ACTION ITEM
Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes
Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Committee Members Present
Jane Nichols (NV), chair
Tom Buchanan, vice chair (WY)
Roy Ogawa (HI), immediate past chair
Diane Barrans (AK)
Joel Sideman (AZ) David Skaggs (CO)
Robert Kustra (ID)
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)
Bill Goetz for Dave Nething (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Bob Burns for Tad Perry (SD)

Committee Members Absent
Roberta Richards (HI)
Dave Nething (ND)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)

WICHE Staff
David Longanecker, president
Sherri Artz Gilbert, for Erin Barber
(executive assistant to the president and to
the commission)
Craig Milburn, chief financial officer
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and
Services
Brian Prescott, director of policy research

Chair Jane Nichols called the meeting to order and asked David Longanecker to call roll. A quorum was confirmed.

Action Item
Approval of the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2009

Chair Nichols asked for a motion on the approval of the Executive Committee meeting minutes of February 12, 2009. COMMISSIONER OGAWA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 12, 2009, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. COMMISSIONER KUSTRA SECONDED THE MOTION. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Discussion Item
Update on WICHE’s Budget

David Longanecker explained to the committee that the FY 2009 budget looks much better than as presented in February. The projected deficit in the budget for FY 2009 has been eliminated, and some excess revenue is now projected. The FY 2010 projections also look much better than last month. The shortfall in FY 2010 will be mostly due to the loss of interest income. Longanecker has been able to lower the shortfall in FY 2010 through some staff turnover on soft funds, no salary increases for staff, and other cost-saving measures. The current projected
revenue shortfall is about $43,000, which is about $60,000 better than last presented. Longanecker said that he will balance the FY 2010 budget, and he will not bring a deficit budget to the commission. Longanecker reported that he has not heard of any states removing the WICHE dues line item from their budgets at this time.

Discussion Item
Preliminary Agenda for May 2009 Commission Meeting

Longanecker reported that May commission meeting will open with the Executive Committee, which will hold a business meeting and review Longanecker’s performance. Longanecker reviewed the full agenda. Commissioner Sideman said that he hoped Paul Lingenfelter would cover the latest information on the ways in which states are responding to the federal stimulus package (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act).

Responses to the Stimulus Bill
Possible areas of WICHE engagement. Longanecker reported that WICHE has several areas of potential engagement with the stimulus bill. They include:

- Broadband Accessibility. Louis Fox is working on broadband access across the U.S., which is way behind the rest of the world in this area. He is working with a number of leaders in broadband accessibility in American higher education to bring broadband beyond research institutions and into communities. Commerce and the National Science Foundation have funds. Fox is looking at a collaborative strategy. Longanecker indicated that he and Fox will keep the commission apprised of activities in this area as they progress.

- Mental Health First Aid. Dennis Mohatt is working on a grant proposal. Collaboration with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) within the Department of Education and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is possible. Mohatt met with SAMHSA staff recently and Longanecker met with OSERS staff. This would be easy to get up and running, as it is already running in Australia and WICHE staffers have received training in the program.

- SSI Science & Math Initiative. Jere Mock is seeking funding on the Science and Math part of the State Scholars Initiative (SSI). The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have funds and are good potential matches. WICHE staffers are quite busy, so Longanecker is looking for additional grant writing help. With respect to the SSI possibilities, ACT would be a strong assessment partner because they have already developed end-of-course exams in math and science. Longanecker has discussed a possible partnership with ACT, and they are considering the idea.

- Mental Health Ground Rounds. Mohatt is the lead and there are likely resources for next year.
- WICHE ICE. Jere Mock reported that they have six partner institutions, including University of Alaska, University of Wyoming, Boise State University, Montana State University, University of Northern Colorado, and Northern Arizona University. They are working off the Montana State University model, creating uniform undergraduate and graduate courses.

- Database Development. There is $250 million in the stimulus bill for statewide database development that would bring elementary/secondary, postsecondary, and workforce databases together. Longanecker indicated that he has been working with the Gates Foundation and with contacts at the U.S. Department of Education to encourage interstate collaboration, rather than the development of 50 disparate databases. He indicated that the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the National Center for Higher Education Management Statistics, and WICHE have been working closely together on this. Longanecker reported that Brain Prescott has taken the lead on this within WICHE.

Possible ways of gaining commission approval. Longanecker asked the commission for suggestions on gaining their approval for WICHE engagement on possible projects associated with the federal stimulus package, as he expected things to happen very quickly and he would need to be able to move rather fast. Longanecker laid out the three possible strategies, outlined in the agenda for the meeting. Chair Nichols proposed that when Longanecker identifies an opportunity he’d like to pursue, he should send an email outlining the basics to the commissioners. Commissioners can share any concerns, and if no red flags are raised, Chair Nichols, Vice Chair Buchanan, and Immediate Past Chair Ogawa will grant approval. The committee supported this idea.

Other Business
Chair Nichols called for any other business before the committee adjourned. There was a suggestion that Longanecker provide a brief report on how the various WICHE states are responding to the economic downturn and federal response at the spring meeting, and in particular how they are preparing for 2012, when the stimulus funds expire.

Chair Nichols adjourned the committee meeting.