

Monday, May 17, 2010

8.00 - 9.00 am  
SMSU Room 323

**Executive Committee Meeting (Open and Closed Sessions)**

Tom Buchanan (WY), chair  
Joe Garcia (CO), vice chair  
Jane Nichols (NV), immediate past chair

Diane Barrans (AK)  
Leah Bornstein (AZ)  
Position vacant (CA)  
D. Rico Munn (CO)  
Roy Ogawa (HI)  
Mike Rush (ID)  
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)  
Dave Nething (ND)  
Patricia Sullivan (NM)  
Carl Shaff (NV)  
Camille Preus (OR)  
James Hansen (SD)  
William Sederburg (UT)  
Ann Daley (WA)  
Klaus Hanson (WY)

**Agenda (Open)**



Approval of the Executive Committee  
teleconference minutes of April 1, 2010 1-3

**Discussion/Action Item:** Deferred compensation  
and salary proposal

**Discussion Items:**

May 2010 meeting schedule

WICHE dues

Other business

**Agenda (Closed)**

**Discussion Item:** FY 2010 evaluation of the president  
and adoption of performance objectives for FY 2011 1-7

Other business

Other\*

\*Please note: Article III of Bylaws states:

Section 7. Executive Sessions

Executive sessions of the commission may be held at the discretion of the chairman or at the request of any three commissioners present and voting. The president shall be present at all executive sessions. The chairman, with the approval of a majority of the commissioners present and voting, may invite other individuals to attend.

Section 8. Special Executive Sessions

Special executive sessions, limited to the members of the commission, shall be held only to consider the appointment, salary, or tenure of the president.

# ACTION ITEM

## Executive Committee Teleconference Minutes

### Thursday, April 1, 2010

#### **Committee Members Present**

Tom Buchanan (WY), chair  
Joe Garcia (CO), vice chair  
Jane Nichols (NV), immediate past chair

Diane Barrans (AK)  
Rico Munn (CO)  
Roy Ogawa (HI)  
Mike Rush (ID)  
Patricia Sullivan (NM)  
Carl Shaff (NV)  
Camille Preus (OR)  
James Hansen (SD)  
Klaus Hanson (WY)

#### **Committee Members Absent**

Leah Bornstein (AZ)  
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)  
Dave Nething (ND)  
William Sederburg (UT)  
Ann Daley (WA)

#### **Other Commissioners Present**

Viola Florez (NM)

#### **Staff Present**

David Longanecker, president  
Erin Barber, executive assistant to the president  
and to the commission  
Demi Michelau, director of policy analysis  
Craig Milburn, chief financial officer  
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services

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 Teleconference Minutes of February 23, 2010**

Chair Buchanan asked for a motion on the approval of the Executive Committee teleconference minutes of February 23, 2010. Commissioner Barrans moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2010, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE. Commissioner Sullivan 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 WICHE budget. Longanecker told the committee that the draft budget presented to the Executive Committee for review is balanced for FY 2010 and FY 2011. Next year's budget assumes no salary increases, dues increases, or other substantial changes. The FY 2011 budget also assumes that WICHE keeps the same commission meeting schedule by meeting in Boulder, CO, in November 2010 and in California in May 2011. Revenues for this year, FY 2010, are being anticipated at 5 percent, or \$115,199 below what was originally budgeted, due to lower indirects and interest rates and not receiving the past dues from California. Expenses have been cut by 5.4 percent, with reductions coming from virtually every area within the budget. For the FY 2011 budget that the commission will adopt at the May meeting, Longanecker has proposed a budget with revenues 2 percent below the approved FY 2010 budget, with expenses identical to revenues, resulting in a perfectly balanced budget. Longanecker noted that the proposed budget for next year maintains most areas of the budget at the current year's projected expenditure level, with the exception of modest increases in three areas (Policy Analysis and Research, Communications and Public Affairs, and miscellaneous expenses) and fairly substantial reductions in two areas (technology and innovation, and program development). The Legislative Advisory Committee was added to the general fund at the officers' request.

## DISCUSSION ITEM WICHE Dues

Chair Buchanan asked Longanecker to walk the committee through the review of the WICHE cost containment document. Longanecker clarified that at the last Executive Committee call, it was suggested that he put together a document showing ways WICHE has been containing costs and keeping a balanced budget throughout the years. He noted that the WICHE budget has increased by the rate of inflation (29 percent) for the past 10 years, while the states' budget growth was about 90 percent over the same period of time. The non-general fund units have grown by 425 percent over the 10-year period of time. Longanecker said that WICHE has grown and provided substantial services through self-funded activities. Much of the cost containment within the general fund budget has been a result of keeping staff numbers low and changing staff compensation. The number of WICHE staff is down to 38, from 42 over the past 10 years. Senior-level positions have been eliminated in order to hire more mid-level staff. The organization has reduced overhead in the area of administrative services by eliminating printing services, librarian services, and the director of administrative services position. The only staff area that has grown recently has been in the IT Department, in part to keep up with the nature of business and technology.

Commissioner Barrans asked Longanecker how many staff report directly to him. Longanecker replied that nine staff members report to him directly. Commissioner Hansen pointed out that the FY 2010 budget (general fund expenditures) on the cost containment document differed slightly from the budget sheet that was provided for the call. The cost containment document reported a budget of \$2,242,993, while the budget worksheet reported a budget of \$2,236,509. Longanecker explained that this was a function of the two documents being prepared at slightly different times, during which the budget preparation was still being finalized.

Longanecker then presented to the committee two strategies to reduce WICHE dues by \$5,000 and \$10,000. He noted that no other organizations that he knows of are reducing dues and that it seemed like the timing of this would not be beneficial, since most of the legislatures are already out of session. If dues are cut by \$5,000, Longanecker proposed taking half of the cut from reserves, holding both commission meetings at the offices in Boulder, and taking a 2 percent cut from staff salaries. Longanecker noted that most of the staff haven't received salary increases in two years, and this will eventually begin to take a toll on the organization. He also said that he preferred reducing staff compensation over taking furlough days, as many of the states are doing, because it would be disingenuous to WICHE's staff to pretend to have furloughs when, indeed, as professional staff, they would be expected to deliver the same level of service. If dues are cut by \$10,000, Longanecker proposed taking half of the cut from reserves, holding both commission meetings during fiscal year 2011 at the offices in Boulder, eliminating the Legislative Advisory Committee annual meeting, and reducing staff by one FTE halfway through the year.

Commissioner Nichols commented that it appeared that most states planned to pay their dues in the upcoming year and asked Longanecker if there is an option in place to allow for grace in dues payment. She noted that a dues cut would be symbolic but would come with great consequence to WICHE's staff. Longanecker explained that during the last recession, in fiscal year 2005, California paid in installments; Colorado delayed a portion of its dues till near the end of the fiscal year; and New Mexico withheld \$200 of its dues, but this was paid by the SHEEO from internal agency resources.

Chair Buchanan asked what the typical timeline was for collecting dues. Longanecker said that the states are billed on June 1 and a majority pay by August, though they are not considered in arrears until the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Chair Buchanan asked if the committee could defer a decision until the May meeting. Commissioner Nichols added that it would be a good idea to wait until the May meeting but asked whether or not they should wait to do a dues cut until next year, since most of the states already know their budgets for this year. Longanecker said that eight out of the 15 states know their budgets; and by May, all but two states should be done with sessions (Arizona and California). Commissioner Sullivan said that New Mexico will keep the same budget for this year.

Commissioner Shaff noted that \$5,000 or \$10,000 is not a significant amount to most states and wondered if a cut in dues was worth the cost to the WICHE staff. Commissioner Sullivan agreed with Commissioner Shaff and recommended keeping the dues flat. She said that it would not be fair to take advantage of WICHE staff. Chair Buchanan agreed with Commissioners Shaff and Sullivan and said that the states would have a clearer picture of budgets when they meet in May. He said that the discussion would be brought back up at the May meeting. Commissioner Shaff moved TO APPROVE KEEPING THE DISCUSSION ON DUES OPEN UNTIL THE MAY MEETING. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Longanecker reminded the committee that they would need to approve the FY 2012 and 2013 dues at the May meeting. He said any counsel from the committee on what to propose would be helpful. He said that he was considering freezing dues for FY 2012 and having a contingent increase in FY 2013, predicated on improving fiscal situations that would allow states to afford an increase. Commissioner Hansen said that they feared the South Dakota FY 2012 budget will be worse than the FY 2011 budget. Longanecker also mentioned to the committee that profiles for each of the states on what WICHE does for them have been prepared and updated. The profiles will be sent out electronically; commissioners can request hard copies for their use, and hard copies will be provided at the May meeting.

Commissioner Rush asked Longanecker to look into the cost savings of skipping a commission meeting in FY 2011 instead of cutting dues.

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

Longanecker noted that there has been one change to the agenda since the last Executive Committee call: to replace Michael McPherson with Martha Kanter, under secretary for the U.S. Department of Education, in the last plenary session. Commissioner Hanson asked if it would be better to move this session up on the agenda because of a possible decrease in participation during the last plenary session. Longanecker said that now that the business session has been moved to first thing on Tuesday morning, participation has stayed steady through the entire meeting.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM** **2011 Workplan**

The FY 2011 workplan includes projects already in place and a couple of new items have been added. The senior staff didn't think there was enough emphasis on productivity and looking at ways in which higher education does business. Longanecker suggested that each of the committees look at this section at the May meeting.

Jere Mock told the committee that the Programs and Services unit has a full portfolio of initiatives and that they are also working in a tight environment for funding. She said that they would discuss a possible energy initiative with their committee in May. They have done a preliminary inventory of academic and research programs that have been developed over the last few years around sustainability, climate, and new energy sources and have developed a good sense of what the programs look like. But they would like to continue looking at new policies and regional initiatives that may build on these efforts, as well as at opportunities to foster regional collaborations between new programs at institutions and new state energy departments. She has had some conversations with energy corporations such as Chevron and Siemens and hopes to host a regional forum to look at what has been developed within states and regionally on this issue.

Longanecker told the committee that staff are developing proposals to the Gates Foundation to continue their work with database development. He thought funding looked promising, and that the foundation would likely want to expand their current work with four states to include more states.

Mock told the committee that staff was looking to expand the Western Academic Leadership Forum (WALF) with a new initiative focusing on the community college sector. They will be holding a meeting in Seattle in two weeks; she'll report on it at the May meeting and will seek approval for a new regional forum in this area.

Demi Michelau shared with the committee that the Policy unit is continuing its work with the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) consortium and network. The federal money to states for the program has doubled, so they will be working to continue their efforts with states in this area. She also said that they would be sharing information about a project serving student soldiers in the West with the Issue Analysis and Research committee. The Policy staff is also looking to build on their work with the *Non-traditional No More* project and are expected to go back to Lumina Foundation for additional funding. She said that the Issue Analysis committee will also discuss a possible project on residency that has been on the workplan for several years. Other projects included looking at ways to improve remedial and developmental education and how to help states develop more effective Web portals (with the

possibility of a national meeting in spring 2011). Commissioner Nichols asked Michelau if she had seen the recent RFP from Lumina Foundation. Longanecker said that WICHE helped review the RFP and would be applying. Commissioner Sullivan expressed interest in the military project and asked to have a follow-up conversation with Michelau.

Longanecker told the committee that if staff can be helpful to states that are phasing down their student lending to direct loans to get in touch with him.

Chair Buchanan asked for any other business. Commissioner Nichols moved TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE. Commissioner Shaff seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

# ACTION ITEM

## FY 2010 Self-Evaluation of the President and Adoption of Performance Objectives for FY 2011

This document provides the performance objectives that the commission adopted for me last May; my self-assessment of how well I achieved these objectives during this past year; and a proposed set of performance objectives for this coming year, based on what has been incorporated in the draft 2010-11 WICHE workplan, which you will be adopting at this meeting.

- First, I present my current performance objectives.
- Next, I provide my self-evaluation with respect to each of these objectives.
- Last, I present proposed performance objectives for this coming year (2010-2011).

This past year fits well that old saying, “May you live in interesting times.” Some say this is an old Chinese proverb, others say it is a Chinese curse. Indeed, either would fit aspects of this past year.

### Administering the WICHE Organization:

- Objectives for “maintaining” the organization
  - Internal management

#### 1. **Maintain a balanced budget for fiscal year 2010 and beyond.**

**Accomplished.** The “balanced budget” portion of this objective has been accomplished. Although we did not receive the \$87,000 in delinquent dues payment anticipated from the California Community Colleges and received only about half of what we anticipated in interest income, resulting in revenues 5 percent below what we projected, we were able to barely balance the budget by sufficiently reducing costs for the year. With respect to the self-funded units, Mental Health will finish the year able to almost entirely replenish funds it was deficient in last year, though WCET will need to borrow some funding from its reserves to meet its budget obligations. WCET, however, will not need to borrow the amount held out explicitly for WCET in WICHE’s reserve accounts.

You may remember that, upon my recommendation, you revised this objective last year to eliminate the goal to bring staff salaries in line with salaries in comparable organizations. You eliminated this because the financial circumstances facing WICHE and its member states made it impossible to address salary discrepancies; indeed, the budget required freezing salaries for the upcoming year. You did, however, charge the WICHE chair to establish a Compensation Committee to develop a plan for bringing the WICHE CEO’s salary into a competitive position over the next few years. To that end, a Compensation Committee, chaired by former South Dakota Commissioner Tad Perry, presented a report at the November Executive Committee meeting, out of which came a charge to Chair Buchanan and me to develop a plan to bring the WICHE president’s salary in line with other CEO’s salaries over the next five years. That plan is being presented to the commission at this May’s meeting.

***2011 Recommendation: Retain this objective, recognizing that this will require substantial sacrifice to the staff, both with respect to salaries and the number of staff we can retain within the organization.***

- #### 2. **Attend directly to ways to more appropriately align responsibilities among unit directors and their respective staffs, in order that they may continue to serve the agency efficiently but do so within realistic limits. Commit to improving the share of minority staff, even though that will be difficult, considering the downsizing of staff that lies ahead.**

**Not Accomplished.** While we continue to improve the alignment of responsibilities among vice presidents, directors, and their staff, we have not achieved the objective of improving the share of minority staff; indeed, we have lost ground.

With respect to aligning responsibilities, the current leadership team is working very well together and we have greater cooperation and collaboration throughout the organization than I can recall in recent history. A number of our midlevel staff have demonstrated substantial professional growth and have accepted greater managerial responsibilities. Ellen Wagner has joined the executive team as the new executive director of WCET and has developed an aggressive, creative, and strategically appropriate new vision for the organization.

With respect to the diversity of the WICHE staff, we lost our only Hispanic staff member this past year and currently have the lowest share of our staff, less than 10 percent, being minority. We clearly do not reflect the Western communities that we serve. Last year I indicated that our efforts to change this seemed to be paying off, but I was clearly wrong. This remains an important imperative for the organization and high on my agenda for improved future performance. While it is difficult to move this agenda forward during a time when we are more likely to be laying staff off than hiring, we must remain exceptionally vigilant to this objective.

**2010 Recommendation: Retain this objective.**

**3. Maintain the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity.**

**Achieved.** An active staff council and advisory committee continue to help maintain a friendly, cohesive, high-functioning “WICHE team.” Despite the difficult financial times facing WICHE, including the absence of salary increases, morale is quite high within the organization. We currently have an exceptionally talented, productive, and nice staff, virtually all of whom enjoy working together. In part this is because we have hired well, but the presence of an exceptionally strong human resources specialist has also contributed substantially to our current admirable staff environment. Unfortunately, over this past year we have had to sever some staff because of grant funding that expired. Most significant were the cuts resulting from the termination of the State Scholars Initiative. This was tough on all staff because the SSI staff was an integral part of our team, but we were able to sustain this substantial loss without a long-term loss of staff morale.

It will be more difficult this coming year to maintain this level of morale because the more severe financial circumstances facing many of our funding sources, and thus WICHE itself, will challenge the staff. Freezing salaries for a second year, further reducing the number of staff as program and general funds decline, and the tightening of discretionary resources will create a much more challenging workplace environment.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain this objective.**

- Service to the commission

**1. Present to the commission at the May meeting an annual workplan that reflects the mission and priorities of WICHE, as established by the commission.**

**Partially accomplished.** I submitted and you approved at our meeting last May an annual workplan that reflects well WICHE’s mission, priorities, and realistic possibilities. This plan incrementally extended the previous plan, which you have affirmed to be “on track” in its focus and activities. Staff and I have worked diligently on this workplan and have accomplished most of it. Some important items on the workplan have not been achieved, however.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain the 2010 objective.**

- State relations

1. **Participate, either on official state visits or for WICHE-relevant occasions, in events in at least one-half of the WICHE states. All state visits should include at least one public-speaking or public engagement session.**

**Accomplished.** During this past year, I visited eight of the 15 WICHE states, missing Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. I was involved in state policy discussions or related work in six states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington), making presentations or leading discussions. In Arizona and South Dakota, I was simply visiting or participating in conferences.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain the 2010 objective.**

2. **Sustain the role of WICHE’s legislative advisors and secure funding to maintain that activity.**

**Accomplished.** We had perhaps our most successful Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting in recent history in September 2009. Participation was very strong and those LAC members who attended rated the event highly. The decision to have the meeting separate from either the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) or Council of State Governments-West meeting proved to be a wise decision; and conducting the meeting at our WICHE offices in Boulder proved a good idea, as well. And we were able to finance the meeting out of our *Getting What You Pay For* Lumina grant, which relieved the general fund budget of that expense. You may remember that last year I had reported this objective as “not accomplished” because our meeting in 2008 had been very sparsely attended and we had not been able to secure funding for the next meeting. Thanks to Demi Michelau’s fine work, we were able to have a very good year with the LAC. As we look to next year, funding for the LAC has been included in the general fund. Without such funding, it would be hard to support the meeting for the coming year because we have no external funding source for this purpose.

**2011 Recommendation: Sustain the current momentum of the LAC through general fund support.**

- Objectives for “development and innovation” within the organization

- Internal management

1. **Secure the resources to outfit the learning center as an exceptional contemporary learning environment.**

**Not accomplished.** Unfortunately, my State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC) colleagues and I have not yet been able to secure funding for the learning center/conferencing facility. Thus, it does not yet contain all of the desired attributes of the contemporary virtual and real learning environment for which we have been striving. Unfortunately, the anticipated relationship with Internet II to share space with us did not materialize, so we were not able to leverage that to assist with fully outfitting the videoconference facility. As a result, we still need to “high-tech” the large conference room of the Learning Center and a videoconference facility. The three State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC) partners have established a modest charge for use of the center, which should help us finance the upgrades we want to incorporate.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain this objective, but accomplish it this coming year.**

- Commission development and innovation

1. **Work with the governors, as appointment opportunities develop, to increase the diversity of the commission’s membership.**

**Accomplished, but . . .** We were able finally to get the governor of California to fill two of the state’s three open commission slots. In addition, two new members from communities of color were appointed,

increasing the net number of minority commissioners from seven to eight. While this represents a slight increase in the membership, to 19 percent, it continues to significantly underrepresent the population that WICHE serves. We have also had some difficulty this past year in getting timely appointments and reappointments; we have pending appointments in Alaska, California, and Montana.

**2011 Recommendation: Continue to work on developing these relationships.**

- State relations development and innovation

1. **Expand our legislative relations activity to include more direct involvement with legislative and executive staff.**

**Accomplished.** We have been reasonably successful in working with legislative and executive staff. Staff in a number of states have requested individual support from WICHE or have requested that WICHE testify before their committees. Perhaps our most substantive engagement in this area continues to be through our partnership with NCSL, for whom we serve as faculty for its education workshops and seminars.

**2011 Recommendation: Sustain the progress to date and work to enhance these relationships.**

2. **Expand partnership relationships, where appropriate, with other organizations, such as the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), Council of State Governments–West (CSG-West), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Pathways to College Network, Western Governors' Association (WGA), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), American Association of Higher Education (AAHE), American Council on Education (ACE), Education Commission of the States (ECS), State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), Association of Governing Boards (AGB), ACT, the College Board, the Center for the New West, the Center for the Rocky Mountain West, the Center for the American West, EduCause, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the Presidents Forum, the National College Access Network (NCAN), the National Association of State Scholarship and Grant Programs (NASSGP), Data Quality Campaign, Campaign for College Access, Pacific Northwest Gigapop, etc.**

**Accomplished.** We have maintained strong relationships with almost all of the prospective partners identified above. We continue to have a particularly strong relationship with our most consistent partners – NCHEMS, SHEEO, NCSL, and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. We also continue to maintain a strong networking relationship with the other three regional organizations – SREB, MHEC, and NEBHE. We retain a cordial but relatively inactive relationship with WGA. For all practical purposes we have no relationship with the Center for the New West, which no longer has an abiding interest in higher education issues. You may remember that last year I eliminated the National Postsecondary Education Commission (NPEC) from the list because my own relationship had expired. Since that time Brian Prescott has been selected to be on NPEC's board of directors so we have reengaged in our relationship with that organization. We have added to this list a number of organizations: the Data Quality Campaign, the Campaign for College Access, and the Pacific Northwest Gigapop, to which I was elected a board member. In sum, we remain a partner with many other organizations and continue to believe that working collaboratively makes a lot more sense than working competitively.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective, but modify it to eliminate the identification of specific organizations, including only additions and deletions to the accomplishments section in future years.**

## Providing Program Services to the Western States:

- Objectives for “maintaining” the organization

- Student Exchange Programs

Accomplish those aspects of the commission-adopted workplan that fit within this objective, including a particular focus on:

1. **Maintaining the strength of the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and seeking new ways in which the program can be refined to better meet the states’ needs for highly educated professionals.**

**Partially accomplished.** Participation in PSEP dropped from 757 to 698 students, a decline of 8 percent, due to declines in participation in all supported fields except osteopathic medicine and podiatry. It is clear that these numbers will continue to decline in the coming year. Jere Mock and Margo Schultz have continued working with the states’ certifying officers to examine ways in which the needs of sending and receiving states can be more equitably and realistically met in the increasingly market-driven environment of professional education. Particular attention is being given to new fields that might be added to PSEP, as well as to ways that the program can be tailored to specifically address state workforce development needs. Yet in the fiscal environment currently facing the states, we will be able to do little to stem the tide of declines that occur when appropriations for PSEP come up against other state priorities and obligations.

**2011 Recommendation: Maintain this objective.**

2. **Manage growth of the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) with existing staff and financial resources by examining ways in which WICHE can be more proactive in facilitating exchange in areas of projected workforce needs and in areas of imbalance, with respect to issues regarding the supply of and demand for educational opportunities, as well as through successful implementation of the WICHE ICE program.**

**Accomplished.** WUE experienced continued growth this past year, growing 4 percent to 24,670 students. Thanks to the exceptional staff work of Margo Schultz and Laura Ewing, under Jere Mock’s direction, we have continued to provide strong customer relations. We are examining ways in which the WUE and WRGP programs can be enhanced to even better serve the students and institutions that participate. This will become an increasingly important issue as enrollment strains test the efficacy of the current models for these programs. In addition to the continued success of these programs, WICHE’s new Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) has been established and began providing courses this past fall. This program contemporizes our array of Student Exchange Programs, now taking courses to students, in contrast to our prior expectation that the students would always come to the courses. While participation in this program has not caught on as quickly as we had hoped it would, we believe that the current fiscal environment will help heighten both knowledge of and participation in ICE.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective.**

- Objectives for “development and innovation” of programs to serve the states.

1. **Accomplish those aspects of the commission-adopted workplan that fit within this objective.**

**Partially accomplished.** Staff continues to explore possible new areas for program development, consistent with WICHE’s mission and workplan to better serve the future needs of our member states through interstate collaboration. Despite our exceptional performance administering the federal State Scholars Initiative (SSI), as demonstrated by program evaluations and accolades from the U.S. Department of Education for our work, we shut the SSI program down and terminated two staff last September 30 when federal funding for the program expired. While we had hoped to sustain the program with non-federal funds, I was unable to secure such funding, resulting in the program’s termination. On a more positive note, our property risk management insurance program, which

we operate in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, has been generating substantial interest and new membership. We had expected the economic downturn to moderate interest and availability of this program, but we have experienced just the opposite, as tough times have drawn institutions to the savings to be achieved through the program.

We have not been able to progress two "interstate" projects included in the workplan: the proposed WICHE service repayment program and the proposed WICHE licensure and credentialing service.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective.**

- 2. Contingent upon receiving sufficient external funding, conduct the deferred evaluation of the Student Exchange Programs in advance of the November 2010 commission meeting, so that recommendations from the evaluation can be incorporated into commission actions at the May 2011 meeting.**

**Not accomplished.** We were unable to secure the resources necessary to conduct this evaluation.

**2010 Recommendation: Delay this proposed evaluation until the fiscal environment for the states improves and receiving funding for this activity is more feasible.**

- 3. Implement in stellar fashion the new initiatives for which we secure funding and possibly develop an additional multistate collaborative program.**

**Not quite accomplished.** We did not achieve the objective of developing and securing resources for an additional multistate collaborative program. We were able, however, to successfully compete for designation as a preferred provider for the U.S. Department of Education, which will allow us to be selected as a grantee or contractor for certain projects without undergoing the full RFP process. We also have begun exploring new possibilities for interstate collaborative programming.

**2010 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective.**

### **Providing Policy, Research, and Technical Assistance to the Western States:**

- Objectives for "maintaining" policy, research, and technical assistance services
  - 1. Continue WICHE's exceptional work as the regional source for higher education information and public policy analysis and advice.**

**Partially accomplished.** We have been reasonably active in this arena. In addition to the interstate efforts, we continue to provide technical assistance to a number of states, most notably during this past year with Alaska, California, Colorado, Idaho, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective.**

- 2. Maintain the strength and vitality of WCET and the Mental Health Program, and do so without general fund support.**

**In process.** Over the past year WCET has gone through a transition in leadership, with Louis Fox transitioning from leadership of WCET to focusing exclusively on the Technology and Innovation initiative and Ellen Wagner joining WICHE to direct WCET. Wagner has brought exceptional energy, community engagement, and experience to WCET and has developed an aggressive and robust plan for the organization. While these efforts have not yet brought WCET to fiscal stability, they promise to do so in short order. The Mental Health Program continues to sustain itself primarily through substantial federal contracts and grants. It has struggled financially, however, since losing funding for the Rural Mental Health Research Center and experiencing a substantial reduction in state-level work. While it had to dip into WICHE's reserves last year, it has returned to fiscal soundness and has very promising prospects for improving its financial position this coming year. Dennis Mohatt's health difficulties have delayed some

possibilities, but he has returned in great shape to continue his success of the past. Both WCET and Mental Health remain valued and valuable parts of the organization, and I believe they will return to financial viability this year.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective.**

- Objectives for “development and innovation” of policy, research, and technical assistance services
  1. **Accomplish those aspects of the commission-adopted workplan that fit within this objective, including securing external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical assistance projects, consistent with WICHE’s mission and priorities.**

**Not accomplished.** This past year WICHE had the same four active grants with Lumina Foundation for Education reported last year. *Getting What You Pay For*, which grew out of our highly regarded *Changing Direction* project, has prepared eight primers for legislators related to the lessons learned from our *Changing Direction* work. *Non-Traditional No More* is working with five states – Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, and South Dakota – to develop policies and practices that attract adults who left college before completing their degree to return to school. *Transparency By Design* is a project within WCET to develop a robust accountability structure for online institutions. A project being conducted in conjunction with Hezel Associates is examining *Articulation and Transfer* policies and practices in higher education, with particular attention to computer-based systems that have been developed to assist colleges in managing these processes.

We also secured funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to bring higher education, secondary education, and workforce database developers from all 15 WICHE states together to examine ways in which they could link their databases to enhance state public policy data analyses.

We have not yet been successful in attracting funding for the project on community college funding. Our Ford Foundation grant, which focused on workforce development, with a particular focus on increasing the success of disadvantaged populations in preparing for high-skill/high-wage occupations, was completed last year; and we have not yet secured support for future efforts to bring state higher education and workforce development efforts.

So, while we remain actively engaged in ongoing projects we have not been successful in securing additional foundation funding this past year. We are currently in discussions with foundations regarding funding in a number of workplan related activities and believe it is highly likely that we will be more successful at both the federal and foundation level this coming year.

**2011 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective, but achieve it this year.**

2. **Further develop and sustain technical assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues.**

**Accomplished.** As previously described my staff and I have continued to provide substantial technical assistance over the past year.

**2010 Recommendation: Retain 2010 objective.**

## IN SUM:

This self-evaluation for fiscal year 2010 (2009-2010) and proposed objectives for fiscal 2011 (2010-2011) reflect what I would characterize as a less than exceptional year. We accomplished much but could and should have accomplished more. Too many of my objectives were simply “not fully accomplished.” While it has been a difficult year for WICHE financially, as it has been for our member states and for those governments and organizations that provide us with contracts and grants, it’s my job to beat the odds, and I did not do so this year. Though I continue to consider both my leadership (within the region and nation) and my management of the organization as strong, there is without

doubt plenty of room for improvement. Given the exceptional staff with whom I work, I/we should have achieved more. I look forward to receiving your reactions to my perceptions and to hearing how you believe I can better serve WICHE in the future.

David Longanecker