cultures. In recent years, visiting scholars taught courses about the Holocaust, Native American sacred objects and traditions, women homesteaders in the American west, and Mississippi Mormons.

The Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies is working with the Dean of Business from the University of Debrecen in Hungary on a student and faculty exchange program. Each summer the Spanish Department offers for-credit courses in a Spanish-speaking country. In 2002 a group went to Spain, and 15 students traveled to Cuba in 2003. Various types of funding have enabled faculty members to study abroad—in Kenya, Japan, Norway, Belgium, Costa Rica, as well as other countries—and to bring their knowledge and expertise back into their classrooms to share with students. Numerous student groups and faculty bring in guest lecturers to discuss diverse topics within the College and community. In particular, the College's Lectures and Forums committee brings to campus approximately eight speakers each year, and the faculty provides at least four colloquia each semester on wide-ranging topics.

The College has numerous student clubs and organizations that promote a diverse community (Mesa State Clubs and Organizations). Religious-based clubs, such as the Baptist Student Union and the Master Plan Ministries, and ten cultural-based clubs and organizations, including the Black Student Alliance, the Cultural Diversity Board, and the Native American Council, are financially supported through student fees and are administered by the student-led Club Advisory Board (CAB) on campus. Furthermore, the College employs an advisor to the Cultural

Diversity Board to ensure that diversity issues are highlighted on campus. Interdisciplinary courses in arts and sciences have been offered. International student travel and international internship experiences are developing.

**Goal 4. Continuously evaluate efforts to develop a more diverse community to include assessment, feedback, and reporting.** Mesa State College, through assessment and reporting activities, continuously reviews its progress toward improving diversity on campus.

Results of the Self-Study Surveys found that 87% of classified staff, 80% of exempt staff, and 79% of faculty agree or strongly agree that Mesa State College effectively addresses cultural diversity with its student, employee, and community relationships. That 13% to 21% disagree indicates that there is considerable room for improvement.

**Affirmative Action.** The Mesa State College *Affirmative Action Plan* delineates specific steps to be taken to prevent unlawful discrimination and to provide a grievance process for those who believe that they have been subjected to discriminatory behavior (18). The *Affirmative Action Plan* requires procedures that assist in promoting the expansion of a diverse campus population. Within the Mesa State College employment pool, women and some minorities are underrepresented. Their recruitment, therefore, is encouraged.

Results of the Self-Study Survey found that 84% of classified staff, 91% of exempt staff, and 87% of faculty disagree or strongly disagree that their opportunities for promotion, pay raises, or other advancement have been artificially limited because of race, ethnicity, age, sex, physical handicap, or religious affiliation. Of all the employees who responded to the question on the Self-Study surveys, 13.1% indicated that they agreed or



strongly agreed that their opportunities had been limited by some form of apparent discrimination. Unfortunately, the question did not specify that the limitations occurred at Mesa State College, but that was the implied context. The questionnaire did not ask for the race, ethnicity, age, religion, or physical handicap condition of respondents, so it is impossible to tell from the survey what form the perceived discrimination took. A question about gender was included. Of all employees, 15% of women and 11% of men felt, as measured by the question, that they had suffered discrimination. While formal grievances on discrimination are virtually absent at Mesa State, this situation requires monitoring. In addition, 59% of classified staff, 75% of exempt staff, and 81% of faculty agree or strongly agree that Mesa State College has adequate training on addressing discrimination. Additional training should be considered, especially for classified staff.

### ***Transcripts and Transfer Procedures***

The Office of the Registrar manages the accurate keeping of student transcripts. Privacy of educational records is protected in accord with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as amended. Publications by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers are used as guidelines for interpretation of FERPA. The Registrar's Office produces a policy summary for distribution to its employees and to College constituents (Office of the Registrar Policies).

The College maintains transcripts, either as hard copies, microfilm, or electronic versions, for all students since the College opened. Transcripts of current students are now kept only in electronic form through use of Banner software. Files are backed up nightly.

Current or former students, by written permission only, may obtain official transcripts. By using the College-assigned

student number, each current student has free access to unofficial copies of his or her current transcript through the College website.

The Office of the Registrar also oversees the transfer process. The Mesa State College Catalog outlines the procedures that students must follow if they want to transfer credit to Mesa State College from another institution or submit their transcripts for graduation (41-54). If a student wants to transfer credit, the official transcript must be sent to Mesa State College directly from the issuing institution. The transcript is reviewed by the Office of Admissions and then forwarded to the Assistant Registrar for Graduation, where it is evaluated for transfer credit. Only courses passed with a grade of C or better are accepted for transfer. When students petition to graduate, their transcripts are reviewed by their faculty advisor, the Department Chair, and the Assistant Registrar to ensure that all requirements for graduation have been met.

In spring of 2001, the State Legislature determined, based on a limited number of cases none of which involved Mesa State College, that students in Colorado were having too much difficulty transferring from one state-funded school to another. Some legislators proposed mandating common course numbering and course descriptions for all state-funded colleges, but the legislation did not go quite that far. House bills 01-1263 and 01-1298 mandated that the Colorado Commission on Higher Education standardize some degree and general education requirements. The CCHE was required to create a matrix system of courses from all colleges that might be used to fulfill general education requirements at any other school. Faculty, administrators, and students from state-funded schools were represented on the GE-25 Council that provided oversight for the process. Each course proposed by a college has to be approved by

a committee, and all colleges must accept transfer of approved courses. Mesa State has participated in this process. Nearly 30 courses have been accepted, and College faculty members are reviewing other course proposals for submission to the Commission.

The same legislation also mandated that CCHE develop what has come to be called the “60-60 agreements” to be effective fall, 2003. In effect, students who earn an A.A. or A.S. degree at any state-supported community college must be able to graduate from any four-year college by taking only 60 more hours. Exceptions are made for vocational, professional, and technical programs, as well as for programs such as business and engineering that have separate state-wide transfer agreements.

Mesa State College continues to cooperate individually with other institutions of higher education to articulate the transfer of college credit. The College participates in 30 articulation, transfer, and cooperative agreements that are managed by the Transfer and Articulation Coordinator (Articulation Agreements).

To facilitate the transfer of credit, the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management publishes the Mesa State College Transfer Student Advisement Guide for students transferring from Colorado community and junior colleges and for transfer students from the College of Eastern Utah. The Guide includes a list of Mesa State College courses that are equivalent to the Colorado Common Core. It also contains information on the transferability of courses from each of the fifteen Colorado community or junior colleges and the College of Eastern Utah as they pertain to specific Mesa State College subject areas or academic departments. The Transfer Student Advisement Guide is updated annually.

Prior to the existence of the College's independent governing board, the institutions governed by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado (Mesa State College, Metro State College, Adams State College and Western State College) worked together to identify and facilitate cooperative efforts among the institutions. The State Colleges agreed that a student in good standing at any one of the four schools may register for and attend classes at any of the other State Colleges. Credit earned for inter-institutional courses was treated as resident course credit and not as transfer credit for purposes of fulfilling program requirements and for graduation. The new boards of the independent state colleges, established during the summer of 2003, will have to address the possibilities for continuing these agreements.

Mesa State College is a member of the National Student Exchange Program (NSE), which is a consortium of over 160 colleges and universities in the United States and its territories. Mesa State students may be able to participate in this program at in-state tuition rates and receive full credit for course work completed while on exchange.

### ***Fair and Accurate Institutional Publications***

Mesa State College publishes information in various venues for internal and external use. Among the campus-wide publications are the *College Catalog*, the Mesa State College Web Site, the *Campus Phone Directory*, and the *Handbook for Advising*. Other publications are produced by various campus offices. All external publications are reviewed by the Director of Marketing and Publications, who is part of the Office of Institutional Advancement.

Results of the Self-Study Surveys found that 85% of classified staff and 95% of exempt staff agree or strongly agree that Mesa State College's publications, statements, and

advertising describe accurately and fairly the institution, its operations, and its programs. (Note: The question concerning this area was inadvertently omitted from the faculty survey.)

### ***Relationships with Other Institutions***

Partnerships play an important role in the continued growth of Mesa State College, especially in its new role as Regional Educational Provider. The idea of partnerships was first implied in 1997 with the adoption of *Mesa State College: A Shared Vision* which stated that Mesa State College was to be “responsive to the changing and increasingly complex needs of the students...” The idea of maintaining current partnerships and establishing new partnerships became one of the six goals established as part of the *Academic Master Plan*. Mesa State’s goal is “to improve the College’s ability to ensure the quality and coherence of off-campus academic offerings to students and to increase the number of articulations and collaborations with other institutions, agencies, and groups” (39).

The goal statement is supported by the following objectives: (1) to develop stronger ties with college programs offered at other locations and with programs offered by other post-secondary institutions in the region; (2) to have full-time faculty members assigned to Montrose when feasible; (3) in cooperation with School District 51, to develop an Advanced Learning Center at UTEC to provide a seamless educational experience for secondary and post-secondary students; (4) to have Mesa State College partner with western slope school districts and with other colleges and universities to establish programming for pre-service teachers and to expand opportunities for in-service teachers; (5) to have Mesa State College partner with regional health care providers and with other colleges and universities to meet the needs for well-qualified professionals.

The School of Business and Professional Studies is taking advantage of partnership opportunities by allowing students to pair with businesses in the surrounding area for "Senior Projects." The Department of Nursing and Radiologic Sciences Programs partner extensively with organizations, agencies, and individuals in the community, state, and beyond.

Within the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, research collaborations have been established with faculty from Colorado Mountain College-Leadville (CMC). In support of this, an articulation agreement is being updated in environmental science between CMC and Mesa State. In addition, there are collaborations with St. Mary's Hospital, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. Specific projects consist of studying the Hantavirus immunology in the community, a tobacco project, and risk assessment training for those communities in the Navajo Nation impacted by historical uranium mining.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences has an array of partnerships. For example, a political scientist and a psychologist are working with the Mesa County Department of Social Services to monitor the effectiveness of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. Faculty members perform with the Grand Junction Symphony, the Western Colorado Jazz Orchestra, and the western Colorado Chorale. Qualified students may receive college credit for such participation.

In addition, Mesa State College and a number of school districts have joined together to offer students in regional high schools opportunity to enroll in Mesa State courses.

Currently four institutions of higher education from the state of Colorado offer a total of seven graduate degree programs on the Mesa State College campus. Mesa State College has

memorandums of agreement or interagency agreements with Adams State College, University of Northern Colorado, Colorado State University, and University of Colorado at Denver. These documents detail the use of Mesa State College resources including access to classroom space, media equipment, computers, and Tomlinson Library.

Many of the graduate programs offered on the Mesa State College campus are a result of cooperation with the Western Colorado Graduate Center, which brokers graduate degree programs and courses to the residents of western Colorado. Mesa State has hosted these programs for many years as a service to its community and constituencies. For the 2002-03 year, the following programs are being delivered on Mesa State's campus: (1) Master of Public Administration, from University of Colorado at Denver; (2) Master of Special Education: multiple emphases, from University of Northern Colorado; (3) Master of Educational Administration (plus principal licensure), from University of Northern Colorado; (4) Master of Arts in Reading, from University of Northern Colorado; (5) Master of Public Administration, from University of Northern Colorado; (6) Master of Counseling, from Adams State College; (7) Ph.D. in Education and Human Resource Studies, from Colorado State University; (8) Master of Education: emphasis in Curriculum, from Adams State College—delivered on MSC Montrose Campus. Many of these programs have local advisory boards that help direct the programs.

Tomlinson Library is active in a variety of library consortia and partnerships that facilitate the sharing of information resources and access to information services. Participation in local consortia and multi-state cooperatives benefit the Mesa State College campus by supplementing the

resources of Tomlinson Library and extending the resources and viability of the Library to the local community and throughout the state. In total, the library is involved in 12 different consortia or partnerships, and processes approximately 10,000 books and articles annually through interlibrary loan.

Mesa State College provides office space to employees of Western Colorado Graduate Center, Colorado State Employee Assistance Program, and AmeriCorps. The College also provides financial management services to AmeriCorps.

Results of the Self-Study Surveys found that 91% of classified staff, 97% of exempt staff, and 97% of faculty agree or strongly agree that Mesa State College conducts its relationships with other institutions ethically and responsibly.

### ***Intercollegiate Athletics, Student Associations, and Subsidiary or Related Business Enterprises***

The mission of the Mesa State College Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is to advance the winning spirit and drive that characterizes all great institutions. The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to the highest standards of sportsmanship, teamwork, scholarship, and citizenship. Mesa State College follows all NCAA and Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC) rules and regulations governing intercollegiate athletic programs found in the *NCAA Division II Manual* and the *RMAC Code Book and Manual*. Since becoming a member of the NCAA Division II programs, Mesa State College has maintained an exemplary record. Mesa State always has been given a clean audit by the NCAA and has never been put on probation or report. Mesa State College acknowledges and upholds the concept of institutional control, requiring appropriate participation in the development and review of athletic policies by the President of Mesa State College, the Athletic Council, and the



Faculty Athletic Representative. All athletic booster organizations, alumni, and other groups and individuals who represent the College's athletic interest are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures established by the College for the governance of its intercollegiate athletic programs (*Athletic Department Policies and Procedures Handbook* 8-11).

Mesa State College offers eleven intercollegiate varsity sports on campus. All sports are offered at the NCAA Division II level within the RMAC. Mesa State College offers seven women's sports (basketball, volleyball, cross country, golf, soccer, softball, and tennis) and four men's sports (football, basketball, baseball, and tennis).

In 2002, Mesa State College had 260 student-athletes (98 females; 162 males). The four year graduation rate of incoming freshmen student athletes is 36%; this is 2% higher than the general student body of 34%. The overall GPA of student-athletes is 3.03; this is higher than the overall student body's GPA of 2.8. Mesa State College athletics has been noted for its academic excellence by receiving two 2002 USA Today/NCAA academic achievement awards.

Funding of athletic teams from student fees is distributed evenly between men's and women's sports, with \$23.41 per student allocated for women's sports and \$23.43 per student allocated for men's sports. For issues relating to Title IX compliance, the athletic department spends 56% of its recruiting budget for women's sports. The average scholarship for a female athlete is 19% higher than the average for a male athlete, while revenue for men's teams is 55.5% of the total revenue raised institutionally for athletics (*Reporting of Institutional Data for the NCAA Gender Equity Survey*).

Mesa State College believes in the overall development of students. Mesa State College is supportive of student groups, clubs, associations, and student government. The Associated Student Government (ASG) oversees all student groups. Student activities, including funding and fee allocation, are governed by the ASG in compliance with the *Associated Student Government Constitution* and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's *Student Fee Policy*. The staff of the Campbell College Center oversees student activities to ensure they are in compliance with the aforementioned documents.

Mesa State College has positive working relationships with auxiliary entities such as the College Bookstore, Associated Student Government, the W.W. Campbell College Center, and outside vendors, including Sodexo Campus Dining Services, via the Purchasing Department. Mesa State College complies with all state and federal statutes and follows prescribed policies and procedures deemed appropriate for each of these entities.

### ***Oversight Processes for Monitoring Contractual Arrangements***

All research contracts and agreements involving state or federal agencies, private foundations, companies, or other associations are processed through the Director of Sponsored Programs. The Director of Sponsored Programs reviews the terms of each contract and any questions are directed to the Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services. Questions that remain unresolved are addressed to the Colorado Attorney General. Ninety-five percent of the awards are based upon research proposals. The Director of Sponsored Programs and the Principal Investigator for the research verify that the statement of work and the deliverables outlined in the proposal and resulting contract are the same. They also ensure that the deliverables can be

achieved within the terms of the award. Five percent of the awards are not associated with a proposal. In these cases the Director of Sponsored Programs and the Principal Investigator work together to create a contract. Subcontracts issued by the Director of Sponsored Programs include prime-award flow down terms plus any terms that are required under state fiscal rules.

The Purchasing Department is responsible for all contracts, supplies, and equipment acquisitions of the College. As outlined in the statute, the State of Colorado Division of Purchasing governs the procurement and disposal of all supplies, the purchasing of services, and any contracts for construction on the college campuses. In August 2002, the internal auditor for the State Colleges in Colorado Colleges completed an audit of the Purchasing Department. The audit report concluded that the Purchasing Department is "well organized, employs strong internal controls, and has implemented many Purchasing/Contracts 'Best Practices' resulting in significant cost avoidance to Mesa State College" (*Performance Audit Contracts and Purchasing* 8). Mesa State College upholds a high level of integrity with its purchasing practices.

### ***Research is Conducted with Integrity***

Mesa State College is in compliance with the Federal Regulations that deal with protection of human subjects in research (*Title 45-Part 46*). The Institutional Review Board consists of seven voting members and one ex-officio member (the Director of Sponsored Programs). The composition of the committee (scientists, non-scientists, community members, male, female, and racial minorities) is representative of the college community and complies with federal regulations.

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, dealing with the ethical treatment of animal subjects in research, follows

two sets of Federal Regulations: The Animal Welfare Act, USDA Animal Welfare Regulations, Title 9–CFR and the *Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.

Mesa State College has a number of additional policies that cover research activities. These include the *Misconduct in Research Policy* and the *NSF/PHS Investigator Financial Disclosure Policy*. The College also has developed its own policy on the *Responsibility of Principal Investigators and Project Directors*.

### ***Mesa State Complies with Federal Regulations***

Chapter 14 of the NCA-CIHE *Handbook of Accreditation* as further defined by the *Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation, Second Edition*, requires that Mesa State address specific Commission policies. Following is a listing of those policies with Mesa State information.

### **Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

Mesa State's programs operate on a semester, credit hour basis in accordance with policies and procedures established by CCHE. Likewise, tuition at Mesa State is governed by CCHE policy.

Because Mesa State's tuition is controlled by State policy, it is often necessary to publish estimated tuition rates in catalog and early registration materials. Final rates are widely published as soon as they become available. Mesa State maintains separate tuition rates for in-State undergraduate students, out-of-State undergraduate students, in-State graduate students, and out-of-State graduate students. Part-time tuition rates for undergraduates vary linearly from 1 to 10 credit hours with 10 hours considered as full-time for tuition purposes. Part-time tuition rates for

graduate students also vary linearly from 3 to 9 credit hours with 9 hours considered full-time for tuition purposes.

Mesa State does not vary its tuition by discipline or undergraduate degree program. Various courses do have a separate fee attached. The establishment of these course fees, like all student fees at Mesa State, is controlled by the "Institution Plan for Student Fees" last revised in December 1998. Students are involved in the approval process.

### **Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act**

Latest figures from the National Student Loan Database System (NSLDS) indicate that Mesa State has an estimated default rate for 2001 of 4.9%. This is down from the official 2000 rate of 6.9%, and significantly below the 1993 official rate of 9.6%. The national average default rate is in the 6% range.

The State of Colorado audits Mesa State every year. No audit comments have been received on student loan activities for the past several years.

### **Institution's Advertising and Recruitment Materials**

In its publications, references to Mesa State's accreditation include the address of the Higher Learning Commission. For example, Mesa State's catalog states: Mesa State College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602 ([www.thehigherlearningcommission.org](http://www.thehigherlearningcommission.org)).

### **Professional Accreditation**

Mesa State's general institutional accreditation is by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of

Colleges and Schools. Programs that currently maintain other accreditation include Nursing by the College Board of Nursing and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and the Radiologic Sciences program by the Committee on Allied Health Education of the American Medical Association. The Athletic Training Program hosted its site visit by the National Athletic Training Association (NATA) in November, 2002, and received notice of accreditation in spring, 2003.

At this time, other programs are preparing for professional accreditation. These include business, education, and music. No program has had adverse action by any accrediting body.

### **Requirements of Institutions Holding Dual Institutional Accreditation**

Mesa State does not maintain dual institutional accreditation. Mesa State's sole general institutional accreditation is by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

### **Institutional Records of Student Complaints**

Records of written and signed student complaints are maintained by the various departments of the College. Logs of these complaints, including the manner of resolution, are available in the Resource Room.

### ***Strengths***

Mesa State College is becoming an attractive Regional Education Provider for its constituents and follows its practices and procedures with integrity. Overall the faculty and staff believe that Mesa State College conducts itself with integrity and adheres to the highest ethical standards in all of its practices and relationships. Results of the Self-Study Surveys support this

surveys to elicit more qualitative information. Department chairs, supervisors, and administrators undergo annual reviews that include polling their subordinates. To monitor the perception among the small percentage of employees who feel they have suffered from discrimination, the annual review could consider adding a relevant question to this survey. More training about discrimination should be considered, especially for classified staff and their supervisors.

The Western Colorado Graduate Center, which has helped bring several programs from other colleges and universities to western Colorado, has been a branch of the State Colleges in Colorado. With the end of that system, Mesa State College needs to assure that WCGCs brokering functions continue. The best way to do that may be to absorb the functions as part of the College, although additional financial costs will be accrued.

### ***Conclusion***

The College conducts itself with integrity and adheres to the highest ethical standards in all of its practices and relationships, both internal and external, and also provides equal access and equitable treatment. As the College moves into the future and makes decisions about meeting the requirements of its legislatively expanded mission while, at the same time, dealing with budgetary restrictions, it needs to carefully monitor itself to make sure that it continues to describe itself accurately to its constituents.

## **Chapter Four: Mesa State College has Effectively Organized the Human, Financial, and Physical Resources Necessary to Accomplish its Purposes**

Students get a great deal at Mesa State College. They receive a quality education, complete with personal and social opportunities that meet their needs, at an institution situated in one of the most beautiful regions of the United States. In an era of unprecedented growth and limited budgets, Mesa State College has managed to effectively organize human, physical, and financial resources to create an excellent environment for teaching and learning.

The College is looking forward to governance by its new board, trusting that it will be staffed with informed people who understand their responsibilities, who will function in accordance with state board policies, and who will have the resolve necessary to preserve the Institution's integrity. Mesa State is confident that its effective, qualified, and experienced administrators, who operate under well-defined and understood organizational structures, policies, and procedures, will guide the College through this transition period.

The College will also depend upon its system of shared governance to provide dependable information to the Institution's constituencies, and, as appropriate, involve them in decision making processes as it develops its relationship with the new board. Mesa State's qualified faculty and staff will continue to provide students with services that create opportunities for them to excel. Mesa State's physical plant supports effective teaching and learning. Conscientious efforts are made to provide students with a safe and healthy learning environment and with academic resources and equipment to support their educational



endeavors. The College continues to manage its financial resources to support the Institution's commitment to creating and maintaining the environment and the human resources necessary for effective teaching and learning.

In the past, Mesa State College has had the resources to offer a wide range of services over a large geographic area to people with a variety of educational and vocational needs. Recently, however, financial circumstances have required that Mesa State reexamine the breadth of its mission. The College has reached a point at which funding restrictions make unlimited growth in all areas of its multi-faceted mission unlikely. Expansion in one service area is almost certain to mean cutbacks in another under the zero-sum orientation within which the College is now forced to function. All decisions made in the near future need to be clearly based on the most important aspect of the College's mission—providing a quality liberal arts-based education in an environment that fosters close and frequent contact between teachers and learners.

## ***Human Resources***

### **Board Governance**

The Colorado General Assembly provides General Fund support to higher education and sets performance standards for all public colleges and universities in the state of Colorado. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education is the State's policy and coordinating body for higher education. CCHE's mission is to implement the directives of the legislature and promote and preserve equality, access, diversity and efficiency within Colorado's institutions of higher education. In addition, the Commission acts in behalf of Colorado's citizens "to provide access to high quality, affordable education . . . that is student-centered, quality driven and performance-based. CCHE's primary 'customers' are Colorado students and citizens. CCHE is committed to providing the best

possible service for its customers”

([http://www.state.co.us/cche\\_dir/hecche.html](http://www.state.co.us/cche_dir/hecche.html) ).

Until quite recently, Mesa State's concerns were voiced at the Capitol through the State Colleges in Colorado (*Trustee Policy Manual*). The Board of Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado had statutory authority and responsibility for the governance of Mesa State College, Metropolitan State College, Adams State College, Western State College and the Western Colorado Graduate Center. To provide assistance toward meeting its mandate, the Board of Trustees established three standing committees (Executive, Academic Affairs, and Finance), a commission, and two councils.

Some doubts exist about how well the CCHE and the now-defunct Board of Trustees have understood their responsibilities toward faculty and staff. The Self-Study Surveys indicated that 72% of the classified staff feels that the Trustees do not have a good appreciation of employee issues and concerns and 78% expressed the same feelings about the CCHE. Similar percentages express the discontent of the exempt staff (74% Trustees, 78% CCHE) and faculty (84% Trustees, 90% CCHE) with regard to these two governing bodies. There is hope that the new Board of Trustees, which will begin functioning in the summer of 2003, will be more aware of employee issues and concerns.

### **Effective Administration**

The President of the College reports to the Board of Trustees. The President imparts leadership in meeting the goals and purposes of the Institution and maintains a supportive relationship between the College and the community.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs reports to the College President and is responsible for the development, implementation, and management of the instructional programs at Mesa State College. The Vice President works with Academic Deans and other administrators to

ensure that the instructional programs are serving the needs of the educational community. In addition, the Vice President serves as one of the primary advisors to the President and acts on behalf of the President in his absence.

The Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services is responsible for providing leadership in financial management that includes budget analysis and projection, oversight of financial accounting, payroll, personnel, purchasing, facilities expenses, and fiscal policy development.

When the Dean of Enrollment Management accepted employment elsewhere in the fall of 2002, that position was temporarily combined with the Dean of Students position to create an interim position of Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. This move saved money, but created a position with huge responsibilities. The Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is responsible for all student support services, including the Student Health Center, Residence Halls, Recreation Center, Student Organizations and Clubs, Financial Aid, Enrollment Management, the College Center, and Academic Services such as testing and assessment, tutoring programs, college success courses, and educational access services.

The Director of Teacher Education has held a position that is organizationally anomalous. He was an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, but also served as Department Chair of Teacher Education and Licensure under the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. This positional confusion probably accounts, in part, for the problems of communication between teacher education and other academic areas. The Director resigned effective July 1, 2003, and the position has been reorganized to report solely to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Organizational charts for Campus Administrative, Financial and Administrative Services, Academic Affairs, Athletic Department, and Student Services are on file in the Resource Room (*Professional Staff Policy Handbook*). Because changes in these charts must be approved and accepted by the Board of Trustees, they are slow to be amended. There may be some discrepancies between the current organizational structure and the organizational charts on record.

### **Administrative Personnel**

Mesa State College's administrators are skilled and dedicated leaders who have successfully managed the College despite on-going financial difficulties. Mesa State has the lowest administrative costs of any four-year college in Colorado. Despite the difficulties in dealing with inadequate funding, administrators have a high level of personal job satisfaction (94.5%), good working relationships (97.3%) and high morale (84%). Eighty percent of the administrators are optimistic about Mesa State's future (Self-Study Exempt Survey).

Job descriptions, including qualifications and minimum requirements for each administrative position, are on file in the Human Resources Department. Some administrative job descriptions, such as the President's, can be found in the *Trustee Policy Manual*. Resumes of administrators are available in the Self-Study Resource Room.

Administrators are exempt, at-will employees. The 116 exempt employees serve in areas such as academics, athletics, student services, financial services, and the library. Administrators, 88% of whom believe that committee assignments are important, are committed to shared governance. Half of the exempt staff reports that they "make an appropriate impact on major policy" (Self-Study Exempt Survey). Classified staff believe that they have a good working relationship with the administration; 77% of classified staff agree that there is real two-way communication between themselves and their supervisor. The faculty is

less satisfied, as only 56% agree that the administrators at Mesa have a good appreciation of faculty issues and concerns (Self-Study Classified and Faculty Surveys). This issue needs to be addressed.

Administrators are evenly divided between male and female. Nine percent of administrators are minorities (Diversity Plan and Report). This percentage is slightly lower than the 2000 Mesa County census minority rate of 11% (U.S. Census Bureau).

Seventeen out of twenty-two senior administrators hold doctorates or masters degrees. Fifteen of the senior administrators are new to their positions within the past six years; they have brought new energy and direction to the College. Fortunately, 18% of administrators have been at Mesa State for more than 11 years, which allows the College to retain institutional memory and provides stability.

Salaries for senior administrators are at the bottom of their peer group. National comparisons reveal that 25% of senior administrators and 13% of mid-level administrators are below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in pay. None of the senior administrators were rated above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile; only 12% of mid-level administrators were (CUPA). Not surprisingly, the Self-Study Exempt Survey found that 72% of administrators believed their pay was not competitive.

The Self-Study Exempt Survey also found that administrators have concerns about the adequacy of the human resource base (58.6%) and about the financial resources for the future (92.1%). Other areas of concern include relationships with the Trustees (60.6%) and the CCHE (67.1%), as well as the adequacy of instructional technology (65.8%) and library resources (49.3%).

### **Systems of Governance**

The President's Cabinet acts as an advisory board to the President. It is a critical committee for developing and implementing policy and procedure. As described in the *Professional Staff Policy Handbook*, "The

Cabinet is comprised of the vice presidents of academic affairs, financial and administrative services; the academic deans; the deans of enrollment management and students, and the directors of institutional advancement, management information services, and the library” (2.2A). On campus, this group has been referred to as the President’s Staff, rather than the President’s Cabinet, to avoid confusion with the group consisting of the presidents of the various colleges in the state college system.

In addition to the President’s Staff, another advisory group, the President’s Council, meets monthly and includes twenty-two senior administrators including all vice presidents, deans, and directors. The Community Citizens Advisory Committee meets with the President on a quarterly basis.

The academic deans for the Schools of Humanities and Social Sciences, Business and Professional Studies, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics, along with the Executive Director of Applied Technology, report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The responsibilities of the Deans and Department Chairs are described in the *Professional Staff Policy Handbook* (3.3-3.4). The campus has fifteen administrative committees, such as the Athletic Council, Technology Council, Discipline Committee, and the Facilities Committee. A listing of all committees can be found in section four of the *Professional Staff Policy Handbook*.

The Faculty Senate plays a significant role in governance and in addressing policies, procedures, and employee welfare matters. The Faculty Senate is composed of representation from all academic departments. The President of the Senate sits on the President’s Council to voice the concerns and opinions of the faculty. The Senate can make recommendations to the President who may act on or delegate responsibility for addressing the recommendations to the proper administrative officer. The challenge for faculty is to share concerns with the Senators so that an avenue of communication is open to the President.

The Faculty Senate has ten standing committees dealing with issues such as assessment, curriculum, salaries, faculty evaluations, tenure, promotion, and other faculty welfare issues (*Professional Staff Policy Handbook, Section 4.2*). One hundred four individual faculty members sit on Senate committees, demonstrating a solid commitment to shared governance. The Self-Study Faculty Survey revealed that 87% of faculty members believe that committee participation is important. However, half the faculty members would like to improve two-way communication with administration. In a 2002 Self-Study Chairs Survey, 50% of the academic department chairs expressed their concerns about how seriously their input was considered in major policy decisions.

The Associated Student Government (ASG) is the representative body and official voice of the students. The ASG operates through the General Assembly, a legislative body composed of students elected by the student body. Students involved in ASG have an opportunity to gain leadership skills by representing student opinions to the Mesa State administration and Board of Trustees. They also are responsible for reviewing and administering student fee requests. Some programs developed by ASG include an escort program, a whistle program, a radio station, the Club Advisory and Cultural Diversity Boards, an outdoor program, and a school newspaper. A student representative sits on most campus committees.

The Classified Staff Council represents classified staff on campus. The President of the Classified Staff Council sits on the President's Council, as well as on the Budget Advisory Committee.

Intercollegiate Athletics also is represented on the President's Council. In addition, the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics meets regularly with a business advisory group comprised of five local business people. The Athletic Council, made up of four faculty members, two students, two community members, and a faculty athletic representative, also meets regularly to share information. In addition, the Student Athlete

Advisory Council was formed to foster a positive image of student-athletes on campus and in the community. Eleven athletes, one from each sport, a trainer, and a cheerleader either are appointed by coaches or elected by other athletes to serve on this council. A member of this Council also serves on the Fee Allocation Committee.

Along with its many publications, pamphlets, and electronic information outlets, Mesa State provides the community with information and involves it in its decision-making processes through various advisory boards, such as the President's Community Advisory Group. Community members are serving on the Self-Study Review Committee.

Shared governance is well established and valued by the faculty, staff and students of Mesa State, but some concerns remain. When the issues are local and within the Schools it appears shared governance works at the College. However, communication and the inclusion of faculty and chairs in major policy decisions is a concern. Faculty committees sometimes make recommendations that are not followed, but they receive no feedback from administrative sources as to why these recommendations were ignored. Faculty members are not allowed to vote on some policy decisions they consider important. This might help explain why only 36% of faculty members agreed with the statement "Views of faculty have an appropriate impact on major policy decisions" (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

### **The Tilman M. Bishop Unified Technical Education Campus (UTECH)**

Tilman M. Bishop, now a Mesa County Commissioner, was a long-term state legislator and Mesa State College administrator who has long been a strong supporter of education, particularly vocational education. The campus that bears his name, 3.0 miles from the main Mesa State campus, houses vocational and technical programs serving students from both MSC and Mesa County School District #51 (MCSD51). The



nature of the relationships between the campuses is unclear to many. Of all Mesa State faculty members surveyed, 75% disagree that the relationship between UTEC and the main campus is clear; 91% of UTEC faculty and 67% of other faculty believe that the relationship should be strengthened (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

Since 1991, UTEC has been governed by the Grand Valley Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). MCSD51 provides one school-board member and its Superintendent to the BOCES board. Mesa State is represented by the College President and a Trustee. One community member, who usually serves as the board president, has rounded out the governing board. Recent legislation has allowed for additional community members.

The UTEC director serves on the MSC President's Staff and functions as the Executive Director of the School of Applied Technology for MSC. The director, while reporting directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at MSC, also reports to and is evaluated by the BOCES Board. The Director of Instruction, Director of Resource Management, Manager of Business Services, and Executive Secretary report directly to the Executive Director (UTEC Organizational Chart).

District 51 and the College contract with the BOCES. The College is the largest contributor to UTEC funding. In addition to \$809,258 for faculty salaries (UTEC Budget), Mesa State contributed 28% of UTEC's \$1,878,323 general fund revenues in fiscal year 2002. District 51 contributed 50.5% of those funds (Grand Valley BOCES/UTEC Audited Budget Figures, 2002).

As is true for the main campus, College student enrollment at UTEC has steadily increased. In fiscal year 2002, UTEC courses generated 219.0 student FTEs, up from 122.6 in 1996. Many of these students also take courses on the main campus as part of their degree programs.

Academically, UTEC houses Mesa State's School of Applied Technology, contributing to Mesa State's community college and Regional Education Provider role and mission. The College controls the curriculum for college-credit classes in the same process that is used on the main campus.

Faculty members at UTEC are paid by the College and are considered Mesa State faculty. Only two of these are tenured, holding the rank of Instructor. These two are long-time employees. Unlike other schools at Mesa State, UTEC will not hire more tenure-track faculty. Other faculty members hold the rank of Lecturer. Altogether, 51 faculty members taught at UTEC in fall, 2002. Twenty-three of these, 11 of whom were first employed in 1999 or later, were considered full-time faculty (Faculty DB Salaries Report).

Most faculty members at UTEC strongly identify with their position as Mesa State faculty. Not without reason, however, they feel that they are often forgotten by main campus faculty. While most College committees have a designated position for UTEC faculty, it is difficult for the few full-time, interested faculty members to fill the slots. Outside of these formal committee connections, little interaction occurs between faculty at UTEC and those on the main campus.

The future of UTEC has been a matter of some controversy. At one point in the mid-1990s, it appeared that UTEC would completely split off from Mesa State and become an entity in itself, but that did not happen. Some influential community members have suggested that UTEC become the heart of a new community college for the western slope, perhaps joining with Colorado Northwestern Community College in Rangely and other west-slope entities. Endorsement of that idea was implied by Mesa State's former administration in the *Role and Mission Statement* (2002) prepared for the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel, which called for "Creation of the Western Colorado Community College." The

College's current administration is now attempting to strengthen the relationship between UTEC and the main campus.

The confusion about the current relationship between UTEC and the main campus needs to be addressed. As long as UTEC faculty remain Mesa State faculty, more structural integration and interaction between UTEC and the main campus should be encouraged. The distribution of basic information about the relationship would help faculty and staff at both locations.

### **Qualified Faculty**

Mesa State College has a well-qualified and diverse faculty whose primary commitment is to teaching. In addition, they serve on committees, advise students, participate in campus and community service, and engage in scholarly and professional activity. In recent years, Mesa State College has begun to encourage more scholarship through step-by-step changes in merit system and promotion criteria. (Faculty resumes are available in the Self-Study Resource Room.)

The administration supports the idea of professional development including comprehensive new faculty orientation, sabbaticals, release time, training, and professional travel. Funding for these opportunities, however, has remained flat at best for several years. Only 15% of faculty members agreed with the statement that, "Faculty development/enrichment is adequately funded" (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

Mesa State College has a well-established process for hiring faculty, as detailed in the *Faculty and Administrative Search Procedure Manual*. Permanent full-time position vacancies are widely advertised to fill positions with the most qualified applicants. Attempts are made to advertise in media that will reach minority candidates. Screening committees to evaluate candidates are formed under the direction of the deans of the schools and department chairs. The committees recommend candidates to the dean through the chairs. The dean reports the

recommendation of the committee and his/her personal recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Once the VPAA finishes his/her interviews with the candidates, he/she makes an overall recommendation to the President. The President then makes the formal offer of employment to the candidate. The offer is conditional upon Trustee approval. This hiring process leaves most of the review process up to the faculty—those who are most familiar with the field and thus have the best insight into which candidates would be most appropriate for fulfilling the curriculum needs of the department.

Full-time temporary and part-time faculty positions may be filled with a less formal procedure. The position may be advertised only locally and may or may not involve a search committee. However, the procedures for filling these positions are consistent with the principles and intent of the College's Affirmative Action Plan. Candidates with at least a Master's Degree or extensive field experience are sought for these positions.

New faculty members go through a three-day orientation to the College, in addition to the meetings attended by returning faculty. They are introduced to administrators, receive brief instruction about Mesa State's technology systems, and have the opportunity to ask questions of some current faculty members (New Faculty Orientation Schedule).

The faculty has changed significantly in the past ten years (See Table 4.1). The number of faculty members has increased by 47%. The number and percent of minorities, women, and those with terminal degrees have all seen large increases (Institutional Data Source, Office of Institutional Research).

In 2002-2003, 38.1% of Mesa State's courses were taught by instructors with "temporary" status. While these are not persons with tenured nor tenure-track positions, many of them were nonetheless long-term and committed faculty. The Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication, for example, had 13 full-time "temporary"

instructors with more than 2 years employment at MSC. Seven of those had been at the College for more than 5 years. One “temporary” had been teaching in the Department for 30 years.

Departments vary considerably in use of temporary faculty, from UTEC, with 91% of classes taught by temporaries, to Nursing and Radiological Sciences, with only 12% so classified. Tenured faculty taught 38.0% of all courses, while tenure track personnel taught 20.4%. The remaining courses were taught by persons with transitional (0.8%) or at-will (2.6%) status (Instructor Status F03).

**Table 4.1: Characteristics of Mesa State College Full-Time Faculty (Full-Time Temporary, Tenure and Tenure Track), 1992 and 2002**

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Fall, 1992</u>	<u>Fall, 2002</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Number of Full-Time Faculty	141	209	+48%
Number of Racial/Ethnic Minorities	7	15	+114%
Percent of Racial/Ethnic Minorities	5%	7%	+40%
Number of Women	47	83	+77%
Percent of Women	33%	40%	+18%
Number with Terminal Degrees	64	141	+120%
Percent with Terminal Degrees	55%	67%	+22%

Nearly all faculty members have strong negative opinions regarding compensations for teaching, scholarship and service. Except for the low pay, faculty are generally pleased about their positions at Mesa State. According to the Self-Study Faculty Survey, 95% of faculty respect their colleagues, 93% feel personal satisfaction in their jobs, and 64% report high morale.

## Number of Students

Mesa State College has attained and maintained both an appropriately sized student body and a strong student profile. The admission requirements at the College, in accord with legislative mandate, continue to be “moderately selective.” In general, applicants for a baccalaureate program who have earned a minimum grade point average of 2.50, a composite score of 19 on the ACT, or 860 combined on the SAT, may be admitted to Mesa State. Students are admitted based on their Colorado Admission Index score. The index score is a calculation using high school GPA and ACT or SAT scores. Mesa’s minimum index score to enroll is 80. Over the past ten years Mesa State’s average index has increased to an average index of 95 for all incoming freshmen (includes 2-year associate degree students) and an average index of 97 for all baccalaureate students (Role and Mission, Executive Summary, 2).

CCHE allows a window of 20% of total applicants for students who do not meet the admission index. Over the past ten years, admissions via the window have decreased by more than 10%. The current percentage used by Mesa State is now down to 2.8% of the actual admissions. (Memo—Mesa State Admission Window).

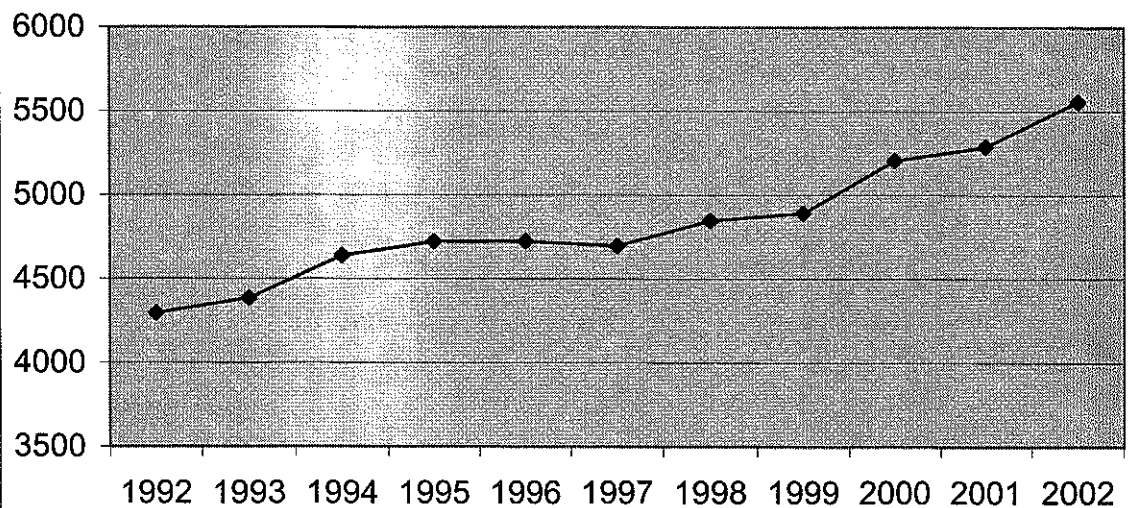
In spite of the increase in student quality, 63% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that they “would prefer stricter entrance requirements for students” (Self-Study Faculty Survey). This concern was found in all departments except Applied Technology and Nursing and Allied Health. The latter has its own, more stringent, requirements for the BSN program. Recognizing the concern about students’ preparation for college, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education has recently determined that colleges should raise their admissions standards. CCHE proposes that high schools in the state phase in higher graduation requirements for college-bound students (Curtin, 2003). While this would affect direct entry into MSCs baccalaureate programs, the community college role and mission would allow students to enroll without meeting the new

standards. If successful, such students could then transfer internally into an MSC baccalaureate program.

In fall semester, 2002, 56% of students were from Mesa County; 92% were from Colorado. Women make up 57% of the student body, while just over 12% are ethnic or racial minorities. Thirty-one percent are 25 or older (MSC Quick Facts, 2003; MSC Enrollment Report 2002).

By school, 34% of students had declared a major in Business and Professional Studies, 32% in Humanities and Social Sciences, 13% in Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and 6% in Applied Technology. Fourteen percent had not yet declared a major (MSC Quick Facts, 2003). Student Services has been working to decrease that number, since undeclared students are at higher risk of dropping out.

**Figure 4.1: MSC Student Fall Enrollment, 1992-2002**



Mesa State's headcount has increased an impressive 29% in ten years (See Figure 4.1.). Population growth in the College's major market area has helped fuel this growth. Mesa County's population increased by 24% in ten years (U. S. Census 1990 and 2000). Enrollment Management also has worked hard to build relationships with area guidance

counselors. There also has been a 430% increase in scholarship dollars awarded to students (Memo–Scholarships). Other reasons for the increase in headcount include: (1) relatively low tuition rates; (2) more aggressive recruiting both out-of-state and in the Denver metro area; (3) development of articulation agreements with community colleges throughout Colorado; (4) consortium agreements with other western states through the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program; and (5) new retention programs, such as the Freshman Year Initiate program and the Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration program. Furthermore, in the past ten years, the public evolution of Mesa State’s image from a two-year community college into an established four-year institution has attracted new students.

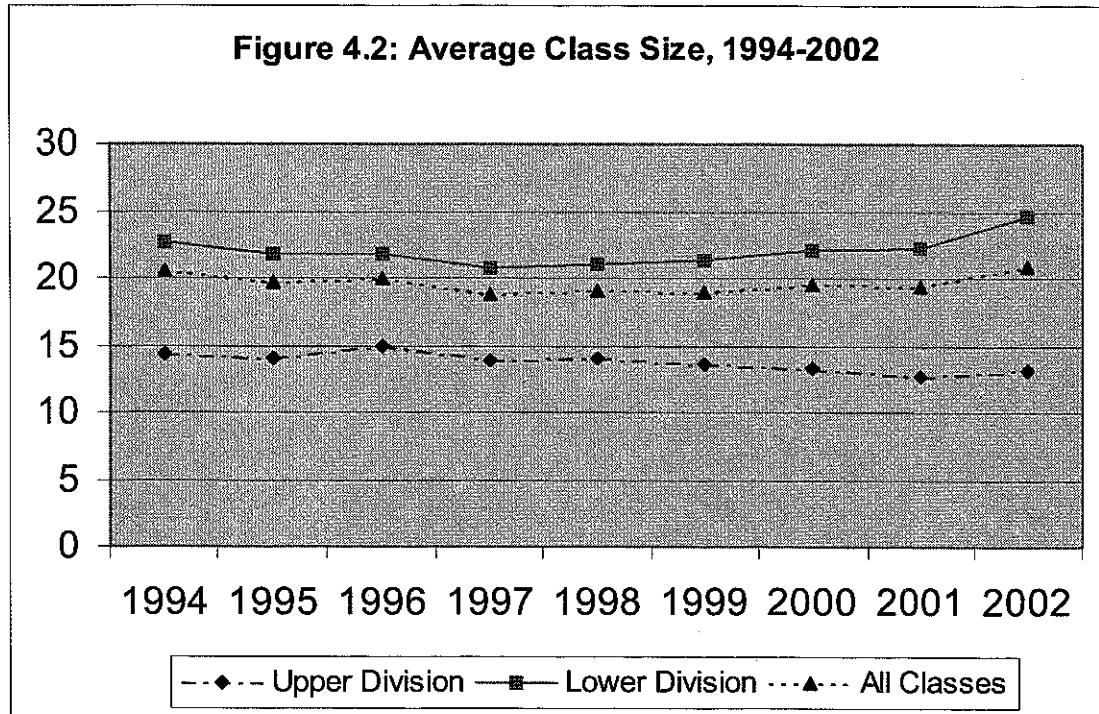
Enrollment growth at Mesa State College is expected to continue at about 2% per year (*Facilities Master Plan*). Since only a small part of the county’s growth is in new college-age students, growth at Mesa State is expected to develop primarily from increased interest in new programs, night and evening classes, and new graduate programs. It is anticipated that Mesa State’s growth will be the result of the quality of its programs, both new and existing, and the College’s increasing emphasis on student retention and success.

### **Class Sizes**

Mesa State College has always prided itself on its practice of offering small classes, taught by qualified personnel. This remains true. The small classes, however, have gradually been getting larger. As Figure 4.2 indicates, average academic class sizes dropped slightly until fall, 1998, when they started getting larger again. Lower division courses, especially in some disciplines that serve as general education requirements, have grown the fastest. In fall of 2002, average lower division class size jumped from 22.22 to 24.57. This 11% increase is manageable, but could become a real problem if the trend continues. To



some extent, the increase in lower division classes has been offset by decreases in upper division class size, which reached its ten-year low point at 12.27 in fall, 2001, before increasing to 13.74 in fall, 2002 (Class Capacity Final Report).



### Services to Students

The environment of Mesa State College encourages and allows students to develop socially as well as educationally. Academic Services provides quality opportunities for students to increase their skills and competencies in academic and vocational areas, and in areas related to developing and improving self-understanding, interpersonal relations, realistic decision-making, value clarification, and establishment of life goals.

Mesa State hosts two programs to help students adjust to college life. The Freshman Year Initiative (FYI) is a week-long, 2-credit course offered at the beginning of each semester to help students cope with the

academic challenges of college. It features sessions on time management, library resources, note- and test-taking skills, use of computer labs, and accessing other resources on campus. Follow up sessions for FYI participants continue throughout their first semester at Mesa. The Program for Achieving Scholastic Success (PASS) is a year-long program designed to help at-risk students improve their academic skills and succeed at Mesa State. PASS participants enroll in selected courses, participate in personal development workshops, and are assigned a mentor. The individual attention helps students gain a better understanding of the College's expectations of them and of what it takes to stay in college and graduate.

Mesa State has had a long-standing problem with retention. The one-year retention rate for the 2000 freshman class was 60.3%. The retention rate for minorities was higher than for the cohort as a whole (Overview of Responses to 2002-03 QIS Report). The national average one-year persistence rate (the rate of retention for all students, not just freshmen) is 71.9% (Institutional Graduation Rates). Although Mesa State's rate has been increasing relative to the national rate, more improvement is expected. The College has taken a multi-pronged approach to student retention, including recruiting, admitting, and enrolling the best students possible.

The assumption, generally, is that low retention rates constitute a problem, but two caveats to that assumption have been raised. First, not all students are prepared for college at the time they enter. It should also be noted that not all students plan to complete degrees at MSC in the shortest time possible. Some plan to transfer to other schools or expect to complete their education as their finances or other factors dictate. A useful study would be to sample incoming freshmen to determine their plans so that the College could better judge whether it is properly serving its students.

The College has instituted the Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR) program to raise retention rates. One of the goals of SOAR is to simplify the processes of advising and registration for freshmen and transfer students. Students attend several sessions during the half day-long program that offers seminars on various aspects of college life, Accuplacer assessing, and class registration, among other activities. Students interact with faculty throughout the process. Fifteen sessions were held between April and August of 2003. Over 1,270 students participated in the SOAR program before the first day of classes of the 2002-2003 school year.

Academic Services also offers two college success courses to help with retention. College Preparatory Reading (SUPP 090) is designed to assist the student in his or her quest to get the most out of college-level reading. Introduction to Higher Education (SUPP 101) introduces students to the resources of Mesa State College and helps them understand the academic skills essential to succeed. Services for students with documented physical or learning disabilities are available through Educational Access Services. Services can include volunteer note takers, monitored testing, and taped textbooks.

Each tenure-track and tenured faculty member is expected to advise students. Faculty advisors provide academic advising to students who have declared a major or who are transferring in with more than 45 semester hours. Each major is associated with one of the four schools. One of the by-products of the SOAR program is a revision of the process of assigning students to advisors. Before SOAR, students sometimes felt that the process of finding and meeting with an advisor was confusing. SOAR matches students with an advisor during their very first semester and encourages frequent meetings—at least once each semester.

The College has organized most of its services for student success under the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. This branch of the College is responsible for ensuring that students are

properly admitted and afforded appropriate assistance in attaining their educational objectives. The staff in the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management assists students by (1) providing an advocacy voice for students as it relates to college services and programs that impact students' lives; (2) lending an ear to problems encountered by students and making appropriate referrals for resolution; (3) mediating conflict between students and organizations; (4) assisting students in making life decisions; (5) serving as an intermediary for student grievances; (6) providing leadership training for students and organizations; (7) connecting students to campus resources designed to enhance their college experience; (8) fostering cultural diversity and inclusiveness through needs assessment and program development; (9) enforcing the application of the Student Campus Code of Conduct; and (10) assisting in crisis management (<http://www.mesastate.edu/sl/dean/>).

To address a problem identified by NCA in its 1994 Report of a Visit to Mesa State College, a Math Lab and a Writing Center were created to supplement student learning. The Math Lab had 4,209 student usage hours in 2001/02. The Writing Center held 395 tutorial sessions in the 2002 academic year, with an additional 42 online tutorials. The Peer Tutoring program provided tutoring to 958 students who need extra help with difficult coursework.

To address another concern from the 1994 NCA accreditation report, Mesa State introduced a program called Mesa@ Night to coordinate a full range of night and weekend services for non-traditional students. It provides extended hours and a one-stop center for coordinating all the necessary steps to enroll at Mesa State College, including academic advising, financial aid, and course registration. Access to courses offered at off-campus sites and at non-traditional times has increased to 369 sections with an enrolled student headcount of 6,726 (QIS 2002-2003 Report). (Note: This figure reflects the number of

students enrolled in all classes. A student taking 3 classes would be counted 3 times in this head count.)

Many student clubs and organizations exist at Mesa State College. Students clubs include professional, academic, and social clubs. Currently, Mesa State College has over 60 active clubs on campus that allow students to meet other students who share similar interests.

The 1994 NCA report indicated that the College should “offer a full complement of career placement services.” In the intervening years, MSC has met this recommendation. The Advising and Career Center (ACC), formerly the Employment Search Center and the Advising and Career Planning Office, assists students and alumni in attaining their career and educational goals. Career counseling and assessments, as well as employment preparedness workshops, sharpen students’ job-searching strategies. ACC maintains a listing of both on-campus and off-campus job openings. A spring career fair has attracted as many as 60 employers to campus. ACC also assists employers in implementing their recruitment strategies. The Advising and Career Center employees 2.5 professional staff, plus student assistants. In 2002-2003, the Center helped 1,257 students as well as several community members and employers (Advising and Career Center, <http://www.mesastate.edu/sl/acc/index.htm>).

Campus Recreation Services provide a variety of programs and services that contribute to the health and well-being of the students of Mesa State College. Two examples of these programs are the Intramural Sports Program and Club Sports. Intramural sports include flag football, softball, volleyball, basketball, indoor and outdoor soccer, ultimate Frisbee, disc golf, badminton, tennis, racquetball, and swimming. Club sports include cycling, rodeo, rugby, and track.

A student-run Wellness Center was established in 1995 to provide private assessment of overall fitness for faculty, staff, and students. The service includes assessments, exercise prescription, and consultation.

In the fall of 2002, 42% of first-time freshmen, and 18% of all undergraduates, lived on campus. The College's four residence halls and one apartment complex provide several services to make the students' academic and personal lives successful and safe. All residence halls have 24 hour secured doors. Handicapped accessible rooms are available for students with special needs. All residence halls have a study lounge or an intensive study floor. Three of the residence halls are equipped with a computer lab. Each student has access to phone, cable, and data connector lines. The residence halls provide students with free access to laundry facilities. Students can check out cleaning equipment and supplies, as well as VCRs and games, from the front desk.

Counseling services are contracted by PsychHealth Associates, P.C., located near campus. The contract allows each interested student six free counseling visits. In 2001-2002, 152 students sought these services. The center also provides alcohol and drug education presentations for staff, faculty and students. The AWARE program staff (A Wellness Approach to Resources and Education) is available to make presentations to student groups, classes, and faculty or departments, on topics related to substance abuse.

### **Human Resources Conclusion**

Mesa State College faculty, staff, and students all are highly motivated, well qualified, and dedicated to the Institution. The organization of the human elements has had to be incredibly effective in order for the College to succeed in an adverse financial situation. Morale is amazingly high, given the circumstances, and respect among colleagues is widespread, as is individual job satisfaction. Students have numerous opportunities to succeed, and the College has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving student retention and minority recruitment.

Issues involving communication between administration and faculty need to be addressed constantly. Furthermore, a long-term price

might be paid for low salaries, limited resources, and high workloads. It is difficult even for talented and dedicated personnel to continue to do more things for more people with fewer resources.

### ***Facility Resources***

Mesa State College has four separate facility locations: the Main Campus, the Unified Technical Education Campus (UTEC), the South Campus, and the Montrose Campus. The first three sites are located in Grand Junction. The fourth is located in Montrose, a town of about 13,000 people 60 miles southeast of Grand Junction. The four campuses that comprise Mesa State College support a safe physical facility conducive to teaching and learning. *The Facilities Master Plan Amendment* describes the strategic facilities planning and development at these locations. This plan is revised approximately every six years and requires approval by the Board of Trustees as well as CCHE. The last amendment to this document was made in 2001 and is currently awaiting CCHE approval. This amendment was developed to support the goals outlined in the original *Facilities Master Plan* and *Academic Master Plan*.

### **Physical Plant**

**The Main Campus.** Commercial and residential zones surround the main campus. Since 1994, four new major capital construction projects have been completed on the main campus resulting in three new buildings with expenses so far totaling over \$31,000,000. These projects have added much needed laboratory space, new auditoriums, renovated classrooms, studio space for the fine arts, and a new residence hall. In addition, extensive work on the technology infrastructure was completed.

Houston Hall is the main classroom building. Houston Hall also houses Academic Services. Administrative offices and student services such as financial aid, registration, and advising are housed in Lowell Heiny Hall. The two newest buildings on campus are the Moss

Performing Arts Center and the Fine Arts Building. The Science Center, with new laboratory space, has also been recently completed. The main campus is also the site for Tomlinson Library, four residence halls and one apartment complex, the Student Life Center, the Student Recreation Center and Saunders Field House. Various annexes and modular units tenanted by faculty and staff are spread across the campus.

Ralph Stocker Memorial Stadium lies across the street from the main campus. This football stadium with a quarter-mile track adjoins Sam Suplizio Baseball Field. Although owned by the city of Grand Junction, both Mesa State College and the local school district use the athletic facilities in a unique cooperative agreement. Mesa State's outdoor graduation is held in Stocker Stadium. Suplizio Field also is the annual home of the national championship series for junior college baseball (JUCCO).

For the past seven years, Mesa State College has purchased property as part of a planned expansion (Expansion Map). Since 1996, the Mesa State College Foundation has spearheaded the Campus Expansion Project, a fund raising campaign to purchase properties west of the main campus. Approximately forty properties have been purchased at the cost of \$5 million. The City of Grand Junction agreed to commit \$250,000 per year over a ten-year period to match College fund raising activities for expansion. Since 1996, the City has contributed \$2,000,000 to campus expansion. In addition, Mesa County has contributed \$50,000 per year for a total of \$400,000 to date. For their participation in this unique partnership, both the City and the County have been nominated for the International City/County Management Associate Award for Outstanding Public/Private Partnerships. Winner of the award will be announced in fall, 2003.

**Student Recreation Center.** On the main campus, the Student Recreation Center and its many programs promote a healthy environment. The 32,000 square foot Student Recreation Center was completed in



January 1996 at a cost of \$3.6 million. Auxiliary funds from the student body paid the entire cost. Saunders Field House was renovated at the same time for an additional \$2.2 million that was financed by the State (Proposed Referendum: Student Recreation and Fitness Center).

**Residence Halls.** The main Mesa State campus has four residence halls and one apartment complex, housing 18% of undergraduates. The most recent addition, Monument Hall, was an auxiliary funded \$5 million project (New Residence Hall Facilities Program Plan). The three older residence halls (Mary Rait, Pinon, and Jay Tolman) and Walnut Ridge apartments have recently had their technology infrastructure improved. Installment of fiber optic cable has increased resident computer use capabilities. A bond refinancing process has recently been approved that will make repairs and safety improvements to Jay Tolman, Mary Rait, and Pinon halls.

In general, controlled maintenance has been well funded by the State of Colorado in the Mesa system. Since 1994, over \$4 million has been spent on projects involving building repairs and maintenance.

**The Unified Technical Education Campus.** UTEC, a 12 acre campus about 3 miles northwest of the main campus, is located in an industrial business park. Buildings include two classroom/shop buildings and two module or annex units. UTEC's goal is to teach, train, retrain and upgrade skills in such areas as culinary arts, engineering technology, communications technology, manufacturing, administrative office technology, criminal justice, and transportation technology. The Campus provides coursework leading to the associate of science degree, associates of applied science degrees, and certificates of occupational proficiency.

**The South Campus.** A now-discontinued agricultural program once occupied this 151 acre site south of the city. The one building on the property, the Industrial Energy Training Center, currently functions as classroom for training electrical linemen and for overall Mesa State storage.

**The Montrose Campus.** For classroom space, Mesa State leases a renovated elementary school immediately south of downtown Montrose. As noted in the *Facilities Master Plan Amendment*, the current facility does not contain enough space for laboratories or faculty offices. Mesa State and the city of Montrose have been discussing expansion possibilities.

### **Safe and Healthy Environment for Students**

Between 1996 and 2000, Mesa State College had its own police force. The force was disbanded in 2000 and replaced with a service contract with the Grand Junction Police Department. A Grand Junction Police Department Substation, located on the Mesa State College Campus, has access to a full array of services including SWAT, investigations, forensic investigation, victims' assistance, laboratory facilities, and records. The Grand Junction Police Department has authority to enforce all federal, state, and local laws as well as official policies of Mesa State College as Level I Peace Officers (Public Safety and Police Services Annual Report).

The presence of twenty-four hour police supervision and a visible program to enhance public safety awareness has paid dividends with low crime rates on the campus (Public Safety and Police Services Annual Report). The Grand Junction Police Department Substation has supported student-sponsored programs that have increased campus safety awareness, such as the installation of Code Blue emergency phones, the investigation into lighting improvements, the distribution of whistles to be used in order to draw attention to a crime situation, and the implementation of a program to walk people to their cars at night.

Mesa State College also has developed a comprehensive series of plans to deal with emergency operations in the event of catastrophes, which might include fires, chemical spills, radiological emergencies, bomb threats, and natural disasters (Emergency Operations Response

Plans, 4-14). The College emergency plan is coordinated with the Mesa County Emergency Response Program.

A Campus Safety Committee comprised of faculty, staff, administration, and student members meets periodically to review College safety operations and to recommend changes in procedures that will enhance the safety of campus life.

### **Academic Resources and Equipment.**

**Classrooms.** Since 1992, Mesa State has made a concerted effort to improve the availability of technology in its classrooms. In 1992, there were no “smart” classrooms. Since that time, with funding from several competitive state technology grants and a technology infrastructure capital construction project, all permanent classrooms at Mesa State are “technology enhanced” and have computer and video projection capabilities, as well as Internet connections.

Colorado has a formula that determines classroom utilization. This plan, in turn, is used to determine priority recommendation for funding new and renovated facilities. According to this guideline, while the classroom capacity on all Mesa State campuses is at 75.5%, the Main Campus is using 86.6% of its classroom capacity. *The Facilities Master Plan* predicts that there will be a critical need for a new classroom facility in the next few years if current growth trends continue at Mesa. A new classroom facility is described in Chapter Six of this *Self-Study Report*.

**Science and Computer Laboratories, Mass Communication Studios, Performing and Fine Arts Facilities.** The Science Center provides a state-of-the-art learning center for students, including various laboratory facilities. Each of the residence halls on campus houses a computer lab, as does Tomlinson Library. The Mass Communications Department features a TV studio, editing suites and a computer lab. Mass Communication now operates a new, digital three-camera television studio, in addition to two digital video studios and one digital audio

production studio. Eighteen practice studios, rehearsal rooms, and labs support music students. In addition to the main theater space, the new Moss Performing Arts Center houses an experimental "black box" theater and an acting/movement room. There are seven laboratory spaces in the Art Department and two in Graphic Arts. Three studio laboratory classrooms are dedicated to the 3-dimensional arts including ceramics and a bronze foundry. Six studio classrooms accommodate printmaking, painting, drawing, fibers, art education, illustration, and graphic art students. The Fine Arts facility also includes a 62 seat lecture hall.

**Distance Education.** Mesa State has a compressed video classroom in the library and another at the Montrose campus. To date the College has initiated or received over 60 for-credit and over 40 non-credit videoconferences in these classrooms. These courses cover many disciplines including Psychology, English, Teacher Education, and Business Administration.

This year Mesa State has added a second distance classroom on the main campus that will be based on newer ATM and Microwave technology that allows for full motion audio and video between select numbers of sites.

**John U. Tomlinson Library.** "The mission of the Tomlinson Library is to advance the academic and technical education endeavors of Mesa State College by providing quality information resources and services that support the instructional and research needs of the campus and, secondarily, of the community." As part of an ongoing strategic planning process, the Library articulated five goals in 1998: (1) implement new information and instructional technologies; (2) build scholarly and special collections; (3) promote services and materials to the user community; (4) provide instruction in using informational resources; and (5) establish cooperative agreements with other libraries and groups to enhance resources and services (Library and Media Services Information Report, Strategic Planning).

The John U. Tomlinson Library, an attractive, 69,000 square foot facility well-situated on the main campus, was built in 1986. Pilings are in place for an additional 10,000 square feet of space that was deleted from the original construction plan. In another five years, the library will need additional stack space. Part of the building's external brickwork is in need of substantial repair or replacement, as is the HVAC control system. Plans are in place for correcting the physical problems.

The current collection contains roughly 300,000 monographs, 900,000 microforms, 13,000 maps, and a growing set of online resources. Since 1995, the book collection grew by 23% despite an ambitious weeding program. Several other collections grew as well. The non-print AV collection dropped substantially, but that was due to weeding of the slide, filmstrip and film collections. The focus of the non-print collection is now on video, DVD, CD's, and other more current technologies. The staff has made a commitment to switching indexes, abstracts, and journals from paper to online format.

The Library has made a commitment to implement appropriate information technologies. The building houses 79 PCs; 53 are dedicated to public use and some use wireless connections. A student computer lab also is available, as well as ten stations on the third floor. A new state-of-the-art Innovative Interfaces Millennium online catalog was introduced in the summer of 2001. Further, the Library has put substantial effort into the design of web pages based on usability testing.

The Library's budget is 5.1% of the overall campus budget. In the past decade, the Library's materials budget increased by 14% to \$400,367. The bulk of that increase came in 1997/98 to support the new MBA graduate program. The operating budget has had a 2% increase since 1992. Personnel costs have increased by 78% to \$942,303. The Library added four positions: two in reference, one in circulation, and one in technical services.

The College continues to work closely with the Montrose Regional Library District to provide services to the Montrose Campus. The Library selects and houses materials at Montrose. The Montrose Public Library provides reference, instruction, circulation, reserves, and interlibrary loan to Mesa State students. Emphasis has been placed on purchasing online materials that fit the Montrose Campus curriculum, such as *CQ Researcher*, *Facts.com*, and *SIRS Researcher*.

**Information Technology.** Mesa State College has aggressively built its information technology structure over the past fifteen years. The Computer and Network Systems unit provides the basic support for the technology on all three wired campuses: Main, Montrose and UTEC. This includes all student labs, networks, PCs, servers, user support, software, hardware, wide-area networks, and security. All permanent classrooms have College network and Internet access as well as multi-media presentation equipment. All residence halls have network, Internet, and cable TV access. All administrative offices, conference rooms, and auditoriums have college network and Internet access. The infrastructure has grown to include over 1,100 PCs with a Gigabit Ethernet fiber backbone serving the entire campus. One quarter of these PC's are in classrooms and student labs. This infrastructure appears to be adequately fulfilling the needs of the College mission at this time.

The telecommunications unit oversees the on-campus telephone switch, all telephone services, all network cabling, and all wide area network services coming into the College. Operator services, billing, adds, moves and changes, as well as long distance telephone service for the residence halls, also are provided. The unit is an enterprise auxiliary and is self-supporting.

The *Technology Master Plan Amendment* outlines recent progress in various technology upgrades at Mesa including extensive network expansion and Ethernet upgrades. The plan also identifies funding requests for three projects: WEBCT Enhancement, Document Imaging,

and Technology Operations Maintenance. Information Technology is a part of a technology triad that includes Media Services and the Center for Teaching and Learning. These three services work together closely to meet the College's strategic objectives.

Since 1992, Media Services has moved from a traditional audio-visual services model to a modern technology-based model while maintaining traditional capabilities. This has involved obtaining and integrating computer multimedia technologies into existing equipment and services. Media Services maintains a full array of computer-based and traditional audio-visual equipment for use in instruction. This includes portable data projectors and laptops, digital cameras, camcorders, overhead projectors, slide projectors, TV's, VCRs, DVDs, and audio equipment.

The Center for Teaching and Learning was established in 1997. It serves as a training service for faculty in the use of instructional technology and offers a wide range of faculty development opportunities. By the 2001-2002 academic year, the Center was offering more than 40 instructional technology sessions and 5-10 faculty development seminars per semester.

### **Facility Resources Conclusion**

The facilities at Mesa State are one of the strengths of the College. Since 1994, the increase in capital construction expenditures has been significant.

The library is another strength of the College. The staff members are hard working, innovative, comfortable with change, and dedicated to the highest standards of patron service. They have been willing to take risks. For instance, they were pioneers of small academic libraries in Colorado venturing into E-journals and E-books. Tomlinson Library is a very heavily used facility. Patron measures show a high rating of success. A 1997 survey of 1,291 patrons found that 31% of users rated the library

as good, 45% as very good, and 10% as excellent. In a 2002 survey of 1,231 patrons, 34% of users rated the library as good, 40% as very good and 11% as excellent. In 2002, a Graduating Senior Survey indicated the Library was used by 91% of graduating seniors. The Library was the most heavily used facility on campus and was rated among the top 5 service institutions on campus (Library and Media Services Information Report).

Mesa State is concerned about support for the Tomlinson Library collection. State funding rescissions have seriously jeopardized the library's ability to procure the new materials necessary to support the scholarship and research interests of students and faculty.

Another major facilities concern is that the Main Campus is running out of classroom space. Program growth could be impeded by this impending lack of space.

Another concern is that most of the technology obtained and installed by Mesa State has been made possible through one-time funding sources. Replacement, repair, and upgrade of this technology and associated facilities may be difficult with current revenue sources and budget concerns.

## ***Financial Resources***

### **Limited Resources**

Pressure on operating funds and reserves is partly due to the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights (TABOR), which is a Tax and Expenditure Limitation (TEL). Twenty-six states currently employ TELs (New 3). Almost all TELs limit growth in state expenditures and revenues to state personal income growth. Unique to Colorado, however, is a much more stringent mechanism that limits the annual revenue ceiling to the prior year's actual receipts or TABOR limited revenue receipts, whichever is lower, plus the inflation rate, plus population growth in the Denver-Boulder area (New 12). The recent economic downturn in Colorado has had a catastrophic effect on higher education. In FY02, the shortfall in



Figure 4.3 depicts the total dollar amount of State funding for MSC from FY 1993 (includes fall semester, 1992, and spring semester, 1993) through FY 2004. The funding increased annually, from \$8,921,078 in FY 93 to \$15,865,136 in 2002. In FY 2003, State funding dropped by \$1,619,443. The projected increase for FY 2004 will put funding just over the FY 2001 mark (General Fund Appropriations Summary).

Figure 4.4 provides the amount of state funding per resident student. Counts for FY 2004 are based on an estimated 2.5% increase in resident students. Both by FTE and by headcount, the appropriations peaked in FY 2000. Projections for FY 2004 would put per-student funding at about the 1998 level (General Funds Appropriation Summary; FTE Comparisons; Headcount Comparisons). These figures are not adjusted for inflation; doing so would make the situation appear even more grim.

### **Pattern of Financial Expenditures**

In spite of funding limitations, the financial branch of Mesa State College has astutely managed resources to support both the facilities and the human resources necessary for effective teaching and learning. Figures from the Overview of Responses to the 2002 Quality Indicator System (QIS) Report Data show that Mesa State College's institutional support expenditures of \$613 per FTE student is at 49% of the established benchmark of \$1,246 (6). Mesa State spends 47.33% of its income on instruction. This is quite high compared with other institutions in Colorado: Adams State (39.25%), Fort Lewis (36.3%), and Western State (35.93%). Despite budget challenges and below average State funding compared with other Colorado institutions of higher education, Mesa State College has delivered a quality education to its students. The long-term goal for Mesa State College is to develop programs and policies to maintain financial viability.

Mesa State College's financial strategy is determined on an as-needed basis as a result of dynamic changes occurring at state and local levels. The Financial Resources Team includes the Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services, three faculty members, and one representative each from Intercollegiate Athletics and the Mesa State College Foundation. The Team's 1997 report outlined present and future guidelines and challenges facing Mesa State College. Its report discussed several areas that needed to be addressed to enhance fund development opportunities, ensure effective use of resources, and achieve other critical goals in the future. Some of the higher priority items include (1) establishing a clear priority of goals for the College; (2) increasing efforts in fund raising; (3) examining opportunities to increase traditional revenues through tuition by credit hour and course fees; (4) consolidating programs and developing cooperative arrangements with other institutions; (5) striving for an enrollment growth of 2-2.5% per year; (6) working at the state level to improve increases in tuition and state-appropriated funds; and (7) increasing student financial aid from all available sources.

Because such a large percentage of Mesa State's revenue comes from state-appropriated funds, downturns in the economy have dramatically challenged the College's effectiveness as a teaching institution. Over the course of the past three difficult years, Mesa's financial management team has managed funding to meet the goals of the College by reallocating funds, switching to less costly services, and cutting low impact service areas. The College appears to be at a threshold, however. Minor cuts and additional class fees can no longer buffer the continual budget shortfalls. The present long-term tactic is to promote stability by adding other methods of revenue enhancement, such as tuition increases, aggressive pursuit of grants and contracts, and increased support from the Foundation and alumni.

The State Auditor's Office engages an independent, external audit firm to conduct an annual audit of Mesa State College. These external auditors report back to the State Auditor's Office, which consolidates reports from all of the State Colleges and presents a unified report to the State Colleges in Colorado Colleges. In the last ten years Mesa has had consistently "clean" audits (Report of the State Auditor 1992-2002). Several other indicators attest to the College's financial viability. These include the increase in tuition revenue from increased enrollment, lack of bail-outs by the State Colleges' Trustees, a lack of transfers from auxiliaries to cover E & G expenses, and a positive fund balance.

### **Management of Financial Resources**

Several factors in the patterns of expenditure and financial management have promoted the College's general success. These include effective operating budget management, Quality Indicator System (QIS) success rates, priority attention to low faculty compensation rates, investment in academic programs, tuition, financial aid, and fund raising.

**Expenditure and Operating Budget.** The College publishes a detailed fiscal year operating budget annually that delineates the dollars allocated to all academic, auxiliary, and staffing enterprises. The budget is available on-line with detailed reporting options so that those with budget responsibility may view the status of their accounts in a timely manner. An aggressive "not sufficient funds" algorithm for purchases was instituted in the fall of 2002 to ensure that the various budgets are not overspent.

The fiscal 2001 current funds were approximately \$26 million compared to \$19 million in 1995, a 37% increase (Operating Budgets 1995 and 2002). Almost 100% percent of the resources available to Mesa State College for ongoing operations come from two sources—state appropriations and student tuition and fees. The state appropriation revenue has increased consistently from 1995 to 2001 in absolute dollars

and in total percent contribution. However, according to the most recent national data, Mesa State would need a \$10.4 million increase in funding to match the average funding for identified peer institutions. Also, Mesa would need \$4.1 million to match the level of funding provided to Colorado sister institutions (Role and Mission, 21-22). Tuition and fees and auxiliary enterprises have maintained their percent contribution as revenue sources while the federal grants and contracts percent contribution has decreased. The percent contributed by state grants and contracts increased slightly.

During the years from 1992 to 2001, Mesa State College successfully allocated its funds and fulfilled its goals of increased enrollment, tuition and fees, and financial aid. However, limited opportunities exist to increase revenues further because state policy makers are generally opposed to increasing taxpayer and student support of higher education via state appropriation money and higher tuition.

**Quality Indicator System.** The 1999 enactment of the Quality Indicator System (QIS) helped redefine Mesa State's fiscal priorities. Previous to the fiscal year 2001, the Board of Trustees allocated funding through General Fund Appropriations from the General Assembly through the Colorado Commission on Higher Education using the Budget Allocation Model (BAM). This was based primarily on enrollment with a 1-year lag, relative to funding received. Beginning in fiscal year 2001, the BAM allocation also included performance funding based on the QIS. The College rearranged priorities to maximize funding without sacrificing institutional integrity. Unfortunately, the percent funding that was based on performance indicators decreased from FY01 to FY02. The change was a disadvantage to Mesa State College because it had a high performance rating on QIS indicators. The QIS remains in place but was not used in FY03 because the Trustees decided the allocation of state-appropriated money was to be determined by the presidents of the State Colleges, (Mesa, Western and Adams). This approach was not in the best

interest of Mesa State College as appropriations were split almost in equal shares even though Mesa State has almost twice the enrollment of its sister colleges. Consistency in the system of appropriations is necessary for maximum efficiency in the College's financial planning.

**Capital Construction Costs.** The fund used for capital construction is separate from the general fund used to keep College academic programs running. Mesa State College has received a satisfactory amount of the capital construction money available in the State, due to consistent growth and good administrative relations with state legislators.

In the last ten years, Mesa State has procured \$31.8 million in capital construction and \$4.29 million in controlled maintenance projects (Controlled Maintenance Projects and Capital Construction Projects). In relation to its size and current growth rate, the College appears to have acquired a minimally adequate portion of the State's capital money.

**Faculty Compensation.** This is important for two reasons. It attracts high quality teachers and it results in greater retention of those teachers. Increasing faculty salaries was a high priority for the former College president who resigned in December of 2002. Salaries at Mesa State College are far below the average for equivalent schools. Mesa State is below its peer institutions in average salary matched by comparable experience and rank. Survey data on faculty salaries from the College and University Professional Association (CUPA) reported that Mesa State is significantly below the average in most disciplines and somewhat below the average in the remaining disciplines. Comparisons between national, state, and Mesa State College salaries are found in Table 4.2. When salaries for all full-time employees are compared, Mesa State averages about \$10,000 less per faculty member than similar colleges nationally, and about \$6,000 less than similar colleges in Colorado (See Table 4.2).

Because the school has been through several budget crisis years, the former President formed the Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF) to help protect salaries and maintain yearly raises. The charge of this Task Force was to find ways to cut costs and reallocate funds to top priority initiatives. The BATF was able to reallocate \$755,000 to support the Institution's teaching focus and to increase faculty salaries.

**Table 4.2: Mesa State College Faculty Salaries Compared to National and Other In-State Institutions**

	<u>National, Public Universities</u>	<u>Colorado, Public Universities</u>	<u>National, Public 4- year Institutions</u>	<u>Colorado, Public 4- year Institutions</u>	<u>Mesa State College</u>
Professor	\$82,344	\$78,954	\$69,641	\$63,630	\$57,210
Associate Professor	\$57,984	\$57,867	\$54,062	\$50,280	\$45,882
Assistant Professor	\$48,671	\$48,904	\$44,293	\$41,653	\$39,712
All	\$63,595	\$64,595	\$54,225	\$50,417	\$44,199

Source: AAUP 2002. *Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac Edition.*

A summary of productivity conducted by the University of Delaware comparing Mesa State with sister institutions indicates 88% of Mesa State's baccalaureate programs rank at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or above in productivity and 65% of their programs rank above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in productivity. The study further indicated that 80% of Mesa's program costs ranked in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to other institutions and 94% of their program costs ranked under the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (University of Delaware). The most probable cause is Mesa State's low faculty and administrative salaries. In spite of this pay inequity, however, Mesa State faculty is among the most productive and effective in the state.

This efficiency is very impressive from a financial standpoint, but additional costs and workloads for faculty may weaken the ability to provide the excellent service to students and citizens called for in the CCHE mission statement. Class sizes were increased in 2002-2003 in order to meet student demand. There were no faculty or exempt pay raises

in 2002-2003, nor are any expected for 2003-2004. In addition, health insurance rates rose substantially in 2002-2003 and are expected to go up again in 2003-2004. Though funds were found to meet this rise in insurance rates from January to June of 2003, there is no money to continue to this funding. This will result in a significant reduction in net pay for faculty at a time when they are being asked to teach larger classes and take on more advising responsibilities.

**Classified Staff.** Approximately one quarter of the employees at Mesa State College are state classified staff. Their terms of employment are governed by statewide policies and procedures, rather than policies that are created at the College level. The Colorado Constitution requires that the salary range for jobs within the classified system be based on an annual survey of comparable positions in the private sector. The legislature determines whether the annual salary survey will be funded, and at what level. If the survey is funded, these raises are mandated over all other institutional budgetary expenses. While other State agencies are generally funded to cover these mandated raises, higher education is not. For fiscal year 2002-2003, classified salary increases were mandated by the legislature, while there were insufficient funds available to provide increases for faculty and exempt staff. On the other hand, substantial salary savings were realized within the classified system through the permanent elimination of several positions, carrying vacancies in other positions, and a major reorganization of our Facilities Services Department. For fiscal year 2003-2004, the governor has banned raises for all classified employees in the state.

**Fund Raising.** Mesa State is looking for other sources of funding to decrease its reliance on State allocations and to increase its financial stability. Possibilities include: (1) grant funding for faculty, staff, and the institution as a whole for program support and research scholarship; (2) academic and athletic scholarships from outside sources; (3) support of

The Mesa State Foundation; and (4) expansion of the alumni support network.

The Office of Sponsored Programs and the Foundation have been successful in attracting support. The Alumni Office also has seen some big changes in the last few years. Greater emphasis on tracking and communicating with alumni has been a priority. The donations from alumni have increased from \$46,223 in 1998 to \$104,105 in 2001 (Memo—Alumni Giving and Membership). In addition, the database for Alumni has grown significantly and more efforts are being made to solicit alumni donations in coming years.

### **Financial Resource Conclusion**

Mesa State College has fulfilled its financial general institutional requirements (GIR's). The College has had clean audits in the last ten years, it has demonstrated appropriate allocation and use of its resources to support its educational programs, and the resultant management practices have demonstrated fiscal viability even during the leanest of times.

Limited state funding and increased costs in such areas as utilities and insurance will continue to impact the financial resources of the College. Despite the current limitations, however, the College has remained financially stable as a result of sound management practices. The result has been a college rated low in program costs and high in productivity. Future endeavors will include tactics to increase revenues by supporting current programs that are revenue builders and new programs and initiatives that will increase revenue, thus adding stability to the total annual revenue.

It is possible that the new governing board may allow Mesa State College more independent control of its financial decisions. The most important benefit in this would be securing all the money generated by



Mesa for Mesa's needs, instead of having its income funneled off to other institutions in the system. This change may help focus budget planning.

### **Strengths**

The mission of Mesa State College has guided its development into a strong multipurpose institution of higher education at a local and regional level. In the last ten years, in good and bad economic environments, Mesa State has continued to provide quality service to its students. The faculty, administration, and staff are dedicated to the College mission and have continued to be highly productive and efficient. Each resource described has been able to weather challenging situations because employees have maintained their commitment and morale. State wide, Mesa's reputation and visibility as a fine academic institution continues to grow. Mesa State College is strengthening its role as a Regional Education Provider. Surrounding communities are benefiting from program development in such areas as Glenwood Springs and Montrose. As a result of its academic integrity and geographical location, student enrollment is increasing annually.

With sufficient resources to support this growth, Mesa State College will become a stronger, self-sustaining institution. The financial management team has been highly effective in supporting the Institution's goals in the ten years since the last accreditation visit. Financial resources have been reassigned to support the educational mission of the College, and facilities have increased significantly. Mesa State's administration, faculty and staff have protected what is central to Mesa State College—teaching and learning—through creative management of its human, physical, and financial resources.

### **Challenges**

The key challenge is to find financial resources to keep pace with increasing costs. Mesa State College has reached a threshold at which increasing financial threats can no longer be feasibly dealt with using the

methods applied in the last ten years. The College will need to find new strategies for future effective institutional support. Chapter Six of this *Self-Study Report* will address some strategic possibilities for the future.

Elimination of classified and exempt positions has reduced costs but has resulted in heavier workloads and some decreased services. The grounds crew, for example, is not sufficiently staffed to maintain the campus in its previous condition. Some administrative functions have been left undone and others have been combined into other positions. When financial conditions improve, these positions should be restored.

Faculty salaries, traditionally low at Mesa State, now lag even further behind peer institutions. Although they are dedicated, faculty members are reaching the limit of doing more work for less pay.

The \$31.8 million in capital construction to facilitate Mesa's growth was crucial for continued expansion. The completion of Moss Performing Arts Center, the Science Center, and the Fine Arts building provided much needed classroom, laboratory, and office space, without which it would have been difficult to serve the growing student body. Money allocated to improving technology services enabled the College to develop a more extensive distance-learning program and, as a result, to expand its services as a Regional Education Provider to areas such as Montrose and Glenwood Springs. The College has acted in a financially responsible way to develop its educational services to the western slope. Two specific challenges Mesa State faces are finding funds to repair and maintain older buildings and determining how to balance increasing student enrollment with constant classroom space.

There is always room for improvement, and dynamic change is part of any successful educational institution. The College has successfully done more with less, but, if the current financial trends continue, each of the resource areas will begin to suffer.

### ***Responses to Past Challenges***

In the last ten years Mesa State College has had to make changes in response to the political and economic environment. The College has met many of the economic challenges by cutting less necessary or financially unsuccessful services like the auto body repair program and the campus police (replaced with a city police contract in its place). Staff scheduling and positions have been combined or cut to save money. When money was short, faculty members and exempt staff have gone without pay raises, and freezes on hiring temporarily have helped balance the budget.

Mesa State realizes that it must try to increase its fund raising efforts. Because the Grand Valley is a relatively small community, it does not have major corporations nearby from which to solicit large funds for facilities, endowments, and scholarships. The College has, however, created a new position—Sponsored Programs—to support grant acquisitions. The Mesa State College Foundation has expanded and trained its staff so as to be more proficient in local and regional fund raising. The Alumni Office is expanding its data bank of Mesa State graduates in order to tap them as a source of funding.

### ***Suggestions***

The past ten years have seen a number of possibilities emerge for the future of UTEC. One is that UTEC could become better integrated into the fabric of the College. Another is that UTEC could spin off from Mesa State and become the hub of a Community College of the Western Slope. Although movement has been in the former direction recently, these appear to be mutually exclusive goals. The College needs to make a firm commitment to some future regarding UTEC so that planning and developing higher education on the western slope can proceed efficiently.

A UTEC Task Force should be formed to consider the future of UTEC, beginning with an analysis of the costs and benefits of these two alternative scenarios. Additional possibilities might also be identified.

The Task Force should recommend a direction and five-year plan to achieve the goal it deems most beneficial to the College and its constituencies.

Representatives on the Task Force should include faculty, staff, and administration from all schools of the College, including Applied Technology, from the Montrose Center, and from the community. This Task Force should work closely with the Regional Education Provider Task Force, which was suggested in Chapter Two of this *Self-Study Report*, and should consider the *Academic Master Plan* and other prior planning documents. A draft report should be made available for comment by March, 2003, and a final report delivered to the College President in May, 2004.

Administrative positions affected by recent budget cuts should be monitored. Combination of the Dean of Enrollment Management and the Dean of Students into one position should be evaluated to determine whether or not that structure is working smoothly. The structurally anomalous position of the Director of Teacher Licensure has been changed, but the new structure should be reviewed.

A part of Mesa State's mission is to attract and retain a diverse student body. The QIS indicates that the College has not performed effectively in achieving this goal. In the past, Mesa State was able to fund recruiting efforts in larger metropolitan areas, but those funds have dried up. Though efforts are made, through organizations such as Lectures and Forums Committee and the Cultural Diversity Board, to promote activities that attend to the needs of a diverse student body, the College needs to continue to investigate innovative methods to attract and retain minority students.

Communication among senior administration, other staff, and faculty needs some attention. In particular, the various faculty committees could be better informed about what happens to their recommendations and why they are sometimes not followed. Because relatively new faculty

members serve on many of the major committees, the purpose, responsibility, and limitation of each committee should be clarified regularly by the Faculty Senate and the administration. The role of the Council of Chairs, too, requires clarification. The Faculty Senate should also consider the use of more campus-wide votes and referenda.

The format of the communications and committee structure has not been changed significantly since the College had a much smaller overall staff. As a smaller institution, the formal communications channels were supplemented by informal ones. The Faculty Senate, or some other body, might want to examine the adequacy of the current communication mechanisms.

### ***Conclusion***

The human, financial, and physical resources of Mesa State College have served student learning well over the course of the past ten years. Sacrifices and creative manipulations have been made by the faculty, staff, and administration to meet student needs in spite of financial cuts due to the recent State budget deficits. Mesa State is confident that it will continue to meet the needs of its constituencies if forthcoming financial support is reasonable. Without reasonable financial support, Mesa State will have to carefully prioritize its decisions about which programs to invest in and which programs to downsize or cut.

The financial challenges have come to a head at exactly the same point in time that the State is asking the College to increase its sphere of influence as a Regional Education Provider. The College has reached a zero-sum threshold that requires serious thinking about the possibility of maintaining its multi-faceted mission. The unprecedented budget rescissions of the past two years and the expectation of further funding difficulties over the next few years requires that the College carefully plan and prioritize. The College has been many things to many people in many places. In times of limited resources, care must be taken not to become over extended.

## **Chapter Five: Mesa State College is Accomplishing its Educational and Other Purposes**

In this chapter, the College presents evidence that it is fulfilling its mission to deliver excellence in education by fostering a climate of scholarship and intellectual curiosity, providing tools for career fulfillment and lifelong learning, and promoting leadership. The chapter also examines Mesa State's assessment policies, documenting the ways in which the college determines that its students, at all levels, are proficient and competent upon graduation, having mastered the knowledge and skills appropriate to both the general education requirements and the degrees they are granted. In addition, this section of the report evaluates the ways that faculty control the evaluation of student learning and the granting of academic credit. Finally, the chapter provides evidence for the ways Mesa State serves as a resource for community enrichment and development, supporting and interacting with its many constituents through the provision of various services and programs.

At Mesa State College, student-centered learning is the keystone from which all core values and traditions emanate. This chapter provides evidence that Mesa State College is properly delivering and evaluating its educational programs and striving to achieve excellence. Along with constant evaluation of its current educational programs, Mesa State is in the process, through program review and other measures, of evaluating its capability to support and advance all the facets of its very broad mission, especially in these difficult financial times. The College is aware of the fact that the primacy of its core purpose—offering a broad liberal arts-based curriculum in an environment fostering close faculty-student interaction—means that commitment to general education, the foundation of its success in all of its other programs, is essential.

### ***Appropriate Educational Programs***

Mesa State College's educational programs are appropriate to an institution of higher education. In this section, data are presented in four areas that support this assertion: (1) courses of study in the academic programs are clearly defined, coherent, and intellectually rigorous; (2) programs include courses and/or activities whose purpose is to stimulate the examination and understanding of personal, social, and civic values; (3) faculty and students participate in scholarship and research as part of the programs; (4) programs require intellectual interaction between student and faculty and encourage it between student and student.

### **Clearly Defined, Coherent, and Rigorous Academic Programs**

Academic programs at Mesa State College are the foundation of student-centered learning. Course descriptions are clearly defined in the *Mesa State College Catalog* and also may be found electronically on the College website at [www.mesastate.edu/main/academics/courseinfo/courseinfo.htm](http://www.mesastate.edu/main/academics/courseinfo/courseinfo.htm). Courses are grouped into programs of study leading to the academic degrees offered by the Institution. These programs of study also are presented in the catalog and electronically at the site given above. In addition, program sheets are available to all students in the program offices. These sheets provide a clear definition of what courses students need to take and suggest a sequence for course work to promote timely progress through the curriculum. The program requirements also are grouped into the *Handbook for Advising*, which is used by the advising counselors and faculty advisors as a tool for helping students create a degree plan that will guide them through their education.

Programs of study are coherent. They follow a natural progression that begins with a solid foundation provided by introductory courses. Subsequent required courses build upon this foundation, increasing a student's awareness of the skills needed to understand and use the

knowledge of the discipline. Elective courses are available in all programs of study. These courses are related to the required core, yet provide students the opportunity to learn more specific knowledge about areas within a discipline.

Intellectual rigor is measured in several ways. Before any program is approved at Mesa State, it must be reviewed at a number of levels to assure not only intellectual rigor, but also consistency with the role and mission of the Institution.

The faculty controls the initiation of new programs and the first steps of the approval process. Proposed programs are presented to, and approved by, a faculty Curriculum Committee. This takes the form of a concept paper that outlines the need for the program within the region served by Mesa State, courses of study within the program, and measures that will be used to assess student outcomes. After an institutional recommendation is made to approve the program, the concept paper is reviewed by the Trustees. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education provides final authorization for the program of study. Once the concept paper is approved, the complete proposal is developed by the faculty and a similar review process is required.

All programs of study at Mesa State undergo internal and external program reviews on a staggered seven-year cycle. However, the faculty is continually reviewing the effectiveness of programs to meet the needs of the students. This review includes assessment of student educational outcomes. More detail about the assessment process at Mesa State will be presented later in this chapter.

National accrediting bodies guide many of the programs of study at Mesa State. The nursing program is accredited by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The radiologic technology program is accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology. Programs leading to teacher licensure are guided by the standards of discipline-based national organizations. Mesa State College



is in the process of seeking accreditation from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), with the site visit scheduled for spring 2004. Programs in the School of Business and Professional Studies are seeking accreditation from AACSB International. They are currently in a pre-candidacy phase and will apply for candidacy in fall, 2003. Programs in culinary arts, transportation, computer drafting technology, manufacturing and machining, and communications technology have been developed and are guided by the standards of their respective national professional societies. The music programs are in the self-study phase for accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The K-12 physical education program is guided by the standards of the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE). The Athletic Training Program is accredited by the National Athletic Training Association (NATA). The computer science program has developed its curriculum of study according to the guidelines of the Joint Task Force on Computing Curricula, a joint effort of the IEEE Computer Society and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM).

Providing courses of study and academic programs that are rigorous, coherent, and intellectually challenging is central to the core value of Mesa State's mission to strive for the highest standards of academic excellence. Meeting appropriate accreditation guidelines is one way to provide continuous assessment of some programs.

It is important not only to offer quality programs, but, especially in a time of limited resources, to be assured that the right programs are being offered, and that the resources are best utilized to support those programs. In spring of 2003, as called for in the *Academic Master Plan*, the College conducted a Program Prioritization study for the first time in more than a decade. Results of this study will now be used to allocate academic resources.

## Consideration of Personal, Social, and Civic Values

Mesa State is committed to providing students with a rigorous intellectual education. Equally important, however, is that students receive an appreciation for their role as citizens of the local, national, and global communities. To this end, the Institution holds as a core value the importance that students exercise and embrace leadership by “promoting a sense of personal responsibility, citizenship, individual integrity, strong work ethic, loyalty, and sound judgment.”

Promotion of personal, social, and civic values is accomplished in a variety of ways. The development of general education at Mesa State has been guided by a nine-fold set of objectives. These are highlighted in the *Mesa State College Catalog* and include expectations that a graduate should:

1. Be able to communicate effectively in the English language,
2. Possess mathematical skills,
3. Be aware of the great moral, ethical, and philosophical questions which have endured through the ages,
4. Have some knowledge of the origins of our own culture and the existence of others,
5. Be able to think critically and recognize issues across a broad spectrum of subjects,
6. Understand the complexities of our social, economic and political environment,
7. Have a familiarity with the scientific approach to the biological, psychological, and physical universe,
8. Appreciate the contributions of literature to our perception of ourselves and our world,
9. Appreciate the aesthetic spirit of mankind through a study of some aspect of the performing and visual arts (51).

Four of the nine general education expectations address the desire to instill in Mesa State students an awareness of their place within the global community. General education requirements for baccalaureate students include six semester hours in the humanities chosen from history, literature, and philosophy and six semester hours in social and behavioral sciences chosen from anthropology, economics, geography,

political science, sociology, and psychology. Examples of approved general education courses that address personal, social, and civic values include “Comparative Politics,” “Social Problems,” “Chemistry and Society,” and “Computers in Society.” Courses within programs also address these issues. The biology program offers a course in bioethics, which explores the interaction of an individual within a society and ecosystem by examining the significance of being human, the translation of ethical beliefs into public policy, and the direction and control of science. One of the goals of the business administration program is to instill in students an awareness of the international environment, social responsibility and professional business conduct. To accomplish this goal, social responsibility, ethics, business conduct, and the international environment are discussed regularly in over 85% of the program’s courses.

Students who receive scholarships from Mesa State are expected to provide 50 hours of community service per year. This takes many forms, including working with social organizations and educational outreach to K-12 students. Approximately 12% of the student body participates in scholarship service activities. Community outreach is not limited to these students. Service clubs and organizations participate in food and toy drives. Mathematics and science students provide enrichment programs for K-12 students to increase awareness of math, science, and technology.

The College believes that providing opportunities for experiential learning is a valuable way to reinforce classroom instruction. Internships and practica are integral parts of many programs and provide a means to enhance learning through application while giving students an appreciation for the role their discipline plays in society. In Colorado’s Quality Indicator System (QIS), individual institutions are allowed to add two indicators to the standard measures used in all institutions. Mesa State chose to be judged on the participation of students in co-curricular

experiences. The college met its goal, with 75% of graduates participating in such a learning experience (*Response to CCHE's QIS Data Report 6*).

Examples of internships available to students at Mesa State are numerous and students in several programs throughout the Institution participate. In the sciences, biology and environmental science students work with government scientists from the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Division of Wildlife on natural resource projects of interest to the region served by Mesa State. In the School of Business and Professional Studies, the internship program provides students with an opportunity for interaction with the business community. Human Performance and Wellness students are provided local and national internship opportunities.

In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, a number of programs provide internship opportunities. Mass Communications students are required to participate in an internship as part of the curriculum. Students from this program work at the radio and television stations in the Grand Junction area. The history faculty has added a course, "HIST 499-History Internship" to the curriculum. This course resulted from the desire to add additional hands-on experiences to students' classroom learning. Students receive experience with historical work in museums, archives, and local, state, and federal agencies. The psychology program provides students enrolled in the counseling concentration practica with local community organizations. Political science majors have served as interns in the U.S. Congress, Colorado State Legislature, and local governments. An international internship was arranged for one student to work with the Ecuadorian Parliament. In sociology, students in the human services and criminology concentrations have the opportunity for service learning through internship programs.

These are just some examples of the applied learning opportunities that Mesa State College provides its students. Clearly there is a desire on the part of the faculty to develop and nurture these

opportunities. Consistent with a core value of promoting a sense of personal responsibility and citizenship, the Institution feels that applied service learning, as a supplement to the classroom, is an excellent means to enhance the expertise of students and instill in them a sense of perspective about their role as citizens in their community.

### **Participation in Scholarship and Research**

An institution of higher education should not only pass on existing knowledge but also acquire new knowledge. At Mesa State College, research and scholarship are student-centered and meant to enhance the educational experience of the students. Research opportunities for students have expanded exponentially in the last five years. This dramatic increase was the result of several initiatives by the College. Senior administration recognized faculty work with students on research and scholarship as a valued part of faculty workload. Faculty members are now given workload credit for the development of undergraduate research projects as well as actual mentoring of students. An Office of Sponsored Programs was established and a person with extensive experience in grants administration was hired as the director. This office has greatly facilitated the faculty in identifying grant opportunities and helps with all aspects of pre- and post-award activities. In FY00, faculty at Mesa State directed externally funded research projects totaling less than \$100,000. By July 1 of 2003, thanks largely to help from this Office, the total had grown to about \$2.7 million.

Undergraduate research is an important part of many programs of study at Mesa State. The College is located in the middle of one of the most geologically diverse regions in the world and the geology faculty is very active in engaging students in research. Students from the geology program have presented papers at regional and national professional society meetings. They have appeared as co-authors on papers in peer-reviewed journals. This exposure has helped the geology program grow,

and graduate programs from around the country now are seeking its graduates. A similar situation exists for students in the biology program, in which students have won national recognition for their research projects at Beta Beta Beta meetings and now are attending top-tier graduate schools.

In the social and behavioral sciences, students conduct faculty-directed research and routinely present their results at regional professional society meetings. Faculty in social and behavioral sciences edit two journals in which student papers may be published. One of the goals of the history program is that students will successfully research and write a quality research paper. The history faculty encourages students to present their results at regional conferences and publish their work in peer-reviewed journals. Nursing students complete a research study and do a formal poster presentation as a component of the curriculum. Posters are presented during a Sigma Theta Tau nursing honor society research day. Awards are given for the most creative and best example of applied research. Students in writing and literature have presented papers at regional conferences, and honors students have attended national conferences. The sociology faculty has developed a structured research course that allows students to work with faculty on independent research projects. One sociologist now serves as a Councilor in the Social Sciences Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research. Sociology is not unique in this respect. In the Mesa State catalog, eleven programs list research courses as part of their curricular offerings.

Embracing its role as a Regional Education Provider and being aware of the responsibilities this role carries, Mesa State College actively collaborates with other organizations on research to benefit the region served by the College. Faculty at Mesa State are co-principle investigators on research grants with colleagues from other institutions of higher education, regional health care providers, and local, state, and

federal government agencies. Mesa County Department of Human Services has awarded faculty in the social sciences a grant to evaluate the Colorado Works program. The National Science Foundation has given the education faculty a grant to develop an environmental education curriculum designed to improve access to higher education by Native American students. Partnerships to enhance educational opportunities for students throughout the region are an important vehicle through which Mesa State College addresses its core value of serving as a resource for community enrichment and development. The environmental science program has established a research partnership with the natural resources program at Colorado Mountain College (CMC), a multi-campus regional community college. Students from CMC work with Mesa State faculty and students on joint research projects, widening the range of research projects available to CMC students.

Mesa State faculty members recognize the educational value of collaborative projects and have consciously developed projects that are interdisciplinary. For example, faculty from chemistry and biology have combined to create a Center for Tropical Research. Each year students and faculty participate in tropical research projects in the rainforests of Costa Rica and Ecuador. Faculty from mathematics and statistics have ongoing collaborative projects with faculty in the business and social sciences programs.

In order to carry out research, especially in the sciences, an institution needs available laboratory space and equipment to support this work. Mesa State College has one of the finest undergraduate science centers in the region. The inventory of major research instrumentation is impressive and growing. In the past two years the National Science Foundation has awarded Mesa State two grants for major research instrumentation, providing national recognition of the quality of the undergraduate research programs that are offered at Mesa State. A key feature that remains central to the Institution's mission is that the research

being conducted at Mesa State is student-centered and designed to enhance undergraduate classroom instruction. State of the art equipment and “hands-on” access to this equipment provides Mesa State students educational opportunities not often available at peer institutions.

A Student Scholars Symposium has been created. The symposium, held each spring, is a day-long celebration of student research and scholarship held on the Mesa State Campus. The symposium features oral and poster presentations by students. Abstract books for the past three symposia are available in the Resource Room (Abstract Books of the Student Scholar Symposium).

One of the most significant developments in the culture of Mesa State College in the years since the last NCA visit is the incorporation of undergraduate research and scholarship into many of the programs of study. The results have been an increase in the quality of the educational experience for students, faculty members who are increasingly recognized as leaders in their fields, and a strengthening of the goal to strive for the highest standards of academic excellence.

### **Intellectual Interaction**

Mesa State prides itself on the quality of the educational experience provided to its students. Accompanying the academic rigor of the programs of study is a collegiality among students and faculty that has evolved as a core strength of the Institution. Student-faculty interactions transcend the bounds of the traditional classroom and take many forms.

All faculty members are required to post and keep office hours. The schedule of office hours is available as part of the course syllabi that are given to students at the start of each semester, and also is posted outside faculty members’ offices. During these times, students know that faculty will be available to answer questions about coursework, to provide academic advising, and to mentor students about career options. Most faculty members are available to students outside of formal office



hours as well. Graduating students surveyed about the availability of faculty responded with an average score of 4.24/5.0, significantly higher than the public college average (3.87) or the national sample average (3.94) (Graduating Student Survey). When Mesa State faculty members were asked about student-faculty interaction, over 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the “student-faculty interaction is positive at Mesa” (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

The College has an advising office, administered by the Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management. This office advises students until they declare a major. Once a student has declared a major, a faculty member from that discipline is assigned as the student’s advisor. The role of a faculty advisor at Mesa State is two-fold, that of an advisor and a mentor. While the advising office serves students and assists with scheduling and classes, the mentoring aspect requires faculty. This is a valuable component of a student’s education at Mesa State and having students and faculty interact as early as possible in a student’s career is critical. The SOAR program (Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration) was designed, in part, to accomplish this. In this program, faculty mentor/advisors work with incoming freshmen during orientation to help with registration and, more importantly, to provide advice about career choices and the transition to higher education. The SOAR program contributes to the institutional goal to support students’ success through academic advising, career counseling, leadership and volunteer service programs, and extracurricular activities.

At Mesa State, opportunities for faculty-student and student-student interactions exist through the work of clubs and honor societies. Most academic disciplines have student clubs (e.g., the Biology Club, Psychology Club, Mathematics Club, Creative Writer’s Club) and chapters of national honor societies (e.g. Alpha Chi, Phi Alpha Theta, Psi Chi, Sigma Tau Delta). Mesa State supports an Academic Honors Program that is affiliated with the National Collegiate Honors Council.

These clubs and societies have faculty advisors and provide students with a means to interact with their peers outside the traditional classroom setting. In a recent Graduating Student Survey, students felt they had ample opportunity for involvement in campus activities (3.9/5.0), significantly higher than the public college average (3.67/5.0).

Mesa State's student organizations give students the opportunity to interact with other students and to apply what they are learning in class to actual situations. Positions in the Associated Student Government, Activities Council, and many others develop leadership. Students essentially run the student newspaper, the *Criterion*; KMSA, the student radio station; the *Literary Review*; and the Johnson Art Gallery. The Cultural Diversity Center also allows students the opportunity to network and grow. Housing and Residential Life hires students to work in the residence halls as directors, assistant directors, and resident advisors who are responsible for the students living in their part of the College community.

The faculty values experiential learning as a way to enhance instruction. Examples of the use of research and internships have previously been discussed. Faculty members in all disciplines encourage discussion in the classroom. Results from a faculty survey show that class discussion in lower division and upper division classes is encouraged most of the time or always by 54% and 68% of the respondents, respectively. In addition, group projects, which encourage student-student interactions, are incorporated into lower division and upper division courses by 60% and 79%, respectively, of the faculty responding to the survey (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

The educational opportunities for students at Mesa State are numerous and diverse. This is part of the culture of the Institution, which serves to optimize the learning experience offered each student.

## ***Assessment of Student-Learning Outcomes***

### **General Overview**

Mesa State provides programs of study that meet the needs of students and the region served by the Institution. To remain responsive to students' needs, the academic programs must evolve continuously. The Institution has in place a plan that insures that student learning outcomes are assessed and that the assessment results are used to provide the faculty with data to improve the programs of study. In this section of the report, the assessment activities at Mesa State will be documented.

The assessment program at Mesa State has been guided recently by the 1995 *Assessment Plan*. This document laid the foundation for the assessment of student learning outcomes in programs of study and the general education program. In the ensuing eight years, the assessment activities have evolved, mirroring the changes at the Institution. The guiding body for assessment work at Mesa State is the Assessment Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. The Assessment Coordinator, who is a tenured member of the faculty, is an ex-officio member of this group. Through this Committee, the faculty at Mesa State has assured that it is in control of the evaluation of student learning and the granting of academic credit.

All of the academic programs of study share common features in their assessment plan. The programs (1) establish goals for student learning and academic achievement; (2) identify tools to measure achievement; (3) establish student performance expectations for those measurements; (4) gather and analyze data; and (5) modify programs of study, as necessary, to improve student-learning outcomes.

As new programs are proposed, these features are incorporated into the concept paper and the assessment plan is reviewed on campus by the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate, and off campus by the Trustees and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. As existing programs undergo review as part of the state-mandated review cycle, the

assessment plan, the assessment evaluation process, and the articulation and implementation of actions to enhance student-learning outcomes based on assessment measures are important parts of the review process.

The tools used by the faculty to assess educational outcomes vary depending upon the goals of the programs and include qualitative assessment (portfolio review, public performances, juried competitions), quantitative assessment (standardized tests, locally developed tests, professional school admission tests, licensure exams), attitudinal assessment (student/graduate surveys, employer surveys), and performance assessment (case studies, internships, capstone projects, and presentation/publication of papers). As a part of the preparation leading to this *Self-Study Report*, program goals, means of assessment, assessment measures, and the use of the results were compiled for each program of study. This information is included for review in the Resource Room (Assessment Goals and Data).

### **Closing the Loop**

In order to be continually responsive to student learning needs, the ultimate goal of an effective assessment program must be to provide input to the faculty about how programs of study should be modified to enhance student learning outcomes. At Mesa State the faculty embraces this goal and numerous examples of the use of assessment results to modify programs exist. Some examples follow.

In the biology program, the performance of graduates on the MFAT is at or above the national average. However, based upon the sub-scores, the faculty noticed that students needed to improve their knowledge of molecular and cell biology, genetics, and quantitative ecology. This has guided recent faculty hires in the program, strengthening the faculty expertise in molecular and cell biology, genetics, and ecology. Based upon feedback from graduates in graduate and professional schools, the faculty has modified specific course

offerings and advising to better prepare students for these post-baccalaureate career paths.

In the sociology program, a similar situation with the MFAT scores was observed. Although overall performance was above national averages, some sub-scores in specific areas indicated some relative weaknesses. The College responded by adding new faculty members and new courses in both sociology and anthropology. Course sequences and the capstone course were changed in response to the assessment measure that pointed to a lack of integration in the program of study.

In the social science program, theory and method courses were added in response to assessment results. Assessment activities also indicated a need to increase the number of interdisciplinary courses offered. The faculty responded by introducing new interdisciplinary courses in ethnopsychology, globalization and culture, and cross-cultural psychology.

Based upon MFAT sub-scores, the psychology faculty has added new members to improve courses in the counseling concentration, replacing adjunct faculty with tenure-track positions.

The English faculty is modifying its assessment tools to measure student outcomes. While student performance on the MFAT exam has been at or above national norms, the test may not be the most appropriate measure of student outcomes, given that the majority of English majors at Mesa State is in the secondary teaching and writing emphases, while literature is emphasized on the MFAT exam.

The human performance and wellness program has used student and employer surveys to improve experiential internship opportunities. Course content is being continually updated based upon students' performance on exit examinations.

Mass communications faculty has used data from employer surveys to review and modify course offerings to assure that students' skills match the needs of the employers who hire them.

Similar examples can be found within all of the academic programs at Mesa State, demonstrating that the College is committed to improving student educational outcomes through an effective assessment program.

### **Procedures for Assessing Student Outcomes**

As stated in previous sections, assessment of student educational outcomes takes many forms and occurs continually throughout a student's career at Mesa State.

**Admission.** In order to gain admission to the Institution, students must present data in the form of past performance (grades) and admission test scores on standardized tests. These data are used to establish a baseline of knowledge for each student and to aid the advising process in guiding students to appropriate majors.

**Declaration of Major.** At this stage students are paired with a faculty advisor who can, based upon a student's performance to date, advise the student about appropriate concentrations and courses of study. This guidance is focused by the program assessment results.

**Program Completion.** The assessment tools that the faculty has identified to measure student educational outcomes are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program of study on the students' learning.

**Post Baccalaureate.** Ongoing assessment of graduates and employers provides faculty feedback to refine academic programs.

The current assessment program at Mesa State College has evolved significantly since the last NCA visit. The faculty of all academic programs has established educational goals and described measurable objectives for them. The faculty has taken ownership of the assessment process, assuring that they remain the responsible party for monitoring student educational outcomes and the granting of academic credit. The Faculty Senate and Curriculum Committee are not only knowledgeable about the assessment process, but also play a key role in the curricular

and programmatic approval process. The Assessment Committee is charged with oversight of the assessment process at the Institution. The Assessment Coordinator serves as an ex-officio member of the Committee. The administration is committed to creating an academic environment in which the faculty and students are enabled to excel. Resources, both human and fiscal, have been allocated to ensure that this commitment is realized.

### **Challenges for the Future**

While acknowledging that great strides have been taken in assessing student educational outcomes, the faculty and administration of Mesa State College recognize that assessment is a continuing priority. During the preparation of this Self-Study, areas in need of strengthening were identified.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools has established Levels of Implementation to assist colleges in strengthening their assessment programs. Each level is defined by a group of characteristics derived empirically from numerous reports of assessment activities at institutions. Level one describes characteristics of institutions beginning to develop assessment programs. Level two characteristics are those of institutions where assessment is being implemented to improve student outcomes. Level three characteristics describe a mature assessment culture on the campus.

At the program level, and to some extent at the institutional level, assessment activities at Mesa State display patterns of characteristics appropriate for NCA level Two implementation. Examples of these characteristics include:

**Measurable objectives.** Faculty members in most departments have developed measurable objectives for each of the educational goals.

**Changes.** After receiving data, faculty members are implementing changes to enhance the educational outcomes.

**Oversight.** The Vice President for Academic Affairs has oversight responsibility for the ongoing operation of the assessment program.

**Priorities.** The mission statement expresses the importance of student-centered learning.

**Values.** Student learning and assessment of student educational outcomes are valued across the Institution.

**Institutionalization.** The Vice President for Academic Affairs has worked with the Faculty Senate to establish a standing Assessment Committee.

**Incorporation.** Assessment findings about student learning are being incorporated into academic program reviews (*Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

In selected areas, the assessment program at Mesa State demonstrates patterns of characteristics appropriate to level III implementation, while in others level I implementation is demonstrated.

The first challenge for the Institution is to build upon the individual assessment efforts of the programs and centralize the activities within one oversight body. This will strengthen the assessment culture at Mesa State. Steps to accomplish this already have been taken during spring 2002 with the appointment of a new Assessment Coordinator and a modification of the charge of the Assessment Committee to be the responsible body for monitoring and evaluating assessment at Mesa State. By doing so, the Institution has begun a meaningful integration of all units on the campus to contribute to achieving the core value of excellence in student-centered learning.

Another challenge for the Institution is to centralize the assessment of the general education program. General education at Mesa State seeks to instill in students the faculties of critical judgment, analytical thought, and an awareness of their world. The design of the program is guided by the nine-fold set of objectives set forth in the catalog and presented earlier in this *Self-Study Report*. Each student must complete a minimum of 33 semester credit hours selected from a list of courses approved by the faculty that addresses the stated objectives of



general education. Within the 33 hour requirement, students must take a minimum of 6 credit hours of composition, 3 credit hours of mathematics, 6 credit hours of humanities, 6 credit hours of social and behavioral science, 3 credit hours of fine arts, 6 credit hours of natural sciences and 3 credit hours of applied studies.

The first level of control over student outcomes in the general education program comes with the course approval process. In order for a course to be approved for general education credit, the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate must certify that its content addresses the desired outcomes for general education at Mesa State.

Recognizing that students apply the skills learned in the general education program throughout their programs of study at Mesa State, in fall of 2002 the faculty was asked to provide information about the effectiveness of the general education program. There was significant dissatisfaction in the students' writing skills. There was a similar dissatisfaction with students' mathematical skills.

A part of the general education assessment program involves a sampling of students taking the Academic Profile test as freshmen and again as juniors, but this information has not been used to change the program. The College recognizes that the current general education assessment program is not functioning as effectively as it could. A plan for developing a new general education program has been initiated. It is spelled out in more detail in the Suggestions section at the end of this chapter.

### ***Distinct Graduate Program***

In 1994 the Mesa State College mission was extended to include offering a limited number of graduate programs. In the fall of 1997 the College started its only graduate program, a Master of Business Administration (MBA). The program has graduated 28 students and has 57 students enrolled. A proposal is being developed for a master's in

education program, and preliminary discussions about a master's in nursing are underway.

The MBA program is a 36-credit-hour program, designed to prepare students for a professional career in general management. The program has a 24-hour core. All students are required to develop and report on a research project or an internship.

The Graduate Council, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate with a representative from each academic department, was established to provide academic oversight for graduate programs and courses.

Administrative responsibility for graduate programs is vested in the Director of Graduate Programs (who now also serves as the Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies). The Associate Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies also is the MBA Director. The Graduate Program Coordinator handles administration of the MBA program. The faculty for the MBA program is drawn from the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Accounting and Information Systems.

### **Distinct Graduate and Undergraduate Offerings**

The course numbering system for Mesa State College is explained in the current *2002-2003 Catalog* (131). There is a clear delineation in the course numbering system that designates courses as freshman (100-199), sophomore (200-299), junior (300-399), senior (400-499), and graduate (500 and above).

Courses numbered above 500 are primarily for graduate students. Undergraduates seeking to take a graduate-level course must secure permission from the instructor. Courses numbered 500 and above, taken as part of an undergraduate degree program, cannot later be used for an advanced degree.

The five-year accounting program allows students to graduate with a BS in accounting and an MBA. Students who are doing well on the

BS in accounting are given the opportunity to take MBA courses while completing their BS in accounting. This select group does 120 credit hours of undergraduate work and 36 credit hours of graduate work in a five-year period.

In order to serve students who do not have an undergraduate degree in business, a series of graduate leveling courses was developed to provide essential business knowledge in a compressed format. While these leveling courses cover material that is similar to undergraduate courses, the delivery is at the pace of a graduate course. These courses cannot be used to fulfill any of the required 36 credit hours for the master's degree.

The curriculum approval process for graduate courses is different from the process for undergraduate programs. The graduate curriculum process includes review and recommendation by the Graduate Council and approval by the Faculty Senate. A faculty member can initiate curriculum matters in his or her academic department.

### **Valuing Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity**

MBA students are expected to undertake research projects as part of their class work. MANG 500, MANG 501, and MANG 510 all require different sorts of research projects. In addition, graduate students are required to complete a practicum project, an internship, or a thesis as an individual exercise during the MBA program.

With encouragement from faculty, Mesa State College graduate students have presented at the Mountain Plains Management Conference on three occasions. Graduate students also have made presentations at the Mesa State Student Scholars Symposium.

Publication records demonstrate faculty members' dedication to scholarship. Scholarly activity is part of the annual evaluation. The College provides a variety of programs to support faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity throughout the year. The College is

committed to increasing opportunities for enhancing the quality of faculty scholarship in support of its mission. Faculty members have been able to present work at regional and national conferences. Support for scholarship has been made available even in times of tight budgeting. For the summer of 2002, the School of Business and Professional Studies was able to provide five faculty members with research grants of \$3000 each.

### **Academic Credit for Prior Learning**

No graduate credit is given based on prior learning except for the transfer of up to nine credit hours of resident graduate credit from a regionally accredited graduate institution. This credit must be approved by the applicant's graduate committee and by the director of the individual graduate program.

### **Qualified Graduate Faculty**

Graduate programs are under the academic oversight of the Graduate Council. All graduate courses and programs are reviewed by the Graduate Council and approved by the Faculty Senate.

Review of faculty credentials is part of the hiring process. The departments that offer graduate courses recruit faculty with a terminal degree in their discipline and a documented record of research and publication. While no formal distinction is made between graduate and undergraduate faculty, graduate courses are taught by the most qualified instructors available.

On the rare occasions when no terminally qualified person was available to teach a graduate course, a professionally certified instructor with an MBA was utilized. The only adjunct faculty member currently teaching in the MBA program is a practicing attorney with a *Juris Doctorate* who teaches Advanced Business Law and Ethics.

## Processes to Ensure Program Quality

To ensure that program goals are met, the MBA program has been assessed continually using both formal and informal means. Five types of formal assessment have been used. Mesa State College's Office of Institutional Research has gathered data about the program in terms of credit hours generated, headcount, FTE, and graduates. In fall 2001, forty-five of sixty-five registered students filled out a survey about the MBA program. During spring 2002, one of the MBA student groups wrote a report about the MBA program for the Strategy and Policy Course MANG 590. All the MBA graduates have demonstrated achievement by completing both the Strategic Policy Capstone course and the Professional track co-op experience. Finally, in spring 2002, MBA faculty was surveyed about coverage of basic content and skills areas. The faculty, staff, graduates, students, applicants, and community members all provided various forms of informal feedback on how the program can be improved to accomplish the goals of the program. Many improvements in the program have originated from informal comments.

These formal and informal assessment activities have led to improvements in the MBA program. The following paragraphs briefly discuss changes made to the program, including an indication of the original source of the improvement idea.

### Changes Made

**Entrance Examination Requirements** (based on applicant concerns). The GMAT was originally required for all applicants. The requirement was modified to include the GRE examination and the Miller Analogies Test (MAT). This modification was made because the GRE is as useful as the GMAT as an evaluation tool, and the GMAT is not locally available. Local students would have to travel to Denver or Salt Lake City to take the GMAT.

**Reduction in Release Time** (based on resource constraints). The release time for instructors, mentioned as a strength in the NCA review of the MBA proposal, has been significantly modified. The original proposal called for a nine-hour teaching load for faculty while teaching a graduate course. The current policy calls for a nine-hour load for the initial preparation course, and a three-hour release every third time the course is taught.

**The Practicum** (based on student concerns). The co-op experience has been expanded to include the possibility of a practicum project. The practicum project is initiated, developed, conducted, completed, and reported by the student and must relate to several MBA courses. The expected impact of the student's recommendations must be beyond the boundaries of a single functional area.

**Leveling Courses** (based on applicant concerns). The original program required students who did not have a business undergraduate degree to take up to 27 hours of undergraduate courses to prepare for the MBA. Now, four leveling courses, in which the same content is taught at a graduate pace, replace that requirement.

**Elective Course Offerings** (based on student survey). Elective offerings for spring, summer and fall 2002 were based, in part, on the survey conducted in fall 2001.

**Assessment Plan Modification** (based on resource constraints). The assessment plan presented in the 1997 Program Proposal was revised. The fifth component of the 1997 assessment plan, the completion of the Capstone Course and the co-op experience (either the internship or the practicum), is the only one that remains intact. The absence of various components of the 1997 plan should be interpreted in the light of the program improvements that have been made. The following changes are the result of formal and informal assessment activities.

*Professional Personnel* (Section VIII), which subscribes to the “teacher/scholar model,” reflecting “the central importance of undergraduate education by weighting teaching effectiveness in promoting student learning more heavily than other criteria.” Mesa State College reinforces this fundamental role through new faculty orientation, support for the Center for Teaching and Learning, annual merit pay evaluation, promotion and tenure decisions, and faculty teaching awards for outstanding performance.

In essence, all departments follow the same systematic approach to assessing effective teaching. Section 8 of the Mesa State College *Professional Staff Policy Handbook* describes the standard assessment procedure and defines and describes the scope and timing of teaching assessment. These criteria were developed to affirm the College’s goal to continue to develop teaching and learning.

### ***Professional Development for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators***

Mesa State College is committed to providing professional development opportunities to all employees, in adherence to the College’s mission encouraging continuous learning as a way of maintaining individual and institutional effectiveness. Additionally, professional development is essential for the continued accreditation of some programs.

Various opportunities for professional development, relevant to the faculty member’s professional goals, interests, and discipline, are described below. Except for two years in the late 1990s, however, when the Trustees provided excess funding for faculty and staff development, the amount of funds for this purpose has remained flat for nearly ten years.

**The Center for Teaching and Learning.** Among the activities offered by this group is a one-week orientation for new full-time faculty. One of the panels offered annually features professors employed at Mesa

for between one and five years who discuss the topic "If I Knew Then What I Know Now," addressing potentially stressful situations encountered in classrooms on campus.

The Center presents appropriate educational offerings for campus personnel, including Proactive Evaluation and Grading Strategies. In addition, the Center provides professional development opportunities for Mesa State College faculty and staff. For faculty, periodic faculty development seminars and workshops are provided on a wide range of topics including formative assessment, student feedback, using undergraduate teaching assistants, and dealing with plagiarism in the classroom are provided.

Faculty, staff, and administrators alike are able to participate in regular instructional technology/office application workshops. Hands-on training sessions are offered each week on such topics as using WebCT in the classroom; introductory and intermediate courses on Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint; scanning documents; using basic graphic tools; and introduction to SPSS and MicroCase statistics. Approximately 40 one-hour workshops are offered each semester. Sessions are held on the main and UTEC campuses. The first sessions at the Montrose Campus are being offered this spring.

In 2001-2002, the Center had six Associates in Teaching and Learning. These are full-time faculty members who receive a one-course reduction each semester. They present instructional technology training, work one-one-one with faculty, and organize a variety of faculty development seminars. During that year the Center offered 32 technology sessions in the fall and 43 in the spring. These are typically limited to four participants each to provide better hands-on instruction. WebCT courses were the most popular. Each year the Center has offered about ten faculty development seminars that averaged about 12 participants each.



provide information, resources, assessment and short-term counseling in order for employees to become better equipped to deal with those personal problems that may be impacting their work performance. The SAP is based upon that model. Referrals are made by staff located in the Advising and Career Center. Upon the mutual agreement of the student and the counselor, a referral is made to a counselor with an off-campus provider, PsychHealth Associates, P.C.

Every enrolled Mesa State College student, assessed to be appropriate for this brief-therapy model, is entitled to 6 hours of counseling with a master's level counselor per academic year. If the need arises for a student to see a psychologist, one hour of that professional's time equals two hours with a master's trained professional. Two group sessions equal one hour with a master's trained professional.

Located two blocks from campus, PsychHealth Associates, P.C., is a group of mental health professionals in private practice. Once a student becomes eligible for referral, she/he will be asked to sign a referral agreement, and will then be given the name and phone number of a counselor at PsychHealth. The student calls the counselor to arrange the initial appointment. Additional counseling, beyond the 6 hours provided by MSC, may, at the discretion of the PsychHealth Counselor, be arranged on a sliding fee basis

(<http://www.mesastate.edu/services/counseling/index.htm>).

**Academic Services Department.** Numerous academic services are offered, including educational access services, academic success courses, testing and assessment services, and tutoring and mentoring programs (<http://www.mesastate.edu/enrollman/acadserv/index.htm>).

During the 2002-2003 school year, Educational Access Services provided direct assistance to 181 students in a variety of ways. For example, 35 volunteers for students with low vision or blindness read 700 textbooks onto audiotape.

Academic success courses such as Introduction to Higher Education (SUPP 101) are offered to all students in order to aid in their understanding of postsecondary rigor and expectations. Students who took the course in 2002-2003 raised their aggregate mean GPA from 1.77 to 2.11.

The tutoring program operates on the main campus, UTEC, and the Montrose Center. In fall 2002, 136 peer tutors contributed 2,248 hours of tutoring for 530 individual students. The fall tutor evaluation survey indicated that 93% of respondents rated their tutoring as good or excellent.

The Testing and Assessment Center administered 6,296 examinations for the campus community in the 2002-2003 school year. The ACT national exam, COMPASS assessment, GED, MFAT in several fields, and PLACE (Professional Licensure and Certification Exam for Colorado K-12 teachers) represent the largest percentage of examinations administered (Student Services Summary).

**Advising and Career Center.** The Advising and Career Center, formerly the Employment Search Center and the Advising and Career Planning Office, assists students and alumni in attaining their career and educational goals and employers in implementing their recruitment strategies. In addition, Mesa State faculty and staff consult with the Center. The Center also provides information to parents (<http://www.mesastate.edu/sl/acc/index.htm>).

In 2002-2003, the Center logged 1,140 advising appointments and 613 registration sessions. The Center saw 160 students in academic distress situations. The online job matching system posted 22,194 positions; 1,662 individuals registered for job posting notification. The Center saw 377 students for career exploration (Students Services Summary).

**Little Mavericks Learning Center.** This private non-profit facility provides a service to Mesa State College students, faculty and

**Bookstore.** The bookstore operates as an auxiliary enterprise. In 2002, the College conducted a study to determine whether leasing the operation to a company like Barnes and Noble would be a more efficient alternative. The conclusion was that prices to students would probably go up and that no savings to the College would be realized, so the current operational model continues.

Housed in the Student Center, the bookstore stocks textbooks and other reading materials, supplies, and gift and promotional materials. It also provides a textbook buy back service.

**Dining Services.** Sodexo contracts for food service at the College. Over 50,000 meals are served annually at the Bookcliff Café, Café a la Carte, and the Residence Dining Hall. The Services generates over \$2 million by providing reasonably priced, nutritious meals at convenient times and places. Students, faculty, and staff take advantage of a variety of meal plans. Sodexo's contract includes exclusive rights to cater College functions.

The Service has been ranked as high as 9<sup>th</sup> nationally in customer satisfaction. Value, too, is appreciated; 76% of respondents identified resident dining as a high value and another 20% saw it as a moderate value (Student Services Summary).

**Evaluation of Student Services.** During the fall semester, 2001, the offices of Institutional Research and Planning and Registration made the ACT Student Opinion Survey part of the process for all students who petitioned for graduation. This Graduating Student Survey found that the College does quite well in comparison to public colleges nationally. In Table 5.1, shaded cells represent areas in which the College exceeded national results in usage or average satisfaction score. Satisfaction scores are calculated only for students who reported using that particular service.

**Table 5.1: Graduating Student Survey, MSC and National Results.**

Service		MSC Responses		Public College Responses	
		% used	Ave. Score 5=Very satisfied	% used	Ave. Score 5 = Very satisfied
1.	Academic advising services	70	3.88	71	3.84
2.	Personal counseling services	12	4.40	15	3.87
3.	Career planning services	16	3.76	21	3.80
4.	Job placement services	19	3.64	12	3.60
5.	Recreational and intramural programs and services	50	4.27	34	4.00
6.	Library facilities and services	91	4.18	83	3.93
7.	Student health services	48	3.94	37	3.73
8.	Student health insurance program	6	2.50	11	3.39
9.	College-sponsored tutorial services	30	4.06	20	3.88
10.	Financial aid services	73	4.12	64	3.73
11.	Student employment services	32	4.13	25	3.90
12.	Residence hall services	39	3.83	38	3.46
13.	Food services	65	3.76	62	3.14
14.	College-sponsored social activities	50	3.95	43	3.77
15.	Cultural programs	24	4.02	18	3.81
16.	College orientation program	37	3.82	55	3.79
17.	Credit-by-examination program (PEP, CLEP, etc)	9	3.71	9	3.90
18.	Honors program	7	3.93	10	3.90
19.	Computer services	79	3.41	72	3.81
20.	College mass transit services	13	3.80	12	3.58
21.	Parking facilities and services	84	1.92	75	2.65
22.	Veterans services	6	4.55	4	3.85
23.	Day care services	6	4.33	2	3.76

Note: MSC exceeded national norms in shaded areas.

In terms of student satisfaction, the top five services were veterans services, personal counseling services, day care services, recreational/ intramural programs and services, and library facilities and services. The latter is particularly noteworthy, given the extreme budget difficulties

faced by the library. Anecdotally, the inter-library loan and journal delivery services are widely thought to be superb, and these can significantly offset the lack of in-house materials.

Career planning services were slightly below national norms in both usage and satisfaction. The related job placement services, however, exceeded national norms. These functions are currently undergoing reorganization to achieve the best results with limited resources.

Usage of, and satisfaction with, the student health insurance is low. Unlike many colleges, Mesa State does not require its students to be insured. All students may use the College's Student Health Services, whether insured or not. Summit Insurance Company will sell health insurance to students, but the College's only involvement is to provide information to students who request it. Consideration is being given to allow companies to bid on providing insurance to more students.

The College's orientation program was much lower in usage than national norms. As graduating seniors, however, these students entered Mesa State before the new SOAR program was initiated. New student involvement in orientation is now nearly universal, so the usage numbers in the Graduating Student Survey will increase significantly in the next few years.

Usage of the credit-by-examination program was at national levels, but satisfaction was lower. Perhaps more information about these programs needs to be disseminated to faculty, staff, and students. This could be especially important, since the Colorado law referred to as "The Student Bill of Rights" (House Bill 01-1263) mandates that "...each public institution of higher education...define a process for students to test out of core courses, including specifying use of a national test or the criteria for approving institutionally devised tests." Mesa State has had that policy since 1988, but the bill continues, "Students shall be granted credit for the core courses they successfully test out of, free of tuition for

those courses.” It might be true that students are not widely aware of these provisions.

Computer services exceed national averages in usage, but was lower in satisfaction. It is difficult to account for that finding. It might be because the computer labs are often full during peak hours, but computer services seems to be doing the best it can with the available resources.

Parking facilities and services received the lowest satisfaction scores. Students may have small-town expectation for parking spaces. It is true that free parking within three blocks of campus is difficult to find during peak hours, but the on-campus Saunders parking lot, just a few blocks from most classrooms, virtually always has available spaces.

### ***Services that Support the Institution’s Role and Mission***

As a Regional Educational Provider for western Colorado, Mesa State College is dedicated to strategic initiatives that lead to economic opportunities, the advancement of arts and culture, innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and leadership in public policy. Mesa State College strives to foster a climate of scholarship and intellectual curiosity, provide tools for career fulfillment and lifelong learning, exercise and promote leadership, and serve as a resource for community enrichment and development (*Mesa State College . . . Shaping the Future of Western Colorado*).

At the root of these core values are professional faculty and staff members who are dedicated to providing high quality service to public agencies, private enterprise, and to the citizens of Colorado.

The following indicators of ongoing service contributions made by faculty and staff exemplify the Institution’s effectiveness in pursuing its strategic initiatives for shaping western Colorado's future.

## **Services to the Economic and Business Community**

As part of the strategic initiative to provide additional skill training, professional development, and technological integration that supports the expansion of service jobs and new economic opportunities in the region, Mesa State College faculty and staff provide support for the following economic and business services:

**Bureau of Economic and Business Research.** This organization is designed to serve as an outlet for Mesa State College to extend service and research opportunities to the community by providing a valuable source of data collection and analysis, applied research, and educational programs.

Over the past three years, the bureau has expanded its service region by providing economic newsletters, community surveys, research services, and educational programs to communities throughout the western Colorado region. One measure of effectiveness is demonstrated through the continued contributions that have been pledged by such entities as the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, the Western Colorado Business Development Corporation, and the Grand Junction Economic Partnership. Over the past three years, the Bureau has completed fourteen projects valued at about \$130,000 (BEBR).

**Dixson Center for Entrepreneurial Development.** Through the use of student interns, faculty, and consultants, the Center provides seminars, lectures, research and consulting projects for entrepreneurial ventures in the community

(<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/sbps/dixson/>).

## **Services for the Advancement of Arts, Culture, and Entertainment**

Mesa State College serves as the cultural center of western Colorado as evidenced by the many performances, exhibits, and services

provided and supported by faculty and staff in music, theatre, dance, and art. Ticket sales of the music, theatre, and dance performances have steadily increased. Theatre performances continue to sell out for every stage show. Students, graduates, and faculty of the theatre program have been instrumental in the development of at least three professional theatre operations in Mesa County.

**Johnson Art Gallery.** Located in the College Center, this facility schedules approximately twenty art exhibits each season. Shows include student-produced artwork as well as works by faculty and professional artists from around the globe. Featured art includes sculpture, ceramics, paintings, drawings, collages, photographs, fiber art, calligraphy, and more (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/fpa/art/johnson.htm>).

**Music at Mesa.** Over twenty-five musical performances are offered each season, including faculty recitals, guest artists, and a student concert series. Featured ensembles include chamber and concert choir, symphony orchestra, jazz, and more (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/fpa/music/musicevents.htm>). In 2003, the 12 events requiring tickets drew 1,438 attendees (Music at Mesa).

**Mesa State Theatre.** Long recognized as a high-quality asset to Mesa State, the theatre produces and performs four main stage shows each season. Shows range from light comedies to musicals and classics. Mesa State is looking forward to avant-garde performances in its new experimental theatre in the Moss Performing Arts Center. Additionally, there are two Mesa Repertory Dance Concerts each season (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/fpa/theatre/shows.htm>).

In 2002-2003, the theatre produced "Texas Tartuffe," Wizard of Oz," "George M!" and "Out of Order." In addition to 2,392 subscription tickets, the performances sold 6,281 single production tickets. Total ticket sales were \$66,395.00 (Theatre Final Report).



**Pinyon.** This nationally recognized magazine publishes poetry, fiction, and art. Students serve as assistant and managing editors, selecting from approximately 5,000 submissions each year ([www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/lc/english/publications/pinyon.htm](http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/lc/english/publications/pinyon.htm)). Pinyon uses five or six student assistant editors who help edit and print 300 copies annually.

**Literary Review.** This award winning student publication of literary and visual art provides a competitive evaluation of student work and an opportunity for student publication and public review (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/lc/english/publications/LitReview.htm>). Three student editors help select from 200 submissions and print 500 copies annually.

**Journal of the Western Slope.** History majors have the opportunity to submit their work to this journal, published quarterly by two student organizations: the Mesa State College Historical Society and the Alpha-Gamma-Epsilon Chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta. Sales range from 250-500 per edition. (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/sbs/his/jws.htm>).

**Vignettes.** This journal, written, edited, and illustrated by students, is dedicated to featuring the talents of undergraduate anthropology students. The journal has over 100 subscribers and prints about 200 copies each edition (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/shss/sbs/soc/anthro/anres.htm>).

**Horizon Magazine.** This student publication produces one or two issues annually. Its 2003 issue on diversity is a finalist, along with Columbia University and the University of Oregon, for the 2003 Mark of Excellence award from the Society of Professional Journalists. The winner will be announced in September, 2003 (Horizon Magazine).

**Athletics.** All football games, baseball games, and men's and women's basketball games are covered live by local radio stations. All sports are generously covered by local radio, television, and newspaper

reports. Mesa's athletic teams have been quite competitive. Since 1997, 17 teams have advanced to the regional level in NCAA Division II playoffs. In the 2001-2002 academic year, five of the eleven teams advanced to that level (<http://www.mesastate.edu/athletics/index.htm>).

### **Services to the Teaching and Learning Community**

Mesa State College is committed to fostering the development of future teachers and providing professional support to current teachers in the public schools. Some of the projects and services provided to K-12 educators by Mesa State faculty and staff include the following:

**Center for Economic Education.** The Center serves as a resource for K-12 teachers on the western slope as they teach economics in their classrooms, through workshops, seminars, curriculum development, information, and materials (<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/sbps/centerecon/index.htm>).

**School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences.** Ongoing K-12 activities including robotics, physics, and computer workshops, science fairs, mathematics competitions, and water conservation festivals are offered (<http://www.mesastate.edu/community/k12connection/index.htm>). In 2002-2003, the math fair drew 250 participants, other math and physical science competitions about 200 more. The water conservation festival draws all fifth graders in the school district—about 2,500 students.

**School of Business and Professional Studies.** Faculty, students, and administrators sponsor annual business and marketing leadership conferences and workshops for secondary students (<http://www.mesastate.edu/community/k12connection/index.htm>). The leadership conference is distributed by satellite to more than 20 communities.

**Human Performance and Wellness.** Faculty and staff provided three camps in volleyball, serving about 180 young people. Two football

summer camps drew 250 participants. Basketball and baseball camps for middle and high school teams throughout the western region are also popular

(<http://www.mesastate.edu/community/k12connection/index.htm>).

**Mesa State Speakers Bureau and Expert Guide.** This publication provides a listing of faculty and staff who are available to speak and serve as information resources for media interviews and make guest presentations to K-12 classrooms, business organizations, and community groups

(<http://www.mesastate.edu/info/media/speakers/index.htm>).

**GeoTech Colorado, Western Slope Conference.** This one-day annual conference offers presentations and hands-on workshops for teachers who want to learn more about using GIS, digital data, and online resources

(<http://www.mesastate.edu/community/symposiums/index.htm>). The April, 2003, conference drew 25 participants. Another is planned for August. Graduate or continuing education credit is available.

**Shideler Center for Science Learning.** Found in the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Center fosters collaboration between the faculty and students of Mesa State College and the teachers and children in K-12. An important function of the center is to provide field science experiences. Annually, 8-12 teachers, along with 10-12 students, participate

(<http://www.mesastate.edu/schools/snsm/shideler/shideler.htm>).

**Media Day.** This is an annual event at which students from K-12 join with Mesa State students to participate in a variety of seminars, workshops and lectures conducted by media professionals. The event, with more than 150 Mesa State participants, draws an average of 250 high schools student each year.

**High School Writing Conference.** This annual event draws together 200-250 aspiring writers from area high schools for a one-day

conference. The conference culminates with a talk by a professional writer and prizes for award-winning high school writers.

**High School One Act Festival.** Every spring high school students from all around the region gather on campus to present one act plays, interact with drama faculty and college student actors and directors, and compete for scholarships to Mesa State College. Between ten and fifteen MSC theatre students participate to make the experience of students from eight or more high schools a success.

### **Service to Campus and Community Organizations**

Approximately 87% of faculty members believe committee service is important; 83% believe committee service makes a difference in the quality of the College. Of those who have been at Mesa two or more years, 89% have served on at least one committee at the department, school, or college level in the past five years; 29% have been on nine or more. More than 80% of classified and exempt staff believes it is important to serve on College committees (Self-Study Faculty, Classified and Exempt Surveys).

**Faculty/Staff Supervisors/Sponsors of Student Organizations, Clubs, and Honor Societies.** Mesa State College faculty and staff sponsor over 40 recognized student clubs and organizations with a wide variety of interests (<http://www.mesastate.edu/sl/clubsorgs/index.htm>).

**Non-Paid Lectures and Workshops on Campus, in the Community, and in Schools.** As demonstrated by the posting on the Lectures and Forums web link, Mesa State College offers a rich, varied, and on-going selection of lectures, workshops, and symposia to business professionals, teachers, current and future students, and other community members (<http://www.mesastate.edu/community/symposiums/index.htm>).

## **Services and Leadership in the Promotion of Public Policy**

Mesa State College is dedicated to providing leadership and expertise in developing and supporting public policy concerning western Colorado natural resources.

**Department of Political Science.** Faculty members serve as information resources on public policy for the local school district, media, and interested public organizations such as Rotary Club, League of Women Voters, Club 20, and the Civic Forum. The department also has been instrumental in the development of numerous extra-curricular clubs designed to give students the opportunity to engage in politics in applied settings. These include the Political Science Club, International Relations Club, and Law Society. Chapters of Young Democrats and Young Republicans also have been established.

**School of Humanities and Social Science.** The Jose Peer memorial public lecture forum brings noted speakers on political issues to college campus and community audiences.

**Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences.** The department offers a seminar series to help students and the public understand water conservation and usage and related environmental policy issues in western Colorado (<http://www.mesastate.edu/community/symposiums/index.htm>).

## **Service to Professional Organizations**

Faculty and staff provide professional service both on and off campus. More than ninety percent of faculty members belong to at least one professional organization. Nearly one half (49%) of faculty members belong to three or more professional organizations (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

## **Evaluation of Services that Support the Role and Mission**

In addition to the information provided in Table 5.1, the Graduating Student Survey asked questions about the general college

environment. Mesa State College exceeded the public college average in all but two of the 42 categories. Only in the “student union” and the “religious activities and programs” category was MSC below the national average, and the statistical difference was insignificant in both of these categories.

The following were the highest rated, statistically significant items in each of five environmental areas: in academics, availability of advisor; in admissions, general admission procedures; in facilities, general condition of buildings and grounds; in registration, billing and fee payment procedures; and in the general category, attitude of college non-teaching staff toward students. An overall category, “This college in general,” gave MSC a student satisfaction score of 4.16/5.00, significantly above the national average of 3.88/5.00.

A central concern of the College’s faculty and staff is to provide close relationship with students, and the Graduating Student Survey indicates that this goal is being met. Other survey data supports that conclusion. The Self-Study surveys found extremely strong agreement among all employees that both student-faculty and student-staff interaction is positive at Mesa State (See Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2: Results of Self-Study Survey Questions “Student-Faculty Interaction is Positive” and “Student-Staff Interaction is Positive,” in Percent who Agree or Strongly Agree.**

	<b>Student-Faculty Interaction is Positive</b>	<b>Student-Staff Interaction is Positive</b>
<b>Faculty Survey</b>	95.5%	93.7%
<b>Classified Survey</b>	93.0%	92.7%
<b>Exempt Survey</b>	98.6%	94.5%

Agreement was similarly strong among all groups that MSC meets the needs of both traditional-age and non-traditional age students.

Perceptions of positive interactions cannot possibly be this strong if services are not provided in an effective and friendly manner.

### **Strengths**

Mesa State College is accomplishing its purpose as defined by its role and mission. The key strengths of the Institution are the faculty and the academic programs they direct. Numerous indicators exist to support this assertion. The Institution is responsive to the changing needs of the region it serves. The academic programs are continually assessed and modified, as needed, to assure that the educational outcomes meet the needs of the students. The faculty is in control of this process and is supported with the necessary resources from the administration. The graduate program is distinct from the undergraduate programs in design and expectations.

The Institution is guided by the core value of quality teaching and has supported numerous opportunities for the professional development of its faculty, staff, and administration. Services are provided to students that encourage student-centered learning and enhance the quality of the educational experience at Mesa State. Students are more satisfied with nearly all categories of their services and experiences at MSC than at public colleges nation wide. Mesa State also serves as a resource for the region, providing educational and cultural opportunities for the citizens of western Colorado.

### **Challenges**

In striving to continually improve the quality of the education it provides, the Institution has identified areas that will benefit from more focused attention. While assessment of academic programs is maturing, awareness of the assessment program by the campus as a whole needs to be enhanced. Steps to accomplish this are already underway by the appointment of an Assessment Coordinator and a modification of the charge of the Assessment Committee to lead the centralization of

assessment activities. The assessment tools to measure whether the general education curriculum is meeting its stated outcomes are in need of improvement. A priority for the faculty and administration during the 2003-2004 academic year should be a review of the general education goals and curriculum, as well as an improvement in the methods used in the assessment of general education outcomes.

### ***Suggestions***

The Assessment Committee should help the campus focus on the importance of continual assessment of student outcomes as a means of accomplishing the Institution's core mission of providing excellence in teaching. Workshops for faculty, staff, and administration should be created in order to provide the tools that are needed to develop more effective assessment programs. The campus should strive to integrate the goals of the general education program into all areas of instruction. Program-specific courses should reinforce the nine objectives of the general education curriculum.

Having identified that the present general education assessment program, as currently configured, may not be serving the Institution's needs, the Self-Study recommends that the Assessment Coordinator and the Assessment Committee, working with the faculty and administration, develop a new assessment plan for the general education program at Mesa State. The new plan must formulate ways and means to accomplish the following actions:

1. Review the objectives for the general education program.
2. Develop assessment techniques to measure student outcomes.
3. Establish benchmarks for the measures.
4. Develop a feedback mechanism to communicate assessment results to the faculty.
5. Provide continuing oversight of the process.

This process should begin as soon as possible and significant progress toward meeting these objectives should be made during the 2003-2004 academic year.



In order to meet its mission as a Regional Education Provider, academic programs at Mesa State should continue to be responsive to the needs of the region served by the Institution. Communication and effective assessment of regional needs, as suggested in Chapter Two of this *Self-Study Report*, are vital to this effort.

At the same time, however, the College needs to assess its ability to continue to support and develop programs across such a broad spectrum of degrees, disciplines, and distances during challenging financial times. Mesa State is, above all else, devoted to its fundamental liberal arts-based role and mission. General education is the firm foundation on which success in all of its other programs is grounded. As the College continues to deal with State budget rescissions and with legislated expansions of its role, it should continually monitor its commitment to this central and basic mission.

Even during difficult financial times, faculty development funds have not been significantly reduced. They have not, however, increased much in the last ten years. When and if more funds are available, the Faculty Senate and Administration should have a discussion about whether faculty pay raises or more development money is a higher priority. Most faculty members spend a considerable amount of their own money on development. Since the development money would not be from taxable income, perhaps the faculty would prefer more of that rather than direct pay raises.

### **Conclusion**

Mesa State College is accomplishing, and excelling in, its educational and other purposes. Many assessment mechanisms have been institutionalized, and others are being developed. The College is well aware of, and clearly focused on, its central mission of delivering a quality education to meet the needs of the diverse citizenry of the western slope.

## **Chapter Six: Mesa State College Can Continue to Accomplish its Purposes and Strengthen its Educational Effectiveness**

The first section of this chapter summarizes the current state of financial, physical, and human resources of Mesa State College. This is followed by an analysis of the decision-making processes designed to respond to the challenges facing the Institution. The assessment processes that inform and guide Mesa State's constituents are reviewed next. The chapter concludes with descriptions of the plans and planning processes designed to ensure the Institution's continuance.

Over the past ten years, Mesa State College has improved the quality and quantity of its programs, faculty, students, technology, and facilities. The College faces challenges in the immediate future, including a new independent governing board, a new president, the current economic downturn, and state funding restrictions mandated by the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). Fortunately, there are processes in place to ease Mesa State through these financial and governance changes.

The plans Mesa State has made over the course of the last ten years have been made in the context of continuing to provide expanding services to growing constituencies in an extended service area. Under the current, and most likely continuing, difficult financial situation, the College may have to rethink its basic planning strategies, paying more attention to prioritizing the various components of the role and mission. This section concludes with a brief analysis of the strengths on which Mesa State can rely, and the challenges Mesa State must address, in these very different economic circumstances.

## **Current Resource Base**

Despite several years of budgetary uncertainty, recent administrative upheaval, and changes in governance, Mesa State College has a resource base that positions the Institution for the future. Although Mesa State faces immediate budgetary challenges, a committed faculty, staff, and administration provide stability in this period of transition, and the Institution and the Grand Valley will continue to draw new residents and potential students. This section analyzes the salient aspects of the current resource base—financial, physical, and human—as well as the Institution’s financial needs.

### **Financial Resources**

Although funding shortfalls at the state level have forced Mesa State College to return part of its budget to the state over the last couple of years, revenues and expenditures over the fiscal years 2001-2003 actually rose slightly (*Operating Budget 2001, 2002, 2003*). Moreover, the current uncertainties with regard to the governance of Mesa State College may, in fact, represent an opportunity to create a system that will increase the financial resources available to the College.

For example, the uncertainties and disagreements about the best governance structure for the state college system resulted in House Bill 02-1165, which required the State Colleges in Colorado to analyze the cost of operating a small, independent four-year college in Grand Junction. The recommendation coming out of this study was that Mesa State should be awarded “floor funding” in order to help it meet its financial needs. This “floor funding,” approved by the Colorado Legislature, would have provided an additional \$1.7 million to the base budget of the College in 2003-2004, with a potential second boost of more than \$1.2 million the following year. Because of the State’s financial difficulties, however, the distribution of the approved “floor funding” was delayed until funds become available. This additional base

funding will be a tremendous financial boost to the College's budget when it is awarded.

In addition, Mesa State tuition revenue continues to increase because student enrollment continues to rise. This trend has been observed for more than a decade and is expected to continue (*Fiscal Year Headcount Trends*). Moreover, the number of applications for fall, 2003, admission to Mesa State College is up (*Admission Trends*). Under the new independent governing board created for Mesa State, revenues will be under the College's control rather than being controlled and redistributed by the Office of State Colleges, as is now the case.

Increased revenue in the form of student fees also offers a way to bridge short-term budgetary shortfalls. The student technology fee, for example, provides funds for staffing, equipment, software and network support for all computer labs, and increased student lab fees now are collected for laboratory classes to make sure that the proper lab equipment and supplies are always available. Earmarked funds such as these will help ensure that Mesa State will continue to invest its lean funds in ways that allow for the effective continuance of its educational mission.

Another new source of revenue is the College's Office of Sponsored Programs, which was created in July 2000 and already has helped produce awards of \$2.7 million. Its mission is to provide support to faculty and staff in obtaining and administering external funds for research and other scholarly activities.

Finally, the College is working with the Alumni Association to build its alumni base as a potential source of income. The Mesa State College Foundation, already a source of revenue, is expected to grow. The Foundation promotes and manages fund raising, receives and records gifts, then transfers funds to Mesa State for use according to the donor's wishes and the College's needs. The donations from alumni have increased from \$46,223 in 1998 to \$104,105 in 2001 (Memo—Alumni

Giving and Membership). The Foundation continues to receive promised funds from the City of Grand Junction and from Mesa County.

### **Physical Resources**

Mesa State College has a compact urban campus, the facilities for which barely are managing to keep pace with growth. Two new buildings with a total of over 55,000 square feet have been a welcome addition to the campus. Virtually all existing classrooms are equipped with computers. A second distance education classroom has recently been completed

Mesa State College is able to provide satisfactory maintenance for its current facilities. One of the hallmarks of Mesa State is its clean and well-kept campus. The Facilities Services Department takes pride in the orderliness of its own offices and shops as well as the campus at large. Based on budget constraints, some of the new and remodeled buildings have not yet been landscaped, and the Institution is narrowing its focus to maintaining existing outdoor features. The State of Colorado provides "controlled maintenance" dollars to maintain buildings in proper condition over their expected life spans.

Since most buildings are relatively new, maintenance, upgrades, and remodeling cost are kept generally low. Money has been allocated, however, to address recently identified structural problems at Tomlinson Library, the repair of which will cost an estimated \$230,000 according to the Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services. The State's Buildings Emergency Project Fund will be used to fund most of that amount, with the remainder to come from the normal non-emergency funds.

Mesa State College is less prepared for future growth. The College has little undeveloped land under its control. Existing classrooms, though currently adequate, are filled nearly to capacity. If the faculty increases by 2% per year over the next five years, an estimated 22

additional offices will be needed (*Facilities Master Plan Amendment 19*). As resources become available to expand facilities, the *Academic Master Plan* provides a prioritized list of projects to meet the most pressing needs first (43). The proposed Business and Information Technology Center would provide 25-30 well-equipped classrooms and 37-40 offices. The Board of Trustees approved the plan for this building in 2001 (Finance Committee Meeting Agenda F3, Dec. 10, 2002).

Resources also are required to address the important issue of library acquisitions. The library materials budget has been virtually flat for several years (*Operating Budget 1997-98*, 20 and *General Fund Operating Budget 2002-03*, 28). During that time the materials have had a 10% to 20% annual inflation rate (Library and Media Services Information Report). Moreover, Tomlinson Library was constructed in 1986 based upon a 10-year growth plan, and will need to be expanded in the near future. Tomlinson Library has not seen the funds necessary to strengthen its effectiveness.

### **Human Resources**

One of the greatest assets at Mesa State is the quality and commitment of its staff, faculty, and administrators. The dedication and optimism of the faculty in particular is an important source of stability in these times of change

College faculty and staff are attracted to the area not only because of the fine reputation of the College, but also because of the wide variety of outdoor activities, the moderate climate with distinct seasons, and the all-around beauty of the area. Unfortunately, keeping people here may become a challenge. The growth of the area and the rising cost of living in comparison to statistically low, and now also flat, Mesa State salaries may keep faculty and staff from enjoying the quality of life that attracted them to the region. Uncertainty about the financial future of the College could easily hamper the College's ability to retain this committed faculty

and staff and make it difficult for the Institution to strengthen its educational effectiveness.

A recent survey administered to staff and faculty indicates some of these mixed feelings, though it must be said that the survey predates some of the direst financial predictions. For example, although only 9.7% of the faculty indicated that they believed the salary system at Mesa State College was comparable to that of similar institutions, only 26.8% indicated that they would take another job if one were offered, and more than nine in ten of the faculty members who responded indicated that they took personal satisfaction in their jobs (Self-Study Faculty Survey).

On the other hand, classified staff, faculty, and exempt staff alike express concern about the adequacy of the current resource base. Respondents were most sanguine about the human resources base, yet fewer than one-half agreed that the human resources base was "adequate." Fewer than one-third of the respondents, whether staff, administrator, or faculty, believed that the physical base was adequate, and only 5.2% of the faculty and 5.3% of the administrators indicated that the College had the necessary financial resource base to position the itself well for the future (Self-Study Faculty Survey; Self-Study Exempt Survey).

### ***Decision-Making Processes with Tested Capability of Responding Effectively to Challenges to the Institution***

Mesa State faces challenges that will affect its immediate future: dealing with Colorado's economic problems, adjusting to a new governance structure, and hiring a permanent President and other high-level administrators. Processes are in place, however, that are specifically designed to aid the College in responding effectively to challenges such as these.

For example, the process created to deal with the anticipated change in governance was in place prior to 2002. In 2000, Northwest

Research Education (NORED) was hired by the state of Colorado to submit a plan for reorganizing the State's public higher education system, and many Mesa State constituents had the opportunity to participate in shaping the future. In July 2000, over 200 faculty, staff, and community members took part in a public meeting at Mesa State College to hear from the NORED representative and to discuss the issue of governance. Later in 2000, a state representative and a state senator were each on campus at different times for open discussions on governance and NORED recommendations (Memo-Bonan-Hamada to Arledge). Input was solicited from all faculty members during this period. Ultimately Mesa State was actively involved in assembling a vision that expressed the College's desires regarding its direction and its system of governance (*Role and Mission, Executive Summary*).

In fall of 2002, even before it became clear what form the change in governance might take, a Governance Transition Task Force was formed on campus. Members included high-level administrators, along with the Faculty Senate President and four other faculty members. The charge of the task force was to anticipate problems that might arise in the transition and to position the College well to meet the challenges. As one example, a list was developed of the reports the College would have to submit to CCHE, along with a calendar of when those reports would be due. Under the State Colleges system, the central office typically managed such reporting. Additional costs to the College, such as increasing travel to Denver and employing a board liaison, were also considered.

On campus, efforts have been made to improve communication so that decision making involves all aspects of the campus community. For example, summaries of President's Council meetings are circulated campus wide; copies of summaries of the meetings of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Council of Deans are circulated to Deans and then to Department Chairs for discussion; copies of minutes of Faculty



Senate and key committees are circulated campus-wide via e-mail; and the Faculty Senate and most other committee meetings are open. This system allows Mesa State faculty to be actively aware of the processes governing the institution.

Even with this system in place, the overall faculty sentiment is that their views are not highly regarded. Based on the recent faculty survey, 53% of the faculty members felt their views have no impact on policy decisions and 41% indicated that communication between administration and faculty is poor. Only 53% felt that the College's decision-making processes can respond effectively to anticipated and unanticipated institutional challenges. Only 16% believed that the Trustees of the State Colleges had a good appreciation of faculty issues and concerns, and just 10% believed that the Colorado Commission on Higher Education had such appreciation. Although the exempt staff was somewhat more positive on these issues, the classified staff was similarly concerned. On a more positive note, 57% of faculty members indicated that the Faculty Senate communicates well with faculty and that it addresses general faculty concerns. Similarly, 57% of the classified staff felt that the Classified Staff Council provided an effective voice for their concerns (Self-Study Surveys).

### ***Structured Assessment Processes***

Assessment issues receive a great deal of attention at Mesa State College. Effective planning simply is not possible without structured assessment processes that are able to evaluate the Institution, such as quality indicators, program and department reviews, support services assessments, faculty and staff evaluations, and student outcomes reports.

#### **Quality Indicators**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has established several ongoing procedures for the assessment of student outcomes and overall quality assurance for each of Colorado's institutions of higher

learning. The most recent of these is the Quality Indicator System mandated by HB 96-1219, called the Higher Education Quality Assurance Act of 1996, which was refined by SB 99-229 in 1999 (QIS History). Nine quality indicators were used in Academic Year 1999-2000 and ten in academic year 2000-2001. CCHE's goal is for 29 indicators to be in place in the near future. Mesa State College will continue to participate in this Quality Indicator System (CCHE Executive Summary Chapter 10).

The quality indicators presently assessed include: (1) graduation rates; (2) faculty teaching workload; (3) freshman retention rates; (4) achievement on licensure and other comprehensive exams and employment of career and technical graduates; (5) institutional support expenditures per FTE student; (6) availability of general education courses; (7) support and success of minority students; and (8) number of credits required for degree. In addition, each institution must pick two more quality indicators upon which to report. Mesa State College has chosen access and co-curricular activities, both of which are important to the College's mission (QIS Report, 2002).

According to the 2002 QIS Report, Mesa State was somewhat lower than the 11-institution state averages in retention and graduation rates. The College was second in percent of students enrolled in classes of 20 or fewer, highest in total student contact hours per full-time faculty FTE, and lowest in percentage of budget going to administrative costs.

### **Programs and Departments**

The CCHE and the Board of Trustees require all academic programs to undergo periodic reviews. Each academic program at Mesa State College is on a seven-year cycle for such reviews (*Trustee Policy Manual 5.3*).

Internally, Mesa State College has positioned itself to become a more assessment-driven institution. As outlined in Chapter Five, the

College now has an assessment coordinator to lead the Faculty Senate's Assessment Committee. The Committee itself has been expanded to include one member of each academic department, thus making its membership more reflective of its importance. Furthermore, each academic department has identified an assessment liaison that will serve as a conduit for assessment information.

Each department will continue annually to review its educational goals and submit a report to the Assessment Committee, outlining the results of its review and the steps it plans to take to progress toward its goals. Modifications and/or additions to each department's educational goals also will be documented.

Faculty members will continue to be intimately involved with curriculum review, periodic academic program review, and tenure and promotion decisions. The rights and responsibilities of the faculty in these areas are outlined in the *Mesa State College Professional Staff Policy Handbook*.

The College has not recently assessed its general education program. The suggestions in Chapter Five of this *Self-Study Report* are designed to remedy this.

### **Support Services**

Each of the College's support services, which include the library, enrollment management and student services, finance and administration, and athletics, continue to maintain its own assessment activities. A participatory and open task force that could consider all these areas together would provide a broader picture of College activities and expenses.

Assessment workshops for all Mesa State employees will be held on an ongoing, as-needed basis, potentially hosted by the Mesa State Center for Teaching and Learning. This will allow the College to have a shared understanding of the purposes, advantages, and limitations of

assessment as a part of its institutional culture. As the degree of emphasis placed upon assessment grows, the shared responsibility for assessment among faculty, administration, and students is expected to grow as well.

### **Faculty and Staff**

All staff and tenure-track faculty members are evaluated comprehensively on an annual basis. Tenured faculty members undergo an annual review, as well as a comprehensive review every five years. Temporary faculty members are evaluated annually on their teaching. Since 1999, faculty members have been encouraged to be explicit in the goal-setting portion of their self-evaluation, with the understanding that they will be judged by their ability to achieve these goals. This assessment has become more formalized over time, to be fully implemented by 2003 (*Handbook for Professional Personnel*, Section VIII).

### **Surveys, Accreditation, Student Outcomes**

Alumni surveys and employer surveys will continue to serve as an important part of the overall assessment process. The granting and maintenance of accreditation by professional associations, such as that currently held by the Nursing Program, Radiologic Technology, and Athletic Training Program and being sought by the Human Performance and Wellness, Education, and Business Programs, also requires significant assessment activity aimed at continuous improvement.

Mesa State has procedures in place for monitoring and modifying academic programs to meet the needs of its students and the communities it serves. The College is confident that it is encouraging the development of thoughtful and active citizens. In recent years, the administration of Mesa State has encouraged faculty to involve students in their research projects. As a result, the number of students presenting work at regional and national meetings has increased, and the number of students attending summer programs also is on the rise. Also, student participation in

internships, cooperative education, and other similar activities is rising; for example, in 2000-2001, 75% of graduates of Mesa State engaged in such programs (*Responses to CCHE's QIS Data Report 6*).

The College plans to continue using student outcome measures such as the entering student survey and the graduating student survey. This will allow the development of trend lines to help monitor the effectiveness of campus changes.

### ***Effective Planning Processes Necessary to the Institution's Continuance***

The core value of Mesa State College is dedication to excellence in teaching (*A Shared Vision*). This goal must be a visible part of the planning processes at the Institution.

The College's most important planning document is the *Academic Master Plan* (AMP). The 1997 *Shared Vision Statement* provided the basis of a detailed *Academic Master Plan*, the purpose of which is to "provide the College with prioritization and implementation guidelines for adopted goals and objectives" (1).

Mesa State's administration recognizes the importance of ongoing, integrated planning and includes in the College's goals "reviewing and updating the *Academic Master Plan* to reflect accomplishments and changing conditions, reviewing and updating the Campus Facilities Plan, and implementing and articulating the College's fund development priorities" (*Shaping the Future*). For the purposes of such continuous planning, Mesa State created the Academic Master Plan Oversight Committee, which reports to the Faculty Senate and is charged with monitoring progress towards the plan's goals and objectives.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning supports decision making at Mesa State College through the development and provision of reliable information, and it promotes the use of information and the interactive exchange of ideas as the basis for effective institutional planning and change. The Office provides research and

planning for all areas of the College and helps academic departments gather and analyze data required by their program reviews mandated by the State Colleges in Colorado Colleges and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

The Technology Council meets monthly with the Director of Information Technology to address technology issues and to assess the *Technology Master Plan*. The Facilities Committee also meets regularly to “identify, evaluate, and make recommendations to the Office of the President on matters that relate to the general operation and use of campus facilities” (*Professional Staff Policy Handbook*, 4.1.B).

### ***Resources Organized and Allocated to Support the Institution and its Programs***

Mesa State has articulated its mission clearly, planned for its future, and prioritized its goals. The Institution is poised to take advantage of the tremendous energy of its motivated and dedicated faculty and staff and the attractiveness of its location to potential students. The College has done an excellent job in performing its mission with limited resources, but maintaining this success and strengthening the Institution depends upon its ability to allocate scarce resources with the utmost efficiency.

The financial remuneration of Mesa State’s faculty and exempt administrators has been quite low when compared to peer institutions and other benchmarks (Faculty Salary Comparison). In an effort to attract and maintain a quality cadre of professionals, the College embarked on a three-year exercise to identify expenditure dollars that could be re-allocated to improving salaries. The Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF) began meeting in the early spring of 1999 to take a hard objective look at all expenditures of the college. The committee was comprised of representatives from all areas of the college. They identified and categorized all activities and expenditures with a priority rating.

The BATF was able to reallocate an average of \$240,000 of ongoing funds for each of three years out of the last four years. The committee has reached the point of diminishing returns and has fulfilled its charter. It should be noted that not only was the committee able to augment salary increases, it also provided an opportunity to ensure that all activities and expenses were within the mission of the College and that expenditures were properly prioritized. This exercise in allocation assessment was as beneficial as its original mission of setting aside dollars for augmenting salary increases. The BATF was disbanded once its original charge was fulfilled, but should be reinstated with a broader charge as the suggestions at the end of this chapter indicate.

The current State funding rescissions have forced the College to reallocate even more scarce resources in order to protect its core mission. With institutional support at 7% of the total education and general budget, the lowest in the State of Colorado, the College has an extremely efficient, albeit overburdened, administration. Because adding additional staff is out of the question at this time, the administration has to continually work harder and smarter.

The creation of UTEC, the Montrose Campus, and Mesa@Night in the last ten years is strong evidence that Mesa State College is responding to the needs of its regional service area by adding and strengthening programs. Resources also are being allocated to pursue the creation of a master in education and a master in nursing degree. Mesa State recently partnered with Colorado Mountain College, which has campuses in several Colorado communities and an enrollment of over 20,000, to offer a Mesa State College degree in education (Frequently Asked Questions). This will change the Mesa State student demographics and enhance the perception of Mesa State as a Regional Education Provider. These new programs address specific goals in the *Academic Master Plan* (14) and Role and Mission (4).

Mesa State's library is a tremendous resource but is struggling to keep up with information demands of students and faculty on a materials budget that has been essentially flat for five years. A new student library technology fee has been implemented to help pay for skyrocketing costs for on-line information resources.

### ***Partnerships that Strengthen its Educational Effectiveness***

Because the geographical area served by Mesa State College is so vast—larger than the state of West Virginia—the College continues to maintain and develop partnership programs to expand educational opportunities to a regional population. This is one of the major goals established in the *Academic Master Plan*.

The School of Applied Technology continues to develop agreements with the Delta-Montrose Vocational-Technical Institute that will allow students there to pursue a range of AAS/Certificate programs.

The Advanced Learning Center (ALC), a proposed partnership between Mesa State, School District 51, and other businesses and institutions on the western slope of Colorado, is described in the *Facilities Master Plan Amendment (26-27)*. The ALC proposes to offer courses to high school and college students concurrently to meet general education requirements at Mesa State. The program, based on the New Technology High School program in Napa, California, is anticipated to be academically rigorous, interdisciplinary, and technology oriented. Current budget constraints have put the acquisitions of buildings and property envisioned for this project on hold, but progress is being made to achieve the goal of providing a “seamless educational experience for secondary and post-secondary students” (*Academic Master Plan*, 46). The first new Advanced Learning Center course was offered in spring 2003.

Mesa State College and a number of school districts have joined together to offer opportunities in regional high schools for students to



enroll in Mesa State courses. The concurrent program is growing and continues to be promoted.

The future holds promise of continued growth. Mesa State College is working with Colorado Mountain College to deliver a complete degree in liberal arts (elementary education) onsite at the Colorado Mountain College Glenwood Springs campus. The College also is working with a variety of community colleges, state colleges, universities, and private institutions to forge a useful plan for the education of paraprofessionals, as mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind law. Mesa State College welcomes the opportunity to partner with other institutions as a way to maximize the opportunities available to the region's residents when Mesa State College is unable to provide the program or degree itself. The Institution has identified potential new partnership arrangements, including offering an MA in special education, moderate needs, and an MA in English language learning, in cooperation with Adams State College.

The School Of Business and Professional Studies is in the process of developing a faculty and student exchange with The University of Debrecen in Debrecen, Hungary. This would include faculty collaboration on various research projects.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences inaugurated its coordination with the Centers for Academic Programs Abroad with the European summer internship in 2003. A total of 16 student interns participated in its London experience, representing four different MSC majors. This program could expand to provide sites for every degree that Mesa State College offers (European Internship). The Administration of Justice program is in the process of developing a partnership with the F.B.I. and the Colorado Department of Corrections.

A partnership of a different type exists between MSC and the Mesa State College Foundation. The Foundation helps tie the community to the College. A similar relationship exists with the Alumni Association,

which, in turn, is closely related to the Foundation. The Alumni Office, the Foundation, and the College, for example, are now working together to develop better tracking of graduates for assessment and fund-raising purposes.

With its designation as a Regional Education Provider, Mesa State's efforts in this area will grow. Partnerships with high schools, community colleges, and other colleges and universities will continue to ensure that the needs for educational programming of citizens in this region will be met.

Mesa State College is well positioned to continue to develop its considerable strengths, provided it can satisfactorily meet the challenges of growing pains in an era of limited resources.

### ***Strengths***

Mesa State has an exceptional faculty and staff, the majority of whom were hired in the last decade, who want to work in an institution that pays special attention to students by putting teaching first. The student-centered learning that is prevalent here is enticing enough to outweigh even the comparatively low salaries. Students who attend Mesa State College benefit from small classes, a vibrant faculty committed to educational excellence, one-to-one interaction with faculty members, and a staff dedicated to student success. The College has worked hard to protect this most basic of educational relationships.

Mesa State College is a growing institution in a growing region in a growing state. Nearly 90% of the College's students are from Colorado, and about 75% are from Mesa County and surrounding counties. Enrollment from this region may be expected to grow as long as western Colorado continues to attract newcomers. Statewide, residents are beginning to realize that Mesa State is an attractive alternative to the eastern slope colleges and universities. In particular, high school students from the Front Range who appreciate the rural character of western Colorado and desire the ambience of a smaller college will continue to be

drawn to Mesa State College. Tireless recruitment efforts, along with a well-designed website, will continue to get the word out. Moreover, the faculty and staff strengths mentioned above are effective recruitment tools—the reputation of Mesa State as a student-oriented institution has grown and is still growing. This makes the College very attractive to many students.

*The Vision Statement* and the *Academic Master Plan* have articulated the direction in which the College would like to go and have prioritized its numerous worthy goals. These plans are being continuously implemented, scrutinized, and updated.

Mesa State College is wired. The Mesa State website is state-of-the-art and comprehensive. It has played, and will continue to play, an important role in the maturation of the College, and the visibility it provides has ensured that Mesa State College is no longer a well-kept secret. Students, staff, faculty, and administrators alike increasingly use the Web to register for classes, keep track of students, organize much of the College's day-to-day administration, promote Mesa State College, and provide a centralized pool of information to guide decision making. Also, communication on campus is almost exclusively through e-mail, all faculty members have computers, and virtually all classrooms are wired for internet and computer projection.

The Media Relations Office and the website will also help to improve the visibility of Mesa State College statewide, as well as in the local and business communities. The previous perception that Mesa State is a two-year local college no longer fits its reality as a vibrant four-year college with a tremendous amount to offer to the area and the state as a whole.

The dissolution of the State Colleges in Colorado may be a blessing. Mesa State College has done much of the groundwork needed to make the transition to true Regional Education Provider status. Perhaps the new independent board will provide the College with the political

clout and economic resources it needs to take full advantage of its considerable strengths and enviable position.

### **Challenges**

If current budget shortfalls continue, the College may be tempted to adopt strategies that threaten the very foundation of its success—its commitment to a high level of contact between committed faculty and motivated students. A shift from tenured and tenure-track faculty to temporary positions, an indifference to the quality and academic backgrounds of instructors, increases in class sizes, cutting low-enrollment courses, and the like may help address short-term budget crunches. In the long run, however, such strategies might harm students, short-change programs, undercut the morale of faculty and staff, and damage some of Mesa State's strongest core values. Scrutiny of full-time equivalents, per capita program costs of essential programs, and faculty productivity is necessary. A quality control mechanism is needed as well. It will become increasingly important for faculty members to be involved in budget-cutting discussions.

The link between the planning process and the budgeting process could be strengthened. *The Vision Statement*, the Master Plans for Academics, Facilities, and Technology, and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning all represent giant steps forward in planning for the future. However, the dissemination and coordination of the planning process lags behind the College's best attempts to plan. Furthermore, as long as the planning and budgeting processes remain separate, it will be difficult to implement any centralized plan. The identification of agreed-upon goals and the plans that resulted from this process were very public and included a wide range of interested parties and a variety of ways to participate; the budget process is by contrast arcane, obscure, and idiosyncratic.

Although Mesa State College lacks appropriate funding, overall, it is in an enviable position. Students want to attend college here, and a

responsive and capable staff and faculty provide them with considerable individual attention and a quality education. The College simply has outgrown its ability to take advantage of and build upon its many strengths without additional resources. The shackles imposed by the uncertainties of Mesa State's systems of governance and financial status must be emphasized as challenges. Without effective governance, stable funding, and new sources of revenue, it will be difficult to maintain the success the College has worked so hard to achieve. It will be even more of a challenge to strengthen the Institution and its programs. The problem is not that Mesa State College has failed to organize its resources, nor is it the case that the resources that do exist have been squandered or even allocated inefficiently. The problem is, rather, that resources provided by the State of Colorado are simply inadequate. This problem is compounded by a state budget process that makes the allocation of even scanty resources unreliable from year to year and subject to rescission. Effective planning, resource allocation and reallocation, and institutional improvement are very difficult under such circumstances.

### ***Suggestions***

Mesa State's greatest challenges stem from budget problems that are not likely to get better soon. As a growing but under-funded institution, Mesa State must attempt to increase revenues and decrease expenditures in a transparent process that sets priorities based on its role and mission.

**Increase Funding and Monitor Spending**

Through the Foundation, the Office of Sponsored Programs, and other existing channels, the College needs to reaffirm its commitment to seeking alternative funding. Tuition increases, too, must be strongly considered. While the College funding cuts are already nicking bone, continued vigilance remains necessary. Creative early retirement packages, for example, might help the College hire less expensive, newer faculty members.

**Responsible Growth**

The College will continue to grow, but must do so responsibly. Existing offices and committees must ensure that being more things to more people in more places does not threaten the small class sizes and close student-faculty relationships that are Mesa State's hallmark. The Faculty Senate and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, in particular, must constantly monitor the impact of growth.

**Academic Program Prioritization Process**

Prioritization of academic programs was conducted in spring, 2003. If the necessity arises to cut academic programs, the Program Prioritization Report should guide the decisions. At the same time, or if the financial climate improves, programs should be added or expanded based on the same report.

**New Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF)**

The first BATF was disbanded after reviewing non-academic College expenditures and recommending cuts. That committee should be revived with an expanded charge. First, the BATF should conduct a prioritization process for non-academic programs similar in nature to that used for academic program prioritization. Support services, including the library, instructional technology, enrollment management and student services, finances and administration, and athletics should be analyzed and prioritized. This would help in the event that further budget cuts

become necessary, and it could also help in determining the order in which resources could be restored as finances allow.

The Task Force should also investigate the budget process with the goal of suggesting a more open and participatory decision-making process for the College. Involvement by a wider College constituency might result in better budgeting decisions and it would also improve the communication among administration, staff, and faculty.

The new BATF should be constituted in early fall, 2003. A draft report should be made available to the College community by November, with a final report sent to the College President in December, 2003.

### **Self-Study Follow Up**

Suggestions made in this *Self-Study Report* will be of little use if they are not seriously considered by the College. The Academic Master Plan Oversight Committee was charged with keeping the Institution and its constituencies focused on the priorities established by the AMP. Either that committee, or one created especially for the present purpose, should monitor the progress of, and be an advocate for, suggestions made in this *Self-Study Report*. The Faculty Senate and the College President should jointly appoint members of the committee who represent various College constituencies. The Committee should prepare a report for the President and Faculty Senate each semester for three years, summarizing the actions taken in response to Self-Study suggestions. A final report should be issued to the College in December, 2006.

### **Conclusion**

Mesa State has a long history of thriving under very difficult funding situations, and it will undoubtedly continue to be a good college even with current funding cutbacks. This is true for many reasons: (1) Mesa State serves a huge region with no similar educational alternatives; (2) the Western Slope region has extraordinary beauty and amazing outdoor opportunities, as well small city amenities, which continues to draw students and exceptional faculty from across the state and beyond;

(3) the Western Slope region is thriving, growing in size as well as in sophistication, with increasing cultural interests; and (4) Mesa State has evolved from the two-year institution it was 30 years ago to the successful and attractive regional public college it is today.

Mesa State College faces alternative futures. If TABOR is rescinded, or higher education becomes exempt from TABOR, or Mesa State receives a permanent financial commitment from the state government (floor funding, for example), or another financial allocation becomes available, Mesa State is poised to achieve much of its potential; it will become an exceptional college and regional service provider for the western slope of Colorado, and a tremendous resource for Colorado as a whole. The alternative future is more modest. Without a considerable additional source of income, the role and mission of Mesa State College must be narrowed and perhaps redefined to reflect the long-term funding situation.

With the careful planning and decision making associated with the College, Mesa State can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.





## Chapter Seven: Information Update

Faculty members and exempt staff found that they face another year without a pay raise. Unlike last year, classified staff also receive no raise for 2003-2004. Considering increases in insurance and other costs, this means another year of effective pay decreases.

Growth in number of students continues, with an estimated increase of 2% in the fall. Matching the forecasts established in the *Facilities Master Plan* and the *Academic Master Plan*, the growth is in spite of an increase in tuition of 5% over last year.

The new Board of Trustees convened its first meeting on July 16 and 17, 2003. One of the first actions was the scheduling of monthly meetings through June 2004. Three of these will be in Denver, with the remainder in Grand Junction. In executive session, the Board offered the continued position of Interim President to Samuel Gingerich, who accepted. The Board expressed an awareness of the need to proceed with the selection of a President, but has not yet announced a schedule for that process. The remainder of the meeting was used primarily as an opportunity for the Board to consider the College's budget processes. The August 20 meeting was also dedicated almost exclusive to concerns with the budget reporting process, postponing a discussion of the College's role and mission. An extra meeting was scheduled for September to continue the budget discussion (<http://www.mesastate.edu/trustees>).

Operations of the Western Colorado Graduate Center were absorbed by Mesa State College. The former Center Director assumed the new MSC position of Director of Regional Programming and is now housed in the main administrative building on campus.

Some of the library woes were alleviated by the acquisition of a new patron-initiated inter-library loan system. Prospector is a unified catalog of eighteen academic, public and special libraries in Colorado and Wyoming. Through Prospector, library users have access to over 15

million books, journals, sound recordings, films, videotapes and other materials held in these libraries. With a simple search and request process, users can identify and borrow materials from these collections and have them delivered to Tomlinson Library within a few days. This new library tool was paid for, in part, with student fees

<http://www.mesastate.edu/msclibrary/about/prospectorfaq.htm>.

A significant advance will be made with the use of Banner's software module Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP). This system will allow computer checking of students' academic program progress, indicating which courses a student has taken that apply toward their graduation, and what courses need to be taken to complete the program. Graduation requirements for all the degree programs will be entered into CAPP during the 2003-2004 year. The system should be ready for student advisors within a year, and for the students themselves shortly after that.

## **Chapter Eight: Request for Institutional Change**

This chapter documents two requests for changes by Mesa State College as a part of its overall accreditation process. The change requests follow the process outlined in Chapter 12—Institutional Change—as printed in Addendum to the *Handbook of Accreditation*, Second Edition, dated March 2002 (42-46). The questions identified for each change correspond in number to the information request changes found in that chapter. The questions are repeated in bold print.

### ***Change Number One: Expanded Degree Sites***

#### **1. What is the change being proposed?**

##### **Proposed Change:**

Mesa State College requests to expand its degree sites to any location within Colorado. It is intended that Mesa State College be able to offer any of its degrees within the described area.

##### **Expected Outcomes:**

While the change has the possibility of increasing enrollment at Mesa State College, the primary desired outcome is expanded higher education access to rural Colorado.

##### **Impact of the Change:**

This change is requested in order to fulfill recent developments in Mesa State's legislative role and mission. It is anticipated that the initial impact on enrollments and educational offerings would be minimal. (See later discussion in this chapter.)

##### **Relevant Commission Policy:**

This change request is in accordance with the Commission's policy statement I.C.2.c as documented in the above referenced *Addendum*... that states:

Commission approval is required to extend accreditation to include... 2. An instructional site at which the institution provides degree program(s) (43).

**2. What factors led the institution to undertake the proposed change?**

**Relevant Institutional Planning:**

This request for change is part of the State's and College's desire to expand higher education services to many underserved areas of Colorado. Planning for this expansion has gone on for some time.

In 1997, Mesa State College adopted a strategic planning document titled *Mesa State College, A Shared Vision* that identified planning goals for the College consistent with its role and mission. That document recognizes "...Mesa State College's mission as a responsible and responsive provider of high quality education and educational services to the Western Slope of Colorado." Among the specific goal statements found in that document are the following:

Increase instructional access with regionally-focused technology for distance learning and academic support services.

Increase the number of articulation agreements and collaborations with other institutions.

Identify the educational needs of various economic sectors and develop ways and means of meeting those needs as appropriate.

Strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones with public schools, businesses, government agencies, and other external groups.

Meet external demands of the region by continuing opportunities for life-long learning and growth through civic and cultural activities.

Expand telecommunications networks and support to provide educational programs in outlying areas including Craig, Delta, Montrose, and Rangely.

Based on this document, in 2001 the College adopted an *Academic Master Plan* that further defined its role in providing higher education services to the region:

It is clear that Mesa State College has limited resources, restricting its ability to satisfy all of the regional demands for educational services. The College must be frugal with the tuition and tax dollars it receives as it provides an array of programs in a traditional manner. Creative solutions are therefore necessary as the institution expands its role as a regional education provider, leading to opportunities for the sharing of resources among institutions and agencies (38).

Specific related goals and objectives enumerated therein state:

To improve the College's ability to ensure the quality and coherence of off-campus academic offerings to students, and to increase the number of articulations and collaborations with other institutions, agencies, and groups...

To develop stronger ties with College programs offered at other locations and with programs offered by other post-secondary institutions in the region (39).

Obviously, planning for an expansion of services has involved not just the desire but also the realization that the planning must also include the economic and sociological realities and possibilities that currently exist.

For some time, the State of Colorado has been discussing the expansion of Mesa State College's regional role. In 2000, the CCHE adopted a new statewide *Master Plan* that speaks directly to improved access to higher education services. The first priority goal states:

...Improve access to higher education for all students, focusing on  
(a) the affordability of higher education for Colorado students and  
(b) access for rural Colorado residents to the broadest array of higher educational opportunities.

As an approach to meeting this goal, the concept of Regional Education Provider has been discussed and studied at the State level for some time. This year, the Colorado General Assembly and the Governor

enacted House Bill 03-1093 that gave Mesa State College its separate Board of Trustees. That bill amended Mesa State's legislative role and mission to include "...Mesa State College shall also serve as a Regional Education Provider." It also gave direction to the meaning of a Regional Education Provider by stating:

(b)... As Regional Education Providers, Adams State College, Mesa State College, and Western State College of Colorado shall have as their primary goal the assessment of regional educational needs and, in consultation with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the allocation of resources for the purposes of meeting those needs.

(2) A regional education provider's initiatives to meet its regional needs may include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Extension of existing programs;
- (b) Creation of new undergraduate programs;
- (c) Development of partnerships with two-year institutions; and
- (d) Facilitation of delivery of graduate education through existing graduate institutions.

CCHE has been in the process of developing policy statements related to this legislation. At their June 5, 2003, meeting, they adopted enabling policies that identified a broad three-step process. A Regional Education Provider shall:

1. Establish an Advisory Council with representation from the stakeholders of the region;
2. Conduct a needs assessment of the higher education needs in the region; and
3. Working with CCHE, identify ways of meeting the need in the region.

That process has begun. Much surveying has already been accomplished and discussions are under way. The options available for meeting the needs are for Mesa State to provide the service either through direct or distance learning methods, to partner with another organization or institution, or to ask that another organization or institution provide the service.

Mesa State is in a unique position to accomplish the process. For a number of years, the State funded Western Colorado Graduate Center has been housed on the Mesa State main campus. That Center's function was to assess the needs of graduate education on the western slope of Colorado, and to provide programs that would help meet those needs. As of the start of the 2004 fiscal year, funding for that Center as a separate entity has been discontinued and Mesa State has absorbed the personnel into its administration. They provide a wealth of information about the region that will be of great assistance in the development of effective educational programs.

CCHE has also, by policy, established regional areas. Mesa State's region is a thirteen-county area in north and west Colorado. This area does "... not supplant the service area for two-year colleges and postsecondary schools offering vocational programs." Mesa State's area for its community college and vocational role and mission is to remain, as will its four-year Colorado-wide area. Mesa State can still provide programs outside of its own region, but must do so in consultation with CCHE and that other region's Provider.

For example, the Western Colorado Area Health Center (AHEC) has asked Mesa State College to provide a bachelor of nursing program to several locations throughout the state. The first cohort consists of 16 students located in Cortez, Craig, and Montrose, Colorado. Interest has also been expressed in developing a second cohort in Glenwood Springs, Steamboat Springs, and Durango, Colorado. It should be noted that the Cortez and Durango sites are outside of Mesa State's designated region. Fort Lewis College, the provider for that region, has approved Mesa State's delivery of the program.

The nursing program being delivered targets registered nurses who desire to improve their educational background to the baccalaureate level. It is a two-year program delivered via AHEC's distance learning facilities.



Overall, the potential addition of degree sites in all of Colorado will position Mesa State as an effective responder to the greater community. In consultation with CCHE and other institutions, Mesa State will have all options available as it tries to meet the needs of students in its own region, as well as those in areas that surround it.

**Needs Analysis:**

Enabling policies for the Regional Education Provider require that Mesa State College conduct a needs analysis in its region. Because much surveying has already been accomplished by Mesa State and other agencies, needs are generally known. Existing information will be analyzed and discussed as it relates to vocational and technical education, community college programs, baccalaureate, and graduate curricula, as well as continuing education courses. A task force with broad participation is recommended as the vehicle for this analysis.

**Involved Constituencies:**

Enabling policies also require that Mesa State College establish an Advisory Council with representatives of all stakeholders in the region. Council members will be selected from a wide range of both public and private organizations so that the broad view of educational needs can be established.

**3. What necessary approvals have been obtained to implement the proposed change?**

**Internal Approvals:**

The Mesa State College *Academic Master Plan*, approved on campus and by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado in 1999, gave direction for Mesa State to extend and strengthen its role as education provider in the area. (23-24) This *Plan* established goals and objectives that speak directly to the issues involved. (See prior discussion under item 2, this chapter.)

**External Approvals:**

Both the Colorado General Assembly and CCHE have formally designated Mesa State College as Regional Education Provider for a thirteen county area of northern and western Colorado. Policies and specific procedures are currently in development for the formal implementation of that designation.

**4. What impact might the proposed change have on challenges identified by the Commission as part of or subsequent to the last comprehensive visit?**

**Challenges:**

Challenges since the last comprehensive visit have been addressed in other portions of this Self-Study document. However, there are two challenges listed in the *Report of a Focused Visit to Mesa State College* on November 4-6, 2002, that speak directly to this issue. That visit was to review requests for change that would add two new degree sites to Mesa State's affiliation status. (The changes were approved effective April 4, 2003.) The two challenges listed in the *Report* were:

1. In some areas, progress on assessment of student academic achievement, particularly with regard to general education, is lacking.
2. There is need to systematically integrate faculty members servicing off-campus sites into the Mesa State College community and to create close associations with the relevant academic departments (12).

**Addressing the Challenges:**

Assessment concerns and plans for the future are addressed elsewhere in this Self-Study. A program involving off-campus faculty and staff is being discussed. This program includes the current practice of giving new-hires direct one-on-one instruction in the College's systems and procedures, having meetings off and on-campus with like faculty and

staff members to discuss problems and opportunities of common interest. It is anticipated that this program will be instituted later this year.

### **5. What are the Institution's plans to implement and sustain the proposed change?**

#### **Faculty and Staff:**

It is difficult to identify detailed plans for implementation prior to knowing both needs and general solutions. However, like the two sites that have already been approved for the College, it is assumed that the policies and assessment procedures that govern the main campus would apply to any off-campus sites that might be established. Governance would stem from, and be accountable to, the main campus.

The ability to sustain programs and off-campus programs must be viewed with care. In many instances, such programs may be considered permanent while others may be temporary. Program duration must be a part of the overall discussion.

#### **Administrative Structure:**

The main campus would govern any necessary off-site administration. It should be noted that, in order to help facilitate the needs analysis and to give some direction to the overall process, the prior Director of the Western Colorado Graduate Center has been named Director of Regional Programming for Mesa State College. Her background and knowledge of the region will be invaluable in assisting provider development.

#### **Learning Resources and Support Services:**

The services required by any given site can vary significantly depending on the needs of students and programs. Mesa State College has considerable technological assets that can assist in this area. Tomlinson Library has been directly involved in developing programs and assisting students in fulfilling their needs for resource access. The staff and administration are adept in meeting with students and helping them with

advising and financial support either directly on their off-campus locations or through technological channels.

**Financial Information:**

Mesa State College does not, by itself, currently have the resources to meet all of the region's higher education needs. Indeed, limited faculty and staff as well as limited physical and financial resources make providing for current needs difficult. That is why all plans for dealing with regional need include a discussion of partnerships. Mesa State College will have several choices in meeting the need—either develop its own programs, partner with other institutions or agencies to provide them, or broker the programs of others to meet the need. In any case, sufficient resources will be provided in order to achieve the educational objective. This will be assured through the cooperation of the College and CCHE.

**Schedule:**

The schedule for identifying any off-campus sites is, understandably, unknown at this time. However, it is anticipated that the Task Force charged with identifying Provider procedures will be established later in this academic year. The Advisory Council should be appointed shortly thereafter.

**6. What are the Institution's strategies to evaluate the proposed change?**

**Documentation of Achievement:**

Documentation of achievement will be an integral part of planning for any off-site programs that may be established. Specific, measurable goals will be instituted and monitored as site development progresses.

**Assessment of Student Learning:**

Assessment procedures used on the main campus shall be used on off-site locations as applicable. Where necessary, new procedures shall be developed that will assess and document the progress of student learning.

## ***Change Number Two: Governance***

### **1. What is the change being proposed?**

#### **Proposed Change:**

As noted in prior sections of this document, Mesa State College has undergone a change in governance. The College has been governed by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado since 1974. On July 1, 2003, in accordance with State legislation, that governing body was dissolved and the Board of Trustees of Mesa State College was formed. It is requested that The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools recognize this new governing body in accordance with Commission policy, and that the self-study review process include an evaluation of this change.

#### **Expected Outcomes:**

Mesa State College has been part of a consortium of schools governed by the State Colleges in Colorado. In accordance with legislation, each of those schools—Adams State College, Mesa State College, Western State College, and Metro State College—is now governed by its own independent Board of Trustees. Mesa State College now has a Board of Trustees that is concerned solely with governance and direction for Mesa State.

#### **Impact of the Change:**

In accordance with enabling legislation:

... the powers, duties, and functions formerly performed by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado with respect to Mesa State College are hereby transferred to the Board of Trustees. Policies, resolutions, procedures, and agreements previously approved by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado and applicable to Mesa State College shall remain in force and effect unless and until changed by the Board of Trustees (House Bill 03-1093).

With the exception noted previously in this document related to Regional Education Provider, Mesa State College's legislative role and mission

remains unchanged. All academic programs still are offered, and the College continues to receive a share of State allocated funds for higher education.

However, the College will be impacted in its functional relation to the new Board, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and the Colorado Legislature. Many Board operations, Commission reports, as well as legislative reports and lobbying operations once accomplished by the former Board's administrative personnel, the Office of State Colleges in Colorado, now will have to be undertaken by Mesa State College personnel. A share of State funding previously allotted to the Office of State Colleges for these purposes, as well as a share of the Office's assets, have been given to Mesa State College.

**Relevant Commission Policy:**

This change request is in accordance with the Commission's policy statement I.C.2.a as documented in the above referenced

*Addendum...* that states:

Commission approval is required when ... 6. An institution changes ownership and/or legal status; Commission staff may give approval upon receipt and evaluation of documentation that the institutional mission remains unchanged, that the academic programs will continue, that board governance continues to meet Commission requirements, and that appropriate financial resources continue to support the institution, but will schedule an on-site evaluation to be conducted within six months (42).

**2. What factors led the Institution to undertake the proposed change?**

**Relevant Institutional Planning:**

Changes in Mesa State's governance have been discussed for a number of years at many different levels. Changes in governance were part of an overall statewide analysis of higher education by a Blue Ribbon Panel initiated by the Governor in 2001. Prior to the last State legislative session, it became clear that there was general agreement that the

institutions that made up the State Colleges would be better served by having their own individual governing boards. The impetus for this move was functional as well as fiscal.

When Mesa State College became aware that this change was imminent, it began planning. At the request of the Interim President, an internal Governance Task Force with wide representation was formed to discuss changes and impacts on the College. That group was used as a springboard for ideas relating to Board relations, and as a way of keeping the College generally informed about governance developments. The group also produced a document and packet of information to be given to each new board member as an introduction to the College.

Planning has included developing a budget for Board operations. Additional personnel have been added in the Office of Institutional Advancement to address Board operations and communications.

**Needs Analysis:**

The need for this change has been substantiated at the State level.

**Involved Constituencies:**

Numerous individuals and groups from the Mesa State College area, as well as from around the State, were involved in the governance change process.

**3. What necessary approvals have been obtained to implement the proposed change?**

**Internal Approvals:**

Internal approvals are not required to implement this change. The change came about as the result of State legislative action.

**External Approvals:**

External approvals have been accomplished in the form of enacted legislation.

**4. What impact might the proposed change have on challenges identified by the Commission as part of or subsequent to the last comprehensive visit?**

**Challenges:**

No impacts are anticipated by this change on challenges identified by the Commission as the result of the last comprehensive visit.

**Addressing the Challenges:**

Not applicable.

**5. What are the Institution's plans to implement and sustain the proposed change?**

**Faculty and Staff:**

No changes to faculty have been made as the result of this change. As stated above, personnel have been added in the Office of Institutional Advancement in order to deal directly with Board operations. There may be additional personnel requirements as the Board requirements dictate.

**Administrative Structure:**

There have been additions to the administrative structure, as noted above, in order to provide for this change. Others will be made as need requires.

**Learning Resources and Support Services:**

No academic learning or support services are required to accommodate this change.

**Financial Information:**

As stated earlier, a share of State funding previously allotted to the Office of State Colleges for these purposes, as well as a share of the Office's assets, has been given to Mesa State College. A one-time allotment of approximately \$750,000, along with continuing funding of approximately \$590,000, has been reallocated to Mesa State. Those funds will be used to provide for current Board operations.



**Schedule:**

The change to a new board has occurred, effective July 1, 2003.

**6. What are the Institution's strategies to evaluate the proposed change?**

**Documentation of Achievement:**

It is anticipated that some of the initial board duties will be a review of policies and procedures assumed from the former Trustees of the State Colleges. As such, statements of achievement related to any Board activities or evaluations are very premature.

**Assessment of Student Learning:**

No activities related to assessment of student learning will be modified as the result of this change request.



## **Chapter Nine: Request for Continued Accreditation**

Through this Self-Study, Mesa State College has demonstrated that it meets the General Institutional Requirements and satisfies the five criteria set out by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges.

Mesa State College has a very dedicated, effective, and efficient administration, staff, and faculty. It demonstrates the highest level of integrity in dealing with all of its constituents. The College attracts a student body that is growing and is increasingly well prepared for success. Its efforts at assessment are strong and improving. Although the College faces funding problems due to the State's budget crisis, it has an excellent planning system that has dealt with fiscal problems without diminishing the quality of teaching and learning that is at the heart of its mission. No doubt exists that the College will continue with excellence even as it changes to meet the challenges of the future.

Mesa State College therefore requests continued accreditation for the maximum ten-year period.



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## Appendix A: General Institutional Requirements

The information in this chapter provides evidence that Mesa State College meets the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. The GIRs identified below in *bold italics* are those delineated in the Higher Learning Commission's literature. Copies of all referenced statutes and documents can be found in the Resource Room.

### ***Mission***

***1. It has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board and made public, declaring that it is an institution of higher education.***

Mesa State College's mission is in accordance with the following statement of the Colorado Legislature:

There is hereby established a College at Grand Junction, to be known as Mesa State College, which shall be a general baccalaureate and specialized graduate institution with moderately selective admissions. Mesa State College shall offer undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business degree programs and a limited number of graduate programs. Mesa State College shall also maintain a community college role and mission, including vocational and technical programs. Mesa State College shall receive resident credit for two-year course offerings in its commission-approved service area. Mesa State shall also serve as a regional education provider (House Bill 03-1093, Section 23-53-101).

***2. It is a degree-granting Institution.***

Mesa State College offers the following degrees:

- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
- Bachelor of Science (BS)
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- Associate of Arts (AA)
- Associate of Science (AS)
- Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

Mesa State College also offers a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency, as well as Teacher Licensure.

## **Authorization**

***3. It has legal authorization to grant its degrees, and it meets all the legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.***

Legal authority for Mesa State College to grant degrees comes from the Colorado Legislature. Specific details of this authority are found in the *Colorado Revised Statutes* (23-2-103, 513). The administration of the legal application is under the authority of the Colorado Commission of Higher Education.

***4. It has legal documents to confirm its status: non-profit, for-profit, or public.***

Mesa State College has a legislatively defined establishment and mission as described under GIR number one. The Colorado Legislature further defines a state college as "...established and existing pursuant to law as an agency of the State of Colorado and supported wholly or in part by tax revenues" (23-2-102, 512).

## **Governance**

***5. It has a governing board that possesses and exercises necessary legal power to establish and review basic policies that govern the institution.***

The governing board of Mesa State College is its Board of Trustees. This Board was established on July 1, 2003 in accordance with the Colorado Legislature's House Bill 1093, Section 23-53-102. Specific operations of the Board of Trustees are currently controlled by policies established by the prior Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado (Trustee Policy Manual). The legislation establishing the Board of Trustees provided for the transfer of power:

The powers, duties, and functions formerly performed by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado with respect to Mesa State College are hereby transferred to the Board of Trustees. Policies, resolutions, procedures, and agreements previously approved by the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado and applicable to Mesa State College shall remain in force and effect unless and until changed by the Board of Trustees." (House Bill 1093, 23-53-102 (6))

This statement applies to other policy documents referenced within the following responses to the GIR's. It is assumed that the Board of Trustees will, as a part

of their initial duties, review all policy documents and make modification as deemed necessary.

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) provides oversight governance of the Board of Trustees (Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-101).

***6. Its governing board includes public members and is sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure the integrity of the institution.***

The autonomy of the Trustees of Mesa State College is legislatively controlled. According to the enabling legislation (House Bill 1093, 23-53-102 (2-5)), the following limitations apply:

- A. The nine trustees constituting the board are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to four-year terms. Of these nine board members, at least two shall reside in Delta, Garfield, Mesa, or Montrose counties.
- B. The tenth Trustee is a non-voting Trustee and is a full-time junior or senior student elected by the student body of Mesa State College to a one-year term.
- C. The eleventh Trustee is a non-voting Trustee and is a member of and elected by the faculty of Mesa State College to a two-year term.

**Board members appointed by Governor Owens are:**

**James Wexels, government affairs consultant to Ackerman Information Corporation.**

**Carol Nesland, certified financial planner in a private practice in Aurora and has practiced as sole proprietor of C.A. James Company since 1991.**

**James Hamilton, chairman and CEO of Home Loan Investment Company in Grand Junction.**

**Luis Colón, director of strategic and business planning for Source One Management.**

**Jane North, active in the Cherry Creek School District for over twenty years, including a position on the board of directors with the Cherry Creek School Foundation.**

**Charlie Monfort, founding owner and chairman and CEO of the Colorado Rockies Baseball Club.**

**Steven Meyer, President of Shaw Construction in Grand Junction.**

Lena Ann Elliott, former vice-chair of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System.

C. Thomas Kaesemeyer, Executive Director of the Gates Family Foundation.

The Faculty Trustee is Gayla Slauson. Garrett Branson represents the students.

***7. It has an executive officer designated by the governing board to provide administrative leadership for the institution.***

As of January 1, 2003, the Interim President of Mesa State College is Samuel Gingerich, PhD. The former President was Michael Gallagher. The Trustees of the State College in Colorado appointed him to this position in 1996. The *Trustee Policy Manual*, chapter 7, governs presidential appointments, duties, and responsibilities.

***8. Its governing board authorizes the institution's affiliation with the Commission.***

The initial authorization for Mesa State College to become accredited with the North Central Association of College and Secondary Schools occurred on April 28, 1955. The Mesa College Committee, the College's governing board at that time, also authorized spending of \$1,000 as the estimated cost of accreditation (A copy of those minutes is in the resource room). Mesa State College first became accredited with North Central in 1957. Today, all accreditation information, including that of the Higher Learning Commission, is regularly and formally reported to its governing board.

## **Faculty**

***9. It employs a faculty that has earned from accredited institutions the degrees appropriate to the level of instruction offered by the institution.***

Mesa State College employed 333 faculty members at the start of the 2002 academic year. Of these, 185 (55%) hold terminal degrees as defined by Mesa State College policy. Another 122 (37%) hold a non-terminal master's degree. Minimal educational requirements for all faculty are defined and governed by Trustee and Mesa State College policies (*Mesa State College Professional Staff Policy Handbook*, 6-1 to 6-2 and *State Colleges in Colorado Handbook for Professional Personnel*, VI-1, VI-4).

**10. A sufficient number of the faculty are full-time employees of the institution.**

At the beginning of the 2001-2002 academic year, 209 (63%) of the 333 faculty were employed full-time.

**11. Its faculty has a significant role in developing and evaluating all of the institution's educational programs.**

Mesa State College is governed internally through a shared governance structure defined by policy (*Mesa State College Professional Staff Policy Handbook*, 2-1 to 4-13). Academic matters are administered through the Office of Academic Affairs, the Academic Council, and the Faculty Senate. Standing faculty committees that make recommendations to these bodies include:

- Academic Policies Committee
- Academy for Educational Excellence
- Assessment Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Distinguished Faculty Award Committee
- Faculty Development, Assistance, and Enrichment Committee
- Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee
- Library Committee
- Sabbatical Leave Committee.

***Educational Program***

**12. It confers degrees.**

During the fiscal year 2002, Mesa State College graduated the following numbers in its various degree categories:

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number Graduated</u>
Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)	8
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)	264
Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)	100
Bachelor of Science (B.S.)	123
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N)	35
Associate of Arts (A.A.)	35
Associate of Science (A.S.)	12
Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)	79
TOTAL	656



In addition, Mesa State College granted 29 Certificates of Occupational Proficiency.

**13. It has degree programs in operation, with students enrolled in them.**

Beginning the fall semester of 2002, Mesa State College enrolled the following numbers of students in its various degree categories:

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number Enrolled</u>
Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)	59
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)	1911
Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)	699
Bachelor of Science (B.S.)	792
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N)	323
Associate of Arts (A.A.)	632
Associate of Science (A.S.)	166
Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)	818
TOTAL	5400

Mesa State College also enrolled 47 students in programs leading to a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency. In addition, 113 students were also enrolled as undeclared.

**14. Its degree programs are compatible with the institution's mission and are based on recognized fields of study at the higher education level.**

Mesa State College's degree offerings are compatible with its three-fold mission as a graduate, baccalaureate, and community college institution (Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-53-101, 732). All degree programs are reviewed and approved by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in accordance with its legislative authority (23-1-107). This Commission's review and approval is accomplished in cooperation with the Board of Trustees and is consistently applied statewide in accordance with goals and expectations established by legislation (23-1-104). Enabling policy can be found in the Commission's *Manual of Policies and Procedures* Part C, pages I-C-1 through I-C-4.

**15. Its degrees are appropriately named, following practices common to institutions of higher education in terms of both length and content of the programs.**

Mesa State College refers to the Classification of Institutional Programs (CIP) Code designated by the U.S. Department of Education and the degrees recognized by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education as assurances that the College's programs are consistent with those of other institutions. Length and content of Mesa State College's programs are consistent with other, similar programs offered by other higher education institutions in the State of Colorado. The length of each degree program is as follows:

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Minimum Credit Hours</u>
Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)	36
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)	120
Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)	120
Bachelor of Science (B.S.)	120
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N)	120
Associate of Arts (A.A.)	60
Associate of Science (A.S.)	60
Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)	60 or more.

Specific degree requirements are listed in the *Mesa State College Catalog 2003 – 2004*.

**16. Its undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry.**

All degree programs at Mesa State College contain a general education component. The goals of the general education program were established in 1986 and consist of the following:

The design of general education has been guided by a nine-fold set of objectives set out in the *Mesa State College Catalog 2003 – 2004*. A Mesa State College baccalaureate graduate should:

1. Be able to communicate effectively in the English language,
2. Possess mathematical skills,
3. Be aware of the great moral, ethical, and philosophical questions which have endured through the ages,

4. Have some knowledge of the origins of our own culture and the existence of others,
5. Be able to think critically and recognize issues across a broad spectrum of subjects,
6. Understand the complexities of our social, economic and political environment,
7. Have a familiarity with the scientific approach to the biological, psychological, and physical universe,
8. Appreciate the contributions of literature to our perception of ourselves and our world,
9. Appreciate the aesthetic spirit of mankind through a study of some aspect of the performing and visual arts (51).

Baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 33 credit hours in general education courses (45-48). Associate of science degrees require a minimum of 33 credit hours for the general education core transfer curriculum. Associate of arts degrees require a minimum of 34 credit hours from the general education core transfer curriculum. This core curriculum is in accordance with the Colorado Core Transfer Consortium Program, which articulates the statewide common core of general education programs in Colorado (49-54).

***17. It has admission policies and practices that are consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to its educational programs.***

Mesa State College's admission policies stem from its legislative mission statement describing it as an institution "... with moderately selective admissions" (Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-53-101, 732). This institutional description corresponds to admission policies defined by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (*Manual of Policies and Procedures*, Part F, I-F-1 to I-F-49).

***18. It provides its students access to those learning resources and support services requisite for its degree programs.***

Mesa State College's Tomlinson Library provides a diverse collection of materials that support all academic programs provided by the College. The library contains over 300,000 items, including books, periodicals, nonprint materials, maps, newspapers, audio and video cassettes, slides, records, CD ROM disks, films, software,

and other items. More than 50 on-line databases are available through the Library's web pages. The library is a selected depository for federal government documents and also contains special collections in the areas of western Colorado history and other subjects.

Services provided by the library include reference and information desk assistance, group study rooms, photocopy and microform machines, and library instruction to classes. The Media Center provides instruction materials, consultation, equipment distribution, and media production services to students and faculty.

Access to the collection is through the on-line catalog, which is composed of the holdings of the Tomlinson Library, and includes holdings in other libraries throughout Colorado and the United States. Should materials not be available locally, the Interlibrary Loan Department obtains needed materials for students and faculty from other libraries. Library and informational resources are available via the web at [www.Mestate.edu/library](http://www.Mestate.edu/library) (*Mesa State College Catalog 2002-2003*, 29-33).

Mesa State College also provides a comprehensive array of support services to assist students in their academic pursuits. Among these services is the Academic Services Department that offers college success and academic improvement courses, access services for the disabled, peer tutoring, and testing services. Academic as well as career advising is provided through the Office of Academic Advising and Career Planning in combination with faculty advisors

## ***Finances***

***19. It has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency at least every two years.***

The State Auditor, an independent agency, audits Mesa State College every year. The results of the audit are conveyed in a consolidated report of the State Colleges in Colorado. A copy of the latest audit report is available in the resource room (*Report of the State Auditor*).

***20. Its financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocation and use of resources to support its educational programs.***

For the fiscal year ending 2002, Mesa State College spent \$20,989,267 for its educational programs. This total includes instruction (\$15,643,741), academic support (\$2,656,186), and student service (\$2,689,340) categories. The total constitutes 74% of the College's unrestricted fund expenditures, excluding those for auxiliary enterprises (*Report of the State Auditor...2002*, 53). This is an increase of 5.9% from the prior year's expenditure of \$19,828,298 (*Report of the State Auditor...2003*, 55).

**21. Its financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability.**

Mesa State College complies with state legislation that prevents deficit spending. Its budgets are based upon projected revenues and expenditures that are continuously monitored against actual conditions. All end of year fund balances for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001 show no deficits, indicating that deficit spending did not occur (*Report of the State Auditor...2002*).

**Public Information**

**22. Its catalog or other official documents includes its mission statement along with accurate descriptions of its educational programs, its learning resources, its admissions policies and practices, its academic and non-academic policies and procedures directly affecting students, its charges and refund policies, and the academic credentials of its faculty and administrators.**

The following is an abbreviated table of contents of the *Mesa State College Catalog 2002-2003* indicating the location of the requested items:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Page Numbers</u>
Mission Statement	5
Educational Program Descriptions	
General Information	9
Specific Information	62-73
Degree Requirements	74-134
Learning Resources	29-33
Admissions Policies and Practices	11-19
Academic Policies	
General	34-39
Graduation	41-61
Non-Academic Policies	38
Charges and Refund Policies	20-25
Faculty and Administrator Academic Credentials	240-249

**23. It accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated.**

Mesa State College is currently accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602, ([www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org](http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org)). The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education accredits Mesa State College's nursing program, and the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology accredits its Radiologic Technology Program. This information is described in the College's Catalog. Copies of the most recent North Central Association self-study and visiting team reports are made available in the Office of the President and in the Tomlinson Library. Copies of other accreditation reports are made available in relevant departmental offices. For purposes of this study, copies of all accreditation reports are available in the resource rooms.

**24. It makes available upon request information that accurately describes its financial condition.**

Mesa State College publishes its budget information, providing copies in a variety of media. The College also prepares quarterly budget updates and year-end summaries. This information is presented to and approved by the Trustees. All of this fiscal information is considered public information and is available on request in accordance with Colorado legislation.

### **GIR References**

- "23-1-101—Legislative Declaration." *Colorado Revised Statutes*. Bradford Publishing: Denver, CO (2001). <http://64.78.178.12/cgi-dos/statdspp.exe?LNP&doc=23-1-101>.
- "23-2-102—Definitions." *Colorado Revised Statutes*. Bradford Publishing: Denver, CO (2001). <http://64.78.178.12/cgi-dos/statdspp.exe?N&srch=23%2d2&r=10&s=21838&cr=2>.
- "23-2-103—Awarding Degrees." *Colorado Revised Statutes*. Bradford Publishing: Denver, CO (2001). <http://64.78.178.12/cgi-dos/statdspp.exe?N&srch=23%2d2&r=10&s=20329&cr=3>.
- Manual of Policies and Procedures*. Colorado Commission of Higher Education.
- Mesa State College Catalog 2003-2004*.
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*Report of the State Auditor – State Colleges in Colorado Financial and Compliance Audit.* Denver, CO (2001 & 2002).

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<http://www.mesastate.edu/trustees/files/Handbook061303.pdf>.

*Trustee Policy Manual.* Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado. Denver, CO (2002).  
<http://www.mesastate.edu/trustees/files/Trustees%20Policy%20Manual.pdf>.

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