Monday, November 7, 2005

November 7, 2005, 4.00 - 5.00 pm  
Century Room

November 8, 2005, 10.00 - 10.15 am  
Joint Committee Meeting  
Century Room

November 8, 2005, 10.15 - 11.00 am  
Joint Committee Meeting  
Century Room

Programs and Services Committee

Carl Shaff (NV), chair  
Doris Ching (HI), vice chair  
Diane Barrans (AK), ex officio  
David Nething (ND), ex officio  

Marshall Lind (AK)  
John Haeger (AZ)  
Herbert Medina (CA)  
Bill Hybl (CO)  
Committee vice chair (HI)  
Bob Kustra (ID)  
Ed Jasmin (MT)  
Committee chair (NV)  
Dede Feldman (NM)  
Robert Potts (ND)  
James Sager (OR)  
Jim Hansen (SD)  
George Mantes (UT)  
Don Carlson (WA)  
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Agenda

Presiding:  Carl Shaff, chair  
Staff:  Jere Mock, director, Programs and Services  
Margo Schultz, coordinator, Student Exchange Programs

Action Item

Approval of the Programs and Services Committee meeting minutes of May 16–17, 2005  7-3

Action Item

Reciprocal acceptance of California students in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)  7-8

Information Item:  Student Exchange Program updates  7-9

Information Item:  The State Scholars Initiative  7-13

Other business

Joint Committee Meeting

Information Item:  The Master Property Program: An avenue for cost savings and institutional contingency planning  7-15

Speakers:  Evan Bull, managing director, Marsh USA; Elizabeth Conlin, vice president, higher education practice, Marsh USA, and program administrator, MHEC Master Property Program; and Wm. A. “Bill” Payton, director of the risk management division, University of Missouri System, former chair, Master Property Program Oversight Committee, and chair, MHEC Package Program Initiative
Commissioner Jane Nichols, chair of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee, convened the joint meeting of her committee and the Programs and Services Committee on May 16, 2005. She introduced Christopher Morphew, associate professor in the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia, who made a presentation of the study he conducted for the commission, “Studying Student Mobility,” designed to better understand student participation in WICHE’s Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). Morphew’s research was supported by Lumina Foundation for Education and included a pilot study (its results were discussed at the May 2004 commission meeting) and a full study that was conducted in fall of 2004.

Morphew noted that he was pleased with the response to the survey: some 2,600 students from 15 Western states and 53 WUE institutions took part, representing 30.4 percent of the 8,550 students who received the questionnaire. The survey addressed students’ motivation to enroll via WUE; migration patterns of WUE students and how these patterns compare with the other student migration patterns; and ways in which programs such as WUE can help shape states’ access and diversity policies.

The results show that low-income students (household incomes less than $40,000) and racial and ethnic minority students have much greater price sensitivity than other students: they were nearly four times as likely to cite “reduced tuition available through WUE” as “very important” as were students whose family income exceeds $100,000 annually. In addition, minority students were more likely than white students to cite financial aid beyond WUE tuition as “very important” in playing a role in their decision to use WUE.

In some cases WUE migration by state was similar to national net migration patterns as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), but this was not always the case. The migration chart below is a useful tool to help states determine how WUE migration patterns affect larger state migration patterns and goals.
Some interesting observations:

- North Dakota shows a net inflow in both NCES and WUE data; nearly half of its out-of-state students are from the WUE program.

- Some states rely more on WUE for migration than others. Arizona and Utah use WUE relatively less than states like Washington and Alaska.

- WUE migration patterns are quite different than larger migration trends for states such as Nevada. Nevada has a net inflow rate of WUE students, but a net outflow rate for general migration. California is the opposite.

Morphew’s research also shows that some institutions provide WUE tuition to any eligible student, while others are very restrictive regarding the admissions process. He said states could better achieve their enrollment goals if they coordinated efforts with all of the participating institutions in the state. Further, students’ WUE enrollment trends in some states appear to be inconsistent with sound state access and migration goals. For example, Nevada, Arizona, and North Dakota experience large net inflows of WUE students despite large projected increases in the numbers of high school graduates in two of those states, Nevada and Arizona. New Mexico, conversely, is projecting a decline in high school graduates and has seats available for more students, yet the state has a net outflow through WUE.

The study results show that WUE provides an effective mechanism, overall, for facilitating student migration. Approximately one-third of respondents said they considered attending their current institution only after learning about WUE. Morphew offered several recommendations to the commission based on his research:

- Expand the pool of participating WUE schools to create a more extensive network of institutions that will attract and increase the diversity of WUE students.

- Maintain the 150-percent-of-resident-tuition formula as a means of fostering access for underrepresented minority and low income-students who are the most price sensitive.

- Encourage state policymakers to make financial aid beyond WUE available to students who need it.

- Market WUE more effectively through high school counselors, particularly in schools with large numbers of minority students. Counselors should talk to students before they become juniors and seniors so that they can explore and utilize the full range of options available within the WUE network.
• Information about the WUE program should be available on state-based online college-mentoring websites, such as CollegeinColorado.org, to help middle and high school students learn about their college options.

• Institutions should be flexible in relation to admission requirements for WUE students and not overly restrict admissions. Minority students are more likely to have lower high school GPAs; many of them would not be able to attend institutions that have 3.5+ GPA requirements.

• WUE schools should consider standardizing the application and admissions process, which is currently inconsistent across institutions in some states.

Morphew will visit several campuses through the end of 2005 to interview WUE students and institutional representatives to learn more about student migration. If states or institutions want more data from his study, he is willing to assist and can be reached at Morphew@uga.edu or 706-542-0573.

Following Morphew’s presentation, the committee adjourned. Acting Chair Doris Ching reconvened the committee on May 17 to discuss several action and information items, and she welcomed new committee members.

**Action Item**

**Approval of the Minutes of the November 8-9, 2004, Committee Meeting**

Klaus Hanson moved and Don Carlson seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the November 8-9, 2004, Programs and Services Committee meeting.

**Action Item**

**FY 2006 Workplan**

Jere Mock presented the FY 2006 Programs and Services workplan by outlining its priority themes and activities. In the area of access, the continuing success of the Student Exchange Programs enables WICHE to expand enrollments in postsecondary education throughout the West. She described the three programs and the range of institutions that participate, highlighting the dramatic tuition savings realized by students who participate in the Western Undergraduate Exchange: students and their families saved an estimated $112 million last year. WICHE also supports student access through its involvement as a subcontractor on the Equity Scorecard project developed by Estela Bensimon at the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California.

In relation to the innovation and technology priority area, Mock described the recent annual meeting of the Northwest Academic Forum, a consortium of 32 master’s and doctoral-granting institutions; WICHE serves as the forum’s secretariat. The meeting was held at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) in Richland, WA, and its participants included provosts, vice presidents of academic affairs, and vice presidents of research. They focused on ways in which higher education can play a more engaged role in economic development and benefit from collaborations with research facilities such as PNNL. She also described the collaborative online degree and certificate programs fostered by NEON (the Northwest Educational Outreach Network), which is funded through a $616,000 grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and plans to create a regional NEON course exchange. The American TeleEdCommunications Alliance was cited as a strategy that enables WICHE and the three other regional higher education organizations to gain purchasing power for technology and telecommunications resources. David Longanecker will become president of the ATAlliance board this summer.

In the area of workforce, Mock mentioned the ongoing publication of “Workforce Briefs,” a state-specific look at trends in workforce development and employment, as well as the overall occupational outlook. WICHE offers programs through SEP that respond to current state workforce needs. For example, Programs and Services staff members are working with staff in WICHE’s Mental Health Program to add additional fields to PSEP in response to mental health workforce shortages in rural and frontier areas.

Mock mentioned WICHE’s collaboration with the Midwest Higher Education Compact on the Master Property Program (MPP), a program that supports WICHE’s finance priority theme. Institutions and states that participate in this program achieve economies of scale by purchasing insurance as a group. The Higher Education System of Nevada was the
first system in the WICHE region to participate and has saved approximately $1 million annually in reduced property insurance premiums. WICHE is encouraging other institutions to join this consortium.

Mock mentioned a couple of areas where WICHE is considering implementing new initiatives. One would assist states that participate in the Professional Student Exchange Program and that hold their students to service or financial payback requirements. WICHE could administer these programs for states if there is sufficient interest throughout the region. Another new project under consideration is a regional licensure and credentialing service that would enable two or more states to turn to WICHE to coordinate this function. Initially, the service would likely focus on teacher education and mental health certifications. Ching said that she would like WICHE to develop a cost and risk analysis before initiating these projects. Longanecker said WICHE will not move forward with these projects unless our analysis shows that the organization would at least break even and that the member states would incur cost savings.

Robert Potts made a motion to accept the workplan, and it was seconded by Ed Jasmin; the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item
Member States’ Use of Out-of-Region Schools for PSEP

Ching introduced Margo Schultz, Student Exchange Program coordinator, who said that staff had further analyzed the issues related to whether WICHE should assess a fee to the out-of-region institutions that receive students from the West through the Professional Student Exchange Program. She said nine out-of-region institutions received $845,000 in PSEP support fees in academic year 2004-05; this represents 7 percent of the total support fees. WICHE currently does not receive any compensation from the schools to administer these contracts, nor do the states where these institutions operate pay WICHE dues. Those dollars represent lost tuition revenues to professional schools located in the WICHE dues-paying states. Fifty-three students are studying at out-of-regional institutions this academic year in the fields of dentistry (41 students), optometry (nine students), and osteopathy (three students).

Schultz said staff does not recommend assessing an administrative fee at the current time for two reasons. First, staff believes that additional students will enroll over time in the two new dental schools in the WICHE region: the Arizona School of Dental and Oral Health in Mesa and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Dental Medicine. This will likely reduce PSEP enrollments in the four out-of-region dental programs.

Secondly, staff is concerned that assessing a fee would further impede access for WICHE’s optometry students, especially if the two participating private schools, Pacific University and Southern California College of Optometry, would pass the fees along to the PSEP students. The only public optometry school in the West, located at the University of California, Berkeley, stopped admitting new PSEP students as of academic year 2004-05 because WICHE’s support fee did not fully compensate the resident/nonresident tuition differential. The committee members agreed that the best strategy at this stage is to maintain the status quo and not to charge an administrative fee to out-of-region schools.

Discussion Item
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE): Preserving Access through the 150 Percent Formula

Schultz introduced the discussion item related to whether the amount of tuition students pay as WUE students should be increased to 200 percent, as suggested by two commissioners during the November 2004 committee meeting. She said staff is concerned about the potential impact on access if the WUE tuition rate is increased since many states are increasing, or plan to increase, their tuition rates. She said there is not an exodus of institutions from the program under the current 150 percent of resident tuition formula. If certain institutions want to decrease the number of WUE students they enroll, there are several strategies they can use, including raising admissions standards or setting a cap on the number of students they will receive through this regional mechanism.

Longanecker said the current program works well: supply and demand are increasing, indicating the program benefits institutions and students. He said the 150 percent formula covers marginal costs at most institutions and the number of WUE students at each institution is small enough to not have adverse effects on any institution’s profits. Ed Jasmin made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on both of the discussion items; Robert Kustra seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
Jere Mock described NEON as a distance education delivery model which increases access to high-demand programs through institutional collaboration. It was developed over the past three years as a collaboration of the Northwest Academic Forum and WICHE. She and Russ Poulin, associate director of WCET, serve as its codirectors. It includes a regional Ph.D. in nursing that is offering by the Oregon Health and Science University to students in Alaska and Idaho as well as the web site www.nursingphd.org, which helps students to learn more about the Ph.D. offerings in nursing available throughout the West. Another NEON offering is a graduate certificate in supply chain management, which will be offered by the University of Alaska Anchorage, Boise State University, and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. A graduate certificate in library media also has been developed to provide this area of study to students in states whose institutions do not offer it. She described the newest NEON initiative, a regional course exchange that will be developed over the next several months.

Ching thanked the Programs and Services staff for their contributions to the organization and the committee meeting was adjourned.
ACTION ITEM
Reciprocal Acceptance of California Students in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Program

Summary
Staff proposes that California students receive reciprocity in all of the states that participate in WUE. Since 1997, only seven states (Alaska, Hawaii, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming) have enrolled California students through WUE; the other states chose not to do so because only one California institution was participating, and most of the nonreceiving states wanted California to be a fully reciprocal partner. As has been the case since the program’s inception, participating states and their institutions will retain the flexibility to decide how best to utilize WUE to address their unique needs and situations. Each state can decide to what extent it wishes to make its programs and institutions available at the WUE tuition rate to students from all of the WICHE member states.

Background
In 1987, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) signed an agreement with WICHE that enabled institutions in the state to receive WUE students. Despite CPEC’s intent, none of the postsecondary institutions in California enrolled WUE students; consequently, California students were not eligible to enroll in institutions in other participating states because of the program’s reciprocity requirements.

Ten years later, in April 1997, the California Maritime Academy expressed interest in joining WUE. The institution had participated as a receiving institution through WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program for several years, but because of a steady decline in state support for maritime studies through PSEP, the institution chose to switch to WUE. This request was approved, and the academy began receiving WUE students in the fall of 1997.

At the June 1997 WICHE Commission meeting, the commission approved the following motion:

States participating in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) may, at their discretion, accept students from states that do not participate in WUE (Arizona, California, and Washington) at the WUE tuition rate.

The commission took this action because enrollment trends were very uneven across the region and some states had substantial capacity to recruit undergraduate students from high growth states. WICHE staff drew up an implementation plan which was approved by the Student Exchange Program Advisory Council and by WICHE’s Executive Committee on August 18, 1997.

Over the past few months, three California State University campuses have joined the Western Undergraduate Exchange and will begin receiving WUE students in fall 2006-07. The institutions are: CSU Chico, CSU Humboldt, and CSU Stanislaus. We anticipate that additional California institutions will join WUE in the coming years.

Action Requested
All of the participating states in WUE will provide California students with full reciprocity, thus providing them the same opportunities to enroll through this regional program as students from other participating states.
INFORMATION ITEM
Student Exchange Program Updates

Implementation of Recommendations from the Student Mobility and WUE Study

Staff is following up on recommendations generated by Christopher Morphew’s study on student mobility and WICHE’s Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). Morphew presented his findings at the May 2005 commission meeting in Juneau, AK; minutes of the session begin on p. 7-3 of this agenda book. The results of the study show that overall WUE is very effective in facilitating student migration. Approximately one-third of the students said they decided to attend their out-of-state institution after learning about WUE. Morphew proposed several recommendations to the commission based on his findings. Staff has begun implementing a series of actions in response, as described below.

Expand the pool of participating WUE schools. WICHE is working to create a more extensive network of institutions that will attract students and increase the diversity of participating students. During the 2004-05 academic year, five colleges and universities joined the WUE network: University of Arizona (Tucson), Eastern Arizona College, and three California State University (CSU) campuses (Chico, Humboldt, and Stanislaus). WICHE staff will try to recruit additional institutions and will follow up with other campuses in the CSU system that have expressed interest but not yet joined. California signed the WUE agreement in 1987 through the California Postsecondary Education Commission; therefore, interested institutions may join with the approval of their campus or system administration. WICHE may also want to consider bringing private schools into the network but would need to determine how WUE tuition discounts would be calculated. Staff will continue to refine recruiting materials developed over the past year to attract new WUE schools.

Contain costs. Morphew also recommended that WICHE hold down WUE tuition costs to 150 percent of resident tuition and encourage schools to provide additional financial support for underrepresented groups. Staff concurs with this recommendation as a means of broadening access to higher education. At the November 2004 commission meeting, two commissioners requested that staff research the possibility of raising the WUE tuition to 175 or 200 percent of in-state tuition. At the following commission meeting, staff recommended that the WUE rate be held at 150 percent in order to provide affordable out-of-state options to students in the West. This recommendation was further confirmed by Morphew’s study findings that racial and ethnic minority and low-income students would be most adversely affected if the WUE tuition rate increased, since they are the most price-sensitive. Related to cost containment, given the price sensitivity of underrepresented groups, WICHE will encourage participating institutions to provide additional financial aid (beyond WUE) to financially needy students. (See the May 2005 agenda book, pp. 10-10 through 10-12, for the full WUE tuition analysis.)

Standardize the WUE application process and examine WUE admission requirements. WICHE is examining the possibility of adding an online applications component to the online WUE catalogue that is now in the planning stages (described in detail several paragraphs below). Currently, no standardized WUE application exists. Students use institutions’ regular admissions applications and indicate on the application form that they are requesting WUE tuition status. On occasion, this has generated problems when students neglect to indicate their intentions to enroll via WUE.

WUE admission requirements are used by participating institutions to meet their individual needs. Some automatically provide WUE tuition to all eligible students. Others are more restrictive and place limits on the numbers of students they enroll through WUE, selecting those with GPAs of 3.5 or higher. WICHE will encourage all WUE institutions to use this exchange as a tool to increase the enrollment of underrepresented students, many of whom would be unable to leave their home state were it not for the tuition savings they receive through WUE.

Encourage states to synchronize their access goals and enrollment policies. Morphew found several migration trends that were inconsistent with high school graduate projections and sound state access goals. For example, two high growth states are destinations for WUE students (Nevada and Arizona); while other states (New Mexico, for example) are projecting a decline in high school graduates and have seats available for more students, yet they have a net outflow of students. WICHE encourages commissioners to examine WUE student enrollments with their state policymakers and institutions, so that they might better achieve their enrollment and migration goals through coordinated efforts among their participating institutions.
**Market WUE more aggressively.** The study found that WUE can be marketed more effectively through multiple channels, beginning with high school counselors, particularly in schools with large minority student populations. Counselors need to talk to students before their junior and senior years, so that students can explore the full range of options within the WUE network. Many students do not find out about the program until they are already enrolled in a postsecondary institution; most institutions won’t allow reclassification to the WUE tuition rate once the student has enrolled.

WICHE staff is approaching this problem from several angles. We will convene WUE liaisons and certifying officers via conference call to discuss the WUE study findings and emphasize the importance of getting the word out to their state high school guidance counselors. In the past, some states have been lax about sending out WUE bulletins to their state high schools; we will stress the importance of widespread distribution of these materials.

Staff will also encourage WUE liaisons to make presentations to guidance counselor meetings in their state to build awareness about WUE. Finally, WICHE staff hopes to make a presentation about WUE during the American School Counselor Association’s June 24-27 meeting in Chicago.

**Creation of an online WUE catalogue.** WICHE has plans to convert the WUE Bulletin, which is currently available in hard copy or PDF files on the Internet, into a dynamic and searchable online database. Staff is reviewing two vendor proposals and hopes to have the new system up and running by fall 2006 (for the AY 2007-06 catalogue) or by fall 2007 at the latest. The new database will allow students and their families to search for specific programs available to WUE students in the geographic area of their choice. Once the online WUE database is complete, the program will be promoted through posters and bookmarks we will distribute to prospective students. Conversion to an online catalogue will reduce printing and postage costs, which are estimated at $8,000 this year. The added advantage is that participating institutions will be able to update their descriptions and contact information online.

Staff is also working to link WUE to state-based, early intervention, online college-mentoring systems that help high school students to research their college options. In addition, we are contacting participating WUE institutions and encouraging them to link to WICHE’s WUE page from their home institution.

**Work more closely with participating WUE institutions.** WICHE staff will share the results of Morphew’s study with participating institutions and explore some of the recommendations, such as offering additional aid to WUE students, particularly underrepresented, low income, and minority students. Staff will also ask them to consider combining their state border programs into WUE.

**Setting the PSEP Support Fees for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Biennium**

During its May 2006 meeting, the WICHE Commission will consider and approve Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) support fees for the 2007-09 biennium. Fourteen fields are currently included in PSEP. WICHE states continue to depend on PSEP to meet several key objectives:

- Develop a professional workforce, especially in the health professions.
- Provide affordable access to a wide range of professional programs that otherwise might not be accessible to students in some states.
- Enhance the quality and prestige of participating programs by enabling them to attract exceptional students from throughout the West.
- Enable states to avoid the costs of establishing new professional schools.

Staff and certifying officers take into consideration many factors as they prepare the recommendations, including:

- The relationship between support fees and today’s nonresident tuition levels as well as future anticipated tuition increases.
- The impact on enrollments if a greater tuition burden is shifted to students.
The creation of new professional programs that have absorbed more in-state students and the availability of out-of-state programs.

Setting support fees involves balancing the diverse needs of states, students, and institutions. States that support large numbers of students through PSEP face mounting fiscal pressures as they try to provide access to professional education for their residents. The receiving institutions’ costs of delivering professional education continue to rise, necessitating greater financial incentives to preserve slots for nonresident students. Students are bearing heavier financial burdens as sizeable tuition and fee hikes, some in the double digits, become more prevalent at several public and private institutions.

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 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 biennium were approved by the full commission in May 2004 and included a 2 percent increase in Group A and B fields for each year of the biennium, along with a $2,000 increase in the first year of the biennium (2005-06) for optometry and dentistry support fees. Fees are outlined in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>$24,600</td>
<td>$25,100</td>
<td>$25,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>19,500</td>
<td>19,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>24,400</td>
<td>24,900</td>
<td>25,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>9,200</td>
<td>9,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>9,200</td>
<td>9,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optometry</td>
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<td>13,300</td>
<td>13,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiatry</td>
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<td>11,600</td>
<td>11,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteopathic Medicine</td>
<td>16,300</td>
<td>16,600</td>
<td>17,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physician Assistant</td>
<td>8,800</td>
<td>9,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Library Studies</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>5,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<td>Architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Nursing</td>
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Over the next couple of months, staff will analyze the tuition and fees of participating schools and discuss proposals for the 2007-08 support fees with WICHE’s certifying officers and participating programs to seek their feedback. We anticipate that some of the schools of osteopathic medicine may challenge the current support levels, as there is a significant imbalance between the support fee for allopathic and osteopathic medicine ($8,500). In 2004-05, tuition for a first-year student in WICHE’s participating osteopathy schools averaged $33,000 (all private schools). The average tuition for allopathic programs in both public and private institutions was only slightly higher at $36,300 – a difference of only $3,300.

Once we have our proposal for new support fees developed, we will distribute it widely to all of the participating states and institutions so that there is ample time for comment prior to the commission action on the fees during the May meeting.

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1. Group A includes those PSEP fields in which WICHE students would have a difficult time gaining access to public professional schools without the financial incentive provided to schools by PSEP.
2. Group B includes professional fields where access is not as significant a problem but where states wish to offset high nonresident and private institution tuition charges for their residents.
WRGP: Call for Nominations of New Programs

Every two years, WICHE invites new graduate programs to become part of its Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP). The network consists of high quality master’s and doctoral programs that are not widely available throughout the West. To be eligible for WRGP, programs must be distinctive on two criteria: they must be of demonstrated quality, and they must be offered at no more than four institutions in the WICHE region (exclusive of California, because California institutions do not currently participate in WRGP). WRGP is particularly strong in programs targeted to the emerging social, environmental, and resource development needs of the West and in innovative interdisciplinary programs.

Through WRGP, graduate students who are residents of the 14 participating states may enroll in participating programs in public institutions on a resident tuition basis or at reduced tuition in private institutions. Along with this obvious benefit to students, WRGP offers states and institutions a means to foster the development and support of innovative programs by enlarging the potential student pool. Like all WICHE student exchanges, WRGP has enjoyed strong support from policymakers in the states as a way to better utilize regional educational resources.

In September 2005, we disseminated the call for nominations to invite graduate programs into the WRGP network. The deadline to submit nominations is November 18, 2005. WICHE staff will work with the regional Student Exchange Program Advisory Council to determine which of the nominated programs to add to WRGP. The list of new WRGP programs will be presented to commissioners at the May 2006 meeting; a WRGP booklet listing the new 2006-08 programs will be published, and the new programs will be added to the WRGP information on our web site.

Encouraging College Access through Online Mentoring Systems

WICHE convened a College Access Symposium on October 4, 2005, at the SHEPC facility in Boulder to explore opportunities for greater state participation in online information systems that promote access to postsecondary education. Representatives of state higher education agencies, institutions, and student loan programs in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming participated. Representatives of several innovative online systems that have been developed in collaboration with the XAP Corporation, including CollegeinColorado.org, the College Foundation of North Carolina, and the Southern Regional Education Board, demonstrated their systems. XAP Chief Executive Officer Liz Dietz and two members of her staff also took part.
INFORMATION ITEM
The State Scholars Initiative

On September 30, 2005, WICHE was notified that it was selected to become the program administrator of the federal State Scholars Initiative. That same day, the commission’s Executive Committee unanimously approved accepting the $4.8 million grant from the Vocational and Adult Education Division of the U.S. Department of Education. (WICHE has authority to expend $2.4 million during this federal fiscal year; the remaining $2.4 million is contingent upon the availability of federal funds.) Some $1.2 million of the grant will fund WICHE’s administrative costs, and $3.6 million will support up to 12 new state efforts through competitive RFP (request for proposal) processes.

The purpose of the State Scholars Initiative is to support state-level business/education partnerships that will encourage and motivate high school students to enroll in and complete rigorous courses of study that will benefit their future careers, postsecondary education, and training. The various initiatives motivate students to take rigorous courses that reflect the National Commission on Excellence in Education recommendations:

- 4 credits of English
- 3 credits of math (algebra I, geometry, algebra II)
- 3 credits of basic lab science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- 3.5 credits of social studies (chosen from U.S. and world history, geography, economics, and government)
- 2 credits of the same foreign language

David Longanecker and Jere Mock will meet with the Department of Education staff in Washington, D.C., on October 26, 2005, to review the project timeline and deliverables. In the meantime, recruitment is underway for a program director (1.0 FTE), program coordinator (1.0 FTE), and administrative coordinator (.80 FTE). The grant also provides support for an additional .65 FTE (for some of Mock’s, Annie Finnigan’s, and Deborah Jang’s FTE). A national advisory council also will be formed following the approval of the proposed roster by the Education Department’s staff.

Staff will oversee the efforts of 14 existing state-level organizations, including three in the WICHE region, that currently participate in SSI. They include:

- Arkansas Business Education Alliance – Arkansas Scholars
- Arizona Business & Education Coalition – Arizona Academic Scholars
- CBIA Education Foundation (an affiliate of the Connecticut Business Industry Association)
- Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Partnership for Kentucky Schools
- Maryland Business Roundtable for Education
- Michigan Chamber of Commerce
- Public Education Forum of Mississippi
- New Jersey Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (an affiliate of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce)
- New Mexico Business Roundtable for Educational Excellence
- Oklahoma Scholars (OBEC)
- Rhode Island Scholars – The Education Partnership
- Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Washington Partnership for Learning

Six additional, state-level business/education partnerships will be recruited in early 2006. Each new partnership may be funded at up to $300,000, over a two-year period, to implement State Scholars programs. New grants to state-level partnerships will be required to meet a series of requirements, including:

- Students in at least four public school districts in the state will be encouraged to take a prescribed course of study (Scholars Course of Study) in the schools.
- High school reform is a priority for the decision leaders in the state.
- The governor and chief state school officer support the program.
- The state’s policy structure is aligned, or the state plans to align it, with rigorous high school course completion.
• The applicant business/education partnership is a viable state coalition.
• There are key businesses and corporations in the state that will provide financial and/or in-kind contributions.

The program staff will be available to provide technical assistance to any eligible state entity interested in developing an application. While the timeframe for the RFP needs to be reviewed with the Department of Education, we anticipate it will be announced in early 2006. A second RFP may be conducted in late 2006 or early 2007, contingent upon available federal funding, to bring a final group of state partnerships into the SSI. Once the new SSI states are selected, WICHE will provide technical assistance, monitoring, oversight, and cost reimbursement to the new state partners.

The state partnerships will have opportunities to share best practices via forums, teleconferences, a web-based resource center, and listservs. Additionally, WICHE will help the state partners coordinate and leverage their resources with related initiatives in their states, such as MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement), GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), and College in the High School (dual-credit) programs.

By way of background, the federal State Scholars Initiative is predicated upon three important research findings:

• There is a strong link between courses completed in high school and postsecondary achievement.
• A solid high school education can increase wages both for students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education and for students who enter the workforce directly from high school.
• A solid academic foundation in high school benefits every student, regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic status, (in fact, students from families with lower socio-economic status tend to derive a greater relative benefit from a rigorous course of study).

To derive these research findings, the U.S. Department of Education conducted three long-term studies that tracked students from their sophomore year of high school through age 30. Especially telling are findings related to coursetaking, which show a strong link between courses completed in high school and postsecondary degree completion. Students who took algebra II, for example, earned a bachelor’s degree 39.5 percent of the time, while students who stopped at geometry earned a bachelor’s degree only 23.1 percent of the time.
INFORMATION ITEM
The Master Property Program: An Avenue for Cost Savings and Institutional Contingency Planning

The Master Property Program (MPP) helps institutions seek broad insurance coverage, reduce their premium costs, and improve asset protection. This year, the value of such a program has become vividly clear. In addition to reviewing the current status of MPP, we’ll look at institutional contingency planning for natural disasters and other emergencies, with speakers Evan Bull, managing director, Marsh USA; Elizabeth Conlin, vice president, higher education practice, Marsh USA, and program administrator, MHEC MPP; and Wm. A. “Bill” Payton, director of the risk management division, University of Missouri System, former chair, MPP Oversight Committee, and chair, MHEC Package Program Initiative.

About the Master Property Program

WICHE has partnered with the Midwest Higher Education Compact (MHEC) since May 2004 to expand the MHEC Master Property Program (MPP) to help more institutions seek broad insurance coverage, reduce their premium costs, and improve asset protection. The Nevada System of Higher Education has been an MPP member since July 2004 and has experienced dramatic savings: nearly $1 million in premium savings during its first year of membership and an additional $500,000 savings on its July 1, 2005, policy renewal, along with improved property insurance coverage. WICHE encourages other institutions and systems in the WICHE region to consider joining this consortium.

The Master Property Program provides its members with property, earthquake, flood, terrorism, service interruption, and crime insurance. The programs offers loss control surveys, plan reviews and inspections, infrared surveys, web-based data management, and annual loss control workshops for participating institutions’ risk managers and facility maintenance staff.

Since the program was developed 11 years ago, it has achieved a critical mass with 46 members (71 campuses); adding more members from the West will enable the purchasing group to positively affect the market when the program administrators seek future bids from insurance underwriters. The MPP has generated more than $22.9 million in savings for its participating institutions. The program is currently underwritten by Lexington AIG and is jointly administered by Marsh and Captive Resources, Inc., under the direction of an MPP Oversight Committee representative of the insured institutions. Details regarding the program’s coverage and benefits are explained in the 2005 enclosed renewal brochure.

During the oversight committee’s October 13, 2005, meeting in Chicago, the members agreed to work with Marsh and its subsidiary companies to put more emphasis on helping MPP member institutions develop business continuity and crisis management plans for natural disasters and other risks, particularly in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

During the November 8, 2005, joint meeting of the Programs and Services and Issues Analysis and Research committees, representatives of Marsh and the past chair of the MPP Oversight Committee will discuss likely impacts that Hurricane Katrina will have on the property insurance and reinsurance marketplace. They will also discuss how institutions and systems of higher education can better prepare for future natural disasters, terrorist risks, and other emergencies.

Program Outreach

Presentations regarding the MPP have been made to institutions in Colorado; to the Oregon community college system and Oregon Health and Sciences University; to a consortium of private colleges in California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington; and to the University of Wyoming.

Six states in the WICHE region currently require their public institutions to participate in their state’s risk management program: Arizona (though their community colleges are eligible), Idaho, North Dakota, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah. Washington requires its statutory institutions to work through its state risk management program. Thusfar, it is our understanding that California and Montana are eligible to participate but have arrangements or plans for purchasing insurance that currently preclude their interest in participating in a WICHE group. If any commissioners would like to have presentations made regarding this program in their state, please contact Jere Mock at 303-541-0222.