Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2009
3.30 - 5.00 pm
Estancia E
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Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

David Skaggs (CO), chair
Position vacant, vice chair
Tom Buchanan (WY), ex officio
Roy Ogawa (HI), ex officio

Patricia Brown Heller (AK)
David Lorenz (AZ)
Position vacant (CA)
Committee chair (CO)
Roberta Richards (HI)
Arthur Vailas (ID)
Dan Harrington (MT)
Jane Nichols (NV)
Position vacant (NM)
William Goetz (ND)
Ryan Deckert (OR)
Robert Burns (SD)
William Sederburg (UT)
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA)
Debbie Hammons (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: David Skaggs, chair
Staff: Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
      Brian Prescott, director of policy research (unable to attend)

Action Item
Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research meeting minutes of November 10, 2008 8-3

Action Item
Approval of the FY 2010 Issue Analysis and Research workplan (with backup information) 8-5

Information Item: Unit update
Policy staff resources (see bios in this tab) 8-13
Policy staff memberships and advisory board participation
ACTION ITEM
Issue Analysis and Research Committee Minutes
Monday, November 10, 2008

Committee Members Present
Jane Nichols (NV), committee chair
Ryan Deckert (OR), committee vice chair
Patricia Brown Heller (AK)
David Lorenz (AZ)
Kaye Howe (CO)
Roberta Richards (HI)
Pamela Kostelecky (ND)
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT)
Robert Burns (SD)
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA)

Committee Members Absent
Arthur Vailas (ID)
Dan Harrington (MT)
Reed Dasenbrock (NM)
Warren Hardy (NV)
Debbie Hammons (WY)

Guests
Dan Anderson, assistant executive director for institutional analysis, Arizona Board of Regents
Patrick Kelly, senior associate, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

Staff Present
David Longanecker, president
Brian Prescott, director of policy research

Chair Nichols convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee on November 11, 2008, and a quorum was established.

COMMISSIONER HELLER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 19, 2008, ISSUE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE. COMMISSIONER HOWE SECONDED THE MOTION. The minutes were approved unanimously by the committee.

Action Item
Changes to the FY 2009 Workplan

Commissioner Kohl-Welles questioned whether the removal of Dolores Mize’s board affiliations from the workplan removed any staff involvement. Brian Prescott replied that the proposed workplan changes reflected elimination of board memberships exclusive to Mize and that those positions were not earmarked for WICHE staff. COMMISSIONER DECKERT MOVED TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE FY 2009 WORKPLAN. COMMISSIONER LORENZ SECONDED THE MOTION. The changes were approved unanimously by the committee.

Action Item
Expanding the Pipeline of Students of Color in the Health Professions:
Proposal to Receive and Expend Funds

The committee took up a proposal to receive and expend funds from the Sullivan Alliance (or its funders) to host a meeting on expanding the pipeline of students of color in the health professions. Brian Prescott explained that currently funding is unsure, but approval is needed to move forward if funding comes. Commissioner Kostelecky asked who would be invited to the meeting. Prescott answered that there would be state teams from several of the WICHE states, including Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. State teams would consist of representatives from state higher education executive offices, four-year institutions, two-year institutions, and health sciences centers in the states that have them, as well as other possible participants, such as state area health education centers. Kostelecky asked if tribal colleges would be invited. Prescott replied that the focus is on Native Americans and Hispanics. Commissioner Howe said that collaboration with community colleges...
may be a good idea, and Commissioner Kohl-Welles added that it would be helpful to have a representative from the University of Washington’s Health Sciences Center. Longanecker agreed that there is a possibility to collaborate with those individuals, but that the question of inviting a representative from Washington could be problematic, due to the competitive impulses of health sciences centers; he and Prescott said that WICHE hoped to have two additional subregional meetings similar to this first one if the project was successful. One meeting would include Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and Hawaii (and possibly Idaho again); and the other would bring in California, Nevada, and Arizona. Commissioner Deckert asked how WICHE determines whether a project is mission-centered. Longanecker answered that this project relates to our work in the allied health fields, to our focus on access for underrepresented populations, and to workforce development. Longanecker said that staff must seek the commission’s approval for projects that exceed $50,000. Chair Nichols asked if this project and proposal should be added to the workplan. COMMISSIONER KOSTELECKY MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE RECEIVING AND EXPENDING OF FUNDS FROM THE SULLIVAN ALLIANCE. COMMISSIONER HOWE SECONDED THE MOTION. The proposal was approved unanimously.

Discussion Items
Other Projects

David Longanecker discussed a proposed project on select Western states’ participation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD’s) education data collection and analysis. He explained that each state would pay $300,000 to join the project. Commissioner Beesley asked whether states could join as a consortium rather than as individual states. Longanecker said that this project had a regional rather than an individual state thrust. Bob Burns questioned whether OECD has done subnational projects before. Longanecker gave the example of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where there was some individual state involvement.

A second project up for discussion was a proposed project with the Association for the Study of Higher Education’s (ASHE’s) Institute on Equity and Critical Policy Analysis. Funded by the Ford Foundation, the institute focus on race and equity in the analysis of policies related to higher education. Chair Nichols suggested that the committee vote on approving the project, since it has already been funded. COMMISSION LORENZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT WITH ASHE. COMMISSIONER RICHARDS SECONDED THE MOTION. The motion was approved unanimously.

Brian Prescott indicated that there were biographical handouts for the unit’s two new hires: Carl Krueger as project coordinator and Brandi Van Horn as research analyst.

Chair Nichols turned time over to Patrick Kelly from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to discuss his paper “Beyond Social Justice: The Threat of Inequality to Workforce Development in the Western United States.” Kelly also provided a preliminary look at a forthcoming paper on productivity in higher education that he has prepared for the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs.

Following Kelly’s presentation, Brian Prescott proceeded to discuss the Policy unit’s activities, which included: updates on the Non-traditional No More project; the Getting What You Pay For project; the College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network; the Best Practices in Articulation and Transfer project; a paper on the funding of academic collaborations; progress toward contemporizing the State Policy Issues Database Online (SPIDO); a proposed meeting on statewide longitudinal data systems, to be funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; dissemination activities related to the most recent Knocking at the College Door publication; a new report on the North Dakota roundtable project; the 2008-09 update to the annual tuition and fees report; plans to prepare a proposal to build off of the recently completed Escalating Engagement project, funded by the Ford Foundation; progress on the evaluation of the Colorado Opportunity Fund, supported through a contract with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Donnell-Kay Foundation; and technical assistance on state-funded financial aid programs.

Chair Nichols adjourned the meeting.
## EXISTING ACTIVITIES

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

### Access & Success
- Student Exchange Programs: Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP); Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP); Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) (state-funded)
- Internet Course Exchange (ICE) (Sloan Foundation and membership dues)
- State Scholars Initiative (OVAE)
- Bridges to the Professoriate (HHS)
- **Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid (Lumina)**
- **Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity (ACT, College Board, and GF)**
- **Non-Traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners (Lumina)**
- Evaluation of Colorado's College Opportunity Fund (Colorado Department of Higher Education, Donnell-Kay Foundation)
- Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Minority Health, Sullivan Alliance)
- State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIIDO) (GF, Lumina, Pathways)
- Children’s mental health improvement projects in Wyoming and South Dakota
- College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network (state subcontracts/U.S. Department of Education)
- Initiatives to expand educational equity for underrepresented ethnic students
- Best Practices in Statewide Transfer and Articulation Systems

### Technology & Innovation
- Western Academic Leadership Forum (membership dues and TIAA-CREF grant)
- **Fostering Collaborative State-level Education and Workforce Database Development (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)**
- 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)
• 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)
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)
Summary of Workplan Activities – FY 2010
Issue Analysis and Research Committee

Existing Activities

Annual Tuition and Fees report. WICHE’s Policy Analysis and Research unit annually produces a report detailing tuition and fees charges for every public institution in the West. The report includes charges for resident and nonresident graduate and undergraduate students in a number of tables, allowing for easy comparisons and some historical information. The unit has made several changes over the years to ensure a higher quality of data and is always looking for ways to make the report more usable and effective. Currently, we are examining how we might contemporize the report to allow for the calculation of enrollment-weighted averages and also how we might make it available online.

Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners. With funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, Non-traditional No More is working with five states – Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, and South Dakota – that were selected through a competitive process to identify their “ready adult” population: those adults who are close to having enough credits to obtain a degree but have not yet returned to college. The project employs two strategies: identifying ready adults and building a path to college success. The first strategy is designed to help states and institutions identify their ready adults. This work includes mining state data systems and engaging partnerships with other public or private data system partners to identify each state’s ready adults. The second strategy is comprehensive and focuses on academic policies, financial aid/financing, student support services, and communications (marketing and information strategies designed to reach out to the ready adult population).

Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid. With funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, WICHE and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) have partnered to build upon the work conducted as part of Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy, a four-year project also funded by Lumina that yielded many important lessons and insights about financial aid and financing policies in the states. Specifically intended to reach out to the nation’s state legislators, the project continues the effort to expand access and success for all students through eight concise policy briefs (disseminated to every state legislator in the country), designed to identify promising practices and ensure that every available state dollar works for students, not against them. Understanding the hard economic choices states currently face and clearly communicating the higher education financing options available to legislators are critical, especially now, as states fight through another recession.

Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC). WICHE created the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) in 1995 to inform the WICHE Commission’s Executive Committee and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education; provide input on WICHE initiatives; and advise staff on program and participant considerations related to WICHE’s policy workshops. In addition, WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West. The LAC meets annually, and members are invited to various WICHE activities, such as regional and national policy forums.

State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO). The State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO) is designed to provide state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers with an inventory of state-level policies and resources in key policy issue areas related to access and success in higher education.

Evaluation of Colorado’s College Opportunity Fund (COF). The Policy Analysis and Research unit has conducted an evaluation of the nation’s only voucher-based approach to higher education finance policy. The project relied on interviews with the policy’s champions, focus groups with institutional and agency administrators, and student unit record data to examine the original intent of the legislation that created COF, how postsecondary education participation changed under COF, and how institutions responded to COF. The draft report concludes with a set of possible policy alternatives.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity. This report is widely used throughout the nation by postsecondary institutions, state agencies, legislatures, governor’s offices, K-12 schools, media, libraries, businesses, and others interested in the future size and composition of
enrollment demand for higher education. In the wake of the most recent edition’s publication in March 2008, Policy Analysis and Research unit staff have made numerous presentations on its findings (and related demographic information) and continue to respond to media and other inquiries.

Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce. The Policy Analysis and Research unit has coordinated an effort involving all units within WICHE to bring together institutional and agency representatives from all sectors of public higher education in eight Western states and to seek ways to expand the pipeline of underrepresented populations into the health professions. A meeting was held April 20-21, 2009, in Aurora, CO, and was co-hosted by the Sullivan Alliance, a Washington, D.C., organization led by former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan and the Anschutz Medical Campus of the University of Colorado, Denver.

College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network. The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) is a federally funded formula grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. As part of this effort, WICHE is working with state partners through two mechanisms: the CACG Consortium (comprised of Alaska and Nevada) and the CACG Network (comprised of Alaska, Nevada, North Dakota, and Washington). While the level of WICHE-related services differ, both options allow CACG states the opportunity to learn from each other, share best practices and lessons learned, and receive current evidence-based research.

Best Practices in Statewide Transfer and Articulation Systems. A joint project of WICHE and Hezel Associates, with funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how states coordinate their articulation and transfer programs for students who move from two-year to four-year institutions. In addition to surveying all 50 states and developing in-depth case studies of selected state systems, WICHE, WCET, and Hezel Associates are examining how state colleges and universities use web portals in the articulation and transfer process to determine the characteristics that make them effective and if similar models can be used in other states. The project is also examining how well states promote, market, and disseminate information about articulation and transfer to students, faculty advisors, admissions staff, and other administrators. Upon completion of the initial research and case studies, WICHE and Hezel Associates will distill key findings into a best practices guide, featuring clear recommendations for policy and decision makers. The project will also result in a set of products that compare the effectiveness of statewide web portals and disseminate the findings through the EduTools website. Additionally, information from the project will be presented to a national policy audience as part of the State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO). Ultimately, the goal of Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems is to guide policy and practice within state higher education organizations, particularly the State Higher Education Executive Officers. Along with regional and national meetings specifically focused on articulation and transfer, the project’s findings should be a valuable resource to state higher education executive offices and other policymakers as they confront issues related to postsecondary access and affordability in the years to come.

Fostering Collaborative State-Level Education and Development Workforce Database. This Gates Foundation-funded project featured a meeting in December, which brought together the individuals responsible for K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data systems in 14 of 15 WICHE states. The goal was to help those states make progress on developing linked longitudinal data systems that track individuals from early grades through employment in order to better inform policy and practice. Follow-up activities include replicating that meeting in several states and working toward creating a pilot effort that may serve as a model for building this capacity in other states.

Benchmarks: WICHE Region. This annual document tracks 15 indicators of progress toward improving access and success, affordability, and higher education finance from a regional perspective.

Electronic Fact Book: Policy Indicators for Higher Education. This online repository of data relevant to higher education policy is regularly updated. Its domains include access, affordability, demographics, economic indicators, faculty, finance, preparation, progression, and workforce. Data are provided at the state level for all WICHE states.

Policy Insights. Policy Insights is a short report series covering a wide array of timely higher education policy issues.

Electronic Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts. Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts are WICHE’s weekly e-mail notices of new policy- and data-related reports.
**Policy Publications Clearinghouse.** The Policy unit maintains a database of policy publications in a continuing effort to serve as a clearinghouse for the WICHE states. The documents include studies, reports, surveys, and policy briefs published by various research and public policy organizations.

**New Directions**

*Technical assistance with state financial aid program design and funding (single-state support, as requested).* Policy Analysis and Research unit staff members have become recognized as experts on the “shared responsibility” model for distributing need-based financial aid, as well as other state grant aid funding approaches. We occasionally receive requests to assist states with rethinking their program design. Such projects are typically done on a contract basis, depending on how well they fit in with existing workload.

*Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity methodology review and expansion.* The Policy Analysis and Research unit is seeking funding to conduct a review of the Cohort Survival Ratio (CSR) methodology that the *Knocking* series has used to make projections throughout its 30-year history. Given changes in data and technology, it is prudent to examine whether there is a better, more accurate approach to making these projections. In addition, the current proposal includes an effort to expand the analyses to disaggregate by income and other useful characteristics and to contemporize the delivery of the projections through a dynamic, web-based interface.

*Initiatives to expand educational equity for underrepresented ethnic students.* WICHE has partnered with the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California and the Association for the Study of Higher Education to assist in the development of an Institute on Equity Research Methods and Critical Policy Analysis. The institute expects to engage scholars and researchers on higher education in order to more appropriately and effectively frame the issues of educational inequities for public policy debates.

**On the Horizon**

*Residency policies.* Residency policies are widely linked to tuition levels for students, yet limited analyses have been conducted on the policies in higher education. Interest in residency requirements has escalated, in the form of concerns related to issues such as undocumented immigrants, financial aid eligibility, exemption of certain groups from residency requirements, criteria for establishing residency, and the role of residency status as a revenue stream. Each of these issues links back to affordability and access, and while WICHE has thus far not been able to secure funding for a project related to these issues, the Policy unit intends to continue exploring options for work in this area.

*Research and analysis of outcome-based funding approaches.* Increasingly, states are recognizing that enrollment-based funding formulas do not create particularly powerful incentives for institutions to prioritize degree/certificate completion. A few states are making adjustments (or are considering doing so) in their financing strategies to reward institutions for retaining and graduating students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. The Policy Analysis and Research unit would be interested in researching how such policies have impacted educational attainment, as data allow.

*Broadening on-campus and online educational options for active service members and veterans.* With many veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, states and postsecondary institutions are faced with how to best serve them at a time of increased demand for higher education and tight fiscal times. WICHE is examining possible ways to assist the Western states in this effort.

*Policy and Mental Health collaboration on recidivism reduction in the prison population.* State corrections policy has endured significant changes in the past 25 years. Historically, it has been based in a belief that those who are incarcerated should be rehabilitated if possible. But the 1980s brought a significant shift in philosophy, to one that focused more on punishment than on rehabilitation. State policymakers heeded the call to be “tough on crime” and passed much more punitive legislation, including mandatory sentencing and “three strikes, you’re out” laws, which over time have resulted in increased pressure on state budgets. In 2001, however, there was yet another shift in public opinion. The 9/11 attacks propelled terrorism onto the forefront of the public’s mind. *Public Agenda* reports that in 2006, 80 percent of Americans felt that defending the U.S. against terrorism should be a top priority for Congress, while 62 percent felt that reducing crime should be. With corrections comprising a larger share of state budgets and the public no longer focused as much on crime, the time might be right for state policymakers to revisit their stance on the issue. WICHE is exploring a project related to reducing recidivism through higher education in an...
effort to develop more effective and sustainable policy resulting in reduced pressure on state budgets, less crime, and in some cases, maybe even economic development strategies.

**Workforce credentialing systems.** ACT has been pushing a National Workforce Readiness Certificate based on its WorkKeys assessments (other, similar initiatives also exist). The Policy Analysis and Research unit has been trying to stay abreast of such developments and would be interested both in helping states forge stronger ties between postsecondary education and the business community – through the development of a common language surrounding competency that this activity helps promote – and in conducting research on the efficacy of such efforts.

**Forging collaborations between Western higher education agencies and institutions and state departments of labor and workforce development.** The Policy Analysis and Research unit recently wrapped up the Ford Foundation-funded project called *Escalating Engagement* that in part focused on highlighting higher education’s workforce development mission. It also sought to help states strengthen the connection between the activities of their higher education institutions and their workforce development training programs. We hope to build upon that body of work by proposing a new project that more explicitly focuses on how state workforce needs can be met, specifically through better service to racial/ethnic minorities and other underrepresented populations. It is apparent that, in many states, failure to adequately prepare these fast-growing populations for high-demand fields (not just get them a degree) could severely impair their economic prosperity in the long run. At the same time, the fast-growing, traditionally underrepresented populations present an opportunity to meet those workforce demands, if only states could find scalable models of particular effectiveness. Additionally, there are too few resources available to states to help them understand how to dismantle silos in workforce development and higher education and also how state-level and federal policies related to the two areas can be made complementary. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is interested in pursuing the capacity to build upon its expertise in these areas as part of the project targeting underrepresented populations.

**Extending the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce initiative into other states.** As described above, this effort is to help states expand the pipeline of underrepresented populations into health professions fields, but the initial meeting only reaches eight WICHE states. Pending the success of the first meeting and our ability to secure additional funding, WICHE would be interested in replicating the meeting, including lessons learned, in other member states.

**International comparisons of learning outcomes.** International benchmarking is an increasingly valuable source of information in a globally competitive marketplace, as shown by the visibility and perceived relevance of the educational attainment figures released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Likewise, the public is demanding to know what they are getting out of higher education, increasingly in terms of learning outcomes. The U.S. government participates in international benchmarking of learning outcomes at the K-12 level but so far has balked at taking part in similar efforts involving postsecondary education. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is examining how it might help states apply and participate in the OECD’s efforts to benchmark postsecondary learning outcomes.
Policy Analysis and Research Staff

Cheryl Graves is an administrative assistant in the Policy Analysis and Research unit. She works closely with the two unit directors, as well as providing administrative support for three unit project coordinators. She has over 15 years of experience in administrative support, as well as 10 years of experience in information technology support, networks, and project management. She is currently pursuing her bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from Colorado Christian University.

Carl Krueger is a project coordinator at WICHE and has an extensive background in education policy, with a focus on increasing postsecondary opportunities for all students. He most recently worked as the research director for Colorado Media Matters, a web-based information center that analyzed media coverage of political and public policy issues. Before that he was a policy analyst for the Education Commission of the States (ECS), a national nonprofit education policy organization, where he worked with selected states on their design and delivery of education and also published numerous policy briefs on issues ranging from P-16 and financial aid to career and technical education. Krueger received a master’s degree in history from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2002.

Patrick Lane joined WICHE in 2008 as a project coordinator. He comes to WICHE after having spent several years working in education policy in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. He served as a special advisor to the Secretary of Education there from 2006-2008, focusing on an effort to align the K-12 system with postsecondary education and the labor demands of the country. He also assisted in developing a new national strategic plan for the education system and in implementing a new longitudinal student data system. Additionally, he worked on several initiatives to improve the readiness of Marshallese students for postsecondary education. Prior to this, Lane was the field director for the WorldTeach program in the Marshall Islands from 2003-2005. He received a master’s degree from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in 2007.

Demarée K. Michelau is the director of policy analysis. The author of numerous education reports, policy briefs, and magazine articles, she has experience in higher education policy on issues such as accelerated-learning options, adult learners, college affordability and access, and K-16 reform. Previously, she worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures as a policy specialist. Michelau received her bachelor’s degree in public law from Northern Illinois University and her master’s degree in political science from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she is currently a Ph.D. candidate.

Jeanette Porter is an administrative assistant in the Policy Analysis and Research unit. She has worked on several projects, including the 7th edition of Knocking at the College Door, the annual tuition and fees report, the State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO), and the policy clearinghouse. Before joining the Policy staff she supported WICHE’s Mental Health staff. Prior to joining WICHE in 2006, Porter received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado.

Brian T. Prescott is the director of policy research in the Policy Analysis and Research unit. In this role, he has primary responsibility for obtaining and analyzing quantitative data with public policy relevance. He is the author of the 7th edition of Knocking at the College Door, WICHE’s widely used projections of high school graduates by state and race/ethnicity. Additionally, he oversees an annual report on tuition and fees charges at public higher education institutions in the West, prepares an annual regional benchmarks report, maintains a web-based statistical fact book, and authors occasional policy briefs and chapters. Prescott also has experience working with states on issues of access, success, affordability, accountability, workforce development, and accelerated-learning options. Prior to joining WICHE in 2004, Prescott worked in the Office of State Governmental Relations at the University of Virginia, where he also earned a Ph.D. in higher education. He also holds degrees from the University of Iowa and the College of William and Mary.

Brandi Nicole Van Horn is a research analyst in the Policy Analysis and Research unit. Van Horn’s primary responsibilities entail collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Center for Education Statistics, and individual state databases. Utilizing these data, she assists the unit in updating publications such as the WICHE Regional Factbook, Benchmarks, and Tuitions & Fees. Van Horn also aids the director in improving, expanding, and producing signature WICHE publications such as Knocking at the College Door and prepares policy briefs and other written material. Prior to joining WICHE, Van Horn gained several years of experience serving students as a higher education administrator and aided the president of the Colorado State Senate.

Las Vegas, Nevada
in research and policy analysis. She has also received training from the National Center for Education Statistics in data mining and analyzing national datasets and has demonstrated experience with both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Van Horn is an alumna of the University of Michigan and Regis University. She is currently completing a doctorate degree in higher education with an emphasis on public policy and quantitative research methods at the University of Denver.