Monday, November 12, 2012

11:00 am - noon
Alpine Conference Room

Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA), chair
Christopher Cabaldon (CA), vice chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Committee vice chair (CA)
Joe Garcia (CO)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Duane Nellis (ID)
Kim Gillan (MT)
Vic Redding (NV)
José Garcia (NM)
Ham Shirvani (ND)
Ryan Deckert (OR)
Robert Burns (SD)
Dave Buhler (UT)
Committee chair (WA)
Sam Krone (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Jeanne Kohl-Welles, committee chair

Staff: Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Brian Prescott, director of policy research
Peace Bransberger, research analyst

Action Item
Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee meeting minutes of May 21, 2012 5-3

Action Item
Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee teleconference minutes of September 27, 2012 5-6

Information Items:

Legislative brief 2012

Legislative Advisory Committee vacancies

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West: 2012-2013
Discussion Items:

Annual update to *Benchmarks: WICHE Region 2012*

Priorities for 2013 legislative sessions

Other business

Adjournment
ACTION ITEM
Issue Analysis and Research Committee Minutes
Monday, May 21, 2012

Committee Members Present
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA), chair
Christopher Cabaldon (CA), vice chair
Susan Anderson (AK)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Duane Nellis (ID)
José Garcia (NM)
William Goetz (ND)
Ryan Deckert (OR)
Robert Burns (SD)
Sam Krone (WY)

Committee Members Absent
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Joe Garcia (CO)
Kim Gillan (MT)
TBD (NV)
William Sederburg (UT)

Chair Kohl-Welles convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee meeting. Roll was called. Demarée Michelau introduced staff from the Policy unit. A quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2011

Chair Kohl-Welles pointed committee members to the agenda book and asked them to review the minutes from the committee meeting on October 31, 2011. Commissioner Goetz moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. Commissioner Anderson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee Teleconference Minutes of April 10, 2012

Chair Kohl-Welles asked committee members to review the minutes from the April 10, 2012, Issue Analysis and Research committee teleconference. Commissioner Cabaldon moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. Commissioner Wheelwright seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEM
Discussion and Approval of the FY 2013 Workplan Sections Pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Unit’s Activities

Chair Kohl-Welles asked Michelau to provide an overview of the FY2013 workplan. Michelau solicited feedback on the new design of the workplan from commissioners and asked whether commissioners had other items that should be included. Commissioner Burns stated that the new format was a significant improvement. Brian Prescott noted that staff view the process of improving the workplan format as ongoing and welcome commissioners’ input. Commissioner Anderson asked whether staff is involved in discussions on how graduation rates are calculated. Prescott said that as a member of an advisory body to the National Center for Education Statistics, he has been involved in discussions about how to implement the recommendations from the secretary of education’s Committee on Measures of Student Success. The committee’s report recommended changes to the IPEDS data collection.
for graduation rates; the changes will be considered by an NCES technical review panel. Prescott stated that the discussions are ongoing, and any resulting changes would take some time.

Commissioner Goetz asked if staff wanted to share information about changes in the content of the workplan. Prescott said that the unit’s priorities remain fairly constant, due to multiyear projects and the regular data reports it produces.

Commissioner Cabaldon asked how items qualify for the workplan and how items end up in the “On the Horizon” category. He suggested that the committee could more actively manage the process for placing items in the workplan. Prescott responded that items are placed in the “On the Horizon” category as issues are identified by commissioners or staff. Michelau further stated that the committee can direct staff to place items in any of the workplan categories or remove items from the workplan.

Commissioner Cabaldon asked for clarification on the “On the Horizon” category and the “New Directions” category. Prescott responded that the “New Directions” category includes items that staff are actively pursuing, through conversations with foundations or with other entities that may provide funding. He stated that the “On the Horizon” category includes items that are being considered but not actively pursued, and that staff will pursue them if directed by the committee. Michelau further clarified that items in the “New Directions” category have been approved by the committee and that staff will include descriptions of the categories in future workplans.

Commissioner Wheelwright asked why it appeared that there were not more items with good opportunities for receiving funding. Prescott stated that staff were adjusting to the rubric and rating system in the new format and that identifying something as having a good opportunity to receive funding would indicate that staff have had a specific conversation with a funder about the item. Prescott said that staff would add clarification about the rubric in the future. Michelau added that staff was working on accurately conveying the priorities of projects from multiple funding streams without unintentionally suggesting to funders or others that certain projects had a lower priority. Prescott noted that staff resources are limited and that the unit cannot pursue every item in the “On the Horizon” category. He invited the committee to provide guidance on the workplan and suggest priorities.

Commissioner Anderson praised the new format but suggested inclusion of WICHE’s core mission within the workplan. David Longanecker noted that it had been included in previous formats and said that staff will work to reincorporate it. Commissioner Burns suggested this would be important and help identify priorities and the importance of various workplan items. Further, he suggested including deadlines and conditions related to certain projects from the funders as another means of expressing priorities. Also, activities that are central to WICHE’s core mission should be identified as such.

Commissioner Cabaldon suggested one path forward might be to eliminate priorities for current activities and instead categorize them based on dimensions such as funding, staff capacity, and centrality to WICHE’s mission. He reiterated that outside entities may misinterpret strict priority rankings as suggesting that a given activity may not be important to staff. Commissioner Wheelwright suggested distinguishing between ongoing efforts, detailing whether they’re large-scale funded projects and ongoing “tracking” efforts.

Commissioner Burns motioned TO APPROVE THE FY 2013 WORKPLAN. Commissioner Deckert seconded the motion. The FY 2013 workplan was approved unanimously.

Information and Discussion Items
Chair Kohl-Welles then asked staff to provide informational updates about unit activities. Michelau informed commissioners that the Legislative Advisory Committee would meet September 11-12 in Sacramento. She stated that there are two vacancies on the committee but that there will be nine members leaving the LAC in the near future. Commissioners appoint LAC members.

Commissioner Deckert suggested that the LAC is proving effective at building relationships among legislators and that the commission should consider allocating more resources. Michelau stated that LAC members’ engagement has increased in recent years and that staff will work with commissioners to ensure each state’s LAC members are fully engaged. Chair Kohl-Welles suggested that nearby legislators who are not members of the LAC be invited to the upcoming meeting.
Prescott then provided information about Taya Owens, the summer intern hired by the unit. In the future the unit hopes to attract larger numbers of qualified applicants from Western states. Chair Kohl-Welles suggested providing information to commissioners when staff begin the intern search process in future years.

Prescott informed committee members about multiple opportunities that WICHE may have in the area of targeting financial aid policy on student success. Staff will continue to pursue these opportunities and report to committee members if and when further discussions take place.

Prescott told the committee about discussions he’d had with state higher education research staff in Arizona, who suggested that there were not good networking and collaboration opportunities for those specifically in Western states. He suggested that WICHE could play a role in facilitating this type of exchange and asked for committee members’ reactions to the idea. Commissioner Garcia asked for clarification on the types of issues this effort would address. Prescott responded that it could address a range of topics, including performance funding, state research and analysis efforts, and remediation; it would be flexible enough to address pressing needs identified by states.

Commissioner Wheelwright suggested that adding an additional meeting that staff would have to travel to could be burdensome. Commissioner Anderson suggested possibly adding a Western-focused component to an existing national meeting that staff would already attend. She also expressed concern about the staff and financial resources that might be required. Commissioner Garcia said such a meeting might serve as a useful supplement or preferred alternative to a national meeting. Prescott stated that as a preliminary concept there was no timetable connected to convening such a meeting, but that he would welcome further feedback as to whether and how such a meeting might meet the needs of research staff members in Western SHEEO agencies.

Chair Kohl-Welles adjourned the meeting.
ACTION ITEM
Issue Analysis and Research Committee Teleconference Minutes
Thursday, September 27, 2012

Committee Members Present
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA), chair
Christopher Cabaldon (CA), vice chair
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Vic Redding (NV)
José Garcia (NM)
Robert Burns (SD)

Committee Members Absent
Susan Anderson (AK)
Kim Gillan (MT)
William Sederburg (UT)
Sam Krone (WY)
Susan Anderson (AK)
Joe Garcia (CO)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Duane Nellis (ID)
Ham Shirvani (ND)
Ryan Deckert (OR)
Dave Buhler (UT)

Chair Kohl-Welles convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee. Michelau called roll and determined that a quorum had not been reached.

Chair Kohl-Welles stated that the purpose of the teleconference meeting was to update the committee on the progress toward the FY 13 workplan and other work that the unit is doing. The only action item, which was approval of the minutes from the Issue Analysis and Research Committee meeting on May 21, 2012, would be postponed until either a quorum was reached or until the November Commission meeting.

Chair Kohl-Welles asked Prescott to update the committee on Knocking at the College Door, the projections of high school graduates by state and race/ethnicity. Prescott reported that he, David Longanecker, and Peace Bransberger recently met with representatives from the College Board and ACT, both of which fund the projections, to plan the public release of the 8th edition. It appears that the release of the publication will be in early 2013 rather than late 2012; ACT and College Board staffers feel that it is important that we not miss an opportunity to make a splash with this publication by releasing it right before the holidays. Staff have been making steady progress in putting the projections together and will make a presentation relying on embargoed data at the upcoming commission meeting. Prescott commented that he had an ulterior motive when he and Bransberger met with College Board and ACT, where half of the meeting was aimed at discussing ways that WICHE (or some other organization sitting between ACT and the College Board) could serve as an intermediary to combine their data. Prescott was unsure whether this conversation would lead to anything, but it felt good to bring the question into the open. He stated that they will try to get the data together and continue to use existing relationships to push that conversation forward.

Chair Kohl-Welles noticed that there were no materials sent in advance of the call. Prescott stated that staff did not send additional materials concerning Knocking for this particular teleconference, but his presentation next month at the commission meeting would include preliminary data from the publication. Chair Kohl-Welles indicated that she understood but was not sure if staff had sent anything out to guide this discussion generally on the teleconference. Prescott confirmed that the only materials sent out prior to this meeting were the agenda and the minutes from the last meeting.
Chair Kohl-Welles asked about several recommendations from the last committee meeting regarding the format of the workplan: was there anything the committee should know as a follow-up to that? Prescott responded that he and Michelau have taken the feedback to Longanecker and the WICHE communications staff, and they are digesting it. Prescott does not believe the workplan is up for discussion at the November meeting and indicated that he did not expect that the committee would see it again until the following May. Chair Kohl-Welles responded that she thought some very good suggestions were made by the committee members.

Prescott updated the committee on progress with the Multistate Data Exchange. He had more good news to report on the project, which is putting together longitudinal, individual-level data from four WICHE states. Data are flowing back and forth between the states and the National Student Clearinghouse, WICHE’s matchmaking contractor, but with the exception of Oregon, the process has taken longer than anticipated for the states themselves. The next project meeting, immediately following the commission meeting, is in Hawai‘i. States that have hosted project meetings have benefited from having the opportunity to invite additional attendees, who take useful insights back to their own work in building their own state data systems.

Prescott then provided a quick review of technical assistance given to Idaho on student financial aid (the unit provides technical assistance on student financial aid to those states who request it). Idaho sought out WICHE last summer; it has a taskforce that will eventually review its entire suite of financial aid programs, with an eye towards whether or not the state needs to cut back on, reorganize, or redesign its initiatives. Longanecker and Prescott have been to Idaho and are consulting with the state; both think it is moving forward in an appropriate direction.

Chair Kohl-Welles asked Michelau to update the committee on the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG). Michelau began by reminding committee members that WICHE has been working with states in the region to help them administer their federally funded CACG grants. For the last couple of years, WICHE has been working most closely with Alaska and Idaho; Carl Krueger is the lead in that area. To maintain their funding, states must meet maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements. Given the current economic situation, many of the project states have had trouble meeting MOE requirements, or uncertainty about it. With respect to the consortium, Alaska is in good shape and continues to be a part of it. Idaho is working closely with the U.S. Department of Education to determine if it will meet MOE requirements; it looks as if it will not continue in the consortium, but if it meets the requirements, it will continue in the CACG Network, which is another way WICHE works with the states. WICHE serves as a liaison between the states and has created a forum in which colleagues share challenges and strategies for success about college access and grant administration. There are seven states in the CACG Network (assuming Idaho continues). Nevada did not meet MOE requirements and will discontinue its involvement in the network. Washington is the other state that did not meet MOE requirements and will discontinue its involvement in the network. Washington is the other state that did not meet MOE requirements, but it is able to continue in the network through carryover funds. Michelau informed the committee that the next CACG Network meeting will be held in December in Austin; Texas is one of the network states (it heard about the network and wanted to join). Bornstein requested reiteration on the number of states that did not meet their MOE requirements. Michelau responded that two of the CACG Network states did not meet the requirements (Nevada and Washington); Idaho is still uncertain.

Michelau discussed the update for the Adult College Completion (ACC) Network. She explained that they are just finishing the second year of the project, which ends September 30; year three begins on October 1. The network has continued to grow. Funded by Lumina Foundation, the network unites organizations, agencies, and others working to try to increase college completion among adults with prior college credit. WICHE has been working hard to engage the groups in this space; activities include an invitation-only annual meeting, lasting one and a half days. This year the meeting is being held in Chicago on October 17-19. Attendance should be approximately 70 people. Invitations have been sent; many people have requested that others be allowed to participate at their own expense, and staff has been able to accommodate them, to a certain extent. Because ACC is a network, staff wants to make sure the meeting is not so large that it loses the networking component but also wants to include people who could benefit and contribute. The number of webinars associated with the project has increased. Committee members will probably see more of these, as staff learns more about what is available. The webinars allow staff to highlight important areas and keep those in the network connected between meetings.

Michelau proceeded to discuss the project Race Against the Clock: Preparing Teachers to Effectively Utilize the Common Core State Standards Assessments. The purpose is to create a professional development curriculum for both preservice and in-service teachers that will focus on assessments. There is already a lot of work going on in the states to bring teachers up to speed to prepare them to teach to the common core. Michelau believes that the gap is in how to use the assessments and the data that come from them. Longanecker and Michelau have been working to identify foundations that would be interested but have not found any to date. It has been suggested that WICHE talk to K-12...
contacts within the foundations. People in the field are interested in the project and say it’s a worthwhile endeavor, but a big undertaking. WICHE will need external funding in order to move the project forward. Michelau will keep the committee posted and will hopefully have more news at the upcoming commission meeting.

Commissioner Burns requested clarification on whether Michelau was talking about teacher preparation for the Common Core State Standards that are coming from those states that are opting out of the No Child Left Behind program. Michelau replied that these are the Common Core State Standards adopted by almost all of the WICHE states, except Alaska (which is keeping its own standards because it feels they are more rigorous). South Dakota has adopted them and is working with the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium to develop assessments that measure student’s readiness against the core. There are only four states in the country that have not adopted the standards.

Michelau briefed the committee on the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC). The annual meeting was held in Sacramento earlier this month. Seventeen legislators from nine states participated. Topics included financial aid, the Common Core State Standards, performance funding, state authorization, and other matters. The early results from the evaluations were positive. WICHE anticipates a high number of vacancies, due to four LAC members running for Congress and six additional members not seeking reelection. Michelau will contact commissioners in the beginning of 2013 to fill the vacancies. Chair Kohl-Welles indicated that one interesting topic was related to WICHE’s work in state authorization; Michelau responded by informing the committee that there would be time devoted to this issue during the Committee of the Whole at the upcoming commission meeting.

Prescott briefed the committee on a project WICHE has been working on with NCHEMS, under a small Lumina Foundation contract. WICHE is contributing its expertise in financial aid policy to an effort to develop information on student success and degree completion, in order to model proposed changes to the Pell Grant program. Such a tool would be a useful contribution to a dialogue that has so far been consumed with concerns about how Pell dollars are distributed, based on institutions attended and student background characteristics. Prescott added that the project will add to WICHE’s capacity to provide useful policy analysis to states concerning how federal and state aid policy can be effectively integrated. He wrapped up by informing the committee that the federal government has so far not provided the data WICHE has requested, which it needs to begin putting the tool together. The project will bring WICHE about $30,000. Bornstein commented that she recently had attended a meeting of community college leaders, funded by the Gates Foundation, which was devoted to obtaining their feedback on various financial aid policy changes. Prescott responded that he had attended a similar meeting and that he believed both meetings are part of a multipronged project Gates is funding to gather feedback from many stakeholders on financial aid. Chair Kohl-Welles reminded the committee and staff that the Gates Foundation’s headquarters is located in her district and that she’d be happy to facilitate a meeting with them if it would be useful.

Carl Krueger informed the committee that the Policy unit would be publishing a summary of legislative activity in the West. Legislative highlights include governance, higher education finance, Common Core State Standards, and other issues. The release of the publication would be at the commission meeting. This publication will be an annual report with a fairly wide distribution.

There was no other business. Chair Kohl-Welles adjourned the meeting.