Chair Tom Buchanan called the meeting to order and asked Erin Barber to call roll. A quorum was confirmed.

**ACTION ITEM**
**Approval of the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of November 2, 2009**

Chair Buchanan asked for a motion on the approval of the Executive Committee meeting minutes of November 2, 2009. Commissioner Nething moved TO APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2, 2009 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. Commissioner Barrans seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**DISCUSSION ITEM**
**Update on the WICHE Budget**

Chair Buchanan asked David Longanecker to update the committee on the budget. Longanecker told the committee that the FY2010 budget is in good shape at this point in the year and is a balanced budget. He pointed out that while revenues are coming in below what was projected because of less indirect cost sharing and lower interest rates, expenditures are also coming in lower than anticipated. Currently there is a projected surplus of $169,555. Longanecker said that he does not anticipate having that high of a surplus at the end of the year. The surplus indicates that there are no problems to report in the general fund budget. For the self-funded units, Longanecker explained that it looks like WCET will need to use between $30,000 and $50,000 of the transition
funds from reserves that were approved at the November meeting but they will not need to use any of the funding for the science and innovation activities headed by Louis Fox. The Mental Health budget looks healthy and their staff continue to work on the budget for next year. Longanecker shared with the committee news about the passing of Dennis Mohatt’s brother, Jerry, and Dennis’ subsequent heart attack, surgery, and recovery. He also let the committee know that Mimi McFaul will be acting as Interim Director until Mohatt returns to work. The committee asked Longanecker to send Mohatt their best wishes for recovery.

Longanecker said that staff would have a much better estimate of the FY2011 budget in a month. The budget provided to the committee currently shows a 3% increase for staff salaries. During the WICHE Officers retreat, it was decided that salary increases would not be proposed for FY2011. Dues for FY2011 are also frozen. It is likely that the organization would be incorporating more staff into core accounts in the general fund because projects and grants are set to expire. Longanecker said that they will likely receive a grant from the Gates Foundation (which is not incorporated into budget) and said that they expect to manage the budget fine for next year but will need to consider what to do about the staff salary program and other tough choices like how many staff to keep for future years ahead.

Longanecker told the committee that it would be helpful to know if any state budget issues arise that would suggest dues payments are in jeopardy. He also mentioned that it looked like the states are reducing seats in the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), so that program will likely be more modest than in past years. Commissioner Rush asked if other states have had any budget issues regarding WICHE dues and said that everything is on the table for cuts in Idaho. Commissioner Hansen said that South Dakota would be finalizing their budget in the next week and would know more then. Commissioner Nichols said that PSEP seats will be reduced in Nevada. Chair Buchanan said Wyoming will also be reducing their budget for WICHE by reducing PSEP seats. Commissioner Ogawa said the same was happening in Hawaii and PSEP seats would be reduced.

**DISCUSSION ITEM**
**May 2010 Preliminary Agenda**

Longanecker told the committee that the May meeting will be in Portland. Following the Executive Committee meeting, the May agenda will start with a session updating everyone on the state budgets. Longanecker said that 10 of the 15 states used stabilization funding in 2009-2010, so they will now be receiving a smaller amount in 2011 which will create more havoc in budgets than last year. The next session will highlight a major WICHE project on articulation and transfer, including the major findings from the study. There will be a presentation on higher education in Oregon over lunch. Longanecker mentioned that commissioners will be staying at the Paramount Hotel in downtown Portland and meeting at Portland State University which is 7-8 blocks from the hotel. A wine tour and tasting will be held at Sokol Blosser Winery about 45 minutes outside of Portland and will include a short presentation on the Northwest Vitaculture program at Chemeketa. The second day of the meeting will begin with the business session. Longanecker said that there will be no dues increase for 2011 or 2012, but regular increases will begin again in 2013. The session on *What’s Up At WICHE?* will focus on Louis Fox’s work on broadband activities and Jere Mock and Pat Shea will present updates on the WICHE ICE program. The final session of the meeting will focus on preserving equity in tough times. Estella Bensimon and Mike McPherson, two experts in this area,
will be invited to present this session. Bensimon is currently a partner with WICHE on a grant project from the Ford Foundation. She will speak about an equity project underway in Wisconsin. McPherson co-authored a recently published book entitled Crossing the Finish Line that looks at disadvantaged students enrolling in colleges and how these students succeed in the current environment. The committee approved the preliminary agenda for the May 2010 meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEM
2010 and 2011 Workplan

Looking at the 2010 workplan, Longanecker said that they have not yet come up with external funding for technology equipment for the SHEPC Learning Center. He said that the SHEPC reserves have grown to where it looks like the three organizations may be able to move forward with purchasing the equipment without external funding. Longanecker also mentioned that the cost of technology has come down considerably and he thought $25,000-$35,000 would probably be enough to equip the Learning Center effectively.

As staff begin putting together the 2011 workplan, Longanecker said they were looking for new ideas. He said they were considering a project around energy in the Programs and Services unit. Staff believe this is an area in which WICHE could do work that would be of value to states and institutions. Longanecker said that the workplan continues to be contemporary and cogent and doesn’t anticipate any major changes to the work that’s being done.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Buchanan asked for any other business. Commissioner Rush said that as he’s watching Idaho’s budget situation very closely, he’s noticing two dynamics emerging that involves the dollars side of things but also includes a political dynamic that suggests that the pain and suffering of budget woes be spread equitably. He said that they are under considerable pressure about dues going to outside organizations and feels that there is a need to demonstrate sacrifices made by WICHE in order to protect their investment in WICHE. Commissioner Rush presented the idea of possibly canceling the fall meeting in 2011. He wanted to know what he could demonstrate that WICHE has been doing during the current budget crisis the states are facing.

Commissioner Nichols commented that there seemed to be a sense on the call about the unusual nature of what is going on in the states right now and that various proposals like Commissioner Rush’s might be best presented on the Executive Committee agenda during the May meeting. Chair Buchanan asked Longanecker to identify some of the cost-saving measures WICHE has implemented and to then put together thoughts/options on additional cost-savings measures that can be presented at the next Executive Committee teleconference. Chair Buchanan added that his first reaction to canceling next fall’s WICHE meeting is to find out how much that meeting will cost and its overall effect on the WICHE budget in addition to other options that might be presented as cost-saving measures.

Longanecker told the committee that the commission meetings turn out to be very valuable because they give staff a chance to connect with commissioners and they are the main way to keep commissioners engaged in WICHE. Commissioner Barrans commented that close attention has
been given to budget restraint over time at WICHE and if there is a way of capturing what WICHE has done over the past year or two to provide a fuller understanding of what is happening at WICHE would be very beneficial. Longanecker said that he would put something together that shows what has been done in the past and what additional measures could be taken in the future.

Commissioner Rush stated that he would still like the committee to consider canceling the fall meeting as an option. Commissioner Nething asked if the WICHE Bylaws require two meetings per year. Longanecker said that he would check the Bylaws to see what is stated regarding the meetings. Chair Buchanan said that if the committee is open to this proposal then between now and next call, Longanecker and staff would take a first shot on a briefing document that can be discussed on the April call and advanced to the May meeting.

Chair Buchanan asked for additional business. Commissioner Barrans asked for the room rate in Portland before and after the May meeting. Longanecker said the room rate would be available before and after the meeting and that the room rate will be $129/night.

The committee was adjourned.