



Presentation to  
**Capital Development Committee**  
 by  
**Fort Lewis College**  
 December 2, 2009

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fort Lewis College is located within the culturally and environmentally unique Four Corners region of the Southwestern United States. In sharp contrast to metropolitan Denver and central Colorado's ski resorts, Western Colorado is a sparsely settled region of small towns (Durango pop. = 15,614), high plains desert, and the only two tribal reservations in the State. Average pay in the region is 24.1% lower than the State; median housing prices are 187% of the State's; and the Consumer Price Index for goods and services is 114. The College plays a major role in stabilizing the local economy outside tourist season, with student spending from September through April.

Growing Fort Lewis College greatly enhances the economic health of Durango and La Plata County. In a recent publication, *Fort Lewis College: A Great Return on Your Investment* it was noted that the College has an impact of over \$104.0 million dollars on the local community each year. The College contributes 8-10% of the personal income, 12.5% to employment, and creates 2,600 jobs annually in the community.

### **Statutory Role and Mission: Section 23-52-101, C.R.S.**

*1) There is hereby established a college at Durango, to be known as Fort Lewis college, which shall be a public liberal arts college, with selective admission standards with a historic and continuing commitment to Native American education. In addition, the college may offer professional programs and a limited number of graduate programs to serve regional needs. The center of southwest studies provides a valuable regional, national, and international resource.*

*(2) (a) Fort Lewis college shall be a regional education provider and shall have two-year authority only for an associate of arts degree in agricultural science.*

*(b) The Colorado commission on higher education shall, in consultation with the board of trustees of Fort Lewis college, establish the criteria for designation as a regional education provider.*

### **Academics**

Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees, FLC offers 96 majors, minors, certificates, and special

academic programs. FLC is an institution with a single focus – undergraduate education: an educational tradition – liberal arts; and a historic mission to provide access to higher education. The faculty (176 full-time, 63 part-time) are highly motivated professionals for whom student success is the highest priority; 62% hold doctoral degrees, 51% are female, average age is 48, and average FLC employment is 8 years.

### **Native American Students**

Fort Lewis College was established under an agreement with the federal government whereby any qualified Native American students would be admitted tuition free. Fort Lewis College is one of two public, non-tribal schools in this category in the country. In the fall of 2009, 758 Native American Students were enrolled at Fort Lewis College under this program, with the tuition being paid by the State of Colorado (consistent with the federal treaty). According to recent reports, Fort Lewis College ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation among institutions of higher education in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded to Native American students<sup>1</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation in the number of Science, Engineering, Technology, and Math (STEM) baccalaureate degrees awarded to Native American students.<sup>2</sup> According to the American Indian Science & Engineering Society, FLC ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation among institutions of higher education in percent of full time Native American undergraduates<sup>3</sup> enrolled in college. Fort Lewis College is the only Native American Serving, Non-Tribal Institution in Colorado.

### **Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC)**

Since 1995, Fort Lewis College has been a member of COPLAC, the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. There are 26 COPLAC institutions, typically no more than one per participating state. These institutions are designated by their states as the public liberal arts institutions.

### **Admissions Standards**

In 2005, at the request of Fort Lewis College, the General Assembly raised the admissions standards from “moderately selective” to “selective”. For the last few years, Fort Lewis College has been gradually increasing the admissions standards for applicants. This increase is an attempt to recognize the types of students the College hopes to attract as Colorado’s public liberal arts institution of higher education.

Other institutions with selective admissions criteria in the State of Colorado include:

- University of Colorado at Boulder
- Colorado State University
- University of Colorado at Denver
- University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
- University of Northern Colorado

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<sup>1</sup> National Science Foundation, <http://webcaspar.nsf.gov>

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> *Winds of Change*, American Indian Science & Engineering Society, 14<sup>th</sup> Annual College Guide, 2007

### **Higher Education in Western Colorado**

Western Colorado has four baccalaureate colleges: Fort Lewis College, Adams State College, Mesa State College, and Western State College. Fort Lewis College is distinguished from these other institutions in the following ways:

- a. Fort Lewis College has selective admissions standards.
- b. Unlike Adams State College and Mesa State College, Fort Lewis College only offers undergraduate degrees. Western State College is currently developing a graduate program.
- c. Fort Lewis College has produced more baccalaureate degrees than any of these other institutions in recent years, and more degrees in the STEM (Science, Technology, Education, and Math) disciplines.

### **Introduction of Projects on Prioritization List**

1. Berndt Hall – Geology/Physics/Engineering
2. Exercise Science/Adventure Education Whalen Gymnasium Renovation/Expansion – South/East

### **Summary of Berndt Hall – Geology/Physics/Engineering Project**

**Fort Lewis College received phase 1 funding (\$3.25 million) for the reconstruction of Berndt Hall.**

This project addresses the continuing need for renovation of science space within Berndt Hall at Fort Lewis College in Durango. The project addresses the space needs of the Physics and Engineering, and Geosciences Departments.

This project is planned as the fourth and final phase of science infrastructure improvements, which began in 1995. A program plan entitled A Program Plan for the Sciences (which was approved by the CCHE in July of 1995) assessed the space needs of all of the Colleges' science programs including Chemistry, Biology/Agriculture/Forestry, Physics/Engineering, and Geosciences. In the 12 years since, two of four proposed projects have been completed and a third will be complete at the end of December.

- 1) A renovation to Berndt Hall completed in the fall of 1997, which replaced a large classroom with two floors of interdisciplinary biology/chemistry laboratories and student/faculty work areas
- 2) A two-story addition to Berndt Hall completed in 2000 provided the Chemistry Department with modern laboratories, supports spaces and offices, and a lecture-style classroom
- 3) A renovation to Berndt Hall which removes an outdated single story portion of the structure and replace it in-place with a modern two-story plus basement facility with laboratories, support spaces, and faculty offices for the Biology, Agriculture and Forestry Departments.

With the third phase of improvements nearly complete, the opportunity arises to now complete the vision of the 1995 program plan by addressing the needs of the

Physic/Engineering and Geosciences Departments. Design funding in the amount of \$3.247 million was secured under the November 2008 Certificate of Participation (COP) issuance, however, construction funding is still required.

The Geosciences/Physics/Engineering Departments are currently occupying antiquated space in Berndt Hall Building Addition No. 2 completed in 1956 and Building Addition No. 3 completed in 1963. The space currently occupied suffers from safety and accessibility deficiencies, limitations of original building ventilation, power, and telecommunications systems, inflexible and outdated laboratory casework and room configurations, and inadequate amounts of both laboratory support and student/faculty support space.

The design solution envisions rebuilding a portion of Berndt Hall, originally constructed in 1968. The project involves the demolition of 16,650 GSF of space in Berndt Hall currently occupied by the Biology, Agriculture, and Forestry Departments. A new 58,414 GSF facility for the Physics/Engineering and Geosciences Departments will be constructed in its place, offering the advantages of modern, energy efficient building technologies and up-to-date instructional configurations. The current space will become available for demolition in January 2010 with the relocation of the Biology, Agriculture, and Forestry Departments to their new space.

The project is envisioned as a four-story structure inclusive of basement. The project will be designed to be compatible with existing surrounding buildings, utilizing sloped roofs, horizontal massing lines, stucco and natural stone materials.

The estimated development project costs are approximately \$34.5 million, with funding in the amount of \$3.247 million already secured. Second phase funding of \$32.2 million will be required to complete the facility. Of this \$32.2 million, \$27.0 million is requested from the State and \$4.2 million will come from Fort Lewis College fundraising efforts.

#### **Fundraising Efforts**

- History – Successful campaigns with Center of Southwest Studies and the Community Concert Hall; approximately \$3.5 million for each facility
- Currently completing the capital campaign for the Union Building. At present, \$4.5 million has been raised, with an addition \$500 thousand needed to meet the stated goal of \$5.0 million.

#### **Other Projects In The Five-Year Plan**

1. Exercise Science/Adventure Education Whalen Gymnasium Expansion North (Phase II)
2. Road Improvements
3. Reed Library Expansion and Renovation
4. Theatre Building