Issue Analysis and Research Committee

Tuesday, 10.00 – 11.00 am
Centennial E

Agenda

Issue Analysis and Research Committee Minutes – May 2002
Call to Order: Cecelia Foxley, chair

Committee Meeting Minutes, May, 2002

Discussion Item: State Tuition Policy for Military Personnel and Dependents.

Commissioner Bill Kuepper has brought to staff the topic of state tuition policy for military personnel and their dependents; we would like to involve the committee in a short discussion of issues around this topic. Commissioner Kuepper was invited to attend an Army Education Summit on in-state tuition for the U.S. Army’s Office of Education. One of the desired outcomes of the summit is to promote consistency among in-state tuition requirements for soldiers and family members. Two of the long-term goals of this initiative are to conduct data collection and analysis activities and develop model legislation or policy to achieve consistency among state policies.
Discussion Item: Program Delivery

In May, 2002, the committee directed staff to add a new activity in the “On the Horizon” section of the workplan, under the “Workforce” issue area. The activity would explore the adequacy of program delivery to provide education and training in areas without comprehensive postsecondary education institutions. Given the newness of this issue, the committee is asked to discuss the proposed new activity area and provide comments to staff for future work.

Information Item: Unit Updates

Staff will provide an update and respond to the committee’s questions concerning ongoing activities:

1. WCET – Sally Johnstone
   a) EduTools demonstration
   b) Update on projects

2. Policy Analysis and Research – Cheryl Blanco
   a) Progress reports on unit projects
   b) Publications
Chair Cecelia Foxley convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee on May 20, 2002, asking participants to introduce themselves. The minutes of the November 13, 2001, committee meeting were approved without revisions.

Chair Foxley moved to the FY 2003 workplan, the second agenda action item. Cheryl Blanco reviewed the five issue areas and the three levels of involvement with the specific activities in each area. Members asked for further explanation of some items but did not remove or rearrange items in the workplan matrix. David Longanecker introduced a new potential topic that has been raised by a commissioner not on this committee. He suggested adding a topic related to how institutions are meeting state needs through their various educational programs. Following additional discussion and support from members of the committee, staff was directed to add this topic under the heading “Workforce” in the “On the Horizon” section. The workplan was approved with this revision.

Chair Foxley directed the members to the discussion item titled “Finding the Will and the Way: Managing Higher Education within Revenue and Expenditure Constraints.” Blanco explained that this agenda item was approved by the committee and the commission last spring. Staff approached some foundations for funding but had not been successful. Recently, the Ford Foundation has indicated possible interest in allowing us to retain approximately $75,000 in unspent funds from two Ford grants that ended in December 2001 to serve as a planning grant for this project. Staff are pursuing this with the foundation. Because it has been some time since this project was introduced to the committee and a commissioner has indicated concern over the scope of the project, staff felt that additional discussion was warranted at this meeting. Commissioner Bill Kuepper (CO) explained that Colorado questioned the appropriateness of looking at state taxation policies. Commissioner Jane Nicholas asked if WICHE would recommend changing tax structures. Blanco responded that the initial funding would probably be used to conduct a regional and state-by-state descriptive study of existing revenue policies and their impact on higher education. If further funding is secured, a small number of interested states would be supported to take a
more in-depth look at their revenue structures and policies, and those states would independently decide if they wanted to issue recommendations. Commissioner Marc Gaspard (WA) indicated that he was very comfortable with this conversation. Commissioner Dick Crofts (MT) suggested that part of the project title, “Managing Higher Education,” is not necessarily consistent with the purpose of examining “the impact of revenue and expenditure constraints on the future viability of higher education.” Commissioner Ryan Deckert stated that he does not see much value for this in Oregon; the value is in looking at what is going on in other states. Commissioner Nichols said the project should look seriously at the consequences of this trend. Other committee members voiced support for this approach. Chair Cecelia Foxley expanded that idea to include consideration of the state’s return on the investment in higher education.

Sally Johnstone reported on WCET (Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications) activities. The current projects include “Beyond the Administrative Core, Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners” and “Technology Costing Methodology,” which are funded by FIPSE/LAAP. “Developing the Tools, Policies, and Models” is funded by the Hewlett Foundation and will be a Web-based evaluation tool for higher education institutions to assist them in finding appropriate course development tools, policies, and student support tools. Another project funded by the Hewlett Foundation has allowed WCET to explore the policy issues of MIT’s Open CourseWare Initiative and to work with UNESCO on exploring open courseware for the developing world. The Hewlett Foundation is also funding a feasibility study for the development of a course evaluation system. WCC (Western Cooperative Consulting) has several projects, some of which include work with the Ohio Learning Network, the New Mexico Higher Education Commission, the University of Oregon, Louisiana State University, and the Asia Pacific eLearning Forum. WCET also has three meetings planned this year: MDE: Institute for Managing and Developing E-learning; Costing and Financing Instructional Technologies in Higher Education: Practical Lessons & Policy Implications; and the 14th annual conference. There are also developing projects in the works, including a student support services Web center, a UNESCO forum on open information issues and projects, and models to support high-need, low-enrollment online courses.

In a brief report on the current work of the Policy Analysis and Research unit, Blanco pointed out the matrix of issues, initiatives, activities, state services, and benefits included in the agenda book. She noted a few remaining items, including publication of the regional fact book, release of the State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDOI), and the selection of states to serve as case study states for the “Changing Directions” project (Lumina Foundation for Education) case studies – Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, and Oregon.

The committee had no further business and adjourned.