California Black Serving Institutions Application

Q1

College/University

San Diego Mesa Community College

Website

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Q2

State your institution's commitment to address Black and/or African American student success and explain how your commitment is consistent with your institution's 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.

San Diego Mesa College's commitment to the success of Black and African American students is embedded within its broader institutional focus on equity, social justice, and anti-racism, as articulated in the Mesa2030 College Master Plan. Developed through an inclusive, multi-year planning process that concluded in 2021, the Mesa2030 plan was designed to guide the college through the next decade. As of 2025, Mesa College is midway through the plan's implementation period, actively aligning its institutional priorities with the long-term strategic vision established in Mesa2030.

 The plan emphasizes the importance of creating equity-minded, anti-racist learning environments, and calls for the use of an equity framework to eliminate achievement gaps and dismantle systemic barriers faced by students of color—with particular attention to the experiences of Black and African American students. As members of our community, their success is central to our understanding of equity and disproportionately impacted populations. The plan further commits the college to using disaggregated data to identify gaps in student success and to implement evidence-based, equity-focused practices that foster culturally affirming environments.

The goals of the college's comprehensive strategic plan are supported by a focused Student Equity Plan that has identified disproportionately impacted student populations based on equity gaps in enrollment; transfer-level math and English course success rates; and retention, completion, and transfer rates. This Student Equity Plan also established benchmarked goals for achieving change.

This commitment reflects and reinforces Mesa College's vision to be the leading college of equity and excellence. The integration of anti-racist and equity-driven strategies into the college's long-term vision ensures that institutional goals are translated into meaningful action.

Over the past several years, Mesa College has taken concrete, measurable, and innovative steps to advance Black student success that aligns with the college's mission of empowering our

diverse student body to reach their educational goals and shape the future, through access, success, and equity. Our work to support Black and African American students is consistent with this mission, and is reflected in key campus initiatives:

- Launching the Harambee Protocol, a cross-campus framework that unifies the college's eight Black student-serving programs into an aligned and strategic system. This protocol ensures coordinated efforts, eliminates redundancy, and leverages shared resources toward measurable outcomes;
- Implementing Black-centered learning communities and programs, including: an A2Mend Chapter, Umoja, the hiring of a general-funded Umoja Counselor/Coordinator, a Black Student Union, and culturally responsive mental health services, and dedicated tutoring;
- Investing in student research, data disaggregation, and equity-focused dashboards;
- The faculty senate's adoption of the San Diego Community College District Black Student Success Workgroup's Instructional Recommendations to Positively Affect Black Student Success program;
- Hosting high-impact events like Black Student Success Week and Rite of Passage Black Grad, which are grounded in cultural affirmation and identity-based celebration;
- Integrating Black student voices into college planning through initiatives like the Mesa Pathways Fellows, participatory governance representation, and data-informed program design;
- Promoting social events including open mics and hip-hop dance;
- Opening our K.U.P. Unity Village in 2025, providing a dedicated space for Kapwa, Umoja, and Puente students to meet and gather to build a community and nurture academic success.

Through these efforts, San Diego Mesa College has established a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for fostering the success of Black and African American students through programs that address equity gaps and create a sense of belonging. By embedding the principles of equity and excellence into long-term strategic plans, San Diego Mesa College has affirmed its ongoing commitment to these initiatives.

Q3 and Q4

The percentage / number of Black/African American students

A total of 2,124 (6.6%) of students enrolled at San Diego Mesa College in the 2024-2025 academic year identified as Black/African American.

Q5

Describe the academic goals for the institution to achieve within the five-year period in which the initial designation is awarded. The goals described in this section should outline the institution's plans to improve retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates of Black and African American students.

During the initial five-year designation period, San Diego Mesa College plans to achieve significant improvements in academic outcomes for our Black and African American students. These goals are aligned with the three core areas identified by the designation process and are supported by both targeted support plans and broader institutional strategy and mission.

Academic Goal 1: Increase first term to subsequent term retention rate for first-time Black and African American students from 59.3% to 62.3% over the next five years. By achieving this 3-percentage point improvement, we will close a 5-percentage point equity gap that currently exists between our Black and African American students and our overall student population. To achieve this, we plan to undertake activities in four areas: a) enhancing student tracking data collection; b) increasing access to financial aid, basic needs, and student support programs by embedding these into regularly scheduled Open Labs; c) further developing culturally affirming spaces that increase students' sense of belonging and contribute to improved persistence; d) providing ongoing professional learning for employees to implement inclusive pedagogy and classroom practices that encourage academic participation and performance; e) continuing our Success Coach program that pairs underserved students with a success coach who conducts monthly check-ins and can refer students to relevant campus resources, a program with demonstrated impacts on retention rates.

Academic Goal 2: Reduce time-to-associate degree completion for Black and African American students from 84 units (2023/2024) to 80 units (2029/2030) as measured by average number of semester units accumulated. Recent data supports this goal with a clear trend in decreasing time-to-completion for Black and African American students. To achieve this over the next five years, we plan to implement three core areas of activity. First, we will increase academic planning support for Black and African American students through dedicated counseling to ensure that students are properly informed about requirements and guided toward appropriate enrollments. By creating a dedicated appointment system within the counseling program, we will foster trust, rapport, and guidance that appropriately addresses student goals and challenges. Second, we will maintain culturally responsive and accessible tutoring opportunities for high-need courses, contributing to increased persistence and reducing equity gaps in course completion. Third, we will formalize pathways leading to Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), streamlining early transfer opportunities, and increasing the number of students achieving this outcome.

Academic Goal 3: Increase the number of first-time Black and African American students who earn a certificate or degree within 3 years from 19 (2020/2021 cohort) to 30 by 2029/2030. Since 2017/2018, we have eliminated a 2.2% equity gap on this metric, and the target is supported by trends in our data. While this goal is supported by other academic success activities, we will also implement targeted interventions to contribute to increased certificate and degree completion. These interventions include expanding career and transfer exploration activities that both encourage students to envision the purpose of their academic journey and demystify institutional processes that often present hurdles; hosting "Countdown to Completion" workshops to ensure students are aware of timelines and requirements; and celebrating Black and African American graduates in a culturally-affirming ceremony that allows other students to visualize their own potential and belonging.

Academic Goal 4: Increase the number of first-time Black and African American students who transfer to a four-year institution within four years from 33 to 44, as measured by a three-year cohort. As San Diego's top transfer institution, Mesa College is committed to improving the transfer success of our Black and African American students, and to achieve this increase we plan to undertake three key activities. First, we will host targeted outreach efforts through campus affinity groups to raise awareness of Transfer Admission Guarantee programs and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) articulation agreements, expanding student knowledge of these opportunities. Second, we will organize opportunities with UCs, CSUs, and out-of-state HBCUs to allow students to gain firsthand knowledge of transfer possibilities and familiarity with campus cultures. Third, we will host a monthly workshop series on financial aid for transfer students, providing students with actionable knowledge on managing aid, scholarships, and other funding sources.

Q6

Describe the academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. Specifically, outline how these goals will improve academic equity gaps in retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates between your Black and African American students and the overall student population. Provide data-driven benchmarks and strategies for achieving these objectives.

San Diego Mesa College has demonstrated notable success in closing equity gaps for Black and African American students as measured by the academic goals addressed above. Of the goals, only one (retention) reflects a plan to close an equity gap; institutional data indicates no equity gaps for outcomes connected with goals 2 and 3 (time-to-completion; graduation rate). We

recognize, however, the opportunity to improve absolute (rather than rate) outcomes for our Black and African American students and have identified four key academic equity gaps that will contribute to increasing successful outcomes. Correspondingly, we plan to leverage new and existing programs to address these academic equity gap areas.

Academic Equity Goal 1: Increase the year-1 transfer-level English completion rate for first-time Black/African American students by 3.1 percentage points over five years. Raising this completion rate from a baseline of 38.7% will eliminate the existing equity gap with the overall student population (completion rate of 41.8%). Research has indicated that passing gateway English and Math classes on first attempt significantly impacts the likelihood that Black and African American students will succeed in transferring from a community college (Cooper et al., 2022). Closing this gap will thus result in improvements to **graduation rates** for Black and African American students.

Despite year-to-year fluctuation, our data indicates a narrowing trend in this gap since 2019/2020 when a 6.9% equity gap existed.

To achieve this goal, we will implement three strategies. First, we will expand embedded Mesa Tutoring and Computing Centers (MT2C) programs to provide timely, in-class academic support that is culturally responsive, and relationship-driven. Mesa College data indicates that while our Black and African American students access tutoring at approximately the same rate as our overall student population (6.9% compared to 7.2%), this tutoring has a significant impact for Black and African American students, who have a 71% course success rate when accessing tutoring, compared to a 57% course success rate when not receiving tutoring.

Second, we will continue to support the growth of our Umoja Learning Community Cohort, a year-long program that provides peer support and mentorship from faculty, counselors, and Umoja staff, increasing student success rates in year-1 English classes.

Third, we will continue to transform classroom practice by implementing best practices for creating equitable outcomes. To do this, we will develop professional learning opportunities for employees on inclusive pedagogy, racial equity, and classroom practices to support Black and African American student learning and engagement through the Learning Opportunities for Transformation (LOFT) campus hub.

Academic Equity Goal 2: Increase the year-1 transfer-level Math completion rate for first-time Black/African American students by 5 percentage points over five years. Raising this completion rate from a baseline of 14.4% will reduce the existing 9.9 percentage point equity gap with the overall student population (completion rate of 24.4%). Research has indicated that passing gateway Math classes on first attempt is significantly associated with successful transfer

outcomes (Cooper and Brohawn, 2023). Closing this gap will thus result in improvements to **graduation rates** for Black and African American students.

To achieve this, we will implement two strategies. First, we will expand embedded Mesa Tutoring and Computing Centers (MT2C) programs to provide timely, in-class academic support that is culturally responsive, and relationship-driven. Mesa College data indicates that while our Black and African American students access tutoring at approximately the same rate as our overall student population (6.9% compared to 7.2%), this tutoring has a significant impact for Black and African American students, who have a 71% course success rate when accessing tutoring, compared to a 57% course success rate when not receiving tutoring.

Second, we will continue to transform classroom practice by implementing best practices for creating equitable outcomes. To do this, we will develop professional learning opportunities for employees on inclusive pedagogy, racial equity, and classroom practices to support Black and African American student learning and engagement through the Learning Opportunities for Transformation (LOFT) campus hub.

Academic Equity Goal 3: Increase first-year course success rate for Black/African American students by 5 percentage points over five years. Increasing the course rate from a baseline of 65.3% will close the existing 5.6 percentage point academic equity gap with the overall student population (70.9% course success rate). Closing this gap will result in improvements in **retention** and **time-to-completion** for Black and African American students.

To achieve this, we will implement four strategies. First, we will expand embedded MT2C tutoring programs to provide timely, in-class academic support that is culturally responsive, and relationship-driven. Mesa College data indicates that while our Black and African American students access tutoring at approximately the same rate as our overall student population (6.9% compared to 7.2%), this tutoring has a significant impact for Black and African American students, who have a 71% course success rate when accessing tutoring, compared to a 57% course success rate when not receiving tutoring.

Second, we will increase the participation of Black and African American students in our CRUISE first-year summer bridge program through targeted outreach and counseling efforts. The CRUISE program provides peer navigators, a sense of community and belonging, and mentorship that has proven particularly valuable for Black and African American students. A three-year analysis of data indicates that Black and African American students participating in the CRUISE program achieved course success rates of 67%, a rate that is significantly better than those Black and African American students who did not participate (57% course success rate).

Third, we will continue to support professional development programs through Learning Opportunities for Transformation (LOFT) campus hub, with a focus on humanizing online

teaching. Evidence indicates that Black and African American students were disproportionately impacted during the shift to remote learning modalities during the pandemic. Three-year data at Mesa College shows a steadily increasing success rate for Black and African American students in online courses, from 62% to 66%, as a result of LOFT programs supporting the implementation of equitable practices for online pedagogy.

Fourth, our faculty will begin implementation of the San Diego Community College District's Instructional Recommendations to Positively Affect Black Student Success, which establishes five best practices for inclusive, supportive pedagogy. Adoption of these recommendations was passed unanimously by the Mesa College faculty senate in Spring 2025. These recommendations will contribute to creating classroom environments that support Black student success by embedding resources, building human connection between instructors and students, and reflecting Black success in curricula and assignments.

Academic Equity Goal 4: Decrease the percentage of drops due to financial hardship for Black and African American students by 3 percentage points over five years. Decreasing the drop rate due to financial hardship from a baseline of 6.4% will eliminate the existing 1.4 percentage point equity gap with the overall student population (5.0% drop due to financial hardship). Closing this gap will result in improvements in **retention** for Black and African American students.

To achieve this, we will implement three strategies. First, through our Office of Institutional Effectiveness we will establish methods to track, monitor, and evaluate enrollment patterns, specifically students who drop before census or do not re-enroll in consecutive semester, to inform tailored interventions and increase overall enrollment and retention.

Second, we will continue wellness check-in calls through our School of Student Success and Equity. These personalized outreach efforts are designed to connect with Black and African American students, offering support, sharing resources, and ensuring they feel welcomed and prepared for the academic term. They also serve to identify potential needs and connect students with campus resources. Additionally, we will continue to support our Black Student Success Meet and Greet event and Black Student Counseling Hot Spots, both of which help ensure students are aware of how to access Basic Needs support.

Third, building on the data and direct outreach strategies, we will target interventions through our campus Basic Needs support programs, including our Family Resource Center. Three-year data indicates that Black and African American students are more likely to be single parents (14.4% compared to 9.6% overall) and that these single parents are more likely to leave courses due to financial hardship. Generally, we plan to strengthen emergency aid, childcare, and housing support programs.

Q7

Identify institutional memberships, charters, or affiliations to organizations dedicated to the advancement of Black and/or African American Students.

San Diego Mesa College's efforts to support Black and African American students involve collaborations or associations with regional and national organizations that provide recommendations, guidance, and programmatic partnerships. These organizations include:

- California Community College African-American Male Education Network Development, A2MEND Charter at San Diego Mesa College
- Nandi Organization
- Umoja
- All African Diaspora Education Summit (ADES) in Ghana
- The National Consortium of College Men of Color (NCCMC) and The Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL)
- San Diego Community College District Black Student Success Workgroup
- San Diego Community College District Career Education and Workforce Development grant for Black Student Success Workgroup efforts
- California Community College Chancellor's Office Partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- San Diego and Regional and California Community College Chancellor's Statewide Black Student Success Workgroup
- The San Diego Urban League
- Sister's Circle - San Diego Chapter American Association for Women in Community Colleges Affinity Group
- Scholarships available to Mesa College Students:
  - ο National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
  - ο United Negro College Fund
  - ο The HBCU Foundation
  - ο The Steve Fund
  - ο Rest for Resistance

Q8

Attach your institution's strategic plan to address the academic goals and academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. The strategic plan should include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

a) <u>mission statement</u> that addresses the applicant's commitment to serve Black and or African American students;

b) <u>outreach services</u> to potential Black and or African American students;

c) existing and/or proposed academic or basic needs <u>support services</u> to assist in the academic success of Black and/or African American students. Support services described in this section may include campus affinity centers, coursework, activities or events;

d) an outline of the planned <u>allocation of resources</u> during the five-year period in which the initial designation awarded;

e) an outline of how the institution is using or will use existing resources to provide culturally relevant <u>professional development</u> for the applicant's faculty and staff in pursuit of Black Serving Institution goals.

Mission Statement and Theory of Change

San Diego Mesa College is committed to becoming a Black-Serving Institution by advancing coordinated, culturally affirming, and data-informed strategies that support Black and African American student success. We strive to remove barriers, foster belonging, and ensure students thrive, graduate, and transfer.

San Diego Mesa College's commitment to Black and African American student success is deeply rooted in its vision of to be the Leading College of Equity and Excellence. This BSI strategic plan integrates the Mesa2030 Master Plan, the 2022–2025 and 2025-2028 Student Equity Plans, as well as the Harambee Protocol, a campuswide framework for aligning all Black student-focused efforts across instruction, student services, and administration.

This commitment reflects and reinforces Mesa College's mission to be the leading college of equity and excellence. The integration of anti-racist and equity-driven strategies into the College's long-term vision ensures that institutional goals are translated into meaningful action. The commitment to equity and excellence is demonstrated by an ongoing process of programmatic and pedagogical innovation, conversations that address metrics, culture, actions, and language, and streamlining structural processes.

We view students from an asset-based perspective, we view our work through an equity lens, and we are committed to addressing and eliminating systemic barriers. To accomplish this, we will meet educational needs and accommodate the learning styles of our students through early

implementation of varied pedagogy generally regarded as promising practices, and regular and thorough assessments of both teaching methods and student learning outcomes.

At San Diego Mesa College, equity is a fundamental value and goal. We will know we have achieved equity when we see parity in outcomes across racial and ethnic student groups and all student groups that have been historically marginalized within higher education. Our commitment to equity requires that minoritized students have access and support across all campus systems, from application to completion. We aim for equity in access and opportunities for all.

This commitment is embodied in the eight Academic and Academic Equity Goals the college aims to achieve during the initial five-year BSI designation period.

Academic Goals

1. Increase first term to subsequent term retention rate for Black and African American students over the next five years.
2. Reduce time-to-associate degree completion for Black and African American students measured by average number of semester units accumulated.
3. Increase the percentage of Black and African American students who earned a certificate or degree within 3 years.
4. Increase the number of Black and African American students who transfer to a four-year institution within 4 years.

Academic Equity Goals

1. Eliminate the 3.1 percentage point academic equity gap for successful completion of year-1 transfer-level English between Black and African American students and the overall population.
2. Reduce by 5 percentage points the 9.9 percentage point academic equity gap for successful completion of year-1 transfer-level Math between Black and African American students and the overall population.
3. Close by 5 percentage points the 5.6 percentage point academic equity gap for first-year course success rate between Black and African American students and the overall population.
4. Close the 1.4 percentage point academic equity gap for course drops due to financial hardship between Black and African American students and the overall population.

These goals, and our strategies to achieve them, reflect our understanding of the complex structural inequalities and barriers facing our Black and African American students. We recognize that:

- Black and African American students at San Diego Mesa College are more likely to experience economic hardship due to structural racism and historical legacies of discrimination in San Diego. This results in barriers to education access and decreased persistence once enrolled;
- Black and African American students at San Diego Mesa College are less likely to express a sense of belonging and college-going identity due to persistent patterns of microaggressions and educational inequities within the K-12 system. This results in decreased persistence, success, and attainment;
- Black and African American students at San Diego Mesa College have traditionally experienced historical marginalization within higher education, and that while intentional efforts to produce equity have begun to address these legacies, achieving substantive equity will require deepening institutional commitments and ensuring deliberate prioritization, establishing clear impact benchmarks and mechanisms for data-driven planning, and integrating accountability and campus coordination efforts.

In order to address these inequalities and barriers, we have developed a strategic plan that leverages Mesa College's existing strengths, while building new targeted initiatives to ensure the success of Black and African American students. This plan will substantially improve outcomes for Black and African American students at Mesa College, reducing or eliminating key academic equity gaps and producing measurable change.

The core of this strategic plan rests on four pillars:

1. **Build Campus Infrastructure for Coordination:** We will establish a BSI steering committee working through the existing Harambee Protocol group to ensure that activities are aligned with objectives and priorities, and that resources are allocated appropriately. Improved coordination will prevent fragmented or siloed initiatives that dilute the effectiveness of efforts, and limit duplication between instruction, student services, and administration. Additionally, we will strategically deepen our data collection through collaborations between Black-serving programs and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to generate stronger disaggregated metrics allowing for transparent evaluation and accountability.
2. **Target Structural Barriers:** Because we know our Black and African American students face structural barriers rooted in larger social inequities, we will continue to develop, evaluate, and refine programs that provide students financial assistance, access to educational supplies and technology, and support for families and childcare.
3. **Academic Achievement Initiatives:** We will maintain targeted support for ongoing efforts such as the Mesa Tutoring and Computing Centers (MT2C), CRUISE summer bridge

program and Umoja Learning Community Cohort that have demonstrated effectiveness, while continuing to pursue innovation in equitable pedagogy.

4. **Foster Belonging:** Recognizing that a sense of belonging and the presence of culturally relevant practices are essential drivers of retention and persistence for Black and African American students, we will continue to support events and activities through the Black Student Union, Black Employee Success Team, A2Mend, Black Studies Department, and other campus programs that create opportunities for mentorship, connection, and community.

A comprehensive table of these activities and pillars is available in the appendix to this document.

Through the implementation of this plan, we expect to more effectively serve our Black and African American students. Improved coordination will not only make activities more efficient, but will expand access to campus resources, allowing us to close gaps around tutoring, course success rates, and other core areas. Through disaggregated data and tracking of outcomes, we will be able to better identify our programmatic strengths and weaknesses, creating feedback mechanisms that will allow for continual improvement of campus initiatives. By closing equity gaps around academic persistence, we will improve retention and completion rates, ensuring that a greater number of our Black and African American students are able to achieve their academic goals. Finally, by fostering belonging and building a campus environment where culturally relevant practices are embedded in pedagogy, student services, and affinity spaces, we will ensure that our Black and African American students experience Mesa College's BSI designation not as a label, but as an integral component of campus life.

Through this strategic plan, Mesa College will ensure that our Black and African American students experience equitable educational outcomes, as measured by retention, time-to-completion, and graduation or transfer rates.

Broadly, we believe that IF Mesa College institutionalizes a culturally affirming and coordinated infrastructure through the Harambee Protocol and BSI Steering Committee, prioritizes intentional capacity-building and resource allocation, and implements equity-minded supports grounded in disaggregated data, THEN Black and African American students will experience higher retention, faster completion, and more successful transfer pathways, BECAUSE systemic barriers will be proactively dismantled, support systems will be culturally responsive and sustaining, and our accountability structures will ensure will ensure continuous improvement and impact.

Building Educational Pathways to Equity

Mesa College's commitment to equity extends beyond immediate classroom outcomes and is reflected in this strategic plan's identification of living wage outcomes as a core objective. Within

Mesa College's Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, 25.8% of Black and African American students who exited the community college system and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution attained a living wage immediately following the academic year of exit, compared to 33% for the overall student population. Over the next five years, Mesa College plans to go beyond closing this 7.2 percentage point equity gap, raising the number of Black and African American students earning a living wage to 50% of CTE participants. In this, we will maintain equity with our goal of ensuring that 50% of all students, across categories, earn a living wage.

To accomplish this, CTE will maintain and expand three programs. First, robust work-based learning (WBL) programs ensure that Black and African American students are connected early to high-demand, living-wage career pathways through equitable access to employer engagement, career readiness workshops, and experiential learning opportunities. These experiences are designed to address historical inequities in employment outcomes and support long-term wage growth and economic mobility. Second, the Mesa Impactship Program (MIP) provides paid, career-aligned internships that intentionally support Black and African American students by increasing access to these opportunities—ensuring they are not excluded from vital career-building experiences due to financial barriers. Through professional mentorship, career coaching, and exposure to high-wage industries, MIP empowers students to develop the skills, networks, and confidence needed to thrive—ultimately helping to close racial wage gaps after graduation. Third, the Career Ambassador Program provides tailored mentorship and career readiness support to underrepresented students, ensuring equitable access to high-quality employment opportunities. By equipping ambassadors with inclusive advising strategies, we aim to bridge systemic disparities in career advancement and wage potential.

Improving Enrollment Success

A foundational component of the strategic plan involves increasing access to college for potential Black and African American students. The plan aims to accomplish this through research and activities to improve enrollment of success rates. Data indicates that Black and African American college applicants proceed to successfully enroll at lower rates than the overall population (2.3 percentage point gap as of 2023/24).

To address this gap and increase overall enrollment of Black and African American students, Mesa College will utilize four existing programs.

Outreach Office & Ambassadors:
Our Outreach Office and Outreach Ambassadors actively connect with the community by participating in events and visiting local high schools. They share insights about life at Mesa College and help make the transition easier for prospective students. The ambassadors are student leaders dedicated to fostering a college-going culture both on

and off campus. They assist students from high schools and Continuing Education, organizing events and providing personalized support to all current and future students. Often, they are the first college representatives prospective students meet, and they use social media to reach a wider audience. Their efforts help new students feel welcomed, included, and supported, especially underrepresented groups.

Social Media Marketing:
Outreach strategies are reinforced by intentional use of social media for marketing. Both San Diego Mesa College and the San Diego Community College District deploy social media and marketing strategies that emphasize representation, featuring images of Black students to promote diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging. This visibility encourages engagement and reinforces our commitment to supporting Black students.

CRUISE Program, Peer Navigators, & Avanza Center:
Mesa's First-Year Experience Program, called CRUISE (Creating Rich Unique Intellectual Student Experiences), supports new students starting in the summer through a Summer Bridge Program. Students meet mentors called Peer Navigators who guide them through their first year. This program is especially helpful for first-generation and historically marginalized students who may lack family support or guidance. Peer Navigators mentor students, organize workshops, and help them succeed. The Avanza Engagement Center is a space where students can study, relax, or connect with peers.

Jumpstart Program:
Jumpstart offers short workshops that help students begin college confidently. Topics include financial aid, transfer planning, study skills, and parent involvement. It helps students learn about campus resources, meet faculty and staff, and tour the college.

Combined, these four areas contribute to the successful recruitment and enrollment of Black and African American students by providing potential students a welcoming environment that promotes belonging and identity, while facilitating new students' access to essential services including financial aid, mentorship, and other campus resources.

Support Services

The strategic plan leverages a significant number of existing campus resources with proven effectiveness. Mesa College's robust system of student supports includes both general basic needs services and dedicated programs and affinity groups for Black and African American students.

The college's core basic needs resources include:

The Stand: The Dr. Pamela T. Luster Resource Center:

Known as The Stand, this center provides essential support to help students meet basic needs such as food, clothing, transportation, housing, childcare, health, and school supplies. It offers a safe space where students can access free resources on campus and in the community. The Stand also raises awareness about issues like food and housing insecurity and helps students apply for support through an online system available 24/7. Additionally, it provides small emergency grants for essentials like books and groceries and supports campus scholarships.

Laptop Lending Program:

Mesa College offers students the chance to borrow laptops for their coursework. Students can request laptops and other materials like calculators through an online form, supporting their academic success.

Scholarships:

Every year, Mesa College awards over $150,000 in scholarships through the College Foundation. Students can apply with one general application to access multiple awards, ranging from $250 to $5,000, helping with tuition, books, and other expenses. Four scholarships are specifically allocated for Black and African American students.

Neurodivergent Students & Mental Health Support:

Mesa provides services for students with neurological or psychological conditions, including learning differences and mental health challenges through the Disability Support Program and Services (DSPS) program and Mental Health Services office. Support services include counseling, workshops, tutoring, and ongoing check-ins, resulting in improved engagement and success. The college's online tools and mental health resources help students access the support they need.

Academic support programs include:

Student Follow-Up System:

Faculty can flag students experiencing academic challenges. An automatic email then alerts students about available tutoring and counseling services, ensuring early intervention and ongoing support.

Mesa Academics and Athletics Program (MAAP):

MAAP supports student-athletes by helping them balance academics, sports, and personal goals. It guides students toward earning an associate degree or transferring, while encouraging success in all areas.

Tutoring Services:
Mesa College offers free tutoring for all students through the Mesa Tutoring and Computing Centers (MT2C). For those students who are underrepresented in terms of graduation and transfer, we also offer "Embedded Tutoring," where tutors are assigned to attend classes, where they can interact with students in their classroom environments to establish rapport and observe students as they initially grasp discipline concepts. These efforts support retention, grade improvement, and graduation.

Campus affinity spaces and support centers across campus play a vital role in supporting the holistic success of Black students by fostering belonging, providing targeted resources, and addressing intersecting identities. Many Black students hold multiple, overlapping identities such as being LGBTQ+, student parents, veterans, formerly incarcerated, first-generation, or undocumented. These centers offer culturally responsive support and safe spaces where students can access academic resources, mental health support, mentorship, and community.

- **Pride Center:** Supports LGBTQIA+ students with inclusive programs.
- **Family Resource Center:** Assists student parents with childcare and parenting resources.
- **Veterans Center:** Serves student veterans with benefits and peer support.
- **Avanza Engagement Center:** Supports first-generation and Latinx/Black students academically and socially.
- **Rising Scholars Center:** Offers reentry support to students impacted by incarceration.
- **Dreamer Resource Center:** Helps undocumented and mixed-status students access legal aid and support.
- **KUP Unity Village:** KUP is a dedicated space for Kapwa, Umoja and Puente Learning Communities students to meet and gather, to build a community and nurture academic success. The space hosts culturally relevant experiences, activities and presentations to foster a sense of belonging and develop the cultural connection for our KUP students to themselves and their ancestry.

These affinity spaces collectively contribute to Black student success by recognizing the full spectrum of student identities, reducing barriers, and offering inclusive support systems that affirm students' experiences. Their collaboration with the Black Student Success initiatives ensures comprehensive, intersectional approaches to equity and empowerment.

Programs dedicated to serving Black and African American students:

A2MEND Charter:
A2MEND focuses on the success of Black male students, providing mentorship, academic resources, leadership development, and cultural activities. It aims to create a

supportive environment that promotes achievement and well-being. The program also offers opportunities like study abroad trips to Africa, scholarships, campus visits, and tours of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), to foster institutional change and ensure Black students' success.

Black Student Union (BSU):

The BSU is a student-led group advocating for Black students and the Black community. It promotes campus events, cultural activities, and outreach efforts to foster inclusion and pride. BSU members serve as peer leaders, helping to organize programs and engage students through social media, campus visits, and community outreach. The BSU advisor also serves as the Black Student Success Department Chair, ensuring strong links between students and college leadership.

Black Studies Department:

This department offers courses on Black history, culture, and social issues that help students better understand themselves and the broader world. The curriculum supports Black students' academic success and provides a foundation for leadership and community engagement. The department also hosts events, speakers, and activities to celebrate Black culture and promote community involvement.

Umoja Program:

Umoja aims to increase the graduation, transfer, and retention rates of Black students through culturally relevant coursework, mentorship, and community building. The program supports students' academic and personal growth, helping them develop skills and confidence. The recent hiring of a full-time counselor dedicated to Umoja provides ongoing, culturally sensitive support. Data shows Umoja students have higher persistence rates, and the program continues to evaluate its impact.

Black Student Success Workgroup (BSSW):

This district-wide group aims to support Black students across San Diego's community colleges. Its mission is to improve educational experiences, build community, and remove barriers to success. Key events include:

- The **Black Student Success Summit**: A gathering for students, staff, and community leaders focused on leadership, identity, and achievement.
- **Black Professionals Day**: An event connecting students with Black professionals for networking and mentorship.

School of Student Success and Equity (SSE):

SSE promotes events and programs to support Black and marginalized students, including:

- **Black Student Success Week**: To celebrate community, achievements, and strategies for success.
- **Black Student Meet and Greet**: An event to foster connection, community, and resource sharing.
- The **Rite of Passage Recognition Ceremony**: Honors Black students earning degrees or transferring.

Planned Allocation of Resources

To support the strategic plan, Mesa College will maintain current resource allocations for identified activities and student support programs. Additionally, the college will increase grant seeking and fundraising efforts to grow available resources for these efforts.

During the five-year initial BSI designation period, resources will strategically be used to support efforts that close equity gaps, improve student success, and foster a sense of belonging for Black and African American students. Funding will be aligned with institutional goals and drawn from various sources, including and not limited to: general funds, categorical funds, grants, and the San Diego Mesa College Foundation. This ensures that equity work is a campus-wide priority and not dependent on any single funding stream. Key budgets include Mesa College General funds, Student Equity and Achievement, Mental Health Grant, Strong Workforce, and The Stand Basic Needs.

Funding resources will focus on personnel, programs and initiatives with proven or promising impact on Black student outcomes. These include:

1. **Personnel supporting Black Student Success Efforts**
   a. 40% FTE Faculty San Diego Community College Black Student Success Workgroup Coordinator
   b. 40% FTE Faculty San Diego Mesa College DEIA Coordinator
   c. Three Full Time and Nine Part-Time Black Studies faculty
   d. 50% FTE Umoja Faculty Counselor Coordinator
   e. 20% FTE Dean of Student Success and Equity
   f. 20% FTE Mental Health Counselor
2. **Culturally Responsive Student Support Services**
   a. Wellness check-in calls at the start of each semester
   b. Expansion of Black and African American Healing Circles
3. **Community Engagement and Events**
   a. Annual Black Student Success Week
   b. Annual Rite of Passage Black Graduate Celebration & Umoja Achievement Ceremony

    c.   Leadership summits, conferences, and guest speakers

4. **Equity-Focused Professional Development and Institutional Change**
   a. Equity-minded training for faculty and staff
   b. Workshops to review data and share resources
   c. Inclusive curriculum and pedagogy initiatives

5. **Academic and Career Pathway Integration**
   a. Black Counselor Hot spots, Student Education Plan counseling appointments
   b. Support for tutoring, transfer prep, and career exploration
   c. Internship and experiential learning opportunities

6. **Data, Evaluation, and Sustainability**
   a. Regular assessment of equity impact and student outcomes
   b. Creation of dashboards and reports to inform continuous improvement
   c. Scaling and institutionalizing effective practices

All divisions, from student services and instruction to administration, will collaborate in developing, implementing, and evaluating these initiatives. Funding effectiveness will be reviewed regularly using data and feedback from students and staff.

By using multiple funding sources strategically, the college aims to create a strong and lasting framework that puts Black and African American student success at the heart of its institutional culture—no longer relying on temporary or isolated funds, but building a sustainable, campus-wide effort.

Professional Development

Mesa College has committed to embedding equity-oriented practices through ongoing professional education for faculty and staff, as well as supporting the professional development and initiatives of members of the campus community who serve Black and African American students. Resources currently support:

1. The development of equity-oriented and culturally relevant pedagogy through several faculty training and development initiatives including:

> **Mesa College New Faculty Institute (NFI)** provides a robust year-long professional development program for new tenure-track faculty members. With its comprehensive curriculum and the pairing of new faculty with faculty mentors from outside of their school, the program is designed to welcome faculty to Mesa, share the values, priorities, and directions of the campus, and create cross-disciplinary solid communities amongst the participants. By shifting the leadership of the New Faculty Institute to a faculty coordinator and a team of faculty liaisons (Instructional Faculty, Student Service Faculty, Career Technical Education Faculty), NFI can directly address the essential tools and

information needed to introduce new faculty to the equity and excellence approach of San Diego Mesa College. The NFI planning team, which consists of faculty, administrators, and classified staff, continually works to refine and refresh the curriculum for the program.

Faculty will receive support implementing the **Instructional Recommendations to Positively Affect Black Student Success**, a comprehensive set of best practices for supporting Black and African American students through inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy. These best practices were developed by the San Diego Community College District Black Student Success Workgroup and the recommendation for their adoption was unanimously passed by the Mesa College Academic Senate in 2025. This framework contributes to creating classroom environments that support Black student success by embedding resources, building human connection between instructors and students, and reflecting Black success in curricula and assignments.

Conference Professional Learning Opportunities: Through collaborative efforts led by the Learning Opportunities for Transformation (LOFT), the President's Office, and the School of Student Success and Equity, the college provides robust support for participation in high-impact professional learning experiences. This includes covering travel, registration, and related expenses for both full-time and part-time employees, as well as student leaders, to attend equity-centered conferences locally, nationally, and globally.

Key supported conferences include:

- **A2MEND Annual Conference**: Focuses on improving success rates for African American male students in community colleges, providing culturally relevant workshops, policy discussions, and networking opportunities.
- **NCORE (National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education)**: A premier national conference offering in-depth training on social justice, racial equity, and inclusive practices in higher education settings.
- **Women of Color ROAR Conference**: A space to empower and uplift women of color through leadership development, storytelling, and community building in professional and academic settings.
- **Umoja Annual Conference**: Provides culturally relevant strategies for enhancing success among African American community college students through workshops, keynotes, and practitioner networking.
- **EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services) Annual Conference**: Offers professional development on supporting historically underserved student populations, including best practices in counseling and student support services.

- **All African Diaspora Education Summit (ADES) in Ghana**: A global summit that connects educators and students across the African diaspora to examine the historical, cultural, and educational connections between Africa and African-descended communities around the world.

2. Professional development for Mesa College staff that centers equity and provides training that fosters belonging and community, including:

Black Employee Success Team (BEST) is dedicated to fostering a supportive and empowering environment for the African American/Black employees on our campus. We are committed to promoting unity, cultural awareness, and academic success by providing resources, advocacy, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Through collaboration and engagement, we strive to uplift and unite our community, ensuring that every member feels valued, respected, and empowered to achieve their fullest potential. By cultivating this environment, we not only strengthen the bonds among African American and Black employees but also create a visible culture of support that affirms our students and lets them know this community was intentionally built with them in mind.

The National Consortium of College Men of Color (NCCMC) hosts trainings, information sharing sessions, and provides resources that support institutional efforts in improving outcomes for college men of color. This professional development consortium provides community college practitioners with research-based insights on how to improve their practice in serving men of color.

Mesa College New Classified Institute (NCI) focuses on welcoming and integrating classified employees and is designed to immerse participants in the College's culture, foster leadership, and strengthen community bonds across departments. Through monthly sessions during a year-long institute, this program provides participants with valuable networking opportunities and collaborative spaces to help shape Mesa's future from the classified perspective. There are approximately 30 classified employees who participate in NCI every year.

These professional learning opportunities allow participants to deepen their understanding of systemic barriers, share effective equity practices, and build meaningful networks. Employees return with actionable insights to enhance programs and pedagogy, while students gain leadership skills, cultural pride, and a broader perspective on global Black identity and advocacy. The college's investment in conference participation reinforces its commitment to equity, student success, and ongoing institutional transformation.

Q9

Outcomes data for 3 recent academic years:

A) Number of awards by all and by Black/African American

For the recent three academic years (2021-22, 2022- 23, 2023- 24), Mesa College awarded a total of **5,518** certificates and degrees (Associate and Bachelor's). Black/African students were awarded a total of **328** certificates and associate degrees during the same three academic years (**5.9%** of all awards or **328/5518**).

Table A.1. Degrees and Certificates Completed (2021/22 – 2023/24)

Ethnicity	2021-22 Award Count	%	2022-23 Award Count	%	2023-24 Award Count	%	3-Year Total Award Count	%
Black/African American	107	5.8%	121	6.8%	100	5.3%	328	5.9%
Total (All Students)	1858	100.0%	1778	100.0%	1882	100.0%	5518	100.0%

Source: SDCCD Data Mart

B) Number of students who completed an award within a normal time and up to 300% of normal time

Definitions:

- **Normal time:** two years
- **300 percent of normal time:** six years
- **Completed degree and certificate programs:** Among students in first-time cohort, the unduplicated count of students who earned one or more of the following: Chancellor's Office approved certificate, associate degree, and/or CCC baccalaureate degree, and had an enrollment in the cohort year in the district that they earned the award within 2 or 6 years (Metric: 619C).

Table B.1. Degree/Certificate Completion within Normal Time

Cohort	All Students Completed	Denominator	%	Black/African American Students Completed	Denominator	%
2019-20	209	4665	4%	13	227	6%
2020-21	136	3722	4%	<10	---	---
2021-22	172	3817	5%	13	226	6%

Source: CCCCO Data Vista, Metric 619C.

Table B.2. Degree/Certificate Completion within 300% of Normal Time

Cohort	300% Time (6-Year) Completion					
	All Students			Black/African American Students		
	Completed	Denominator	%	Completed	Denominator	%
2015-16	642	6164	10%	29	322	9%
2016-17	672	4536	15%	33	293	11%
2017-18	684	4409	16%	32	302	11%

Source: CCCCO Data Vista, Metric 619C.

C) Student transfer rates for all students and for Black/African American

Definition(s):

- **Transferred to a four-Year college or university within three years:** Among students in first-time cohort who earned 12 units or more at any time and at Mesa College and who exited the community college system in the cohort year listed in the table below, the number of cohort students who enrolled in any four-year postsecondary institution in the subsequent four years.

Table C.1. Student Transfer Rate (Within Three Years)

Cohort	Transfer Rate for 3-Year Cohort					
	All Students			Black/African American Students		
	Completed	Denominator	%	Completed	Denominator	%
2017-18	549	1773	31%	30	106	28%
2018-19	556	1773	31%	32	89	36%
2019-20	668	1945	34%	33	75	44%

Source: CCCCO Data Vista, Metric 620C.

Q10

President's Certification: commitment to address Black and African American student success

SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

Certification Statement of Commitment to Black and African American Student Success

San Diego Mesa College

At San Diego Mesa College, our commitment to becoming the leading college of equity and excellence was adopted as our official vision statement in 2016. Equity-Minded Leadership begins with the recognition that inequities in student outcomes, particularly those affecting Black and African American students, are not the result of individual shortcomings but rather the consequence of longstanding structural barriers. As President, I take personal and institutional responsibility for identifying and dismantling these barriers with courage, care, accountability, and intention.

This commitment is embedded in the core of our institution and guided by two critical frameworks: Mesa2030, our visionary educational and facilities master plan, and our 2022– 2025 Student Equity Plan. These documents provide a shared roadmap for addressing systemic inequities and advancing racial justice through measurable goals, strategic investments, and collective accountability. Together, these efforts ensure Black and African American students can successfully travel their journey, whether they are pursuing a certificate, Associate's Degree, or Bachelor's Degree at Mesa College, aspiring to transfer to a university, gaining skills for a future career, or seeking lifelong learning.

Our foundation for this work has been intentionally built over time through culturally responsive programming, identity-affirming leadership, and inclusive campus-wide initiatives. Programs such as Umoja affirm Black identity and voice while offering critical support for student retention, completion, and transfer. The recent hiring of our first Umoja Counselor Coordinator has expanded our capacity to provide culturally grounded academic and personal guidance. Additionally, the establishment of our A2MEND Student Charter reflects our ongoing commitment to empowering Black male students through mentorship, leadership development, and community engagement.

We also recognize that space matters, not just for academic success, but for healing, reflection, and belonging. The creation of our new Kapwa, Umoja, Puente (KUP) Unity Village is a transformational achievement that centers student voice, community solidarity, and cultural affirmation. This student-designed, community-rooted space provides a home for connection, empowerment, and shared purpose. Our Harambee Project further strengthens this foundation by creating platforms to celebrate Black excellence, amplify student leadership, and cultivate a stronger sense of unity and visibility across campus.

Mesa College's commitment is further reflected through our participation in Black Student Success Week, our long-standing engagement with the California Community College Equity Leadership Alliance, and our deep investment in antiracist professional learning that equips faculty, staff, and administrators to serve all students with care, intentionality, and cultural responsiveness

Equity-minded leadership is leadership for transformation. It challenges the status quo, centers justice, and embeds antiracism in every layer of institutional decision-making. At Mesa College, we rely on disaggregated data to inform our strategies, allocate resources where they are needed most, and hold ourselves accountable for achieving equitable outcomes. We believe that education is the greatest liberator, and that when we create conditions that matter, we not only support students but also reimagine systems and expand opportunities.

Finally, we hold firm to the belief that when you inspect what you expect, you create the opportunity to dig deeper, to reflect, reassess, and realign. This intentional accountability enables us to move beyond surface-level change and achieve more powerful, enduring outcomes rooted in equity and excellence for our Black students.

At San Diego Mesa College, we remain steadfast in this commitment every day, in every space, with humility, boldness, and an unshakable belief in the brilliance, beauty, and boundless potential of our Black community.

Best,

Ashanti Hands
President, San Diego Mesa College

Q11

Describe the campus resources available to promote equity and inclusion for Black and African American students. Include details on academic support programs, cultural centers, mentorship opportunities, student organizations, financial aid initiatives, and any other institutional efforts designed to foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment.

San Diego Mesa College offers a comprehensive ecosystem of academic, cultural, and wellness resources that promote equity and inclusion for Black and African American students.

This includes a wide range of academic support services such as tutoring, embedded academic coaching, summer bridge programs, and dedicated counseling. Our cultural and affinity spaces— including the Pride Center, Family Resource Center, Rising Scholars, Dreamer Resource Center, and Avanza Engagement Center—support students in navigating college life while affirming intersecting identities.

The recently launched **KUP Unity Village** serves as a dedicated space for students in the Kapwa, Umoja, and Puente learning communities, and fosters belonging, cultural pride, and academic success.

Mesa's long-standing **World Arts Collection**, which originated as an African Arts Collection, reinforces the presence and significance of global Black culture across campus, offering students visible connections to heritage, history, and identity.

Programs like Umoja, A2MEND, the Black Student Union, and the Black Studies Department support cultural identity, leadership development, and academic achievement. These are further amplified by the coordinated efforts of the Harambee Protocol, the Black Student Success Workgroup, and the School of Student Success and Equity.

Additionally, Mesa provides access to basic needs resources, mental health services, and personalized outreach. Professional learning through the LOFT ensures that faculty and staff are continuously supported in serving students through equity focused and culturally responsive practices.

Together, these efforts reflect Mesa's deep commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where Black and African American students are seen, supported, and empowered to succeed.

List of Programs dedicated to serving Black and African American students:

> **A2MEND Charter:** A2MEND focuses on the success of Black male students, providing mentorship, academic resources, leadership development, and cultural activities. It aims

to create a supportive environment that promotes achievement and well-being. The program also offers opportunities like study abroad trips to Africa, scholarships, campus visits, and tours of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), to foster institutional change and ensure Black students' success.

Black Student Union (BSU): The BSU is a student-led group advocating for Black students and the Black community. It promotes campus events, cultural activities, and outreach efforts to foster inclusion and pride. BSU members serve as peer leaders, helping to organize programs and engage students through social media, campus visits, and community outreach. The BSU advisor also serves as the Black Studies Department Chair, ensuring strong links between students and college leadership.

Black Studies Department: This department offers courses on Black history, culture, and social issues that help students better understand themselves and the broader world. The curriculum supports Black students' academic success and provides a foundation for leadership and community engagement. The department also hosts events, speakers, and activities to celebrate Black culture and promote community involvement.

Umoja Program: Umoja aims to increase the graduation, transfer, and retention rates of Black students through culturally relevant coursework, mentorship, and community building. The program supports students' academic and personal growth, helping them develop skills and confidence. The recent hiring of a full-time counselor dedicated to Umoja provides ongoing, culturally sensitive support. Data shows Umoja students have higher persistence rates, and the program continues to evaluate its impact.

Black Faculty Counselor Collaborative: Organizes Black Student Counseling Hot Spots that offer dedicated sessions for Black and African American students to meet with counselors for 30-minute counseling sessions in-person or through Zoom, offering guidance tailored to a student's specific needs and academic record.

Black Student Success Workgroup (BSSW): This district-wide group aims to support Black students across San Diego's community colleges. Its mission is to improve educational experiences, build community, and remove barriers to success. Key opportunities include:

- The **Black Student Success Summit**: A gathering for students, staff, and community leaders focused on leadership, identity, and achievement.
- **Black Professionals Day**: An event connecting students with Black professionals for networking and mentorship.
- **Creation of meaningful internship opportunities for Black students**, with successful completion that supports career preparation and hands-on learning.

- **Expansion of on-campus hourly part-time employment for Black students**, reducing the need to work off campus and allowing greater focus on academic goals.
- Opportunities for **Black students to lead college-wide and district-wide events**, fostering leadership, wellness, and academic success.
- **Publication of a semester newsletter,** shared district-wide, that highlights student voices, upcoming events, opportunities, and resources for Black student success.
- **Development of a dedicated Canvas shell for Black students**, providing centralized access to events, support services, scholarships, and community engagement opportunities.

School of Student Success and Equity (SSE): SSE promotes events and programs to support Black and marginalized students, including:

- **Black Student Success Week**: Celebrates community, achievements, and strategies for success.
- **Black Student Meet and Greet**: An event to foster connection, community, and resource sharing.
- The **Rite of Passage Recognition Ceremony**: Honors Black students earning degrees or transferring.
- **Empowering Minds- Black Student Healing Circles:** In partnership between Mental Health Services and Student Success and Equity these Healing Circles are grounded in cultural traditions and collective care, and emphasize open dialogue, emotional wellness, and community resilience.

Black Employee Success Team (BEST): is dedicated to fostering a supportive and empowering environment for the African American/Black employees on our campus. We are committed to promoting unity, cultural awareness, and academic success by providing resources, advocacy, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Through collaboration and engagement, we strive to uplift and unite our community, ensuring that every member feels valued, respected, and empowered to achieve their fullest potential. By cultivating this environment, we not only strengthen the bonds among African American and Black employees but also create a visible culture of support that affirms our students and lets them know this community was intentionally built with them in mind.

Q12

Include any additional information that the governing board should consider in evaluating your institution's readiness to be identified as a Black Serving Institution.

San Diego Mesa College is unequivocally ready to be recognized as a Black Serving Institution. This readiness is reflected in our sustained institutional commitment to equity, our strategic infrastructure, and our deep investment in culturally affirming practices that support Black and African American student success.

San Diego Mesa College recognizes that the designation as a Black Student Serving Institution may not be accompanied by direct funding. In light of this, we are committed to being intentional in leveraging existing structures, systems, and planning processes to sustain and institutionalize this work. Deepening strategic connections between programs, BSI activities will be woven into our core institutional mechanisms, including the annual Program Review process, the upcoming 3-Year Equity Plan (to be completed in Fall 2025), the 5-Year College Strategic Plan (to be completed in 2026), and the Vision Aligned Reporting (VAR) initiative, which emphasizes evaluation, documentation, and impact analysis.

Through the implementation of the Harambee Protocol and establishing the BSI Steering Committee, and integrating Black student success goals across planning, resource allocation, and professional learning, we have taken intentional steps to ensure this work is not siloed or temporary but embedded in the culture and daily operations of the college.

This integrated approach reflects our understanding that sustainability and impact require alignment, coordination, and a strong system of accountability. We are committed to advancing this work within our existing capacities and ensuring it becomes an enduring part of our institutional identity and daily practice.

This application does not capture the full scope of what San Diego Mesa College is doing—and has been doing—for Black student success. We firmly believe that we have long operated in the spirit of a Black Serving Institution, even without formal recognition. Our commitment is embedded in our college's mission to promote access, success, and equity through inclusive and collaborative learning environments. It is also aligned with our vision to be the leading college of equity and excellence, educating students to shape the future.

We are fostering an environment where Black and African American students can be seen, supported, and celebrated in every aspect of college life, from academics and counseling to cultural programming and leadership development. This designation will strengthen our ability to

continue closing equity gaps, build community, and affirm the brilliance and potential of our Black students.

The BSI designation is not the beginning of our journey—it is an affirmation of the work we have long been committed to. We welcome this opportunity to formalize our identity, deepen our impact, and continue building a future where Black student success is recognized, celebrated, and sustained. We view the opportunity to become a Black Serving Institution not simply as a recognition, but as a responsibility, one we are honored to carry forward with purpose, integrity, and care.

Appendix

Pillar	Programs	Activities and Objectives	BSI Goals Supported	Ultimate Outcome
1. Build Campus Infrastructure for Coordination	Institutional Resource Allocation Framework	Budget alignment processes tied to equity outcomes and impact	All Goals	Continuous improvement, aligned equity efforts, resource efficiency
	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	Disaggregated data systems for tracking equity outcomes	All Goals	Continuous improvement, aligned equity efforts, resource efficiency
	BSI Steering Committee / Harambee	Cross-campus coordination framework for aligning Black student success activities	All Goals	Continuous improvement, aligned equity efforts, resource efficiency
	LOFT Professional Development (Equity Pedagogy)	Faculty and staff training hub for inclusive and antiracist teaching	All Goals	Continuous improvement, aligned equity efforts, resource efficiency
2. Target Structural Barriers	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	Disaggregated data systems for tracking equity outcomes	All Goals	Continuous improvement, aligned equity efforts, resource efficiency
	Data Tracking on Drops Before Census	Institutional data infrastructure to track drop patterns and causes	A1	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Childcare Support Programs	On-campus childcare access and financial assistance	E4	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Black Student Meet and Greet	Community-building event programming for cultural connection	A1, E3	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Family Resource Center	Comprehensive support for parenting students including referrals and resources	E4	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Scholarships for Black Students	Centralized scholarship system with equity-focused criteria	E4	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Laptop Lending Program	Tech lending library with intake forms and fulfillment process	A1	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Black Counselor Hot Spots	Pop-up academic planning and support services in affinity spaces	A1, A4	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness

	Wellness Check-in Calls	Personalized outreach system with resource connection	A1	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
	Emergency Grants Program	Online request workflow for rapid distribution of micro-grants	E4	Increased retention, fewer drops, improved financial stability
3. Academic Achievement Initiatives	Student Education Plans (SEPs)	Degree audit tools and counselor systems for tailored student plans	A2, A3	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
	Follow-up System (Flags & Outreach)	Faculty-initiated alert and early intervention platform	A1, E3	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
	CRUISE Summer Bridge Program	Peer navigator infrastructure and first-year experience program coordination	A1, A3	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
	MT2C Embedded Tutoring	Timely, in-class, culturally responsive tutoring infrastructure	A1, E1, E2, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Black Counselor Hot Spots	Pop-up academic planning and support services in affinity spaces	A1, A4	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
	Dedicated Counseling Appointments	Equity-focused academic planning integrated into counseling schedules	A2, A3, A4, E1, E2	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
	Umoja Learning Community	Year-long, culturally grounded cohort model with peer, faculty, and counselor mentorship	A1, A3, E1, E2, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Countdown to Completion Workshops	Graduation, transfer, and certificate readiness workshops	A3	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
4. Foster Belonging	Umoja Learning Community	Year-long, culturally grounded cohort model with peer, faculty, and counselor mentorship	A1, A3, E1, E2, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	LOFT Professional Development (Equity Pedagogy)	Faculty and staff training hub for inclusive and antiracist teaching	All Goals	Continuous improvement, aligned equity efforts, resource efficiency
	CRUISE Summer Bridge Program	Peer navigator infrastructure and first-year experience program coordination	A1, A3	Timely course enrollment, degree progress, and transfer readiness
	Black Employee Success Team (BEST)	Affinity-based employee network with structured engagement and support	E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence

	A2MEND Charter and Activities	Mentorship, leadership development, and transfer preparation for Black male students	A3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Mesa College New Faculty Institute (NFI)	Structured year-long onboarding for equity-minded instructional practice	A1, A3, E1, E2, E3	Improved instructional equity, faculty preparedness, and Black student engagement and success
	Culturally Responsive Mental Health Services	Counselors/Psychologists/Therapists trained in culturally affirming practices	E3, E4	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	MT2C Embedded Tutoring	Timely, in-class, culturally responsive tutoring infrastructure	A1, E1, E2, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Black Studies Department Curriculum	Culturally relevant coursework on Black history, culture, and social issues	A3, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Rite of Passage Graduation	Ceremonial planning infrastructure to affirm Black student achievements	A3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Black Student Union Events	Student-led event coordination and outreach structure	A1, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Black Student Success Week	Institutional event planning and funding for annual equity events	E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
	Open Mic and Hip-Hop Dance Events	Arts-based cultural programming and student engagement	A1, E3	Improved belonging, retention, and persistence
5. Educational Pathways to Equity*	Mesa Impactship Program	Paid internship coordination with mentoring and DEI employer partnerships	Supplemental Goal	Higher career readiness, transfer, and wage attainment
	Career Peer Mentorship	Peer-to-peer advising model with equity training	Supplemental Goal	Higher career readiness, transfer, and wage attainment
	Work-Based Learning (WBL)	Equity-driven employer engagement and experiential learning infrastructure	Supplemental Goal	Higher career readiness, transfer, and wage attainment
	Black Professionals Day	Career networking and cultural identity-based employer engagement	Supplemental Goal	Higher career readiness, transfer, and wage attainment

* While not a pillar of the Strategic Plan for BSI Academic and Academic Equity Goals, San Diego Mesa College is committed to equitable student outcomes, including living-wage employment. The goals and commitments identified here are addressed in the "Building Educational Pathways to Equity" section of the plan.