Ad Hoc Committee for Self-funded Units

Monday, November 10, 2008
3.30 - 5.30 pm
Courtroom L
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Ad Hoc Committee for Self-funded Units

Roy Ogawa (HI), chair
Jane Nichols (NV), ex officio
Camille Preus (OR), ex officio

Diane Barrans (AK)
Joel Sideman (AZ)
Appointment pending (CA)
David Skaggs (CO)
Helene Sokugawa (HI)
Robert Kustra (ID)
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)
David Nething (ND)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Carl Shaff (NV)
James Sager (OR)
Tad Perry (SD)
William Sederburg (UT)
Ann Daley (WA)
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Presiding: Roy Ogawa, chair

Staff: Louis Fox, vice president, WICHE Technology and Innovation, and executive director, WCET
Dennis Mohatt, vice president, Behavioral Health, and director, WICHE Mental Health Program

Agenda

Approval of the Ad Hoc Committee for Self-funded Units meeting minutes of May 19, 2008 9-3

Discussion Items:

Funding for Transparency By Design 9-5

Fall 2008 WICHE Mental Health Program and budget update – Dennis Mohatt 9-7

Fall 2008 WICHE Technology and Innovation and WCET program and budget update – Louis Fox
ACTION ITEM
Ad Hoc Committee for Self-funded Units
Monday, May 19, 2008

Committee Members Present
Roy Ogawa (HI), chair
Camille Preus (OR), immediate past chair
Diane Barrans (AK)
David Skaggs (CO)
Robert Kustra (ID)
Ed Jasmin (MT)
David Nething (ND)
James Sager (OR)
Tad Perry (SD)
David Buhler (UT)
Ann Daley (WA)
Tom Buchanan (WY)

WICHE Staff Present
David Longanecker, president
Louis Fox, executive director, WCET, and vice president,
WICHE Technology and Innovation
Dennis Mohatt, director, Mental Health Program, and vice
president, Behavioral Health

Chair Roy Ogawa called the Ad Hoc Committee for Self-Funded Units to order and asked David Longanecker to review the charge to the committee. Discussion of the committee charge followed President Longanecker’s overview.

A MOTION AND SECOND WERE GIVEN TO SEND THE RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT A STANDING COMMITTEE FOCUSED ON THE ACTIVITIES OF WICHE’S SELF-SUSTAINED ENTITIES (CURRENTLY, THE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM AND WCET) TO THE FULL COMMISSION. The motion passed unanimously.

Mohatt provided an update on Mental Health Program activities, including a year-end report. He discussed future focus areas around improving services for returning OIF/OEF (Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom) veterans and mental health services on campuses. Discussion followed among committee members, with strong support for the idea of focusing on campus mental health services.

Fox reviewed the activities of the Technology and Innovation initiative and efforts to enhance the WICHE footprint in this area. He reviewed the evolving status of WCET within WICHE and in the external marketplace, which should be examined further by the committee in the future. Fox also presented the new reserve policy for WCET, which will be seeking to establish a reserve amounting to 25 percent of the operating budget. In the interim, pending adequate reserves, Fox plans to establish a reserve equal to three months of operating costs, plus $25,000. The Mental Health Program is examining a similar policy. Fox discussed the tenuous financial health of WCET and predicted continued difficulty through FY 2009.

The committee adjourned.
DISCUSSION ITEM
Transparency By Design

Transparency By Design is a consortium of adult-serving higher education institutions whose leaders wish to transcend simple accountability reporting. The project will create a Website that openly shares and interprets student outcomes information. Adult students and policymakers will be enabled to make more informed decisions about online, adult-serving higher education options. Transparency By Design was developed by The Presidents' Forum, which was established in 2002 by Excelsior College to provide adult-serving institutions with the opportunity to exchange knowledge and perceptions of current models and tools.

Michael Offerman, leader of the working group that developed the initiative observed: "The members of Transparency By Design are united in the belief that students should be well-informed about their education options – what they will learn and how well other students have performed at a specific institution. To meet the education needs of adult students, we as an industry must provide them with trustworthy and transparent ways to choose among many available options and to gauge the potential of each one to further their careers and achieve their dreams."

In the first quarter of 2009, Transparency By Design will unveil its Website, displaying information on student demographics, completion rates, costs, student satisfaction or engagement, and alumni experiences. Future versions of the Website will include outcomes for academic programs and program specializations, allowing prospective students to assess how well a program will prepare them for their professional pursuits.

The Presidents' Forum selected WCET to serve as a neutral third party that will challenge the institutions to meet their stated goals, audit data submitted for publication, create text that will inform students on important questions they should ask, and publish the information on the Website. WCET is leading the development and design of the Webspace hosting this information. WCET will also coordinate, conduct, and publish research using the data.

Transparency By Design member institutions (see chart below) each paid a fee to underwrite the initiative's initial planning and implementation. At the request of Lumina Foundation for Education, WICHE and WCET recently submitted a full proposal, requesting $629,000 over 3.5 years to fund project research and development. The project is also seeking ties to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and additional member institutions to join the project.

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<th>Transparency By Design Member Institutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Intercontinental University Online</td>
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<td>American Public University System</td>
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<td>Capella University</td>
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<td>Charter Oak State College</td>
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<td>Colorado Technical University</td>
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<td>Excelsior College</td>
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<td>Fielding Graduate University</td>
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Phoenix, Arizona
DISCUSSION ITEM
Mental Health Program and Budget Update: Fall 2008

Overall Picture
The Mental Health Program continues to be very active, with projects in multiple WICHE states. Several states have notified the program they will not be able to remit affiliation fees for FY 2009, including Arizona, Utah, and Washington. The program was not successful in obtaining a new four-year cycle of funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for its Rural Mental Health Research Center. HRSA decreased the number of centers from eight to six, and our center application did not make the new cut, although our score was equal to that awarded during the previous review cycle. New opportunities will help us financially offset this loss; however, some specialized research staff may not be retained.

Staffing
The program currently employs nine full-time staff and two part-time staff. We also have long-term agreements with several project-specific consultants to the program.

Budget
The program ended FY 2008 with a $4,000 negative fund balance. This was due to the late payment of invoices by several states. Had outstanding invoices been remitted prior to the year-end close, the program would have shown a $23,000 positive fund balance. The reserve picture also was impacted by the no-cost extension of several contracts into FY 2009, which had initially been expected to be completed in FY ’08.

Major Projects
Alaska
• Supporting various aspects of the behavioral health workforce initiative.
• Ongoing support of the Division of Behavioral Health data improvement initiative.
• Development of an American Psychological Association–accredited psychology internship consortium.

Colorado
• Population in need of public behavioral services study and analysis.

Hawaii
• Supporting workforce development re: transformation.

Idaho
• Conducting behavioral health redesign study for legislature.

South Dakota
• Supporting children’s system of care pilot in Rapid City.
• Suicide prevention grant evaluation.
• Co-occurring state incentive grant evaluation.

Wyoming
• Suicide prevention grant evaluation.

New Projects on Horizon
1. Invited to submit a proposal to study the use of mental health first aid (MHFA) in military populations, including adaptation of manual and clinical trials.

2. Training of higher education residence life staff in MHFA.

3. Consultation to the new Veteran’s Administration Rural Resource Center for the Intermountain Region (CO, UT, MT, WY).
4. VA expansion of Rural Resource Centers; WICHE is partnered with the South Central mental illness research educational and clinical center.


Challenges and Opportunities
The current economic meltdown will pose great challenges to our region. It also could be an opportunity for us to finally discuss how to use WICHE’s interstate compact to possibly operate multistate functions (e.g., data warehouse, needs assessment, program evaluation, certification, and quality assurance). Many states will be forced to curtail operations, yet some activities and functions might be able to be operated through the compact, with shared administration, fiscal support, and governance.