

An Overview of Mesa State College and Western Colorado

Public colleges and universities are inextricably linked to the regions and communities in which they are located. A college often is a significant partner in regional economic development. Not only can it be a major employer, but it also is a business that purchases a large volume of goods and services having a substantial local impact. A campus frequently is a social and cultural focal point that enhances, in its broadest sense, the quality of life of area residents. Be it art or athletics, a college brings activities and programs that otherwise would not be so readily accessible to a community. As a public institution, a college also serves as an information resource to which a region looks for answers to questions with which it is grappling. At the core of its responsibilities, though, a public college exists to deliver education to those who support it.

Mesa State College is a regional public institution established to serve the educational needs of Western Colorado. Founded in 1925, the college has evolved into a higher education center of nearly 6,200 students and now offers academic and technical programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Grand Junction, Montrose, Glenwood Springs, and surrounding communities. This report examines the impact of Mesa State on Western Colorado from three perspectives: 1) the college's contributions to educational attainment by residents of Colorado's Western Slope; 2) a description of how the college better the region's quality of life; and 3) the institution's impact on the regional economy. Diverse as these contributions are, the common thread running through the three sections is the way in which Mesa State College is achieving a higher degree of leadership in Western Colorado.

The College

The college currently offers academic degrees and vocational certificates in 54 undergraduate fields of study and one master's level degree. As programs have been added and enrollment has grown—particularly in recent years—Mesa State also has become a major employer in the region. In 2003, the college employed 1,194 full- and part-time faculty, staff, and students, ranking third in total employees in Mesa County after School District 51 and St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center. With a payroll in excess of \$22.5 million, the college also ranked as the third largest employer.

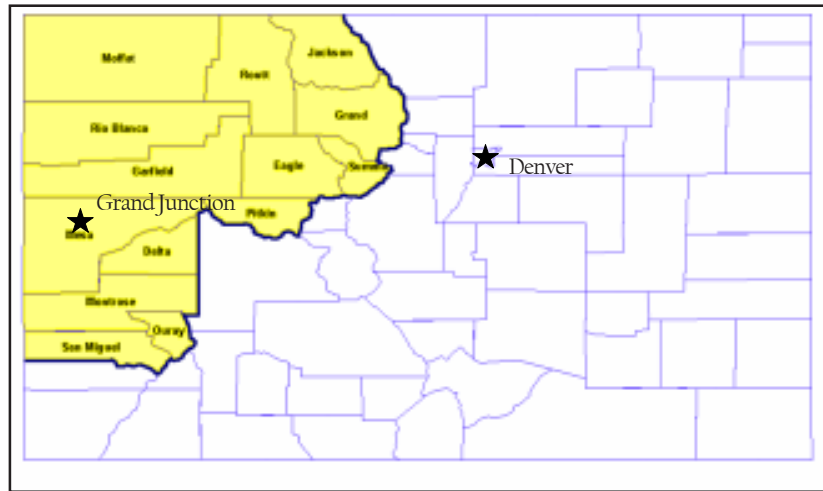
The most recent change in Mesa State's responsibilities occurred in 2003 when the Colorado General Assembly designated Mesa State College as the Regional Education Provider for 14 Western Slope counties (Figure 1): Delta, Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Jackson, Mesa, Moffat, Montrose, Ouray, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Miguel and Summit. With this expanded role and mission, Mesa State will have growing demands to provide education and the technological skills to meet the needs of the region's changing workforce.



Note: This summary is an excerpt from *Achieving a Higher Degree of Leadership in Western Colorado* by Carol Futhey and Morgan Bridge, November 2004. The complete report is available at: <http://www.mesastate.edu/president/impactstudy>.



Figure 1. COUNTIES DESIGNATED TO BE SERVED BY MESA STATE COLLEGE
AS A REGIONAL EDUCATION PROVIDER



The Western Slope of Colorado

The 14 counties that comprise the college's service region represent nearly 28% of Colorado's total area, a region approximately the size of the state of West Virginia. The sheer physical area of the region—28,535 square miles—as well as the significant topographic divisions, create major challenges for the college as it develops coursework for delivery. The college's service region is primarily one of small populations that are both diverse and widely dispersed. This is illustrated by the fact that three of the counties—Rio Blanco, Ouray, and Jackson—have fewer residents than the enrollment of the college (Table 1). Mesa County, with 120,000 residents, has the greatest population concentration on the Western Slope.

**Table 1. MESA STATE COLLEGE 14-COUNTY SERVICE REGION BY TOTAL
POPULATION IN 2000**

County	Total Population	Population Chg (1990 - 2000)	Projected Population (2010)	Percent Persons in 2000 Census Who Were --	
				Under 18 Yrs Old	65 Yrs & Older
Mesa	119,281	24.8%	143,591	25.0%	15.2%
Garfield	45,521	46.1%	58,558	27.1%	8.8%
Eagle	43,027	90.0%	56,819	23.5%	3.0%
Montrose	34,572	36.9%	43,371	26.8%	15.2%
Delta	28,421	32.7%	34,405	24.0%	19.7%
Summit	24,225	82.8%	32,427	17.4%	3.3%
Routt	20,255	39.8%	24,390	22.6%	5.0%
Pitkin	14,810	17.5%	18,906	16.7%	6.8%
Moffat	13,154	16.1%	14,526	28.5%	9.4%
Grand	12,711	56.2%	16,740	21.8%	7.8%
San Miguel	6,951	80.5%	8,919	17.6%	3.4%
Rio Blanco	5,945	-1.1%	6,548	26.5%	11.2%
Ouray	3,882	63.1%	4,648	22.8%	12.2%
Jackson	1,589	-1.7%	1,720	25.6%	13.1%
14-County Total	374,344		465,568		
Colorado	4,417,714	30.6%		25.6%	9.7%

Source: Colorado Data Book. Downloaded 6/28/04. http://www.state.co.us/oed/bus_fin/contents.html.

The economic base of the region's 14 counties, by some measures, is quite similar while other indicators reflect significant differences. The resort counties of Pitkin, San Miguel, Eagle, Routt, Summit, Grand, and Ouray are highly affluent and contrast with the remaining seven that are relatively more rural and remote. The seven counties with lower income levels have economies that are oriented more toward agriculture, ranching and/or mining. The entire region, however, is dominated by small businesses. At least 60% of the businesses have four or fewer employees. Only Mesa, Routt, Pitkin, and Eagle Counties have more than 3% of their businesses employing 50 or more persons. Meeting the diverse educational needs of the Western Slope region poses both opportunities and challenges for Mesa State College.

As shown in Table 2, the importance of education cannot be overstated, given the clear correlation between educational attainment and earning power. Thus it appears that future economic gains in the region are highly interrelated with the college's ability to deliver the type of education needed by its residents. ■

Table 2. COLORADO EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2000*

Educational Level	Median Earnings
Not a high school graduate	\$21,757
High school graduate	\$28,765
Some college	\$32,294
Bachelor's degree	\$42,237
Advanced degree	\$53,528

*Census data limited to year-round, full-time employed Coloradoans aged 21 to 64 years in 2000 who worked 50+ weeks and 35+ hours per week in 1999.

Balancing Access with a Quality Education: The Educational Impact of Mesa State College

As an institution with education as its primary responsibility, it is logical to begin with the impact that Mesa State College has had on postsecondary education participation in Western Colorado. This section focuses on the college's educational contributions in three ways: 1) an overview of changes in educational attainment, both regionally and statewide; 2) a description of the college's efforts to expand educational access to the region's residents in a way that balances that commitment with that of delivering a quality education; and 3) some quality indicators of the college's academic programs.

An Overview of Western Colorado's Educational Attainment

Colorado consistently ranks as one of the most highly educated populations in the United States when measured by the proportion of persons 25 years of age and older who have completed a baccalaureate degree (Table 3). In 2000, the Bureau of the Census reported that 32.7% of Coloradoans held a baccalaureate degree or higher. Half of the counties in Mesa State's service region—Pitkin, San Miguel, Summit, Eagle, Routt, Grand, and Ouray—have populations where one-third to one-half have at least a bachelor's degree. Their residents have attained levels of education significantly above the statewide percentage due to the highly educated population that has migrated into these counties.



**Table 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN MESA STATE COLLEGE'S
14-COUNTY REGION, 1980 - 2000**

County	Percent Persons 25 Years and Older Who Were Baccalaureate Degree Completers in --			Percentage Point Change 1980 - 2000
	1980	1990	2000	
Pitkin	46.2%	49.8%	57.1%	10.9
San Miguel	35.9%	40.3%	48.5%	12.6
Summit	38.7%	39.7%	48.3%	9.6
Eagle	34.6%	33.0%	42.6%	8.0
Routt	31.7%	34.7%	42.5%	10.8
Ouray	24.6%	27.9%	36.8%	12.2
Grand	21.2%	30.2%	34.5%	13.3
Colorado	23.0%	27.0%	32.7%	9.7
Garfield	20.2%	21.6%	23.8%	3.6
Mesa	16.3%	17.4%	22.0%	5.7
Jackson	13.4%	15.3%	19.9%	6.5
Rio Blanco	18.0%	37.9%	19.5%	1.5
Montrose	13.8%	15.4%	18.7%	4.9
Delta	12.2%	13.6%	17.6%	5.4
Moffat	14.7%	15.4%	12.5%	-2.2

**General Social and Economic Characteristics: Colorado . 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census of Population. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census.*

The balance of the 14 counties has not reached the state average. Historically these counties—Garfield, Mesa, Montrose, Jackson, Rio Blanco, Delta, and Moffat—have had less mobile populations and/or are generally more rural and physically isolated. These demographic and geographic characteristics make it more likely that these counties' residents have attended college closer to home, such as at Mesa State, or transferred to Mesa State after attending a local community college or vocational school. Thus it is far more likely that Mesa State College can claim credit for the gains in educational levels by residents in these counties, particularly at the two- and four-year levels.

Expanding Access to Higher Education

The college draws the largest number of students, not surprisingly, from the three counties in closest proximity to Grand Junction—Mesa, Montrose, and Delta—with these counties representing approximately two-thirds of the college's enrollments in fall 2003. The institution's role as a Regional Education Provider, however, is broadening its geographic base. The college has developed a campus in Montrose, and technology is enabling the growth of programs with other institutions such as Colorado Mountain College. The enrollments from the 14-county region that Mesa State College is designated to serve have increased by nearly 26% between fall 1998 and 2003.

Measuring how an institution expands access goes beyond where educational opportunities are made available to the populations that now participate in larger numbers. Perhaps the most striking change over the five-year period (1998 - 2003) is Mesa State's attraction of more than 300 high school students who are enrolled concurrently in college-level classes. They now make up approximately five percent of the college's enrollment. When a student enrolls in courses that simultaneously award high school and college credit, this not only reduces the cost of a college education, but also is a head start on credit hours toward a college degree.

Most importantly, Mesa State's concurrent offerings serve as an incentive to students to continue their education beyond high school.

Access also has been extended to students from underrepresented races or ethnic groups. The number of undergraduates who have identified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander, Black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaskan Native origin increased by approximately one-third between 1998 and 2003. The largest numeric gain among the underrepresented groups for the five-year period was recorded for Hispanic students who now account for 7.6% of the student headcount at Mesa State College.

The fact that nearly 10% of the region's residents had an income level below the poverty level as of 1999 has critical implications for Mesa State's role as a Regional Education Provider. Given this statistic, discretionary spending is limited, and only a fixed set of colleges is affordable to the place-bound segment of the population. Accessibility and affordability, therefore, become crucial considerations in whether or not these populations will participate in higher education. That Mesa State College is often characterized as both accessible and affordable is a testament to its commitment to raising the educational attainment of Western Slope residents.

Balancing Access with Quality

As significant as broadening access to educational opportunities is, it must be balanced with the assurance that academic programming is of high quality. An initial indication of academic quality begins with why students choose to attend Mesa State College. Without question, location and affordability are important considerations for why some students select the college. Equally significant is evidence that a growing share of students is electing to attend Mesa State for academic reasons.

Responses from the college's Entering Student Survey document that incoming undergraduates are placing a growing importance on Mesa State's academic programs—both in terms of quality and availability—when making decisions about their college of choice. Academic considerations are of increasing significance as students select where they want to go to school (Tables 4 and 5). This shift is best documented by the students' response to the statement that experienced the highest increase in agreement—more than 17 percentage points—that Mesa State College “has [a] high-quality program in the subject area I plan to pursue.”

Table 4. COMPARISON OF FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION TO ATTEND MESA STATE COLLEGE BY STUDENTS ENTERING IN FALL 2000 and 2004

College Impressions	Percentage of Respondents Indicating Factor Was Very Important or Moderately Important in --	
	Fall 2000	Fall 2004
How important was each of the following in your decision to attend this college?		
1. Academic Reputation of the College	63.6%	85.4%
2. Availability of a Particular Program	67.9%	85.4%
3. Location of the College	85.7%	73.3%
4. Cost of Attending the College	78.1%	71.3%
5. Availability of Financial Aid/Scholarship	71.4%	70.9%

Source: ACT Entering Student Survey, Section III, A; MSC Entering Class, Fall 2000 and 2004



**Table 5. COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF MESA STATE COLLEGE
BY STUDENTS ENTERING IN FALL 2000 and 2004**

College Impressions	Percentage of Respondents Indicating They Strongly Agree or Agree with Statement --	
	Fall 2000	Fall 2004
Indicate your level of agreement with each statement about this college.		
1. College has high-quality academic programs	65.9%	70.9%
2. College has high-quality program in the subject area I plan to pursue	49.8%	67.4%
3. Cost of attending this college is reasonable	73.2%	75.7%

Source: ACT Entering Student Survey, Section III, B; MSC Entering Class, Fall 2000 and 2004

Mesa State College values teaching, learning, and student-faculty interaction, and the quality of these activities is fundamental to everything that the college represents. The fact that only about four percent of the college's budget is allocated to central administration underscores this point.

Another measure of quality is the level of degree attainment of the faculty. For AY 2003 - 04, 61% of the full-time academic faculty held a doctorate, first professional, or other terminal degree. At least six faculty have been recognized as Fulbright scholars. At UTEC, the technical faculty members are licensed experts in their respective fields. Equally noteworthy, Mesa State's faculty have made a professional commitment to an institution where effective teaching is its highest priority. The college's ratio of students to faculty for fall 2003 was 18:1, enabling the faculty to be available to students in a more intense manner. The accessibility of the faculty and the ability for students and faculty to interact are commonly cited strengths of the college.



As an approach to learning, a liberal education produces individuals who are informed, active, and responsible citizens. An element that distinguishes Mesa State College's undergraduate programs from many others in the state is the extent to which students have opportunities to participate in learning activities, typically off-campus, that supplement traditional classroom activities. Each year, an average of 250 students are placed in some form of applied learning that integrates academic study with problem-solving experience in the forms of internships, structured research, clinical assignments, and cooperative education placements.

The college also offers a rich array of opportunities that enhance undergraduate research skills. More than 1,000 Mesa State students annually engage in structured research, topics, independent studies, and seminars. Of special note is the Honors curriculum, which offers advanced, stimulating courses beyond the normal college-level classes. The Honors thesis option is patterned after a graduate school format.

By linking classroom learning with real world applications, many students have gained valuable experience for further study at the graduate level through structured research courses. It

should be noted that Mesa State graduates continue to be admitted to some of the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities for graduate study.

Beyond the traditional classroom environment, the college offers an extensive network of academic support that is constantly being expanded and updated. Library collections benefit from consortial relationships with libraries from across the state. The information technology area is being refocused to better support efforts in teaching and learning by developing and implementing 1) a high-speed infrastructure that connects all campus facilities; 2) a real-time video teleconferencing system for delivery of academic programs; and 3) additional wireless "hotspots" to allow mobile access to the network resources.

Some of the truest measures of academic program quality, however, lie in the results of the educational experience—student outcomes. The college is collecting information on student success on exit exams, and in several fields of study, standardized test results associated with state or national licensure/accreditation requirements are available. The results of graduates from Mesa State's professional programs are summarized below:

- Nursing students taking the National Council Licensure Exam for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) typically have an annual pass rate of 90% or higher.
- Graduates of the radiologic technology program have achieved a 100% pass rate on the national certifying examination for the past five years.
- The Program for Licensing Assessment for Colorado Educators (PLACE) measures a student's knowledge in the content area before being recommended initial licensure in teacher education. Mesa State students in this program scored a 95% pass rate in elementary education and a 90% pass rate for students seeking secondary education licensure.
- Business scores on Educational Testing Service's Major Field Test have continued to improve, with the most recent administration reaching an average score of more than 160, two points higher than the prior testing session.

The best overall indicator of how well the college is fulfilling its mission, however, is to ask its graduates to grade the college at the time they complete their program of study. On a national survey of student satisfaction, evaluations by Mesa State graduates on measures related to academic quality are quite striking. With a score of 5.00 being the highest, Mesa State respondents placed a high value on the effectiveness of classroom instruction (average = 4.22), interaction with faculty (average = 4.24), and class size (average = 4.30). The graduates' overall assessment of their collegiate experience averaged 4.12, a score that is significantly higher than the national average of 3.87 for public colleges.

In sum, as a regional public institution, Mesa State College has been a major contributor to the improvement in educational attainment by residents of Colorado's Western Slope. With its designation in 2003 as the Regional Education Provider for a much larger geographic area, the college is faced with the daunting challenge of continuing to balance educational access with academic quality in an era of unpredictable resource availability. As it responds to this challenge, the college must be more creative and flexible in what and how it delivers programming to meet the educational needs of the residents it is mandated to serve. ■



Contributing to the Region's Quality of Life

Most public colleges typically engage in the local community whereby college faculty and staff volunteer professional expertise and talent and offer social and cultural programs and outreach activities. The scope of Mesa State's programs and activities is varied, but they share a common denominator: bettering the quality of life of Western Colorado.

Educational Activities and Programs

The influence of the college's academic programs extends beyond the classroom environment. Mesa State's faculty and students participate in numerous outreach efforts that enhance the education of thousands of school children, teachers, and citizens of the region. Among them are the Western Colorado Regional Science Fair, Media Day, Math Extravaganza, the Writing Conference, health fairs, History Day, the music festival, and a one-act play theatrical contest.

As one of the college's most visible programs, intercollegiate athletics frequently has been a significant contributor to the quality of life. Athletics brings numerous spectator sports to the region, with an estimated attendance of 44,650 last year. Additionally, the summer camp program—which taught baseball, basketball, football, soccer, and volleyball skills to 4,540 campers last year—develops participants' athletic knowledge and team concepts under the supervision of college personnel. The athletic program also is involved in the



community through activities such as a reading program and math tutoring in local elementary schools; partnering with Grand Junction Parks and Recreation for free sports clinics for 150 – 200 youth; and teaching softball skills and sportsmanship to 30 children who are physically challenged as part of the Challenger Program.

Through its Extended Campus program, Mesa State initiated in-service programming for teachers in 2004, serving 215 professionals primarily in Montrose. The courses covered topics such as quality childcare, paraprofessional educator training, and library education. Other forms of education that reach audiences beyond those in a traditional academic setting are available through the Community Education Center. In AY 2003 - 04, the center enrolled 1,700 adult learners in 174 personal enrichment and professional development classes.

Cultural programming is one of the most obvious measures of quality of life, and in that context, Mesa State College has been a major contributor. Mesa State has a variety of programs in the fine and performing arts, all of which offer high quality cultural experiences to students and the larger community. Programs in art, music, theatre and dance provide regular events for the public, with art exhibits, music performances, and theatre productions attended by more than 20,000 individuals last year.

Professional Expertise Shared by Mesa State Faculty and Staff

College faculty are engaged in myriad research projects. Funding varies from nationally-competitive agencies (e.g., National Science Foundation) to local, private support, to college resources. Further, the college's staff, as well as its faculty, frequently share their expertise with numerous civic groups; serve on community boards; offer lectures, performances, and seminars to schools throughout the region; and adjudicate contests.

Volunteerism

Some Mesa State College scholarships require that the recipients perform community service hours, with 50 hours per academic year being the typical contribution. The service is supervised volunteer work for organizations, enabling students to use their skills and talents while helping others in the community. Nearly 400 students completed 17,500 hours of community service in FY 2003 - 04. A second example of volunteerism is Mesa State's AmeriCorps Program, part of the Corporation for National and Community Service and established through a grant to the college in 1997. The program serves incarcerated, homeless, expelled, pregnant, physically- and mentally-challenged, and academically-delayed youth at approximately 20 sites within Mesa County. The program is beginning its eighth year and over 10,000 youth have participated in at least one Mesa State AmeriCorps function.



College Services and Facilities Available to the Public

Tomlinson Library, dedicated in 1986, contains over 190,000 volumes. It includes a large government documents collection, houses a world class geology library, and is equipped with state-of-the-art computer technology. The library brings a growing collection of resources to the Western Slope that is unmatched within the 250-mile radius that extends to Denver and Salt Lake City, Utah. The library's staff, facility, and technology serve a clientele well beyond the campus community, numbering more than 350,000 patrons during FY 2003 - 04. The Campbell College Center contains Liff Auditorium and several meeting rooms that are made available to the public for a nominal fee. During FY 2003 - 04, approximately 325 businesses (local and non-local), individuals, and non-profit agencies used space in the college center, accommodating 18,500 visitors.

In conclusion, Mesa State College is responsible for a wide-range of activities and programs that have a significant impact on the surrounding region's educational, social, and cultural environment. Though often subtle, it is clear that there are a great many contributions made by Mesa State to the quality of life experienced by the residents of Western Colorado. ■



Estimating the Economic Impact of Mesa State College

The impact of Mesa State College on its surrounding counties extends well beyond an organization that delivers educational programs and enhances the region's quality of life. A third significant contribution is the economic impact of the college on the local economy. The data presented here estimate the economic impact of Mesa State College—in excess of \$144 million annually—based on expenditures (including capital) made by the college, employees, students, and visitors attending college activities and the subsequent multiplier effect.

Expenditure Categories

Employee: Employee expenditures include all those items purchased by MSC's 1,194 full- and part-time employees as they spend their paychecks in the local community. Purchases range from rent/mortgage payments to clothing to entertainment. Due to the location of Mesa State College, it is assumed there is little dollar leakage out of the area, particularly in the major areas of housing, food, and transportation. For purposes of this study, it was assumed that 10% adequately accounts for leakage out of the 14-county region. Employee salaries for FY 2003 - 04 totaled \$15.4 million after taxes. Adjusting for leakage, \$13.8 million were added to the local economy through employee expenditures.

College: Mesa State College purchases a variety of items from the surrounding community that range from printing to janitorial supplies to health care. After analysis of vendor lists of college expenditures, it was concluded that approximately 50% of the total expenditures were spent in the 14-county region. The total of all items expended by the college was \$10.9 million for FY 2003 - 04, so allowing for 50% of those dollars to be spent in the surrounding area, over \$5.4 million were added to the local economy by the presence of Mesa State College.

Capital: Capital expenditures were evaluated on a year-to-year basis. During the time frame of this study, a variety of capital projects was completed/continued, including the Fine Arts building and repairs/renovations to Houston Hall, Walter Walker, Saunders and Tolman Residence Hall. An annual average of \$3.7 million was spent. Again estimating that 50% was spent in the region, Mesa State added an average of \$1.8 million to the local economy in FY 2003 - 04.

Students: As students attend Mesa State College, many dollars are spent locally, and it was assumed that 90% of the spending stays in the local economy. Based on a formula for student expenditures used by the Financial Aid Office, non-tuition student expenditures were broken down into five groups: books and supplies, board, personal expenses, room, and transportation. On average, the 5,725 students enrolled in fall 2003 spent \$1,186 a month while attending the college for the academic year, exceeding \$55 million.

Visitors: Visitor expenditures include all of those items purchased by visitors as they attend Mesa State College activities. As visitors attend college events, they purchase lodging, food, entertainment and fuel, bringing in "new" dollars to the community. The estimated per diem of \$98 was obtained from the Department of Defense for the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Grand Junction, Colorado.

Various local organizations were asked to provide their visitor counts for the year 2003. Based on an estimate of 131,000 visitors, it is estimated that 30% (39,397 individuals) were from out of the area and spent dollars in Mesa County due to the presence of Mesa State College. Using \$98 as the per diem amount, \$3,860,906 were spent by visitors attending college events.

Multiplier Effect

The multiplier effect is important when determining the total economic impact of Mesa State College on the surrounding community. Due to the multiplier effect, any time a dollar is spent, it travels through the economy as it becomes another person's income. Thus the dollars spent by Mesa State College "multiply" as they flow through the surrounding community, and become the income of others. After reviewing similar studies, a range of multipliers was averaged separately by the high and low ranges, resulting in the selection of a conservative multiplier of 1.8 for this study.

Labor Multiplier

A labor multiplier can be used to calculate the number of jobs created by the influx of the \$80 million into the surrounding community. These are jobs created in order to service original jobs. Again, as other studies were reviewed, differing labor multipliers were applied. Using an adjusted average from the studies, a labor multiplier of 1.4 was used to estimate the additional number of jobs created in order to service expenditures made by college employees. Using the current 1,194 employees at Mesa State and the labor multiplier of 1.4, an additional 477 jobs (full- and part-time) have been created due to the presence of the college.

Total Economic Impact

As the third largest employer in the region, Mesa State College makes a significant economic contribution to the 14 counties of the Western Slope. Table 6 and Figure 2 summarize the direct dollars spent by expenditure category by Mesa State College in FY 2003 - 04, as well as the indirect impact due to the multiplier effect and the total impact. By combining all expenditure categories for the year and then applying a multiplier of 1.8, the direct impact of the \$80 million of Mesa State expenditures generated approximately \$144 million due to the multiplier, making the college a major stimulant to the economic development of the region. ■

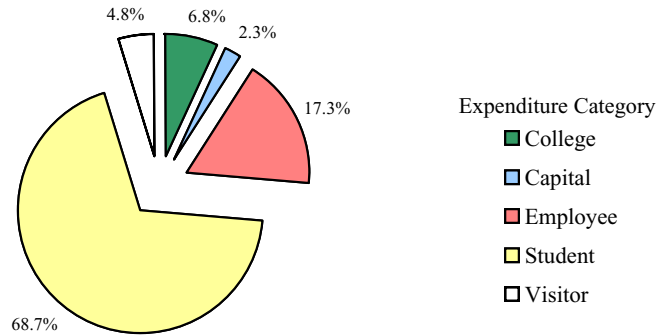
**Table 6. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MESA STATE COLLEGE
BY EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES, 2003 - 2004***

Expenditure Category	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Total Impact	% of Total
College	\$5,482,622	1.8	\$9,868,719	6.8%
Capital	\$1,881,259	1.8	\$3,386,266	2.3%
Employee	\$13,883,262	1.8	\$24,989,872	17.3%
Student	\$55,008,090	1.8	\$99,014,562	68.7%
Visitor	\$3,860,906	1.8	\$6,949,631	4.8%
Total	\$80,116,139		\$144,209,049	100.0%

*To avoid distortion from differing multipliers and inflation, total impact was calculated only for 2003-2004.



**Figure 2. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MESA STATE COLLEGE
BY EXPENDITURE CATEGORY, 2003-2004**



Looking to the Future

There is no single indicator that measures the full impact of Mesa State College on its 14-county region. As this report documents, however, indicators within an educational, cultural, and economic framework enable one to begin an assessment of the college's contributions. Further, the college will continue to have a significant impact on the future economic development of the Western Slope as it expands educational programming to meet its regional education provider responsibilities.

The college's range of academic degrees—from vocational certificates to graduate programs—enables Mesa State to respond to a diversity of educational needs. These will lead ultimately to higher levels of educational attainment and, in turn, increase the earning ability of its area's residents. The college's cultural, social, and outreach functions are impressive and greatly enhance the region's quality of life. Beyond that, they affect how attractively businesses view Western Colorado as a potential site in which to locate. Equally important is the short-term impact that the college has on the economic activity in the region—estimated to be \$144 million in FY 2003 - 04—an amount great enough to support an additional 477 jobs.

What makes these accomplishments even more impressive is that the college does all of this and more with fewer resources than virtually any other four-year public institution in Colorado. For FY 2003 - 04, the college's allocation per full-time equivalent student from the state was among the lowest of Colorado's 13 four-year public institutions. Of equal importance, the college delivers these academic programs and support services with a very low proportion of its budget spent on administrative costs and one of the most affordable tuition rates in the state.

In 2004, the institution entered a new era: the Board of Trustees completed its first year of governance, a new president was selected, the college implemented activities associated with its regional education provider designation, and the institution shifted closer to fiscal flexibility as an enterprise in 2005. The challenge to the college community will be how it embraces these and other changes and builds on its strengths to achieve yet a higher degree of leadership in Western Colorado. ■