Executive Committee
Meeting (Open/Closed)

Monday, May 12, 2014
8:30 – 9:30 am
Zia A
Executive Committee Meeting (Open and Closed Sessions)

Dianne Harrison (CA), chair
Mike Rush (ID), vice chair
Leah Bornstein (AZ), immediate past chair
Diane Barrans (AK)
Eileen Klein (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Dene Thomas (CO)
Sharon Hart (CNMI)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Tony Fernandez (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Vic Redding (NV)
Camille Preus (OR)
James Hansen (SD)
Dave Buhler (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Karla Leach (WY)

Agenda (Open)

Action Item Approval of the Executive Committee teleconference minutes of March 18, 2014 1-3

Discussion Item:

May 2014 meeting schedule

Other business

Agenda (Closed)

Discussion Item:

FY 2014 annual evaluation of the president and adoption of FY 2015 performance objectives 1-6

Other business

Other*

*Please note: Article III of Bylaws states:
Section 7. Executive Sessions

Executive sessions of the commission may be held at the discretion of the chairman or at the request of any three commissioners present and voting. The president shall be present at all executive sessions. The chairman, with the approval of a majority of the commissioners present and voting, may invite other individuals to attend.

Section 8. Special Executive Sessions

Special executive sessions, limited to the members of the commission, shall be held only to consider the appointment, salary, or tenure of the president.
ACTION ITEM
Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes
Monday, March 18, 2014

Committee Members Present
Mike Rush (ID), vice chair
Diane Barrans (AK)
Dene Thomas (CO)
Sharon Hart (CNMI)
Tony Fernandez (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Vic Redding (NV)
Cam Preus (OR)
Dave Buhler (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Frank Galey for Karla Leach (WY)

Other Commissioners Present
Loretta Martinez (CO)

Committee Members Absent
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Eileen Klein (AZ)
Dianne Harrison (CA), chair
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Jim Hansen (SD)

WICHE Staff Present
David Longanecker, president
Erin Barber, executive assistant to the president
Mollie McGill, interim co-executive director, WCET
Craig Milburn, chief financial officer
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Brian Prescott, director of policy research, Policy Analysis and Research
Pat Shea, director, academic leadership initiatives

Vice Chair Mike Rush called the meeting to order. Erin Barber called roll and confirmed a quorum.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the February 13, 2014, Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes

Vice Chair Rush asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Hart moved TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 13, 2014 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE MINUTES. Commissioner Holmberg seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEM
Budget Update on FY 2014 and FY 2015

Vice Chair Rush called on David Longanecker to present the budget discussion. Longanecker explained that the FY 2014 budget currently shows a surplus of approximately $115,000 at the close of the fiscal year. Longanecker said he expects that number to be lower by the end of the year. The FY 2014 budget also assumes payment of $87,000 from the California Community Colleges. Longanecker said he remains hopeful, but less optimistic that the amount will be paid in this fiscal year.

Longanecker explained that a balanced FY 2015 budget would be presented at the May meeting. Currently, the budget for FY 2015 is not balanced and the organization is facing a set of unique circumstances. FY 2015 currently shows a deficit of approximately $72,000. Salary increases and inflation increases in all program areas have been removed. There are a few accounts that show an increase in budget, and these include the President’s Office for the contractual agreement on deferred compensation and Administrative Services due to changes in staffing and FTE. Longanecker noted that the LAC would not be funded to the level it needs to be to cover the cost of increased participation costs.

Finally, Longanecker said the reserves are healthy. A portion of the reserves are dedicated. Commissioner Barrans asked for background information on the dedication amount in the Unexpected Shortfall reserve category. Longanecker responded
that the dedication was created by the commission a few years ago to protect the organization in the event that expected revenues are not received (i.e., dues are not received from a state) or expenses exceed expectations. Longanecker and Craig Milburn explained that the dedication is approximately 10 percent of the general fund budget. Commissioner Barrans asked if it would be appropriate to have a conversation to discuss a possible change in the percentage amount. Vice Chair Rush commented that the conversation is appropriate and should be on the Business Session agenda at the May meeting. Commissioner Bennett expressed concern about withholding salary increases in FY 2015 and the effect it would have on staff. Longanecker said he would ask the commission in May for an amount to use for salary increases if something changes in the budget that would make salary increases possible (i.e., such as an increase in revenues). This strategy was used for salary increases in 2012. Longanecker also noted that one of the loans on the building would be paid off in another year, which will free up resources in the general fund. He said FY 2015 is facing unique constraints, including the end of several grant activities. Staff are working with foundations and have several proposals out that could bring in resources, but they haven’t yet been funded.

**ACTION ITEM**

Approval to Allocate $30,000 from Reserves to Cover Subvention Costs of Public Policy Challenges Facing Higher Education in the American West and Higher Education in the American West.

Longanecker asked the committee for their approval to draw $30,000 from the reserves to cover the subvention costs of Public Policy Challenges Facing Higher Education in the American West and Higher Education in the American West. The books are being published by Palgrave-MacMillan and will be delivered in the next few weeks. Longanecker said WICHE has purchased 500 copies as part of the agreement with the publisher. He tried to seek funding from TIAA-CREF, Wells Fargo, and Bank of the West to cover the subvention costs, but those efforts were not successful. Commissioner Barrans moved TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $30,000 FROM THE RESERVES TO COVER SUBVENTION COSTS. Commissioner Bennett seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**ACTION ITEM**

Approval of Funding from the Kresge Foundation for Phase II of the Interstate Passport

Longanecker asked Pat Shea to discuss the funding item with the committee. Shea explained that the first phase of the Passport project had been funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Phase II will focus on six remaining content areas in lower division general education. The project would work with faculty members in multiple states. Staff have asked the Kresge Foundation for $776,349 in partial funding for this two-year project. WICHE would receive approximately $50,000 in indirect over the grant period. Commissioner Bennett moved TO APPROVE THE FUNDING FROM THE KRESGE FOUNDATION FOR PHASE II OF THE INTERSTATE PASSPORT. Commissioner Fernandez seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**ACTION ITEM**

Approval of Conference Funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for “Transfer Solutions Through Cross Organizational Alignment”

Longanecker said that staff have gone to the Gates Foundation for partial funding of the Interstate Passport. The foundation is funding similar projects around the country and asked WICHE to bring the grantees of these projects together to discuss where efforts are complementary and where they are duplicative. She noted that the amount of the funding will be approximately $174,000 over the next nine months, covering two phases. The first phase will include the Passport, the General Education Maps and Markers (GEMS) project at AAC&U, the California State University reform efforts, and SHEEO’s Multi-Collaborative to Advance Outcomes Assessment project. WICHE would receive approximately $27,000 in indirect. Commissioner Preus moved TO APPROVE CONFERENCE FUNDING FROM THE GATES FOUNDATION FOR “TRANSFER SOLUTIONS THROUGH CROSS ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT.” Commissioner Holmberg seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Commissioner Thomas asked for clarification on the meaning of “cross organizational alignment.” Longanecker said this was not in reference to any P-20 efforts, but instead focused on the alignment among the four grantees.
DISCUSSION ITEM
Update on SARA

Longanecker anticipates five states will be approved at the May meeting to join SARA: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, and Washington. Four states will likely join later in the year: Arizona, Montana, South Dakota, and Oregon. North Dakota has decided to join MHEC-SARA. The other five states left in the Western region are in various stages of development and may come in later. Commissioner Barrans expressed concern she’s heard among other SHEEOs that the states joining SARA weren’t going to be stringent enough in their approvals of institutions. Longanecker responded that there are a few states, such as Wisconsin and Massachusetts, who believe only they have the correct approach on approving institutions to operate in their states. However, there will be about 25 states in SARA at the end of the calendar year, a sign that things are going very well. Major changes have been made concerning physical presence, to meet a concern of the Southern states. Those changes have been well-received. Commissioner Barrans indicated that she had also heard concerns from some SHEEOs that they would only support SARA if it applied only to regionally accredited institutions and not to national accreditors, as well. Longanecker responded that this issue had been discussed throughout the development of SARA. The dilemma is that a program that was available only to regionally accredited institutions creates a problem for the U.S. Department of Education because ED recognizes national accreditors. He indicated that his experience suggests that national accreditors are, in general, as responsible as regional accreditors, and that the federal National Advisory Commission on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) assures that they maintain high standards for institutional approval and continued accreditation. He noted that it may well be that some states choose not to participate, and that was understood by the SARA participants.

DISCUSSION ITEM
Draft of the FY 2015 Workplan

Longanecker said a draft of the FY 2015 workplan is being presented to the committee members for their comments and/or feedback. Staff will bring a final draft of the workplan to the committee meetings for approval at the May meeting. He noted there were few changes to the workplan from last year’s version.

DISCUSSION ITEM
Preliminary Agenda for the May 2014 Commission Meeting

Longanecker noted the sessions for the meeting are built around the theme “Higher Education: Public Good and/or Private Benefit.” The first session is entitled The Future of WCET. He told the committee that he is currently in discussions with Sloan-C about possibly merging with WCET. Ellen Wagner will be at the May meeting, and they will be recommending the merger or not. The argument in favor of a merger is that the space in which these two organizations operate is getting smaller and bringing them together could create a stronger organization. The argument against a merger is that WCET is a very vibrant organization and brings a lot of value to WICHE. They will continue their discussions with Sloan-C. Longanecker asked the committee to provide feedback to him if they have any thoughts or comments on this issue. Longanecker walked through the other sessions on the agenda. Commissioner Hart asked if there were any updates to the discussion at the November meeting about a regional goal for college completion. Longanecker said they continue to revise the document and haven’t yet published it for broad use. The document, for example, didn’t take into account state goals, which would play a major role in setting a regional attainment goal.

Longanecker also noted that Guam approved a resolution in its legislature. He is waiting for approval from the governor and payment of their portion of dues with CNMI before they are ready to be approved by the commission for membership.

Vice Chair Rush called for other business. The meeting was adjourned.
ACTION ITEM

FY 2014 Annual Evaluation of the WICHE President and
Adoption of FY 2015 Performance Objectives

This document provides the performance objectives that the commission adopted for me last May; my self-assessment of how well I achieved these objectives during this past year; and a proposed set of performance objectives for this coming year, based on what has been incorporated in the draft of the FY 2015 WICHE Workplan, which you will be adopting at this meeting. Significant changes to the draft workplan may require adjustments to the performance objectives provided here.

This year my self-evaluation will be accompanied by a separate evaluation of my performance to be provided by Dianne Harrison, your chair. This addition of an annual evaluation by the chair was incorporated as policy of the commission based upon the recommendation of Dr. Cece Foxley, former WICHE commissioner from Utah and the person the commission contracted to conduct the external review of my performance last year.

First, I present my current performance objectives.
Next, I provide my self-evaluation with respect to each of these objectives.
Last, I present proposed performance objectives for this coming year (2014-2015).

I would consider my performance over this past year to be a mixed bag. While there have been significant high points and I continue to enjoy my work with WICHE, I am not particularly satisfied with my performance in a number of areas. I will seek to reflect both perspectives in this evaluation.

Administering the WICHE Organization:

Objectives for “maintaining” the organization

Internal management

1. Maintain a balanced budget for fiscal year 2014 and beyond and seek to find a way within a balanced budget to provide modest merit-based salary increases to staff.

   Accomplished. Both the “balanced budget” portion of this objective and providing a modest 3 percent merit-based salary increase for staff have been accomplished. Overall, we are projected to end fiscal year 2014 with a surplus of approximately $60,000 (about 3 percent above the commission-approved general fund budget). This surplus results from slightly lower expenses than anticipated.

   While this objective was achieved for FY 2014, the budget I have recommended for FY 2015 will not meet the requirements of this objective because it is not rich enough to support staff salary increases. Thus, I have met the current needs but not the “beyond” needs. I have recommended an interim review that would possibly provide salary increases mid-year, but this is clearly not an optimal circumstance. It should be noted that this is anticipated to be a one year dilemma because the payment of loans for WICHE’s share of the State Higher Education Policy Center’s facility over the subsequent two years will alleviate some of the constraints that WICHE currently faces.

   2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective.

2. Attend directly to more appropriately align responsibilities among unit directors and their respective staffs in order that they may continue to serve the agency efficiently but do so within realistic limits. Commit to improving the share of minority staff.

   Partially accomplished. We continue to improve the alignment of responsibilities within and between the various units within WICHE. Over the past year, with the substantial help of Jerry Worley, our chief technology officer, we have created a sustainable financial model for our IT enterprise infrastructure within the organization. It would be stretching it to say that the full management team is comfortable or happy
with the solution we have in hand, but I am. We have had a major transition in leadership in WCET with Ellen Wagner’s decision to leave the executive director’s position at the end of 2013 to focus her attention more substantially on the Predictive Analytics Research project.

We have done “OK” in diversifying our staff. Of the 13 new hires this past year, three have been persons of color. Unfortunately, two of the staff we lost this past year were persons of color, so our net gain was only one. Currently, however, only 11 percent of our staff are persons of color, and that is clearly unacceptable.

2015 Recommendation: Retain this objective.

3. Maintain the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity and assess the level of morale during the annual evaluation process.

Not accomplished. Last year I indicated that, in general, morale in the organization was high. I believe that remains the case today, though a number of personal circumstances involving some of our staff – serious illnesses, flood dislocations and damages, etc. – have created occasional perturbations in morale. I did not, however, provide an objective evaluation tool to staff to test whether my perception is correct or not. I do intend to do so this coming year.

The frugal nature of our salary schedule, particularly compared to higher education and to the private sector for similar levels of talent, has begun to take a toll. We had exceptional difficulty this past year hiring IT staff and I am very concerned that our modest higher level staff salary scale may deter some exceptional candidates from applying for senior-level positions such as the executive director position in WCET.

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective.

Service to the commission

1. Present to the commission at the May meeting an annual workplan that reflects the mission and priorities of WICHE, as established by the commission, and bring at least one additional Pacific territory or freely associated state into membership with WICHE.

Partially accomplished. I submitted and you approved at our meeting last May an annual workplan that reflects WICHE’s mission, priorities, and realistic possibilities. This plan incrementally extended the previous plan, which you have affirmed to be “on track” in its focus and activities. The staff and I have worked diligently on this workplan and have accomplished most of it. As is virtually always the case, limits in resources have resulted in some items on the workplan not being achieved. All mission-critical efforts have been accomplished, though.

Among the most significant accomplishments of the year were bringing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) into full membership, bringing the PAR program into operation, implementing SARA, both at the regional and national levels, and operationalizing the multistate longitudinal data exchange.

Over the past year, however, we have not secured any new significant grants in the policy area, which we need to accomplish, given five major grants will expire during this calendar year. Nor did we bring an additional Pacific territory or freely associated state into affiliation with WICHE, though I did have very promising indications that more would be joining when I presented to the governors and presidents of these Islands in December 2013.

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective, but add the expectation that at least one additional major grant will be secured to enhance the organization’s workplan.

State relations

1. Participate, either on official state visits or for WICHE relevant occasions, in events in at least one half of the WICHE states, including all states not visited the prior year.
Accomplished. During this past year, I visited 13 of the 16 WICHE member states and territories, missing Hawai‘i, Montana, and South Dakota. I did manage to visit all of the states that I had not visited the prior year (Alaska, CNMI, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oregon).

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective, with a specific focus on visiting the three states not visited this past year.

2. Sustain the current momentum of the Legislative Advisory Committee through general fund support.

Accomplished. We conducted a very successful Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting in Las Vegas in September 2013. The number of legislators participating exceeded our expectations, and the engagement of these participants was stellar. The meeting was financed with general fund resources. I am concerned that the amount available in the budget that I have requested for FY 2015 may not be sufficient to cover the costs of the upcoming meeting because of increased participation, and increased travel costs (including the exceptional costs for participants from the CNMI).

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective.

Objectives for “development and innovation” within the organization

Internal management

1. Connect WICHE’s IT infrastructure to the UCAR Internet II connection.

Not Accomplished. We were not able to complete the connection with Internet II through an agreement with the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), which is located proximate to WICHE’s facility. We continue to work on this project and expect it to be accomplished in the coming year.

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective.

Commission development and innovation

1. Continue to work on developing relationships with the governors, as appointment opportunities develop, to increase the diversity of the commission’s membership.

Not Accomplished. While the six members appointed to the commission since the May 2013 meeting promise to be strong commissioners, none are from communities of color. The diversity within the commission, however, has not changed; 30 (64 percent) men, 17 (36 percent) women, 12 (26 percent) people of color.

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective.

State relations development and innovation

1. Sustain progress in expanding our legislative relations activity to include more direct involvement with legislative and executive staff and work to enhance these relationships.

Accomplished. We have been reasonably successful in working with legislatures. Staff in a number of states have requested individual support from WICHE or have requested that WICHE testify before their committees. Our most substantive engagement in this area continues to be through our partnership with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), though we have also extended our collaboration this past year with the Council of State Governments (CSG), both through the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) initiative and in direct activities with CSG-West, and we have established a strong relationship with the Western Governors’ Association (WGA) and its new executive director. WICHE staff often serve as faculty for NCSL’s education workshops and seminars. During the past year I personally testified before or worked extensively with legislatures, legislators, or legislative staff in Alaska, California, Colorado, CNMI, Hawai‘i, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, and Washington. We have been less engaged with governors and their staff.
During the past year I worked with governors or their staff in California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington.

2015 Recommendation: Retain the 2014 objective.

2. Retain strong partnership relationships with other organizations that WICHE can both benefit from and contribute to in pursuit of our respective missions.

Accomplished. We have maintained and expanded strong relationships with our traditional partners, including particularly strong relationships with our most consistent partners – National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), and NCSL. The transition in leadership at SHEEO has been an easy one for our partnership because George Pernsteiner was well acquainted with WICHE from his time in Oregon. Our relationship with the other three regional organizations – Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) – while consistently strong, has been further expanded with the advent of SARA. In addition, we have rekindled our previously very positive relationship with CSG-West and its new executive director.

My more extensive professional obligations to other organizations have changed significantly over the past year. My tenure on the board of the National Student Clearinghouse ended in September 2013. Slightly earlier last year, though, I became chair of the board of the Consortium on North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC). Earlier this year I was asked to be a member of the board of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) as well as an advisory committee member to the AAC&U’s GEMS project.

2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective, with no specific organizations identified for unique outreach.

Providing Program Services to the Western States:

Objectives for “maintaining” the organization

Student Exchange Program

Accomplish those aspects of the commission’s workplan that fit within this objective, including a particular focus on the following.

1. Maintain the strength of the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and seek new ways in which the program can be refined to better meet the states’ needs for highly educated professionals.

Partially accomplished. Participation in PSEP continued to drop modestly (from 678 in academic year 2012-13 to 658 in academic year 2013-14). Jere Mock and Margo Colalancia continue working with the states’ certifying officers to examine ways in which the needs of sending and receiving states can be more equitably and realistically met in the increasingly market-driven environment of professional education. Particular attention is being given to new fields that might be added to PSEP, as well as to ways that the program can be tailored to specifically address state workforce development needs. We also continue working on upgrading the IT system that supports the PSEP program, though this has proven to be both more expensive and time consuming than we anticipated.

2015 Recommendation: Retain this objective.

2. Manage growth of the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) with existing staff and financial resources by examining ways in which WICHE can be more proactive in facilitating exchange in areas of projected workforce needs and in areas of imbalance, with respect to issues regarding the supply of and demand for educational opportunities, and through successful implementation of the WICHE Internet Course Exchange (ICE) program.
Mostly accomplished. Participation in WUE continues to increase, growing nearly 9 percent this year to 33,812 students. Thanks to the exceptional staff work of Margo Colalancia and Kim Nawrocki, under Jere Mock’s direction, we have continued to provide strong customer relationships. We are examining ways in which the WUE and the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) can be enhanced to even better serve the students and institutions that participate. This will become an increasingly important issue as enrollment strains test the efficacy of these programs’ current models. In addition to the continued success of these programs, WICHE’s Internet Course Exchange (ICE) has been established and continues to provide courses. This program contemporizes our array of exchange options, now taking courses to students in contrast to our prior expectation that the students would always come to the courses. I remain disappointed that participation in this program has not caught on as quickly as we had hoped it would, despite facing a fiscal environment that we thought would heighten both knowledge of and participation in this program.

**2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**

Objectives for “development and innovation” of programs to serve the states.

1. **Accomplish those aspects of the commission’s workplan that fit within this objective and explore innovative ways in which WICHE can assist its member states and territory to act together collectively in more ways.**

   Partially accomplished. While staff accomplished much in the programs and policy projects we have had underway and worked hard on developing proposals for new projects consistent with the direction of the workplan, we have not been successful to date in securing major policy related funding for the future. This is critically important because five major externally funded activities this coming year – PAR, Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange, Adult College Completion Network (ACCN), the Interstate Passport, and SARA – will expire in 2015. Both PAR and SARA will successfully transition to sustainability, but the other three will not likely be sustainable without continued external funding. Those efforts in which we have been engaged have in many cases gained national recognition as exemplars in the work they are doing. ACCN has helped spur on the national efforts to attract more adults back into higher education for the sake of the nation. The Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange is recognized as a national model of interstate collaboration and has even been suggested as a viable alternative to the proposed national student unit data base. The Interstate Passport has gained great acclaim as an innovative approach to enhance transfer through a competency framework. It is ironic, therefore, that none of these have yet received assurances of continued financial support. Two of the new direction projects included in the workplan – Leveraging Work-Based Learning and Reducing Recidivism through Inmate Education and Reentry Programs – have begun generating some interest from potential funders but have not yet received assurances of support.

   With respect to the objective of assisting member states and territories to act together collectively in more ways, the most significant accomplishments have been the SARA initiative and the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange. The new effort in this regard was the discussion at the November meeting, supported by a policy brief, about adopting a regional commitment to achieving the national degree attainment goals.

   **2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**

2. **Implement in stellar fashion the new initiatives for which we secure funding and possibly develop an additional multistate collaborative program.**

   Accomplished. We have established the regional State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement and received ample and gracious funding from Lumina Foundation to sustain that program until it becomes self-supporting. We even have a commitment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to assist in the funding effort, should it become necessary. We have also secured bridge funding from the Gates Foundation to transition the Predictive Analytics Reporting project to sustainable self-sufficiency, and we received funding as a sub-contractor on the Consortium for Health Education Online project managed by Pueblo Community College. As noted in the write-up for the previous objective, we have not been successful in our other philanthropic activities.

   **2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**
Providing Policy, Research, and Technical Assistance to the Western States:

Objectives for maintaining policy, research, and technical assistance services

1. Continue WICHE’s exceptional work as the regional source for higher education information and public policy analysis and advice.

   **Accomplished.** We have been quite active in this arena. In addition to the interstate efforts, we continued to provide technical assistance to almost all of our member states. In great part this is because of the resources they needed to inform them about how best to join W-SARA, and Rhonda Epper has provided absolutely stellar assistance on these initiatives. We have also assisted, however, on myriad other areas, from finances, student learning outcomes and assessment, the common core, adult learning, competency/proficiency development and measurement, and mental health services, just to name a few.

   **2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**

2. Maintain the strength and vitality of WCET and the Mental Health Program, and do so without general fund support.

   **In process.** Under Ellen Wagner’s leadership, WCET became an even more vibrant and vital organization, focusing on technology infrastructure and innovation. The organization successfully reached fiscal stability, and continued success in securing grants to advance the frontiers of innovation in technology. With Ellen’s decision to leave the executive director’s position, my staff and I took a few months to think about how to best position WCET for the future. Having completed that process, we are now engaged in the process of selecting a new director for WCET and preparing for the fall annual meeting. As we anticipate spinning the PAR project off as a separate sustainable enterprise, we will be examining ways in which we can sustain WCET’s reputation as an entrepreneurial organization in the educational technologies space.

   The Mental Health Program, though fundamentally strong and now sporting the largest staff of any unit within WICHE, faced a difficult year, in great part because a large share of its funding comes either directly or indirectly through the federal government and the threat of sequester not only delayed the delivery of some federal funds but also led to substantial reductions in the funding that was available. As a result, the Mental Health unit will experience a deficit budget this year, but is on track to erasing that deficit in FY 2015.

   **2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**

Objectives for “development and innovation” of policy, research, and technical assistance services

1. Accomplish those aspects of the commission’s workplan that fit within this objective, including securing external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical assistance projects, consistent with WICHE’s mission and priorities.

   **Technically accomplished, but . . .** This past year we secured funding for the SARA program and the continuation funding for the transition of PAR out of WCET. We also received a number of modest grants to write papers, etc. As described earlier, we have not secured funding for other items – either continuing or new – on the workplan, and we must do so to ensure the vibrancy of our policy and research agenda.

   **2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**

2. Further develop and sustain technical assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues.

   **Accomplished.** As previously described, my staff and I have continued to provide substantial technical assistance over the past year.

   **2015 Recommendation: Retain 2014 objective.**
IN SUM:

This self-evaluation for fiscal year 2014 (2013-2014) and proposed objectives for fiscal year 2015 (2014-2015) reflect a productive but not exceptional year for me. While I continue to consider both my leadership (within the region and nation) and my management of the organization as strong, our strength this past year was due not to me but rather to the exceptional efforts of a remarkably talented and dedicated staff. Despite having accomplished a good bit this year, I nonetheless continue to believe that I need to improve my performance and am disappointed in the number of objectives not accomplished.

I look forward to receiving your reactions to my perceptions and to hearing how you believe I can better serve WICHE in the future.

David Longanecker