Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes
Thursday, February 24, 2011

Committee Members Present
Joe Garcia (CO), chair
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT), vice chair
Tom Buchanan (WY), immediate past chair
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
D. Rico Munn (CO)
Roy Ogawa (HI)
Mike Rush (ID)
Clayton Christian for Sheila Stearns (MT)
Bill Goetz for Dave Nething (ND)
José Garcia for Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Carl Shaff (NV)
Camille Preus (OR)
Jim Hansen (SD)
Bill Sederburg (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Klaus Hanson (WY)

Committee Members Absent
Diane Barrans (AK)
Roy Ashburn (CA)

WICHE Staff Present
David Longanecker, president
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Craig Milburn, chief financial officer
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Brian Prescott, director of policy research
Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET

Chair Joe Garcia 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 8, 2010

Chair Garcia asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes of November 8, 2010. Commissioner Shaff asked that the minutes be corrected to show that he was present during the November 8, 2010 meeting. Chair Garcia asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Shaff moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 8, 2010 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS AMENDED. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Discussion Item
Report on the WICHE Officers Retreat

Chair Garcia reported that he met with David Longanecker, Bonnie Jean Beesley, and Tom Buchanan, for a WICHE Officers’ retreat on February 22-23, 2011. Much of the discussion was focused on the FY 2012 budget for both the general and non-general funds. Right now the budget for next year looks good, but there is potential for a budget shortfall if states do not pay their WICHE dues. Chair Garcia said that the officers spent time discussing questions that would arise if states don’t pay their dues:

1. How do we handle our obligations and relationships with those states?
2. Should penalties or fees be charged to states that do not pay?
3. What limits should be placed on receiving access to certain WICHE benefits?
Chair Garcia explained that the Executive Committee will discuss these issues in more depth during the March 23 teleconference and at the May commission meeting. He also reported that there are concerns regarding compensation for WICHE staff but morale among staff continues to be high. Chair Garcia reported that the FY 2011 workplan is moving forward as expected in most areas. There has been a delay on the Projection of High School Graduates project due to a high focus on the Gates Data Exchange project. There are a number of potential open seats on the WICHE Commission which staff will be looking to fill before the upcoming commission meetings. The officers also discussed future meeting dates and locations and proposed the following for consideration:

- **May 2012**: Fort Collins, CO
- **November 2012**: Salt Lake City, UT
- **May 2013**: Seattle, WA
- **November 2013**: Boulder, CO
- **May 2014**: New Mexico
- **November 2014**: Boulder, CO

Staff will be checking the dates to make sure they do not conflict with holidays and other meetings and will present the dates and locations at the March Executive Committee teleconference and at the May commission meeting. Finally, the officers explored possibilities for next year’s workplan including the possibility of adding a new theme on campus safety and security, which is an increasing concern on campuses. They also discussed the change in demographics, particularly with respect to the Hispanic populations which will be critically important for states to address. Remedial education was also discussed as a possible area of work along with workforce issues and how higher education is contributing to current workforce issues.

### Discussion Item

#### Update on the Budget

Chair Garcia asked Longanecker to give an update on the WICHE budget. Longanecker said that the budget provided to the committee is an accurate representation of where the organization currently is, but it is not a precise representation. The current projections under revenue show approximately $100,000 below the projected budget. Longanecker said that he does not believe that WICHE will come in that far below the budget. Part of the $100,000 shown includes the $87,000 past dues from California along with $65,958 remaining in state dues owed by New Mexico. Longanecker also noted that the report projects about $216,000 in lower expenses, which accurately reflects what the computer projects but not what staff are projecting for their expenses. Longanecker said that staff expect to expend their funds before the end of the fiscal year. The surplus in expenses also includes items that may need to be transferred, including IT projects that were planned for this current fiscal year but will need to be pushed into FY 2012. Longanecker said that he would like to have money transferred to FY 2012 rather have it put into the reserves in those unique circumstances where staff won’t be able to expend budgeted items in FY 2011 simply because IT resources aren’t available to do so. Longanecker said he would present this as an item to consider during the Business Session at the May commission meeting. He also mentioned that he does anticipate having a modest surplus at the end of FY 2011.

Commissioner Rush asked if the percentages for the CA and NM past dues should be negative instead of showing positive on the report. Longanecker said that they should reflect negative instead of positive.
Longanecker went on to say that he would like to provide bonuses to staff to bridge the gaps in benefit increases from last year and this coming year. As a consequence of not receiving salary adjustments, staff saw a decrease in their net salary both last year and this year. If there is a surplus in the budget at the end of the fiscal year, Longanecker proposed asking for staff bonuses at the May commission meeting. Commissioner Hanson asked if this would be a one-time bonus or if it would be a regular adjustment to base salaries. Longanecker said that these would be one-time bonuses. Commissioner Munn expressed concern that the bonuses would only further increase the salary gap that staff will face in the future. Longanecker said that he understood the concern but felt like the organization was not in a position to address salaries at the present time. He said the senior staff at WICHE felt like it would be better to sustain current staffing levels than to reduce staff. Longanecker hopes to address the salary issue in another year or two.

Longanecker continued with a report on the FY 2012 budget, explaining to the committee that the report showed what it would take to maintain current projects without a staff salary increase. The report shows a deficit budget by $12,549, but Longanecker maintained that he would bring a balanced budget to the Executive Committee at the March 23 teleconference. Commissioner José Garcia asked what the dates are for WICHE’s fiscal year. Longanecker responded that the dates are July 1 to June 30.

**Action Item**

**Proposed Consortium Programs: The North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) and Online Supplemental Instruction (OSI)**

Chair Garcia asked Longanecker to update the committee on current projects. Longanecker said that WICHE staff had received an extension for their grant from the Carnegie Foundation and would use the funds to do a meeting in conjunction with the Western Academic Leadership Forum (WALF) on the Common Core State Standards. This meeting would include a special session for education deans to discuss the implications the Common Core Standards have for education curriculum.

Longanecker asked Jere Mock discuss two proposed consortium programs. Mock explained to the committee that WICHE’s two preproposals were among 50 finalists for funding out of 600 preproposals for the Next Generation Learning Challenge initiatives currently being funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the William and Flora Hewitt Foundation. Thirty-two of the final 50 proposals will receive funding. In the first proposal, WICHE will serve as the coordinating partner and fiscal agent for the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO). The award requested was $749,994 (the maximum award is $750,000). WICHE would partner with BCcampus and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to expand the integration of Remote Web-based Science Laboratory (RWSL) and open science courseware in biology, physics, and chemistry. Mock explained that it would be a 15-month project that would lay the groundwork for wide-scale expansion and would be eligible for more funding.

In the second proposal, WICHE would serve as the coordinator and fiscal agent for a consortium including Montana State University Bozeman, the University of Montana Tech, Northern Arizona University – Yavapi, and the University of Wyoming that would use Online Supplemental Instruction (OSI) to expand the model currently in place at the University of Wyoming. OSI is a student support
model that facilitates student learning and engagement with online support for difficult introductory courses. This would also be a 15-month project, and the award requested was $250,000 (the maximum award request). Both initiatives would begin in April, and staff expect to hear if their proposals were accepted at the end of March. Commissioner Hanson asked if NANSLO and OSI would be working with accredited programs and courses. Mock said that all of the partner institutions were accredited institutions so the courses and programs are also accredited. Commissioner Preus moved APPROVAL TO SEEK, RECEIVE, AND EXPEND FUNDS TO SUPPORT WICHE AS THE COORDINATOR AND FISCAL AGENT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN NETWORK OF SCIENCE LABS ONLINE AND THE ONLINE SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION INITIATIVE IF ONE OR BOTH OF THESE INITIATIVES ARE FUNDED THROUGH THE NEXT GENERATION LEARNING CHALLENGES INITIATIVE. Commissioner Hanson seconded the motion. Commissioner Rush asked what the benefit of these two initiatives would be to WICHE. Mock said that it would further WICHE’s mission to promote access and success, and it would also relieve some general fund salaries and provide indirect to WICHE. She also said that the full amount of the reward would not come to WICHE, since the partners would receive some of the funding for the initiatives. The motion was approved unanimously.

Longanecker asked Ellen Wagner to provide the committee with an update on the proposal WCET will be submitting to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Wagner explained that the proposal would provide large-scale analytics to help federate student records among 6 participating institutions, which include Rio Salado, the University of Hawaii system, University of Illinois Springfield, and the University of Phoenix. If awarded, the grant would provide funding for WCET and other WICHE staff written into the grant. The proposal is being submitted in time for the March 21 or 22 funding meeting at the Gates Foundation, and WCET staff expect to be notified within 30 days of submission.

Discussion Item
May 2011 Commission Meeting Preliminary Agenda

Chair Garcia asked Longanecker to walk the Executive Committee through the proposed agenda for the May 2011 WICHE Commission meeting. Longanecker proposed that the agenda focus on “The Other Guys” or those who are offering non-traditional higher education along with the proprietary, online, and brokered services such as Western Governors University, the University of Phoenix, and Rio Salado. Longanecker suggested opening the meeting with updates on completion initiatives underway in the Western states, such as Complete College America, the Lumina productivity work, and the Gates Foundation’s Completion by Design initiative. Longanecker also suggested inviting Peter Smith from Kaplan University to serve as the luncheon speaker. Longanecker noted that Smith is the author of “Harnessing America’s Wasted Talent: A New Ecology of Learning” and would be a very engaging speaker. Following lunch, the commission would hear a presentation from “The Brokers”—the organizations offering novel education services like Blackboard, SmartThinking, Pearson Education, and Regis University. The Nexus Policy Research Center would then be invited to give a presentation. This is a non-profit center with funding from the University of Phoenix and the Apollo Group that works to improve student learning with data analytics. They bring technology gurus together with neuroscientists to find out how higher education can be done more effectively and efficiently. The committee meetings would meet Tuesday morning, to address concerns that meeting Monday afternoons was difficult after a
full morning of meetings, followed by the business session and a question and answer session on accreditation and state regulations. Longanecker noted that the sessions would be divided into a new format with scheduled time for discussion. Commissioners Goetz and Sederburg affirmed the agenda. Longanecker said that he would move forward and start inviting speakers. Chair Garcia excused himself, with apologies, from the meeting to attend another conflicting meeting and turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Beesley.

Vice Chair Beesley (filling in for Chair Garcia) asked Longanecker to give the committee an update on WICHE dues payments. Longanecker said that all of the states have paid the 2011 dues with the exception of New Mexico, who has only paid a portion but is working on paying the full amount. He said that a plan will need to be put in place if states are unable to pay the 2012 dues. Longanecker said that if states aren’t able to pay in full, the amount owed shouldn’t be forgiven but there should be a plan that takes into consideration the unique circumstances we’re currently working in. Commissioner Sederburg asked if this meant that the states not paying dues would remain a WICHE state but the dues would be in arrears. Longanecker said that this was one possibility. Commissioner Hanson said that they experienced a similar situation in one of their municipalities and had to put a payment deadline in place so that the debt didn’t remain for too long. Longanecker said that he would be open to hearing ideas from commissioners. Vice Chair Beesley said that this accurately reflected what the WICHE Officers discussed during the retreat: that there is a need to take into account the circumstances of each state but to also be fair to states who do pay their dues and to WICHE as an organization. And she added that whatever plan is put in place would need the full support of the commission.

Vice Chair Beesley adjourned the meeting.