

Guidelines on Higher Education

Background

1. Fort Lewis College and Southwest Colorado Community College, a division of Pueblo Community College, both post secondary institutions in our area, have a significant impact on the economy, quality-of-life, and quality and availability of the workforce in La Plata County and the region. Fort Lewis College and Southwest Colorado Community College, a division of Pueblo Community College have paid special attention in recent years to the needs of the business community, creating a symbiotic relationship focused on preparing the workforce for the jobs that exist in the marketplace. In recent years, higher education has taken a disproportionate share of budget cuts in comparison to other state agencies.

**The Chamber Supports:**

1. Fort Lewis College receiving a proportionate share of state funding made available to state institutions of higher education in Colorado.
2. The continued expansion of graduate level programming at Fort Lewis College designed to meet market demands and enhance the quality of the local workforce.
3. Fort Lewis College continuing to act as a regional institution for both four year and graduate education, advancing the role of Southwest Colorado Community College, a division of Pueblo Community College, in partnership with all local school districts to respond to the needs of the business community.
4. Continued expansion of Fort Lewis through the development of new and remodeled facilities to facilitate quality instruction and to accommodate student and academic program growth.
5. Measures that promote enhanced technological means for delivery of education to rural areas.
6. Measures that ensure that higher education is affordable and accessible to Colorado residents, particularly residents of Southern Colorado.
7. Measures designed to provide maximum flexibility and reduced bureaucratic regulation.
8. Supporting the Native American Tuition Waiver at Fort Lewis College and fulfilling the Federal mandate to provide higher educational opportunities for Native Americans.

**The Chamber Opposes:**

1. Defunding the public higher education system in Colorado or singling out higher education for disproportionate cuts in comparison to other state agencies.
2. Efforts to politicize higher education funding, governance and delivery.
3. Eliminating or reducing by the federal government or the State Legislature the Tuition Waiver for both resident and non-resident Native American students. I