



2012 GUIDELINES ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Background

1. Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College have a significant impact on the economy, quality-of-life, and quality and availability of the workforce in Mesa County and the region. Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College have paid special attention in recent years to the needs of the business community, creating a symbiotic relationship focused on preparing the workforce for the jobs that exist in the marketplace. In recent years, higher education has taken a disproportionate share of budget cuts in comparison to other state agencies.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Colorado Mesa University receiving a proportionate share of state funding made available to state institutions of higher education in Colorado.
2. The continued expansion of graduate level programming at Colorado Mesa University designed to meet market demands and enhance the quality of the local workforce.
3. Colorado Mesa University continuing to act as a regional institution for both four year and graduate education, advancing the role of Western Colorado Community College in partnership with School District 51 and the community, and remaining responsive and connected to the needs of the business community and other sectors.
4. Continued expansion of Colorado Mesa University through the acquisition of property for future facility development, the closure of streets to gain the physical integrity of the campus, and the development of new and remodeled facilities to facilitate quality instruction and to accommodate student and academic program growth.
5. Measures that promote enhanced technological means for delivery of education to rural areas.
6. Measures that ensure that higher education is affordable and accessible to Colorado residents, particularly residents of Western Colorado.
7. Ensuring that students enrolled throughout Western Colorado have comparable state financial support as they pursue postsecondary degrees.

8. Strengthening local governing boards at each institution (rather than centralizing power in an all-inclusive system) in order to maintain a degree of autonomy and develop market driven education programs to meet the needs of our members and our region.
9. Measures designed to provide maximum flexibility and reduced bureaucratic regulations and unnecessary oversight for institutions like Mesa State College (i.e. lengthy review and approval of academic programs, multiple financial reporting systems, multiple personnel systems, procurement processes, etc).

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Defunding the public higher education system in Colorado or singling out higher education for disproportionate cuts in comparison to other state agencies.
2. Efforts to politicize higher education funding, governance and delivery.
3. Transforming the Colorado Commission on Higher Education from a statewide coordinating board in to a regulatory board with authority that supersedes that delegated to local governing boards.
4. State mandated efforts to merge institutions or consolidate local governing boards.