

SECTION G

RESEARCH AGENDA AND PLANNING

**San Diego Mesa College Research Committee
Research Planning Agenda
(Approved by President's Cabinet – February 27, 2007)**

INTRODUCTION

The primary mission of San Diego Mesa College is to promote student access, retention, and success. Research supports the College in carrying out its mission, and all research efforts ultimately contribute to this realization.

As a part of college-wide planning, the Research Committee is proposing the following research agenda. This document is to be used as a guide to ongoing structured inquiry of research and will be updated on a regular basis. Mesa's research agenda is informed by the district Environmental Scan and supported by the college's Mission Statement as well as its strategic planning process. It establishes benchmarks by which the college's progress in research is assessed with continuous improvement based upon a cycle of planning.

The pursuit and sharing of knowledge is the essence of research, and every individual on campus has the capacity to be a researcher. Research is a collaborative effort and necessitates the cooperation of all campus members. While the Research Committee and shared governance bodies at Mesa facilitate the shaping of this document, all members of the Mesa community participate in carrying forth the Research Agenda.

The Research Agenda comprises four Categories of Strategic Initiatives. While the Categories and Initiatives are numbered, this numbering does not reflect a rank-ordering or priority.

RESEARCH AGENDA CATEGORY #1: Secure access for all segments of the community

"Mesa College is committed to providing excellent educational programs and services to its students and the community."

Strategic Initiatives	Research Focus	Timeline
1. Examine demographics of students served by the College and college programs.	Student body	Ongoing
2. Ensure that gateway programs and services serve all segments of the community	Admissions Faculty Advising Student Orientation	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
3. Explore impact of online education and other alternative forms of teaching on access.	Learning Communities Online education Service Learning Short-term courses	On a 1 to 5 year cycle

RESEARCH AGENDA CATEGORY #2: Strengthen and Improve College Programs and Services to Promote Success and Retention

“The College is committed to providing the highest quality of education and services designed to promote access, retention, and student success.... This success is supported by the College’s Student Learning Outcomes at the Associate Degree level and includes critical thinking; communication, self-awareness and interpersonal skills; personal actions and civic responsibility; global awareness; and technological awareness.”

Strategic Initiatives	Research Focus	Timeline
1. Support efforts related to Student Learning Outcomes	Associate Degree Majors Basic Skills Economic/Career Development ESOL General Education Online education Short-term/long-term courses Transfer Education FAST TRACK	Ongoing
2. Provide data for Academic and Student Services Program Reviews	Academic Programs Student Services	Ongoing
3. Track students through their educational endeavors from high school, taking placement tests, and then to course sequences through completion	Academic Skills Center Admissions Counseling DSP&S EOPS ESOL Placement (Employment/ Career) Students Transfer Center FAST TRACK	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
4. Examine student success and student equity	Academic Program Review ESOL Gatekeeper courses SLOs Student Services Prgm Review Students	Ongoing

<p>5. Study utilization of student services, academic support and co-curricular programs, and facilities</p>	<p>Academic Skills Center Admissions Advising and Counseling Assessment Bridges to Success Campus facilities Career Services Early Intervention Educational Plans ESOL Financial Aid Freshman Success Mesa Academy Orientation PERG Puente Project Student Government</p>	<p>On a 1 to 5 year cycle</p>
<p>6. Identify student needs</p>	<p>Academic Skills Center Advising and Counseling Assessment Career Services/Employment Counseling DSP&S EOPS ESOL Mesa Academy Puente Project Student Government Students Transfer Center</p>	<p>On a 1 to 5 year cycle</p>
<p>7. Measure student engagement</p>	<p>Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) Office of Instructional Services, Resource Development, and Research Silver Process study Students</p>	<p>On a 3 year cycle</p>

8. Observe campus climate	Administration Faculty Staff Students	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
9. Investigate ways in which technology promotes success and retention	Learning Resource Center Online education Technology across campus	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
10. Strengthen ties between Academic Programs and Student Services	Academic Programs Student Services	Ongoing

RESEARCH AGENDA CATEGORY #3: Support College planning and decision-making concerning student access, retention, and success.

“Through participatory governance, all segments of the college engage in ongoing dialogue about quality, learning assessment, and implementation of institutional changes to improve student success.”

Strategic Initiatives	Research Focus	Timeline
1. Scan the environment to identify areas of institutional change	Campus Community District	Ongoing
2. Support data-driven decision-making	Academic Programs Academic Support and Co-curricular Programs Dean of Instruction Office of Instructional Services, Resource Development, and Research Dean of Student Services Office of the President Student Services VP of Instruction VP of Student Services	Ongoing
3. Support enrollment management initiatives	Collaboration w/District Research and Planning Office of Instructional Services, Resource, Development, and Research Office of the President VP of Instruction VP of Student Services	Ongoing

4. Supply data for the Educational Master Plan	Office of Instruction, Resource, Development, and Research Office of the President VP of Instruction	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
5. Provide data to support the accreditation process	CCFSSE CCSSE District Research and Planning Office of Instruction, Resource, Development, and Research Office of the President VP of Instruction	On a 1 to 5 year cycle

RESEARCH AGENDA CATEGORY #4: Develop and promote linkages with the surrounding community to establish relationships of mutual benefit.

“Mesa cultivates relationships to assess the needs of its total community in order to offer programs for the benefit of a diverse student body, including new and continuing students, as well as those wishing to re-enter the educational process. These community relationships, such as high school outreach and partnerships with business and industry, as well as transfer and four-year institutions, provide grounds for multilateral investment in our students as they move along the continuum from academic to career.”

Strategic Initiatives	Research Focus	Timeline
1. Supply and analyze data for Marketing and Promotional Activities	Marketing, Public Information Officer Office of Community Relations Office of Instructional Services, Resource Development, and Research (CCbenefits)	Ongoing
2. Support high school outreach and placement testing	Dean of Student Development & Matriculation High school outreach Office of Community Relations	On a 1 to 5 year cycle

3. Maintain ties with transfer institutions	Articulation Officer District Articulation Council Four-year colleges and universities Transfer Center	Ongoing
4. Track achievement in vocational placements, employment, and internships	Alumni Current and graduated students Employers	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
5. Cultivate relations with business and industry via partnerships, internships, and other mutual initiatives	Advisory Committees Dean of Business, Computer Studies, and Technologies Dean of Health Sciences and Public Service College-level courses at Scripps Green Hospital	On a 1 to 5 year cycle
6. Resource development	Discipline-specific grants Equipment grants College-wide grants	Ongoing
7. Maintain collaborative relationship with the District Office, District-wide Research Committee, SDCCD Colleges, and Continuing Education	Continuing Education District Office District-wide Research Committee SDCCD Colleges	Ongoing
8. Academically and socially integrate groups and individuals into the fabric of the college (in-reach)	AB 540 students Associated Students Campus Counseling ESOL Mesa Academy Office of Community Relations Participatory governance Bodies Puente Project	Ongoing

8/15/06

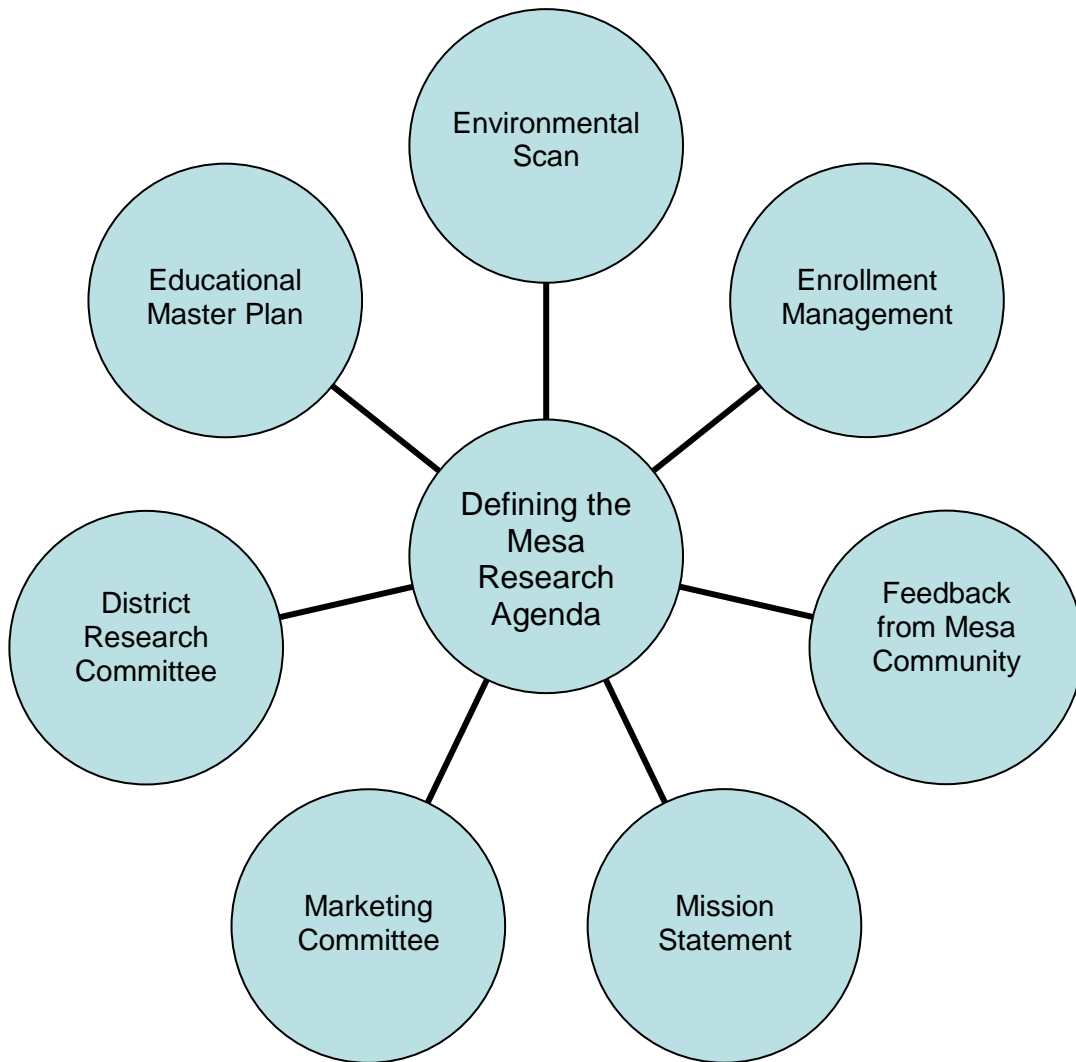
Revised 8/23/06

Revised 11/08/06

Revised 11/17/06

Diagram #8

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN THE SHAPING OF THE MESA COLLEGE RESEARCH AGENDA



**San Diego Mesa College
Research Committee
Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA)**

Introduction

The Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA) provide information regarding the proper access, protection, use, and dissemination of data at San Diego Mesa College. Four principles of data sensitivity were identified including: Data Access, Data Security, Use of Data, and Dissemination of Data. Each principle is discussed relative to three levels of data sensitivity: Level I, Level II, and Level III. The magnitude of data sensitivity is directly related to the scale used for the levels. Moving from one level up to another denotes a significant increase in the data's sensitivity as described in the "Terms and Definitions" section. This document is an evolving work and shall be reviewed and amended periodically.

Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions are provided in order to establish a shared understanding of the underlying concepts concerning data sensitivity.

Data Sensitivity: the extent to which data should be protected, based on the nature and content of the data

Level I: public information which is highly aggregated, or broadly categorized, such as enrollment figures, transfer rates, or any other institution-wide data

Level II: General Requests for Research Reports, survey data, and data that are disaggregated, or broken out by categories, to some extent, such as success rates or student progress at the program level

Level III: Special Requests for Research Reports and sensitive information that is highly disaggregated, such as student contact information, data at the Course Reference Number (CRN) level, student records, and all personally identifiable information

Data Specificity: a continuum along which data may be generalized to broad groups or specified to smaller units.

Aggregate Data: data expressed as total summaries that encompass multiple groups or units within broad categories, i.e., Level I data

Disaggregated Data: data that are broken out by categories or units, i.e. Level II data or Level III data if the unit of division is individual students, staff, or faculty members such that the information is personally identifiable

Data Steward: any individual who uses, handles, or manages data and is thus responsible for ensuring the security and integrity of the data

Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA): a Federal law that prohibits the release of student records (verbally, in writing, or by any other means) without the

written consent of the student or a court order or a lawfully issued subpoena, unless there is a specific statutory authorization or a legitimate educational interest or need to know, a need to know as part of fulfilling their job duties, or an emergency

Internet: a world-wide network of computer networks Intranet: an internal, private network that can only be accessed within the confines of an enterprise, e.g., the Mesa College Intranet

Need-to-know: necessary for reasonable operation, strategic planning, and the accomplishment of one's expected and stated job duties, while serving a legitimate educational interest

Pivot tables: a reporting tool that quickly sorts and summarizes data, independent of the original data layout, in an Excel spreadsheet by dragging and dropping data elements into rows, columns, or summary positions

**Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda
Statement of Responsibility**

I, _____, have read and understand the *Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA)*, pages 1 and 2 of this document, in its entirety. I accept the responsibility of protecting the security of data to which I am granted access and understand that I am subject to disciplinary consequences if I breach the security of these data. I hereby agree to comply with all of the principles, instructions, and regulations related to data access, security, use, and dissemination that are set forth in this document.

[Signature] _____

[Date] _____

Original: 2/14/07; Revised: 3/14/07; Revised: 3/23/07

Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA)			
Data Access	Data Security	Use of Data	Data Dissemination
<p>LEVEL I: In order to provide access to all, these data are posted on the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) web site <research.sdccd.edu>. Select data will also be available on the Mesa College Research Committee web site. If a requestor of research would like access to Level I data that are not already available, the requestor should complete a Request for Research Report (RRR) Form and follow the RRR protocol delineated in the section below under Level II data.</p> <p>LEVEL II: Individuals must complete a RRR Form, available through the Office of Instructional Services, Resource Development, & Research (Research Office) or in electronic format on the Research Committee web site. The Research Office will not process RRRs until approval is granted from the requestor's Department Chair and School Dean and the Form is received with all required signatures. Department Chairs and School Deans are responsible for ensuring that data are being requested on a legitimate need-to-know basis. Requestors who are new to the process must meet with the Dean of the Research Office and the Campus-Based Researcher. Although the requestor may specify a project timeline, prioritization of RRRs shall be left to the discretion of the Research Office. External requests, such as those from the press, community, or outside agencies, are to be routed through the Research Office for appropriate processing by the Institutional</p>	<p>LEVEL I: Data reports will be available in PDF format only in order to protect data integrity.</p> <p>LEVEL II: All data will be stored on a secure server. Proprietary data will be stored on the Mesa College or SDCCD Intranets. Data reports will be available in PDF format only in order to protect data integrity.</p> <p>LEVEL III: Access shall be password-protected. Passwords will be given to individuals on a need-to-know basis. Data Stewards shall take all precautions necessary to prevent disclosure of highly sensitive data to individuals who have not been granted access. Individuals who do not have or have been denied access shall under no circumstances seek to procure or view sensitive data. Failure to comply with these precautions and restrictions shall meet with serious consequences, which range from temporary suspension of access rights to disciplinary action by law enforcement agencies, according to the extent to which security was breached. Data Stewards should take care to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Protect the confidentiality of usernames and passwords (2) Log off or sign out after visiting a password-protected Intranet or Internet site (3) Avoid creating databases or 	<p>LEVELS I, II, and III: Data will be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) fairly and lawfully processed (2) processed for limited purposes (3) adequate, relevant and not excessive (4) accurate (5) not kept for longer than is necessary (6) processed in line with the Data Subject's right (7) Handled with utmost concern for data security. All aspects of research, including formulation of the research question, sample selection, choice of variables, and methodology, should be carefully thought out and planned by Data Stewards. Data stewards should ensure data integrity, execute analyses with precision, and interpret findings accurately in a clear, understandable manner. Special 	<p>LEVELS I and II: The Dean of the Research Office and the Campus-Based Researcher shall disseminate data as deemed appropriate to requestors who follow the protocol for submitting a Request for Research Report. Data will be disseminated in their appropriate context. Proprietary data shall be disseminated only with permission from the stewards of those data. Individuals are obligated to respect all copyright laws and give credit where credit is due. Reproductions of data reports should have all original titles, footnotes, and supplemental information intact and unaltered.</p> <p>LEVEL III: Highly sensitive data will be disseminated by the Research Office on a need-to-know basis only to requestors who print and sign the <i>GIRPA Statement of</i></p>

<p>Review Board (IRB).</p> <p>LEVEL III: Access will be granted on a need-to-know basis. Individuals who wish to gain access are required to complete the Data Sensitivity Training Tutorial which will cover proper handling and use of data, comply with the <i>Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA)</i>, and print and sign the <i>GIRPA Statement of Responsibility</i>. Individuals who are granted access to Level III data shall be ethically bound to the <i>GIRPA</i>. In the event that the data requested are not deemed “need-to-know”, the data request shall be fulfilled at a more aggregated and appropriate level of data sensitivity.</p>	<p>applications that use SSN as identifiers</p> <p>(4) Never send un-encrypted sensitive data via email</p> <p>(5) Protect printed sensitive data by storing in locked desk, drawer, or cabinet and never leave unattended on desk, copier, FAX or printer</p> <p>(6) Dispose of sensitive data by shredding (shredder available in K202) or returning to Research Office</p> <p>(7) Physically protect devices that can be easily moved, such as PDAs, laptops, and portable storage devices, e.g., memory sticks</p>	<p>attention should be given to data definitions and interpretations of findings.</p> <p>LEVEL III: Highly sensitive data should always be used on a need-to-know basis. These data should never be used for commercial, private, personal, or political purposes.</p>	<p><i>Responsibility.</i> All Level III data that are disseminated by the Research Office will be considered confidential, and issues related to confidentiality will be discussed with requestors. Reproductions and unauthorized dissemination of Level III data are prohibited.</p>
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**San Diego Mesa College
Research Committee
Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Q1: Where did the Guidelines for Implementing the Research Planning Agenda (GIRPA) come from?

During a pivot table demonstration at a Research Committee meeting, several faculty members expressed their concern regarding course-specific data in Excel pivot tables that gave the user the capability to drill down to the course section level and view Student Equity data for individual professors. This incident sparked a deeper concern that San Diego Mesa College needed to formalize the protection of data sensitivity and integrity of research, and, thus, a Subcommittee convened to research and develop a set of principles to guide the use of sensitive data.

Q2: What is the purpose of the GIRPA?

San Diego Mesa College encourages research on education issues and believes in making data which are in the public arena transparent and available to faculty, staff, and the general public. At the same time, the college upholds these guidelines on the access, security, use, and dissemination of sensitive data in order to assure the integrity of research and protect the rights and privacy of personnel and students. The GIRPA reinforces the exercise of sound judgment and the professionalism of data stewards.

Q3: What determines the “need-to-know”?

The research question determines the “need-to-know.” If a requestor has a research question that can only be answered with Level III data and the requested data are necessary for reasonable operation, strategic planning, or the accomplishment of the requestor’s expected and stated job duties, serving a legitimate educational interest, then there is a need-to-know. Examples include, but are not limited to, schedule development, Program Review, and data-driven decision-making by School Deans or Department Chairs.

Q4: Where do I consult when I am not sure about the level of confidentiality or sensitivity associated with a research request?

You should contact the Mesa College Office of Research.

Q5: What is a “research question”?

A good research question guides the process of seeking information to contribute to knowledge and/or practice. A research question generally is a problem to be solved, decision to be made, or knowledge to be gained through the gathering, analysis, and consideration of information.

Q6: Are there any special requirements to obtain research data?

NO – Faculty, administrators, staff, and students with a “need-to-know” will have access to research data. The level of research data is determined by the research question, and may result in Level I, II or III information.

Q7: What is the meaning of aggregated/disaggregated data?

Data specificity is on a continuum with extremes of aggregated data on one end and disaggregated data on the other. The following example illustrates this principle of data specificity: Aggregate data in the extreme would be data such as an institution-wide success rate

(Level I). This institution-wide success rate can be disaggregated, or broken out, at the school and program level to yield success rates by school and program (Level II). If we disaggregate further and break it out by CRN, we would be able to see the success rate for a single professor's class (Level III). We may disaggregate even further and determine the success rates for individual students (also Level III). While aggregate data in the extreme would include data such as institution-wide figures, disaggregated data in its extreme would comprise any data that are personally identifiable to individual personnel or students. Rarely do research questions necessitate personally identifiable information; most research questions can be answered with Level I or Level II data.

Q8: Can I access Level I data generated for others?

YES – the Research Office keeps copies of all reports it produces. Your access is dependent upon your need-to-know.

Q9: Can I access existing data stored online?

YES – visit <http://research.sdccd.edu/>, the District's Institutional Research and Planning website.

Q10: My school (as any department, program, unit, discipline, etc.) generates and maintains Level III data. Does GIRPA apply to my school's data?

YES – good research practices dictate ethical and professional behavior. Level III data, no matter where they exist or what the source, demand adherence to existing GIRPA policy. Although your School's data are not generated or maintained by the Research Office, the GIRPA should guide the access, security, use, and dissemination of sensitive data within your School.

Q11: What are the consequences for unauthorized dissemination of Level III data?

Individuals receiving Level III data from the Mesa College Research Office are expected to comply with the GIRPA policy. Standards of good judgment and professionalism are required when working with highly disaggregated information. Existing District disciplinary procedures will be enforced when inappropriate dissemination of Level III data occurs.

Q12: What is a pivot table? And when will I get access to the Student Equity pivot tables?

A pivot table is a reporting tool that quickly sorts and summarizes data, independent of the original data layout, in an Excel spreadsheet by dragging and dropping data elements into rows, columns, or summary positions. Student Equity pivot tables for Fall 2006 should be completed by April 2007. The pivot tables will be disseminated to individuals who have been granted access to these Level III data.

Q13: Do I have the right to share Level III data with my colleagues?

NO – reproductions and unauthorized dissemination of Level III data are prohibited.

Q14: How does GIRPA differ from the Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

Requests for data from the Mesa College Office of Research are under the auspices of the GIRPA. Research involving Mesa students as human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

Original: 3/20/07

Revised: 3/23/07