What’s Up in the West? A Focus on Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and South Dakota

Cheryl Blanco will share key summary data from the “Benchmarks Report.” David Longanecker will host a discussion with representatives from Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and South Dakota on how activities in their states relate to the general WICHE themes of enhancing access, financing the enterprise, and assuring a well-prepared workforce for the future. They’ll also look at innovation and quality assurance issues, as well as at accountability and how to ensure that our rhetoric and reality are in sync.

Biographical Information on the Speakers

David A. Longanecker is the executive director of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Previously, he served for six years as the assistant secretary for postsecondary education at the U.S. Department of Education, developing and implementing national policy and programs providing more than $40 billion annually in student aid and $1 billion to institutions. Prior to that, he was the state higher education executive officer (SHEEO) in Colorado and Minnesota. He was also the principal analyst for higher education for the Congressional Budget Office. Longanecker has served on numerous boards and commissions and was president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers. He has written extensively on a range of higher education issues. His primary interests in higher education are: access, teacher education, finance, the efficient use of educational technologies, and academic collaboration in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. He holds an Ed.D. in education from Stanford University.

Cheryl Blanco is senior program director for Policy Analysis and Research at WICHE. She monitors historical and emerging socioeconomic and political trends that impact higher education; directs the work of several policy projects; and produces a variety of publications to improve policymaking in higher education. She was appointed by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley to the Advisory Council on Education Statistics for the National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and is past chair of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. Prior to joining WICHE, she was educational policy director at the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission. She has held faculty and administrative positions at Arecibo Technological University College, University of Puerto Rico, including assistant to the vice president for academic affairs, director of the division of continuing education, coordinator for professional development, and tenured associate professor in the English Department. She received her Ph.D. in higher education from Florida State University.