Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Monday, May 21, 2007 – 3.30 - 5.00 pm
Continental Divide
Monday, May 21, 2007

3.30 - 5.00 pm
Continental Divide

Programs and Services Committee

Carl Shaff (NV), chair
Marshall Lind (AK), vice chair
Cam Preus-Braly (OR), ex officio
Roy Ogawa (HI), ex officio

Committee vice chair (AK)
John Haeger (AZ)
Position vacant (CA)
William Hybl (CO)
Helene Sokugawa (HI)
Robert Kustra (ID)
Don Harrington (MT)
Committee chair (NV)
Dede Feldman (NM)
Eddie Dunn (ND)
James Sager (OR)
James Hansen (SD)
Peter C. Knudson (UT)
Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney (WA)
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Carl Shaff, committee chair
Staff: Jere Mock, senior program director, Programs and Services
Terese Rainwater, program director, State Scholars Initiative
Margo Schultz, program coordinator, Student Exchange Programs

**Action Item** Approval of the Programs and Services Committee
ing meeting minutes of November 13, 2007  8-3

**Action Item** Approval of the FY 2008 Programs and Services
workplan  8-8

**Action Item** Approval of PSEP restructuring  8-10

Information Items:

Student Exchange Program updates  8-19
Report on the State Scholars Initiative  8-22
The American TeleEdCommunications Alliance  8-26
Other Programs and Services updates  8-27
Other business and adjournment
ACTION ITEM
Programs and Services Committee Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2006

Committee Members Present
Carl Shaff (NV), chair
Marshall Lind (AK), vice chair
David Nething (ND), ex officio
Cam Preus-Braly (OR), ex officio
William Hybl (CO)
Helene Sokugawa (HI)
Sen. Dan Harrington (MT)
Sen. Dede Feldman (NM)
James Hansen (SD)
Peter Knudson (UT)
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Committee Members Absent
John Haeger (AZ)
Robert Kustra (ID)
Eddie Dunn (ND)
James Sager (OR)
Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney (WA)

Other Commissioners Present
Diane Barrans (AK)
Joel Sideman (AZ)
William Byers (CO)
Arthur Vailas (ID)
Ed Jasmin (MT)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)

Staff Present
Jere Mock, senior program director, Programs and Services
Jeanette Porter, administrative assistant, Mental Health Program
Terese Rainwater, program director, State Scholars Initiative
Margo Schultz, program coordinator, Student Exchange Programs
Susan Vermeer Lopez, project coordinator, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, Mental Health Program director

Guests Present
David Iha, certifying officer, Hawaii
Lisa Shipley, certifying officer, Wyoming

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Minutes of the May 22-23, 2006, Committee Meeting

Chair Carl Shaff called the meeting to order and introduced Commissioner Marshall Lind, the new vice chair of the Programs and Services Committee. He also introduced new committee members Helene Sokugawa and Sen. Dan Harrington.

COMMISSIONERS HANSEN AND BUCHANAN MOVED AND SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 22-23, 2006, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEM
Student Exchange Programs Update

Chair Shaff reviewed the agenda and introduced Jere Mock, senior program director of Programs and Services, who provided an overview of the Student Exchange Program (SEP). Mock explained that since the May 2006 commission meeting, staff has focused on increasing operating efficiencies, primarily via the development of new databases to administer and promote the programs. Mock also reported that Programs and Services and the Mental Health staff members will work with the commissioners to form a regional health care advisory council. The advisory council’s goal will be to identify emerging workforce needs throughout the region and across a range of health care professions; and to identify effective models of health care education and delivery throughout the rural West. Funding from federal agencies or foundations will be sought to cover the costs of convening the advisory council. The feasibility of adding a loan repayment component to PSEP, as an incentive for Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) graduates in the health fields to serve in the rural and underserved areas, will also be explored.
Margo Schultz, Student Exchange Program coordinator, gave an update on the three programs. The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is the largest, with over 21,000 students this year, an increase in enrollment of 5 percent over last year. WUE students pay 150 percent of resident tuition, and there are 133 participating institutions. She reported that WUE students saved an estimated $129 million for the 2006 academic year.

Schultz reported that two California State University (CSU) institutions have recently joined WUE – CSU Dominguez Hills and CSU Bakersfield – bringing the total of WUE institutions in that state to five. CSU Northridge and CSU Long Beach have also expressed interest. The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) and Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins have rejoined WUE and will begin accepting new WUE students in fall 2007.

Schultz provided more information regarding the new online databases for WUE and the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP). Commissioner Barrans wanted to know what control mechanisms were in place to ensure that institutions update their profiles and program listings on a regular basis so that students and parents who used the site would have a positive experience. Schultz said staff will contact institutions each summer to update their listings. All updates entered by institutional representatives are reviewed and approved by WICHE staff before they are posted to the site. The database also has improved reporting features that allow faster reporting and more detailed analysis of program usage, so that states can track trends for both incoming WUE students and their students who use WUE to study out of state.

The second program, Schultz reported, is the Western Regional Graduate Program, which had 450 students enrolled in fall 2006, a slight increase from 2005. This program is made up of 179 distinctive, high-quality programs at 39 institutions in the West. Many of the programs added in the past couple of years are interdisciplinary and dual-degree programs.

Schultz explained that the third program, the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), includes 14 fields, primarily in the health professions, with 744 students enrolled as of fall 2006. States have invested $13.4 million this year to provide access for their residents to programs not available in their states. The fields with the largest PSEP enrollments are veterinary medicine (207 students), optometry (146 students), and dentistry (144 students). Arizona’s $600,000 increase in PSEP funding contributed largely to the rise in student numbers: almost 70 more students were supported, compared to 2005. Schultz mentioned that staff is working with PSEP states to update their alumni practice location statistics by early 2007, so that policymakers will have a better idea of how many students are returning to their home state to practice.

Attracting more WICHE PSEP graduates into underserved areas throughout the West was a predominant theme at the May 2006 Programs and Services Committee meeting. This will be an important focus for the new health care advisory council. Schultz cited a report which found that the lack of spousal employment opportunities, low compensation, and lack of cultural and educational activities in rural areas were among the primary barriers to recruitment of physicians and registered nurses in underserved areas.

WICHE staff will look to the guidance of the new health care advisory council on how to develop “grow your own” pipeline programs, creating clinical rotations within the Western states, and working with institutions to develop curriculum that addresses health care practice in rural and underserved areas. Depending on funding, WICHE hopes to convene the first meeting by summer 2007. WICHE staff will draft a background paper and pursue funding sources to cover the costs associated with the advisory committee functions.

Commissioner Barrans suggested that a background paper may help the council frame the discussion. She stated that in Alaska there must be careful consideration in identifying communities that can be helped in order to set reasonable expectations about what can be accomplished by the initiative. She suggested that the background paper provide realistic expectations and delineate where and how health care practice might be impacted. She also asked if the council would address long-term versus short-term workforce needs or chronic workforce needs. In Alaska a short-term need often will emerge that may not require a large number of practitioners per year. It would be helpful if the advisory committee could address those varying needs.

Commissioner Lind stated that he had a name he wanted to submit for nomination to the council. Schultz said she will be canvassing the commissioners to get their recommendations for the advisory council. Chair Shaff pointed out that the draft list of advisory council members is confidential and designed as a starting point for commissioners to build upon. He suggested that a manageable size for the advisory council would be around 50 members.
INFORMATION ITEM
Restructuring of the Professional Student Exchange Program’s
Group A and Group B Fields

Schultz asked the committee members to consider inactivating several low-use “Group B” fields in WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program and to consider the feasibility of elevating the field of pharmacy to “Group A” status. She explained the differences between PSEP’s Group A and Group B fields. Group A is composed of fields in which access is more competitive and where there are significant workforce shortages, such as dentistry, occupational therapy, allopathic medicine, osteopathic medicine, optometry, physical therapy, and veterinary medicine. The students in these programs pay resident tuition at public institutions. In most cases the support fee is high enough to cover the cooperating school’s resident/nonresident tuition differential, so that enrolling institutions have an incentive to admit WICHE students.

Historically, there are fewer access issues and less workforce pressure for fields in the Group B category, which includes architecture, graduate library studies, graduate nursing, pharmacy, and public health. The support fees are credited to the nonresident tuition or the full private tuition, and the student pays the balance. Over the past 10 years, enrollments in the Group B fields have been very low, except in pharmacy.

Staff recommends that commissioners consider recategorization of pharmacy to Group A status. If this is done, the support fee would have to be increased by approximately $6,000 over the AY 2006 support fee rate, bringing the total support fee for pharmacy to approximately $12,500 to cover the tuition differentials at the majority of WICHE’s participating schools in public institutions.

Schultz noted that the University of Southern Nevada’s three-year “PharmD” program is now accredited, and that there are plans to open two new pharmacy schools in the next five years, if they are funded. They include the University of Hawaii at Hilo, which plans to admit students as early as fall 2007, and the University of Nevada Reno/University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Pharmacy, which could admit students as early as fall 2009, if funded.

Commissioner Barrans stated that if Nevada and Hawaii intend to have all of their need absorbed by the new pharmacy schools in their own states, eventually Alaska may be the only state enrolling pharmacy students through PSEP. Shaff responded that Nevada will continue to send students to other states’ programs until its planned public pharmacy program is fully accredited, which will take four years.

Mock said that Commissioner Jane Nichols, who could not attend the committee meeting, supported the shift of pharmacy to Group A, and she suggested that, if possible, staff consider phasing in the support fee increase.

Chair Shaff responded that the possibility of moving pharmacy to Group A was touched on by the committee back at the May 2006 meeting and suggested that a final decision be delayed until the May 2007, to allow time for further discussion and to let commissioners check the impact on their state budgets.

Schultz summarized the options: maintain the status quo, since at least two new public pharmacy schools are under consideration; or reclassify pharmacy to Group A and increase its support fee as soon as possible. Mock said that commissioners representing the states that currently support students in pharmacy through PSEP will continue to be very involved in conversations regarding this proposed change.

Schultz continued the overview of possibilities for the other Group B fields. Wyoming is the only state supporting students in architecture, and no students have been supported recently. Currently, there are 11 master’s programs in region. Staff recommends inactivating architecture in PSEP and inviting cooperating institutions with distinctive programs to join WRGP.

Staff also recommends eliminating graduate library studies from PSEP and inviting cooperating institutions with distinctive programs to join WRGP. Schultz reported that only two states support students in this field: New Mexico and Wyoming, with 1.5 students from New Mexico, and none, currently, from Wyoming. Commissioner Sullivan reported that last spring, New Mexico eliminated graduate library studies as one of its funded programs and will focus on dental and veterinary medicine.

Schultz said the University of Arizona’s president has said that its graduate library studies program should become self-supported in the very near future. Given the high demand for seats, it is unlikely that the University of Arizona would
discount its seats at the WRGP resident rate. The program has generously charged PSEP students only resident tuition and has absorbed a significant loss in the tuition differential but will not continue to do so into the future.

Commissioner Buchanan responded that the three Wyoming commissioners have discussed this and support moving three programs (architecture, graduate library studies, and graduate nursing) to WRGP.

Concerning public health, Schultz reported that there is one student from Montana in the program, and she will graduate in May 2006. There are 14 master’s programs currently available through PSEP, and one distinctive, border-focused program joined WRGP in spring 2006. Schultz suggested that commissioners consider lifting the “distinctiveness” criteria for WRGP programs in all health-related fields; inactivating public health in PSEP; and then inviting all cooperating PSEP public health programs to join WRGP.

WICHE’s support fee for graduate nursing is very low, and no graduate nursing students have been supported through PSEP since the field was reactivated during the 2004 academic year. Schultz said students are likely finding better arrangements through federally funded programs, so there is no reason for them to enroll through PSEP.

Commissioner Sokugawa stated that the University of Hawaii has a doctorate program in nursing that currently has low enrollments, and she asked if the program would qualify for WRGP. Schultz responded that if the WRGP program distinctiveness requirement is lifted for the health fields, WICHE would welcome the program’s nomination.

Mock said that staff will submit an action item and propose the discussed changes to the Group B fields at the May 2007 commission meeting. Chair Shaff asked for the consensus of the committee to take action on the staff recommendation at the May meeting, and the committee supported the recommendation.

INFORMATION ITEM

The State Scholars Initiative

Mock introduced Terese Rainwater, program director for the State Scholars Initiative (SSI) program; Rainwater joined the WICHE staff in December 2005 to manage the SSI national program. In October 2005, WICHE received a $5.5 million grant to serve as program administrator of the SSI, the initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. Rainwater said that the goal of the State Scholars Initiative is to increase the number of high school students taking a rigorous course of study, and the centerpiece of SSI is the involvement of business leaders. State Scholars programs bring business leaders into classrooms to encourage and motivate middle and high school students to enroll in and complete a rigorous course of study to prepare them for college and work. State Scholars is targeted at the middle 50 percent of students, those who do not see themselves as being able to complete rigorous courses. The initiative provides positive reinforcement for these students through a variety of incentives. Twenty-four states have received or are receiving federal funding. Of these 24 states, 19 are actively participating, receiving funds and/or operating SSI projects. Two WICHE states that have had successful years are Arizona, which now presents Arizona Academic Scholars to one-third of all high school students in the state, and Utah, which had a successful statewide launch and exceptional media coverage.

Rainwater reported that in September, WICHE completed year one of the SSI grant. It has received a continuation funding award of $600,000 for year two. Additional funding of $600,000 was granted for a third year of program administration. WICHE and SSI were selected to receive an additional $517,000 for program administration, technical assistance, and evaluation from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The total funding for State Scholars is now $6.6 million, of which $2.1 million will fund WICHE’s administrative costs and $4.5 million will support up to four new and 15 ongoing state efforts.

Commissioner Barrans said that in Alaska, they are faced with the fact that there are schools with only one teacher, and they cannot provide the full SSI curriculum; therefore, they do not qualify for SSI. She asked if the staff has any suggestions to help rural and frontier states to deliver the math and sciences courses.

Rainwater explained that different solutions have been tried in SSI rural school districts. For example, some school districts have joined together to support and share a teacher in a given subject area. This was done with success in rural counties in Oklahoma, in order to provide physics courses. In Connecticut a model math academy has been developed that
provides summer tutorials in one school district. In another Connecticut school district, a “just-in-time” math lab was developed so students can get help as they need it. In the coming year, WICHE hopes to work with states and state SSI evaluators to identify and share promising practices.

Commissioner Lind, an SSI Advisory Board member, asked Terese to send the results of the first-year evaluation to all WICHE commissioners. Commissioner Sullivan noted that in New Mexico, if high school students take three years of a foreign language, they receive two years of college credit. Commissioner Hybl said that the U.S. Department of Education is very pleased with WICHE’s administration of the program.

INFORMATION ITEM
WICHE Internet Course Exchange

Mock introduced Susan Vermeer Lopez, who joined the WICHE staff in August 2007 as a project coordinator. Vermeer Lopez discussed the development of the WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE). The mission of WICHE ICE is to create a program for students to access high-quality Internet-delivered courses and programs through a model that supports faculty and participating institutions across the WICHE region and beyond. She outlined the guiding principles of the program: the needs of students are the central consideration for the development of WICHE ICE; all institutions must be regionally accredited; and existing institutional policies will be used to complete WICHE ICE transactions as often as possible. WICHE ICE currently has nine dues-paying member institutions and is governed by the WICHE ICE Steering Board, composed of representatives from each member institution. The steering board’s executive committee includes: Tom Miller, chair, University of Alaska Anchorage; Maggi Murdock, vice chair, University of Wyoming; and Joe Fedock, liaison to the Northwest Academic Forum, Montana State University, Bozeman.

In order to support WICHE ICE, WICHE will maintain and coordinate course-sharing lists, assist institutions with resources and technical assistance, increase participation, and serve as secretariat to the WICHE ICE Steering Board.

There are currently two collaborative partnerships in WICHE ICE: a supply chain management graduate certificate and the Nursing Education Exchange (NEXus) for doctoral-level nursing students. Two collaborative partnerships in progress are in the areas of general education and rural social work education (a graduate certificate). Other disciplines being considered for future collaborative partnerships include engineering, public health, teacher education, and other areas, as determined by the steering board.

WICHE ICE works with a “course exchange” model, meaning that partnering institutions accept each WICHE ICE course as if it was their own. Each course carries the student’s home institution course number, and the institution offering the course sets the tuition and fees. A database (www.wiche-ice.org) helps institutions share information to facilitate the course exchange. Member institutions pay $3,000 per year to join WICHE ICE and an additional $1,000 for each additional course exchange. The benefits of WICHE ICE to students and institutions include increased access to courses for students; increased faculty interaction and collaboration; and improved collaboration between institutions, an aid in responding to workforce demands.

Chair Shaff thanked the staff for their presentations. He asked the committee to review the list of prospective advisory committee members and contact Jere Mock or Margo Schultz with recommended names. He said the decision on the staff recommendation regarding changes to Group A and Group B fields will be discussed in May at the Montana meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.
## Existing Activities

### (GF=general fund)

### Finance
- Annual Tuition and fees report (GF)
- Multiyear policy projects on higher ed finance and financial aid (Lumina Foundation)
- Performance measurement improvement in the Western states public mental health programs
- Property insurance and risk consortium (self-funding)
- Legislative Advisory Committee
- Workshop for legislative staff (Lumina)
- Technical assistance workshop (Lumina)

### Access & Success
- Student Exchange Programs: Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)
- State Scholars Initiative (OVAE)
- Pathways to College Network (GE Fund, James Irvine Foundation, FIPSE and others)
- Escalating Engagement (Ford)
- Multiyear policy projects on higher ed finance and financial aid (Lumina Foundation)
- High school graduates projections by state, race/ethnicity, and income
- Children’s mental health improvement projects in Wyoming and South Dakota

### Innovation & Info-technology
- Support of the NorthWest Academic Forum’s regional initiatives (NWAF)
- Internet Course Exchange (ICE)
- Developing best practices in online student services and audits of institutions’ online student services via CENTSS, the Center for Transforming Student Services (WCET)
- EduTools provides comparisons of electronic learning software and online course evaluations (WCET)
- WCET annual conference (WCET)

### Workforce
- Escalating Engagement (Ford)
- Developing Student Exchange Program responses to critical workforce shortages especially in the West’s rural and underserved areas
- Mental health student exchange
- Workforce Briefs (GF)
- Building partnerships for competency; public mental health workforce development
- State technical assistance with Alaska, Oregon, North Dakota, and Washington (Ford)

### Accountability
- Regional benchmarks (GF)
- Electronic Regional Fact Book: Policy Indicators for Higher Education (GF)
- Policy Insights on a range of higher education issues (GF)
- Facilitation of the Western States Decision Support Group for Public Mental Health (SAMHSA)
- Electronic alerts and clearinghouse (GF)
- SPIBD (GF)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Innovation &amp; Info-technology</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residency policies</td>
<td>Methodological review of Projections of High School Graduates (Spencer)</td>
<td>Quality measures in e-learning (WCET)</td>
<td>Expanding professional advisory councils (health professions)</td>
<td>Collaboration with NCHEMS, SHEEO and WICHE on database maintenance and exchanges</td>
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<td>Student mobility</td>
<td>Good practice for the creation and use of open educational resources material (WCET)</td>
<td>Regional social work consortium (seeking funding)</td>
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<td>Portable financial aid</td>
<td>EduTools sustainability model (WCET)</td>
<td>Development of an R-34 research proposal focused on evidence-based practice in rural mental health with the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center</td>
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<td>Implementation of WCET strategic planning/branding outcomes (WCET)</td>
<td>Regional rural health care advisory council and new initiatives</td>
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<td>Implementation of dynamic, integrated web and communication tools (WCET)</td>
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<td>Expand EduTools comparisons of policies (WCET)</td>
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<td>Acquiring a regional learning center for SHEPC</td>
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<tr>
<th>New Directions</th>
<th>On the Horizon</th>
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<tr>
<td>(proposals have been approved by the commission)</td>
<td>(proposals not yet submitted to the commission or past proposals that are being recast)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Access</td>
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<td>Productivity as a strategy to address cost and affordability concerns</td>
<td>New traditional students</td>
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<td>Assisting states and institutions in planning for new types of students (WCET)</td>
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<td>Projecting financial aid program funding to increase access for low-income students</td>
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<td>Adult degree completion</td>
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<td>College access marketing</td>
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<td>Expand access for minority-serving institutions to cyberinfrastructure networks and applications (Science, Technology, and Innovation — WCET)</td>
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<td>Expand availability and use of digital arts and humanities</td>
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ACTION ITEM
Approval of PSEP Restructuring

WICHE staff recommends the commission inactivate several low-use fields in WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and raise the classification and the support fee of its pharmacy program.

Background
PSEP fields are currently divided into two groups. Group A includes those PSEP fields in which WICHE students would have a difficult time gaining access to public professional schools without PSEP. The nine Group A fields include: dentistry, medicine, occupational therapy, osteopathic medicine, optometry, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine. Ninety-five percent of PSEP students are enrolled in Group A fields.

Group B includes professional fields in which access is not as significant a problem but where states wish to offset high nonresident and private institution tuition charges for their residents. The five Group B fields are: architecture, graduate library studies, graduate nursing, pharmacy, and public health. Forty-one PSEP students (5 percent) are enrolled in Group B fields.

Students enrolled in Group A fields receive higher support fees than students enrolled in Group B fields because access to the Group A fields is more difficult. Admission to these professional schools is more competitive, and there are significant workforce shortages related to them.

A “support fee” is financial assistance appropriated from the student’s home state that reduces the amount of tuition the student must pay. For the 2006 academic year, WICHE states invested over $13.4 million in support fees to educate 743 PSEP students, primarily in the health professions. Support fee levels are determined by profession. WICHE aims to keep support fee levels as affordable as possible to the state but also to provide a small incentive to the admitting schools by matching or slightly surpassing the resident/nonresident tuition differential of WICHE’s public cooperating schools. The fees for Group A fields range from $9,200 (physician assistant) to $25,600 (allopathic medicine). Group B fields receive lower support fees because admission to the schools is less competitive and there is less workforce pressure. The Group B fees range from $4,300 (architecture) to $6,500 (public health).

Group A students pay resident tuition at public institutions and the balance of the cost of tuition after the support fee is credited at private institutions. For Group B fields, the support fee is credited at both public and private institutions, and the student assumes the balance of the cost of tuition.

With the exception of pharmacy, use of Group B fields has dropped to levels where it is difficult to justify their continued existence in the program. Table 1 shows the participation levels of the Group B fields, the states that support students in those fields, and the level of participation over the past 10 years.

<table>
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<th>Table 1. Support History for Group B Fields</th>
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<tr>
<td>AY 1997 - AY 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture (WY)</td>
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<td>AY 2006 fee = $4,300</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Library (NM, WY)</td>
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<td>AY 2006 fee = $5,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Nursing (WY)</td>
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<td>AY 2006 fee = $4,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy (AK, HI, NV)</td>
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<td>AY 2006 fee = $6,100</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health (MT)</td>
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<td>AY 2006 fee = $6,500</td>
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Note: Since 2001, all graduate library students were from New Mexico. From 2000 on, all public health students were from Montana.
Depending on the field, staff proposes three types of changes for the five fields that are now in Group B: (1) recategorization; (2) inactivation; and (3) transferring the field to WICHE’s Western Regional Graduate Program. The following are staff recommendations for each field, made after analysis and consultation with commissioners and certifying officers of states that support students in the fields concerned. The recommendations are summarized at the end of this action item.

**High-Use Field: Pharmacy**

*Note: The states of Alaska, Hawaii, and Nevada support students to study pharmacy.*

Staff recommends that pharmacy be recategorized to Group A. The enrollment in pharmacy through PSEP has averaged 36 students per year over the past 10 years. Pharmacy students supported through WICHE exceed the enrollment of students in several Group A fields. Most importantly, national projections indicate that there will be a shortage of 157,000 pharmacists by 2020 (source: American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy). The role of the pharmacist has expanded significantly; in addition to becoming hospital, clinic, or drugstore pharmacists, graduates have opportunities to consult directly with patients on medication use and work as health educators. Professionals are also sought for drug development, research, and health policy.

The state health workforce profiles from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) cite the following statistics for Alaska, Hawaii and Nevada, which highlight the shortages of pharmacists and pharmacy techs and aides.

- **Alaska:** “There were 320 pharmacists and 320 pharmacy technicians and aides practicing in Alaska in 2000. Alaska had 51 pharmacists and 51 pharmacy technicians and aides per 100,000 population in 2000, which ranked them 49th and 50th, respectively, among the 50 states.”
- **Hawaii:** “There were 1,120 pharmacists and 1,420 pharmacy technicians and aides practicing in Hawaii in 2000. Hawaii had 92.4 pharmacists and 117.1 pharmacy technicians and aides per 100,000 population in 2000, which ranked them 4th and 2nd, respectively, among the 50 states.” (Despite its relatively high national ranking, Hawaii reports that there is a severe shortage of pharmacists in its remote areas.)
- **Nevada:** “There were 1,470 pharmacists and 1,420 pharmacy technicians and aides practicing in Nevada in 2000. Nevada had 72.8 pharmacists and 70.3 pharmacy technicians and aides per 100,000 population in 2000, which ranked them 31st and 42nd, respectively, among the 50 states.”

Source: Health Resources and Services Administration (http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/reports/profiles).

There is strong student interest in the field. There was a 53.9 percent increase in the number of applications to U.S. pharmacy schools in the 2004 academic year. Although the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy is not currently collecting data on unique applicants, pharmacy schools in the U.S. received a record number of applications in 2004 – 79,135 – and there has been a steady increase over the past five years. Nationally, schools of pharmacy report receiving 7.4 applications per entering student in fall 2005, a slight increase from 7.0 the previous year. A total of 46,527 students enrolled in doctor of pharmacy programs (as a first professional degree program) in 2005; this represents a 6.8 percent increase over 2004. In 2005, 8,268 degrees were awarded – the largest number of degrees ever conferred in the history of pharmacy education. Graduates are courted before they have their diplomas in hand, with starting salaries in the $80,000 range.

In 2006-07 tuition rates at participating public institutions show that the support fee would need to be increased by a minimum of $6,000 (to meet the median tuition differential) and a maximum of $8,500 (to meet all of our participating schools’ resident/nonresident tuition differentials). The support fee in pharmacy is currently $6,100 (nine-month rate) for the 2006 academic year and will increase to $6,300 for the 2007 academic year.

Staff recommends increasing the support fee as of fall 2008 to give states adequate time to budget for the increase. PSEP students must repay the support fee if they are from Alaska (they receive the funds as a loan); they will also need adequate time to prepare, since their loan amount will double.

Table 2 shows the current 2006-07 tuition levels and differentials at WICHE PSEP schools of pharmacy and the costs that PSEP pharmacy students currently assume at the lower support fee rate. The support fee rate for pharmacy students currently ranges from $6,100 to $9,150, with a higher fee for accelerated, three-year programs.
### Table 2. Support Fee Analysis AY 2006 - PHARMACY
Comparison of Tuition to WICHE Support (Group B level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting states: Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada</th>
<th>SUPPORT FEE: $6,100 (9-month base rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC (12 schools)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of WICHE students supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Arizona</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.C. San Francisco</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Colorado HSC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho State U.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Montana</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. New Mexico</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota State U.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon State U.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Utah</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Washington</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington State U.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Wyoming</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MEDIAN</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PRIVATE (4 schools)                      |                                        |
|                                          | No. of WICHE students supported | Full private tuition | Tuition currently paid by WICHE student (full private - support fee) | Percentage of tuition covered by AY 2006 support fee |
| Midwestern U.*                           | 5 | $31,011 | $22,878 | 26.23% |
| U. of the Pacific*                       | 8 | $26,920 | $17,770 | 33.99% |
| U. So. California                        | 1 | $34,222 | $28,122 | 17.82% |
| Western U.                               | 1 | $34,030 | $27,930 | 17.93% |
| Total (public & private)                 | 36 | **AVERAGE** | $24,175 | 23.99% |
|                                          | **MEDIAN**  | $25,404 | 22.08% |

* Accelerated three-year programs.

**Source:** First-year tuition rates as reported by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. Figures do not include fees, which range from $355 to approximately $2,000.

Determining the appropriate support fee for pharmacy as a Group A field is complex because of the many factors at play. Tuition differentials among our 12 public participating schools vary widely. To estimate a hypothetical fee if the change were to take effect for the 2007 academic year, staff added an average 7 percent increase to the current 2006 tuition levels.

Using an estimated 7 percent increase, the lowest resident/nonresident tuition differential at the public schools of pharmacy would be $6,744 at the University of Montana and the highest would be at $15,740 at the University of New Mexico. PSEP has no students enrolled at either institution at this time. The majority of PSEP students enrolled in public programs are studying at Washington State University (eight students), where the differential is estimated at $12,234, and the University of Washington (six students), where the differential is estimated at $12,300. Four students are attending the University of Colorado’s Health Science Center, where the tuition differential is the second highest, and is estimated to grow to $15,036. The median tuition differential at all of WICHE’s public schools is estimated at $11,630 for the 2007 academic year. Full tuition at our four private institutions is predicted to range from $28,804 (University of the Pacific’s three-year accelerated program) to $36,412 (Western University).

If a new Group A-level support fee is set too high in pharmacy, our institutions with the lowest differentials would receive a considerable incentive payment, while others would just meet their differential, providing no real incentive to save seats for WICHE students. If the fee is too low, some schools may cancel their participation in our program, narrowing access for our students.
Table 3. Support Fee Analysis - PHARMACY (AK, HI, NV)
Comparison of Estimated 2007 Tuition to WICHE Support at the “Group A” Level

Assumptions:
• Tuition increase of 7% (from previous year)
• Support fee of $12,500 (9-month base rate. Accelerated programs are paid out faster over three years; cumulative amount equals that of four-year programs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of WICHE students supported</th>
<th>Est. AY 2007 nonresident tuition</th>
<th>Est. AY 2007 resident tuition</th>
<th>Est. AY 2007 res./nonres. differential</th>
<th>Revenues red. by inst. with “Group A” support fee of $12,500</th>
<th>Difference between WICHE rate and nonres. tuition</th>
<th>WICHE rate as a percentage of nonres. tuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC (12 schools)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Arizona</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$24,685</td>
<td>$14,210</td>
<td>$10,475</td>
<td>$26,710</td>
<td>$2,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.C., San Francisco</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$32,619</td>
<td>$19,517</td>
<td>$13,102</td>
<td>$32,017</td>
<td>-$602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Colorado HSC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$30,559</td>
<td>$15,524</td>
<td>$15,036</td>
<td>$28,024</td>
<td>-$2,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho State U.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$24,760</td>
<td>$12,091</td>
<td>$12,669</td>
<td>$24,591</td>
<td>-$169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Montana</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$16,968</td>
<td>$10,224</td>
<td>$6,744</td>
<td>$22,724</td>
<td>$5,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. New Mexico</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$26,724</td>
<td>$10,985</td>
<td>$15,740</td>
<td>$23,485</td>
<td>-$3,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota State U.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$13,639</td>
<td>$5,108</td>
<td>$8,531</td>
<td>$17,608</td>
<td>$3,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon State U.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$24,662</td>
<td>$13,999</td>
<td>$10,664</td>
<td>$26,499</td>
<td>$1,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Utah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$24,278</td>
<td>$11,346</td>
<td>$12,932</td>
<td>$23,846</td>
<td>-$432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Washington</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$25,420</td>
<td>$13,120</td>
<td>$12,300</td>
<td>$25,620</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington State U.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$25,248</td>
<td>$13,013</td>
<td>$12,234</td>
<td>$25,513</td>
<td>$266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Wyoming</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$17,297</td>
<td>$8,165</td>
<td>$9,131</td>
<td>$20,665</td>
<td>$3,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$11,630</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$870</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>12,267</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>233</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE (4 schools)</th>
<th>Est. no. of WICHE students supported</th>
<th>Est. 2007 full private tuition</th>
<th>Est. tuition paid by WICHE student minus higher support fee (full private - support fee)</th>
<th>Percentage of tuition covered by WICHE support fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwestern U.*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$33,182</td>
<td>$16,516</td>
<td>50.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of the Pacific*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$28,804</td>
<td>10,054</td>
<td>65.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. So. California</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$36,618</td>
<td>24,118</td>
<td>34.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western U.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$36,412</td>
<td>23,912</td>
<td>34.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (public &amp; private)</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td><strong>$18,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.95%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$20,214</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,214</strong></td>
<td><strong>42.28%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Accelerated three-year programs.

Up to 10 new pharmacy schools are slated to open in the U.S. by 2010, and in general, existing schools are increasing their enrollments. This will increase the need to recruit and retain pharmacy faculty. Two new Western pharmacy schools are in the planning. Hawaii is on track to open a new school by fall 2007, or possibly the following year. Nevada, however, has unsuccessfully sought funding to open a public school of pharmacy during the past two legislative sessions. Another bill is under consideration this year, but many believe that it is unlikely to be funded.

The University of Hawaii is opening a college of pharmacy on its Hilo campus. Purdue’s pharmacy dean was hired and began working in Hilo in July 2006 with funding from a federal grant. The university has obtained legislative funding and has hired staff and faculty. The program is slated to become self-supporting through tuition dollars.

The school plans to enroll its first class of 80 students in fall 2007 and has already accepted 50 students. However, in addition to obtaining accreditation of its pharmacy school, the Hilo campus must also apply for accreditation to issue
advanced degrees, since it has not previously awarded graduate or professional degrees beyond the bachelor’s level. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education’s January 2007 report states: “An on-site evaluation was authorized to be conducted during spring 2007, so as to provide the basis for the Board’s consideration of precandidate accreditation of the Doctor of Pharmacy program at its June 2007 meeting.” The onsite visit is scheduled for May 2007.

The University of Nevada, Reno, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, are presenting their third request to fund their joint school of pharmacy to the state legislature. The concept was approved in 2001, but the school has not been funded. The bill requests $5 million over the next two years so that the school can admit its entering class in 2009. The four-year “PharmD” program would be part of the proposed health sciences center, which is seeking nearly $300 million for buildings, operations, equipment, and expansion of nursing programs. Despite Nevada’s severe shortage of pharmacists and growing elderly population, funding for the new school seems unlikely as of this writing. Legislators are encouraging the state to utilize the pharmacy program at the private University of Southern Nevada, located in Henderson.

Staff sought feedback from our states which support pharmacy students.

- **Alaska** has some reservations about increasing the support fee for pharmacy students and reclassifying it as a Group A field. In Alaska it seems that access or preferential admission is not so much the issue, but rather the cost of professional pharmacy education. If this recommendation passes, the State of Alaska would like to grandfather continuing students through at the lower rate and start only new students at the higher rate. They are concerned that continuing students will not appreciate the additional loan debt that they will need to sign on for at the higher rate. Finally, the state is looking at negotiating on an online pharmacy program with Creighton, which may mean that the state would discontinue funding pharmacy students through PSEP anyway. Those arrangements are still being negotiated.

- **Hawaii** has a legislative request in for an additional $250,000; if it is funded, they could support the increase as early as the 2007 academic year. The shortage of pharmacists in Hawaii’s rural areas is a serious problem, so they are seeking to train as many as possible. They are also looking at instituting a legally binding service payback requirement for PSEP students.

- **Nevada** commented that although the new pharmacy school is still in the budget request, it is not recommended by the governor, so its funding is unlikely. They will include funding in the budget for the higher support fee, but suggested that it should apply only to new students for fall 2007 and 2008. Nevada added that the mood of the legislature was to encourage attendance at its private pharmacy school in Las Vegas rather than creating a new one.

WICHE staff recommends that commissioners move pharmacy to Group A by fall 2008, as long as state budgets can respond to the accompanying fee increase. Table 4 illustrates the estimated impact on supporting states’ budgets, given a proposed support fee increase from $6,100 per student to $12,500 per student and using 2006 PSEP student participation numbers. Please note that the short-term cost for students enrolled in year-round accelerated programs would be slightly higher. Actual impact on the state budget will vary, depending on the year of the implementation, the number of students enrolled, and the final fee level approved at the May 2008 commission meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of students 2006-07</th>
<th>Support fees at current “B Rate” 2006-07</th>
<th>Support fees at proposed “A Rate” of $12,500</th>
<th>Increase between A and B rates</th>
<th>Percentage increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$24,400</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$25,600</td>
<td>104.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>115,900</td>
<td>237,500</td>
<td>$121,600</td>
<td>104.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>79,300</td>
<td>162,500</td>
<td>$83,200</td>
<td>104.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>$219,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>$450,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$230,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>104.92%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Calculations assume that all students are enrolled in programs that receive a nine-month rate. Actual short-term costs will be slightly higher for students in accelerated programs (Midwestern and University of the Pacific) but relatively equal over the long term.
Invite New Pharmacy Schools in the West to Become Cooperating PSEP Schools
Staff will invite new, fully accredited schools of pharmacy to participate in the PSEP program, effective AY 2008, depending on their current status.

The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) is the accrediting body for pharmacy education. Programs that have not yet enrolled students are granted precandidate status. Candidate accreditation is granted to programs that have enrolled students but have not yet graduated their first class. Finally, programs that have graduated their first class and have met all ACPE standards are awarded full accreditation.

Below is a list of Western pharmacy schools and their projected final accreditation date:

1. **University of Southern Nevada, College of Pharmacy (Henderson Campus):** Private institution, accelerated three-year program. Fully accredited as of graduating inaugural class in spring 2006. The school also has an extension campus in South Jordan, UT, which enrolled its first pharmacy students in fall 2006. As an extension campus, it enjoys its parent campus’s accreditation status.

2. **Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy:** Private institution, four-year program. Graduated first class in spring 2006. Candidate accreditation status was continued. Spring 2007 visit scheduled.

3. **University of California, San Diego, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences:** Public institution, four-year program. Charter class graduated in June 2006. Candidate accreditation status was continued. Spring 2007 visit scheduled.

4. **Touro University California College of Pharmacy:** Private institution, four-year program. Inaugural class admitted fall 2005. Should be fully accredited by fall 2009.

5. **Pacific University School of Pharmacy:** Private institution, intensive three-year program. The program was granted precandidate status in June 2006 and admitted its inaugural class in fall 2006. Should be fully accredited by fall 2009.

6. **University of Hawaii at Hilo College of Pharmacy:** Projected to receive precandidate accreditation status effective June 2007 after a spring 2007 visit from the council. First class to enroll fall 2007. Should be fully accredited by fall 2011.

Low-use Fields: Architecture, Graduate Library Studies, Graduate Nursing, and Public Health
Staff proposes two options for the remaining low-use fields: rendering them inactive and/or inviting cooperating institutions in the health fields or ones with distinctive programs to join the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) network.

As fewer WICHE states support fewer students in these fields, the relationship with the cooperating schools has become more difficult to maintain and, at times, strained. Many have not enrolled a PSEP student in years, and the department faculty and administration are no longer familiar with our program. Obtaining responses (to our enrollment surveys, tuition-and-fees surveys, and other requests) from these cooperating schools is problematic. Most department staff members seem to resent the additional administrative work, since they see no financial gain for the program or its students. If these programs were offered through WRGP instead, students from all WICHE states (except California) would have access, thus increasing the diversity of the cooperating programs’ student body. With a minimal number of states supporting so few positions in these fields, very few students are currently benefiting.

Architecture
*Note: The state of Wyoming supports students to study architecture.*

Effective fall 2008, staff recommends inactivating architecture and inviting cooperating schools with distinctive programs to join WRGP. Qualified programs could be admitted to WRGP and enroll students at the resident rate, effective fall 2008. There is no guarantee that cooperating institutions will apply to WRGP or qualify for entry, unless they demonstrate distinctive elements in their program; but staff will make a strong effort to attract several options for future Wyoming students. Any student already enrolled through PSEP would be grandfathered through the program.

WICHE’s 10 cooperating programs are: Arizona State University; University of California, Berkeley; University of Southern California; University of Colorado at Denver; University of Idaho; Montana State University; University of New Mexico; University of Oregon; University of Utah; and University of Washington. Most offer a master’s in architecture or in landscape architecture.
The support fee in architecture is $4,300 for the 2006 academic year, with a maximum of three years of support. Wyoming has not supported any students in architecture since 2004. One student is now certified for architecture for AY 2007 and has an offer of admission from a PSEP school.

**Graduate Library Studies**

*Note: The state of Wyoming supports students in graduate library studies.*

Staff also recommends inactivating graduate library studies (GLS) in PSEP (effective fall 2008) and inviting cooperating institutions with distinctive programs to join WRGP. Wyoming has not supported any students in GLS since 2000. New Mexico indicated that it must cease supporting students in GLS as of fall 2007. One Wyoming student is now certified for graduate library studies for 2007 but does not hold an admission offer from a cooperating school to date. Neither state has any continuing students enrolled in the program for the 2006 academic year.

WICHE’s six cooperating programs are: University of Arizona; San Jose State University; University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Hawaii at Manoa; and University of Washington. They offer several variations of master’s degrees in library and information science. The support fee in graduate library studies is $5,600 for the 2006 academic year, with a maximum of two years of support. Many of the programs are partially or fully available online.

Staff proposes to invite cooperating GLS schools with distinctive programs to join WRGP beginning fall 2008. There is no guarantee that cooperating institutions will apply to WRGP or qualify for entry, unless they demonstrate the distinctive elements of their program; but staff will make a strong effort to attract several options for our Wyoming students.

**Graduate Nursing**

*Note: The state of Wyoming supports students in graduate nursing.*

Graduate nursing was reactivated as a PSEP field in AY 2005, but no students have been certified in the field as yet. Wyoming is the only state that is offering to support students in the field at this time. One representative from a cooperating graduate nursing school commented that the Group B level of support is not high enough to attract students to use PSEP’s graduate nursing option.

WICHE’s four cooperating programs are: Loma Linda University (private); University of Hawaii at Manoa; University of North Dakota; and Oregon Health & Science University. The support fee in graduate nursing is $4,700 for the 2006 academic year, with a maximum of four years of support for Ph.D. students.

Staff recommends inactivating graduate nursing in PSEP and inviting all public cooperating programs to join WRGP. In addition, staff proposes to lift the distinctiveness criteria for any health-related program wishing to apply for WRGP status. Cooperating programs would be ushered into the program effective fall 2008.

The Wyoming certifying office supports the inactivation of the field, since WICHE students already have 12 different nursing programs at five institutions from which to choose through WRGP. WICHE nursing students enrolling through WRGP pay only resident tuition and do not have to pay the balance of the tuition differential not met by the low support fee, so they would be better off. The following programs are currently offered through WRGP by colleges of nursing in the West:

1. Nursing (Ph.D.), University of Arizona
2. Nursing (Ph.D.), University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
3. Nursing – specialization in health care informatics (M.A./M.S.), University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
4. Nursing and Latin American studies (M.A./M.S.), University of New Mexico
5. Gerontology (M.S.), University of Utah
6. Neonatal nurse practitioner (M.S.), University of Utah
7. Nurse midwifery (M.S.), University of Utah
8. Nursing (Ph.D.), University of Utah
9. Outreach nurse practitioner (M.S.), University of Utah
10. Teaching nursing (M.A./M.S.), University of Utah
11. Women’s health nurse practitioner (M.S.), University of Utah
12. Rural health nursing (M.A./M.S.), University of Wyoming

Public Health
Note: The state of Montana supports students in public health.

Since 2000 Montana has supported one or no new or continuing students in public health per year. New Mexico now has its own public program and stopped supporting in public health as of the 2006 academic year. WICHE’s six cooperating programs are: Loma Linda University (private); San Diego State University; University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Colorado Health Sciences Center; and the University of Washington.

The support fee for public health is $6,500 for the 2006 academic year, with a maximum of two years of support. Extended three-year programs receive an equivalent accumulated rate that is spread over three years. Staff recommends inactivating public health in PSEP and inviting all public cooperating programs to join WRGP. In addition, staff proposes to lift the distinctiveness criteria for any health-related program wishing to apply for WRGP status. As with the other low-use fields, cooperating programs would be ushered in on the “fast track.”

The Montana certifying officer understands the logic behind the inactivation of the field but would like some options for its students through WRGP. New Mexico State University currently offers a master’s degree program in community health education (with an emphasis on U.S./Mexico border health issues and health disparities) through WRGP. WICHE students enrolling through WRGP would pay resident tuition; they would not have to pay the balance of the tuition differential not met by the low support fee, so they would be better off.

Currently, one Montana resident is supported in the field at the University of Washington’s three-year extended program. The student is in her second year and will graduate in May 2008. If this recommendation is approved, staff proposes to grandfather the student through the program until graduation.

Recommendation Concerning Private-Institution PSEP Programs and their Participation in WRGP
To maximize student access to existing programs, staff recommends that WICHE invite cooperating private institutions’ programs that would be inactivated in PSEP to join WRGP along with the public institutions. To participate in the WRGP network, the programs would need to be distinctive (unless they are related to the health professions) and would need to meet the same quality standards as our participating public programs. Any private institutions offering graduate programs through WRGP would be required to reduce their full private tuition by 10 percent. Individual agreements would be signed with each private institution and WICHE. The private institutions and the programs concerned in this transition are the University of Southern California (architecture) and Loma Linda University (graduate nursing, public health).

This 10 percent reduced full-private-tuition model could also later be used to approach private institutions in the West to participate in WICHE’s Western Undergraduate Exchange. The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) currently uses this model for private institutions that participate in Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP).

Action Requested
1. Convert pharmacy to a Group A field, whereby students enrolled at public institutions will pay only resident tuition and not the balance of nonresident tuition minus the lower Group B level fee. The higher support fee will be effective fall 2008 or later, depending on supporting state budget capabilities (AK, HI, NV).
   a. The support fee is estimated at $12,500 for the 2007 academic year. The commission could confirm a final fee amount at the May 2008 meeting, in conjunction with the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 support-fee setting. The appropriate fee could be more easily determined once 2008-09 tuition rates for cooperating pharmacy schools are announced. Staff estimates states will need to budget for a support-fee level of approximately $13,100 for the 2008 academic year, in order to meet the current trend of the 5 percent increase in pharmacy school tuition.
   b. Once the new fee levels are implemented, there are two options concerning support-fee levels for new students and continuing students. The first option: The support fee for continuing students could remain at an equivalent Group B level through their graduation, with a maximum funding period of four years. New students enrolling...
in pharmacy when the change occurs (anticipated fall 2008) could begin with the higher Group A support fee level.

The second option: The new fee level could apply to both new and continuing students. **Staff recommends this option, as it will minimize confusion and complaints from continuing students.** An identical fee amount for new and continuing students will make the transition and billing easier for receiving schools as well. Finally, it will also simplify the state budgeting process and simplify PSEP administration of the program at the WICHE central office.

c. WICHE will invite new accredited pharmacy schools in the WICHE region, as well as existing accredited schools that are not currently participating in WICHE, to become cooperating schools effective AY 2008.

2. Inactivate architecture and graduate library studies as PSEP fields as of fall 2008; invite qualified, distinctive programs to join WRGP effective fall 2008.

3. Lift the “distinctiveness” criteria for all health care–related programs applying to participate in WRGP.

4. Inactivate graduate nursing and public health as PSEP fields as of fall 2008; invite qualified programs to join WRGP effective fall 2008.

5. Invite former PSEP private institutions with qualified and/or distinctive programs to participate in WRGP if they are willing to offer WICHE students a 10 percent reduction on their full private tuition.
INFORMATION ITEM
Student Exchange Program Updates

WUE
The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a regional program that enables students in participating states to enroll in designated two- and four-year public institutions and programs in other participating states at special, reduced tuition levels. The WUE tuition rate is 50 percent more than the institution’s regular resident tuition. In 2006-07 WUE students saved some $131 million in tuition costs.

A total of 21,578 students enrolled in 134 WUE institutions (69 four-year and 65 two-year) in fall 2006. Two California State University (CSU) institutions will begin participating in WUE in fall 2007: Dominguez Hills and Bakersfield. The addition of these two institutions will make a total of six California institutions participating in the WUE network, with five of them having joined in the past two years. CSU Long Beach and Northridge have also indicated a strong interest in joining the program.

New developments. The new online WUE database is complete. It allows students and their families to search for specific programs available to WUE students in the geographic area of their choice. Institutions now update their own descriptions, contact information, and information on the specific programs available to WUE students through a password-protected web interface. Institutions report enrollment numbers online, using standardized classification of instructional programs (CIP) codes.

New this year: WICHE has designed a new report format for institutional and state enrollment planners so that they can analyze out-migration trends of their state residents, by program CIP code. This data will allow planners to examine student demand and program capacity within their state and throughout the West. Copies of this special report format will be distributed during the May commission meeting. The detailed WUE Enrollment Report for the 2006-07 academic year was released in March 2007; the report is available in a PDF in the Student Exchange Program section of WICHE’s website.

WICHE staff presented the WUE program to approximately 500 high school college admission counselors in April 2007 in Denver at the annual conference of the Rocky Mountain Association for College Admission Counseling (RMACAC) and the Pacific Northwest Association for College Admission Counseling (PNACAC). RMACAC and PNACAC are the regional associations of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC). The participants counsel high school students in the WICHE states of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Other regional counseling associations to be contacted include the Dakota Association for College Admission Counseling; the Hawaii Association for College Admission Counseling; and the Western Association for College Admission Counseling (California and Nevada).

Finally, 21,000 copies of the new WUE promotional poster (see, on this page) were mailed to WICHE WUE liaison representatives in March. The liaisons will disseminate copies of the posters to high schools in their state, in an effort to promote the program over the next few years. Commissioners will find a copy of the poster in their May 2007 agenda book packet.

WRGP
The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) includes master’s and doctoral degree programs that are not widely available throughout the West. To be eligible for WRGP, programs must be distinctive on two criteria: they must be of demonstrated quality; and they must be offered at no more than four institutions in the WICHE region (exclusive of California). WRGP is particularly strong in programs targeted to the emerging social, environmental, and resource development needs of the West and in innovative interdisciplinary programs.
Through WRGP graduate students who are residents of the 14 participating WICHE states may enroll in participating programs in public institutions on a resident tuition basis. WRGP currently includes 178 programs. In 2006, 457 WRGP students were enrolled in 142 participating programs; only one program did not report its WRGP enrollments.

The WRGP online catalogue is operational, and WRGP programs reported their enrollment numbers through the new web interface for the first time in fall 2006. Each program has also been assigned a CIP code for more meaningful reporting.

In fall 2007 WICHE will request nominations for new programs to join the WRGP network. If the commission approves the staff’s May 2007 recommendation to inactivate certain Group B fields in PSEP (architecture, graduate library science, graduate nursing, and public health), then WICHE could see a surge in applications from programs formerly participating in PSEP that want to enroll Western residents from outside their state through WRGP.

PSEP

The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides students in 12 Western states with access to a wide range of professional programs that otherwise might not be available to them because the fields of study are not offered at public institutions in their home states. PSEP students pay reduced levels of tuition — usually resident tuition in public institutions or reduced tuition at private schools. The home state pays a support fee to the admitting schools to help cover the cost of the students’ education. WICHE students receive some preference in admission.

Each participating state determines the fields and the number of students it will support; and each state supports students in some — but not all — fields. Some states have additional arrangements for professional education with schools in the West or elsewhere. The 14 fields include: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, physician assistant, graduate nursing, graduate library studies, pharmacy, public health, and architecture. During the 2006-07 academic year, 743 students were enrolled through PSEP, with support fees totaling $13,411,728, compared to $12,344,556 in the previous academic year. The 2006-07 SEP Statistical Report, containing data on the number of students supported in the various fields, was released in January 2006 and is also available at www.wiche.edu/sep.

Staff is proposing a restructuring of Group B fields in PSEP. Staff’s recommendation to the commission is to eventually reclassify pharmacy as a Group A field, which would necessitate higher support fees to cover the nonresident tuition differential. A higher support fee would make enrollment of WICHE PSEP students more attractive to the cooperating schools of pharmacy. Staff proposes inactivation of the remaining fields and inviting them to join WRGP. WICHE would offer a special invitation to the public health and graduate nursing programs to enroll students from the WICHE states through WRGP instead of PSEP; this would necessitate lifting the “fewer than four programs in the West” WRGP program participation requirement for all health-related programs.

New Directions: Healthcare Workforce Issues

Staff is advancing in its research on how to best enhance its Student Exchange Programs to help its member states fill their workforce needs, particularly in the rural West. WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program has served its states well over the years, but attracting health care professional graduates to rural and underserved areas continues to be an enormous challenge. Even with the benefit of reduced tuition, lower salaries in underserved and rural areas are a primary deterrent for professionals, who are carrying increasingly high debt loads upon graduation.

WICHE proposes to partner with other federal and state agencies and private funders to find strategies to alleviate these growing health care workforce shortages, which are a problem nationwide but are exacerbated in the rural West. We are looking at a number of possible solutions, including: pipeline strategies to attract students into the health professions; loan repayment options that would make it affordable for PSEP graduates to practice in rural and underserved areas; and greater emphasis on rural curriculum and rural rotations and residencies at the cooperating PSEP schools. This may also involve adding new fields to PSEP, particularly in allied health, and may include training and education for advanced dental hygiene practitioners at the master’s level, as well as for dental techs, veterinary techs, radiology techs, and pharmacy techs.

To better inform its efforts, WICHE is doing the following: interviewing key leaders in the West who are familiar with rural health workforce issues, including the directors of state offices of rural health; creating an inventory of existing state and other loan repayment programs for practitioners who serve in rural communities; conducting state surveys on these
issues; and collecting workforce data in the various health professions. Over the past few months, staff has met with Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as with representatives of its National Health Service Corps and the National Rural Health Association.

WICHE’s Student Exchange and Mental Health programs are also planning to convene a small group of residency directors of public cooperating PSEP medical and dental schools to develop collaborative efforts that could be coordinated by WICHE. Participants will likely include the University of Arizona, the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, the University of Hawaii, the University of Nevada, the University of New Mexico, the University of North Dakota, Oregon Health & Science University, and the University of Utah.

In addition, once funding is obtained, WICHE will convene a Western health professionals advisory council, which will include institutional representatives, practicing health professionals, legislators, and state and government representatives of programs with a shared vision.

Staff continues to seek counsel from its commissioners on how WICHE can lead its member states in regional and collaborative efforts that will grow their health care workforce and encourage practitioners to serve in rural areas.
INFORMATION ITEM
The State Scholars Initiative

Background
On October 1, 2005, WICHE became the program administrator for the State Scholars Initiative (SSI). The initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. The purpose of the State Scholars Initiative is to support state-level business/education partnerships that will encourage and motivate high school students to enroll in and complete rigorous courses of study that will help them in their future careers and with any postsecondary education or training they undertake. State Scholars models motivate students to take rigorous courses that reflect the National Commission on Excellence in Education recommendations: four years of English; three years of math (algebra I, geometry, algebra II); three years of basic lab science (biology, chemistry, physics); three and a half years of social studies (chosen from U.S. and world history, geography, economics, and government); and two years of the same language other than English.

The 22 states that are currently participating in SSI (receiving funds and operating SSI projects or having completed their SSI projects but remaining in the SSI network) include: Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming. WICHE is responsible for providing technical assistance, monitoring, oversight, and cost reimbursement to the SSI projects in these states. Two additional states previously were funded, and they created and completed SSI projects: New Mexico and Washington.

Key Outcomes
The number of participating schools is rapidly growing, as some SSI states move beyond the pilot phase to multidistrict, or in some cases, statewide implementation. Findings from the “Evaluation Report for State Scholars Initiative: October 1, 2005 – November 30, 2006” (the first year evaluation report) show that in 19 of the 24 SSI states, there were approximately 800 schools participating in the network at the end of November 2006. This represents a nearly fourfold increase over the estimated 200 schools participating in October 2005. The State Scholars Initiative has been implemented in a range of schools (urban, suburban, and rural); the diversity of locales and experiences to date will inform, and better position, the initiative for future expansion.

The U.S. Department of Education, through the State Scholars Initiative, has engaged the business community in high school redesign. Participation of State Scholars Initiative business partners has increased from 367 in December 2005 to 904 in November 2006, less than a year later. Shelly Esque, director of public affairs at Intel Corporation in Arizona, says, “At Intel we strongly believe that education is the key to a knowledge-based economy, innovation, and the future. The State Scholars Initiative is providing the venue for getting critical messages such as this out to tens of thousands of Arizona students, their parents, and teachers. Communities and individuals who wish to take advantage of the ever-increasing demand for skilled and professional labor are empowered by the call for more math and science and are supporting and celebrating students’ successes.”

The State Scholars Initiative provides states and participating school districts with the opportunity to better access and use student course-taking data to support rigor in high schools. A recent study (America’s High School Graduates: Results from the 2005 NAEP High School Transcript Study, February 2007) highlights the need to both build an academic foundation of rigorous courses and to develop an understanding of competency in each course. The State Scholars Initiative contributes importantly to this discussion by outlining a strong option for schools to follow: the State Scholars Initiative Core Course of Study. Through the State Scholars Initiative and other national efforts, we are learning about the various policies and processes needed to achieve truly rigorous academic coursework.

Some states are using the State Scholars Initiative Core Course of Study to support the development of a statewide rigorous high school default curriculum. At least eight states have passed a statewide default curriculum, six of which are SSI states: Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas. Of these, only Delaware and Texas have not received federal State Scholars Initiative funding; SSI helped to motivate policymakers to enact a statewide curriculum in Kentucky, Michigan, and Oklahoma.
**WICHE's Federal Funding and Staffing**

The total amount of federal funding provided to WICHE for State Scholars is now $6.6 million: $2.1 million will fund WICHE’s administrative costs, and $4.5 million is supporting state programs. SSI was originally funded at $5.5 million; WICHE has successfully completed year one and has received its continuation award of $600,000 for year two. In addition, WICHE has been notified that an additional $600,000 of the grant funds may be used for another year of program administration, extending WICHE’s administration of SSI to September 20, 2008. Finally, WICHE, in competition with another federally funded program, was selected by the assistant secretary of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Troy Justesen, to receive an additional $517,000 for program administration, technical assistance, and evaluation.

In December 2005 Terese Rainwater was hired as SSI program director (1.0 FTE). Christian Martinez joined the staff in January 2006 (1.0 FTE) along with Michelle Medal as administrative coordinator (1.0). Jere Mock oversees the program (.20 FTE on the grant). The grant also covers .65 FTE of the WICHE communications staff’s FTE, supporting the SSI work of Annie Finnigan, Candy Allen, and Deborah Jang.

**The SSI State Network**

Each of the state programs is administered by a state-level business/education partnership and supported by up to $300,000 in federal funding over a two-year period. When WICHE took on the program administrator role, there were 14 states in the network. WICHE has conducted two national RFPs since February 2006 to expand the network to its current group of 22 states (a list of the participating state business/education organizations is on pp. 8-24 and 8-25).

New states host a kick-off event to launch State Scholars in their state. All four states that joined in November 2006 have held a statewide kick-off event, and WICHE staff has been present at each. South Dakota held its kick-off on January 10, 2007, and WICHE commissioners James Hansen, regent, South Dakota Board of Regents; and Tad Perry, executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, attended. WICHE staff has attended State Scholars kick-off events in five of the six states that joined in March 2006; the remaining kick-off, in Nebraska, is being scheduled. On December 2-6, 2006, WICHE hosted a state directors’ meeting and sustainability workshop in Denver. The purpose of the meeting was to address the policy, evaluation, and sustainability issues faced by State Scholars states and to orient and train new states in the State Scholars Initiative model.

WICHE hosts a monthly conference call, in which state partnerships learn how to address program needs and share best practices. WICHE has also conducted a series of state site-monitoring visits to ensure the quality of program implementation and provide technical assistance. Monitoring/technical assistance visits have been conducted in the following states: Arizona, Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming. As part of the technical assistance provided, WICHE helps state partners coordinate and leverage their resources with related initiatives in their states, such as the American Diploma Project, National Governors Association Honor States program, MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement), GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), and College in the High School (dual-credit) programs. It also lends assistance to state business, education, and policy leaders.

**National SSI Advisory Board**

On December 7, 2006, the State Scholars Advisory Board met at the Community College of Denver and provided WICHE and state business education partnerships with advice on how to move from program implementation to sustainability. The members of the advisory board are: Mike Cohen, president, Achieve; Liz Dietz, chief executive officer, XAP Corporation; Brian Fitzgerald, executive director, Business-Higher Education Forum; Christine Johnson, president, Community College of Denver; Charles Kolb, president, Committee for Economic Development; Marshall Lind, WICHE commissioner and chancellor emeritus, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Leon Lederman, resident scholar and Nobel Laureate, physics, Illinois Math and Science Academy; Barry Munitz, chair, California P-16 Council, and former chancellor, California State University, and former president, The J. Paul Getty Trust; Jane Nichols, vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education; Raymund Paredes, commissioner of Higher Education, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; Suellen Reed, superintendent of public instruction, Indiana Department of Education; Piedad Robertson, president emeritus, Education Commission of the States; Arthur Rothkopf, senior vice president, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Janis Somerville, senior associate, K-16 Initiative, NASH/Ed Trust;
David Spence, president, Southern Regional Education Board; Susan Traiman, director of education and workforce policy, Business Roundtable; Deborah Wilds, program officer, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and Steve Wing, director of government programs, CVS Pharmacy. (Lederman, winner of the 1988 Nobel Prize for Physics, and Wing, CVS Pharmacy, joined the SSI Advisory Board in March 2007.) In addition to annual in-person board meetings (December 2006), WICHE hosts quarterly conference calls with the advisory board.

Other Recent Activities
As a result of staff changes at the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education, WICHE staff has met with OVAE staff in person in December of 2006 and in February, March, and April of 2007. In addition, WICHE staff has provided technical assistance to the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) to support the implementation of Academic Competitiveness Grants. In June 2007 WICHE will host OVAE staff at the WICHE offices for the second federal monitoring visit.

From December 2006 through March 2007, WICHE has placed special emphasis on communication and dissemination. At the December 7 SSI Advisory Board meeting, which the new OVAE assistant secretary, Troy Justesen, attended, SSI states shared promising practices about their SSI implementation. Also at this meeting, WICHE provided each SSI state with a media kit with tools and information about how to garner media attention for state SSI programs. On January 8, 2007, WICHE disseminated the second SSI newsletter, which features policy research, program updates, and state sustainability efforts. On February 28, 2007, WICHE released the State Scholars Initiative 2006 Year in Review. On March 23, 2007, WICHE launched a redesigned State Scholars website, with more emphasis on business involvement and a stronger underlying structure. On March 29, 2007, WICHE released the Why Physics? brief, reviewed by Leon Lederman, the winner of the 1988 Nobel Prize for Physics and SSI Advisory Board member. Most recently, WICHE released the third SSI newsletter. Finally, WICHE is working on the production of a short SSI DVD; a webcast; a Why Foreign Language? policy brief, a statewide default curricula policy brief; and a national SSI summit. At this summit WICHE will explore issues surrounding pairing a rigorous high school curriculum with demonstrated competency; determining effective course alignment and assessment; and identifying whether policy options such as a statewide default curriculum support student access and success.

WICHE’s performance is monitored by an independent third-party evaluator, Diana Robinson, senior research associate at the Regional Development Institute of Northern Illinois University. State performance is monitored by another independent third-party evaluator, Karen Paulson, senior associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. WICHE is in regular contact with both evaluators.

The SSI Network and Chronology
WICHE staff oversees the efforts of 13 of the 14 original state-level organizations, most of which began implementing the program in 2003. They include:

Arkansas Business Education Alliance
Arizona Business & Education Coalition
CBIA Education Foundation (an affiliate of the Connecticut Business Industry Association)
Indiana Chamber of Commerce
Partnership for Kentucky Schools
Maryland Business Roundtable for Education
Michigan Chamber of Commerce
Public Education Forum of Mississippi
New Jersey Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (an affiliate of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce)
New Mexico Business Roundtable for Educational Excellence
Oklahoma Business Education Coalition
The Education Partnership of Rhode Island
Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The eight state business-education partnerships that joined the State Scholars network in March 2006 are:

The Fund for Colorado’s Future*
Committee for SECURE Louisiana
Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education
North Carolina Business Committee for Education*
Future Force Nebraska
Utah K-16 Alliance
Virginia Career Education Foundation
The Education Alliance of West Virginia

The four state business-education partnerships that joined the State Scholars network in November 2006 are:

Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry
New Hampshire College & University Council
South Dakota State Chamber of Commerce and Industry
The Wyoming P-16 Council

* In August 2006 two business-education partnerships withdrew from the national State Scholars Initiative network: the Fund for Colorado’s Future and the North Carolina Business Committee for Education. After receiving extensive technical assistance, these states were not comfortable signing the SSI state contract. Ultimately, the role of business in both states was an accommodation, not the centerpiece of their State Scholars programs.
INFORMATION ITEM
The American TelEdCommunications Alliance

In 2001 WICHE joined with the three other regional higher education organizations (the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, the New England Board of Higher Education, and the Southern Regional Education Board) along with MiCTA, a national nonprofit technology association, to form the American TelEdCommunications Alliance (ATAlliance). This national initiative was created to bring schools, colleges, and state education agencies together to improve access to cutting-edge telecommunications and technologies and to provide better pricing options for our colleges and universities.

The ATAlliance has seen some success in the last six years in using the RFP process to secure contracts with vendors on a number of programs and services (in voice, video, wireless, computer hardware and software, e-learning course-management, power and energy management, library equipment, and office supplies) at prices that are lower than what some institutions might’ve been able to negotiate on their own. However, the times have changed greatly since the organization was founded, and the ATAlliance is no longer as relevant to our institutions’ needs. Today, institutions rarely pay the “off-the-shelf” price for technology goods, programs, or services: the web has allowed everyone to “shop” for the best deals they can get, and this has made vendors much more willing to negotiate. Access to cutting-edge technologies has also vastly improved, thanks to increased competition in the market.

In addition to this, ATAlliance has faced one unanticipated problem that has made marketing the program to our institutions and supporting the program within our organizations very difficult: lack of information. Many vendors – especially those in the telecommunications industry – have been extremely reluctant to share information with us about which of our institutions (and which departments within them) have purchased services under ATAlliance contracts. This has made “selling” the program difficult. Lack of information has created another problem, as well: each of the regional organizations was supposed to be recompensed on the basis of contract usage by its institutions, and these funds were to be used to support the program within our organizations; but without solid information from the vendors, the ATAlliance program manager has never been able to give us a clear picture of what usage was.

The New England Board of Higher Education withdrew from the ATAlliance last year. At a meeting in April, the ATAlliance Board (including David Longanecker and the heads of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, the Southern Regional Education Board, and MiCTA) discussed whether to dissolve the ATAlliance (contingent upon WICHE commissioners’ approval). The decision was made to hold off on this course of action for the time being. While the ATAlliance agreement with its current program administrator, MSC, will expire on June 30, 2007, the ATAlliance vendor contracts run into fall 2008 (and one, in which WICHE is not involved, runs into early 2009); concern that our institutions be served well by vendors for the life of the contracts caused the board to decide to hold off on dissolving the ATAlliance, at least for now. Once the contracts expire, and given the commissioners’ approval, it is likely that the corporate structure of the ATAlliance will be dissolved, as recommended by the chief executives of MHEC, SREB, and WICHE.

The group has left the door open for any of the organizations to work together on an RFP in the future – as WICHE currently does with MHEC, for instance, through the Master Property Program, or on a more informal basis. Each ATAlliance partner may seek partnerships with the other compacts related to various technologies on an as-needed basis.
INFORMATION ITEM
Programs and Services Update

WICHE Internet Course Exchange
To increase access to higher education, the WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) is facilitating the sharing of electronically delivered courses and programs throughout the WICHE region and beyond. Currently, 12 higher education institutions and university systems in the WICHE region are members of WICHE ICE. The members, who each pay a $3,000 membership fee, include: the University of Alaska Anchorage, Bismarck State College, Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, Montana State University, Montana University System, University of Nevada Reno, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, University of Utah, and University of Wyoming. These institutions are developing, or are assessing the feasibility of developing, course and program exchanges in a variety of disciplines, including: general education, social work, allied health fields, teacher preparation courses in secondary math and science, and master’s level programs in Basque studies, public health, and teacher education. The member institutions are represented on the WICHE ICE Steering Board, which oversees the policies that guide this regional consortium.

The WICHE ICE Steering Board met on April 25-26 in Portland, OR, preceding the Northwest Academic Forum annual meeting along with WICHE staff members Jere Mock and Susan Vermeer Lopez. Topics of discussion included adopting the WICHE ICE Operations Manual, which includes topics such as the essential characteristics of e-learning consortia; the financial model for WICHE ICE; and examples of forms and procedures for course and program exchanges among WICHE ICE institutions.

Master Property Program and Property and Casualty Program (in collaboration with MHEC)
The Master Property Program (MPP) is offered by WICHE to Western institutions in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC). MPP offers an insurance and risk management program that provides comprehensive property coverage related to higher education needs and enhances institutions’ risk management and asset protection strategies. MPP’s engineering and loss control services are tailored to member institutions’ requirements, as well as to the group as a whole. The program has generated more than $30.5 million in savings for participating institutions and affords its members the opportunity to earn dividends based on annual loss ratios. Members currently include 76 campuses (38 primary policies) with total insured values of $51.9 billion. The Nevada System of Higher Education was the first system in the WICHE region to participate in the program and saved $1.3 million a year in the first two years in the MPP on its $2.8 billion in insured assets.

In 2004 the Property and Casualty Program (P&CP) was introduced to meet the needs of smaller institutions, those with enrollments averaging around 7,500 students. The P&CP offers a package program and lower deductibles to meet their unique needs.

Since October 2006, Jere Mock and Susan Vermeer Lopez have met with six institutions to present the MHEC/WICHE insurance programs: the Colorado School of Mines (CSM), Laramie County Community College (LCC-WY), Oregon University System (OUS), Pima Community College (PCC-AZ), the University of Northern Colorado (UNC), and the University of Wyoming (UW). The program administrator, Marsh, Inc., is currently developing quotes for Pima Community College and the University of Northern Colorado as well as for Westminster College (UT) and the College Liability Insurance Company (CLIC), a consortium of universities in California, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Additional eligible institutions will be contacted to assess their interest in the program and staff will continue to work with CSM, LCC, OUS, and UW to assess the feasibility of their participation.

Northwest Academic Forum 2007 Annual Meeting
Thirty-two master’s and doctoral-level institutions and 10 states participate in the Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF), represented by their provosts, vice presidents of academic affairs, and state academic officers. The 2007 NWAF annual meeting was held on April 26-28 at Portland State University. Its theme was “A Perfect World: Student Success through P-16 Alignment.” Speakers, including California State University Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer Gary Reichard; Janis Somerville, senior associate of the National Association of System Heads and The Education Trust; Jane Wellman, Executive Director of the Delta Project on Postsecondary Costs, and Cheryl Blanco, Vice President for
Adult and Experiential Learning at the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning; explored the linkages between K-12 and higher education and addressed topics such as how to connect access, quality and the costs of higher education; student civic engagement; and transitions and retention in higher education. During the meeting, the NWAF members voted to provide an $8,000 contribution from the NWAF reserves to support the development of the WICHE Internet Course Exchange. Jere Mock, Susan Vermeer Lopez, and Laura Ewing provide staff support for NWAF activities.