Plenary Session II:
Those Other Institutions

Monday, May 16, 2011
10:15 - 11:45 am
Stanford East
For a variety of reasons, an increasing number of students are choosing to attend nontraditional institutions. This fact almost everyone knows, but what exactly is a nontraditional institution? At one point in American higher education’s past, community colleges were considered nontraditional institutions, and even today many of the students attending them are often categorized as nontraditional. Today, when we talk about nontraditional institutions, we’re usually referring to those categorized as “for-profit” – as contrasted with “traditional” public and “not-for-profit” independent or private colleges, universities, and vocational institutions. Included in this for-profit category are the new mega-institutions – like the University of Phoenix (UOP), the ITT Institutes, and Kaplan University – but also those traditional, locally owned trade schools and other highly regarded national institutions of long standing, like DeVry.

Another set of institutions that fit into this category are online colleges and universities, which have become prominent with the development of the Internet. In addition to the University of Phoenix and others like it in the for-profit sector, this category also includes institutions that began well before the evolution of the Internet, originally providing nontraditional students with instruction in nontraditional ways and evolving into the online format later: Charter Oaks, Excelsior, and Rio Salado are some examples. Some of these institutions are for-profits, many are not-for-profits, and others, like Rio Salado Community College, are public institutions.

In addition to these various strands, there are other unique and entrepreneurial institutions that have evolved in recent years, like Western Governors University, which is based entirely on competency-based learning.

For this session we have invited a variety of institutions, each of which has established a strong reputation in its particular niche, to talk with the commission about how they came to define their mission and devise a business plan to accomplish that mission. We selected them not only because they are considered leaders in the field of nontraditional education but also because they come from different strands within the collection of “other” institutions.

Speakers: Chris Bustamante, president, Rio Salado College; Ken Sorber, vice president for strategic relations, Western Governors University; other speaker TBD
Facilitated Discussion on Those Other Institutions

Facilitator: David A. Longanecker, president, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Biographical Information on the Speakers & Facilitator

Chris Bustamante serves as president of Rio Salado College, one of the premier online education institutions in the nation, which is part of the Maricopa Community College District (MCCD). Bustamante is well-known as an advocate for increasing access to higher education opportunities and forging transformational partnerships with business, government, and other educational providers, work that has led to such innovations as the first Communiversity to be established west of the Mississippi River. In addition, Bustamante currently serves as an adjunct professor for Northern Arizona University in the master’s of educational leadership program. Before joining the MCCD, Bustamante served as the assistant to the superintendent for community and government relations for the Phoenix Union High School District. He also served as a legislative aide to the Arizona House of Representatives from 1984-1987. He has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and finance from the University of Arizona and a master’s degree and doctorate in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University.

David A. Longanecker has served as the president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education in Boulder, CO, since 1999. WICHE is a regional compact between 15 Western states created to assure access and excellence in higher education through collaboration and resource sharing among the higher education systems of the West. Previously, Longanecker served for six years as the assistant secretary for postsecondary education at the U.S. Department of Education. Prior to that he was the state higher education executive officer (SHEEO) in Colorado and Minnesota. He was also the principal analyst for higher education for the Congressional Budget Office. Longanecker has served on numerous boards and commissions. He has written extensively on a range of higher education issues. His primary interests in higher education are: expanding access to successful completion for students within all sectors of higher education, promoting student and institutional performance, assuring efficient and effective finance and financial aid strategies, and fostering effective use of educational technologies, all for the purpose of sustaining the nation’s strength in the world and increasing quality of life for all Americans, particularly those who have traditionally been left out in the past. He holds an Ed.D. from Stanford University, an M.A. in student personnel work from George Washington University, and a B.A. in sociology from Washington State University.
Ken Sorber is vice president for strategic relations at Western Governors University. His professional background is as a sales and marketing executive in the education/technology field. He has built and directed regional and national sales teams for Wicat Systems; Academic Systems Corp.; and Vinca Corp. He served as vice president of sales and marketing for Netoria until that company was acquired by Novell. Most recently, Sorber served as president of the Tennessee Nashville Mission, which was a three-year volunteer position with his church. He graduated from Brigham Young University.