Monday, May 19, 2008

2.00 - 4.00 pm Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting
Boardroom

Jane Nichols (NV), committee chair
Ryan Deckert (OR), committee vice chair
Camille Preus (OR), ex officio
Roy Ogawa (HI), ex officio

Patricia Brown Heller (AK)
David Lorenz (AZ)
Position vacant (CA)
Kaye Howe (CO)
Roberta Richards (HI)
Arthur Vailas (ID)
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)
Warren Hardy (NV)
Committee chair (NV)
Reed Dasenbrook (NM)
Pamela Kostelecky (ND)
Committee vice chair (OR)
Robert Burns (SD)
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT)
Jeanne Kohl-Wells (WA)
Debbie Hammons (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Jane Nichols (NV), chair

Staff: Dolores Mize, vice president, Public Policy
and Research
Demarée Michelau, senior policy analyst and
director of special projects, Public Policy
and Research
Brian Prescott, senior research analyst, Public
Policy and Research
Terese Rainwater, Director of State Scholars Initiative,
Programs and Services

Action Item
Approval of the Issue Analysis and
Research Committee meeting minutes
of November 5, 2007

Information Item: Presentation of paper cowritten by
Terese Rainwater and Dolores Mize on rigor and P-16
policy implications (paper as separate document)

Action Item
Approval of the FY 2009 Public Policy and
Research workplan
Information Item: Benchmarks report (separate document)

Unit Update: Public Policy and Research – Dolores Mize, Demareé Michelau, and Brian Prescott (PowerPoint on CD)
ACTION ITEM
Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting
November 5, 2007

Commissioners Present
Ryan Deckert (OR), vice chair
Patricia Brown Heller (AK)
Dave Lorenz (AZ)
Roberta Richards (HI)
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)
Reed Dasenbrock (NM)
Pamela Kostelecky (ND)
Robert Burns (SD)
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT)
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA)

Other Commissioners Present
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Klaus Hanson (WY)

Committee Members Absent
Jane Nichols (NV), committee chair
Camille Preus (OR), ex officio
Roy Ogawa (HI), ex officio
Kaye Howe (CO)
Arthur Vailas (ID)
Warren Hardy (NV)
Tex Boggs (WY)

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Vice Chair Ryan Deckert convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee on November 5, 2007, and a quorum was established.

Commissioner Burns motioned to APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 21, 2007, ISSUE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously by the committee.

Deckert excused Chair Nichols from the meeting before turning over the time to Dolores Mize. Mize noted that the meeting would not follow the agenda exactly and introduced Paul Lingenfelter, president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, as the first speaker. He reviewed the highlights from his new publication, “More Student Success.”

Klaus Hanson mentioned that Wyoming has the Hathaway Scholarship, a merit-based scholarship, and it was recently reported that only 60 percent of students retained their scholarship after the first year of college. Hanson noted that there is a myth that seat time equals achievement time. He feels that there is still a disconnect between the two, and that something needs to be done to fix the disparity.

Lingenfelter replied that it helps to calibrate incentives at a level that is attainable and progressively challenges students. Using GPA as the key standard (and setting it high) encourages students to take easier classes. A better approach is the one used by the Oklahoma Promise Scholarship, where students are eligible for the scholarship with a C plus average, if they are taking harder classes. Lingenfelter suggested that if 40 percent of the students are losing their scholarship, it is set up wrong.

Mary Sheehy Moe added that Montana is doing a good job at establishing what proficiencies are needed for college. The state currently has an English placement test, which determines whether a student is college ready. Deckert asked how a state could go about acting on these ideas and how it could improve outreach to low-income students.
Lingenfelter replied that states need scholarship programs that are clearly visible to the public and to students when they are in middle school or the early years of high school. Clear academic standards are needed at every transition point, and this clarity must be shared by K-12 and postsecondary educators.

Dolores Mize explained that the higher education systems in a number of states are looking at using ACT’s EPAS (Educational Planning and Assessment System), where students take the rigorous courses, are issued tests which determine where small gaps in learning have occurred, and are corrected. Mize saw this program work in Oklahoma and would recommend it.

Bonnie Jean Beesley asked if there is a list of potential grants states could apply for to help with the implementation of these programs. Lingenfelter replied that individuals within each state can easily develop the expertise needed to find these grants. But grants will never be enough to do the job. The most important money is what states already have; it is important to mobilize the resources that are already available in individual states more effectively. Mize added that in Oklahoma EPSCoR funded one person who specifically searched for grants. She feels that it is more beneficial to have someone within the state searching than to pay WICHE to do it.

Dolores Mize next described WICHE’s new grant, *Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners*, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, which seeks to increase college access and success among adult learners. WICHE has received $755,100 to work with three states over the next two years to assist “ready adults” (those adults who are just shy of having enough credits to obtain a degree but have not yet returned to college) in completing their degrees. WICHE will issue a call for participation in the next couple of months, and all WICHE commissioners will be notified upon its release. Questions about the grant can be directed to Mize by phone or email.

Dennis Mohatt reviewed the Mental Health Program’s workforce development contracts in seven states. He described the associated challenges of and strategies for addressing behavioral health workforce issues in rural communities.

Louis Fox, executive director of WCET, introduced his new staff person, Mollie McGill, who is working for both WCET and the WICHE Science, Technology, and Innovation initiative. Fox went on to discuss the prospective agenda for WCET and the Science, Technology, and Innovation initiative, including extending the broadband network to all universities in the West and in the healthcare sector, as well as six main themes that have come up in the area of science and technology.

Dolores Mize touched on two new externally funded projects, totaling $130,000, to conduct updates and major upgrades of the SPIDO database. The work is supported by the Pathways to College Network and the Lumina Foundation Making Opportunity Affordable initiative.

Vice Chair Decker adjourned the committee meeting.
# WICHE WORKPLAN 2009

## EXISTING ACTIVITIES

### Finance

- **Annual Tuition and Fees report (GF)**
- **Non-Traditional No More**: the first cohort of states – Arkansas, Colorado, and Nevada – will spend the year creating a comprehensive strategy for identifying “ready adults” and promoting their college success
- Property insurance and risk consortium (self-funding)
- Performance measurement improvement in the Western states public mental health programs
- **Making Opportunity Affordable** (national partnership led by Jobs for the Future and funded by Lumina)
- Legislative Advisory Committee: revamping the committee, examining the membership, stimulating attendance by members, and convening an annual meeting
- **SPIDO**: upgrading and updating the comprehensive database of state-level higher education policies (GF, Lumina, Jobs for the Future, Pathways)

### Access & Success

- **Student Exchange Programs**: Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP); Western Regional Exchange Program (WRGP); Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) (state-funded)
- Internet Course Exchange (ICE) (Sloan Foundation and membership dues)
- State Scholars Initiative (OVAE)
- Bridges to the Professoriate (NSF)
- Multiyear policy project on higher ed finance and financial aid – an extension of the **Changing Direction** initiative (Lumina Foundation, in partnership with NCSL and the Hechinger Institute)
- **Knocking at the College Door**, publication dissemination (ACT, the College Board, and GF)
- **Knocking at the College Door**, local, state, regional, and national presentations
- **Non-Traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners** (Lumina Foundation, matched by first cohort of states: Nevada, Arkansas, and Colorado)
- College access marketing (single-state support as needed; collaboration with Pathways; embedded in the **Non-Traditional No More** program for adult students)
- Children’s mental health improvement projects in Wyoming and South Dakota
- Education Advisory Board for ACT
- Advisory commissioner for National Community and Education Partnerships
- Colorado ACT Council
- Pathways to College Strategic Communications Subcommittee
- Pathways to College Policy Committee
- U.S. Department of Education Technical Working Group, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Supportive participation in the Access and Success Initiative, National Association of System Heads
- College Access Challenge Grant Program Network (support for Western states applying for and implementing plans for the federal grant program; additional support through Western network)
- Projecting financial aid program funding to increase access for low-income students (single-state support, as requested; existing efforts in Oregon and Arizona, in partnership with National Center for Higher Education Management Systems)
- **Annual Tuition and Fees report (GF)**
**Technology & Innovation**

- Development of best practices in online student services, audits of institutions’ online student services via CENTSS (Center for Transforming Student Services), and related consulting services (WCET)
- EduTools: Provides comparisons of electronic-learning software and online course evaluations (WCET)
- Development and production of annual conference, this year celebrating WCET’s 20th anniversary (WCET)
- Northwest Academic Forum (membership dues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Traditional No More</th>
<th>program will involve distance-learning education policies and practices with respect to providing access to e-learning for adult learners (Lumina)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy analysis on the funding of academic collaborations in technology</td>
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**Workforce**

- Development of Student Exchange Program responses to critical workforce shortages, especially in rural and underserved areas
- Regional Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council
- Western Consortium for Rural Social Work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalating Engagement</th>
<th>(Ford) – will propose a next phase of this program to support ongoing state activities following the June 2008 summit on workforce certification systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reformatting the Workforce Briefs, to be published electronically by the Policy unit and to focus more on workforce education and policy “big picture” issues, employment, and education data (GF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State technical assistance associated with the Legislative Engagement project (Alaska, Oregon, North Dakota, and Washington)</td>
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<td>Mental health student exchange</td>
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<td>Building partnerships for competency: public mental health workforce development</td>
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<td>Rural mental health training initiatives</td>
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**Accountability**

- Regional benchmarks (GF)
- Electronic Regional Fact Book: Policy Indicators for Higher Education (GF)
- Policy Insights on a range of higher education issues (GF)
- Data quality campaign (national partnership)
- Electronic Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts (GF)
- Policy Publications Clearinghouse (GF)
- State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)-IPEDS data collaborative (funded by SHEEO)
- SPIDO (GF, Lumina, Jobs for the Future, Pathways)
- Technical and policy assistance for North Dakota’s higher education legislative committee and reauthorization of the North Dakota Roundtable (GF)
- Follow-up initiatives responding to the National Center on Public Policy and Higher Education’s report cards and the National Commission on Higher Education’s report
- ACT Education Advisory Board
- Making Opportunity Affordable (national partnership funded by Lumina and led by Jobs for the Future)

| Establishing a knowledge base of existing research and best practices about academic integrity and student verification in online learning in anticipation of Congressional reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (WCET) |
| Facilitation of the Western States Decision Support Group fur Public Mental Health (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) |
NEW DIRECTIONS
(proposals approved by the commission)

Finance

- Multiyear policy project on higher ed finance and financial aid: an extension of the Changing Direction initiative (Lumina Foundation for Education, in partnership with National Conference of State Legislatures and the Hechinger Institute)

Access & Success

- Initiatives to expand educational equity for underrepresented ethnic students
- College Access Challenge Grant Program Network
- Expand access to cyber-infrastructure, research and education networks, and applications for geographically remote and/or underserved institutions, including minority-serving institutions in the West (Science, Technology and Innovation)

Technology & Innovation

- Transition EduTools to a new model focused on community contributions of knowledge (WCET)
- Expand utilization of Web 2.0 social networking and new breed of web-based communications tools, serving as a prototype for other WICHE programs (WCET)
- In partnership with Kansas State University’s Institute for Academic Alliance, create Academic Collaboration policy website for multi-institution e-learning consortia (WCET)
- Facilitate Internet2 connectivity throughout the West (Science, Technology and Innovation)
- Expand the availability and use of research and education networks (state, regional, and national) for health and mental health services and related educational outreach (Science, Technology and Innovation, and Mental Health)
- Launch of the WCET Academy to provide professional development
- Developing a regional learning center for State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC)
- Expansion of ICE (Sloan)

Workforce

- Expanding professional advisory councils (health professions)
- Establishing a rural health care advisory council
- Surveying PSEP medical and dental schools’ rural track and pipeline programs to identify best practices
- Regional social work consortium
- 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
- Assessment of Mental Health Program distance-learning opportunities for California’s small and frontier counties (Mental Health and WCET)

Accountability

- Collaboration with National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and the State Higher Education Executive Officers on three-phase plan to create pre-K–workforce data systems (proposal sent to Gates Foundation)
- Contemporize the Knocking at the College Door publication to include web-based state information and information on major MSAs, income, and gender, as well as to update the data more often (proposal sent to Gates Foundation)
- Transparency By Design: collaboration with President’s Forum to develop outcome and quality measures for leading online education institutions (WCET)
ON THE HORIZON
(proposals not yet submitted to the commission or past proposals that are being recast)

Finance

Access & Success
- Expanding adult degree completion through online education via ICE
- Expansion of the State Scholars Initiative with private funding
- Student mobility
- Portable financial aid
- Public Policy and Research unit plans to bid for the federal GEAR UP program national evaluation contract (expected announcement in 2009 fiscal year)
- Project with National Council for Community and Education Partnerships and NCSL to examine the impact of college access programs on state policy (project in development)

Technology & Innovation
- Research on strategies and best practices that promote use of open educational resources in higher education (WCET)

Workforce
- Collaboration with Colorado Department of Labor to expand access to online education via WICHE ICE in four-state demonstration project (Sloan Foundation)
- Assisting states in identifying academic program development needs
- Health and allied health workforce development and policy
- Workforce credentialing systems
- Forging collaborations between Western higher education agencies and institutions and state departments of labor and workforce development
- Policy and Mental Health collaboration on recidivism reduction in the prison population

Accountability
- Creation of Research Insights series for education and policy researchers
- Presentations on the new SPIDO features at national meetings (GF, Lumina, Jobs for the Future, Pathways)
- Mine federal databases, databases from the EdTrust, and other national-level databases to create Western state-specific research and policy briefs on timely and relevant topics