Frequently Asked Questions about MESA

How many students does MESA serve?
In 2011-12 (the year with the most complete figures):
MESA served 28,192 students.
20,299 pre-college students (393 schools)
4,707 community college students
3,186 university-level students

Who does MESA serve?
MESA provides academic support services to educationally disadvantaged students. These students include those who are low-income; who are the first in their family to attend college; who attend low-performing schools\(^2\), etc. MESA does not select students who already excel academically. MESA works with students who are interested in math and science and are willing to work hard to meet high academic standards.

How much money does MESA receive from the state?
In 2011-12 MESA received $6.24M from the state--$4.72M through UC’s SAPEP\(^2\) funds and $1.52M through the California Community Colleges’ FSS\(^3\) funds, for a total of $6.24M.

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,\(^4\) and cut virtually all funding to its university level program.

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.

How cost-effective is MESA?
• MESA is able to leverage its state dollars to secure federal grants to individual centers and scholarships on a statewide basis. 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.

---
\(^1\) Schools ranked in the lowest quintile in the Academic Performance Index.
\(^2\) Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnership (SAPEP).
\(^3\) Fund for Student Success (FSS).
\(^4\) Success Through Collaboration, a partnership with the Department of Education and American Indian Education Centers.
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.

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.

Is MESA’s goal to recruit students 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.

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. Meanwhile, only 10% of California’s college degrees and certificates were awarded in STEM fields. The only way for our state to remain competitive is to make sure that all students are prepared for college. MESA helps students overcome academic barriers so they can realize their potential and go on in higher education.

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. 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.

---