Monday, November 8, 2010

Plenary Session II:
What's Up at WICHE? Common Core Standards and What They Mean for the West

This past June the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) launched a new national initiative to adopt Common Core Standards for all American students, grades K-12, in English-language arts and mathematics. To date, the governors of all but two states (Alaska and Texas) have endorsed this effort, which has the potential of substantially improving the preparation of students for future success in college and the world of work.

Despite being designed to assure that students come to college prepared to succeed, higher education has been only modestly engaged in the development of these standards, and few leaders in higher education understand well their implications for their states or institutions. Yet for a variety of reasons, higher education’s engagement in this effort is essential to its ultimate success. First, implementing these standards will certainly affect higher education in many ways, impacting the future demand for and configuration of remedial/developmental education, the demands on the preparation of students training to become teachers, and the development and alignment of standards that will almost certainly follow within higher education. Second and equally important, success in implementing these K-12 standards will require an uncommon level of interaction and, indeed, accommodation between the K-12 sector and higher education. Higher education, therefore, must be proactive in helping to define a path for students that is mutually understood and appreciated in all sectors of the education system.

One higher education leader who has not been absent from the development of these standards is Paul Lingenfelter, president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). Lingenfelter, along with other higher education leaders, including representatives from the American Council on Education, while invited late to the game, have been active in helping to assure that legitimate concerns and needs from higher education have been attended to in the development of these standards. Lingenfelter will join us to discuss the development of these Common Core Standards and what they mean for higher education in the West.

Speaker: Paul Lingenfelter, president, State Higher Education Executive Officers
Biographical Information on the Speaker

Paul E. Lingenfelter’s work as president of SHEEO has focused on successful participation in higher education, accountability, and finance. Under his leadership SHEEO organized and staffed the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, which in 2005 issued its report *Accountability for Better Results: A National Imperative for Higher Education*. He previously served as vice president of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, where he established and led the MacArthur Foundation Program on Human and Community Development. Earlier, Lingenfelter served as deputy director for fiscal affairs for the Illinois Board of Higher Education. He received an A.B. from Wheaton College in literature, an M.A. from Michigan State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in higher education. He currently serves on the boards of the National Student Clearinghouse and the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability.