Committee of the Whole

Tuesday, 10.15 am – 12.00 noon
Eagle Gate – Lower Level

WICHE Chair: Chuck Ruch, president, Boise State University
Tuesday, May 20, 2003

10.15 am - 12.00 noon
Eagle Gate – Lower Level

Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Call to Order: Chuck Ruch, chair

Report of the Executive Committee (Tab 1)

- FY 2004 Salary and Benefits
- FY 2004 General Fund Budget
- WICHE Evaluation Report

Report of the Programs and Services Committee (Tab 8)

- FY 2004 Workplan

Report of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee (Tab 9)

- Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities (WCALO) – Phase 2
- Development of Costing Tool for Distance Education and ICTs for Teacher Education and Support in sub-Saharan Africa

- FY 2004 Workplan (Tab 10)

Report on the Status of WICHE’s Office Facility

Meeting Evaluation: A meeting evaluation form will be emailed to all commissioners.

Other Business

Adjournment
The western spirit is, or will yet be
(for no other is, or can be) the true American one.

- Herman Melville, 1855

Spirit of the West
5 Priorities for the Future
The West has always seemed a quintessentially American place: a land of possibility where anyone willing to work hard enough could bootstrap their way to a prosperous, satisfying life. That’s still true, but in 2003, hard work alone won’t cut it. A good education is a necessity, and not just for those who aspire to professional status – but for everyone who’ll be engaged in the future economy of the West. Fortunately, the West has done a better job of building a broad-based, multitiered higher education system than any region in the country. Unfortunately, that system is currently under a triple threat. Its elements: rising demand; a change in the nature of the student population; and constrained finances.

In 1953 the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education was founded to meet a trio of critical goals in the post-war era: to improve access to professional programs; to make such programs affordable; and meet the workforce needs of the West’s burgeoning economy.

Fifty years later, in 2003, the issues of access, affordability, and workforce needs are more important than ever. In the coming year, as WICHE celebrates its first half century, we’ll continue to work toward finding innovative solutions in each of these areas: solutions that recognize the West’s growing population and our economy’s increasing sophistication, as well as the difficult financial times that most of the Western states are currently facing. Our goal is to do our utmost, via our programs and research, to support all of our constituents in our member states – from legislators and decision makers facing a host of tough and tricky decisions to students and families trying to afford the American dream of a good education, now almost a requirement for life in the 21st century.

The 21st century has brought WICHE face to face with two other important higher education priorities: accountability and technology. Both of these are bottom-line issues, their consideration of the utmost importance in these challenging times: accountability, because it is a tool for making sure that every dollar we put into higher education is well-invested; and technology, because it is a means for stretching resources as far as possible.

This year, WICHE will continue to focus on this pair of issues, as well as on its traditional trio of core priorities: higher ed finance, access, and workforce development. In our meetings and conversations with WICHE commissioners and with other constituents, these five have emerged as the most critical issues facing our region today.

While WICHE continues to celebrate its 50th anniversary, honoring each of its states in turn, it is dedicated to finding solutions that satisfy the West’s needs while also taking note of the times. As part of our anniversary observance, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our mission and work plan. Utilizing the input of our WICHE Commission and other constituents, we will sharpen our focus on key regional priorities. Below, we outline the ways in which WICHE is working towards innovative solutions that do just that in five key areas.

**Finance**

Finance is a critical issue to our member states today, as well as to students. In a recession, how can we best fund higher education so that it satisfies the needs of our economy while also serving our students, especially those from low-income families? WICHE has several projects...
that focus on finance issues. “Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy,” is an initiative of the Policy Analysis and Research unit that focuses on aligning policy dealing with financial aid, financing, and appropriations. Funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education, this 18-month project has supported the restructuring of these policies and practices to maximize participation, access, and success for all students.

Contingent upon funding support for a second phase of the “Changing Direction” project, we will extend the scope of this initiative to examine the impact of revenue and expenditure constraints on the future viability of higher education. The project will engage policymakers and higher education leaders in key policy issues around the ability of states to sustain their investment in higher education. This work will assist states in evaluating their individual context for generating and sustaining revenues for higher education and the related effects on issues such as access, delivery, and quality. Target states will develop alternative scenarios that will guide and shape their course of action and help them design a fiscal plan to sustain their investment in higher education through a period of constrained resources and expenditures.

WICHE’s Student Exchange Programs (SEP) provide financial assistance to students in the West and opportunities for resource sharing to the region’s institutions. This year, students and their families saved more than $76 million in reduced tuition costs by participating in the three programs: the Professional Student Exchange Program, the Western Regional Graduate Program and the Western Undergraduate Exchange. Over 18,000 students participated in these programs in 2002-03.

In addition to continuing to administer PSEP, WRGP, and WUE, WICHE’s Programs and Services unit will work with our member states to seek opportunities to broaden student participation in each program. The Professional Student Exchange Program, the oldest of the exchanges, currently enrolls over 700 students in 13 disciplines. In PSEP, students usually pay resident tuition (or reduced tuition in private institutions) and sending states pay an additional “support fee” for each of the professional fields. Thirteen Western states provide support for students in fields including: architecture, dentistry, medicine, graduate library studies, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physician assistant, physical therapy, podiatry, public health, and veterinary medicine. Staff will work with state governing and coordinating boards to explore adding new programs to PSEP.

The Western Regional Graduate Program, which makes high-quality, distinctive graduate programs available to students at resident tuition levels, now includes 134 programs in some 37 institutions in all WICHE states except California. Several new programs were added this year, including two focused on justice and rural development at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks; on domestic violence program management and public policy at the University of Colorado at Denver; on ocean engineering at...
Oregon State University; and on medical informatics and neuroscience at the University of Utah.

More institutions and programs continue to join our Western Undergraduate Exchange, which had a record 17,023 students participating this fall – an increase of more than 1,000 students over last year. We will continue to simplify annual WUE enrollment reporting by providing electronic access for institutions to input data. We’re also developing a regionwide database for states to use as a strategic enrollment and academic planning tool via the WICHE Web site. Staff and a visiting faculty member will conduct a research project to examine the impact of WUE to better understand how institutions, states, and students can continue to use and benefit from this regional program. The project will determine if there are specific state or institutional policies that could foster increased student use of the program and identify ways to support states’ access and enrollment needs.

WCET, the Cooperative advancing the effective use of technology in higher education, is involved in several projects that focus on finance. One current project involves implementing standard analytical principles to assess the costs of higher education’s use of technology; the project was developed by WCET and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

Access

In honor of our 50th anniversary, WICHE is hosting an event in each of its states to commemorate its participation in the commission. Depending on each state’s wishes, we are using these events to provide an overview of higher education in the state and the West, focusing on current challenges – particularly those related to finance and providing access for underserved populations – and offering ways that WICHE can help. We are also seeking constituent advice on how we can bolster the relevancy of our current work. The Programs and Services unit is overseeing these events.

Helping states to expand educational access, a principal reason for the creation of WICHE, remains as one of our core functions. WICHE’s Student Exchange Programs serve a trio of constituents. Through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), and the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), students can enroll in a wide range of programs throughout the West. Institutions participating in the WICHE programs attract exceptional students from the entire Western region and achieve greater cost effectiveness by enrolling students in undersubscribed programs. Another benefit: the programs offer Western states a range of options to help their citizens gain access to a broad array of educational programs and institutions. This year, staff will continue to work with the WICHE commissioners and other constituents to increase our exchange programs’ effectiveness and responsiveness to meeting state and regional needs. Exploring new avenues of institutional and interstate collaborations, including the electronic delivery of academic programs, is another area of focus for the Programs and Services unit.

In partnership with the Northwest Academic Forum, WICHE has launched an innovative new project, NEON (Northwest Educational Outreach Network), working with higher education systems and institutions in nine WICHE states. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) provided a three-year grant to WICHE in October 2002 to support NEON’s efforts to help states utilize distance learning to respond to their unmet educational needs. The Programs and Services unit is partnering with the WCET to develop
the consortium and foster regional academic collaborations. Participating states and higher ed institutions partner with other states to offer programs at a distance to or jointly create new programs. Developing distance-delivered programs in high-need professions – such as a Ph.D. for nursing educators – is a top priority.

WICHE is the secretariat for the Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF), a nine-state group of institutions and state policymakers which fosters regional resource sharing and promotes innovative and collaborative efforts among its member institutions. WICHE works with the forum’s executive committee to plan an annual meeting each spring that is attended by provosts, academic vice presidents, and chief academic officers of the member institutions and states. The forum’s members will continue to identify opportunities for interinstitutional academic collaborations so that states’ fiscal resources can be used more effectively.

The Policy Analysis and Research unit offers analysis, support, and data to constituents on access as well as other issues. One of its major endeavors for 2003: its work with the Pathways to College Network, an alliance of private and corporate foundations, nonprofits, educational institutions, and the U.S. Dept. of Education. Pathways’ goal is to improve access to higher education for disadvantaged students, and to help prepare them to take advantage of what higher education has to offer. The Pathways Network – which includes researchers, policy analysts, educators, K-12 administrators, government, business, foundations, and community organizations – seeks to identify the best ways of putting disadvantaged students on the path to college. Its 16 educational and community organizations are working together to create new programs that open college doors for low-income students. To support this effort, WICHE has developed an online searchable policy inventory, SPIDO (State Policy Inventory Database), and has been assisting with case studies, roundtables, and strategy briefs. Also this year, WICHE is assisting with regional policy forums for Pathways in Pittsburgh and Atlanta. In addition, WICHE oversees the project’s five major components and directs the project’s policy component.

Ensuring the affordability of higher education for all students is central to meeting the West’s current and future access challenges. The “Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy” project, described earlier, examines how to structure financing policy and financial aid to maximize access and participation. Part of this effort involves not just access to higher education but success in persisting to degree completion. Under our Phase 2 proposal, we plan to broaden the scope of the project to also examine retention in higher education and how financial aid and financing policies impact student persistence. Another important addition to the Phase 2 initiative involves looking more closely at two-year institutions, particularly in light of how financing and financial aid policies influence community college students’ participation, access, success or goal attainment.

Mental Health

The WICHE Mental Health Program seeks to enhance the public systems of care for persons with mental illnesses, children with serious emotional disturbances, and their families. The program approaches this mission through partnerships with state mental health authorities, advocacy and consumer groups, federal agencies, and higher education institutions. Activities focus upon direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state mental health agency data analysis, and liaison activities with higher education to enhance workforce development. Current projects include:

- Western States Decision Support Group
- Project to Improve Mental Health Program Performance Measurement
- Public Mental Health Workforce Development Project
A third continuing Policy project related to WICHE’s ongoing efforts to promote access is the Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities (WCALO) - a project funded by a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Advanced Placement Incentive Program. A partnership whose nine members are Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and Utah, WCALO’s goal is to increase the number of low-income and rural students succeeding in accelerated-learning courses. States participate in the consortium in a variety of ways, including: supporting students from low-income families with fee reimbursement for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams; providing professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors; subsidizing online accelerated-learning courses; and participating in the consortium’s network of state education agency and state higher education executive office representatives.

Through our Ford Foundation project, “Expanding Engagement: Public Policy to Meet State and Regional Needs,” we will continue to work with selected states on the collision between demand, access, and financial constraints. These concerns, more than any others, will dominate policymaking in most of our states. The generally weak state economies coupled with increased demand for higher education has made this issue a top priority in our policy support work. Collaborating with states on an individual basis through targeted technical assistance will be a key strategy for this project. We are scheduling state focus groups to bring together a few, carefully selected top-level policymakers in individual states to define the issues. Our priority concern is the one that our states face: maintaining access in a period of constrained resources. Our objective is to create a community of support at the top by assembling such leaders as the governor, speaker of the house, president of the senate, state higher education executive officer, and prominent business or tribal leaders to discuss these challenges and identify potential solutions. We will also utilize several other venues – including state roundtables, a subregional multistate conference, publications, briefing papers, and research reports – to promote discussion and action among policymakers and policy shapers on these issues. We will again involve members of WICHE’s Legislative Advisory Council as we cultivate individual legislators’ engagement early on and work closely with them to involve other lawmakers and policymakers.

The Policy Analysis and Research unit is also working on an important current issue concerning tuition for military personnel, spouses, and dependents. The Dept. of the Army has taken the lead for all branches of the military on a national campaign to encourage states to provide in-state tuition rates at state-supported colleges and universities for military personnel, their spouses, and dependents. A key concern is over “continuity” or continued availability of the in-state rate for spouses and dependents if the enlisted person is reassigned to another state. To help inform this effort among the Western states, WICHE is collecting and analyzing baseline information on policies and practices related to this issue and monitoring activity at the national level as the Army engages the aid of a number of higher education organizations and coordinates within states through civilian aides and state leaders.

As part of Policy’s continuing work on high school graduates, it is shaping a new research initiative to project high school grads by income level, powerfully supplementing its extensive databases on race and ethnicity. By combining income-level and racial/ethnic data

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**CONAHEC**

The Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), based at the University of Arizona, helps institutions and states explore initiatives involving education in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. WICHE was a founding partner of this unique consortium and is represented on its board of directors, which held its first meeting in Guadalajara on March 25, 2003. CONAHEC’s 120 members are drawn from higher education institutions and organizations. Its media are three: conferences that address higher ed issues in North America and foster trilateral collaborations; research papers on cross-border higher ed issues; and its North American higher education portal. Current projects include:

- Ninth North American Higher Education Conference (Spring 2004, in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico) - theme to be determined soon
- North American higher ed portal (http:conahec.org)
- BORDER PACT (U.S.-Mexico) Network
- North American Student Exchange Program
for elementary and secondary school students, WICHE will be able to add another dimension to its projections of high school graduates, providing policymakers and educators with the data they'll need to make informed decisions about the effect of changing demographics on higher education.

Policy is currently seeking funding for another project, involving student mobility. The goal of the project is to build states’ capacity to measure and understand the impact of student mobility and thus more effectively address related public policy issues. The project will examine student mobility at various points in the college experience, including the mobility of recent high school graduates as they enter college, the “swirling effect” produced as college students move in and out of higher education institutions, and the movement of recent college graduates from their institutions to their state of employment. It will analyze mobility data and explore the factors that contribute to students’ decisions. The implications for public policy are many and the issues are varied, including residency requirements, tuition, financial aid, transfer, articulation, financing, determining competency and student outcomes, efficiency, and linkages with K-12.

Access is also an issue with a current CONAHEC (Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration) project, which explores expanding cross-border higher ed access in North America. WICHE and CONAHEC have established a regional tuition bank whereby institutions will make specified educational programs at their institution available to students from other institutions participating in the network; the program is based on multilateral “tuition swaps,” where students pay fees to their home institution and are responsible for their own travel, lodging, and other expenses. As of fall 2002, when the first students embarked on their exchanges, 34 higher education institutions from Canada, the U.S., and Mexico had signed up to participate, offering more than 250 academic programs to prospective students in the three countries. Within the next three years, the exchange program – designed for both undergraduate and graduate students – will involve approximately 90 higher education institutions. In October 2002, CONAHEC’s University of Arizona office also received a three-year implementation grant from FIPSE to substantially increase international exchange opportunities for U.S. students to participate in short-term study programs in Mexico and Canada.

Innovation & Information Technology

WICHE has a number of initiatives focused on innovation and information technology as they relate to higher education. As part of its global outreach, WCET has begun work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to explore issues of use for copyrighted information and other information technology issues related to universities in developing nations. WCET will be a cosponsoring organization for the 2003 International Council of Distance Education conference, a workshop at the Hong Kong Web Symposium, and the International Conference on Open and Online Learning (ICOOL 2003) that is focused on African and Indian Universities.

WCET continues to work with institutions and state agencies as they develop and expand their distance-learning plans. In 2003, it will also host two major professional development events, its 15th annual conference in San Diego, CA, and the Institute for Managing and Developing E-learning (MDE).

Another project, supported by the Hewlett Foundation, is allowing WCET to study new IT developments, such as the policy implications of the open courseware movement. WCET is also continuing its work with Web-based student services for online learners, with support
from its corporate and state members. A third project, “Edutools: Web Resource for Comparisons,” addresses the needs of institutions developing online education by giving administrators a single place to go for product and policy comparisons; the project is supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Another technology-focused project is the American TelEdCommunications Alliance, an initiative created by the four regional higher education compacts (the Midwestern Higher Education Commission, the New England Board of Higher Education, the Southern Regional Education Board, and WICHE) and MiCTA, a nonprofit telecommunications association, to promote the joint procurement of educational telecommunications and advanced technology. As one of the lead organizations, WICHE, via its Programs and Services unit, is working to inform colleges and universities, the K-12 sector, and other nonprofit organizations in the 15 Western states about opportunities to become members and purchase telecommunications services and technology at lower costs, as well as to gain access to information about state-of-the-art telecommunications services. The mix of products and services available for purchase through the alliance/MICTA contracts includes voice, video, and computer network and Internet products; computer hardware and software, power and energy management programs; library equipment; office supplies and equipment; and training. By mid-2003, ATAlliance members will be able to purchase an array of e-learning course management system software via the nationally negotiated contracts, at substantial cost savings to college and universities and K-12 systems.

The Policy unit continues to look at the financing of information technology through its project “Expanding Engagement: Public Policy to Meet State and Regional Needs.” In collaboration with WCET, the Policy unit will convene a regional forum in early October in SaltLake City on the theme “Weathering the Perfect Storm: Information Technology in a Limited-Resource Environment.” In the past five years when state economies were strong, states and their institutions invested heavily in information technology – both in infrastructure and teaching and learning. Now there is little or no money to continue building in this way. The forum will explore the policy issues that legislators and education leaders face when resources are scarce for information technology: meeting the needs of underrepresented and low-income students for postsecondary education, the role of faculty in teaching and learning, and the impact on administrative services. The conference will address a range of questions for these issues: What is the potential for educational telecommunications to increase access for these students? Are we reducing access for the most disenfranchised populations when we cut back on educational telecommunications? How can states and institutions use educational telecommunications more effectively and efficiently for high-demand courses and programs? How do we revise faculty roles without sacrificing quality of instruction and research? Can we increase effectiveness and efficiency by acting strategically regionally and sharing academic resources? Commissioned papers and case studies covering a variety of state strategies reflecting the realities of sharing costs for the continued support of information technology at the state and institutional levels will help set the stage for discussion.

**Workforce & Society**

Many of the economic changes that our region has undergone in the last half century have evolved from innovations and discoveries made at our higher ed institutions. Our Student Exchange Programs offer options to export and import students based on current needs and provide students with access to high-demand, high-cost disciplines, particularly in health care professions, some of which are seriously understaffed in a number of states.

Expanding our programs to include new models of exchange or new academic fields is a goal
we will continue to work on this year. In FY 2003, we worked with states and institutions on identifying emerging workforce needs in high-demand areas and assessing institutional capacity within the region to meet those needs. Through the work of the NEON (Northwest Educational Outreach Network) consortium and other groups, regional meetings will be held to explore how Western states are addressing the nursing shortage, as well as the shortfall of teachers in rural areas, and to develop regional responses to state workforce and professional development needs. This year, we also update our state Workforce Briefs with projections on future workforce needs and economic trends.

WICHE’s Mental Health program will continue its support of the Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG), which enables interstate collaboration for improving data infrastructure and performance measurement in the public mental health systems. The WSDSG will conduct three regional conferences focused upon collaborative activities and professional peer knowledge exchange among state mental health program evaluators and system planners. Major program activities will focus upon the areas of assessing the prevalence of mental illness in the West, workforce development to ensure the deployment of competent mental health professionals, and the development of technical assistance activities in the area of evidence-based practice.

CONAHEC works on workforce issues from a North American perspective. One outcome of its recent Eighth North American Higher Education Conference in Calgary, Alberta, was a document entitled “Priorities for North American Higher Education Collaboration: The Calgary Recommendations,” outlining 10 strategies to help North American higher education institutions work together and form a stronger and more prosperous regional community. The recommendations, which will serve as a platform for future CONAHEC work, include two that are focused on workforce issues, particularly on the issue of professional mobility in North America.

In May of this year CONAHEC’s U.S.-Mexico borderlands network, called BORDER PACT, will award a third round of seed money grants to academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working on projects to improve life in the borderlands. Projects typically focus on the environment, health, immigration, sustainable development, and education.

The Policy Analysis and Research unit has received funding from the Ford Foundation to look at four workforce areas in depth: nursing, information technology, teacher education, and faculty. The grant supports activities such as roundtables, policy forums, and research, as well as the WICHE Fellows and a post-doc WCET position. Briefing papers on selected workforce issues, such as nursing, faculty, and the IT workforce, will be issued as part of this effort. Some of these materials will be produced by WICHE Fellows, who are supported by our Ford Foundation grant. Additionally, a subregional meeting may be held for Western states on workforce issues.

During 2003 - 2004 we'll continue to communicate with several key constituencies to broaden their understanding of WICHE's programs and services. One way we do this is via our Legislative Advisory Committee; the committee will convene its annual meeting in mid-July in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures' annual meeting, to discuss the fiscal challenges states are facing throughout the region and other important higher ed issues. We will continue to collaborate with other higher ed organizations and policy organizations to expand the reach of our work and share resources.

**Accountability**

WICHE works with Western states to help them develop new strategic plans, designed to provide greater accountability in relation to the states’ higher education investments.
Our multiyear project, "Expanding Engagement: Public Policy to Meet State and Regional Needs," supported by the Ford Foundation, provides an opportunity for policymakers, institutional leaders, and others in the higher ed community to better understand the relationships between finance and accountability issues. The recent release of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education's Measuring Up 2002, a state-by-state report card for higher education, will also allow WICHE opportunities to assist policymakers with accountability issues. Through state technical assistance, roundtables, and small, high-level meetings with state leadership, WICHE will support Western states' efforts on a broad range of accountability issues. This year, WICHE is assisting on the California Higher Education Accountability Project as a member of both its analytic team and its advisory group. The project has become the basis for policymaker discussions and a legislative agenda in support of statewide accountability goals and indicators aimed at meeting vital state public policy priorities.

A number of continuing Policy Analysis and Research unit projects relate to accountability and other higher ed issues. Its short report series, Policy Insights, covers a wide range of higher ed topics, including accountability, while the Policy Alert and Stat Alert provide weekly e-mail notices on new policy- and data-related reports. We also publish an annual Tuition and Fees report with detailed data on all public institutions in the West, as well as a regional fact book that provides a wealth of data on access, affordability, finance, faculty, technology and workforce issues.

The Policy unit is also involved in a project with the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the British Council, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The organizations periodically convene an invitational forum to examine where each country is in their efforts to widen participation and how to measure success in doing so.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Innovation &amp; Info-technology</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Exchange Programs</td>
<td>Support of the Northwest</td>
<td>Workforce Briefs (GF)</td>
<td>Regional Factbook Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), Western</td>
<td>Academic Forum regional initiatives (WICHE)</td>
<td>Workforce Briefs (GF)</td>
<td>Indicators for Higher Education (GF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)</td>
<td>NDN, the Northwest Educational Outreach Network (FIPSE)</td>
<td>Building partnerships for competency, public mental health workforce development</td>
<td>Policy/Insights on a range of higher education issues (GF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accelerated Learning Initiatives (U.S. Dept. of Education)</td>
<td>Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications initiatives</td>
<td>Building regional partnerships in the American Telecommunications Alliance (self-funded)</td>
<td>Development of guidelines in distance delivered education for the regional accrediting agencies by WICHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pathways to College Network (CE Fund, James Irvine Foundation, FIPSE, and others)</td>
<td>Project on the collision between demand, access, and financial constraints (Ford)</td>
<td>Building regional participation in the American TELEd Communications Alliance (self-funding)</td>
<td>Project on higher education quality and accountability in a time of stable or declining enrollments (Ford)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-year policy projects on higher ed finance and financial aid (Lumina Foundation)</td>
<td>Project on the education and training of health care professionals (OECD)</td>
<td>North American Higher Education Portal Expansion (FIPSE)</td>
<td>Facilitation of the Western States Decision Support Group for Public Mental Health (SAMHSA)</td>
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<td>Reform assessment improvement in the Western states public mental health programs</td>
<td>Parent and child economic impact in the Western states (OECD)</td>
<td>Financial information technology (Ford)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Innovation &amp; Info-technology</td>
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<td>Expanding the Technology Costing Methodology Project (FIPSE)</td>
<td>PSU Revitalization</td>
<td>Policy Forum on financing Information Technology in a limited resource environment</td>
<td>Developing Student Exchange</td>
<td>Collaboration with NCHEMS, SHEEO and WICHE on database maintenance and exchanges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of the impact of revenue constraints on future viability of Higher Education in the West</td>
<td>Faculty diversity initiatives</td>
<td>Research on student mobility</td>
<td>Program responses to critical workforce shortages</td>
<td>Institute for legislators and trustees on higher education issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Directions—Phase 2 (Lumina)</td>
<td>Migration Patterns of College Students (AR)</td>
<td>Acquiring a new WICHE facility and regional learning center</td>
<td>Expanding professional advisory councils (health professions, veterinary medicine)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Accelerated Learning Initiatives—Phase 2 (US Dept of Ed)</td>
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On the Horizon
(proposals not yet submitted to the commission or past proposals that are being recast)

Finance

Policy work on resident and nonresident tuition policies

An exploratory project on the pros and cons of vastly reducing or eliminating entirely the distinction between resident and nonresident tuition policies. This activity would include discussions and white papers on differentiated policies and how undifferentiated policies would impact tuition levels, financial aid, residency, admissions, and other policies and practices at the state and institutional level. The project might also look at how such policies might influence the missions of public institutions in the state.

Access

Advisory council on K-20 interactions to enhance preparation

Almost every state is talking about improving K-12 and higher education relations. Many have established P-20 councils at the local and state level; others have statewide coalitions to improve communication and collaboration across the educational system. WICHE has a number of initiatives that involve a P-16 or P-20 approach, including our work on Standards for Success and the Pathways to College Network. This new activity would examine the potential role of an advisory group on K-20, similar to the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) or Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF), to assist the commission in looking at the critical linkage points between K-12 and higher education.

Innovation & Info-technology

Expanding NEON

Seek additional external funding to support the Northwest Educational Outreach Network (NEON) in its efforts to help states and institutions to share electronically delivered degree programs. Explore expanding NEON beyond the nine-state NWAF region.

Expanding portal technologies

Building on the experience WICHE has gained in developing CONHEC’s new portal to the Internet, this project would explore whether developing portal capabilities within WICHE could enhance service at cost-effective prices for other applications of service to the West.

XAP

Two options exist: (1) Work with AK, ID, MT, NM, ND, and WY to assess interest in developing Xap Mentor Systems to provide Internet-based information management systems for college-bound students. If two or more states want to proceed, seek external funding. (2) Follow the SREB approach (“Ways In”) of developing specialized community portals for in-demand professions such as teachers and nurses. Licensure requirements, access to programs, courses, degree information, and financial aid assistance could be provided for each area.
On the Horizon (continued)
(proposals not yet submitted to the commission or past proposals that are being recast)

Workforce

Convening regional and subregional forums on emerging workforce needs:

Seek external funding to convene one or more workforce forums to assist states in planning for emerging workforce needs and to discuss the potential of developing multi-institutional approaches to meeting these needs.

Recruiting leaders for Western higher education

A new service to be offered by WICHE, which would provide institutions of higher education within member states with professional search services to help fill senior administrative positions. This service would seek not to replicate the services provided by the bevy of fine search firms operating to serve American higher education today. Rather, this service would focus on providing less expensive searches, focused primarily on filling positions in smaller, more remote colleges and universities.

Assisting states in identifying academic program development needs

Activity in this area could be in conjunction with, or independent of, the regional and subregional forums on workforce needs. Work with state-level academic affairs offices to create an inventory of anticipated new academic programs and explore opportunities for interstate and interinstitutional collaborations for the new programs or in lieu of the new programs.

Accountability

Follow-up initiatives responding to the National Center on Public Policy and Higher Education’s report cards

The release of Measuring Up 2002 has again activated conversation in the states on how well they are providing access in an affordable way. The weakened state economies have created a more difficult, sometimes adversarial, environment for these discussions, forcing states policymakers and leaders to think carefully about their ability to sustain access and affordability goals. This activity would examine ways that the commission and staff could provide technical assistance to states and support an informed, thoughtful dialogue on the likelihood of making progress on Measuring Up goals.
Partner Organizations

WICHE projects are often supported via grants, contracts, or in-kind support from foundations, corporations, institutions, government agencies, and other organizations. Supporting our recent projects

- Association of Governing Boards
- Boston University Medical School
- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Mental Health Institute
- Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions
- Council of State Governments-WEST
- Education Commission of the States
- The Ford Foundation
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- Lumina Foundation for Education
- Andrew Mellon Foundation
- Mexico – ANUIES
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Institutes of Health
- Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Northland Healthcare Alliance (North Dakota)
- Pathways to College Network (with funding from the Daniels Fund, the GE Fund, the James Irvine Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Lucent Technologies Foundation, Lumina Foundation, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education)
- Sloan Foundation
- South Dakota Department of Human Services
- South Dakota Division of Mental Health
- Southwest Counseling Service (Wyoming)
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Education: FIPSE
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
- Wyoming Division of Behavioral Health
The WICHE Commission

WICHE's 45 commissioners are appointed by their governors from among state higher executive officers, college and university presidents, legislators, and business leaders from the 15 Western states. This regional commission provides governance and guidance to WICHE's staff in Boulder, Colorado. Charles Ruch, president of Boise State University, is chair of the WICHE Commission; Don Carlson, state senator, Vancouver, is vice chair.

Alaska
Diane M. Barrans, executive director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Juneau
Johnny Ellis, state senator, Anchorage
Mark Hamilton, president, University of Alaska Statewide System, Fairbanks

Arizona
Linda Blessing, executive director, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix
Lawrence M. Guds, senior regional vice president, University of Phoenix, Phoenix
John Haeger, president, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff

California
Francisco Hernandez, vice chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz
Herbert Medina, associate professor, Mathematics Dept., Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles
Robert Moore, executive director, California Postsecondary Education Commission, Sacramento

Colorado
William F. Byers, consumer and public relations manager, Grand Valley Power, Fruita
Tim Foster, executive director, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Denver
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Cindy Younkin, state representative, Bozeman

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Raymond D. Rawson, state senator, Las Vegas
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Sen. Dede Feldman, Albuquerque
Everett Frost (WICHE chair, 2000), president emeritus and professor emeritus, Anthropology Dept., Eastern New Mexico University, Portales
Patricia Anaya Sullivan, assistant director, WERC, Las Cruces

North Dakota
Larry Isaak, chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck
Richard Kunkel, vice president, North Dakota Board of Higher Education, Devils Lake
David Nething, state senator, Jamestown

Oregon
Ryan Deckert, state senator, Portland
Camille Preus-Braly, commissioner, Oregon Dept. of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Salem
Diane Vines (WICHE chair, 1997), vice chancellor for corporate and public affairs and board secretary, Oregon University System, Portland

South Dakota
Robert Burns, distinguished professor, Political Science Dept., South Dakota State University, Brookings
James O. Hansen, chair, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre
Robert T. (Ted) Perry (WICHE chair, 2002), executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

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David Gladwell, state senator, North Ogden
E. George Mantes, member, Utah State Board of Regents, Salt Lake City

Washington
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Marcus S. Gaspard, executive director, Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, Olympia
Debora Merle, policy advisor for higher education, Washington Office of the Governor, Olympia

Wyoming
John Barrasso, state senator and orthopedic surgeon, Casper
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Jenne Lee Twiford, principal, Douglas Middle School, Douglas
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The WICHE Web site [www.wiche.edu](http://www.wiche.edu) includes a staff directory with phone numbers and email addresses.