



FORT LEWIS COLLEGE ECONOMIC IMPACT & ANALYSIS REPORT

Fiscal Year 2012-13

November 2014

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Introduction

The story of Durango, Colorado, and the entire Southwest, is a story of fearless independence and discovery, from the people who first braved the wilderness in this area in search of a better life, to those seeking the adventure and rugged beauty this place offers today. It's a story that also tells of the past, present, and future of Fort Lewis College, southwest Colorado's only four-year public liberal-arts-and-sciences college.

For more than a century, Fort Lewis College (FLC) has served Durango and the region as an educational institution, cultural hub, major employer, and economic driver. The College is shaped by the history of the communities that surround it and, in turn, FLC has become an integral part of southwest Colorado.

The students who choose to attend Fort Lewis College are following in the footsteps of those who came to this area before them. They are independent and eager to find their own way. Just like the early inhabitants of this area worked hard to discover the opportunities available here, Fort Lewis College students work hard to discover their own potential for their futures and become active, informed, and engaged citizens.

Like those pioneers who built the railroads to disburse the wealth and knowledge of the Southwest throughout the nation and the world, Fort Lewis College graduates take what they learn with them wherever they might go, regardless of whether they stay in the Southwest or travel to the other side of the world.

One unique aspect of Fort Lewis College is the institution's century-old commitment to providing educational opportunities to the American Indian and Alaska Native people of this country. The contribution of the American Indians / Alaskan Natives cannot be overstated in making this region so culturally and historically rich. The same can be said for the impact on the College from the thousands of American Indian/ Alaska Native students who have gone to school here.

The importance of education to the betterment of both the individual and society is obvious, and that is particularly true for so many American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Attainment of a college degree is lower than the rest of the nation among many of these communities, and unemployment is higher. At Fort Lewis College, American Indian / Alaska Native students can attend tuition-free, earn a degree, and become the next generation of leaders in their home communities. Many of them do just that.

Though education is Fort Lewis College's primary mission, its benefit to Durango, southwest Colorado, the Four Corners, and beyond goes far past simply awarding degrees. The partnership between the College and the communities it serves is a special one, and one that will hopefully continue and grow for another 100 years.

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I. About Fort Lewis College - FY 2012-13 Snapshot

Location

Fort Lewis College is a selective, public, liberal arts and sciences college offering B.A., B.S., M.A. degrees and special academic programs in 116 areas of study. Fort Lewis College's 247-acre campus is located in Durango, Colorado at the heart of the culturally and environmentally unique Four Corners region of the American southwest. Durango is the economic and social center of the five-county region,¹ which spans an area larger than the state of Connecticut. Durango's population in 2012 was estimated at 16,936, La Plata County's at 51,443, and southwest Colorado's at 91,716.²

Background

Founded in 1911, Fort Lewis College has a well-earned reputation for its blend of small classes, dynamic academic programs, affordable tuition, and a liberal arts and sciences perspective leading to transformative learning experiences that foster entrepreneurship, leadership, creative problem solving, and life-long learning.

Fort Lewis College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The Chemistry Department offers a Bachelor of Science degree that is accredited by the American Chemical Society. The National Association of Schools of Music accredits the Music Department. The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education accredits the Athletic Training Education Program. The Teacher Education Department is accredited by the national Teacher Education Accreditation Council and authorized by the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Higher Education. The college is a member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts colleges.

Fort Lewis College boasts the only accredited engineering program and the only business school accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International in western Colorado. Fort Lewis College is consistently recognized as a *College of Distinction*, a *Forbes Best Western College*, a *Business Insiders Smartest College*, and a

Princeton Review *Best in the West* among its many awards and recognitions.

Physical Setting and Activities

The Fort Lewis College campus sits at 6,872 feet atop a mesa overlooking the lush Animas River Valley and historic downtown Durango with a spectacular view of the San Juan Mountains. Once prized for the silver and mining. The region is now a destination for those seeking the history, rugged beauty, and cultural diversity of the Old West. Durango averages 300 sunny days each year and is close to nearly a thousand miles of mountain-biking trails, the largest wilderness area in the state, two ski resorts, Mesa Verde National Park, and two national monuments. Fort Lewis College Cycling has won 20 national championships in mountain biking (most recently in 2013) and road biking. Fort Lewis College Cycling has finished #1 in the nation in USA Cycling's Division I in 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2011. Fort Lewis College Men's Soccer won NCAA Division II national championships in 2005, 2009 and 2011. Fort Lewis College Women's Basketball was National Runner-up in NCAA Division II.

Student Origins

The students who choose to study at Fort Lewis College are seeking the same things that people who lived in this area more than a century ago were after: an adventure and a path to a better life. The total fall enrollment in FY 2012-13 was 3,748 students with 63 percent Colorado residents and 37 percent non-residents. One quarter (25.3 percent or 949) of Colorado resident students originated from the five-county region of Southwest Colorado. Fort Lewis College has enrollment from all 50 states. The majority of non-resident students attended from New Mexico (394, 10.5 percent), Arizona (309, 8.2 percent), California (116, 3.1 percent), and Alaska (93, 2.5 percent).

Student Characteristics

As a percentage of fall 2012 enrollment, 45.1 percent (1,691) of students were majoring in the natural and

¹Commonly referred to Region 9, which includes Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan counties.

²[U. S. Census, Population and Housing Estimates.](#)

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behavioral sciences, 23.4 percent (877) in the arts, humanities, social sciences; 18.1 percent (678) in the School of Business Administration; 3.7 percent (138) in education; and 13.5 percent (507) had not declared a major.³ In 2012-13, Fort Lewis College provided educational opportunities for 935 students (24.9 percent of total enrollment) who were the first in their families to attend college, thereby fulfilling its core value of service to the region through access to quality education for residents of Southwest Colorado.

Minority Students

Representative of the area in which it resides, Fort Lewis College is one of the most diverse institutions in the state. Minority students comprised 37.8 percent of the total student body in 2012-13. In fall 2012, Fort Lewis College enrolled 790 American Indian/Alaska Native students (21.1 percent of the student body) from 144 federally recognized tribes. Other minority students represented include Hispanic students (9 percent of the student body), African

American students (1 percent), and Asian and Native Hawaiian (less than 1 percent) of the student body.

Area Economy

Base industries that support the region include agribusiness, tourism, regional services (hospitals, airports, regional construction), and retirees. Region 9 includes Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties, a geographic area that encompasses 6,584 square miles, 6.3 percent of the total land area in the State of Colorado (104,247 sq. miles). Of the total, 45 percent are public lands, 38 percent are private lands. Due to the geographic isolation between communities, people in the region often commute long distances to take advantage of better employment opportunities, shopping, or lower real estate prices.

Table 1 below shows that La Plata County, where the college is located, has a lower unemployment rate than Region 9 as a whole and a per capita income rate that is higher.

Table 1⁴ Selected Regional Economic Data

	La Plata County	Region 9¹	Colorado
Land Area	1,670	6,522	104,094 sq/mi
Population, 2010	51,443	91,716	5,042,853
Population Growth, 2010-2013	3.8%	0.48%	4.8%
Unemployment Rate, 2012***	6.6%	8.5%	8.0%
Per Capita Income, 2012***	\$45,476	\$35,844	\$45,775
Poverty Rate, 2008-2012 Estimates	11.1%	14.5%	12.9%
High School Grads, 2010	94.1%	91.2%	89.9%

³ (IR 2012-13 Program Review, 1.1 Fort Lewis College Enrollment Dashboard).

⁴ Data obtained from Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office and Region 9. For

a more in-depth look at issues and economies in Region 9, see www.scan.org.

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II. Societal Contributions

Fort Lewis College’s impact on the southwestern region of Colorado goes beyond employment and expenditures expressed solely in economic terms. The college’s mission as an institution with an education tradition—liberal arts and sciences and an historic mission—is perhaps more important today than ever:

Fort Lewis College offers accessible, high quality, baccalaureate liberal arts & sciences education to a diverse student population, preparing citizens for the common good in an increasingly complex world. (*Fort Lewis College Mission Statement*, updated 2008).

Students come to Fort Lewis College for a 21st-century liberal-arts-and-sciences education at an affordable price, drawn to our academic excellence, student diversity, commitment to Native Americans, and personal attention. As Colorado’s designated public liberal-arts-and-sciences institution, students are prepared to enter the workforce as well rounded global

citizens who are able to think critically, work in teams, communicate effectively, and analyze data. The senior capstone project epitomizes the essence of a liberal-arts-and-sciences-education, engaging students in work that requires critical and analytical skills, teamwork, and effective communication of their final thesis projects to the public.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Labor Market Statistics, Fort Lewis College produces graduates in the highest demand industry sectors for southwestern Colorado. Almost 60 percent of all students major in the STEM and business disciplines. Forty-three percent of all students are Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors with an additional 17 percent majoring in the business disciplines at Fort Lewis College, a career ready focus which is increasingly important to the region and the nation. The college’s enrollment aligns with the workforce needs of Southwestern Colorado communities, as demonstrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Degrees Awarded in Programs Supporting Regional Workforce Needs

Industry Sector by Rank Order for Growth in Western Colorado	2023 Projected Percent Change	FLC Academic Program to Fulfill Workforce Needs	Five Year Total Degrees Awarded
Management of Companies and Enterprises	5.9%	Business Administration	
		Business Administration	568
		Accounting	136
		Marketing	127
Ambulatory Health Care Services	5.7%	Public Health	11*
		Exercise Science - Athletic Training	15
Social Assistance	5.2%	Sociology	170
		Psychology	284
Hospitals	5.1%	Biology	214
		Chemistry	69
Amusement and Recreation Industries	5.0%	Exercise Science	
		Adventure Education	35
		Athletic Training	15
		Exercise Specialist	103
		Business Administration	
		Hospitality and Tourism	73
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4.9%	Natural and Behavioral Sciences	
		Engineering	7***
		Geosciences	79
		Anthropology	88
		Chemistry	69
		Arts and Humanities	
		Art Graphic Design	55

*Two-year total. Public Health started in 2009 with a four-year total enrollment of 196 students.

** Two-year total. Engineering started in 2008 with a five-year total enrollment of 541 students.

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This area's history of brining natural resources out of the ground and distributing that wealth across the country echoes the mission of Fort Lewis College today. Knowledge, experience, and talent are Fort Lewis College's imports and exports, and Fort Lewis College graduates are finding success all over the world.

Fort Lewis College maintains an active role in educating students to become highly qualified teachers to meet area demand in local K-12 schools, as 235

teachers have earned a bachelor's degree over the past five years. In consultation with local education providers, a Master's Degree program in teacher education leadership was developed in 2012. Many of the professionals going through this program will earn a master's degree that will lead to higher pay based on an additional professional degree. In fact teachers with Master's degree earn on average \$10,000 more annually than teachers with bachelor's degrees, providing a win for the classroom and a win for the teacher's earning power⁵

Historic Trust – American Indian / Alaskan Native Education (AI/AN)

Part of what makes the Southwest such a culturally and historically rich and unique place is the contribution of the Native American people who have lived here for centuries. The same thing could be said for the impact that American Indian / Alaskan Native students have had on Fort Lewis College though the years.

Fort Lewis College is one of only two colleges in the nation to offer tuition waivers to qualified American Indian / Alaskan Native students from anywhere in the United States. This historic mission began as part of an agreement with the federal government which transferred 6,200 acres of land to the State of Colorado, so that Fort Lewis College would "be maintained as an institution of learning to which Indian students will be admitted free of tuition and on an equality with white students" in perpetuity (Act of 62st Congress, 1911). Fort Lewis College is situated within 150 miles of 25 Native American Reservations and has been designated as a Native American-Serving, Non-Tribal college by the U.S. Department of Education.

- Fort Lewis College **awards more degrees to American Indian/Alaskan Native students than any other baccalaureate institution** in the nation.
- In 2010, Fort Lewis College awarded **more STEM degrees to American Indian / Alaskan**

Native students than any other baccalaureate institution in the nation.

- Fort Lewis College ranks **fourth in the nation** in the percent of full-time American Indian/Alaskan Native undergraduates enrolled at a non-tribal institution.
- **Native American Center** - Offers academic advising, academic monitoring, referrals for tutoring, assistance with financial aid applications, personal counseling, assistance with internships and graduate school applications, and conducts special workshops. Faculty members from various departments hold office hours in the Native American Center to support students. Computers are available for students to use for research or write papers.
- **Navajo Teacher Outreach Program** – Since 1998, approximately 1,260 Navajo Teachers have become highly qualified to teach on the reservation through a partnership with Fort Lewis College.
- **Native American Indigenous Studies** - Offers an interdisciplinary, comparative, and ultimately transformative approach to the study of the historical, political, social, and on-going experiences of Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Indigenous people both within the United States and throughout the rest of the world.

Supporting the Unique Southwestern Cultural Heritage and the Region

It is essential to Fort Lewis College's mission that it contributes to the cultural diversity and economic development of the Four Corners region. To that end, the college is an active participant in other learning

endeavors as well as social and cultural events in the region. To play an active role in the community, state, and region, the college must ensure that its programs fulfill the needs of the student population

⁵ Schneider, Mark, "Higher Education Pays: The Initial Earning of Graduates from Colorado's

colleges and Universities Working in Colorado," college Measures, March 2013.

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and the region. This rich ethnic and regional heritage is reflected in the make-up of the student body, its special programs, and the college curriculum. These contributions enhance the quality of life in Southwest Colorado and make it a thriving community for all.

- **The Center of Southwest Studies** – Connects individuals and communities with opportunities to explore, study, and experience the Southwest’s dynamic heritage through rotating special exhibits; over 12,000 digital images of artifacts, drawings, maps and photographs; and other archival materials.
- **Life-Long Learning Lecture Series** – Offered to the public in subject areas of local and academic interest with an emphasis on the southwest and local topics, twenty lectures are held throughout the year with approximately 1,500 attendees annually.
- **Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of Southwest Colorado** – Offers consultation services for business start-up and growth. In 2013 the SBDC served 533 clients, created 102 jobs, and started 56 businesses, generating \$3.8 million in capital formation for entrepreneurs in the region. In 2004, the SBDC was honored with the Colorado State Small Business Development Star Award.
- **Student Union Building** – As the largest conference facility in Durango, this resource hosts events, 65 percent of which are for external community members and groups.
- **Downtown Welcome Center** – A collaboration between Fort Lewis College and the Durango Business Improvement District, the City of

Durango, and the Durango Area Tourism Office, the Welcome Center is open seven days per week. Located in Durango’s historic downtown, it gives Fort Lewis College “Main Street” visibility and serves over 5,000 visitors annually.

- **El Centro de Muchos Colores** – Educates about Hispanic culture through food sales, a Christmas reenactment of Las Posadas, Luminaria displays, National Hispanic Heritage Month events, live music performances, guest speakers, Latino movie nights, an in-house cultural library, international maps and flag resources, community outreach with the Durango Latino Education Coalition, and its student-run publication *La Movida*.
- **Continuing Education Program** – Offers a variety of continuing education coursework to community members including teacher license renewal, nonprofit management training, personal enrichment, and professional development.
- **Common Reading Experience** – An annual community reading of a book that invokes exploration of such current and relevant topics, such as the death penalty, environmental sustainability, humanitarian leadership, and community service. The multi-month-long event includes readings, lectures, discussion groups, and K-12 classroom visits by each book’s author, as well as Fort Lewis College coursework centered on the selected reading. Examples of past books include *The Heart and the Fist*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Full Body Burden*, *Three Cups of Tea*, and *The Beast in the Garden*.

Higher Education Increases Earnings

A bachelor’s degree is an excellent investment for most students and is the most common degree awarded in the United States.⁶ According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, bachelor’s degree holders nationwide earn about 65 percent per year more (\$20,000) than high school graduates, and are far less likely to be unemployed.⁷ Fort Lewis College generates economic impact by improving the education and earning capacity of residents in southwest Colorado. Fort Lewis College has one of the lowest ratios of student debt to first-year earning for public four-

year institutions in Colorado, as average debt is about 38 percent of first-year earnings. This means that more earnings are distributed back to the community once a student graduates from Fort Lewis College. Table 3 on the next page shows that in Durango alone there are an estimated 500 Fort Lewis College graduates who have obtained a baccalaureate degree and now have an estimated direct impact of \$18 million in the area.

⁶ [National Center for Education Statistics.](#)

⁷ [Bureau of Labor Statistics.](#)

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Table 3: Contribution of Human Capital

Number of Fort Lewis College graduates in Durango	500
Increased earnings generated per graduate	\$20,000
Known contribution to Durango Human Capital	\$10,000,000
Multiplier	1.8
Estimated Total Impact	\$18,000,000

III. Economic Contributions of Fort Lewis College

Model Overview and Methodology

This section provides information on the economic contributions to the region of all spending associated with Fort Lewis College in Fiscal Year 2012-13. This includes the following: (1) employment, payroll, and expenditures of the faculty and staff; (2) college operations—local purchases of goods and services; (3) capital expenditures on construction and renovations; (4) student expenditures; and (5) spending at special events, such as athletic games. Human capital was addressed in the previous section.

Direct contributions in this report are spending by the college for payroll, capital spending on construction, renovations, maintenance, and purchases of goods and services from local vendors, as well as student and visitor spending. Secondary contributions include *indirect* and *induced* effects. Indirect contributions consist of the additional jobs and income created when Fort Lewis College purchases goods and services from the many diverse businesses that provide immediate support to the college. The indirect effect also includes the income and jobs of businesses that are further down in the local supply chain. Induced contributions consist of income and jobs created throughout the economy when employees of

Fort Lewis College and all businesses that support the college spend their personal incomes on consumer goods, other property, services and taxes in the region.

College Revenue - Operations FY 2012-13

The college revenue snapshot illustrates the various set of resources required to operate a state-supported institution of higher education. Table 4 below, shows the annual operating revenues for fiscal year 2012-13 were \$66.8 million, representing an adjusted total including only the net revenues from tuition and fees after the distribution of financial aid to students. This indicates that Fort Lewis College is one of the major economic enterprises in southwestern Colorado. The products and services that the college purchases from the region range from office supplies to utilities. State funding accounted for \$33.0 million or 50 percent of the adjusted revenue total, which includes the College Opportunity Fund, Fee for Service contracts, and reimbursement for Native American tuition waived. Revenue sources include all of the state and federal funds, auxiliary enterprises, and most of the tuition and fee revenue.

Table 4 - Fort Lewis College Revenue Sources FY 2012-13

	Revenues	Percentage
State of Colorado – Fee for Service Contract	\$5,314,557	7.9
Tuition and Fees*	\$20,210,300	30.2
Sales and Services of Auxiliary Enterprises	\$15,210,055	22.7
Federal Grants and Contracts	\$2,895,214	20.9
State and Local Grants and Contracts	\$14,009,072	1.6
Non-Governmental Grants and Contracts	\$1,101,340	1.6
Federal Pell Grants	\$5,642,678	8.4
Gifts/Donations	\$1,899,483	2.8
State Capital Contributions	\$95,928	0.1
Other Sources	\$498,473	0.7
Total	\$66,877,100	100

Sources: FLC Financial Statements, fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

*Tuition and fees represent net revenues after financial aid.

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Expenditures by Category

Table 5 below reports Fort Lewis College’s total expenditure budget of \$59.4 million for FY 2012-13. These are arranged by functional categories. Employee salaries and student wages (i.e. work study) will be addressed in the other sections related

to student spending. Salaries and benefits represent \$39.4 million or the largest expenditures, with \$14.7 million in direct spending the second largest category from the operational portion of the budget. Total expenditures exclude depreciation.

Table 5- Institutional Expenditures by Natural Category FY 2012-2013

Salaries and Benefits	\$39,831,067	66.9%
Operational Expenditures	\$14,341,700	24.2%
Scholarships and Fellowships	\$1,420,712	2.4%
Student Wages	\$1,386,711	2.3%
Interest on Capital Debt	\$2,499,382	4.2%
Total*	\$59,476,943	100.0%

Sources: FLC Financial Statements, fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

*Total expenditures exclude depreciation.

Salaries and Payroll

Table 6 below shows \$69.5 million total economic impact from the \$39.8 million spent on salaries and benefits: \$29.6 million on salaries and \$10.2 million on benefits paid to faculty and staff. There were 483 full-time-equivalent employees (FTEs)—182 faculty,

301 staff—in FY 2012-13. According to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs estimations, this translates into 671 “jobs. In addition, 95 percent of college employees and 96 percent of wages were located in La Plata County.

Table 6 – Total Cost of Labor

Salaries	Amount	Benefits	Amount
Faculty	\$11,969,568	Retirement	\$6,053,952
Exempt	\$12,803,301	Health Insurance	\$3,559,039
Classified	\$4,486,190	Medicare	\$396,104
Temporary	\$352,746	Workers Comp.	\$162,872
		Unemployment	\$47,295
Subtotal Salaries	\$29,611,805	Subtotal Benefits	\$10,219,262

Total Cost of Labor	\$39,831,067
Regional Payroll	\$38,636,138
Multiplier	1.8
Total Impact	\$69,545,048

Fort Lewis College is the third largest employer in La Plata County, after the Southern Ute Tribe and Mercy Medical Center. Wages paid to work study students

were not included here, as income from it is spent by students on room, board, or personal items and is reflected in the student spending category.

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Operational Expenditures

Payments to vendors for goods and services were estimated at \$14.3 million. These payments represent all expenses of the college excluding salaries, student wages, scholarships, and capital expenditures. Table 7 shows that of this amount, about \$2.9 million (20 percent) is estimated to represent spending in La Plata County, where the college is located, for utilities, equipment, supplies, maintenance, services, and travel. This amount also includes payments to Sodexo, the college’s contracted food service provider, for locally purchased food service items and payroll expenses.

Table 7: Regional Impact of College Operating Spending FY2012-13

Operational Expenditures*	\$14,341,700
Local Spending Rate**	20%
In-Area Purchases and Payments	\$2,905,450
Multiplier	1.8
Estimated Total Impact	\$5,229,810

*Source: Payments to vendors for goods and services were estimated at about \$28.1 million by the Fort Lewis College Budget Office.

** Expenditures by county were estimated by vendor zip codes

Capital Expenditures

Capital expenditures vary annually due to their dependence on the availability of funding for construction projects from the State. For example, Fort Lewis College is currently building a 60,000 GSF Geosciences, Physics, and Engineering building at an estimated costs of \$35.0 million. It will also strive for LEED Gold certification. An opportunity cost of LEED Gold certification is that reductions and greening of the college’s sewer system and electrical/mechanical will reduce the impact on the City of Durango’s utility systems creating greater energy efficiencies. The economic contribution of capital during a building phase for the college has a dramatic impact on expenditures.

During FY 2012-13, funds were spent on various small scale construction projects, parking, technology upgrades, and controlled maintenance. Capital expenditures are typically separated from all of the other college costs.

Table 8 shows that the expenditures associated with capital projects totaled \$2,984,400. Based on the types of projects it is assumed that many of the workers came from the local area and spent their paychecks here.

Table 8: Capital Expenditures FY2012-13

Capital Improvements	\$1,658,000
Multiplier	1.8
Total Impacts	\$2,984,400

Student Spending

Fort Lewis College students add substantial dollars to the local economy. In fact, students provide both long-term stability and short-term, or seasonal, stability, to the local economy, which derives 36 percent of its income from the service industry that feeds tourism.⁸ Seasonal stability occurs because most the students of the college are attending classes and thus present in La Plata County from September through April when tourist activity is relatively low. To calculate student spending, a mean month expenditure⁹ was determined for on-campus and off-campus students for purchases such as room, board, personal expenses, and entertainment. Housing and food/board costs for students living on campus represent payments made to the college and are excluded from the calculations, as are rooming costs by students living at home.

Table 9 shows that Fort Lewis College’s 3,748 degree-seeking students spend an estimated \$29.0 million annually in the Durango community. They generate over \$11.5 million in housing revenue alone and represent approximately 20 percent of the city’s rental housing market.¹⁰ The overall impact of student spending in the region is \$52.3 million.

⁸ State of Colorado Demography Office, data retrieved February 2014.

⁹ Student spending “mean month expenditure”: Housing: \$5,942/year for off campus; food \$2,902/year for off campus; other \$2,860/person.

¹⁰ US Census data shows 7,850 housing units—of which 51 percent are owner-occupied. The means there are 3,850 rental units. If 3 students occupy one unit, 2,350 students would occupy 783 units—20 percent of the total.

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Table 9 - Estimated Student Spending FY 2012-13

Purchases	Off-Campus	On-Campus	Total
Number of Students	2,348	1,400	3,748
Housing	\$11,522,160		\$11,522,160
Food	\$6,813,896		\$6,813,896
Misc	\$6,715,280	\$4,004,000	\$10,719,280
Total	\$25,051,336	\$4,004,000	\$29,055,336
Multiplier			1.8
Overall Impact			\$52,299,605

Event Spending

Fort Lewis College draws numerous individuals to Durango each year through a variety of events, such as athletics, graduation, the Hozhoni Days Pow Wow and Pageant, and Community Concert Hall events. Visitors either participate in these events from outside Durango and purchase food, lodging, and entertainment while staying in the area. These outside dollars are new dollars to the community and increase overall economic activity.

An estimated standard per diem, as defined by the U.S. General Services Administration for the Durango area, is \$95 for lodging (based on two people per room) and \$61 for meals.¹¹ The visitor numbers below reflect total attendance from outside the region. For example, over the past 50 years the college has been the site for the Hozhoni Days Pow Wow, which draws over 2,000 visitors annually. In addition, the Center of Southwest Studies serves as an archive, library and museum promoting preservation

heritage in the Southwest. Researchers from outside the area often use the archival collections, while many other visitors come to see exhibits. Fort Lewis College is an active and athletic campus offering participation in a number of varsity sports, such as soccer, basketball, football, and cycling that compete in NCAA Division II. Between cycling and men's soccer, Skyhawk Athletics boast more than 20 national championships. Annual college events, such as graduation, Family Weekend, and orientation draw family and friends of current and perspective students to the region.

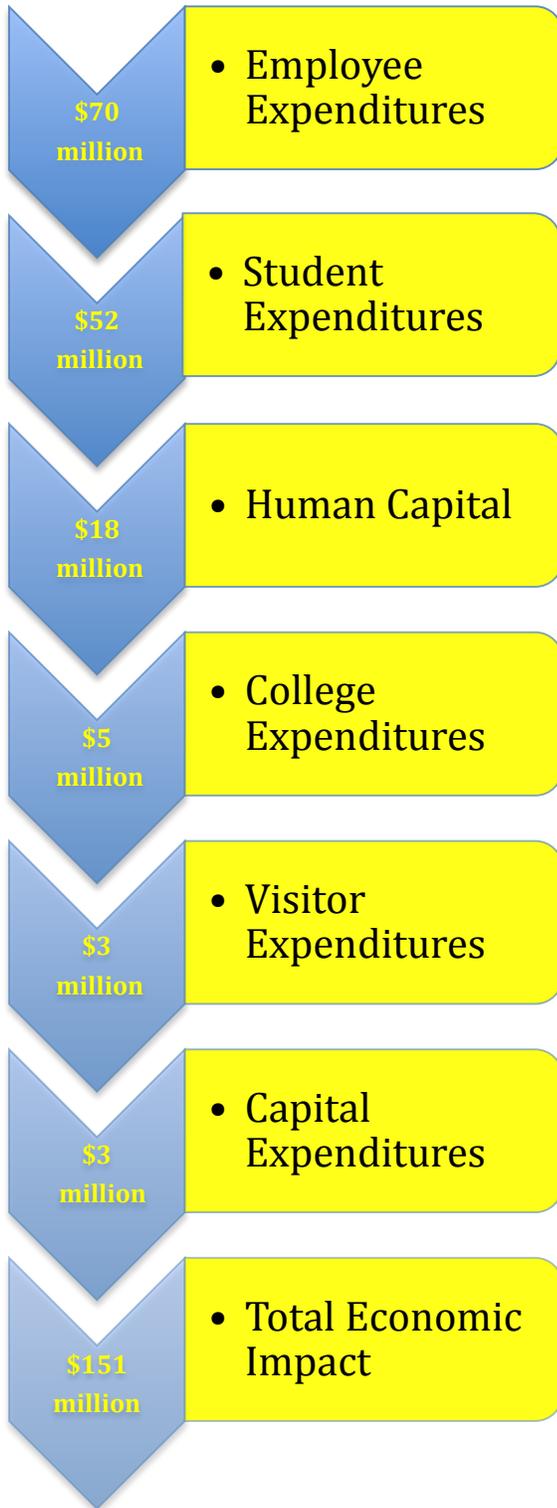
Table 10 on the next page shows that an estimated 13,356 visitors attended events at the college, bringing in an estimated \$1.8 million in direct spending to the region. Combined, the direct and indirect effect of these visitors generated approximately \$3.3 million in economic activity.

Table 10: Visitor Impacts for FY 2012-13

Visitor Group	Visitors	Room \$95/Day	Meals \$61/Day	Total
Athletics	1,560	\$74,100	\$142,740	\$216,840
Admissions Events	2,000	\$95,000	\$183,000	\$278,000
Orientation	1,100	\$52,250	\$100,650	\$152,900
Family Weekend	220	\$10,450	\$20,130	\$30,580
Commencement	1,760	\$83,600	\$161,040	\$244,640
Native American Center	2,500	\$118,750	\$228,750	\$347,500
Community Concert Hall	3,500	\$166,250	\$320,250	\$486,500
Center for Southwest Studies	716	\$34,010	\$65,514	\$99,524
Total	13,356	\$634,410	\$1,222,074	\$1,856,484
Multiplier				1.8
Total Impact				\$3,341,671

¹¹ [GSA FY 2012 Per Diem Rates.](#)

IV. Overall Economic Impact



The graphic to the left shows that by combining the six major expenditures categories, Fort Lewis College contributed over \$151 million into the regional economy in FY 2012-13.

About 45 percent of the FY 2012-13 spending was associated with employees working at Fort Lewis College. Another third of the overall expenditures was associated with students attending Fort Lewis College. The human capital resulting in higher earnings due to increased degree attainment was 11.6 percent of the economic impact to the area. The remaining areas comprise three categories—college operations, capital expenditures, visitor expenditures—10.6 percent of the total impact. To accurately reflect the total economic impact of Fort Lewis College on southwestern Colorado, indirect expenditures must also be considered and discussed.

Multiplier Effect

Multipliers help economists estimate the impact of dollars as they are injected into and circulated through an economy. As this happens, the total size of that economy grows. For example, the ripple effect of the wages paid to Fort Lewis College faculty and staff members is the employees re-spending on housing, food, clothing, and entertainment in the local economy.

Table 11 on the next page shows the range of multipliers used by various colleges and universities in recent economic impact studies. The table suggests that multipliers range between 1.5 – 2.11. Some institutions utilize a variety of multipliers in different expenditure categories. For this study, a single multiplier of 1.8 was selected, as it represents the average (1.86) of those identified above when compared to other studies of institutions of higher education in Colorado. In addition, a report entitled “Southwest Colorado Economic Drivers; Job Generation by Second Homes and Other Economic Drivers in Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, and Montezuma Counties” determined that the multiplier of 1.81 was an accurate reflection of the secondary spending associated with the college’s economic contribution to the region. Using this multiplier, the college’s total contribution to the regional economy is estimated to be \$151 million in 2012-13.

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**Table 11: Output Multipliers Used
in Selected Higher Education
Economic Impact Studies**

Institution	Multiplier
Colorado Mesa University ¹²	1.8
Adams State College ¹³	1.5-1.9
University of Colorado, Denver Anschutz ¹⁴	1.9-2.11
Region 9 (for Fort Lewis College) ¹⁵	1.79 – 1.89
Fort Lewis College ¹⁶	1.8

Conclusion

The vibrancy of Fort Lewis College has increased the impact of the college, economically, socially, and culturally for Southwestern Colorado and its residents. This study estimates that Fort Lewis College’s total economic impact in the region is \$151 million. Estimates show that almost four percent of all jobs in La Plata County are generated by Fort Lewis College spending, when including both direct and secondary (supporting) jobs.¹⁷

This study has used a conservative approach in its calculations and multipliers to estimate the total economic impact of Fort Lewis College, ignoring contributions, such as the value of volunteerism to the region and the many contributions it makes to the societal benefits of academic and cultural events in southwest Colorado. It is likely then that the true economic impact of Fort Lewis College is actually greater than the estimated \$151 million. Fort Lewis College benefits greatly for the historical, cultural, and environmental uniqueness of the region, in which it is located. In turn, the college is an integral partner and valuable contributor to the education, cultural, and economic prosperity of Durango and the surrounding communities that Fort Lewis College serves.

¹² Futhy, Carol, “Colorado Mesa University, Regional Economic Impact 2013.”

¹³ Wisdom and Strum, “Adams State College’s Economic Impact Analysis and Report San Luis Valley and Colorado.” San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, March 2005.

¹⁴ Sammons Consulting, LLC, “Economic Contributions University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical Campus,” University of Colorado Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus, June 2014.

¹⁵ “Southwest Colorado Economic Drivers: Job Generation by Second Homes and Other economic Drivers in Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, and Montezuma Counties” prepared by Region 9 Economic Develop District of Southwest Colorado, Inc., October 2010.

¹⁶ IBID.

¹⁷ [Colorado State Demography Office.](#)