



NEWS

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For Immediate Release: January 27, 2009

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Mesa State prepares to cut spending for next fiscal year

Grand Junction – Mesa State College administrators continue to scrutinize the college budget for ways to reduce spending in Fiscal Year 2009/2010 in anticipation of a lowered level of state funding.

“The governor’s presentation of a proposed FY09/10 state budget to the legislature today is just the beginning of the state budget process but it seems clear that higher education funding will be reduced as will state funding for a number of other purposes,” said Mesa State President Tim Foster. “Under the governor’s proposal, Mesa State, like the rest of the institutions of higher education, would see another reduction, this one of \$1.6 million next year. We will continue looking for operating efficiencies and savings while protecting the high quality education we offer to students.

Per normal protocol in the annual budget process, college administrators follow a set of guiding principles in identifying cost reductions. Those principles are:

- Budget conservatively;
- Protect life, health and safety of the campus community;
- Protect the quality learning experience that is offered;
- Encourage ways to be better and meet state and regional needs;
- Pursue effective productivity gains;
- Continue implementation of cost containment and operating efficiencies; and,
- Eliminate functions that do not add a corresponding value that exceeds their cost.

Budget cutting strategies include reviewing contracts with every service provider to validate necessity and determine if opportunities exist for re-negotiation or re-bidding; assessing all service areas to determine if a third-party vendor would be more cost effective; seeking every opportunity for sharing services and equipment such as copiers, printers and telephones; seeking every opportunity to reduce paper use and communicate electronically; assess the viability of closing some buildings during summer months; and examining all department with regard to efficiency, productivity and value.

The college has also set up a method for faculty and staff to electronically submit their ideas about ways to save money and/or generate revenue.

“We’ll go as far as we can with budget cuts but at some point, we will also have to look at the revenue side of the equation, Foster said. “As always, when we consider tuition increases we do so with an eye on ensuring that our students have access to and can afford college.”

Earlier this month, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budgeting called on the college to reduce spending this fiscal year by \$932,000. The college has identified about half of that spending reduction in non-personnel budget items that it will cut. Those reductions are found in such items as travel, supplies, printing, and copying.

The other half can be found through the consolidation and reorganization of student services and financial service. The reorganization will reduce some duplication of effort and more acutely focus on customer services essential to student success.

Mesa State received approximately \$24 million in state funding for FY 2008/09.

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