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# Frequently Asked Questions about MESA

# How many students does MESA serve?

# In 2014-15 (the year with the most complete figures):

# MESA served 25,011 students.

17,836 pre-college students (393 schools)

4,172 community college students

3,003 university-level students

**Who does MESA serve?**

MESA provides academic support services to educationally disadvantaged students. These students include those who are low-income; the first in their family to attend college; attend low-performing schools[[1]](#footnote-1), etc. MESA works with students who are interested in math and science and are willing to work hard to meet high academic standards.

# How is MESA involved with Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards?

Given MESA’s long history of project-based, hands-on learning, the program’s process to align with Common Core and NGSS has been intensive yet a natural transition. In 2013 MESA began converting its MESA Day curriculum to fall precisely in line with Common Core and NGSS.

The updated curriculum was presented at the Virtual MESA Academy for Science and Math Educators (vMASME) in August 2014 and the Southern MESA Advisors’ Regional Training *(SMART)* in October 2014. MESA teachers return to the classroom equipped to use this new curriculum.

# How much money does MESA receive from the state?

In 2013-14 MESA received $6.24M from the state--$4.13M through UC’s SAPEP[[2]](#footnote-2) funds and $1.52M through the California Community Colleges’ FSS[[3]](#footnote-3) funds, for a total of $5.65M. That funding is expected to stay the same for the next budget year.

**What budget cuts has MESA experienced?**

# Since 2002-03, MESA’s funds through UC have been cut by over 55%, affecting its pre-college and university-level programs and statewide office. Since 2009-10, MESA’s funds through the California Community Colleges have been cut by 38%, affecting the community college program.

# The cuts have forced MESA to close several centers, reduce funds to remaining centers, terminate one of its four statewide programs, [[4]](#footnote-4) and cut virtually all funding to its university level program.

**How does MESA ensure fiscal accountability?**

MESA’s fiscal matters are overseen by the University of California Office of the President and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. Every year MESA submits an annual program outcome report through the University of California, per legislative mandate.

**Where does MESA appear in the state budget?**

MESA funding appears in **two** places in the state budget. As mentioned above, MESA is funded under UC’s Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (SAPEP) category. MESA is also funded under the California Community College’s Fund for Student Success (FSS) category.

SAPEP support is found in the Gov.’s 2015-16 Proposed Budget, Section 6440, Public Service: “Student Academic Preparation and Education Partnerships.” CCCCO office support is found in the Gov.’s 2015-16 Proposed Budget, section 6870, 5675115 “Fund for Student Success.”

**How cost-effective is MESA?**

* MESA is able to leverage its state dollars to secure federal grants to individual centers and scholarships. MESA attains matching monies and in-kind resources from campuses and individual schools. And MESA receives funds and in-kind resources and services from industries.
* MESA spends only $225 in state dollars per student each year—far less than the average $930 per student spent by federal programs such as Upward Bound and TRIO.

**Is MESA’s goal to recruit students only to UC?**

No. MESA’s goal is to prepare students so they will have a wide variety of college options. MESA wants its students to ultimately attain four-year degrees from independent universities and colleges as well as UC and CSU. MESA is an intersegmental program and serves students through centers at UC, CSUs, Community Colleges, independent universities and other educational partners.

**Why should programs like MESA be funded at a time when UC and CSU are receiving record numbers of applicants?**

MESA provides academic support so that students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds can successfully compete for a place in college. California faces a serious shortage of college graduates. If current trends continue, our state faces a shortage of one million college graduates.[[5]](#footnote-5) Meanwhile, only 10% of California’s college degrees and certificates were awarded in STEM fields. [[6]](#footnote-6) For California to remain competitive we must make sure that all students are prepared for college.

**How does MESA contribute to California’s economy?**

Without MESA’s support, many students would not be able to go to college. College graduates in California earn almost twice as much per hour as high school graduates.[[7]](#footnote-7) Without MESA, not only would these students’ quality of life and earning power suffer, their odds of utilizing state-supported services would increase.

MESA helps develop the STEM workforce that our state needs to remain competitive. California, one of the nation’s leading technology centers, is facing a major shortage of STEM professionals. By supporting educationally disadvantaged students who are interested in STEM studies and helping them to succeed in college, MESA makes an important contribution in filling this need.

MESA provides key professional development to teachers. Ongoing training in hands-on, project-based learning benefits not only the MESA teacher and the program students, but the entire school. MESA teachers back skills to their other classes to enhance learning of all students.

1. Schools ranked in the lowest quintile in the Academic Performance Index. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnership (SAPEP). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Fund for Student Success (FSS). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Success Through Collaboration, a partnership with the Department of Education and American Indian Education Centers. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Educating California: Choices for the Future*, Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Vital Signs,* Change the Equation and American Institutes for Research, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Educating California: Choices for the Future*, Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California, 2009.

   7 For most recent year data is available 2013-2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)