



SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE



ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



EQUITY
IN ACTION
ILLUMINATED PATHS



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SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

San Diego Mesa College is a fully accredited, comprehensive college committed to equity and excellence. We honor our diverse community of students, faculty, professional staff, and administrators who collaborate to foster scholarship, leadership, access, and innovation in an inclusive learning environment. By promoting student learning and achievement that leads to degrees and certificates, transfer, workforce training, and lifelong learning, we empower our students to reach their educational goals and shape their future. Among the largest community colleges in California, Mesa College serves approximately 30,000 students per year, 19% of whom are full-time. Mesa College offers more than 200 associate degree and certificate programs and was one of the first community colleges in California to offer a four-year baccalaureate degree. Mesa College ranks as one of San Diego's top transfer institutions, is a proud Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI), and is a student-parent and military friendly college, serving more than 4,000 veterans, active duty service members, and their families.



EXECUTIVE LEADERS



Ashanti T. Hands, Ed.D.
President



Isabel de Los Angeles O'Connor, Ph.D.
Vice President, Instruction



Larry T. Maxey II
Vice President, Student Services



Lorenze A. Legaspi
Vice President, Administrative Services

GOVERNANCE LEADERS



Andrew Hoffman
President, Academic Senate



Sahar (Mona) King
President, Classified Senate



Ixchel Valencia Diaz
President, Associated Students

SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



San Diego Mesa College had an exciting 2023-24. Our theme, 'Equity in Action: Illuminated Paths,' inspired us to engage in innovative efforts that promoted equity and excellence. We shined a light on diverse perspectives and provided intentional support, ensuring clear pathways to belonging and success for all students. This collective effort is something we can all be proud of.

Our Strategic Enrollment Management Committee and plan led to a 5% growth in on-campus enrollment. This increase was driven by improved accessibility through scheduling and aligning practices with student needs. We created spaces for students to be, become, and belong, including hosting our first Powwow in over 20 years, remodeling our Learning Resource Center to meet post-COVID needs, and opening our Serenity Garden. Mesa College received the Family U National Certification Seal for our work with student parents, the only school in California to receive this honor, and many more significant awards.

Our students continued to shine their light through remarkable achievements. Alumnus Mario Romero made history working on the first privately owned spacecraft to touch down on the moon. Our women's volleyball team won the 3C2A State Championship, and Husna Ayoubi was awarded the prestigious 2024 Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship.

We received provisional approval to offer a baccalaureate degree in Physical Therapy Assisting. Upon final approval, this will be our second baccalaureate degree, following our first in Health Information Management

Offering a bachelor of science degree for less than \$10,000 exemplifies our commitment to affordable, high-quality education.

In spring, we celebrated our 60th anniversary, honoring six decades of equity and excellence. The campus and community joined in festivities, including a formal kick-off, San Diego Mesa Foundation's Change-Maker Breakfast, Past Presidents Panel, Homecoming events, and more. Our 60th anniversary will continue through the end of the year with various activities and culminate with the Spirit of Mesa: Celebrating 60 Years of Impact — the inaugural year of the San Diego Mesa College Foundation's signature event.

We will leverage our Mesa 2030 Strategic and Facilities plan to advance key priorities, including enhancing academic and career training facilities, implementing safety and accessibility upgrades, and making energy-related improvements. We will prioritize projects for potential inclusion in a future bond measure, promising an exciting future for our community.

Mesa College remains unwavering in our commitment to teaching, learning, and community well-being. We hope you enjoy reviewing the many ways we have illuminated paths toward equity and excellence as much as we have enjoyed creating these special moments.

Best,
Ashanti T. Hands, Ed.D.
President
San Diego Mesa College

WE ARE *Mesa*



1964
Founded



30,405
Students enrolled
2023/2024



ETHNICITY

Latinx 40.2% • White 28.9%
Asian/PI 10.8% • Other/Multi 7.6%
Black/African American 6.6% • Filipino 4.3%
Unreported 1.2% • Native American 0.2%



3,982
MILITARY

Active Military, Veteran
Spouse/Dependent



27.1%
First Generation
College Students



1,880
Academic Degrees &
Certificates Awarded



\$46
Cost per Unit,
CA Resident



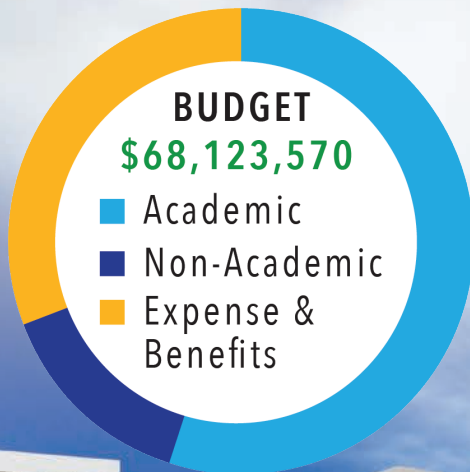
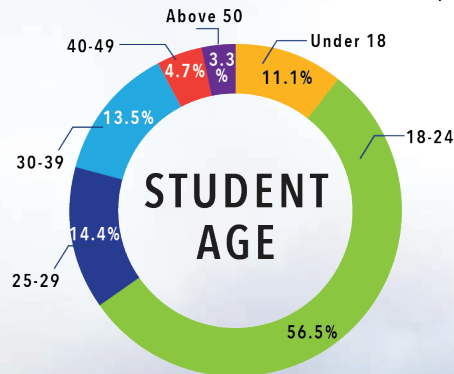
1,581
San Diego
Promise Participants



\$27,554,793
Financial Aid
Distribution



13,755
Students received
Financial Aid



ONLINE COMMUNITY



/SanDiegoMesaCollege

8,468 Followers
142 Shares
165,338 Post Reach
53,056 Post Clicks



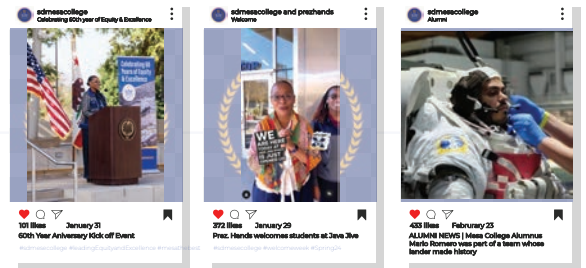
/sdmesacollege

4,342 Followers
465 Posts
59,355 Impressions
550 Likes
174 Retweets



@sdmesacollege

6,732 Followers
807,234 Reach
Top 3 Engaging posts



WEBSITE

www.sdmesa.edu



4,271,163 TOTAL VIEWS

TOP 5 PAGES

880,202[°] HOMEPAGE
239,451[°] COURSES OVERVIEW PAGE
72,892[°] APPLY TO MESA
68,044[°] ACADEMIC PROGRAMS OVERVIEW PAGE
65,742[°] FALL SEMESTER LANDING PAGE

TOP 5 VIEWED PROGRAMS

58,830[°] RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY
17,405[°] HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
12,393[°] MEDICAL ASSISTING
11,611[°] PHLEBOTOMY
11,598[°] PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

COMMENCEMENT 2024



MAY 23, 2004

With nearly 540 graduates participating and thousands of guests and family members in the stands, it was a momentous occasion. The ceremony kicked off with a celebratory drum line and grand processional. Mesa College was proud to honor and celebrate each graduating student.

San Diego Mesa College continues to be one of San Diego's leading transfer institutions, with 725 students earning an Associate Degrees for Transfer in 2024.

HONORING OUR 1,650 GRADUATES

137
STUDENT
ATHLETES

200
VETERANS

100
SDCCD
STUDENT
EMPLOYEES

21
BACHELOR'S
DEGREES
IN HEALTH
INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT



GRADUATES' AGE RANGE

17 → 78

1,567
B.A. & A.A./A.S.
DEGREES

353
CERTIFICATES

8 INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS

692 HONORS

289
GRADUATES WHO
HAVE 2+ DEGREES

70
VALEDICTORIANS

150+
PROMISE
STUDENTS

60 YEARS OF EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Mesa College marks 60 years of Equity and Excellence in 2024. We are proud to have served our students and community for six decades, and invite all to join the festivities.

On January 31, Mesa College kicked off the year with a celebration that included music, dancing and other festivities. Students, faculty, staff, administrators, elected officials, alumni, partners, the Mesa College Foundation, and members of the community came together to celebrate six decades of equity and excellence.

Among the guest speakers were San Diego Community College District Chancellor

Gregory Smith and Board of Trustees President Bernie Rhinerson, along with Chancellor Emerita Dr. Constance M. Carroll and Mesa College Alumna Dr. Hellen Griffith of The Preuss School at UC San Diego. The Mayor's Office and City Council member Jennifer Campbell presented proclamations, and Mesa College debuted its commemorative 60th Anniversary video.

Mesa College continued to host additional signature events through the remainder of the year, including speaker panels, art and memorabilia exhibitions, and Homecoming Spirit Week, all culminating in a celebratory Gala in October 2024.



Proclamation



Celebrating the 60th year college's birthday



Leaving a mark



Mesa's 60th year Milestone



Mesa College's Past and Present Presidents



Dr. Pamela Luster showed up the walk up song



Dr. Rita Cepeda shared her stories



Q&A with the past presidents panel

60TH ANNIVERSARY MESA'S HISTORY 1964-2024

[SDMESA.EDU/60THANNIVERSARY](https://sdmesa.edu/60thanniversary)

San Diego Mesa College has a rich history. Spanning six decades, instruction began in 1964 with just 1,400 students and 25 programs. Over the years, the campus has grown and evolved, witnessing significant milestones in education and culture.

We started strong in the 1970s and '80s with on-campus art, athletics, activism, and vibrant campus life. The building of the Mesa College Library and Learning Resource Center in the 1990s marked the beginning of a "renaissance" on campus. In subsequent decades, new and restored campus landmarks included many academic buildings, the Merrill Douglas Football Stadium, Student Services Center, Mesa Commons, the Rosa Parks Transit Station, and a central Mesa Quad, inaugurated in 2022.

Join us in honoring our past, celebrating our present, and envisioning our future as we continue to strive for equity and excellence in education. Thank you for being part of Mesa College's extraordinary journey over the past six decades.

Visit our 60th anniversary website to delve into our legacy and explore the impact Mesa College has had on its students and the community. Watch our anniversary video, explore our historical timeline, and stay updated on upcoming events as we continue to celebrate 60 years of Equity and Excellence in Education.



*Business & Technology building
Topping out*



Rosa Parks visited Mesa College



*Commencement
ceremony*



Radiologic Technology



Fashion class



Typing class



Hospitality class



Electrical Engineering



Commencement



Gymnastics

EQUITY

MESA COLLEGE CELEBRATES NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE

The newly adopted Land Acknowledgement at San Diego Mesa College begins, “We, at San Diego Mesa College, acknowledge that the land we occupy is unceded territory of the Kumeyaay people, indigenous to this region from time immemorial.” As part of a renewed commitment to Equity and Excellence in Mesa College’s 60th year, the Mesa College Committee for Diversity Action, Inclusion & Equity (CDAIE) worked closely with local tribal leaders and students to plan culturally relevant events throughout the 2023-24 year.

Our connection, collaboration and relationship with the local tribal nations strengthens us and adds to the rich community at Mesa, of which we are proud.



Dr. Edeama Jonah
Equity & Engagement
Librarian



In November 2023, San Diego Mesa College celebrated Native American Heritage Month with student panels, film screens, resource sessions, and a historic flag raising ceremony. The Flag Raising Ceremony on November 14 was held in conjunction with community members of the Tribal Nation. For the first time, Mesa College raised the flag of the Kumeyaay Nation.



On March 16, 2024, Mesa College hosted a Powwow to celebrate Mesa’s 60th Anniversary. The event, the first held on-campus in more than 30 years, was a partnership with the San Diego United School District Ethnic Studies Program.





EQUITY BLACK PROFESSIONALS DAY

On Sept. 29, 2023, San Diego Mesa College hosted Black Professionals Day. This free event was held to encourage San Diego Community College District students to pursue rewarding careers by giving them the opportunity to meet San Diego Black professionals who are working in a variety of fields.

The event came about after students participating in a Black Student Success Summit last spring said they were not aware of Black professionals in a variety of fields.

Among the professionals participating in the event was ABC 10News Multimedia Reporter Natay Holmes, along

with professionals in fields ranging from entrepreneurs to engineering. Attendees were able to meet with participating professionals, hear about their paths to success, and get advice about pursuing their chosen career.

MESA RISING PODCAST



Over the summer of 2023, three Mesa College journalism students, with help from faculty mentors, created the Mesa Rising podcast featuring stories and Mesa experiences of formerly or currently incarcerated students attending Mesa College through the Rising Scholars program.

The production of the podcast was made possible

by the Emerging Journalist Fellowship Grant from Cal Humanities, which provides financial support, training, and mentorship to community college student journalists.

The rate of recidivism, which refers to the percent of formerly incarcerated individuals who reoffend and go back into the criminal justice system, is a staggering 41.9% in California. However, education while

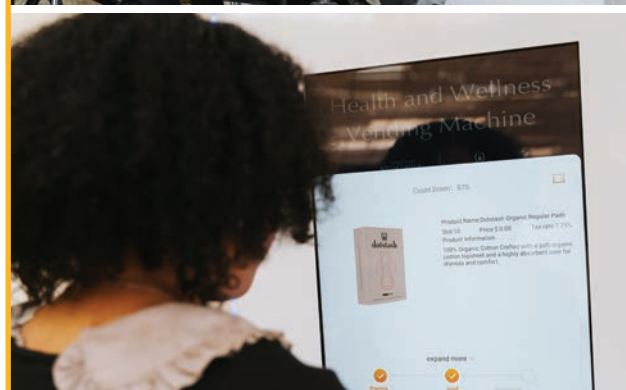
inside or outside prison can lower that rate to around 20%. The Rising Scholars program at Mesa works to remove barriers to education and increase access to education for those people, which is why the Mesa Rising podcast featured some of their incredible stories.

The six episode series can be found on Spotify. (QR code)

ACCESSIBLE WELLNESS VENDING MACHINE INSTALLED

San Diego Mesa College recently installed a Wellness Vending Machine on the fourth floor of the Student Services Center. Managed by the Student Health Services, it will bring safety, affordability, and equity to the basic needs of student health.

The vending machine dispenses essential items such as menstrual products, contraceptives, the “morning-after pill,” Tylenol and Advil, as well as pregnancy tests. All items are dispensed at a reduced cost or for free, and purchases are anonymous.



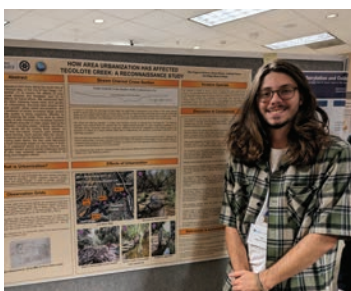
INAUGURAL CLASS EARNS A.A. IN SPANISH FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS

It can be a trope in TV shows and movies for a student fluent in a language to take a class in that language for an “easy A.” But for many, fluency at home may not translate to fluency in the workplace, and their skills may be disregarded. The associate of arts degree in Spanish for Spanish Speakers is designed for students who are already fluent in Spanish, who speak it at home with family, and who want to build on their existing Spanish knowledge to get a head start on future educational and employment opportunities.

In May, the inaugural class of AA in Spanish for Spanish Speakers students were awarded their degrees. They were required to take four classes designed for the new major: Spanish for Spanish Speakers I & II; Hispanic Literature for Spanish Speakers, and Hispanic Culture and Civilization for Spanish Speakers. Students were not required to take introductory language courses. Additionally, students had the opportunity to take even more specialized courses like Spanish for Health Care Professionals.

CONGRESSWOMAN SARA JACOBS VISITS MESA FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Congresswoman Sara Jacobs visited San Diego Mesa College on May 31, 2024, to present a check in support of the needs of the college's significant parent population. The \$1,466,279 appropriation, secured as part of the FY 2024 federal budget, helped fund facility improvements at the Mesa's Family Resource Center (FRC) inside the Library and Learning Resource Center in order to provide enhanced student support and resources. The FRC, which opened its doors April 1st, provides a space for student parents, along with their children, to study, attend workshops, and build community. Funding will support the expansion of services through extended hours of operation, additional staff, and more supplies such as diapers and food.



STUDENT RESEARCHERS EXCEL

The Mesa College Research Conference (MCRC) is a capstone event for Mesa College students engaging in research. One hundred fifty students took part in 2024, presenting on topics ranging from sociology to chemistry. In addition, for the second year in a row, the event was host to students from across San Diego County community colleges doing research at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

The Scripps Geosciences Educational Opportunities

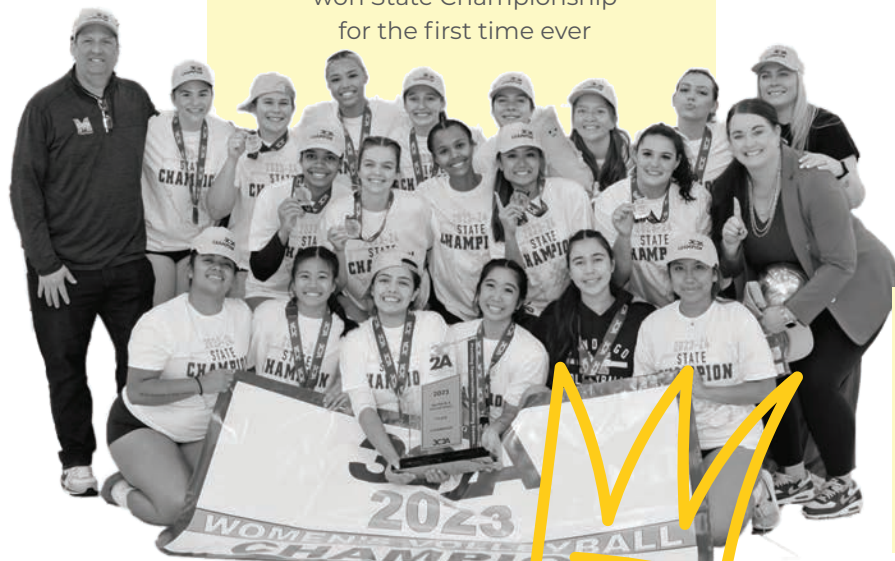
(Scripps-GEO) program is a semester-long paid internship in which students engage in hands-on activities including researching in labs, learning lab techniques, instruction in how to code. They are also paired with mentors from Scripps who provide invaluable connections and expertise.

During the MCRC, several GEO scholars won awards. Subsequently, six Mesa College students, along with a Mesa College faculty member, were asked to present their research

during the American Association for the Advancement of Science Pacific Region conference held in June in downtown San Diego. There, the team of Max Cagnon-Hoiland, Shane Moore, and Isabella Vasilev won the prestigious J. Thomas Dutro, Jr. Award for their research poster "How Area Urbanization Has Affected Tecolote Creek: A Reconnaissance Study."

Women's Volleyball team

won State Championship
for the first time ever



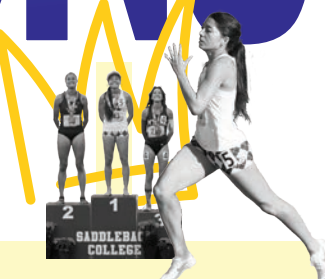
Women's Beach Volleyball Pairs
team of **Kaylin Jager** and **Myah Gomez**
won State Championship for the first time.
(Mesa's Female Co-Athlete of the Year)

WE ARE CHAMPIONS

Women's Shot Put
State title taken by
Kias Kimuli (Mesa
College's Female
Co-Athlete of the
Year) in school
record-breaking
toss



Men's 4x400 Relay team
wins State trophy for the
first time since the 1968
team led by then-student
and now-retiring Coach
Wes Williams



Women's 800 Meter Run
State Championship won
by **Sidney Garcia** in a
school record-setting run

Men's 800 Meter Run
State Championship
event won by **Ian Rosen**



Cross-Country Men's and
Women's titles captured
by **Jyden Schmid** and
Alexis Noble, respectively,
with record-breaking
performances



Men's Javelin State
Championship trophy
earned by **Kyle Wood**
(Mesa's Male Athlete of
the Year) with throw that
set a new school record



Women's Badminton
Doubles team of
Mylyne Keopaseut
and **Megan Nguyen**
wins California title
2nd year in a row



M Strawberry Bowl winner



On November 21, the Mesa College Olympians Football Team triumphed against the Allan Hancock College Bulldogs at the James H. Cobb Strawberry Bowl. Their invitation to the bowl game was the fourth consecutive for the Olympians under Head Coach Gary Watkins.

The Olympians defeated the Bulldogs 42-20, ending the Bulldogs' six-game winning streak. Quarterback James Odom lead Mesa College in passes and runs during the game. Mesa College Player of the Game was Kader Diop, after he caught three passes for 79 yards and a touchdown on the night. Across the 2023 season, Mesa College finished third in the National Southern League with a 6-4 record.



Photo credit: Nicole Noel

AWARDS & ACCREDITATION

Radiologic Technology Program Achieves 8-Year Accreditation Milestone

The San Diego Mesa College Radiologic Technology (Rad Tech) program has been awarded an eight-year continuation of accreditation by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT). This achievement marks a significant milestone for Rad Tech, representing the first time in 22 years that it has achieved the full eight years of accreditation. Accreditation is a rigorous process that ensures educational programs meet and maintain minimum standards of quality and integrity. The Radiologic Technology program at Mesa College was commended for its program effectiveness. It boasts an impressive five-year job placement rate of 99%, a five-year credential pass rate of 84%, and an annual program completion rate of 81%. Furthermore, all graduates of the program attain a living wage in San Diego. Of those students who begin the program, 50 - 60% are low-income, highlighting the program's role in reducing the equity gap in the San Diego community.



Computer Information Science Program Achieves Verified Status as a Program of Computing Talent

In December 2023, the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC) announced that San Diego Mesa College's Computer Information Science (CIS) program achieved the prestigious status of a Verified Program of Computing Talent. Programs are verified as part of a rigorous evaluation process led by Advancing San Diego, the flagship program of EDC's Talent Initiatives, which aims to double the production of skilled workers in San Diego while prioritizing historically underrepresented populations in the innovation economy.

Mesa College's CIS program offers an extensive number of certificates and associate degrees in fields including computer science, computer programming, and software engineering. With over 20 different courses, the CIS program gives students an understanding of the work and ignites their passion for the field.

AWARDS & ACCREDITATION



Ethnic Studies Program Awarded by California Community Colleges as an Exemplary Program

At the January 22, 2024, meeting of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, the San Diego Mesa College Ethnic Studies Faculty Council was awarded the prestigious Exemplary Program Award.



The Mesa College Ethnic Studies Faculty Council (MC-ESFC) began in fall 2020 as a taskforce charged with protecting and planning for the future of Ethnic Studies. It now continues as a permanent body and “serves as a representative voice and resource for the establishment and evolution of Ethnic Studies departments and programs at Mesa College and the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD).”

In recognizing the MC-ESFC, the Board of Governors stated, “[The MC-ESFC] is a model for how institutional stakeholders can work in collaboration to advance Ethnic Studies.” The program was also recognized for its work beyond the immediate realm of Mesa and San Diego Community College District.



Library and Learning Resource Center Receives Insight Into Diversity Magazine’s 2024 Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award

In March, the San Diego Mesa College Library and Learning Resource Center (LRC) was featured among 55 other exemplary library programs as a recipient of the 2024 Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award from Insight Into Diversity Magazine, the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education. The LEAD Award honors academic libraries’ programs and initiatives that encourage and support diversity, equity, and inclusion across their campus.

The Mesa College LRC was selected for its commitment to promoting access, outreach, and literacy services to underserved groups, including ethnic and racial minorities, gender differences, and people with disabilities.

We applied for the LEAD Award because the San Diego Mesa College Library Team would like to shine the light on our equity and excellence initiatives, especially removing barriers and providing access to our underserved student populations.



Dr. Edeama Jonah
Equity & Engagement Librarian
Mesa College



Husna Ayoubi



Aylin Din Parast Saleh



Ella Jaravata

Natalie Cervantes

EXCELLENCE

RECOGNITION THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP

Countless San Diego Mesa College students have won prestigious scholarship awards to fund their educational endeavors for the 2024-25 school year and beyond. Some awards of note include:

Mesa College student Husna Ayoubi was chosen from more than 1,600 nationwide community college students to receive the Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, a highly competitive award that can reach as much as \$55,000 each year by financing all or a portion of educational costs, including tuition, room and board, books, and required fees.

Ayoubi, originally from Afghanistan, speaks five languages and volunteers extensively on campus and in the community. She studied cognitive science at Mesa College, completed the Medical Assistant Program, and, participated in a medical assistant externship at the Palm Care Cardiology Urgent Care Center in El Cajon. Among

her notable achievements, Ayoubi, who has transferred to Stanford in fall 2024, served as an interpreter at Fort Bliss, Texas, Afghan refugee camp clinic and also has tutored English language learners in the Cajon Valley Union School District. And, as a Mesa College Associated Student Government student senator, she led the implementation of Mesa College's first Teacher Appreciation and Recognition week.

Additionally, in the spring of 2024, Ayoubi and fellow Mesa College peer, Aylin Din Parast Saleh, were named Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) 2024 All-California Academic Honor Roll Students. The students selected for PTK Honor Roll represent some of the best of the 2 million students enrolled in California's 116 community colleges.

Ella Jaravata is another outstanding Mesa College student to win honors. As a political science major who hopes to study environmental

law, Jaravata won the Cal LAW Pathways Outstanding Student Scholarship, which was awarded based on student scholarship, participation, and goals to give back to the community in the area of law to assist young, aspiring lawyers in their education.

Vet Tech student Andrea Calles-Virgen won the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) and Merck Animal Health Scholarship for \$2,000. This scholarship supports one "exceptional veterinary student" attending school in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Additionally, Natalie Cervantes, Alexandra Laramore, and Jianina Montecal received the Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship, awarded by the San Diego Indian American Society. The award recognizes students who have exemplified Mahatma Gandhi's commitment to truth, non-violence, equality for all, compassion, and kindness to all.

EXCELLENCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

FUTURE EDUCATOR SUMMIT

The second annual Future Educator summit, held in March, was a collaboration among San Diego County schools from the TK-12 level, to colleges and universities. Hosted at San Diego Mesa College, it helped increase the visibility of educator career pathways for students. Mesa College faculty from academic areas including the Child Development, Teacher Education, Tutoring, and more, alongside administrative staff, hosted informative panels to inspire the next generation of teachers in San Diego County.



PATHWAYS TO LAW PROGRAM RECEIVES EXPANSION GRANT

In October 2023 Mesa College was awarded a \$99,000 grant to expand its Pathways to Law Program in partnership with California LAW (Leadership – Access – Workforce) — a partnership between the State Bar of California, the California Department of Education, and dozens of educational institutions. Mesa College was awarded the grant due its strong record of above-average transfer rates and connection to the broader community, including through dual enrollment programs with local high schools.

The Pathways to Law program creates a pipeline for Mesa College students to connect to transfer institutions, their affiliated law schools, and begin a legal career. The expansion will allow for increased capacity, educational programming, and more events.

SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE
Pathway to Law



FORMER FOSTER YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mesa College's collaboration with all community colleges within Region X culminated in a spectacular Carnival Extravaganza, kicking off a month-long celebration for National Foster Care Awareness Month. Students, along with community and educational partners from across San Diego County, came together for a day filled with fun activities, strengthening connections and building a vibrant community.

This event provided an opportunity to raise awareness about student needs and highlight the support offered by the NextUp program, which assists current and former foster youth students, helping them achieve their academic, career, and personal goals.

EXCELLENCE

DRAMA PROGRAM

Alumni Talk Acting, Agents, and More in Drama Panel

In March 2024, San Diego Mesa College Dramatic Arts majors were thrilled when five alumni came to speak with current students about their journey thus far in the performing arts. The panel, titled "Life Post Mesa in the Performing Arts: Transfer and More," was organized by Drama Professor George Ye.

Panelists included Malachi Beasley, Deepti Kingra, Kaivan Mohsenzadeh, Emilee Zuniga, and Lexsy McKowen, all Mesa College alumni who now work in the performing arts across the United States.



My passion [for performing arts] came from working in Mesa College Theatre Company.

Kaivan Mohsenzadeh
Mesa College alumni



The Tempest

From April 19 to 28, the Mesa College Theatre Company (MCTC) produced Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. It drew some of the largest audiences in the Company's history, with over 1200 audience members across six shows. In addition, the Company partnered with local high schools La Jolla Country Day and Morse to give special performances.

Digital Storytelling @Mesa Festival

The Mesa College Dramatic Arts Department this year organized the inaugural Digital Storytelling @Mesa Festival to provide a venue for the San Diego Community College District community to share their incredible video art, documentaries, music videos, and films.

Held in May at Mesa College's Apolliad Theatre, the festival screened 30 projects by SDCCD filmmakers including 15 students, 2 alumni, 2 community members, 3 staff members, and 4 professors. Films showcased the diversity of the SDCCD community, including Professor Paul Detwiler's documentary *Las Reinas de los Cuentos*, which follows two drag queens as they share education and joy through children's reading hours.



EXCELLENCE

CAREER SERVICES SPOTLIGHT



Career Fair 2024



Veteran Career Day



Inaugural French Career Fair



Allied Health Career Orientation

CAREER FAIRS 2023-2024

Over 2023-2024, the San Diego Mesa College community, led by the Mesa College Career Center and including academic departments, alumni, San Diego Community College District, and external organizations, organized countless career-boosting events.

Highlights included the Veterans Career Day, hosted by the Mesa College Veterans Center during Veteran's Week in November to provide advice and inspiration to Mesa College veterans looking to take new steps in their civilian career. Also in November, Mesa College hosted the Inaugural French Career Fair in partnership with the Consulate of France and Quebec Delegation featuring international employers. In December, the San Diego Mesa College Allied Health Department and San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), collaborated to host the Healthcare Career and Annual College Symposium, which drew an attendance of more than 300 high school students.

The largest career-building event on campus this past year was the SDCCD Spring Career Fair. Recruiters representing more than 100 employers looking to hire came to Mesa College on March 21. Hundreds of students also took part, with some walking away with interviews or job offers made on the spot, providing them incredible opportunity to advance their careers from day one of graduation.

224

Career Peer
Ambassador
Appointments

482

Career Counseling
Appointments

2,996

Mesa College
Students
on Handshake

600+

Students Attend
the Career Fairs

MESA IMPACTSHIP PROGRAM

281

Student Participants

103

Employer Participants

12,280

Students Participating in
Work-Based Learning

EXCELLENCE

MESA COLLEGE FOUNDATION



Investing in Bright Futures - Scholarships for Students

This year, our Foundation was able to honor students' hard work and reduce barriers to success by awarding over \$168,000 across 110 different scholarships, reaching 180 students.

Mesa's 31st Annual Scholarship Award Ceremony brought together over 250 people to celebrate the achievements of our students and generosity of our donors.

\$614,000

Raised in support of
Mesa's students and
mission

\$168,000

Awarded
in scholarships

1,700

students reached
with investments in
8 Innovation Grants



EXCELLENCE

MESA COLLEGE FOUNDATION

World Cultures Arts Collection Transforms to World Art Gallery and Research Center

San Diego Mesa College is home to the World Art Collection, an assemblage of museum-quality cultural artworks from around the world. Inaugurated by Dr. Barbara Blackmun in the 1970s, in recent decades the collection has grown to include works from India, China, Mesoamerica, and the Pacific, and cultures across Africa.

This past year, the collection was reborn under the direction of Dr. Denise Rogers, when all 1,300 pieces were moved into the new World Arts Gallery and Research Center on the fourth floor of the Learning Resource Center. Rogers, who has served as the collection's manager since 2010, has used the gallery to provide research opportunities for students and foster connection with the San Diego community. Students, faculty, staff, and community members are able to enjoy the collection by visiting the art gallery and seeing these incredible pieces up close, right here at Mesa College. Various events to support and promote efforts around the gallery and its collection are planned for the upcoming year.



Partner Spotlight SAN DIEGO FOUNDATION



Mesa College is proud to have partnered with the San Diego Foundation on several key initiatives this year. With their support, we were able to double the size—and food production—of the student-led TerraMesa community garden, increase its accessibility, and create a meditation garden designed by students.

What's more, support from the San Diego Foundation allowed us to partner with Hoover High and Barrio Logan College Institute to use our best-in-class tutoring model and education pathway to kindle a love for teaching, starting as early as high school. Through these efforts, we are part of the solution to empower a more diverse pipeline of classroom teachers.

The partnership culminated with a campus visit with the California Education Funders Collaborative, wherein Mesa College students were able to connect directly to state-wide funders to celebrate their accomplishments, share their experiences, and reflect on their insights about how to improve equity in education.

2023/24 IN REVIEW

JULY 2023



**SEPTEMBER
2023**

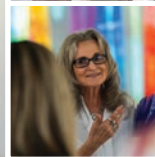
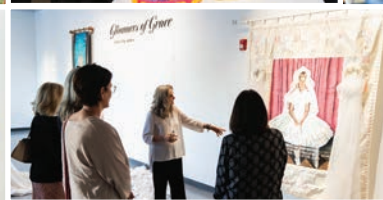
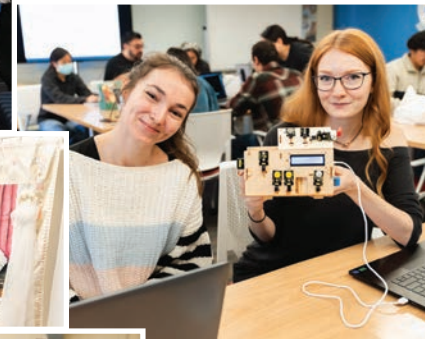
Latino/a/e Bienvenida!

**Latino/a/e Heritage Month
Kickoff Event**



**NOVEMBER
2023**

Taste of Mesa Returns



**AUGUST
2023**

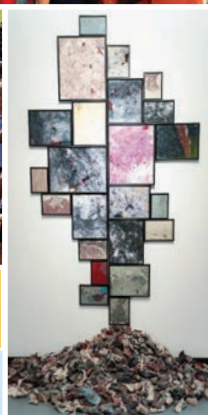
**2nd Annual
Olympian Olympics**

**OCTOBER
2023**

**Glimmers of Grace
Art Exhibit**

**DECEMBER
2023**

**Innovation
Research Lab
Engineering
Workshops**



**JANUARY
2024**

Spring Welcome Week

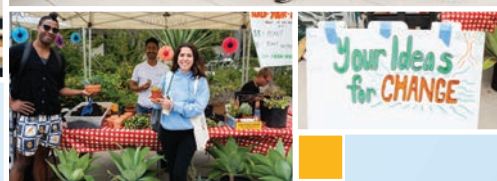


**FEBRUARY
2024**

**Teacher Education
and DEBER program
Meet and Greet**

**MARCH
2024**

**SDCCD
Tutor EXPO**



**APRIL
2024**

**Celebrating
Earth Day**



**MAY
2024**

**Mesa Moves:
Dance Synthesis**

RAISE YOUR PRIDE

ALUMNI THE MESA COLLEGE ALUMNI NETWORK

WWW.SDMESA.EDU/ALUMNI

The goal of the Mesa College Alumni Networks is to connect alumni with each other and their alma mater – Mesa College. Alumni are welcomed and encouraged to stay connected to Mesa College through campus events, news, affinity groups, and by engaging with the Mesa College Foundation. With the support of the Foundation and the Office of Communications, Mesa College established its Alumni Network in 2019 and immediately launched communication and alumni engagement efforts. Through social media and a robust email campaign, Mesa College initially reached out to more than 50,000 Mesa College Alumni, with nearly 600 engaging back requesting to be reconnected.

Mesa Alumni

The Alumni Network continues to grow. Membership is free, and it is a great way for alumni to keep in touch with classmates, to stay informed, connected, and support Mesa College.

Additionally, the Alumni Network has teamed up with the Mesa College Career Center to offer a variety of programs, such as Handshake, for alumni to get connected with jobs, gain access to events, schedule appointments with a career counselor, and search for and apply to millions of different job openings. Learn more about the handshake program, please visit www.sdmesa.edu/handshake



ALUMNUS Jonny Kim - Astronaut

Jonny Kim studied at San Diego Mesa College while serving on the Navy's SEAL Team THREE. He distinguished himself in service and academically receiving his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of San Diego and his doctorate of medicine from Harvard Medical School.

Then, he took a new leap. In August 2017, he reported for astronaut training at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In May 2023, he was interviewed by Good Morning America as "the first Asian American astronaut to fly to the moon." That year, he also earned his "Wings of Gold" status as a Naval Aviator by completing advanced helicopter training.

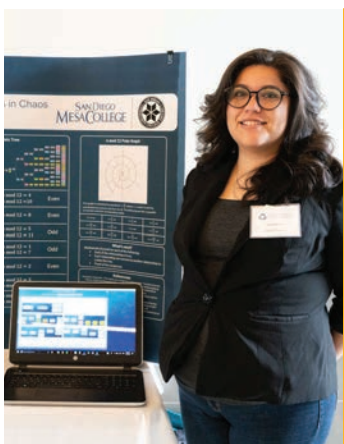
For Jonny, "comparison is the thief of happiness." His advice to students and other alumni is to "focus on what makes you happy and passionate, regardless of what it is."



Campus Blooms with New Fine Arts Building Mural

San Diego Mesa College often invites alumni to campus to share their stories, their skills, and their success. In June, alumnus Andrew Alcasid returned to paint an incredible 30-foot vertical mural in the lower-level courtyard entrance of the Fine Arts Building. The mural displays a spread of floating orchids, a flower with personal significance for Alcasid, against a background of blues and greens.

Alcasid's journey at Mesa College started in 2008, where he studied printmaking before transitioning into the Museum Studies program. He looks back at his time on campus fondly, recalling the impact of the Fine Arts faculty and staff members. For Alcasid, the relationships he forged as a student played a crucial role in his artistic development and influence his career to this day.



Story of Resilience and Advocacy

At Mesa College, alumni stories, like that of Sandra Perez, are as extraordinary as the students themselves.

Perez lost her mother during her first year in high school. Subsequently, her stepfather discouraged her from attending college and kicked her out of her home at the age of 17. Despite the emotional turmoil, she remained faithful to her mother's dream for her to graduate college.

Perez enrolled at Mesa College, beginning a work study program that led her to the Mesa College Office of Institutional Effectiveness, which encouraged her interest in qualitative and quantitative research.

After earning a bachelor's degree in mathematics from UC Davis, she accepted a position at The Education Trust in Washington, D.C. where her work forms part of an ongoing EdTrust series on affirmative action, exemplifying her dedication to social justice.



Spotlight on Dr. Helen Griffith

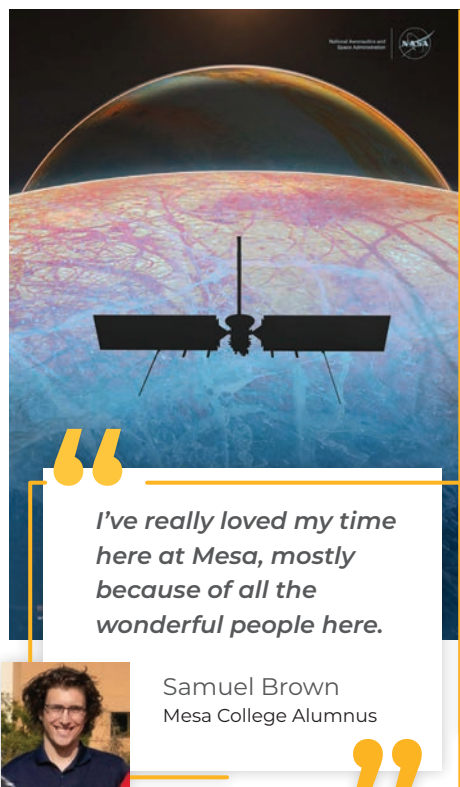
Helen V. Griffith, Ed.D., attended Mesa College as a young woman in the 1970s. She has since gone on to succeed as an educator and school administrator in San Diego including, in her current role, as the inaugural executive director of The Preuss School UC San Diego.

Previously, Dr. Griffith was the executive director of e3 Civic High, a public charter high school located in the San Diego Central Public Library, the dean of Students at Crawford High School, vice principal at Lincoln High School and principal of Millennial Tech Middle School.

Dr. Griffith returned to campus in January to help celebrate Mesa College's 60th anniversary, acting as a keynote speaker at the event. She shared her MESA (My Extraordinary Story of Achievement) moments with the crowd and even shared that her son had also graduated from Mesa College. According to Griffith, the academic excellence and available campus support systems make attending Mesa College a "no-brainer."

MESA STORIES

MESA SHOOTS FOR THE STARS



I've really loved my time here at Mesa, mostly because of all the wonderful people here.

Samuel Brown
Mesa College Alumnus

NASA Selects Mesa Student for Inaugural Europa Internship Program

Mesa College alumni Samuel Brown, who graduated in spring 2024, is now among the first 40 undergraduate students to participate in the inaugural NASA Europa ICONS (Inspiring Clipper: Opportunities for Next-Generation Scientists) internship program. From June 3 to August 9, 2024, he worked with NASA scientists to support the agency's Europa Clipper mission — which will scour Europa, one of the moons of Jupiter, for signs of life under its ice-covered oceans — as part of the only cohort of interns to work with the spacecraft while it is on Earth.

Brown was an active student and member of the community at Mesa College. He served as a STEM Peer Mentor for math and physics courses and worked at the Tutoring Center on campus.

During the program, he was paired with a mentor, received a \$12,000 stipend, and visited NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., for a two-day meeting with his fellow students and mentors. Brown plans to transfer to a UC school after the internship.

Solar Eclipse Viewing Parties

In 2023-2024, the United States was host to an annular solar eclipse (also known as a "Ring of Fire" eclipse) and a historic full solar eclipse that swept across the country.

San Diego was in the 50-60% range of visibility for both these astronomical events, and San Diego Mesa College faculty and students came together in October and April to celebrate with the rest of the country and watch in awe as the moon moved in front of the sun.

In April, nearly 100 Mesa College community members stopped by the Math and Science Complex to use telescopes, viewing glasses, and pinhole viewers to safely view the phenomena.



MESA STORIES

ALUMNUS MAKES HISTORY AS MEMBER OF THE ODYSSEUS LUNAR LANDING CREW



San Diego Mesa College alumnus Mario Romero played a pivotal role in Intuitive Machines' historic lunar mission on February 22, 2024, marking the first privately owned spacecraft to land on the moon. Graduating from Mesa College in 2015 with a focus in astronomy/astrophysics, Romero's campus involvement in student organizations and advocacy laid the groundwork for his future endeavors. He co-founded the Student Veteran Organization (SVO), championed for an on-campus Veteran Resource Center, and actively supported homeless veterans and children. Romero's dedication earned him recognition, including the ABC10 News Salute to Heroes Award for San Diego veterans.

Transitioning to Columbia University, he completed a bachelor's degree in pure mathematics before earning a master's degree in systems engineering from University of Houston-Clear Lake. Now employed as an Assembly, Integration and Test Engineer at Intuitive Machines, Romero not only contributed to the lunar project but also won a company-wide contest to name the machine. Drawing inspiration from Homer's Greek epic hero of the Odyssey, Romero reflected on the mission's challenges, setbacks, and ultimate success, emphasizing perseverance in the face of adversity.

From Mesa Museum Studies Student to Intern at Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

For 12 weeks from August 26 to November 15, 2024, one of Mesa College's graduating museum studies students will embark on a new adventure as a Latino museum studies intern at the Smithsonian. Jake Selters will work at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C.

Selters entered Mesa College to pursue a career as a physical therapist. After two years, he decided to switch his path to museum studies in order to follow his true passions, graduating in May 2024 with a certificate of performance in museum studies. This experience helped him to land the prestigious Smithsonian internship.

At NMAI, he will learn about museum and cultural standards of preservation, collection storage techniques, facilitating community engagement, and inventorying valuable, sensitive, and historically significant items. Selters also will collaborate on the installation the museum's upcoming Sublime Light: Tapestry Art of DY Begay exhibit.



I love the place I live and the opportunity to deepen the art culture here as a person born and raised in San Diego would be amazing.



Jake Selters
Mesa College Alumnus



Smithsonian

MESA STORIES



Being a part of a STEM SEAS cruise is a phenomenal opportunity, and I want to encourage any student interested in our water planet to apply.



Dr. Waverly Ray
Geography Professor

OUT TO SEA WITH STEMSEAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCEANIC EXPEDITION

In November 2023, San Diego Mesa College Professor Dr. Waverly Ray embarked on a nine-day voyage from Seattle to Honolulu aboard the R/V Thomas G. Thompson, an oceanographic research vessel, with STEMSEAS. Chosen to participate out of hundreds of applicants, Waverly joined community college faculty from 13 schools and the Office of Naval Research's Research Facilities Program Manager Robert Sparrock for a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

STEMSEAS provides ship-based, 6- to 10-day exploratory experiences for undergraduates from diverse backgrounds aboard National Science Foundation-funded research vessels. The goals of this special expedition were to help community college faculty feel prepared to serve as future STEMSEAS expedition mentors, expose faculty to the STEMSEAS experience, and provide an exciting, unique and potentially transformative professional development opportunity for community college faculty. This first-of-its-kind expedition aimed to partner with "one of higher education's most undervalued resources, community college faculty."

CROSS-BORDER FASHION REDUX

The Fashion Program at Mesa College is one of the best in the United States and a marquee event of the program is the annual Fashion Redux. In its 13th year, the design competition challenges students to reimagine historical garments provided by the San Diego History Center's impressive Historic Textile Collection.

This year's exhibit was based on the idea that San Diego's geographical location has fostered a unique cultural exchange. The five historic pieces offered as inspiration included 1940s era suits worn by actor Tommy Hernandez, better known as Don Diego, and a Baile Folklórico dress made in the 1970s. Four finalists — Sabel Molina, Kristina Ryan, Estefania Cazessus, and Kayle Lopez — were honored at an opening celebration, and their designs were displayed alongside the historic garments beginning in April at the San Diego History Center in Balboa Park.



**FASHION
REDUX**

MESA STORIES

SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION

MESA PASSES FIRST CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In April, Mesa College passed its first Climate Action Plan (CAP). The plan consists of over 100 actions to advance sustainability over the next two academic years in order to achieve a Gold Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS) rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Mesa College would likely be one of the first community colleges nationwide to achieve this status.



WOODLAND TRAIL ON CAMPUS OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

The San Diego Mesa College Woodland Nature and Interpretive Trail, a collaborative effort between faculty, staff, and the community, opened to the public in fall 2023. Featuring 42 labeled native species, including four endangered plants, such as the San Diego Barrel Cactus and Torrey Pine, the trail offers serene meditation spaces nestled among native vegetation. Construction, maintenance, and labeling were completed with volunteer efforts and support from campus Administrative Services and the Environmental Sustainability Committee. Plans are underway to extend the trail to connect Mesa College to the Tecolote Canyon trail system, providing a safer pedestrian route via an underpass below Genesee Avenue.



MESA GARDENS

The Mesa College TerraMesa Community Garden was established in 2015 to create a local, sustainable source of organic produce right on campus. Since then, the garden has grown to nearly 4,000 square feet of community space with drip irrigation, a greenhouse, compost hub, and native plant garden. The space hosts workshops to teach food sovereignty skills including composting and gardening.

The Meditation Garden opened in June. The space will provide room for connection to nature, self-reflection, relaxation, and, according to members of the TerraMesa student group who led the project, could be used to host outdoor concerts, graduation photoshoots, and more.



SPACES AND PLACES

Ever since I came to the OZone room my grades have been improving.



Quajon Young
Student Athlete

Opening of the Athletics OZone Study Space for Student-Athletes

To be a member of the prestigious San Diego Mesa College Athletics program, students must keep up with a vigorous academic regimen. All student-athletes must maintain a continuous 2.0 or higher grade point average to be eligible for any sport. In November, to address student needs, Mesa College opened a study space specifically for student athletes called the OZone. Staff report that the space is full three to four times a week.

Campus Pole Banner Refresh for Mesa's 60th Anniversary

In advance of Mesa College's 60th anniversary year in 2024, the Office of Communications embarked on an effort to rejuvenate the campus by redesigning and reinstalling more than 100 pole banners. Banners were produced to highlight our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, celebrate 60 years of history, community partners, and alumni, while also promoting newly defined Academic and Career Pathways. These pathways provide clarity for students by categorizing the hundreds of degrees and certifications offered at Mesa by interest and career opportunities.

The banners were installed in March, and can be seen throughout the campus.



LRC Furniture Refresh

The storied Library and Learning Resource Center has been a Mesa College fixture since its opening in 1998. This year, it received a complete refresh. New furniture was selected to enhance students' abilities to study however they prefer. High-backed chairs with built-in desks and dividers promote individual study. Group study spaces created using room dividers, booth style seating, and additional whiteboards encourage collaborative study. Other upgrades include standing desks and lots of comfy chairs and power outlets along with updated technology. More than 700 computers were upgraded, and easy-to-use, high-capacity printers were installed to facilitate evolving student needs.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS



The Institutional Effectiveness and Research offices provide college-wide leadership and support for the infrastructure and integration of the College's institutional effectiveness efforts. IE promotes a commitment to equity, excellence, and continuous quality improvement through college-wide planning, research, program review, outcomes assessment, resource allocation, and accreditation.

Environmental Sustainability Survey:

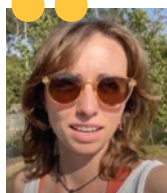
Conducted a survey to gather actionable data for the development of Mesa College's Climate Action Plan and other sustainability initiatives aligned with the Roadmap to Mesa2030.

Strategic Enrollment Management:

Provided leadership support to the Strategic Enrollment Management Taskforce.



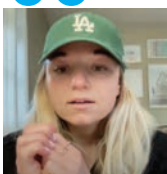
Since its launch in Fall 2022, the Mesa Impactship Program (MIP) has positively impacted over 500 students by providing internships tailored to their academic and career goals. The program expanded in the 2023-2024 academic year, building partnerships with local organizations in fields such as healthcare, technology, education, and the arts. This year, over 280 students completed internships, gaining hands-on experience, skill development, and professional connections to prepare them for their future careers. MIP's collaborations with UCSD and SDSU have further supported students in research-focused placements.



Intern: Gina Queck
MIP Track: Apprenticeship
Major: Psychology
Department: Mesa Garden
Mentor: Prof. Waverly Ray



This internship at Mesa garden would be perfect to my interests in sustainability, little bit of agriculture and community gardening.



Intern: Olivia McIntosh
MIP Track: Veterans Internship
Major: Physical Therapist Assistant
Department: Spine & Sport Physical Therapy- Imperial Beach
Mentor: Prof. Gail Bachman



The confidence I currently have is due to the on the job training I am getting with MIP.

MESA 2030 GOALS Framework for Long-term Planning



Mesa 2030

The Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan continues to drive our Educational and Facilities vision. Mesa2030 sets the long-term goals and the Roadmap to Mesa2030 identifies priorities and strategic objectives. Via our annual Program Review, Mesa showcased how individual programs and departments connect their work to the Strategic Objectives and Mesa2030 Goals.

- The Mesa Student Success Coaches program supports Black/African American and Latinx students, leading to notably higher retention rates than students without this support.
- The Program Pathways Mapper simplifies a college's program and transfer requirements, guiding students through Academic and Career Pathways (ACPs) in an accessible format.
- The Dual Enrollment Strategic Plan at Mesa College aims to expand dual enrollment opportunities by building strong partnerships with K-12 institutions, increasing access and success for minoritized students.
- Mesa College's Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Pathways initiative reduces financial barriers by providing courses with free or low-cost materials, supporting student success through higher completion rates and higher grades.
- Efforts across the campus are being made to strengthen learning outcomes assessment, ensure compliance with ACCJC standards, and foster continuous improvement in scholarships.
- The Mesa2030 Facilities Planning Task Force focuses on developing new instructional and student support spaces on campus.
- The Committee for Diversity, Action, Inclusion, and Equity (CDAIE) created a Mesa College Land Acknowledgement and a DEIA Discussion Guide to deepen awareness and encourage campus-wide conversations around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Mesa College's Climate Action Plan is dedicated to reducing Mesa College's carbon footprint, focusing on climate literacy and student action, and mitigation of Mesa's impact on climate change.
- Professional Learning initiatives at the LOFT support the college community, emphasizing race consciousness, cultural relevance, and equity in teaching practices through initiatives such as Mesa's Ongoing Support for Teaching, Curriculum Equity and Excellence Review, New Classified Institute, and New Faculty Institute.

WE ARE *Mesa*

The Leading College of Equity and Excellence

Land Acknowledgment

We, at San Diego Mesa College, acknowledge that the land we occupy is unceded territory of the Kumeyaay people, indigenous to this region from time immemorial.

The Kumeyaay people continue to demonstrate strength in their ability to surmount generational trauma, which started with the injustices of colonization and continues to this day.

The relationship of the Kumeyaay people with the land underlies their strong commitment to protect the land, preserve their heritage, and work for balance and harmony.

This land acknowledgment is our commitment to honor the Kumeyaay people and to establish a relationship with them based on truth and mutual respect.

Mission

San Diego Mesa College is a comprehensive community college committed to access, success, and equity. We honor those commitments as a diverse community of faculty, students, professional staff, and administrators who collaborate to foster scholarship, leadership, innovation, and excellence in an inclusive learning environment. By promoting student learning and achievement that leads to degrees and certificates, transfer, workforce training, and lifelong learning, we empower our students to reach their educational goals and shape their future.

Vision

To be the leading college of equity and excellence, educating students to shape the future.

Values

- Access
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Freedom of Expression
- Diversity
- Respect
- Equity
- Scholarship
- Sustainability
- Integrity



Annual Report

The San Diego Mesa College Annual Report is published online at sdmesa.edu/officeofcommunications

To request a printed copy, please email mesacommunications@sdccd.edu.

Published by:

San Diego Mesa College, Office of Communications

Editors:

Jennifer Nichols Kearns, M.S. and Leslie Stump

Editorial Assistants:

Saisha Banks, Emma Rodriguez and Aaron Pischke

Photography: Office of Communications, Nicole Noel

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Community College District

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San Diego Community College District

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