Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2009
3.30 - 5.00 pm
Estancia G
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Programs & Services Committee Meeting

Carl Shaff (NV), chair
Joseph Garcia (CO), vice chair
Roy Ogawa (HI), ex officio
Jane Nichols (NV), ex officio

Diane Barrans (AK)
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Position vacant (CA)
Committee vice chair (CO)
Helene Sokugawa (HI)
Michael Rush (ID)
Kerra Melvin (MT)
Committee chair (NV)
Dede Feldman (NM)
Pamela Kostelecky (ND)
James Sager (OR)
Tad Perry (SD)
Peter C. Knudson (UT)
Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney (WA)
Klaus Hanson (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Carl Shaff, chair
Staff: Terese Rainwater, program director,
      State Scholars Initiative
      Margo Schultz, program coordinator,
      Student Exchange Programs

Action Item
Approval of the Programs and Services
Committee meeting minutes of
November 10, 2008  7-3

Action Item
Approval of the FY 2010 Programs and
Services workplan – Terese Rainwater and
Margo Schultz  7-8

Action Item
Approval of criteria for early participation in WICHE’s
Professional Student Exchange Program
by provisionally accredited schools
in high-demand fields – Margo Schultz  7-12

Discussion Item:
State Scholars Data and Sustainability – Terese Rainwater  7-21
Information Item:
Student Exchange Program update and report on the
May 17, 2009, meeting of the WICHE certifying officers –
Margo Schultz

Other business

Adjournment
Commissioner Lind called the meeting to order. COMMISSIONER JAMES HANSEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 19, 2008, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING. COMMISSIONER KLAUS HANSON SECONDED THE MOTION. The motion passed unanimously.

Information Item

Student Exchange Program Updates

Margo Schultz, program coordinator of WICHE’s Student Exchange Programs, gave an update. Enrollment in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (which allows students from the WICHE region to enroll at participating institutions and pay 150 percent of resident tuition) increased slightly, from 22,100 students in fall 2007 to 23,500 students in fall 2008. There are currently 143 participating universities and community colleges. Staff received an inquiry from a California community college interested in WUE, but in-state tuition in California is low because it is heavily subsidized, and 150 percent of the in-state rate would not cover the costs of education. Staff is trying to pursue a solution and hopes that at some point it will be feasible for some California community colleges to join WUE.

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) offers lower-cost access to master’s and doctoral-degree programs not widely available in the West. To be eligible for WRGP, programs that are not related to health must be “distinctive,” meaning they must be offered at no more than five institutions in the WICHE region (outside of California). Staff initiated a special nominations round in November 2008 for master’s, Ph.D., and graduate certificate programs to join WRGP, with a focus on professional science master’s (PSMs) and healthcare-related programs. Schultz asked commissioners to visit a website that describes where professional science master’s programs are currently offered (www.sciencemasters.com) and encouraged any such programs in their state to apply.

In the 2008-09 academic year, 758 students were enrolled through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) in 10 healthcare fields, with support fees totaling over $14.6 million. Participation is down slightly from 773 students in the previous academic year.

WICHE’s Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council met in June 2008 and has amended its bylaws concerning council membership categories. Typically, each state has a pre-vet advisor or a practicing D.V.M. and a state legislator. Unfortunately, most states’ legislative representatives have found it difficult to participate on the council because of legislative session conflicts or lack of travel funds. Council members voted that states may substitute the executive director of the state veterinary medicine association for the legislator, if they would be more likely to participate.
Schultz encouraged commissioners to read WICHE’s newest workforce brief on oral healthcare, released during the WICHE Commission’s November 2008 meeting. The brief is the fourth in a series that looks at the West’s healthcare workforce needs (previous briefs addressed workforce issues in health information technology, pharmacy, and medical education).

Schultz reviewed some key points from both the medical education and oral healthcare workforce briefs. Access to services in the West is more difficult than elsewhere in the U.S., because our region is very rural; 75 percent of its counties are nonmetro, and 11 percent of the West’s population resides in those counties. Recruiting providers in rural areas is also a challenge, and reimbursement rates tend to be lower. It is not financially feasible for most new doctors or dentists with high debt load to locate in the rural areas. The West is also very diverse, but its providers do not reflect its diverse population. Although the West has increased the number of underrepresented minorities in dentistry by 160 percent from 2000 to 2007, they only represent 10.2 percent of the West’s entering dentistry classes, which is lower than the 13.2 percent national average. Two solutions include recruiting within diverse and rural communities and providing students with the opportunity to train in community health centers. A.T. Still University’s School of Dental and Oral Health in Mesa, AZ, is a good example of such a program.

Allied dental practitioners also can play an important role in filling the workforce gaps. Dental hygiene is among the fastest-growing occupations, but most hygienists work with dentists in private practice. Several Western states are leading the way in expanding dental hygienists’ scope of practice and decreasing their supervision requirements, so that they can practice independently. These states include: Alaska, California, Colorado, Oregon, New Mexico, and Washington. The most striking and innovative example is Alaska’s dental health aide therapists (DHATs), who serve remote villages in the state. They are trained over two years and are authorized to do procedures that normally only a dentist would do: routine fillings, extractions, and even restorations. On a related note, Schultz also asked the commissioners to consider their states’ need for dental hygienists with a master’s degree. Several master’s programs have developed recently, and WICHE sees the value of these graduates serving as dental hygiene faculty. Programs in the West include those at: University of California, San Francisco, Idaho State University, University of New Mexico, Eastern Washington University, and the University of Washington.

Commissioner Peter Knudson of Utah, who is a practicing orthodontist as well as a state senator, shared his perspective on the current oral healthcare situation in the West and commented on WICHE’s oral healthcare workforce brief. Utah is typical of other Western states: there is a concentration of dentists in the state’s metropolitan areas. He noted that dentistry has traditionally competed with primary care for Medicaid reimbursement dollars. Rates were so low that many dentists preferred to treat pro bono to avoid the billing hassles. As reimbursement rates increase, more dentists are taking Medicaid patients.

Knudson worked in public healthcare dentistry for three years upon his graduation from dental school. Forty years ago, medical professionals did not understand that good oral health care was essential to a patient’s overall well-being. Fortunately, the medical profession has become an ally in advocating for better oral healthcare, especially pediatricians.

Regarding dental hygienists’ role, Knudson said that Utah has had several proposals to expand their scope of practice, and he sees the value of this: more people will have access to oral healthcare. Their emerging role is synonymous with that of physician assistants and nurse practitioners in primary care. He also sees a need for M.S. dental hygienists.

Commissioner Garcia commented that he served on a dental board in the past, and dentists were not willing to cede control of their scope of practice. Some dentists are concerned that hygienists could encroach on their scope of practice in urban areas, too. Commissioner Lind, who lived in the Alaskan bush for two years, said there was a lot of opposition to Alaska’s DHAT, but that it came to be despite the political pressures against it, and the model has been successful thus far.

Commissioner Hanson questioned Wyoming’s decision to not require service payback of its PSEP graduates. Knudson commented that Utah stopped supporting in dentistry through PSEP once it started a state loan repayment program for dentists. Knudson also said that the United States leads the world in state-of-the art dentistry, but there are still many people in the country who don’t receive oral healthcare, and the challenge is making sure that they benefit too.

Commissioner Lind asked why WUE growth seemed to have slowed over recent years. Jere Mock responded that several factors are at play: some institutions are capping the number of WUE slots that are available each year, and there are more state-based scholarships or voucher programs designed to encourage students to enroll in their home state.
Terese Rainwater, program director for the State Scholars Initiative (SSI), provided a program update, presented SSI data, and discussed sustainability options. Rainwater reported that SSI has two goals: to increase the number of high school students taking a rigorous course of study; and to engage the business community in this endeavor. WICHE has been granted continuation funding from the U.S. Department of Education through March 31, 2009. WICHE has also submitted a request to extend SSI funding through September 30, 2009.

SSI State Models
As WICHE enters its fourth year of program administration, Rainwater highlighted five examples of state implementation, noting the flexibility SSI provides to accommodate state needs.

- **Kentucky: Community College Partners model.** In an effort to expand the reach of its program and bring it to scale statewide, Kentucky Scholars has entered into a partnership with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and its 16 colleges. KCTCS is exploring ways to provide scholarship support to students who graduate as Kentucky Scholars. To sustain this effort, the Kentucky Department of Education will match the KCTCS grant with $100,000.

- **New Hampshire: Program of attraction model.** Since the beginning of its contract with WICHE, New Hampshire Scholars has sought to enlist new school districts by using every opportunity to meet with school district staff and potential business partners statewide. As a result the program has grown from six pilot school districts in 2007 to 12 school districts in 2008. New Hampshire Scholars anticipates that number doubling in 2009, for a total of 24 school districts. By 2010 they hope to have enlisted 40 school districts, an important milestone since it would represent over half the state’s high schools. Once this goal has been reached, the program plans to approach the New Hampshire Legislature for funding to expand the program statewide and sustain efforts in already participating school districts.

- **South Dakota.** South Dakota Scholars is coordinating statewide efforts with the South Dakota Department of Education regarding career planning, career clusters utilization, and career software availability, so that all of these resources are universally available to students in the state. The department of education has expressed interest in sustaining South Dakota Scholars past federal funding. Since the beginning of 2007, when South Dakota Scholars began, the program has grown from four pilot school districts to some 20 school districts.

- **Tennessee.** Tennessee Scholars has developed several different avenues for sustaining its program, including efforts at the state and county levels. Its most recent success was the development of the Educate and Grow Sumner County initiative, which offers full tuition scholarships to Tennessee Scholars interested in attending Volunteer State Community College. The Sumner County Commission allocated $500,000 in seed money. To qualify, students must meet the following requirements:
  - Complete all Tennessee Scholars requirements.
  - Maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher.
  - Complete 40 hours of community service.
  - Maintain a 95 percent attendance rate during the last year of high school, with no out-of-school suspensions during the last two year of high school.

- **Utah.** In 2008 Utah Scholars received a state appropriation of nearly $1 million to create and fund the Regents’ Scholarship. The scholarship has two levels. It provides a $1,000 base scholarship to any student who completes the Utah Scholars core course of study with a minimum GPA; and a scholarship equal to 75 percent of tuition for two years of full-time college enrollment to students who complete the Utah Scholars core course of study with a 3.5 GPA and a 26 score on the ACT.

Rainwater provided a brief summary of the Year Three evaluation findings from SSI’s two independent evaluators, Diana Robinson of Northern Illinois University (NIU) and Karen Paulson of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). Three types of data are collected to better understand the effect that SSI has in participating states and school districts. These are: qualitative, student course-level, and perception data. Data from
the NIU and the NCHEMS evaluations point to the importance of the personal connection between the business volunteers and the students in influencing students to take more rigorous courses. Year Three perception data indicate that SSI has had a positive influence on all groups involved: students, parents, businesspeople, teachers, and guidance counselors.

Following up on the National Summit on Academic Rigor and Relevance, Rainwater reported that the summit proceedings, “No Longer at Risk: A Nation in Peril,” was produced and disseminated. In addition WICHE created and maintains a National Summit webpage, which provides links to the speeches given and materials provided at the meeting. Finally, WICHE responded to several individual state requests for information.

In preparation for the 2008-2009 school year, WICHE released a multiple products to support state programs, including: the summit proceedings, September 2008 newsletter, “Why Foreign Language?” brief, and the SSI Volunteer Management Database (VMD). The VMD is an online tool that assists states in the management of their programs as they expand, while simultaneously providing a means by which business partners and schools can schedule trainings, presentations, and student recognition events. All active SSI programs received a VMD customized for their state. The VMD was created in partnership with Northern Illinois University.

Rainwater reported that WICHE is funded through March 31, 2009, with a likely extension through September 30, 2009. In the meantime WICHE has approached corporations and foundations to see if they would be willing to assist in providing funds to transition the federal State Scholars Initiative to nonfederal funding and status.

Pat Shea, director of the WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE), provided an update on WICHE’s newest exchange. ICE, founded in 2007, allows regionally accredited two- and four-year institutions and consortia to exchange seats in online courses and to collaborate in the development of online programs. This exchange allows institutions to increase their revenue by offering seats in courses with extra capacity and provides institutions importing the seats with a way to expand their academic offerings. Students benefit by registering, using financial aid, and having the courses transcribed by their home institution, avoiding the extra cost of applying to another institution and attempting to transfer a course which may or may not be accepted by their program. Current members of WICHE ICE include: Arizona Universities Network, Bismark State College, Boise State College, Eastern Washington University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College (ID), Montana State University, North Dakota University System Online, South Dakota System of Higher Education, University of Alaska Anchorage, University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Nevada, Reno, University of Utah, and University of Wyoming.

Shea focused on findings from the current business and marketing planning process, funded by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Principal among those findings was that the timing is good for the rollout of the ICE program, due to advances in technology and the market demand for flexible learning opportunities that make online learning an increasingly attractive and financially viable option for institutions. E-learning also provides the flexibility to respond quickly to emerging workforce needs in the state and region, an important goal at this time of global competition. And as the economy further depletes already declining funding for higher education, many institutions are looking for ways to continue to meet student needs in a more cost-effective way. ICE provides some practical and timely solutions.

To help inform the business and marketing plan, WICHE conducted research on the status of e-learning in higher education today. Highlights included the recent study “Making the Grade: Online Education in the U.S., 2006,” by the Sloan Consortium, which found that online students now represent close to 17 percent of all higher education enrollments in the U.S. and forecast that this trend will grow. A survey conducted by ICE in September of 400-plus academic leaders at institutions in the WICHE states provided additional insight about the future role of online learning in the West. The survey found that:

- 63 percent have a strategic plan to develop and execute online learning.
- 86 percent are planning to expand online course or program offerings.
- 42 percent are planning to partner with other institutions to grow online enrollments.
- 39 percent are engaged in collaborative online degree programs with other institutions.
- 71 percent are open to internal process assessment and action.
- 90 percent see value in a collaborative online initiative.
- 51 percent interested in learning more about WICHE ICE.
Other findings included a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of ICE. Strengths included: a visionary leadership and committed champions; demonstrated market (student) need; a wide range of intellectual capital to draw from; the WICHE "brand" and reputation as a core attribute; and experienced early adopters who know how to implement ICE. Weaknesses included: a lack of funding; the ICE cost/membership model built on an old paradigm; reliance on internal campus infrastructure resources, support, and processes; campus organization and thinking in silos; and busy academic audiences lacking the time to learn how to implement a new program. Opportunities included: expanded access for students; more teaching opportunities for faculty; generation of new revenue sources to fund (and possibly save) programs; recognition of participating institutions as innovative; the chance to step out of old paradigms; and the demonstration of WICHE’s continued innovative leadership. Threats included: a lack of funding; silo thinking at institutions; process barriers to integration at the campus level; short-term vs. long-term thinking/commitment; failure to develop a core strategy/plan; and difficulty in getting the word out.

ICE will continue to work on the business and marketing plan over the next few months. During that time it will also mail out a new brochure, distributed to the commissioners at the meeting. It will stress the message, via its website and elsewhere, that ICE provides access to students and opportunity to institutions. More specifically, through ICE, students can have increased access to courses and programs to support career and personal growth; learn with peers to increase the understanding of the bigger world outside their local area; accelerate their course of study and get an education on their own timetable (convenience and flexibility redefined); and enhance the quality of the educational experience by studying and learning from experts at different institutions. Through ICE, institutions can access new and emerging student markets; ensure learning options are available to low (and declining) population areas; increase the strength and presence of specialty or niche course and program offerings to stay viable; save money through a shared revenue model; support student retention; enhance institutional positioning through key faculty collaborations; and increase market awareness of innovative practices and undertakings.

Shea asked commissioners to help spread the word about ICE by talking to their governor, legislators, and academic leaders about opportunities through ICE; by encouraging long-range academic planning for online offerings at the campus, system, and state level with ICE as a strategy; by advising ICE staff on specific academic needs or assets to share; and by assisting in securing funding to develop joint programs and provide stability to ICE operations.
## WICHE WORKPLAN 2010
### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (Highlighted)

### EXISTING ACTIVITIES

#### Finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Tuition and Fees report (GF)</td>
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<td>Non-Traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners (Lumina)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid (Lumina)</td>
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<td>Performance measurement improvement in the Western states public mental health programs</td>
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<td>Legislative Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO) (GF, Lumina, Pathways)</td>
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<td>Evaluation of Colorado’s College Opportunity Fund (COF) (Colorado Department of Higher Education, Donnell-Kay Foundation)</td>
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<td>Master Property Program, insurance and risk consortium (self-funding)</td>
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<td>Collaborative purchasing through MHEC/WICHE Xerox contracts (self-funding)</td>
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#### Access & Success

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<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student Exchange Programs: Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP); Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP); Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) (state-funded)</td>
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<td>Internet Course Exchange (ICE) (Sloan Foundation and membership dues)</td>
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<td>State Scholars Initiative (OVAE)</td>
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<td>Bridges to the Professoriate (HHS)</td>
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<td>Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid (Lumina)</td>
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<td>Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity (ACT, College Board, and GF)</td>
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<td>Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Minority Health, Sullivan Alliance)</td>
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<td>State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO) (GF, Lumina, Pathways)</td>
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<td>Children’s mental health improvement projects in Wyoming and South Dakota</td>
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<td>College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network (state subcontracts/U.S. Department of Education)</td>
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<td>Initiatives to expand educational equity for underrepresented ethnic students</td>
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<td>Best Practices in Statewide Transfer and Articulation Systems</td>
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#### Technology & Innovation

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<tr>
<td>Western Academic Leadership Forum (membership dues and TIAA-CREF grant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fostering Collaborative State-level Education and Workforce Database Development (Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation)</td>
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<td>Professional development services to help colleges and universities offer quality e-learning programs, including WCET’s annual conference (Oct. 21-24 in Denver), CatalystCAMP for new e-learning professionals (in conjunction with annual conference), webcast seminars for faculty development, and establishment of an iTunesU channel to access WCET podcasts (WCET)</td>
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• Expansion of the services, scope of resources, and number of participants in the eLearning Consortia common interest group, in partnership with Kansas State University’s Institute for Academic Alliance (WCET)
• Provision of comparisons of electronic learning software and online course evaluations via the widely recognized EduTools website (WCET)
• Expansion of utilization of Web 2.0 social networking and new breed of web-based communications tools, serving as a prototype for other WICHE programs (WCET)

Workforce

• Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Minority Health, Sullivan Alliance)
• 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 (WICHE ICE)
• Healthcare and emerging fields’ workforce briefs (GF)
• Collaboration with Colorado Department of Labor to expand access to online education via WICHE ICE in four-state demonstration project (Sloan Foundation)

• Mental health student exchange
• Building partnerships for competency: public mental health workforce development
• Rural mental health training initiatives

Accountability

• Fostering Collaborative State-level Education and Workforce Database (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
• Benchmarks: WICHE Region (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 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
• Electronic Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts (GF)
• Policy Publications Clearinghouse (GF)
• State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO) (GF, Lumina, Pathways)
• Launching of the initial phase of the Transparency By Design website, to educate adult students to become better consumers of online education (WCET)
• Establishment of a knowledge base of existing research and best practices about academic integrity and student verification in online learning in response to Higher Education Opportunity Act legislation, serving as a resource to institutions and the accrediting community (WCET)
### NEW DIRECTIONS
(approved by the commission)

#### Finance
- Technical assistance with state financial aid program design and funding (single-state support, as requested)

#### Access & Success
- Expanded access to cyber-infrastructure, research and education networks, and applications for geographically remote or underserved institutions, including minority-serving institutions in the West by working with national broadband initiatives of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Technology and Innovation)
- Establishment of a knowledge base of existing research and good practices that improve student retention in online courses and programs (WCET)
- *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity* methodology review and expansion
- Expansion of WICHE ICE to develop new multi-institution academic collaborations to produce online courses and programs in high-demand fields

#### Technology & Innovation
- Transitioning EduTools to a new model focused on community contributions of knowledge, in partnership with WCET’s new LMS/CMS common interest group and with the National K-20 Initiative of Internet2 (WCET)
- Advancement of the work of the new common interest group on academic administration and academic policies related to e-learning, attracting more academic administrators to actively participate in peer discussions of a variety of academic and faculty issues related to distance education, online education, and technology-enhanced learning (WCET)
- Expansion of the availability and use of research and education networks (state, regional, and national) for health and mental health services and related educational outreach (Technology and Innovation, Mental Health)
- Development of a broadband technology policy and awareness initiative that supports individual state and regional efforts to deploy, connect, and use advanced networks in support of education, healthcare, and research by working with national broadband initiatives of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Technology and Innovation)
- Technologically enhance the State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC) learning center
- Expansion of WICHE ICE (Sloan and memberships)

#### Workforce
- Expansion of professional advisory councils (health professions)
- Survey of PSEP medical and dental schools’ rural track and pipeline programs to identify best practices
- Assessment of Mental Health Program distance-learning opportunities for California’s small and frontier counties (Mental Health and WCET)
- Collaboration with Colorado Department of Labor to expand access to online education via WICHE ICE in four-state demonstration project (Sloan Foundation)
ON THE HORIZON
(not yet submitted to the commission)

Finance
- Residency policies
- Research and analysis of outcome-based funding approaches

Access & Success
- Expanding adult degree completion through online education via ICE
- Expansion of the State Scholars Initiative with new funding
- Broadening on-campus and online educational options for active service members and veterans

Technology & Innovation
- Research on strategies and good practices that promote use of open educational resources in higher education (WCET)
- Research on effective intervention strategies to increase student retention and student success in online courses and programs (WCET)

Workforce
- Policy and Mental Health collaboration on recidivism reduction in the prison population
- Assisting states in identifying academic program development needs and exploring new regional student exchange opportunities
- 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
- Extending the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce initiative into other WICHE states

Accountability
- International Comparisons of Learning Outcomes
- Research and analysis of outcome-based funding approaches
- Second phase of the Transparency By Design website: the site will improve and enrich the institutional and program data offered, recruit more institutions to participate, and expand marketing of the site to attract more users (WCET)
ACTION ITEM
Criteria for Early Participation in WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program by Provisionally Accredited Schools in High-Demand Fields

Summary
WICHE policy currently requires that professional programs receiving students through the WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) have full accreditation status. Staff proposes that the commission adopt criteria for determining whether provisionally accredited professional schools in high-demand fields should be allowed to enroll students through PSEP. Staff also recommends allowing the new, provisionally accredited dental schools and optometry schools at Midwestern University, in Glendale, AZ, and Western University of Health Sciences, in Pomona, CA, to participate in PSEP, effective in 2010-11. In addition, staff recommends that A.T. Still University’s osteopathic medicine program in Mesa, AZ, be allowed to participate once it has satisfactorily addressed all of the additional provisional accreditation requirements specified by the Commission of Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA).

Relationship to the WICHE Mission
WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program enables WICHE to fulfill its mission of expanding access to postsecondary education and assisting states with workforce development.

Background
WICHE policy currently requires that professional programs receiving students through the PSEP have full accreditation status. Full accreditation is granted to programs after their first class of graduates, when they meet their professional accrediting body’s standards for education. Our policy also requires that if a participating program experiences a change of status affecting its accreditation, the program must report the change to WICHE. If the new status involves a loss of the rights and privileges accorded to graduates of fully accredited programs, the participation of new students will be suspended, pending restoration of full accreditation. This policy has insured that the programs provide the necessary core of required education, training, and experience for their graduates. It also gives students enrolled in the programs reasonable assurance that the professional programs are meeting their stated objectives.

In May 2003 the WICHE Commission was asked to allow two dental schools early participation in the program: A.T. Still University (ATSU), Mesa, and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. In November 2003 the commission approved the schools’ participation, and they were eligible to enroll WICHE-supported students in fall 2004. Both schools graduated their first classes in May 2007 and received full accreditation. Allowing the dental schools to enroll PSEP students prior to their full accreditation worked out well, particularly at ATSU’s dental school. ATSU has one of the largest PSEP enrollments of WICHE’s 10 cooperating dental schools. Thirty percent of ATSU’s dental graduates are now serving in community health centers, a tribute to their innovative model that focuses on public health dentistry. The majority of Arizona’s PSEP dental students (over 40 percent) chose to enroll at ATSU in the 2008-09 academic year.

In recent months WICHE has been asked to make an exception to its policy by several new private schools in the fields of dentistry, optometry, and osteopathic medicine. They are:

- A.T. Still University, Mesa (osteopathic medicine)
- Midwestern University, Glendale (dentistry and optometry)
- Western University of Health Sciences (dentistry and optometry)
- Rocky Vista University (osteopathic medicine)
- Pacific Northwest University of Health Science (osteopathic medicine)

Because of the critical healthcare workforce shortages the West is facing, particularly in oral healthcare, vision care, and primary care, WICHE staff and some certifying officers recommend that the commission review and approve these schools’ requests for early participation in the program, provided that the following criteria are met:

1. The institution itself is either fully accredited by a regional accrediting agency or holds candidacy status and is actively pursuing regional accreditation. Candidacy is a pre-accreditation status that demonstrates the institution
meets all eligibility requirements. Candidate institutions are evaluated biennially and typically apply for full accreditation at the end of four years, though some institutions choose to apply after two years of candidacy. Although candidacy is awarded to institutions which show strong evidence that they can achieve accreditation within the candidacy period, it does not assure full accreditation; some institutions are denied. Full accreditation status can take up to seven years.

2. The regional accrediting agency has given approval for the institution to offer the new professional program (when applicable).

3. The new professional program has been approved by the state higher education agency assigned to review new programs (in states where this is applicable).

4. The professional program has received provisional (or initial) accreditation by its professional accrediting body and does not have any specific requirements or any recommendations of major concern cited in its most recent accreditation report.

5. The school offers a program of study in a high-demand field where there is substantial competition for admission; and the number of currently cooperating WICHE schools in that field is proportionately small, compared to the demand for seats.

6. The proposed professional program prepares students to serve underserved, rural, and other vulnerable populations.

Although their professional programs have received provisional accreditation, Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences and Rocky Vista University have not yet applied for regional accreditation, so their requests cannot be reviewed at this time. Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences plans to apply to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) later this year. Rocky Vista University is preparing its eligibility application to the North Central Association/Higher Learning Commission (NCAHLC), for submission by December 2009. WICHE staff will consider requests for early participation from these two schools once they are candidates for regional accreditation and as long as their preliminary professional accreditation is in good standing.

The following sections, organized by discipline, provide detail on the accreditation process, substantiation of workforce need, information about each petitioning program, and staff recommendations for each program requesting early participation in PSEP.

Dentistry

Dental Schools’ Accreditation Process

The American Dental Association’s (ADA’s) Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and accredits dental schools in the United States. A developing program must apply to CODA for initial accreditation. This classification is granted to any dental, advanced dental, or allied dental education program which is in the planning and early stages of development or at an intermediate stage of program implementation and not yet fully operational. Initial accreditation provides evidence to educational institutions, licensing bodies, and government or other granting agencies that, at the time of initial evaluations, the developing education program has the potential to meet the standards set forth in the requirements for an accredited dental educational program. Initial accreditation is granted based upon one or more site evaluation visits and until the program is fully operational.

Initial accreditation is the highest accreditation level that a school can qualify for until it becomes fully operational. A second site visit is conducted in the second year of the program, and then again prior to the graduation of the first class. Upon favorable review the school should receive full accreditation approval without reporting requirements, which is granted to an educational program that achieves or exceeds the basic requirements for accreditation. Alternatively, a program may receive full accreditation approval with reporting requirements, which indicates that specific deficiencies or weaknesses exist in one or more areas. Evidence of compliance with the cited standards must be demonstrated within 18 months if the program is between one and two years in length or within two years if the program is at least two years in length. If the deficiencies are not corrected within the specified time period, accreditation will be withdrawn, unless CODA extends the period for achieving compliance for good cause.

Students who enter a program with the status of “initial accreditation” and who complete the program are considered graduates of a fully accredited program for purposes of licensure, application to specialty programs, etc. ADA’s website (www.ada.org/prof/ed/accred/commission/index.asp) provides additional detail.
New Dental Schools: Background Information

Midwestern University College of Dental Medicine. Midwestern University’s Glendale campus opened in 1995 with the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine and now consists of 14 healthcare programs in the fields of: osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, dental medicine, optometry, physician assistant studies, physical therapy, occupational therapy, biomedical science, bioethics, health professions education, cardiovascular science/perfusion, podiatric medicine, nurse anesthesia, and clinical psychology. Some 1,300 students are enrolled in the university’s programs in Glendale. Midwestern already receives PSEP students in the fields of occupational therapy, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physician assistant studies, and podiatric medicine. The parent campus, located in Chicago, was founded in 1900 as the American College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery. In 1988 the medical college relocated to Downers Grove, a western Chicago suburb. The university is an independent (private), nonprofit institution. Midwestern University attained full university status in 1993 and maintains full accreditation from North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission through 2017-2018.

Midwestern University’s College of Dental Medicine matriculated its first class of 111 students in fall 2008 under the leadership of Dean Richard Simonsen, D.D.S., M.S. The 2008-09 tuition is $58,000. The class size will be increased to 145 students over time. Graduates of the program will receive a doctor of dental medicine (D.D.M.). Midwestern received approval from the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education to offer the program, and the North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission reviewed the addition of the program and conducted a follow-up site visit in January 2008. The program received initial accreditation from CODA in February 2008; follow-up site visits are scheduled for spring 2010 and spring 2012; no major concerns were cited in the CODA letter.

Midwestern’s dental program focuses on evidence-based critical inquiry; preventive, minimally invasive clinical orientation; and understanding research and a commitment to service. Its curriculum includes basic, behavioral, and clinical sciences; preclinical simulation studies; practical clinical dentistry and community clinical rotations. Its systems-based, preclinical, basic sciences program is distinctive. The students participate in classes based around a particular system (for example, the cardiovascular system) and lectures on the different basic sciences related to that system, while studying a clinical case scenario related to the system, so that they better understand the importance of the basic sciences to their future dental experiences. Midwestern’s curriculum also emphasizes ethics and character development. The program gives the student an understanding of the professional obligations and duties of dentists, particularly in regard to underserved populations. Students will do their clinical experiences in a technologically advanced, 242-chair clinic, as well as in off-site rotations into underserved areas at community health centers and other clinics for underserved populations.

Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine. WUHS was founded in 1977 as the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and now consists of nine graduate health professions colleges: optometry, dentistry, podiatric medicine, biomedical sciences, osteopathic medicine, allied health, pharmacy, graduate nursing, and veterinary medicine. It is a private, nonprofit institution. Western University attained full university status in 1996 and has full accreditation from the Western Association of Colleges (WASC). Over 2,200 students attend the university, located in Pomona, CA. WUHS receives PSEP students in the fields of osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, and physician assistant.

The Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Dental Medicine will matriculate its first class of 64 students in fall 2009 under the leadership of Dean James Koelbl, D.D.S., M.S., M.J. The 2009-10 tuition is $49,500. Graduates of the program will receive a doctor of dental medicine. WASC authorized the “substantive change implementation” that allows Western University to offer the new program. In addition to serving as a “regional” accreditor, WASC also serves as the state agency in charge of reviewing new programs in California. The dental program received initial accreditation from CODA in January 2009; follow-up site visits are scheduled for spring 2011 and spring 2013; no concerns were cited in the letter.

Western University’s dental curriculum is patient-centered, with a student-centered learning environment. Students develop their skills in state-of-the art simulation clinics and gain extensive clinical experience on campus and in various community-based settings. Dentistry students are trained alongside students from other healthcare professions, preparing them for multipractice, collaborative clinical settings, which are becoming more common. In addition to the dental curriculum, students are trained in business, practice management, leadership, and communication skills to help them become successful practitioners.
Dental Education and Workforce Issues
The West and the nation have tremendous workforce demand in oral healthcare, especially for practitioners willing to work in rural areas or with underserved populations. At the same time, large numbers of dentists are projected to retire in the next 20 years. The American Dental Education Association (ADEA) estimates that from 2014 to 2027, more dentists will leave the workforce than enter it (assuming that the number of dental graduates remains stable and that retirement age is 65). In 2003, 56 dental programs existed in the U.S. For the 2009-10 academic year, 58 institutions will enroll students. Admission to dental school is extremely competitive. In 2007-08, 13,742 applicants applied for 4,618 seats, giving applicants only a 34 percent chance of being admitted. WICHE released a workforce brief on oral healthcare (www.wiche.edu/SEP/PSEP/oralCare.pdf) in November 2008, providing additional detail.

Cooperating PSEP Dental Schools
WICHE states supported a total of 143 students in dentistry in 2008-09. Enrollment details are as shown in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending State</th>
<th>AZHS</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UCLA</th>
<th>UCSF</th>
<th>UOP</th>
<th>USC</th>
<th>COLO</th>
<th>UNLV</th>
<th>ORE</th>
<th>WASH</th>
<th>Out of Region</th>
<th>Total Number Students</th>
<th>Total Fees Paid by Sending State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Arizona</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>51</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$234,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>$3,145,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WICHE staff contacted representatives from cooperating PSEP schools of dentistry regarding the two programs that have requested early participation in PSEP and received one response. The individual encouraged WICHE to grant the petitioning dental schools early admission into PSEP, stating that the accreditation process is rigorous and an institution would not be given a pre-accreditation status to admit an entering class if they did not fulfill important criteria to provide students with a good education that qualified them to test for their license upon graduation.

Staff Recommendation
Competition for seats in dental schools is among the highest of all healthcare professions, and several WICHE states over the past few years have been unable to fully use their PSEP dentistry funding at our preferred in-region institutions. As a result almost 28 percent of our dentistry students are enrolled at out-of-region institutions. Students who study in-region are more likely to remain in the West upon graduating, and PSEP was created to build the regional workforce. Providing access to WICHE students at two additional schools will allow them potential access to an additional 186 seats. **WICHE staff recommends that the commission approve the schools’ requests for early participation, effective for the 2010-11 academic year. Staff will monitor the schools’ progress until full accreditation is received.**

Optometry

Optometry Accreditation Process
The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and accredits optometry schools in the United States. If a new program demonstrates that it is developing within council standards, it receives the status of preliminary approval, which allows it to begin student recruitment and admission and start offering the program. The school receives a second site visit after the first class is enrolled, and it must submit periodic reports to the council until its final accreditation visit, when its inaugural class is in its fourth year of the program. If the school is in compliance, it is then granted full accreditation.

Students who enter a program with the status of “preliminary approval” and who complete the program are considered graduates of a fully accredited program for purposes of licensure, application to specialty programs, etc. (Additional detail is available at www.aoa.org/x5157.xml).
New Optometry Schools: Background Information

Midwestern University’s Arizona College of Optometry. Midwestern University’s Arizona College of Optometry (see background information on Midwestern in earlier section) will matriculate its first class of 50 students in fall 2009 under the leadership of Dean Hector Santiago, O.D., Ph.D. The program will have the potential to eventually enroll 200 students. The 2009-10 tuition is estimated at $27,500. Graduates will receive a doctor of optometry degree. Midwestern received approval from the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education to offer the program, and the North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission approved the addition of the program on June 25, 2008. The program received preliminary approval from ACOE in November 2008. ACOE plans to conduct an evaluation visit in March or April 2010, after the first class is enrolled. Periodic reports will be due as the first class progresses through its third year. Twelve months prior to the graduation of the first class (graduation is in spring 2013), ACOE will conduct its final site visit to determine the college’s final accreditation status. No concerns were cited in the ACOE November 2008 letter.

Midwestern’s program features an interdisciplinary environment where students from different colleges share classes and clinical opportunities. Construction of the Midwestern University Eye Institute began in 2009 and will be completed by spring 2010. The clinic will provide training for optometry students, allow community outreach, and offer state-of-the-art vision care to the surrounding populations. Students will offer vision screening services to schools, nursing homes, and community centers. The college will offer electrodiagnostic and prosthetic eye services not currently offered by optometrists in the region. It will also provide other services not widely available, such as low vision rehabilitation to serve the needs of patients with significant visual impairment, vision training for patients with eye teaming and focusing dysfunctions, sports vision to enhance the visual skills of athletes, and infant vision care. The program is developing innovative educational and clinical opportunities for students interested in serving populations with limited access to vision care. These populations include Hispanics and Native Americans, who have a higher incidence of diabetes-related vision disorders, and African Americans, who have a higher incidence of glaucoma and macular degeneration. The externship program will allow students to practice and provide primary eye care services in federally operated hospitals, the Indian Health Service, and public and private health care institutions in the region.

Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry. Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Optometry (WUCO) will matriculate its first class of 70 students in fall 2009 under the leadership of Dean Elizabeth Hoppe, O.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H. (Background information on the Western University of Health Sciences is provided in an earlier section.) The 2009-10 tuition is estimated at $27,700. Graduates will receive a doctor of optometry degree (O.D.). In December 2008 the Western Association of Colleges authorized a “substantive change implementation” that allows Western University to offer the new optometry program. As mentioned earlier, in California, in addition to serving as a “regional” accreditor, WASC also serves as the state agency in charge of reviewing new programs. The optometry program received preliminary approval from the American Council on Optometric Education in February 2008. ACOE will conduct an evaluation visit in March 2010, after the first class is enrolled. After that, periodic reports will be due while the first class of students progress through their third year. Then 12 months prior to the graduation of the first class (the inaugural class will graduate in spring 2013), ACOE will conduct its final site visit to determine the college’s final accreditation status. No concerns were cited in ACOE’s February 2008 letter.

WUCO offers several distinctive features to prospective students, including early entry into patient care, an emphasis on interprofessional education, and an emphasis on optometric rehabilitation. Students will begin patient contact during the fourth week of the first year in the program through a community-based school screening program and continue to develop their clinical skills throughout the program. Western University has made a commitment to interprofessional education across the entire campus and within all programs (optometry, medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry) during students’ preclinical and clinical years. This innovative model fosters a team approach to patient care and healthcare management. The college’s focus on optometric rehabilitation includes neuro-optometric rehabilitation, vision therapy, low vision rehabilitation, and care for vulnerable populations such as individuals with autism, developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities.

Optometry Workforce Needs

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of optometrists is projected to grow faster than average for all occupations through 2014, in response to the vision care needs of a growing and aging population. The demand for optometric services will increase because of the growth of those in the oldest age group, who are more likely to suffer from cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes, and hypertension. There are additional factors that will likely increase the demand for optometric services. State and federal programs are expanding children’s vision initiatives across the United States. There is also an increase in traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), which affect the eyes. Of note,
the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are 7,500 undiagnosed TBI patients among military personnel returning from Iraq. Finally, as technological innovation in eye care continues to increase, more options are available to those with vision disabilities. In addition, in more than half of the communities in the U.S., there is only one licensed optometrist in practice.

Cooperating PSEP Optometry Schools
WICHE states supported a total of 133 students in optometry in 2008-09. Enrollment details are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTOMETRY</th>
<th>Receiving Schools</th>
<th>Total Number Students</th>
<th>Total Fees Paid by Sending State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sending State</td>
<td>SCCO</td>
<td>PACU</td>
<td>Out of Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
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<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Utah</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WICHE staff contacted representatives from cooperating PSEP schools of optometry. One school representative commented that they were not sure why optometry schools warranted exceptions when pharmacy schools, for example, had not had them in the past. (WICHE partners with 17 pharmacy schools, and only 41 students from three states are supported in the field; whereas 12 WICHE states currently support 147 students in optometry, and the majority of the students only have two in-region schools to which they can apply.) They also encouraged the agency to carefully review the programs to assure that they are of high quality.

The second respondent did not believe that participating schools are in a position to advise WICHE on this issue. They also said they are disheartened to see the erosion of WICHE support for Southern California College of Optometry and Pacific University, due to the fact that states can allow their students to take WICHE support outside of the region. (For instance, Colorado allows applicants who are denied an offer at a WICHE school but are accepted by an out-of-region school to take their WICHE support to an out-of-region school. Although the policy was originally written to make sure that all optometry seats were used, it was not consistently applied in years past and may have been abused by applicants in some cases.) Finally, the respondent commented that they could not address the quality of the new programs, as they are not up and running yet.

Staff Recommendation
Competition for optometry seats is very high in the WICHE region. At this time WICHE has only two cooperating institutions in the region: Southern California College of Optometry and Pacific University in Oregon. The University of California, Berkeley ceased taking WICHE students in 2003 because it felt the PSEP support fee was too low. Many WICHE states have been unable to fully use their PSEP optometry funding at our preferred in-region institutions. Except for Colorado and North Dakota, most states do not allow their students to take WICHE funding out of region. Last year Arizona allowed this for the first time because too few of its applicants were offered admission at WICHE schools. As a result, almost 13 percent of our optometry students are enrolled at out-of-region institutions. Students who study in-region are more likely to remain in the West upon graduating, and PSEP was created to build the regional workforce. Providing access to WICHE students at two additional schools will allow them potential access to an additional 120 seats. WICHE staff recommends that the commission approve the schools’ requests for early participation, effective for the 2010-11 academic year. Staff will monitor the schools’ progress until full accreditation is received.

Las Vegas, Nevada 7-17
Osteopathic Medicine

Osteopathic Medicine Accreditation Process

The Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the accreditor of colleges of osteopathic medicine. Accreditation from COCA signifies that a college has met or exceeded the commission’s standards for educational quality.

Pre-accreditation status is the initial recognition status awarded by COCA. Pre-accreditation is reviewed annually, with an on-site visit when indicated. Initial pre-accreditation is awarded following the receipt of a feasibility study and an on-site visit to determine that prerequisites have been met and that the developing college of osteopathic medicine may be expected to attain the next level of accreditation status – provisional accreditation – within the five-year term of pre-accreditation. Colleges holding pre-accreditation may not recruit, accept applications from, or admit prospective students. Pre-accreditation status also does not establish eligibility to participate in federally funded student financial aid programs.

COCA grants provisional accreditation to new colleges of osteopathic medicine through the time of graduation of the first class. COCA reviews schools with provisional accreditation annually to assess the academic progress of first-, second-, and third-year classes up to their time of graduation. Initial provisional accreditation is awarded when a college is able to demonstrate that it will be able to initiate instruction by a specified date. Continuing provisional accreditation is awarded based upon the college’s demonstrating that it is meeting the standards for accreditation for each class of instruction being offered.

Initial accreditation is granted if the accreditation standards are exceeded or met at the time of graduation of the college of osteopathic medicine’s first class. Accreditation status is the highest level of accreditation awarded, and confers all rights and privileges of accreditation. Accreditation status is reviewed within a seven-year survey cycle of self-study and comprehensive on-site evaluation. Continuing accreditation is granted to those colleges that exceed or meet the accreditation standards. COCA will conduct a final site visit of A.T. Still University (ATSU) Mesa’s School of Osteopathic Medicine (SOMA) in March 2011, before its first class graduates. If for some reason a provisionally accredited institution does not qualify for full accreditation after the final visit, there is a “teach out” provision, whereby an accredited institution takes over and the students of the first entering class receive a degree from the fully accredited institution, so the graduates are held harmless and are licensable upon graduation. According to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), this has never occurred.

A.T. Still University Mesa’s School of Osteopathic Medicine. A.T. Still University opened the Arizona School of Health Sciences in Mesa in 1995. Its parent campus was founded in 1892 in Kirksville, MO, as the nation’s first college of osteopathic medicine. In 2003 the Mesa campus also opened the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health, which was authorized for early participation in WICHE’s PSEP, effective fall 2004. The Mesa campus now offers eight graduate and health professions programs in the following disciplines: athletic training, audiology, biomedical sciences, dentistry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and osteopathic medicine. A.T. Still University’s Mesa campus already receives 34 PSEP students in the fields of dentistry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and physician assistant.

ATSU’s SOMA matriculated its first class of 107 students in fall 2007 under the leadership of Dean Douglas Wood, D.O., Ph.D. In fall 2008 SOMA matriculated its second class of 104 students. The 2008-09 tuition is $36,980. Graduates will receive a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree (D.O.). The Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education authorized the addition of the osteopathic medical degree in April 2008. ATSU’s Mesa campus is accredited by the North Central Association (NCA)/Higher Learning Commission (HLC). HLC completed a site visit in February 2009 and has recommended the maximum accreditation of 10 years for ATSU. Authorization to offer the osteopathic medical degree was granted to the parent campus by NCA/HLC in 1994; therefore, special approval for the Mesa campus to offer the doctor of osteopathic medicine degree was not required.

The program received initial provisional accreditation by the COCA of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) in September 2006. COCA conducted a second site visit in January 2008 and was granted continuing provisional accreditation. At that time the site visit team identified five new requirements and gave two recommendations and three commendations. The new requirements resulting from the January 2008 site visit were to be addressed by July 2008. COCA conducted a second site visit in January 2009 and cited additional requirements that must be addressed by July 2009.
The January 2009 report commends ATSU SOMA for its design and implementation of a technology-based system that supports evidence-based learning for its students and faculty on campus and in the community health centers. The program was also commended for its newly developed and implemented second-year “clinical presentation curriculum.”

ATSU’s SOMA students spend their first year on the Mesa campus learning together in small groups using real-life patient interactions and simulated clinical experiences. Students’ education in the second through fourth years is based at one of the 11 community health center (CHC) campuses across the country. The second year is spent learning additional clinical presentations, observing patient care, and gaining an understanding of the local health system and community health practices. Third- and fourth-year students will complete their clinical rotations at a variety of CHCs and associated hospitals, independent healthcare providers, and other healthcare institutions. The CHC partners located in the WICHE region include the following:

1. **North Country/Canyonlands Community Health Center, based in Flagstaff, AZ**, serves isolated and ethnic populations in rural northern and eastern Arizona.
2. **Clinica Adelante Community Health Center** serves migrant Hispanic and suburban at-risk populations in Maricopa County.
3. **El Rio Community Health Center, based in Tucson, AZ**, serves urban, suburban, ethnic, HIV, and homeless constituents in and around Tucson.
4. **Family HealthCare Network, based in Porterville, CA**, serves suburban and farm-worker populations in the valley at the base of Yosemite National Park.
5. **Northwest Regional Primary Care Association**, serves urban, suburban, rural, and isolated populations through 80 member community health centers in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.
6. **HealthPoint (formerly Community Health Centers of King County)** serves urban, suburban, émigré, and ethnic populations in the county east and south of Seattle.
7. **Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, based in Waianae, HI** (on the island of Oahu), serves Native Hawaiian, Asian, and suburban populations in the northwest coastal section of the island.

ATSU SOMA’s most distinctive feature is its partnership with the nation’s community health centers, which provide a healthcare safety net for underserved communities. In addition, SOMA students begin their clinical observations in CHCs at the start of their second year instead of waiting until the third year, as in traditional models.

**Primary Care Workforce Needs**

There are severe workforce shortages of primary care physicians, especially those willing to work with underserved populations or in rural areas. WICHE’s workforce research on primary care found that osteopathic physicians in the West were practicing in primary care at substantially higher levels than allopathic physicians (53 percent versus 35 percent). Historically, osteopathic physicians are more inclined to serve rural and underserved populations. D.O.s comprise 5 percent of the physician workforce in the WICHE region; 95 of the physician workforce are allopathic doctors (M.D.s). WICHE’s workforce brief on medical education (www.wiche.edu/SEP/PSEP/MedEd08.pdf) provides additional detail.

**Cooperating PSEP Osteopathic Medical Colleges**

WICHE states supported a total of 54 students in osteopathic medicine in 2008-09. Enrollment details are as follows.

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WICHE staff contacted representatives from cooperating PSEP schools of osteopathic medicine. One respondent stated that although he was not familiar with the program development at the Mesa campus, his institution did have considerable confidence in the ATSU parent campus located in Kirksville, MO. He felt that ATSU Mesa would take all the necessary steps to assure that students on the new Mesa campus received the same quality education delivered on the parent campus.
Staff Recommendation

PSEP students from Arizona have shown a clear preference for enrolling at an institution located in their state if they obtain an offer of admission at one of the two private schools (ASTU or Midwestern). In 2008-09 the state supported 32 students in osteopathic medicine. Seventy-eight percent of them are currently enrolled at Midwestern University’s osteopathic program. Allowing ASTU’s SOMA early participation in WICHE’s PSEP will give WICHE students from Arizona (and other states that support in osteopathic medicine: Montana, New Mexico, Washington, and Wyoming) potential access to an additional 100 seats. **WICHE staff recommends that the commission approve ATSU SOMA’s request for early participation in PSEP if the additional COCA requirements are satisfactorily addressed by July 2009.** 

**Staff will stay in contact with the school and COCA staff until then. If the school complies with the requirements, PSEP students could enroll in the program, effective for the 2010-11 academic year.** Staff will monitor the school’s progress until full accreditation is received.

Action Requested

WICHE staff recommends that the commission adopt the following criteria related to allowing professional schools to participate in WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

If new and provisionally accredited schools in high-need healthcare fields, and located in the WICHE region, request early participation in PSEP, staff recommends that these schools be allowed to participate in PSEP provided that:

1. The institution is either fully accredited by a regional accrediting agency or holds candidacy status and is actively pursuing regional accreditation. (As mentioned above, candidacy is a pre-accreditation status that demonstrates the institution meets all eligibility requirements. Candidate institutions are evaluated biennially and typically apply for full accreditation at the end of four years, though some institutions choose to apply after two years of candidacy. Although candidacy is awarded to institutions which show strong evidence that they can achieve accreditation within the candidacy period, it does not assure full accreditation; some institutions are denied. Full accreditation status can take up to seven years.)
2. The regional accrediting agency has authorized the institution to offer the new professional program (if applicable).
3. The new professional program has been approved by the state higher education agency assigned to review new programs (in states where this is applicable).
4. The professional program has received provisional (or initial) accreditation by its professional accrediting body and does not have any specific requirements or recommendations of major concern cited in its most recent accreditation report.
5. The proposed school offers a program of study in a critical need field where there is substantial competition for admission and the number of currently cooperating WICHE schools is proportionately small, compared to the demand for seats.
6. The proposed professional program prepares students to serve underserved, rural, and other vulnerable populations.

Staff further recommends allowing four provisionally accredited programs to participate in PSEP, effective for the 2010-11 academic year:

- Midwestern University, Glendale’s College of Dental Medicine
- Midwestern University, Glendale’s College of Optometry
- Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Dental Medicine
- Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Optometry

A fifth provisionally accredited program, the A.T. Still College of Osteopathic Medicine, could also be approved for participation in PSEP if the school complies with the requirements cited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation by July 2009 (resulting from the January 2009 site visit), as part of its continuing provisional accreditation status.
DISCUSSION ITEM
State Scholars Initiative Data and Sustainability

In October 2005 WICHE was selected as the program administrator for the State Scholars Initiative (SSI) by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). SSI is funded under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. WICHE administers approximately $6.6 million and provides oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance to 19 state-level business-education partnerships in their implementation of the State Scholars Initiative model. WICHE has been granted a final extension through September 30, 2009.

The State Scholars Initiative has two goals: to encourage students to take a rigorous course of study in high school to prepare them for postsecondary education or work; and to engage businesses to help in this endeavor. Patterned after the National Commission on Excellence in Education recommendations, State Scholars requires that students take: four years of English; three years of math (algebra I, geometry, algebra II); three years of basic lab science (biology, chemistry, physics); 3.5 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.

Nineteen states are receiving federal funds and operating SSI projects or they have completed their SSI projects and remain in the SSI network: Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Five additional states were previously funded, and they created and completed SSI projects: Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Washington.

Evaluation
In its fourth and final year, SSI maintains a robust evaluation component, which encompasses SSI states’ performance as participants in the program and WICHE’s performance as program administrator.

State performance evaluation is shared between Diana Robinson, associate director at the Center for Governmental Studies of Northern Illinois University (NIU), and Karen Paulson, senior associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). State performance is evaluated on three different measures: the quality and success of business education partnerships; student course enrollment and completion data; and perception data from SSI constituents. Findings for Year Four include:

- The fourth and final year of the State Scholars Initiative was successful in terms of gathering student course enrollment and perception data.
- Since October 2005 SSI has collected data on some 1,458,724 student enrollments representing three separate academic years from SSI pilot districts with the associated demographic variables (sex, race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, economic disadvantage, disability) and course grades in most cases.
- Five terms of data can be compared as trend data for 18 districts in four SSI states, and there is evidence of positive change in student course-taking patterns.
- When challenged to do so, students take more rigorous courses, such as algebra I, geometry, biology, chemistry, physics, and languages other than English.
- Analysis of failure rates indicates that students succeed in these courses at rates commensurate with previous terms.
- Between September 2007 and February 2009, nearly 19,000 perception surveys were submitted from 159 individual State Scholar Initiative events held in 11 SSI states.
- Results from these surveys show that the State Scholars Initiative effectively communicates the message regarding the importance of taking a rigorous high school course of study to students and adult stakeholders.

Copies of SSI 2009 annual evaluation report will be available in paper and on the SSI website this summer.

The evaluation of WICHE’s performance is conducted by Diana Robinson. This evaluation focuses on how well the program is being run at the national level. The Year Four report will be available in October 2009.
**Publications and Products**

In February 2009 WICHE published the national SSI newsletter, featuring 16 State Scholars students from 12 states. In March WICHE provided customized perception and course enrollment data to SSI states and school districts. Later this spring and in early summer, WICHE will provide additional customized state data reports to states, a final evaluation report on state performance, a policy brief on lessons learned and promising practices, and another newsletter.

**Sustainability**

The State Scholars Initiative is one of a few national initiatives to collect and analyze student course-level data (if not the only one). This data, coupled with SSI constituent perceptions and an in-depth examination of SSI business-education partnerships, provide a wealth of information. As a federal program, however, SSI is funded only through September 30, 2009. WICHE has been approaching corporations and foundations to see if they would be willing to assist in providing funds to transition the federal State Scholars Initiative to nonfederal funding and status.

**WICHE’s Staffing**

In December 2005 Terese Rainwater was hired as SSI program director (1.0 FTE). Michelle Médal serves as SSI associate project director, and Kay Hulstrom serves as SSI administrative coordinator. Jere Mock oversees the program (.20 FTE on the grant). The grant also covers .75 FTE of the WICHE Communications staff’s FTE for work by Annie Finnigan, Candy Allen, and Deborah Jang.

**The SSI State Network**

During WICHE’s program administration, 10 states have joined the State Scholars Initiative network (see the list of all participating state business education organizations at the end of this discussion item). Each state program receives up to $300,000 in federal funding over a two-year period and is administered by a state-level business education partnership.

Of the states that joined the State Scholars Initiative during WICHE’s program administration, all 10 have launched the program through statewide kickoff events, secured business volunteers and support, presented to students, and submitted both course-level and perception data.

As part of its oversight responsibilities, WICHE has conducted at least one state site-monitoring visit in every state that received federal funds during WICHE’s program administration. These visits were designed 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, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming. WICHE also hosts a monthly state directors’ conference call, in which state partnerships learn how to address program needs, share promising practices, and seek advice from other state directors.

**National SSI Advisory Board**

State Scholars Initiative Advisory Board members will be consulted on an individual basis during Year Four. The members of the advisory board are: Mike Cohen, president, Achieve; Brian Fitzgerald, executive director, Business-Higher Education Forum; Christine Johnson, special assistant to the provost, University of Colorado, Denver; Charles Kolb, president, Committee for Economic Development; Marshall Lind, WICHE commissioner and chancellor emeritus, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Leon Lederman, Nobel laureate in physics and resident scholar at the Illinois Math and Science Academy; Barry Munitz, chair of the California P-16 Council, former chancellor of the California State University and former president of 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; Roger Sampson, president, Education Commission of the States; David Spence, president, Southern Regional Education Board; Susan Traiman, director of education and workforce policy, Business Roundtable; Deborah Wilds, president and chief operating officer, College Success Foundation; and Steve Wing, director of government programs, CVS Pharmacy. (Roger Sampson joined the board in September 2007; and Liz Dietz, former president of Xap, resigned from the board the same month. Janis Somerville, senior associate, K-16 Initiative, NASH/The Education Trust, resigned from the board in November 2008.)
The SSI Network Chronology
WICHE staff oversees the efforts of 10 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
- Washington Partnership for Learning+

WICHE has overseen the activities of eight of the 10 state business-education partnerships that joined the State Scholars network in March 2006. They include:

- 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

WICHE also oversees the SSI activities of the four state business-education partnerships that joined the State Scholars network in November 2006:

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

+ These states have concluded their SSI projects.

* 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, Colorado and North Carolina 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**

**Student Exchange Programs Update**

**Western Undergraduate Exchange**

WICHE’s Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a regional program that enables students to enroll in designated two- and four-year public institutions elsewhere in the WICHE region at reduced tuition. The WUE rate is 50 percent more than the institutions’ regular resident tuition.

After more than 20 years in operation, WUE is the nation’s largest program of its kind, with some 23,600 students participating in 2008-09. WICHE staff estimates that students and their parents saved $151.1 million in tuition costs for the same year. Students choose from some 140 WUE institutions. A detailed WUE enrollment report was sent to all commissioners in January 2009 and is now posted on the website.

Two new institutions have joined WUE, and several others have expressed interest. Both Arizona State University’s West campus in Glendale and its Polytechnic Campus/College of Technology and Innovation in Mesa will offer the discounted WUE tuition rate to students enrolling in selected majors, effective for the 2009-10 academic year. In addition, Eastern New Mexico University’s Roswell campus is part of the WUE network, but its Portales and Ruidoso campuses are not; the Portales campus will likely join the network. Finally, Cerro Coso Community College in California has expressed interest but is hesitant because its in-state tuition rate is only $20 per credit hour and because tuition at the community college level is heavily subsidized in California; the $30 WUE rate would probably not cover costs.

Given the reduction in WICHE’s travel budget, staff may not be able to participate in many meetings of regional high school counselor organizations this year but will continue to promote the program by communicating with the regional and individual state high school counselor organizations, sending announcements about WUE to their discussion lists and requesting that they establish links to the WUE website, which will be seeing some improvements this year.

**Western Regional Graduate Program**

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) offers lower-cost access to master’s and doctoral-degree students for programs that are not widely available in the West. Some 40 institutions in 14 WICHE states participate in the network. Until this year no institutions in California had reciprocated by offering their programs through WRGP, so California students were not able to enroll at the discounted WRGP rate. California State University’s (CSU’s) East Bay campus has broken new ground for the state and nominated three new programs to the network, all of which were WICHE peer-approved. They include an M.S. in education/online teaching and learning, an M.A. in multimedia production, and an M.S. in recreation and tourism. California residents are now eligible to enroll through WRGP, beginning in the 2010-11 academic year. WICHE staff will work with existing programs to prepare them for this change. It should be noted that just as in WUE, WRGP programs are not expected to provide an unlimited number of discounted seats to residents of WICHE states; they can cap the number. However, we do ask them to agree to give preferential admission to residents from WICHE states and to provide at least a minimum number of WRGP discounted seats every academic year, which could vary, depending on the size of their program. WICHE staff will continue to work with the CSU system to attract additional WRGP programs from California.

WICHE staff received a total of 32 nominations for new programs in fall 2008 and over the winter months conducted a peer review by graduate deans and faculty member from institutions throughout the region. WRGP’s programs, with the exception of its healthcare programs, must be “distinctive” – available at no more than five institutions in the WICHE region (outside of California). All programs were selected to be added to WRGP, bringing the total to some 220 programs by spring 2009. The new programs broaden the academic options in several areas: applied environmental geosciences, multimedia production, primate behavior, and an education degree in online teaching and learning. The University of Alaska Anchorage nominated its e-learning graduate certificate but later had to withdraw the nomination because the program may be discontinued, due to budget issues.

There are now 50 some healthcare-related programs available at the resident rate through WRGP, new ones include programs in specialized areas of nursing, mental health counseling, social work, audiology and speech pathology, and dental hygiene (with a focus on training future faculty).
Professional Student Exchange Program
The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides students in 12 Western states (California, Oregon, and South Dakota do not participate) with access to a wide range of professional programs that 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.

In the 2008-09 academic year, 757 students enrolled through PSEP, with support fees totaling almost $14.5 million. The programs available to students include dentistry, medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine. Complete details on student enrollment and state and institutional participation are available in WICHE’s 2008-09 Student Exchange Program Statistical Report, which was mailed to commissioners in January 2009 and is also available on our website.

Beginning with our member states’ January 2009 legislative sessions, the reality of the economic downturn is resulting in a decrease in PSEP participation. Despite the critical need for more healthcare professionals in all the WICHE PSEP states (and all over the West, for that matter), sending states are being forced to cut back on the number of new students funded through PSEP, effective for the fall 2009 entering classes. As of this writing, it is difficult to know exactly how this will play out, but staff estimates a decrease of at least 10 percent of new seats for the fall 2009-10 year and the possibility of similar cuts for the 2010-11 academic year.

Upcoming workforce brief on veterinary medicine. Staff produces a series of publications, A Closer Look at Healthcare Workforce Needs in the West, to help policymakers and educational leaders understand workforce trends and available institutional capacity in order to educate more students in the healthcare fields. Previously published briefs are available on the oral healthcare, medical, pharmacy, and health information technology workforces. The upcoming brief examines the West’s workforce needs for doctors of veterinary medicine (D.V.M.s) and veterinary technicians, with an emphasis on the shortage of D.V.M.s who are willing to serve in the less lucrative but highly critical areas, such as public health, food safety, biosecurity, and food/animal practices. It analyzes the supply and demand for the different types of providers, the current capacity of veterinary schools in the WICHE region, and projected shortage estimates. It also describes the limited incentives available to attract food/animal practitioners in rural areas, such as scholarships and loan repayment programs. The brief will be released this summer, and a copy will be mailed to commissioners. It will also be available for download on WICHE’s website.

New regional provisionally accredited schools in high-need fields that have petitioned for early participation in PSEP. Five new schools in the fields of dentistry, optometry, and osteopathic medicine are requesting to enroll WICHE-supported students, effective fall 2010. They include A.T. Still University’s School of Osteopathic Medicine in Mesa, AZ; Midwestern University’s College of Dentistry and its College of Optometry in Glendale, AZ; and Western University of Health Science’s College of Optometry and College of Dental Medicine in Pomona, CA. Two additional colleges of osteopathic medicine also requested to petition for early participation in PSEP: Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine in Yakima, WA; and Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Parker, CO. Although their professional osteopathic colleges have received provisional accreditation, the institutions themselves do not have candidacy status for regional accreditation; however, they are in the process of applying. Because they are newly established institutions, WICHE staff decided it was premature to review their petitions until they held full professional accreditation at the program level or were actively pursuing regional accreditation at the institutional level. For full details, please see the action item write-up in this tab.

Upcoming new initiatives. The West’s rural areas have been hardest hit by persistent and growing labor shortages in the healthcare professions. WICHE is exploring a pilot initiative to train primary care physicians committed to working in rural areas. Students of the program will be exposed to rural practice opportunities and will benefit from an enhanced rural curriculum with a strong mental health component through a partnership with WICHE’s Mental Health Program. They could also participate in preceptorships and rotations with mentors in their home state; and home state residencies would be available to them. This could be coupled with host community retention efforts, designed to increase the graduate’s likelihood of returning to a rural area in the home state to serve. On April 6th, state officials from Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming met and toured the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine and discuss the development of this “PSEP Plus” initiative, to be coordinated through WICHE. UC Denver School of Medicine launched its Rural Track Program in 2005. Student interest in the program has more than doubled, and early outcomes have been positive; all 12 students of the inaugural cohort have been matched in residencies in fields that are critical to rural practice (family medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, and general
surgery). WICHE will continue to work with member states interested in UCD’s Rural Track Program. The University of Colorado Foundation is also looking at possible private-funding options to support students interested in the rural track.

WICHE staff is also doing preliminary research on the possible creation of new student exchange models in high-demand fields. Such programs could allow our member states’ institutions to collaborate on program offerings and share faculty for cutting-edge professions, such as IT and digital communications specialties, as well as hardware engineering. Biotechnology, nanotechnology, and energy technology are also being explored. The next brief will likely explore the workforce needed to implement more renewable energy options (including wind, solar, biodiesel, ethanol, and hydroelectric) for the West.
WICHE Internet Course Exchange

The WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE), which offers students of its member institutions increased access to online courses and programs while they are enrolled at their home institution, currently has 12 institutional members and four consortia members, bringing its impact to approximately 30 institutions. Staff and the ICE Steering Board members are implementing the marketing and business strategies identified in its new business plan, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, to increase memberships, enrollments, and collaborative activities. The steering board held its annual meeting in Boulder, CO, on March 30-April 1, 2009.

A new white paper “The Time is Right for ICE” (www.wiche.edu/prosvcs/ice) helps members and prospective members understand the ways in which ICE can help institutions retain and expand their online course and program offerings even as they trim their budgets. In this period of significant fiscal challenges, the white paper and the new web “getting started” checklist will be used to solicit additional members to take advantage of ICE’s benefits during the coming year.

New functionality added in spring 2009 to the WICHE ICE database, which supports the exchange of course, program, and student data, will help institutions to more readily participate in ICE and should lead to more enrollments next year. The results of a recent survey of our members’ excess demand and capacity for online courses, along with program information gleaned from their new member profiles, will be used to identify courses and programs where online enrollments can be increased as well.

Several ICE collaborative initiatives are poised to make additional progress this year if pending grant proposals are funded. The social work consortium, consisting of five ICE institutions, will build on the momentum of its first faculty fellows workshop, held in February 2009, to exchange more courses and increase enrollments. In addition it will explore the viability of creating a joint certificate program for K-12 social workers and other programs as needed. The math and science for secondary teachers’ initiative will expand its efforts to involve faculty from its five member institutions in discussions and joint activities to develop online courses serving this niche population. Another ICE initiative is focused on building tools for faculty and staff to develop their awareness and to provide training concerning the unique needs of military (active and veteran) students studying online.

During 2010 the ICE partnership with the Colorado Department of Labor in its portal project will enroll students in information technology, healthcare, and energy courses at their home institutions in Colorado. The courses will be imported through ICE from institutions in other states. This U.S. Department of Labor demo project will allow participating students to become better prepared to respond to workforce needs as they are encouraged to form an ongoing relationship with an institution in their state.

WICHE ICE will explore other opportunities for collaborative initiatives in 2010 in the areas of lab courses and renewable energy. It will continue to support the exchange of doctoral-level nursing courses through the Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus), which uses the WICHE ICE database as its platform.

ICE members include:

- Adams State College
- Arizona Universities Network
- Bismarck State College (ND)
- Boise State University (ID)
- Eastern Washington University
- Idaho State University
- Lewis-Clark State College (ID)
- Montana State University, Bozeman
- Montana University System
- North Dakota University System Online
- South Dakota System of Higher Education
Western Academic Leadership Forum

The Western Academic Leadership Forum (WALF) gives academic leaders in the WICHE states – provosts, academic vice presidents at master’s and doctoral-level institutions, and chief executives and chief academic officers for system and state governing boards – a venue for sharing information, resources, and expertise as they address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions.

This year’s annual meeting was hosted by the University of Alaska Anchorage on April 22 to 24. The program, themed “Taking Stock: Strategic Leadership in Changing Times,” allowed attendees to share information about decisions they were making to maintain quality even as they made significant cuts in their budgets due to the downturn in the economy. Models of best practice and lessons learned in supporting student success and faculty work life were of special focus.

WALF, which includes members in all 15 WICHE states, was formerly known as the Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF). In December 2008 the executive committee expanded the scope of the organization and renamed it. In an era of such tight fiscal resources, a mechanism by which the West’s top academic leaders can share new cost-effective strategies, debate the pros and cons of restructuring, relay lessons learned from innovative initiatives, and discuss the effects of novel decision-making and other activities is critical. Therefore, during fiscal 2010, WALF will implement new web-based communication strategies, whereby its members can more readily share this information on an ongoing basis and also work together on new collaborative initiatives. WALF will also engage in more outreach to prospective members to expand the organization’s ability to build a stronger future for higher education in the WICHE region.

Current members include:

**Alaska**
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University of Alaska System
- University of Alaska Fairbanks

**Arizona**
- Arizona Board of Regents

**Colorado**
- Colorado State University

**Hawaii**
- University of Hawaii System

**Idaho**
- Boise State University
- Idaho State Board of Education
- Idaho State University
- Lewis-Clark State College
- University of Idaho

**Montana**
- Montana State University – Bozeman
- Montana State University – Billings
- Montana University System
- University of Montana Missoula
- Minot State University
Nevada
- University of Nevada – Las Vegas
- University of Nevada – Reno

New Mexico
- New Mexico Higher Education Department

North Dakota
- North Dakota University System
- North Dakota State University
- University of North Dakota
- Valley City State University

Oregon
- Eastern Oregon University
- Oregon State University
- Oregon University System
- Pacific University
- Portland State University
- Western Oregon University

South Dakota
- South Dakota Board of Regents
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

Utah
- Utah State Board of Regents

Washington
- Central Washington University
- Eastern Washington University
- Washington State University
- University of Washington

Wyoming
- University of Wyoming

Master Property Program
WICHE offers participation in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact’s Master Property Program (MPP) to colleges and universities in the West. Institutional members benefit from comprehensive property insurance coverage tailored to higher education needs while improving their risk management and asset protection strategies. Members also have the opportunity to earn annual dividends, based on the consortium’s comprehensive loss ratios. Currently, MPP institutions have total insured values of $63.5 billion. WICHE and MHEC members together have achieved savings of approximately $51.5 million in premiums and dividends ($11.5 million in savings estimated for 2008-09). The MHEC program was created in 1994; WICHE has partnered with MHEC in offering the program since 2004. The program is currently underwritten by Lexington AIG and is jointly administered by Marsh, Inc., and Captive Resources, Inc. under the direction of a leadership committee representative of the insured institutions.

Five institutions and two systems in the WICHE region are members of the Master Property Program:

- Lewis and Clark College (OR)
- Nevada System of Higher Education:
  - Community College of Southern Nevada
  - Desert Research Institute
  - Great Basin College
  - Nevada State College at Henderson
  - Truckee Meadows Community College
  - University of Nevada – Las Vegas
  - University of Nevada – Reno
  - Western Nevada Community College
WICHE staff continues to work with our program administrators to provide information on the MHEC/WICHE insurance programs to interested institutions.

**New MHEC/WICHE Contract with Xerox for Printing and Document Management**

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact invited WICHE to participate in a three-year contract with four possible one-year renewals with Xerox Corp. for printing equipment and document management services. Under the contract all government agencies and institutions or systems of higher education in the MHEC and WICHE regions can use Xerox for their office printing needs. The contract also includes production-level printing services. MHEC first began working with Xerox in 2003, to provide costs savings and printing product improvements to colleges and universities in its region; it later conducted a national RFP process and negotiated a second contract with Xerox that takes advantage of the power of collective purchasing. In addition to hardware – such as multifunction devices, laser printers, copiers, and fax machines – the contract covers Xerox services, including productivity assessments and document advisories to help manage and streamline records and administrative documents.

The full range of Xerox Global Services' offerings will also be available, including Xerox Office Productivity Assessments that will examine copy, print, and fax volumes across an entire organization and identify opportunities to save money by consolidating equipment. Members can also utilize Xerox’s Document Advisor Services to help manage the information overload of student records and administrative documents schools continually face.

An administrative fee will be assessed on all purchases resulting from the MHEC/WICHE contracts. The fees are 2 percent on gross sales on equipment purchases under the small printer contract and 1 percent of gross sales on equipment purchases under the large printer contract. Revenues from the fees will be split evenly between MHEC and WICHE.