

MESALANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tucumcari, NM

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022 - 2027



MESALANDS
Community
COLLEGE





OFFICE of the PRESIDENT



Mesalands is changing, evolving, and maturing like a butterfly from a cocoon to be a nation's leader and a college that our colleagues around New Mexico respect and admire. It is a national leader focused, first and foremost, on student success, breaking down barriers to student access to education, closing the educational and employment equity gap, rooted in embracing diversity, inclusion, and belonging and all while proudly living the local culture every day to serve all students especially the Hispanic students and those indigenous people with whom we share this land with "excelencia."

I am proud of this report that clearly lays out a plan to grow Mesalands. It considers our challenges and offsetting those obstacles with a scientific, research-based, methodical, and strategic approach to not only recover the students lost over the pandemic era but reach, exceed, and grow. The community is ready. The students are ready. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to the success of every student and the Board of Trustees are ready to support Mesalands as a first-choice college for everyone's post-secondary education, certificate, degree, credential, skill set, or short-term credential.

This plan carefully details the facts and strategies of our growth. It features our strengths and our challenges. But one thing that is ever-present in this plan is rugged optimism and a deep commitment to serve students. *Mesalands Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan* details the changes being implemented in the post-pandemic era to assure a welcoming return to college whether it be face-to-face, online, hybrid, or hyflex. Mesalands is ready for you and Mesalands will Lead the Way.

In closing, it must not be forgotten that this report is a compilation of scores of hours and dozens of people from every corner of the campus from staff to faculty to students to administrators and to each a great thanks as they, together, constructed a roadmap for the future steps for Mesalands.

In your service,
Gregory T. Busch, Ed.D.
President and CEO

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Enrollment Management Plan 2022-2027

Overview

Strategic enrollment management literature indicates that plans for process management must establish clear enrollment goals to serve as measurable objectives. To accomplish the measurable objectives that lead to targeted successful enrollment goals, student-centered strategies and activities will be executed. The Mesalands' plan will have the added goal of assisting the institution to develop an improved structure that will facilitate initiatives and interventions conducive to data collection, assessment, student success, access, equity, and the use of prudent resources to include a variety of College assets including social capital, built capital, cultural capital, political capital, human capital, financial capital, and natural capital (Busch, 2015). The integration of the community college *Capitals Framework* (Busch, 2015) and *Model for Transfer Pathway to Success through Intrusive Advising* (Busch, 2015) will culminate in Mesalands developing a healthy academic environment, creating sustainable economic structures, and fostering a culture of social inclusion through academic and student services (Busch, 2015).

Mesalands College prides itself on the inclusion of all members of the college community for student success and the development of this plan. The plan is principled in best practices from across the nation, experience and tradition in the history of the College, and rooted in theory and educational research. The Chief Officers of the College were charged by the President with developing a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP). A SEMP Task Force, which included representation from Student Affairs, Academic Advising, Career Services, Hispanic Outreach and Student Support Services, Registrar, Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Accreditation Liaison, Admissions and Financial Aid, Workforce Development, Institutional Technology, and student representatives was formed. This SEMP Task Force will continue to meet on a monthly basis to discuss and develop ongoing enrollment initiatives, introduce interventions to support students who may be facing internal or external challenges, and to modify the living plan for continuous quality improvement.

To address the changing student enrollment patterns, as well as the current and future employment and educational needs of the region, this strategic enrollment management plan has been designed as a dynamic document. This will help the College community address enrollment in a five-year period (AY 2022-23, AY 2023-24, AY 2024-25, AY 2025-2026, and AY 2026-2027). The plan is under continuous evaluation and may result in a redefinition of the enrollment goals and objectives as dictated by student, community, regional, state, and national needs.

Vision

As a college of choice, Mesalands Community College provides a comfort-level that enables students of all abilities to mature as learners and engaged citizens. A leading community college in the nation, the college creates a stimulating, rigorous, and inclusive learning environment focused on increasing student success for all student with an emphasis on

closing the equity gap as understood by the study of marginalized student populations. Use of innovative technology enhances learning experiences and widens access to learning media. Community and business leaders value the college as a reliable partner and principal provider of workforce development thus serving as the engine for economic development of Tucumcari, Logan, Quay and surrounding counties. Quay County residents of all ages and cultural and ethnic backgrounds appreciate the College as the hub of their educational, cultural activities, and the preservation of their ethnic heritage.

Mission

Mesalands Community College is an institution of higher education that promotes student learning through quality education and services while fostering personal growth, leadership, and opportunity to a culturally diverse community.

Strategic Enrollment Management Guiding Principles

1. SEMP is aligned with Mesalands' Strategic Master Plan and Strategic Objectives.
2. SEMP is a shared institutional responsibility focused on recruitment, retention, and completion.
3. SEMP includes a focus on all aspects of Student Support Services including course and resource availability to aid students' degree/certificate completion/obtaining individual goals and skill sets.
4. SEMP includes a focus on meeting the employment needs of the region.
5. SEMP includes a focus on building relationships with alumni and the external community.

Strategic Master Planning

Mesalands' Strategic Master Plan provides a general road map on the direction the College will take to achieve attainable goals. Representatives from various areas of the College have met to develop a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that includes the overarching ideas of the College's Strategic Master Plan as guiding tools in preparing SEMP's measurable objectives. Specifically, the SEM Plan addresses and responds to strategic goals that include providing: 1) an environment where learning is appreciated, encouraged, and assessed; 2) academic and technical programs for qualified individuals to enhance their lifelong educational opportunities with an emphasis in a general core base of knowledge; 3) accessible, multi-faceted services to qualified participants; 4) opportunities to develop leadership skills and achieve personal growth by valuing academic and social responsibility; and 5) quality community service programs responding to the diverse needs of the region.

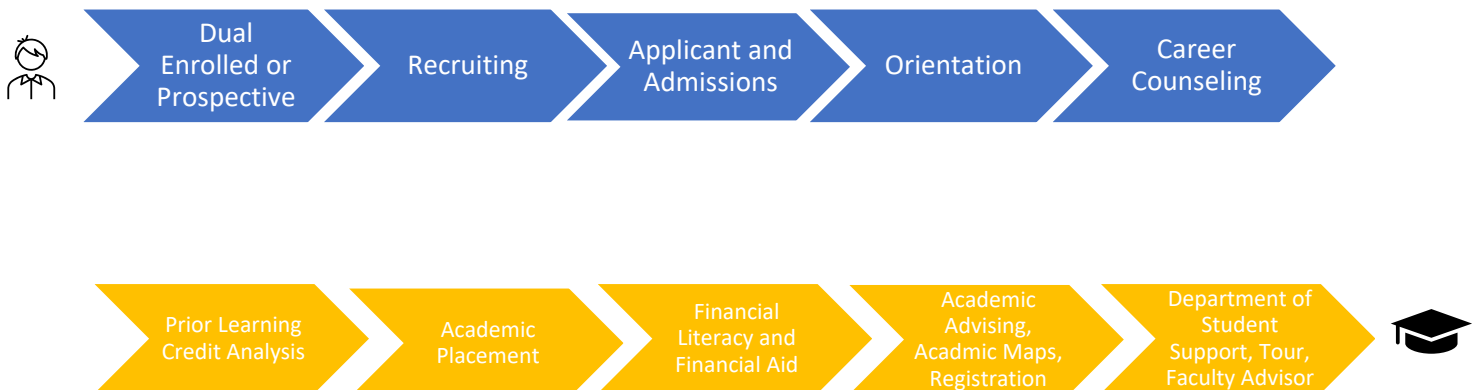
What We Know: Mesalands Community College Facts

- Mesalands Community College region is defined by the geographical area within a 100 mile radius of the College, which includes the following counties in Northeast New Mexico and West Texas: Quay, Mora, Harding, Curry, DeBaca, Guadalupe, San Miguel, Roosevelt, Union, Bailey, Parmer, Deaf Smith, Oldham, Hartley, Castro, Lamb, and Cochran. Students from these areas include high school students with dual enrollment, recent graduates, English learners, and adult re-entry students, all of whom are represented on campus. Beyond this region, students also travel from around the world for our unique programs and for our award-winning athletic programs.
- Mesalands College has targeted services in place to assist the diverse needs of all students and a dedicated group of Student Success Specialists work full-time to support new students as they matriculate into the college as well as a division of Student Support Services which begin working with all students from day one and provide customized support if the student is also an at-risk (e.g. First generation, low-income, non-traditional age)
- Mesalands College is an institution of 'ripple of impact' as the learned education and skills support the region and economy of the region, the state, and the nation.
- Mesalands College is committed to offering excellent programs and services for students pursuing transfer, career and technical education, and basic skills remediation needed to prepare students for four-year college-level coursework (e.g., transfer programs, CTE, and basic skills curriculum). Further, Mesalands hosts the Mesalands University Center, home of multiple universities who offer degree completion programs including bachelors, masters, and doctorate without leaving the Mesalands campus in Tucumcari.
- Mesalands is the home of the Center for Innovation of Renewable Energy with training in multiple forms of renewable energy and hosts the North American Wind Research and Training Center as well as more than 9 acres of dedicated area for solar power. More than five forms of renewable energy are instructed at Mesalands.
- Mesalands focuses on conservation, the environment, agriculture, and our obligation to our natural resources. It has an ongoing agreement with the United States Department of Forestry and the Cowboy Arts Program to train and domesticate wild mustangs from national forests and rehome the mares and geldings to prevent continued over population and starvation of these protected animals.
- Total student unduplicated enrollment at Mesalands Community College decreased from 1,822 in Fall 2017 to 1,336 in Fall 2021. This reflects a decline in total student enrollment of 26.7% over that four-year period. However, total student enrollment increased from 1,204 in Fall 2020 to 1,336 in Fall 2021. This reflects an increase in total student enrollment of 11% during that time. The enrollment stabilization and growth plan is addressed in *Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan*.
- Over 30% of the student population are Dual-Enrolled and slightly more than 50% of Mesalands students are considered Non-Traditional (e.g., over the age of 24). Mesalands also serves incarcerated individuals across nearly all prisons in New Mexico.

- The number of part-time students greatly exceeds the number of full-time students (un-duplicated headcount) in the Fall 2021 semester by a ratio of 90.9% part-time to 9.1% full-time. This is identified as a significant challenge within Strategic Enrollment Management understanding that the graduation rate for part-time students is significantly below that of full-time students. For this reason, this challenge is also addressed in *The President's Enrollment Recovery Plan*.
- Mesalands' student population has remained approximately 70% male and 30% female from Fall 2017 to Fall 2021.
- Enrolled students across the observed period from 2017 to 2021 most commonly self identified as being either White (42%) or Hispanic or Latinx (33%). However, this is in contrast to the community which (70%) self-identify as Latinx. Closing the college-going equity gap among the Hispanic community is identified as a challenged in the plan and addressed in *Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan*.

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan

Based on the steam of data retrieved at defined intervals of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and reported to the Office of the Chief Institutional Research and Effectiveness Officer, goals and milestones goals and milestones have been established for prospects, recruitment, admissions, enrollment, and the symbiotic proactive and intrusive advising beginning on a student's day one at Mesalands with the Division of Student Support alongside faculty and program advisors. The President has charged the Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force with the development of seamless pipeline managed by trained professionals at each level of guidance from the Dual Enrolled or a prospect to the individual student's goal success or completion of a skill set, certificate, or degree to job placement, mentoring, or university transfer for a baccalaureate degree.



Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan requires a bifurcated Dual Enrollment (to obtain *National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Accreditation*) for both a skills or trades track and a college-going track in participating high schools. Further, based on the *Model for Transfer Pathway to Success through Intrusive Advising* (Busch, 2015), Mesalands' Director of Concurrent Enrollment will collaborate with high school counselors and teachers to work with students to begin selecting in their secondary educational level a career path. Once the career path is established, students do not simply take whatever is available, but Mesalands will partner with high school counselors and teachers to deliver dual credit courses that will be guaranteed to transfer and be counted toward high school graduation and completed credits toward a chosen degree pathway. At the time of graduation, the student will matriculate into the Enrollment Pipeline and will be mentored from day one to graduation and assisted with initiatives and interventions proven to support student success "as life gets in the way."

The *Plan* requires that all students meet with the Office of Career and Mentoring Services to learn more about their major or plan of study or to engage in Student Interest Inventories to help students find their natural career inclinations. In these visits the students will learn the up-to-date data on the professions from the local, state, regional, and national levels as well as job forecasting from the United States Department of Labor. We believe that thorough and accurate career planning early in the matriculation process will lessen the number academic major changes, increase the time from enrollment to completion, reduce educational debt, prepare a happier, well-rounded student, and successful alumni in the workforce or transfer to the university.

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan also requires that in addition to common elements of enrollment such as registering for classes or completing an application every student, with emphasis placed on adult learners, will meet with an expert Prior Learning Credit Counselor who will follow best practices and national standards and guidelines to determine if a matriculating student may potentially be eligible for prior learning credit. If prior learning credit may be an option for the student, the Counselor will provide direction to the student on the steps to validate prior learning credit and monitor and assist the student to eliminate unrequired credit, thus shortening the time to degree or into the workforce and lessen any unnecessary educational expense.

Also located in the Office of Enrollment Management is a licensed mental health counselor prepared to assist with mental health issues, accommodations for Americans with Disabilities, and to assist with learning, emotional, or social disabilities.

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan further requires that the student attend a program on financial literacy before finalizing financial aid and explores on-campus options for housing, room, and board. Every student is mandated to participate in new, returning, or online student orientation (on-campus or online) and finally the student meets with a NACADA-trained, professional academic advisor to prepare, not only the first semester schedule, but to create a customized academic map integrating prior learning credit and demonstrating the courses required each semester during the tenure of the attendance at Mesalands. The Academic Advisor collects further demographic information

from the student which identifies marginalized populations for both data collection and to transfer the information to the Division of Student Support which will immediately begin providing support material, activities, and mentoring throughout the college experience.

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan calls for the formation of Enrollment Service Specialists supplied by volunteers in the community and members of *Friends of Mesalands*. An Enrollment Services Specialist will tour the campus with the student and introduce the student the various areas the student will be utilizing while a student including the Division of Student Support where the student will be introduced to Hazel's House Food Pantry and the private Mother's Room to allow mother's to nurse or prepare for feeding after classes, the business office, the Veteran's Lounge manned by local veteran volunteers to support fellow veterans especially those who struggle in college with post-war PTSD, the Stampede Mercantile, library and tutoring services, the Honors College, the Hispanic and Multicultural Art Gallery, the Office of Global Education and Study Abroad, security, health services office, administrative offices, and finally introduce the student to his/her faculty or program advisor.

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan is built upon a number of success and theory based best practices from across the county, many from the research of results from the Columbia University Teacher's College and the Community College Research Center or highly successful other institutions of higher education, as best practices of guided pathway structures especially those of Complete College America, American Association of Community Colleges, The League of Innovation, Rural Community College Alliance, and Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and Excelencia in Education. Hazel's House Food Pantry and a full-time licensed mental health counselor directly address the two greatest challenges facing America's community colleges today with more than 7 out of 10 suffering hunger security and an immeasurable number of individuals facing mental health issues as a result of the pandemic era or post-war PTSD. Additionally, research has proven that few part-time students find a successful outcome. As a result, Mesalands will work to create multiple modes of course delivery, flexible scheduling, living-learning communities, and cohorts to give students more options that may meet their schedules and complete more quickly. Mesalands also participates on proven student success initiatives such as 15 to Finish and Purpose First which has been shown by Complete College America to be highly effective to supporting part-time students and creating options for part-time students to earn full-time credit.

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan is data-informed and led by the data-inspired and student success focused. We acknowledges the enrollment loss of 486 students at the College's peak enrollment in 2017 but have committed the College under the leadership the Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force to return the College to its peak enrollment over the next three academic years and by five year's enrollment to have reach a new growth of 324 students with a total projected enrollment of 2146. At the regimented and deliberate pace of increasing enrollment, in ten years Mesalands could be serving 2,956 (which by our internal anecdotal calculations is predictable, realistic, and accurate for the College).

Academic Year	Enrollment Goal	Total Projected Enrollment
2022-2023	162	1498
2023-2024	162	1660
2024-2025	162	1822 = Peak Obtained
2025-2026	162	1984
2026-2027	162	2146

Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan is further designed to not leave university-bound students facing difficult relocations and is created to permit university-bound students to continue family, work, and other responsibilities in Tucumcari without being forced to sacrifice a bachelors, masters, or even a doctoral degree. To reach even higher in *Mesalands' Enrollment Recovery and Growth Plan*, he created the Mesalands University Center staff by partnering universities which open doors for 2+2 and 3+1 agreements. The Plan is to include support for much needed New Mexico graduates in a variety of occupations, especially social work and education. The day-to-day leadership of the Mesalands University Center is the Chief Marketing and Communication Officer who oversees the College's marketing efforts, student transfer, the Strategic Enrollment Management Pipeline in addition to the Center, thus dedicating his career from recruitment to marketing at-promise or strategically-identified low enrolled populations to transitioning all student through the enrollment pipeline and to completion and success whether it be to gainful employment, transfer to a university, or stay at the Mesalands University Center.

Planning Assumptions

Internal Factors Impacting Planning

Campus Growth: Ten Year Physical Master Plan Implementation Underway.

Scalability: Processes and Procedures prepared to serve All Students where they are.

Partnerships: Employment structure that promotes partnerships between academic and student affairs through cross employment, support, and collaboration.

Academic Engagement: Use of multiple measures for placement assessment, corequisite remediation, Mesalands Honors College.

Organizational Engagement: Organized on a Matrix-Model vs. Hierarchy to maintain cross-departmental focus on Strategic Goals: Student Success, Access, and Resources.

Social and Emotional Engagement: Clubs, Student Life, Mental Health, Sanctioned Athletics from the NJCAA, NJCAAE, and NIRA, Academic Honor Societies

Family Engagement: Friends of Mesalands, Support to Student Mothers and Veterans, Multicultural Celebrations, Embracing Heritage as an Hispanic Serving Institution, Kids Kollege, Blue and Gold Senior Scholars.

External Factors Impacting Planning

High School Graduation Rates: Due to changes in the 18-year old population, the high school graduation rate in New Mexico is projected to increase .87% from 2021-22 to 2022-23 academic year. However, the high school graduation rate in New Mexico is expected to experience a decline in high school graduates of 2.9% from 2022-23 to 2023-24 academic year (National Center for Education Statistics 2022: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_219.20.asp).

Economy: The economy is unpredictable, and as such, college appropriations by state funding sources will continue to fluctuate.

Financial Aid: Enrollment will greatly be impacted by federal and state financial aid regulations. However, with potential to increase federal financial aid, Pell, and to include Pell and more funding in Workforce Development more students will have post-secondary options available. Further, the Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships have opened doors to 'free college' for those living in New Mexico.

Workforce Development: Mesalands opened its first Center for Workforce Development in Spring 2022 and became an immediate success offering short term certificates, industry credentials, community education, and customized training. While the goal of Mesalands' Center for Workforce Development is to provide skill certificates, pathways into a skilled labor, CTE, and an invaluable arm to workforce and economic development to the region. The goal is not to serve as a substantial revenue arm of the College. The President and leadership believe that assuring the delivery of post-secondary credentials is the appropriate return to Tatum and New Mexico industry and occupational employers. **Public Transportation System:** Although public transportation services are available in the State, rural areas such as Tatum, NM continue to have very limited public transportation services. However, the College recognizes this as a barrier, especially for low-income students, and has made available local shuttles to campus from low-income neighborhoods and areas of need.

State Agenda: Ongoing support for existing and new programs as well the necessary student support services is unpredictable at best. As a small rural New Mexico college the unique and desperate needs to sustain our facilities, develop new resources, support safety and health care, and maintain the campus have largely been looked over and are undependable at best making planning for the future, especially enrollment management planning, incredibly difficult until leaders at the state level begin to see the great things happening at Mesalands and develop an awareness with serious action to aid. However, with Mesalands involvement with CHES, the College has been forced to seek more innovative solutions to its problem.

Federal Agenda: Elements of the original federal plan are gone while other elements remain promising for Mesalands. The federal emphasis on supporting Rural-serving Institutions, increasing broadband, and improving infrastructure are aspects of the original plan that will continue to benefit Mesalands. Further, the federal agenda has included a robust level of support for workforce development and the return of funding in a variety of forms including the expansion of Pell to those seeking short term or skills education through Workforce Development and the revisiting of WOIA funding to training. It has been an asset for Mesalands that President Gregg Busch has been working closely with The White House on the Rural Stakeholders Initiative as well as members of Congress supporting agriculture and renewable energy programs.

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan: Completion by Design

Included in Mesalands' plan are basics of enrollment management planning; broad results oriented goals with measurable, realistic, and achievable objectives. Major goals of the Plan are divided into four categories: 1) Pre-entry Goals; 2) Entry Goals; 3) Retention Goals; and 4) Completion Goals. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are used to assess the overall progress of the Plan are: 1) Inquiries; 2) Applications; 3) Enrollments; 4) Persistence and Retention Rates; and 5) Transfer and Graduation Rates.