Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes
Wednesday, March 23, 2011

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

Committee Members Absent
Roy Ashburn (CA)

Others Present
José Garcia, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Matt Gianneschi, deputy executive director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

WICHE Staff Present
David Longanecker, president
Erin Barber, executive assistant to the president
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 told the committee that he would have to step away from the call after 30 minutes for another meeting in the Governor’s office and asked that Vice Chair Beesley chair the meeting on his behalf. Vice Chair Beesley called the meeting to order and asked Erin Barber to call roll. A quorum was confirmed.

Action Item
Approval of the Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes of February 24, 2011

Vice Chair Beesley asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committee teleconference minutes of February 24, 2011. Commissioner Rush moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2011 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Discussion Item
Update on WICHE’s Budget – FY 2011 and FY 2012

Vice Chair Beesley called on David Longanecker to go through the budget update with the committee. Longanecker reported the FY 2011 budget remains healthy and has not changed since the February 24 Executive Committee call. He noted that the FY 2012 budget presented to the committee currently shows a $15,694 deficit. Longanecker said that he will bring a balanced budget for the Commission to approve at the May meeting. The deficit currently projected is a result of upcoming benefit increases,
but Longanecker said he would find the additional $16,000 needed to balance the budget and present it in May. Longanecker said that as he discussed in the February Executive Committee meeting, he was also proposing a carry-over of funds from the reserves to cover the deferred compensation plan that was already approved by the commission and $45,000 for specific IT projects that were not completed in FY 2011. Carrying over the funds into FY 2012 would allow staff to complete these projects and not lose the funds that were budgeted for this year. In addition, Longanecker indicated that he will request an additional $100,000 from reserves for one-time IT projects. In the February meeting he had projected that these projects would require approximately $50,000, but subsequent discover of serious issues with respect to the WUE website has led him to revise this amount upward to $100,000. These proposed IT projects include updates to the WUE and PSEP web sites and the transition to the use of SalesForce, a system that will replace WICHE’s current administrative data base. Longanecker said that he would like to know if there are any concerns among the committee members regarding carrying over funds from FY 2011. He told the committee that they will be adding $180,000 to the reserves at the end of this fiscal year from a surplus in the budget, which will more than cover the proposed draws on reserves. Commissioner Barrans asked if there would be any opportunity of receiving outside funding for some of the proposed IT upgrades and projects. Longanecker said that most of these projects would be enhancements to core elements in the WICHE organization and would not likely receive any funding from outside sources. He said that updating the PSEP database and web site and the move to SalesForce will be an enhancement of existing program elements. He asked Jere Mock to describe the PSEP upgrade. Mock said that the upgrade will add tuition and fee information, make profile updates more accessible, and would provide more flexibility for users. Barrans asked if information could be provided at the May meeting about how the money will be distributed for program enhancements and/or new features. Longanecker said that he will provide that information at the May meeting.

Discussion Item
Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Longanecker said that the proposed future dates and locations of commission meetings were discussed at the February 22 – 23, 2011 WICHE Officers retreat. He noted that for the fall 2012 meeting, Veteran’s Day will be observed on November 12 which coincides with the proposed meeting dates and is a holiday for many people. He said he would need to know if this presented a conflict for commissioners. The meeting cannot be held earlier because of Election Day the week prior. The fall 2013 meeting falls on Election Day, but there are only a few WICHE states holding elections during 2013. Veteran’s Day would occur again during the proposed dates for the November 2014 meeting. Commissioner Rush asked when the last time the commission meeting was held in New Mexico and said it would be useful to see a list of past meeting locations. Longanecker said that the commission met in New Mexico in 2002 and that he would provide this information at the May meeting. Commissioner Hanson asked what travel accessibility to and from Fort Collins, CO will be like. Longanecker said that shuttle service between DIA and Fort Collins is reliable and also said that CSU has been a major influence in PSEP’s veterinary medicine program.

Discussion Item
May 2011 Commission Meeting Preliminary Agenda

Longanecker went through the preliminary agenda for the May commission meeting. He discussed which speakers have been invited and which have confirmed their participation at the meeting. He also mentioned that speakers will have shorter presentation times to allow for longer discussions. Longanecker shared that dinner groups may be organized around common interest topics (an idea
proposed by Kim Gillan (MT)). More details on this activity will be provided at the meeting. Chair Joe Garcia said that it looked like a good agenda and excused himself from the call. Vice Chair Beesley also affirmed the agenda and told Longanecker to proceed as he has planned for the May meeting.

Discussion Item
FY 2012 Workplan

Longanecker presented a draft of the FY 2012 workplan. He explained that the draft presented does not include an item on safety and security, which will be included in the final draft at the May meeting. He said that the new workplan follows where the organization has been and isn’t proposing any radical changes to the work in the upcoming year. Longanecker said that the work remains focused around five themes: access & success, technology & innovation, finance, workforce & society, and accountability. Longanecker said perhaps the weakest area is currently in workforce & society where there isn’t a major activity going on within the organization. Some work is being done in Policy, Mental Health, and Programs. He mentioned that a group from New Mexico will be coming to WICHE on March 28 to discuss the link between education and workforce. Commissioner Stearns thought the workplan looked comprehensive and ambitious. She asked if the workload was larger than the size of Longanecker’s staff. Longanecker replied that he and the staff have a full but manageable plate. Commissioner Hanson asked if consideration could be given to job security in the public sector and its impact on higher education. Longanecker said that it could be an intriguing issue to look at workforce development within higher education itself. Commissioner Sullivan asked for clarification on a recent email from Vice President Biden calling for a boost in graduation rates, and how this call is the same as or different from previous calls for an increase in graduation rates. Longanecker replied that there will be a session at the May meeting dedicated to the completion agenda and work WICHE states are currently involved in to meet this goal and what the foundations are supporting. He also said that President Obama’s initiative is very close to these foundation-supported agendas. WICHE doesn’t have a specific grant around this issue, but Longanecker and many other staff have been very involved in these initiatives. Commissioner Sullivan said that it would be useful to know how the initiatives are working together and how the states should proceed towards the goal. Commissioner Barrans wondered if SHEEO was working on any initiatives around workforce within faculty in higher education. Longanecker said that NCHEMS is significantly involved in most of these projects. He also said that the impact of retaining faculty in an environment where labor unions are in disarray is a new phenomenon. Most of the discussions so far have been rhetorical, and it might be worth looking for foundation support to look into this idea further. Commissioner Barrans suggested that it could be woven into part of the workforce theme in the workplan.

Other Business

DAL discussed with the committee WICHE’s work with the Center for Urban Education (CUE) in Nevada. The project has looked at different ways to promote success among populations of color within the state. WICHE has completed the first phase of work in the project and now has room for an additional state for the second phase. Longanecker said that this may be useful for states who are applying for the
Complete College America grants. Commissioner Nichols said that it has been a helpful partnership and will be looked upon favorably in the grant applications for college completion for minority populations. Dr. José Garcia (NM), Commissioner Rush (ID), Vice Chair Beesley (UT), and Matt Gianneschi (CO) all expressed interest in being part of the project.

Vice Chair Beesley adjourned the meeting.