Plenary Session V: What WICHE Can Do to Help in Tough Times

At this point in the commission agenda, you will have received presentations from Dennis Jones and Jane Wellman on the fallacy of much of the “conventional wisdom” about higher education and how higher education can use the current economic crisis to move forward. You will have heard from Tom Bailey about the various significant efforts at both the national and federal levels to expand and improve our nation’s community colleges. You will better understand the historical context and uniqueness of Western higher education, based on Patty Limerick’s presentation. And you will have heard from Brian Prescott about how the West has responded so far to the availability of federal assistance through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, as well as from Brian and Demi Michelau about a couple of WICHE efforts focused on addressing some of today’s most pressing issues.

This session is devoted to a discussion of how the West can respond most effectively to the difficult times we currently face and, more specifically, how WICHE can help its member states respond to these circumstances.

Pat Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, will facilitate this discussion. As one of the foremost thinkers in and leaders of American higher education today, Callan will be able to help WICHE assess how it can best serve in these times. Callan is the perfect instigator for this discussion, not only because of his current leadership role but also because he has been a significant part of WICHE in the past. He served as a WICHE commissioner from three states – Montana, Washington, and California – during his tenure as SHEEO in those states and was twice elected chair of the commission.

Moderators: Patrick Callan, president, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education; David Longanecker, president, WICHE

Biographical Information on the Speakers

Patrick M. Callan is founding president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Established in 1998 by a consortium of national foundations, including Atlantic Philanthropies, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Ford Foundation, the center is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. Its purpose is policy research and promotion of public policies to enhance opportunities for high-quality education and training beyond high school. The center is best known for its Measuring Up report cards that evaluate, compare, and grade state performance in higher education up to and including the baccalaureate degree. These reports are issued every two years and take into account education provided by public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities. Measuring Up has received extensive national and state media coverage, as have other center reports on
such subjects as college access and affordability. From 1992 through 1997, Callan was executive director of the California Higher Education Policy Center, recognized for its tough-minded analyses and for calling public attention to important higher education issues. Prior to this he was vice president of the Education Commission of the States and served as executive director of the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the Washington State Council for Postsecondary Education, and the Montana Commission on Postsecondary Education. Callan has been a member of numerous national, regional, and state commissions and has written and spoken extensively on education and public policy. He is the author of many articles and papers on education, educational opportunity, public accountability, financing of higher education, and leadership. He is coeditor of Public and Private Financing of Higher Education: Shaping Public Policy for the Future and coauthor of Designing State Higher Education Systems for a New Century, a study of state organization and governance of higher education. He collaborated with Gene Maeroff and Michael Usdan on The Learning Connection, New Partnerships Between Schools and Colleges (Teachers College Press). He has served as an advisor to blue ribbon commissions, state education and higher education boards, governors’ offices, and legislative committees in many states.

David A. Longanecker has served as the president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education in Boulder, CO, since 1999. WICHE is a regional compact between 15 Western states created to assure access and excellence in higher education through collaboration and resource sharing among the higher education systems of the West. Previously, Longanecker served for six years as the assistant secretary for postsecondary education at the U.S. Department of Education. 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. He has written extensively on a range of higher education issues. His primary interests in higher education are: expanding access to successful completion for students within all sectors of higher education, promoting student and institutional performance, assuring efficient and effective finance and financial aid strategies, and fostering effective use of educational technologies, all for the purpose of sustaining the nation’s strength in the world and increasing quality of life for all Americans, particularly those who have traditionally been left out in the past. He holds an Ed.D. from Stanford University, an M.A. in student personnel work from George Washington University, and a B.A. in sociology from Washington State University.