Self-funded Units Committee Meeting

Monday, October 31, 2011
10:15 - 11:45 am
President’s Conference Room
Self-funded Units Committee Meeting

Position vacant, chair
Jim Hansen (SD), vice chair
Joe Garcia (CO), ex officio
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT), ex officio

Jim Johnsen (AK)
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Michael Kirst (CA)
Position vacant (CO)
Roberta Richards (HI)
Mike Rush (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Joseph Hardy (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Dave Nething (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Committee vice chair (SD)
Peter Knudson (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Jim Hansen (SD), vice chair

Staff:
Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET
Mollie McGill, deputy director, WCET
Louis Fox, senior associate, Technology & Innovation
Dennis Mohatt, vice president for behavioral health and director,
   Mental Health Program

Action Item: Approval of the Self-funded Units Committee meeting minutes of May 17, 2011 6-3

Action Item: Developing the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework 6-5

Information Items – WCET
Staff:
Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET
Mollie McGill, deputy director, WCET
Update on major WCET activities:
WCET focus areas for FY 2012
Predictive Analytics Reporting proof of concept project
Federal activities: state authorization of distance education
Proposed project to implement a state authorization reciprocity program [Tab 4, p. 24]
Research: Managing Online Education survey, University Professional and Continuing Education Association survey
Learner progress data for adult learners
Salesforce implementation

Budget update

Information Items – Technology & Innovation
Staff: Louis Fox, senior associate

Update on Technology & Innovation activities:
- National Research and Education Network initiatives
- Global Environment for Network Innovations (GENI)
- United States Unified Community Anchor Network (U.S. UCAN)
- GigU
- USA Ignite

Mental Health Program and Technology & Innovation projects
- Alaska Psychiatric Institute: e-psych
- South Dakota: Sinte Gleska University system of care project
- Health and Human Services: national rural health information technology training programs

Information Items – Mental Health Program
Staff: Dennis Mohatt

Program update:
- New project update: SAMHSA/HRSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Health Services Administration) Center for Integrated Health Solutions

Other business

Adjournment
ACTION ITEM
Self-Funded Units Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 17, 2011

Committee Members Present
Kaye Howe (CO), committee chair
Jim Hansen (SD), committee cochair
Jim Johnsen (AK)
Michael Kirst (CA)
Roberta Richards (HI)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Dave Nething (ND)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Camille Preus (OR)
Don Bennett (WA)

Committee Members Absent
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Mike Rush (ID)
Joseph Hardy (NV)
Peter Knudson (UT)
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Staff Present
Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET
Mollie McGill, deputy director, WCET
Russ Poulin, deputy director, WCET
Louis Fox, senior associate, Technology & Innovation
Dennis Mohatt, vice president for behavioral health and director, Mental Health Program

Commissioner Howe called the meeting to order.

A motion TO APPROVE THE SELF-FUNDED UNITS COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 8, 2010, was made by Commissioner Hansen and seconded by Commissioner Stearns. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion TO APPROVE THE SELF-FUNDED UNITS WORKPLAN was made by Commissioner Nething and seconded by Commissioner Hansen. The motion was approved unanimously.

David Longanecker and Russ Poulin provided an overview of recent federal regulations pertaining to the states’ authorization of out-of-state educational providers. The Western Academic Leadership Forum held its annual meeting in April and prepared a letter to the commission endorsing some WICHE-led action to promote interstate reciprocity on this matter. Longanecker and Poulin noted there are several national organizations, including WCET, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Presidents’ Forum, and State Higher Education Executive Officers that are actively engaged with the U.S. Department of Education and working to establish some short-term and longer-term remedies to ease the burden on both institutions and regulators. For example, WICHE authorizes institutions that are already participating in some existing interstate agreement, such as WICHE ICE (Internet Course Exchange). Following some discussion, Chair Howe thanked Longanecker and Poulin for the update, adding that WICHE seems to moving in a good direction.

Wagner introduced her report, noting this has been a banner year for WCET. The next year is on course to be even better. She highlighted the projection that WCET will be on solid financial footing in FY12. Her report focused on several major initiatives that are bringing renewed national attention to the organization and thus attracting new institutional members. The expansion of WCET’s revenues from membership dues is critical to the organization’s ability to provide a full suite of services to members. External grant funds augment revenue through indirect cost recovery and a slight reallocation of staff, but a goal is to retain WCET’s core staff to focus on core member services. That said, WCET is thrilled to announce a new six-month grant, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework project is a six-month, $1 million grant to demonstrate the effective use of predictive analytic methods for improving student outcomes. The goal is to identify variables that influence student retention and progression and guide decision making that improves postsecondary student completion. Much of the grant’s funds will support a new project team, as well as providing support to the six institutions participating in this pilot phase. The project end date is December 31, 2011, by which time WCET anticipates a positive commitment from the Gates Foundation for a full, three-year project to expand the initiative to 16 additional institutions. Wagner added that the initial project is a proof-of-concept effort, and most exciting will be the collaboration among institutions across sectors.
The State Authorization Network (SAN) is a fee-based network of higher education statewide or systemwide consortia (with some individual institutions), offering an information exchange about how institutions are navigating the new state authorization regulation. SAN participation requires membership in WCET, which has resulted in the addition of 10 new members.

WCET will partner with Casey Green of the Campus Computing Project to administer the third annual Managing Online Education (MOE) survey. The MOE survey focuses on management, infrastructure, and trends within campuses relative to hybrid, online, and distance education. Commissioner Kirst commented that the data generalize results across all institutional types (from research universities to local community colleges) and suggested it would be useful to be able to examine the survey data by institutional type.

Wagner referred commissioners to the Trusteeship magazine article as another example of how WCET’s work is gaining further national attention.

WCET has secured 24 new members since January 1, and the current membership campaign is expected to bring in new members from public, private/nonprofit, and private/for-profit institutions, as well as new sponsorship opportunities with companies serving the e-learning market. Other WCET services include the member-driven common interest groups, the October 2011 member meeting, webcasts, and robust member-to-member listserv exchanges.

Mental Health Program
Mohatt provided a brief update on the Mental Health Program. FY11 has been very productive, and the unit has engaged in projects across the WICHE West, including initiatives in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Projects have also included work with a national impact, as well as projects in several non-WICHE states, including Texas, Kansas, and Missouri.

The Mental Health Program exceeded revenue projections for FY11. It anticipates ending the year with revenue in excess of $2.7 million and should generate a year-end positive fund balance of over $200,000. All previous deficits have been retired, and targeted reserves have been established. FY12 is expected to track about the same for the program.

Mohatt reported that two professional staff had transitioned out of the program in the past few months. During the second-quarter of FY11, the unit hired two part-time support staff: Sabrina Tang as an administrative assistant and Joanne Brothers as a budget coordinator.

The Mental Health Program has two new major projects. First, a new technical assistance project with Doña Ana County (Las Cruces, NM) supports the development of a communitywide crisis intervention system. The tasks include the coordination of community members in mental health first aid and health/mental health providers in trauma informed care. This is a $300,000 project spanning both FY11 and FY12.

Second, the Mental Health Program will be the colead for workforce/professional development for the new federal initiative to establish a national Center for Integrated Health Solutions. This center focuses upon the integration of primary and behavioral healthcare systems of care. While there are many tasks associated with this new, five-year initiative, of special interest for WICHE is the program’s development of a learning community for interested participants in the West and coordination of a national dialogue with academic leaders in behavioral health and general medicine training programs around curriculum changes needed to support integrated care practice.

Technology and Innovation
Fox gave a brief overview of the e-psych effort that he and Mohatt are collaborating on with the Alaska Psychiatric Institute. WICHE’s e-psych efforts have the potential to support rural psychiatric care throughout underserved rural communities in the West.

Fox also reported that he has retired from his leadership role with the K-20 Initiative of Internet2, which he directed for a number of years. Over this past year, he has continued to represent WICHE on several broadband network projects that will impact the West and assisted the U.S. Department of Commerce with several technical assistance workshops for minority-serving institutions and consortia to inform them of broadband development funding opportunities.
ACTION ITEM

Developing the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework

Developing the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework (DPAR) is the second part of a three-part plan to create a single, federated, aggregated data resource, consisting of de-identified and anonymized student records from multiple U.S. postsecondary institutions. DPAR builds upon the success of the Predictive Analytics Framework proof of concept project (PAR Framework POC), funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (announced during the May 2011 WICHE Commission meeting). During the six-month proof of concept project, WCET and six member institutions demonstrated that it is possible to create a shared data model for evaluating points of student loss and momentum in online-learning programs across a variety of postsecondary institutional types. DPAR is proposed to extend that work, focusing on achieving the following outcomes:

1. Refine the data model developed during the PAR Framework POC to add variables within and across institutions.
2. Develop solutions for increasing the number of valid, reliable reports that can be produced during an academic year.
3. Recruit 12 new partners to the PAR Framework project, bring the total number of participating institutions to 18.
4. Integrate the new data sets, new variables, and all 18 institutional partners into the PAR Framework.
5. Continue to build the knowledge base of what it takes to prepare an institution for contributing their student records to the federated data aggregation effort.
6. Continue to look for information that identifies points of student loss, points of student momentum, and opportunities to develop remediation strategies that reduce impact due to threats of loss and maximize opportunities for increasing momentum.

This project is intended to take place over a 20-month period of time. We anticipate that the budget for this project will be approximately $5.6 million.

Background
From June to December 2011, WCET and its six partner institutions (American Public University System, Colorado Community College System, Rio Salado College, University of Hawai‘i System, University of Illinois-Springfield, University of Phoenix) successfully federated hundreds of thousands of de-identified and anonymized student records that feature millions of course records to create a single unified data set. To do this PAR partners obtained institutional permissions in the form of a single signed memorandum of understanding (MOU). Partners also obtained institutional research board (IRB) approvals from each institution. A battery of descriptive, inferential, and predictive statistical analyses are now being applied to the single data source, utilizing techniques that are looking to identify points of student loss (variables affecting when students drop out of school) and points of student momentum (when students are likely to be motivated to achieve.) We expect to be able to report upon the results at this commission meeting. In anticipation of the results, we are preparing for the next round of development, in which we will increase the number of schools whose data are included within the unified cored data set; refine the data model being used to drive analyses; and establish strategies to assist institutions reduce loss and maximize momentum.

Relationship to WICHE Mission
This project directly responds to WICHE’s accountability mission. It also responds directly to WCET’s mission of accelerating the adoption of learning technology innovations.

Project Description
During this proposed 20-month project, WCET will continue to provide project direction, project management, messaging and promotion, and fiduciary oversight. Twelve new institutional partners – WCET members – will join the PAR Framework project, bringing the total number of U.S. institutions agreeing to share their de-identified and anonymized student records to 18.
Core project staff and founding partners will guide new institutions on the processes of MOU and IRB clearances and will orient new partners to the data code book to facilitate the preparation of institutional records for contribution to the common core data set.

The six founding PAR Framework partners will continue to refine the data model jointly created during the PAR POC, adding new variables and refining interpretations of others. Revisions to variables and code book will be introduced to new partners as they are developed, so that the data sets of the 12 new institutions and the founding six institutions are integrated. Descriptive, inferential, and predictive statistical analysis will be applied to the expanded data set, looking for points of student loss and momentum.

One of the key outcomes for this project will be finding a solution or set of solutions for increasing the number of data pulls that can be meaningfully produced in an academic year, across all institutions that are contributing records to the core data set.

**Staff and Fiscal Impact**

The budget for this project is still being developed. We anticipate that we will request approximately $5.6 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund a 20-month project involving WCET as the managing partner, supporting 18 WCET member institutions in the “big data” work. As was the case with the PAR Framework POC project, WICHE will receive an indirect payment of 15 percent of the grant for administrative service, fiduciary oversight, and staff support. WCET will receive funding to pay for contract staff associated with project direction, management, and evaluation, as well as principal investigators. A small percentage of salary contributions to all WCET staff will reflect the need that core staff will have to integrate PAR Framework aspects within the WCET organization and menu of member services.

**Action Requested**

Approval of request to seek funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the Developing the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework project