Tuesday, November 11, 2003

Program and Services Committee

Committee Members
Diane Barrans (AK), chair
Phil Dubois (WY), vice chair
Chuck Ruch (SD), ex officio
Don Carlson (WA), ex officio

Marshall Lind (AK)
John Haeger (AZ)
Herbert Medina (CA)
Bill Byers (CO)
Raymond Ono (HI)
Jack Riggs (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Carl Shaff (NV)
Dede Feldman (NM)
Larry Isaak (ND)
Cam Preus-Braly (OR)
Tad Perry (SD)
David Gladwell (UT)
Deborah Merle (WA)
Klaus Hanson (WY)

Agenda

Call to Order: Diane Barrans, chair

**Action Item** Programs and Services Committee Teleconference, Minutes, October 15, 2003

**Action Item** Programs and Services Committee Minutes, May 20, 2003 Meeting

Discussion Item: Report on the Sept. 19-20, 2003, regional conference Rural Mental Health in the WICHE West: Meeting Workforce Demands through Regional Partnership – Jere Mock, director of Programs and Services; Dennis Mohatt, program director, WICHE Mental Health Program; Dr. Carlos Brandenburg, administrator, Division of Mental Hygiene & Mental Retardation, Nevada Department of Human Services; and Dr. Karl Brimmer, director, Mental Health Division, Washington Department of Social and Health Services
Reinstating Graduate Nursing as a Field in the Professional Student Exchange Program and Adding Electronically Delivered Programs – Jere Mock

Information Item: WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program: Consideration of Support Fee Options for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 Biennium – Sandy Jackson, SEP program coordinator

Information Item: Reflections on WICHE’s 50th Anniversary Activities – Deborah Jang, Web design manager and 50th anniversary coordinator

Other Business

Adjourn
Chair Diane Barrans opened the meeting and asked Jere Mock to give a brief summary of the action item to be voted on regarding approving an exception to the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) policy that requires participating programs have full accreditation. The exception would apply to two new Western dental schools - the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health (ASDOH) and the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Dental Medicine.

Mock said WICHE was asked last spring to make an exception to current policy that requires professional programs that receive students through PSEP have full accreditation status. The Programs and Services committee discussed this request at its May 2003 meeting and directed staff to obtain more information and to contact other participating dental schools to solicit input.

Mock and Sandy Jackson contacted all of the dental schools in the Western region. Six of the deans said they have no concerns about adding the new schools to PSEP. One individual who is new to the position declined to comment; another offered to fully support the WICHE Commission's decision. Staff also contacted the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) regarding the initial accreditation designation and the programs' accreditation status.

Commissioner Carl Shaff said he recently spoke with Sen. Ray Rawson (NV), and he is very excited about getting these schools included in the PSEP and about the benefits it will bring to Nevada. Shaff moved to...
approve the policy exception based on the WICHE staff recommendation, which includes the stipulation that the schools notify WICHE immediately if their accreditation status changes or is refused. Commissioner Klaus Hanson seconded the motion. Hanson said he was impressed that one of the requirements of the UNLV School of Dental Medicine is that all students be able to converse in Spanish.

Chair Barrans suggested the action item should include the dates when the two programs should receive full accreditation status; Mock concurred.

Sen. Don Carlson asked if any schools that have received initial accreditation have not later received full accreditation. Mock answered that she spoke about that with the director of CODA's Predoctoral Dental Education Program, and she said that no U.S. dental schools that have received initial accreditation status have been closed prior to receiving full accreditation in the history of the commission.

Commissioner Deborah Merle asked if one or both of the schools do not receive full accreditation would the students still receive credit. Mock answered yes; students are considered to be in an accredited school. They can apply for financial aid, sit for state and national boards, and apply for postgraduate programs.

Chair Barrans asked if there were any objections, none were expressed, and the motion to grant an exception to allow the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health and the University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Dental Medicine passed unanimously.

The action item will be presented to the WICHE Executive Committee at its meeting on Nov. 10, 2003.

The committee had no further business and adjourned.
Chair Diane Barrans opened the meeting by introducing three new committee members: Carrol Krause, Montana; Sen. Dede Feldman, New Mexico; and Klaus Hanson, Wyoming.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Minutes of the November 12, 2002, Programs and Services Committee Meeting

The minutes of the November 12, 2002, committee meeting were approved without revisions.

DISCUSSION ITEM
Accreditation Status of Professional Programs in the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)

Chair Barrans asked Jere Mock, director of Programs and Services, to introduce the item, and she invited Dr. Jack Dillenberg, dean of the Arizona School of Health Sciences School of Dentistry and Oral Health, to explain his request to the committee.

Mock said that WICHE was contacted by WICHE Commissioner Linda Blessing, executive director of the Arizona Board of Regents, regarding a request from the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health for
an exception to the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) policy that requires that all participating institutions have full accreditation status. She asked staff to consider inviting Dr. Dillenberg to speak to the Programs and Services Committee regarding the status of the new dental school. Mock explained that over the years, WICHE has required institutions to be fully accredited before they enroll students through PSEP. The Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health is a new program that will enroll its first class in July 2003, offering a Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) degree with a certificate in public health management. It is one of three new dental schools that have opened in the past four years. Before that, no new dental schools had been built in the U.S. over the last 25 years. The ASDOH was granted initial accreditation status by the Commission on Dental Accreditation in January 2003, and two more site visits will be conducted before the school gains full accreditation status.

Dr. Dillenberg said the U.S. is in a different environment as regards oral health than ever before. A Surgeon General's report published last year describes dental disease in the U.S. as a silent epidemic; and 6,000 dentists are retiring each year, while only 4,000 students graduate annually from dental schools. The West, with an older cohort of dentists, will continue to have severe shortages, particularly in rural and frontier areas. New Mexico, Montana, and Idaho are three Western states with critical needs for dentists. The Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine is the program's parent organization; Kirksville has participated in WICHE's PSEP program for a number of years through a contract for the State of Arizona. The new dental school had 1,200 applicants, and 54 students are enrolled in its first-year class.

Dr. Dillenberg said its focus is on developing dentists to meet needs in rural and underserved areas; they have developed a new model of education that has students working in community health centers during 80 percent of their four-year dental program. Four American Indian tribal members are in the entering class, the highest percentage at any dental school in the U.S. He said the state dental association is providing mentors to the program, and the Commission on Dental Accreditation has praised the school for its innovative biomedical curriculum and has granted initial accreditation.

Commissioner Dubois asked Dr. Dillenberg to describe possible actions that could result in relation to decisions the accrediting body will make during its next two site visits. Dr. Dillenberg said with initial accreditation designation, all of the school's students receive all of the rights of full accreditation: they are guaranteed a place for the national boards and state licensing exams. During previous visits, the accrediting team made three recommendations, none related to the program's mission, finances, or curriculum. The team wanted to see a third-year clinic floor plan, a faculty list for the second year, and a more contemporary infection control protocol. The school was given commendations for its commitment to diversity, mission to assist underserved populations, and curriculum model. The team will visit the program again in 2005.

Commissioner Feldman said she recently attended a dental education conference addressing the extreme shortage of dentists in rural areas, particularly dentists who would serve Medicaid patients and dentists who are from underrepresented minority backgrounds. She said these issues are critical in the rural West and in New Mexico, a state that is considering opening a new dental school. Dental educators at the conference hailed the Arizona dental school as a promising new model that integrates public health with professional education. The Arizona program will have its students return to their home states to practice in rural areas during their fourth-year residencies. She does not want students to have to wait for four
years to be eligible for PSEP support. She moved that the committee take immediate action on this issue; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Merle.

Commissioner Dubois asked Mock how she felt about taking action now, and she said she would prefer to discuss the issue with other dental schools to get their reactions to the policy change because staff have heard recently that some of the schools have concerns about granting the exception; she also noted that some of the certifying officers that administer the PSEP program have raised questions about the impact this action could have in relation to new programs in other professional fields that participate in the exchange. Mock said there is sufficient information available from the Commission on Dental Accreditation to ensure that future PSEP students enrolled at the institution would be protected; she mentioned that she had been in contact with Rosemary Monehen, director of the Commission on Dental Accreditation's Predoctoral Dental Education program, who said that once initial accreditation is granted the students are eligible for financial aid and can sit for licensure exams and apply for postgraduate programs. Monehen said that all institutions that have received initial accreditation status subsequently have received full accreditation. Chair Barrans said her interest is in hearing from the states and the other dental schools that have had to comply with our standards to date and to find out the nature of their concerns: whether they are worried about a new competitor in the market or have concerns such as whether graduates will be accepted in postgraduate schools.

Commissioner Krause said in Montana it is unlikely there will be additional new money for students in dentistry; it will be a matter of redistribution of the existing appropriations. He said he was uncomfortable moving ahead right now without talking to the certifying officers about the funding and the possible impact of the policy change; he said the region would be well served by this program, particularly in the states that have tribal colleges and reservation communities. Commissioner Shaff said Nevada has a new dental school that WICHE Commissioner Sen. Ray Rawson helped develop. He asked if waiting until November for a decision would negatively affect the new program in Arizona. Dr. Dillenberg said he will have a full class either way but would rather not wait another year; he said final admission decisions are made by April 1, 2004. Commissioner Dubois said he would like the committee to consider the consequences of something going amiss with the accrediting process because he has seen it happen in other disciplines; he suggests that if the exception is approved and any problems arise subsequently with the school's accreditation, the WICHE Commission should be notified immediately. He said the initial accreditation designation sounds as though it is similar to the accreditation process in pharmacy where students are allowed to sit for boards once the initial designation has been granted. Chair Barrans said the model of education that will be used at the ASDOH has been very successful for the WWAMI (Wyoming, Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho) medical education program that places students in rural communities for residencies.

Following the discussion, Commissioner Feldman amended her motion to include the requirement that if there is any change in the ASDOH's accreditation status, the commission revisit its participation. This motion would authorize the participation of this new program in PSEP with initial accreditation status. Commissioner Merle agreed to the amendment and Chair Barrans called the question. The motion failed.

The committee directed staff to contact other dental schools to discuss this issue and to gather additional information from the states; if sufficient information is available, a teleconference will be scheduled with members of the Programs and Services Committee prior to the November meeting.
ACTION ITEM
Approval of Programs and Services Workplan for 2003-04

Chair Barrans asked Mock to introduce the draft workplan (located on pp. 8-10 - 8-14 of the agenda book and in a brochure that was distributed to the committee). Mock said the three Student Exchange Programs - the Professional Student Exchange Program, Western Regional Graduate Program, and Western Undergraduate Exchange - all support the access component of the WICHE workplan. The Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF), the Northwest Educational Outreach Network (NEON), and the American TeleEdCommunications Alliance (ATAAlliance) are three initiatives that support the innovation and information technology theme through interstate collaboration and interinstitutional resource sharing. The unit produces a series of Workforce Briefs each year to inform member states about workforce projections in each of our 15 member states, with an emphasis on the fields that are included in the Professional Student Exchange Program.

The communications staff within the unit provides support to the WICHE organization by developing, editing, and designing electronic and print communications. These include: the WICHE Web site, NewsCap, the WICHE annual report and annual work plan, state and regional fact sheets, WICHE conference brochures and materials, publications, agenda books, and presentations.

Mock said four areas have been identified in the "On the Horizon" section of the workplan as potential new activities, pending commissioner endorsement and the acquisition of external funding. They include:

1) Expanding NEON activity beyond the 10-state NWAF region to include all WICHE states.
2) Examining the potential costs and benefits for states interested in implementing the electronic student services provided through the Xap Corp.'s Mentor Systems and exploring the potential of developing a multistate system.
3) Convening a series of regional/subregional forums on emerging workforce areas.
4) Creating a regional clearinghouse, or inventory, for states and institutions to use as they anticipate new academic degree programs or look at scaling back existing programs.

Commissioner Dubois asked why we are working with just the Xap Corp. since there are other vendors providing similar products, and he asked whether there was some strategic advantage for the region having WICHE involved. Mock said several WICHE states are developing Mentor Systems and Colorado's commissioners, in particular, have encouraged staff to make other Western states aware of the product. Longanecker added that Xap has developed an interesting portal for the Southern Regional Electronic Campus, which is the Southern Regional Education Board's electronic community; he said a similar approach may be feasible for the NEON project. He said WICHE Commissioner Tim Foster, director of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and leaders of the California State University System have been strong advocates. Further, the system is likely to be too expensive for the smaller states to implement but it might be doable if a few states worked together. Chair Barrans added that there are other products on the market, including Mapping Your Future and some other portals; most of them are funded through the state financial aid agencies and not by institutions or state higher education agencies. She said the Mentor Systems provide a particularly effective way for eighth-grade and older students to develop their own academic portfolios and to explore their higher education options using the Internet. Dubois said he could pull the right group of people together in Wyoming for a Mentor Systems
Commissioner Krause said this is not something Montana will get involved in because they have other alternatives.

In terms of future activities, Commissioner Dubois said the Programs and Services unit has a lot on its plate, and NEO N and the NWAF projects have some important initiatives underway that should take priority over new activities. Commissioner Feldman suggested that if regional workforce forums are convened, they should focus on health workforce issues in the West. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has studied workforce needs in many states; its information could be reviewed in determining how to concentrate our efforts. Commissioner Isaak suggested the issue of accountability is being elevated at the federal level through reauthorization and is one that WICHE may want to explore by disseminating information on best practices. Commissioner Dubois said the SHEEO organization is doing a lot of work on this issue, and Commissioner Barrans said a lot of activity is going on at the state and national levels on both workforce and accountability issues. She suggested that WICHE synthesize this information for Western states rather than duplicating other work. She said all of the initiatives outlined in the "On the Horizon" section of the workplan are ones that could serve WICHE’s mission, but she recommends that our efforts should focus on our existing activities to ensure they develop as planned.

Commissioner Isaak made a motion to approve the Programs and Services workplan; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Carrol Krause and passed unanimously. Commissioner Dubois reemphasized that he would like to see staff prioritize its work on NEO N, NWAF, the traditional Student Exchange Programs, and possibly some additional work with Xap, and defer other activities. Commissioner Isaak agreed and said NEO N has strong potential and is an excellent effort. Chair Barrans acknowledged the work and productivity of the Programs and Services unit.

DISCUSSION ITEM
Reviewing the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) Enrollments and Support Fees

Chair Barrans asked Mock to introduce the discussion item and she introduced Vicki Falsgraf, Oregon certifying officer and chair of the WICHE certifying officers' subcommittee on support fees. Mock said the WICHE Commission sets the PSEP support fees every two years. PSEP helps states to meet their professional workforce needs and allows students who do not have access to selected programs to enroll at institutions in other states. Students generally pay resident tuition at public institutions and one-third of regular tuition at private institutions; the "sending" states provide a support fee to cover the difference between resident and nonresident tuition. Historically, the participating institutions have received an additional financial incentive exceeding the nonresident tuition levels, for many years this differential was approximately 105 percent of nonresident tuition. As tuitions have increased at differing rates across institutions, the incentives have become more variable. Support fees for the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 biennium were approved by the full commission in May 2002 and included a 4 percent increase in Group A and a 3 percent increase in Group B fields for each year of the biennium, along with a $1,000 increase in the first year of the biennium of the physician assistant support fee. In concert with this action, the commission suggested that a subcommittee of the WICHE certifying officers and the WICHE staff begin a conversation on whether new approaches to setting the fees are needed. Mock said the subcommittee has met by teleconference several times and Falsgraf has spent considerable time examining the programs' history, enrollments, and alternative support fee models; Sandy Jackson has provided staff support, and she developed a substantial amount of background information for the subcommittee.
Falsgraf said the executive summary of the certifying officers' subcommittee report is available in the agenda book (pp. 8-29 - 8-32). The report provides historical and longitudinal information by field and state as well as regional information. She acknowledged the cooperation and hard work of the subcommittee and staff. The group found that declining enrollments have occurred in the PSEP program over the past 20 years, coincident with increasing support fees and recent economic decline in most of the participating states. States want to keep support fees as low as possible to serve the maximum number of students, schools want increased support fees so that they can cover program costs and maximize their resources; and students are caught in the middle. The certifying officers focused on Group A fields, those in which WICHE students would have difficulty gaining access to public professional schools without the PSEP program. The nine current Group A fields include: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, and physician assistant. Initially, the subcommittee thought the reason for declining enrollments was the biennial support fee increases. The highest enrollments occurred in 1977-78 when 1,097 students took part; in 2002-2003, the enrollment is 674, a decline of 61 percent. In researching reasons for the decline, the subcommittee learned that some states have responded to the increasing fees by sending students to professional programs in states outside the WICHE region; some broker these arrangements for themselves, in other cases the WICHE staff negotiates these arrangements.

Falsgraf provided a handout that describes in-region enrollments in the 13 fields by state. The subcommittee believes there is a positive correlation between increased fees and declining enrollments; she said other contributing factors include: new professional schools in several Western states, out-of-region arrangements, and constrained state budgets. She said a careful analysis of these factors is needed to determine what modifications may be needed to the Professional Student Exchange Program. The subcommittee also recommends two short-term options to be implemented immediately, which would reduce the previously approved fees for the 2003-05 biennium. The recommendations are to adjust the support fees to Group B standards. In Group B, the student generally pays the resident tuition rate; however, whenever the sum of the resident tuition paid by the student and the support fee does not at least equal the nonresident tuition, the school may charge the student the difference. The subcommittee did not propose a recommended approach for setting the fee levels based on the Group B model. The committee's second option would set a ceiling (e.g., 20 percent) above nonresident tuition which the PSEP incentive (i.e., the sum of support fee plus resident tuition) will not exceed.

Falsgraf suggests the need to evaluate several historical principles and assumptions upon which PSEP has been built. Examples include: whether receiving institutions truly need a financial incentive to enroll PSEP students; the impact on enrollments if a greater tuition burden is shifted to students; and the relationship between support fees and today's nonresident tuition levels. She said these issues are not new; they are very complex and require further attention to reach new solutions.

Commissioner Dubois thanked Falsgraf, the certifying officers, and WICHE staff for the work on this project; he said that while it is true that declining state budgets and increasing support fees have contributed to the drop in enrollments, there are many other related factors: the initiation of the WWAMI medical education program, creation of new professional programs that have absorbed more in-state students, and the initiation of out-of-state programs. He said that while it may be worthwhile to do additional research on these factors, a more important question is whether students would have access to these programs if the WICHE and WWAMI structures did not exist. The point of PSEP is to make sure
students have the opportunity to seek professional education; he said he is comfortable with the untidiness of the system because it helps individual students take predictable levels of state support and decide where they want to enroll. If the students excel academically, they have more institutional options than marginal students. He said he is not convinced, based on the data, that we have seen a decline of student access to these kinds of programs overall. Dubois added that one of the consequences of reducing the support fees in medicine to the Group B levels, for example, would be for medical schools to reduce the slots available to PSEP students. The current PSEP support fees in medicine are half of what Wyoming is paying for students enrolled in WWAMI. In this constrained budgetary environment, if we were to reduce the support fees the consequence would be a reduction of slots overall.

Commissioner Isaak said from a simple cost perspective, it is difficult to determine what we should do and it becomes more of a philosophical decision about how much of the burden students should carry versus the states that do not offer the programs. If the WICHE fees get too high, we will price ourselves out of the market as states will reduce their participation; he said he needs more time to think about these issues before he would agree to reducing the fees. The medical school at the University of North Dakota would not want the fees to be dropped.

Mock reiterated that the support fees present a complex challenge in a dynamic higher education environment. She noted that when the subcommittee recently presented its recommendations to the other certifying officers, the need to preserve access to professional programs was given higher priority over the need to reduce support fees by the states that send the largest numbers of PSEP students. Mock said WICHE's priority is to maintain access for states that cannot afford, or choose not to build, new professional programs in the PSEP fields. She said staff will continue to discuss the support fee issues with certifying officers and the participating institutions and that the conversation can be continued at subsequent Programs and Services committee meetings. Since there was no commissioner support for reducing the fees midstream in the biennium, Mock said staff would maintain its plan to present recommendations on the support fees for the 2005-07 biennium at the WICHE Commission's May 2004 meeting.

INFORMATION ITEM
Summary of ATAlliance Activities

Chair Barrans asked Mock to describe new initiatives begun by the American TeleEdCommunications Alliance. Mock suggested that the commissioners refer to the information item on p. 8-33 of the agenda book since the meeting was drawing to a close.

The committee had no further business and adjourned.
ACTION ITEM

Reinstating Graduate Nursing as a Field in the Professional Student Exchange Program and Adding Electronically Delivered Programs

Summary

Ensuring that states have access to professional education, especially in the health professions, has been central to WICHE’s mission since its inception. WICHE states continue to rely on the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) to provide affordable access to a wide range of professional programs that otherwise might not be available to students in some states and to help those states avoid the costs of establishing new professional schools. Thirteen fields are currently included in PSEP and are divided into two groups. Group A includes nine fields in which access to public professional schools is difficult for WICHE students: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, and physician assistant. Group B includes easier-to-access professional fields where states wish to offset high nonresident and private institution charges for their residents: graduate library studies, pharmacy, public health, and architecture. Law and graduate nursing were “suspended” as PSEP Group B fields in 2001 because no states had supported students in these fields for a number of years.

Several graduate nursing programs are currently available through WICHE’s Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), including Ph.D. programs at the University of Arizona (UA), University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (UCHSC), and University of Utah (UU). Through WRGP, residents of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming are eligible to enroll in available programs outside of their home state at resident tuition rates; students need not meet financial aid criteria. The WRGP enrollments in the three nursing programs are small: one at UA, seven at UCHSC, and three at UU. The Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU) withdrew its Ph.D. program from WRGP a few years ago because the resident tuition requirement was no longer feasible for the program.

WICHE staff proposes that the field of graduate nursing be reactivated as a supported field at the Ph.D. level, to increase the regional exchange options available to states as they address an acute shortage of nursing professionals, particularly nursing faculty shortages. Under current WICHE policy, a field can be reactivated or added if two or more states will support students in the field. Nevada and Wyoming have expressed interest in supporting students in nursing Ph.D. programs through PSEP; we anticipate that Alaska and Idaho, and possibly other states, may do that over time.

We also propose to add, for the first time in WICHE history, electronically delivered and online programs as “receiving” programs in this field for PSEP students. If this is approved, Ph.D. programs in nursing could be made available to students through WRGP or through PSEP; the participating institutions would determine which program to affiliate with based on their enrollment and fiscal circumstances.

A support fee of $4,500 for the 2004-05 academic year is proposed for the nursing Ph.D. beginning fall 2004, for a maximum support length of five years.
Background

Several of the WICHE states are experiencing, or anticipating, severe nursing faculty shortages. We can help to address this problem by adding nursing Ph.D. programs to PSEP and through the new partnerships that are developing via the NEON (Northwest Educational Outreach Network) project.

A primary goal of the NEON project is to increase access to high-need academic disciplines through the sharing of electronically delivered academic programs. The NEON project, a collaboration of WICHE and the Northwest Academic Forum, is working with schools and colleges of nursing in the West on a common purpose: to broaden access to Ph.D. programs for nurse educators. (The NEON project is also focused on pilot projects in three other disciplines. NEON is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.) We now have 17 schools and colleges of nursing involved in various aspects of the NEON project.

This initiative responds to growing faculty shortages as the current nursing faculty workforce advances toward retirement and the pool of younger replacement faculty decreases. In 2002, the mean age of doctoral faculty was 53.3, up from 49.7 years in 1993.

NEON Access Partnerships for Interactive and Online Instruction

A few institutions in the West now offer, or plan to offer, nursing Ph.D. and master's courses at a distance. The NEON project is creating partnerships among institutions using interactive and online instruction so that they can share in the development of their offerings. The Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU) will offer a new cohort of its nursing Ph.D. program to students in other Western states in fall 2004 as the first access partnership to develop through NEON. The program will be delivered primarily by interactive television to sites at partner institutions in other states. On Sept. 10, representatives from four potential partner institutions met at OHSU to discuss the collaborative program and to begin to develop joint agreements. WICHE staff, deans of the nursing schools and colleges, and other institutional representatives attended from the University of Alaska Anchorage, Idaho State University, University of Nevada-Reno, and the University of Wyoming. Since then, the four institutions have worked with OHSU on the joint agreements and identified prospective students. As of Oct. 6, 30 potential students and representatives from each campus have participated in videoconferences to learn more about the Ph.D. program. OHSU also is the process of informing the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities of its plans to serve new sites in other Western states through this collaborative program. The provosts at the University of Nevada-Reno and University of Wyoming have indicated they will seek state support for some of the students who enroll in the OHSU regional program through PSEP.

A NEON meeting involving deans from other Western schools and colleges of nursing will be held in conjunction with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) annual meeting on Oct. 28 in Washington, D.C., to explore developing other access partnerships. Areas to be discussed include joint online course and program development, online course cross-registration for students in different schools; cross-institutional faculty mentoring and research; and developing collaborative degree programs.

If the WICHE Commission approves reactivating Ph.D. programs in nursing as a supported field in PSEP, WICHE staff will contact all of the accredited programs in the WICHE region to explore their interest in continuing or resuming their participation in WRGP or PSEP as "receiving" programs. Staff will also inform the WICHE states that do not have accredited Ph.D. programs in nursing that they can once again utilize PSEP to support students in this field.
The nursing programs that are currently available through the Western Regional Graduate Program and their 2002 WRGP enrollments include:

Ph.D. in Nursing

- University of Arizona (1 - OR)
- University of Colorado Health Science Center (7; 1 each: NV, NM, O R; 2 each: UT, WY)
- University of Utah (3; 1 AZ; 2 ID)

Master’s Programs

- University of Colorado Health Science Center - Health Care Informatics (1 OR)
- University of New Mexico - Nursing & Latin American Studies (0)
- University of Utah - Clinical Nursing Informatics (1 MT)
- University of Utah - Nursing Midwifery (0); Nurse Practitioner, Women's Health (1 ID); Oncology Clinical Nursing Specialist (0)
- University of Wyoming - Rural Health Nursing (3; 2: CO & 1: ID)

Other institutions in the WICHE region that offer Ph.D. programs in nursing include:

- Loma Linda University (CA)
- University of California-Los Angeles
- University of California-San Francisco
- University of San Diego
- Oregon Health & Sciences University
- University of Hawaii at Manoa
- University of North Dakota
- University of Washington

New Ph.D. programs recently have been approved, or are under development, at:

- University of New Mexico (in partnership with New Mexico State University)
- University of Northern Colorado
- Washington State University

Action Requested

Approval to reinstate graduate nursing as a PSEP field at the Ph.D. level and to include electronically delivered accredited programs as well as on-site programs as described in this action item.
We are taking this issue of WICHE Policy Insights to examine the registered nursing workforce dilemma because of the implications, opportunities, and challenges it creates for institutions of higher education and public policymakers in the Western states. As providers of nursing professionals, colleges, universities, and vocational schools play a key role in efforts to address this workforce issue. Public policy leaders and state legislatures will also be challenged to assess their state's capacity to counter these trends and enlist the assistance of postsecondary education in the development of innovative and cost-efficient solutions.

Shortage Indicators

Multiple pressures are influencing both the supply of and demand for registered nurses (RNs). Meeting the increasing demand for registered nurses is becoming increasingly complex. The most recent projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that one million new and replacement registered nurses will be needed by the year 2010. The stability of a healthcare system pivots on a sufficient supply of an appropriately educated and skilled nurse workforce. Reports of the erosion of this vital workforce have emerged from a number of sources that examine the indicators of the nursing shortage.

The years between 1996 and 2000 marked the slowest growth in the registered nurse population over the 20-year period between 1980 and 2000. This slowdown in growth reflects fewer new entrants into the nurse population coupled with a larger volume of losses from the nurse population than in earlier periods. Shortages of registered nurses, previously projected to begin around 2007, were already evident in the year 2000 in 30 states, including 10 of the WICHE states.

By 2010, the national shortage of RNs is projected to increase to 12 percent and to be unevenly distributed across the U.S. At that point demand will exceed supply at an accelerated rate and nearly quadruple, from a modest 6 percent in 2000 to 20 percent by 2015. In the West, 11 of the WICHE states are projected to exceed the 20 percent national projected shortage of registered nurses.

Contributing Factors

In recent years, numerous national reports and studies have attempted to describe, quantify, and explain the potential threat the registered nursing shortage poses to quality health care delivery. The reports identify several driving forces or trends contributing to the shortage. They include: population growth and aging, an aging nursing workforce, new opportunities for women in other professions, and a smaller pool of young people entering the profession. Additionally, the image of the nursing profession, the impact of managed care and/or other cost containment measures, and the challenging work environment of nurses are cited as reasons for this workforce deficit. These interrelated factors will present significant challenges to state policymakers, higher education systems, and institutions.
Population Growth and Aging Baby Boomers
Two of the most significant factors contributing to the stressed nursing workforce are population growth and the aging Baby Boomers. The Bureau of the Census projects that the U.S. population will increase to nearly 300 million by 2010. Significant numbers of the country’s 78 million Baby Boomers (i.e., the large group born between 1946 and 1964) are poised for retirement. It is projected that by 2010, the number of persons aged 65 and over will be 39 million, or 13 percent of the total population. Increased longevity and new technologies will create a surge in demand for health care services required by an older population at a time when there will be fewer nurses in the workplace.

Graying of the RN Workforce
The nursing workforce is also growing older along with their Baby Boom peers in the larger population. In 1980, nearly 53 percent of the RN population was under the age of 40, while in 2000 less than one-third (31.7 percent) was under the age of 40. In 1980, 25 percent of RNs were under the age of 30 compared to only 9 percent in 2000. The aging RN workforce reflects fewer young nurses entering the RN population, large numbers of nurses moving into their 50’s and 60’s, and students entering nursing education programs at an older age. By 2010, it is projected that approximately 40 percent of the nursing workforce will likely be older than 50.

Enrollment Increases Insufficient to Meet Growing Demand
In Fall 2002, enrollments in schools of nursing rose over 2001 enrollments by 8 percent. Even though recent increases might signal a shift in the decline in enrollments since 1993, the number of students in the educational pipeline is still insufficient to meet the demand for more than a million new and replacement nurses over the next 10 years. Despite increases in enrollments at a majority of nursing schools, slightly more than 30 percent of schools report no change or a decline in enrollments in 2002, resulting in unfilled seats. Almost 40 percent of schools with increased enrollments attracted only 20 or fewer students this year. Not only is there a shortage of students in the nursing educational pipeline, the number of successful graduates obtaining licensure is also inadequate to meet the demands of today’s health care system. Data on new registered nurses, as measured by those passing the RN licensing test (NCLEX), show that after growing steadily during the first half of the 1990s, the number of new RN graduates fell in the last half of the decade, resulting in 26 percent fewer RN graduates in 2000 than in 1995.

Nursing Faculty Shortages Diminish the Capacity of Nursing Schools
At many nursing schools, enrollment growth is a factor of how well schools have been able to bridge the expanding nursing faculty shortage. In recent years, the deficit of faculty has reached critical proportions as the current nursing faculty workforce advances toward retirement and the pool of younger replacement faculty decreases. As with the overall nursing workforce, the mean age of this sector has increased steadily from 49.7 years in 1993 to 53.3 in 2002 for doctoral faculty and from 46 to 48.8 for master’s faculty during this period. A majority of schools with baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral programs responding to a 2002-03 survey reported that two of the highest ranking reasons for not accommodating student applications were insufficient funds to hire new faculty and competition for jobs with other market places. Additional barriers influencing the ability of nursing programs to attract and retain faculty include the limited number of programs offering an academic nursing education track, competition for doctoral graduates, lack of clinical placement opportunities, salary differentials, working conditions, tuition and loan burdens for graduates, age of doctoral recipients, and time to degree. The shortage of educationally prepared nursing faculty will present continuing and expanding challenges for states and higher education institutions.

How States Have Responded to the Nursing Shortage
Many states are examining the potential stress registered nurse shortages will place on health care systems. State level workgroups are encouraging legislators to tackle the problem on a number of fronts. In a 2002 survey of state responses to health worker shortages, nursing shortages were cited as a major concern in 90 percent of the states. Twenty-four states had convened task forces to study the shortage of nurses, and 24 states reported scholarship and/or loan repayment programs for registered nurses. From 2001 through 2003, state legislatures have introduced and enacted many pieces of legislation to address nursing shortages. The dominant themes of legislative actions include nursing education incentives, the improvement of working conditions, nursing quality indicators to improve patient outcomes, and the collection of data for planning, policy formulation, and accountability.

Nursing Education Incentives
From 2001 into 2003, legislative initiatives have focused on strengthening the educational pipeline for all levels of nursing and attracting a more diverse pool of applicants. Nursing education incentives have included student loan forgiveness, tax credits for tuition, grant and scholarship programs, outreach programs, and funds to hire additional staff and faculty. Some states have proposed funding educational programs with tobacco settlement money; others have created early outreach efforts that expand recruitment efforts to elementary and high school students and offer special placement in associate degree programs.
Yet others have provided funds to health care facilities to establish education-in-nursing specialty areas, qualified nursing education under welfare-to-work plans, and marketing programs to improve the image of nursing. Still others have considered providing incentives through block grants.

Among the Western states in 2001-2003:
- Arizona’s Governor has established a “Nursing Shortage Task Force” and recent legislation requires the development of a five-year plan to increase the number of graduates from nursing programs in the state.
- California is standardizing all nursing program prerequisites and admissions requirements on a statewide basis.
- Colorado passed two bills: one directed the state to develop admission policies for nursing programs to allow for more students; a second bill created a three-year care provider career-path program.
- New Mexico has created a “Nursing Excellence Program and Fund” to identify strategies to enhance recruitment and retention of professional nurses, set standards, and increase career and educational opportunities. Legislation also mandates improved interactions between health facilities' administrators, the medical professions, and institutions of higher education. Additional legislation enacts the “Nursing Licensure Compact,” to encourage the cooperation of participating states in the areas of nurse licensure and regulation.
- Nevada has appropriated funds for nursing loans.
- South Dakota is revising provisions regarding the nurses’ education assistance loan program by funding tuition reimbursement for nurses and other health professionals who practice for a minimum of two years. An appropriation was also made to expand the nursing programs at South Dakota’s public universities.
- Oregon is providing additional funding for nursing education and creating the Nursing Services Program to allow the Oregon Student Assistance Commission to pay portions of student loans for nurses who practice in shortage areas. Oregon also established the Nursing Leadership Council which developed a strategic plan to double the enrollment in Oregon’s nursing programs by 2004, redesign nursing education, and create the Oregon Center for Nursing to coordinate and implement the plan.
- Wyoming legislation creates a nursing loan grant program and requires the Wyoming Higher Education Assistance Authority to coordinate the inclusion of Internet courses to meet prerequisites for entry into nursing programs.

### Improving Working Conditions and Staffing Levels

There has been significant attention and public pressure regarding the convergence of poor working conditions and the inadequate staffing levels that are making it difficult to retain nursing professionals. During the most recent legislative sessions, several laws have been enacted to target staffing and other workplace issues.

In the Western states:
- California has mandated minimum staffing levels in hospitals throughout the state.
- Oregon and Washington enacted legislation prohibiting mandatory overtime.
- Oregon and Nevada lawmakers are requiring the development and implementation of valid and reliable nursing staffing systems.
- New Mexico and Oregon are providing whistleblower protection for nurses who report unsafe conditions.

### Data for Planning and Accountability

As states begin to establish or revise policies to address the broad range of issues related to the projected shortages of nurses and other health professionals, there is an increasing need for comprehensive, accurate, and timely data and analyses. In addressing this need, many states have passed legislation requiring the collection and analysis of data to support policymaking and planning.

- Idaho legislators passed a concurrent resolution requiring the State Board of Education with the Idaho

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**THE FEDERAL RESPONSE**

The prospects for alleviating the nation’s increasingly acute shortage of nurses have improved somewhat with approval of the federal Nurses Reinvestment Act. The act directs the secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to undertake a number of activities to encourage more people to enter the field of nursing and to stay in the field. The act supports scholarships, loan repayments, public service announcements, retention grants, career ladders, geriatric training grants, and loan cancellation for nursing faculty. Funding for these programs is provided through 2007.

Further relief and support for state efforts may be found through Titles VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act, which authorize a number of initiatives to improve the geographic distribution, quality, and racial and ethnic diversity of the health care workforce.

For more information on the Nursing Reinvestment Act grant and scholarship programs see: [http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing/reinvestmentact.htm](http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing/reinvestmentact.htm).
Collaborative and Strategic Partnerships

In response to nursing shortages, colleges and universities are developing collaborative and strategic partnerships with hospitals and other stakeholders to build student capacity and address mutual needs. These arrangements make a variety of connections and serve various functions. Some schools utilize expert practitioners to augment nursing faculty supply. Others involve partnerships among nursing education programs to encourage the sharing of services and physical resources to overcome limitations in clinical, classroom, and research space. Still others collaborate to provide tuition assistance in exchange for work commitments.

For additional models of collaborations and partnerships focused on nursing workforce issues, visit the WICHE Publications Clearinghouse at: http://www.wiche.edu/Policy/RPP/index.asp.

Diversifying the Nursing Workforce

A lack of diversity in the educational pipeline leads to a lack of diversity in the registered nurse workforce. According to the latest National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses (2000), prepared by the federal Division of Nursing within the Bureau of Health Professions (HRSA), only 5.4 percent of all RNs are men; only 12.3 percent of RNs represent racial or ethnic minority groups while these groups represent nearly 41 percent of the general population. Many reasons have been identified as to why men and minority group members do not pursue careers in nursing: role stereotypes, economic barriers, few mentors, gender biases, lack of direction from early authority figures, misunderstanding about the practice of nursing, and increased opportunities in other fields. In Nursing’s Agenda for the Future: A Call to the Nation, a coalition of nursing organizations and associations aims for diversity that reflects the patient population, in order to better meet population needs. Five strategies were identified to increase the nursing workforce through valuing diversity:

- Increase diversity of faculty, students, and curricula in all academic and continuing education.
- Focus recruitment and retention programs to greatly increase diversity.
- Target legislation and funding for diversity initiatives.

Distance Learning’s Impact

Through video conferencing, CD-ROMs, and the Internet, distance education affords the profession opportunities to increase collaborative efforts in the workplace.

- Increase diversity of faculty, students, and curricula in all academic and continuing education.
- Focus recruitment and retention programs to greatly increase diversity.
- Target legislation and funding for diversity initiatives.

NORTHWEST EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH NETWORK

Expanding Educational Access, Distance Learning and Interstate Collaborations

WICHE is partnering with the Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF) – a 10-state group of institutions and state policymakers – to create a regional electronic consortium, the Northwest Educational Outreach Network (NEON). NEON’s mission is to foster interinstitutional collaborations to expand the availability of academic degree programs offered via technology-mediated education. One of the initial efforts involves working with schools and colleges of nursing in the West to expand access to nursing Ph.D. programs through academic courses and programs offered at a distance. This collaboration is open to all nursing programs in the 15 WICHE states and will help reduce the faculty shortage that is projected over the next several years.

For more information on NEON, contact: Jere Mock at 303.541.0222 (jmock@wiche.edu) or Russell Poulin at 303.541.0305 (rpoulin@wcet.info).
teaching, practice, and research. Distance learning has benefits for engaging students and may enhance enrollments at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate levels. Some of the factors that need to be addressed by nursing leaders, healthcare institutions, external funders, and policymakers are:

- Superior distance education programs require substantial institutional financial investment in equipment, infrastructure, and faculty development.
- Local, regional, and national planning for multisite communications needs to consider coordination of services, compatibility, and the progressive upgrading of hardware, as well as policies that lower transmission costs within states and across state lines.
- The use of distance technology and, in particular, Web-based media have raised questions regarding intellectual property and copyrights, privacy of educational dialogue, and other related legal and ethical issues that will require continuing clarification.
- Technology-mediated teaching strategies can change dramatically the way teaching and learning occurs, challenging the traditional relationship of students to academic institutions. These strategies may change conventional thinking about how the quality of educational programs is assessed and what is required to support student learning (e.g., library access, counseling services, computing equipment, tuition, and financial aid).
- Distance education technology has provided some nursing schools with an advantage in recruiting students and is increasing competition among institutions.

Despite the potential benefits of distance education, this technology cannot resolve issues like the shortage of clinical sites which limits the capacity of many nursing programs to provide the necessary hands on experiences to students.

**Accelerated Programs**

Accelerated programs are innovative approaches that have gained momentum throughout the country over the past decade. Programs are offered at both baccalaureate and master’s levels and reach out to new student populations by building on previous learning experiences and providing a “fast-track” into the nursing professions. For those with prior degrees, accelerated programs offer a quick route to becoming a registered nurse but require heavy credit loads and intense clinical experiences. These programs are attractive to second-career seekers, and graduates of these programs are prized by nurse employers who value the many layers of skill and education these graduates bring to the workplace. The challenge inherent in these programs is to quickly produce competent nurses while maintaining the integrity and quality of nursing education. Many institutions are adding part-time options and developing partnerships to support these students financially and academically.

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**Policy Implications**

The abundance of legislative activity at both the state and federal levels reflects the growing awareness of the impact of the shortage of registered nurses and other health professionals on the health care system. The current and evolving shortage of RNs in the U.S. will demand new approaches, combining federal efforts, state initiatives, and public-private partnerships. Addressing these complex issues will require the involvement of healthcare, education, and governmental sectors, working collaboratively to consider both short-term and long-term strategies. Not much can be done to reverse the factors contributing to the increased demand for these health professionals, but there are significant policy implications for the development of strategies to increase the supply of RNs. The development of solutions to address this workforce dilemma will require quality data collection and analysis, a continuing commitment from state policymakers and education leaders, and collaborative structures to develop and implement policy recommendations.

State policymakers, higher education and health care leadership will need to focus on multiple issues related to policy and practice:

- What are the implications of a nursing shortage for public policy?

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**Accelerated Baccalaureate and Master’s Degree Programs in the WICHE Region**

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
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<td>California</td>
<td>Azusa Pacific University</td>
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<td>Loma Linda University</td>
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<td>Mount St. Mary’s College</td>
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<td>Samuel Merrill-St. Mary’s-MSN</td>
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<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Lewis-Clark State College</td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
<td>University of Nevada-Reno</td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
<td>Oregon Health and Science-BSN &amp; MSN</td>
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<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>South Dakota State University</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
<td>Pacific Lutheran University-MSN</td>
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<td>Seattle University-MSN</td>
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Note: List based on response to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) 2002-2003 survey of nursing
If there is a shortage, what might be its characteristics in terms of severity, types of affected facilities, and geographic distribution?  
What are the causes of the current shortages?  
Is there a reliable central source of data on the future need for registered nurses on which to base public policy and resource allocations?  
How effective are current strategies in addressing this workforce issue?  
What types of system and institutional strategies will be required to address it?  
What educational strategies and standards will be required to ensure a balance between the quality of RNs and the quantity needed?  
Are educational leaders seeking opportunities for collaborations across disciplines and institutions?  
Are Web-based technologies being utilized to increase access to nursing education opportunities?  
How can the state’s resources, in a time of economic uncertainty, be most effectively leveraged to address policy options related to recruitment, education, retention, technology, data collection, and regulation strategies?

State governments play a major role in helping to assure an adequate supply of health workers to meet the health care needs in their states. State roles include the licensure of health professionals, regulation of health care facilities, support of educational programs, and financing of state colleges and universities. In response to the registered nurse shortages, most Western states are developing solutions and programs consistent with their health and education systems. States are convening tasks forces or commissions, creating scholarship and loan repayment programs, engaging in workforce data collection, reshaping educational programs and career ladders, and developing initiatives to more effectively market nursing opportunities. Regional dialogues, information sharing, and collaborations will also reinforce state-level policies, initiatives, and programs so that competent registered nurses are available when and where we need them the most.

Endnotes
4 Health Resources.
7 Spratley, Johnson, et al., 7 and 11.
9 Health Resources, 4.
16 Spratley, Johnson, et. al., 8.

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INFORMATION ITEM
WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program
Consideration of Support Fee Options for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 Biennium

The Problem
As the support fees continue to rise in each Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) field, states are able to support fewer new students. Fixed budgets or cuts in overall higher education budgets are eroding the states' annual appropriations for the program as the number of applicants seeking assistance often continues to increase.

Background
Ensuring that states have adequate access to professional education has been central to WICHE's mission since its inception. WICHE states continue to rely on PSEP to meet professional workforce needs, provide affordable access to a wide range of professional programs, help states avoid the high costs of establishing new professional programs, and enhance the quality of participating programs.

Every two years, the PSEP support fees are set for the next biennium. At the May 2004 commission meeting, support fees for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 academic years will be considered.

At the May 19, 2002, meeting of the certifying officers in Santa Fe, NM, many of the certifying officers voiced concern over the proposed support fee increases as recommended by the WICHE staff at that time. Virtually every state in the WICHE region is either currently experiencing or anticipates budget cuts because of revenue shortfalls and struggling economies. Budget cutting ultimately results in fewer new students being supported annually. Although the proposed fees were subsequently approved by the WICHE Commission, the certifying officers spent many months researching the entire history of support fees and developing both short- and long-term recommendations for the commission's discussion and consideration at their May 2003 meeting.

Based on the initial reaction of commissioners from states that "send" a large number of students in PSEP, WICHE staff has been in informal discussion over the past six months with participating programs, particularly in Group A fields, where access continues to be an issue for students needing to go out of state to receive their professional education. Lowering the current support fees, as proposed by the certifying officers subcommittee, would greatly increase the cost to the individual students at a time when all other expenses and resident tuition figures are increasing at an alarming rate. With these increases fewer students may be willing or able to incur such increased costs. Schools that no longer receive an incentive to accept WICHE students may decide to no longer offer preferential admission considerations.

Preliminary discussions with medical, dental, and veterinary medicine programs have indicated extreme concern with the possibility of lowering the support fees as recommended in May 2003. Although few programs indicated that they would need to reconsider participation in PSEP, most indicated that they would have to charge the tuition loss to the students. Under WICHE policy, programs enrolling PSEP students in Group A fields (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, and physician assistant) must charge students no more
than resident tuition. In order to continue participation, WICHE policy would need to be changed to allow the programs to charge greater than the resident tuition to the students as can be done in Group B fields (graduate library studies, pharmacy, public health, and architecture) when the support fee and the resident tuition is less than full nonresident tuition.

There appear to be a growing number of programs, however, who would not be opposed to freezing the support fees for a year or two. They, too, are dealing with budget cuts and understand the states' concern over increasing costs of this vital program. To that end, WICHE staff will form a proposal over the next few months seeking written input from participating states, institutions, and higher education offices.
Beginning with WICHE’s kick-off dinner last November at the commission meeting in Colorado, 12 member states have rolled out their own anniversary commemorations throughout the year.

**Wyoming**

In conjunction with a gathering of the University of Wyoming Alumni Association, WICHE was honored at a legislative reception on January 13, 2002. David Longanecker and Jere Mock attended the event at The Hitching Post in Cheyenne. As part of Wyoming’s anniversary activities, WICHE Commissioners Phil Dubois, John Barrasso, and Jenne Lee Twiford issued to the media “A Golden Anniversary for a Priceless Idea” – a tribute which noted some of the early formative and collaborative dialogue in which former UW President George Duke Humphrey, whose son wanted to go to medical school, visited with the dean of CU’s School of Medicine about interstate exchange possibilities.

**South Dakota**

Despite a storm that dumped nearly a foot of snow on South Dakota, the WICHE anniversary celebration on Jan. 15 in Pierre was attended by some 30 legislators, as well as former legislators, educators, regents, and others. The Board of Regents cohosted the WICHE reception, which was followed by a policy briefing on K-16 linkages, presented by Cheryl Blanco (remotely, because her flight was cancelled due to the storm). Commissioners Tad Perry and James Hansen welcomed guests to the reception and honored 12 WICHE students.

**Arizona**

The celebration luncheon in Arizona took place at the Flinn Foundation in Phoenix on Jan. 15. Guests included over 20 state senators and representatives, as well as regents, educators, administrators, and WICHE Commissioner John Haegar. Jack Jewett, president of the Board of Regents, spoke on the “Changing Directions” project. WICHE Commissioner Linda Blessing, executive director of the Board of Regents, related Arizona’s history with WICHE; and David Longanecker addressed “the perfect storm” in the West as it affects higher ed, and how WICHE can help Arizona weather it. Featured in Longanecker’s presentation were photos and testimonials of former PSEP students who are now practicing professionals in Arizona.

**Oregon**

At a breakfast reception on February 18 at Willamette University in Salem, David Longanecker spoke to an audience of legislators and higher ed decision makers. Also in attendance were WICHE commissioners Camille Preus-Braly and Diane Vines. Later in the day, at the invitation of WICHE commissioner, Sen. Ryan Deckert, Longanecker also spoke on the state of higher education in the West before the Senate Appropriations and Education committees.

**Nevada**

The state legislature in Reno was the site of the Feb. 27 breakfast in honor of WICHE’s 50th anniversary in Nevada. David Longanecker gave a well-attended presentation on the unique higher ed challenges currently faced by state. In attendance were legislators, former WICHE PSEP students now practicing in
Nevada, and WICHE commissioners and former commissioners. Later in the day, Longanecker was introduced on the floor of the Senate by WICHE commissioner Sen. Raymond Rawson; met with Gov. Kenny G. S. Guinn; and discussed K-16 challenges over lunch with State Superintendent of Instruction Jack Mclaughlin and WICHE commissioners Jane Nichols, chancellor of University and Community College System of Nevada, and Carl Schaff, educational consultant to the State Dept. of Education.

Washington
WICHE Commissioners Don Carlson, Marc Gaspard, and Debora Merle planned WICHE’s anniversary celebration around Washington’s Higher Education Day, March 26, 2003, at the State Capitol Campus in Olympia. Some 150 guests attended the WICHE reception, including the presidents of every one of the state’s four-year institutions, as well as many of their trustees and regents. In addition, many members of the Senate and House Higher Education committees were able to attend. Brief remarks by Marc Gaspard and Sen. Carlson were followed by a presentation by David Longanecker. After the WICHE event, which was catered by the high school students from the state’s New Market Vocational Skills Center, most of the guests went to a Higher Education Day reception at the governor’s mansion.

California
WICHE’s 50th anniversary celebration in California took place on April 29 at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. The reception was cosponsored by the College Board, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, the Foundation for Educational Achievement, and Loyola Marymount College. California WICHE Commissioners Francisco Hernandez, Herbert Medina, and Robert Moore welcomed invitees to the celebration. Sen. Dede Alpert and Assemblywoman Carol Liu, WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee members, presented Executive Director Longanecker with a resolution commending WICHE for its many contributions to California and the Western states. The executive director of the California Postsecondary Education Commission, Robert Moore, introduced Longanecker, who gave a presentation to an audience of legislators and higher education decision makers.

Utah
A highlight during WICHE’s commission meeting in Salt Lake City May 19-20 was Utah’s celebration of its 50th anniversary as a member of WICHE. WICHE Commissioner Cece Foxley welcomed approximately 125 celebrants to the anniversary dinner Monday evening, May 19. From the Varsity Room at Rice-Eccles Stadium (home of the 2002 Winter Olympics), guests were treated to a panoramic view of the sun setting over Salt Lake City as WICHE Commissioner David Gladwell introduced Gov. Mike Leavitt. Following Gov. Leavitt’s address concerning the value of competency-based education, WICHE Commissioner George Mantes introduced David Longanecker, who affirmed the mutual benefit of the Utah-WICHE partnership.

Hawaii
WICHE’s anniversary celebration with Hawai’i on September 11, 2003, took place at the Queen Lili’uokalani Center for Student Services of the University of Hawai’i. David Iha, WICHE’s certifying officer, made opening remarks, and WICHE Commissioner Clyde Kodani welcomed the guests to the afternoon reception. Speakers, in addition to David Longanecker, included former WICHE Chair Richard Kosaki, state senators Norman Sakamoto and Brian Taniguchi, and WICHE Commissioner Doris Ching. Charles Taba, D.D.S., a graduate of WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program, also spoke. Guests included administrators from the University of Hawai’i and the University of Hawai’i at Manoa, as well as
regents, former commissioners and PSEP grads. Earlier this year, on April 3, the Hawai‘i State Legislature adopted HR148, a resolution honoring WICHE’s 50th, introduced by Committee on Higher Education members K. Mark Takai (chair), Tulsi Gabbard Tamayo (vice chair), and Roy M. Takumi.

Montana
In conjunction with the Board of Regents meeting, MSU-Billings hosted a WICHE anniversary reception on their campus on September 25. Chancellor Ron Sexton welcomed between 150 and 200 guests (representatives from higher ed, the state legislature, Congressional staffers, and the general public) and introduced new WICHE Commissioner Sheila Stearns, who has recently begun her tenure as commissioner of the Montana University System. WICHE Commissioner Cindy Younkin made comments. WICHE executive director David Longanecker delivered a presentation, focusing on higher ed in Montana, followed by Gov. Judy Martz, who congratulated WICHE on its past and continuing role in the West.

North Dakota
As of this printing, North Dakota Commissioners Larry Isaak, Richard Kunkel, and Sen. David Nething plan to celebrate WICHE during the annual meeting of the Higher Education Roundtable at a lunch on October 21, 2003, at the Doublewood Inn in Bismarck. Invited guests and roundtable members will include representatives from the executive and legislative branches, the private sector, the SBHE and the NDUS. David Longanecker will attend and speak on North Dakota’s higher ed challenges and contributions, as well as the important part it plays in the region’s higher ed community. Also featured will be Kay Van Erem, D.D.S., who is an alumnus of the Professional Student Exchange Program.

Colorado
On April 21, 2003, the Colorado General Assembly introduced a resolution commending WICHE’s contributions to higher education in the state and region. The resolution passed in the House that same day and in the Senate on the next. Further state commemorations are on the agenda of the WICHE Commission Meeting, set for November 10 at the Omni International Hotel in Broomfield. At a luncheon, James Shore, chancellor of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, will speak. The anniversary dinner will feature keynote speaker David Ward, president of the American Council on Education.

Alaska
On December 4, 2003, in conjunction with the University of Alaska Board of Regents meeting, Alaska commissioners will host an anniversary luncheon at the Lucy Cuddy Center of the University of Alaska Anchorage. Speakers will be Arliss Sturgulewski, former state senator and WICHE commissioner, and David Longanecker.

To round out the anniversary celebration, plans for state events are pending in Idaho and New Mexico.