

San Diego Mesa College
Enrollment Portrait 2008
MAJOR FINDINGS
Presented at Mesa President's Cabinet: Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Background

- The Enrollment Portrait tables depict enrollment counts and percentages for the calendar year 2008, Spring, January Intersession, Summer, and Fall, to inform enrollment management for the calendar year 2009. By examining the areas in which enrollments are most heavily concentrated, the College will be better-positioned to make critical decisions regarding course offerings for 2009.
- Enrollments are disaggregated by the Student Accountability Model (SAM) code which indicates whether a course is occupational in nature, transfer eligibility, Basic Skills status, School, and subject.
- The Enrollment Portrait is to be used as a supplement to the periodic Chancellor's Cabinet Update Reports produced by District Institutional Research and Planning.

Student Accountability Model (SAM) Code (Occupational / Non-Occupational)

- The vast majority of enrollments at Mesa are concentrated in Non-Occupational courses (Spring 2008: 79%, Intersession 2008: 78%, Summer 2008: 81%, and Fall 2008: 79%).
- In Spring, Summer, and Fall 2008, 12% of enrollments were in "Clearly Occupational" courses. In Intersession 2008, the percentage was slightly higher at 15%. Clearly Occupational courses are generally taken by students in the middle stages of their programs and should be of difficulty level sufficient to detract "drop-ins". Clearly Occupational courses should provide the student with entry-level job skills (source of definition: California Community Colleges Management Information Systems Data Element Dictionary).

Transfer Eligibility / Basic Skills

- Three-quarters of enrollments at Mesa were in CSU/Private/UC-transferrable courses during the primary terms of Spring and Fall 2008. During both primary terms, 16% of enrollments were CSU/Private-transferrable. The remainder of enrollments was in Associate Credit and Not for Credit courses (Spring: 7% in Associate credit and 3% in Not for Credit; Fall: 5% each for both Associate credit and Not for Credit)
- During both Intersession and Summer 2008, 81% of enrollments were in CSU/Private/UC-transferrable courses. The percentages of enrollments that were in CSU/Private-transferrable courses during Intersession and Summer 2008 were 15% and 13%, respectively.
- During all terms in 2008, less than 5% of all enrollments was in Basic Skills courses.

School or Academic Unit

- In Spring, Summer, and Fall 2008, the most heavily enrolled Academic Unit was the School of Math and Natural Sciences. During Intersession, it was the School of Business, Computer Studies, and Technology.
- During all four terms of 2008, the second most heavily enrolled Academic Unit was the School of Social- and Behavioral Sciences and Multicultural Studies and the least number of enrollments was in the School of Student Development and Matriculation.

Subject

- In the primary terms of Spring and Fall 2008, the most heavily enrolled subjects were Math, English, Physical Education, Psychology, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, and History, in descending order of enrollment volume.
- During Intersession 2008, the subjects with heaviest enrollments, in descending order, were Economics (10%), Physical Education, Health Education, and Business (all 8%), and Math (7%).
- During Summer 2008, Math (12%) and Physical Education (10%) were the most heavily enrolled subjects.

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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
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Mesa clearly lives up to its reputation as a “transfer college”, with 90 – 96% of the College’s enrollments being concentrated in transferrable courses and over three-quarters in Non-Occupational courses. At the same time, the College’s mission statement explicitly expresses a commitment to economic and workforce development, and Basic Skills has emerged to the forefront of state-wide, as well as College-wide, initiatives. So how, in this time of shrinking revenues and resources, do we continue to be “all things to all people”?

MATRICULATION: Partly, we do this by providing the right courses to the right students, i.e., serve each student exactly what he or she needs. We can encourage students to take the courses they need in a timely manner by urging them to navigate through the matriculation process, taking the placement tests upon arrival to Mesa, attending Orientation, developing an Educational Plan, and seeing a counselor if necessary.

DATA-INFORMED DECISIONS: Mesa can also provide the right courses by using the information provided in the Chancellor’s Cabinet Update Reports to better inform enrollment management. This comprehensive report, which is produced on a weekly basis leading up to and including Census Day, includes waitlisted sections, higher and lower demand courses, fill rate, and FTES. The Chancellor’s Cabinet Update is provided to the College Presidents and disseminated in Dean’s Council. The standard quick-fix of “cutting art and gym” is definitely not an option as these are two of our most heavily enrolled subjects during the primary terms. So should we cut the “exotic” or “boutique” courses? Sure... if that is what the data in the Chancellor’s Cabinet Update suggest. Now, more than ever, we need to make data-informed decisions that keep the best interests of our students and campus community in mind.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF REVENUE: Mesa should aggressively pursue additional sources of revenue, particularly in the Basic Skills and Occupational arenas for two reasons: 1) our smallest enrollments are in Basic Skills and Occupational courses and 2) there are more grants available in these two areas. For a partial list of grants, see the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office web site at <http://www.cccco.edu/CommunityColleges/SystemGrants/tabid/280/Default.aspx>.

INVOLVE THE STUDENTS: How powerful it is for the Legislature and Governor to hear the voices of the employees of the California Community Colleges, but how much more powerful would it be coming from the students themselves? Let’s work together with our students to create change: “Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it.” – Paulo Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed

