

WICHE



Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 17, 2011

8:00 - 9:30 am

Russian Hill Room

Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

www.wiche.edu

9 Tuesday 8:00-9:30 am

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Russian Hill

Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Robert Burns (SD), chair
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA), vice chair
Thomas Buchanan (WY), ex officio
Joseph Garcia (CO), ex officio

Susan Anderson (AK)
David Lorenz (AZ)
Position vacant (CA)
D. Rico Munn (CO)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Duane Nellis (ID)
Kim Gillan (MT)
William Goetz (ND)
José Garcia (NM)
Jane Nichols (NV)
Ryan Deckert (OR)
Committee chair (SD)
William Sederburg (UT)
Committee vice chair (WA)
Debbie Hammons (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Robert Burns (SD), chair

Staff: Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Brian Prescott, director of policy research
Patrick Lane, project coordinator



Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research
Committee meeting minutes of
November 8, 2010 9-3



Approval of the FY 2012 workplan sections
pertaining to the Issue Analysis and Research
unit (see summary of workplan activities, p.9-9) 9-5



Approval of the *Western Consortium for
Accelerated Learning Opportunities* project 9-13

Information Item: Internship program 9-14

Discussion Items:

Update on the status of *Knocking at the College Door:*

*Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/
Ethnicity* methodological review project

Update on data resources review (*Fact Book/Benchmarks/
Tuition & Fees*)

Update on *Educational Equity and Postsecondary Student
Success: A Center for Urban Education and WICHE
Partnership for Policy Research and Analysis*

Update on the *National Research and Development Center on
Postsecondary Education and Employment* grant proposal

Update on the *Adult College Completion Network*

Update on *Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer
Systems* – national meeting on college access web portals

Update on WICHE *Regional Passport* initiative

Update on Common Core Standards project

Pressing issues for the Policy Analysis and Research unit
to consider

Other business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM

Issue Analysis and Research Committee Minutes

Monday, November 9, 2010

Committee Members Present

Robert Burns (SD), chair
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA), vice chair
Susan Anderson (AK)
David Lorenz (AZ)
Steven Wheelwright (HI)
Kim Gillan (MT)
William Goetz (ND)
William Sederburg (UT)
Debbie Hammons (WY)

Staff Present

Carl Krueger, project coordinator, Policy Analysis and Research
Patrick Lane, project coordinator, Policy Analysis and Research
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis, Policy Analysis and Research
Brian Prescott, director of policy research, Policy Analysis and Research
Brandi Van Horn, research analyst, Policy Analysis and Research

Committee Members Absent

D. Rico Munn (CO)
Jane Nichols (NV)
Ryan Deckart (OR)
Viola Florez (NM)

Chair Burns convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee on November 9, 2010, and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the May 17, 2010, Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Burns asked members to review and approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Commissioner Kohl-Welles MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 17, 2010, ISSUE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING. Commissioner Lorenz seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously by the committee.

INFORMATION ITEM

National Research and Development Center on Postsecondary Education and Employment

Prescott described the *National Research and Development Center on Postsecondary Education and Employment* grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, which had already been approved by the Executive Committee. The project expands on existing work already underway at WICHE, in partnership with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and the State Higher Education Executive Officers. Anderson asked which aspects of the proposal would be particularly problematic, and Prescott replied that the federal RFP assumes that the data necessary to comprehensively address the linkages between postsecondary education and employment are there to be harvested, which is not an accurate assessment, in spite of recent federal investments. Longanecker noted that no one else is currently developing a way to look at longitudinal data that links higher education and workforce data across state borders and that WICHE's proposed project accounts for aspects of data systems design and development that were not part of the federal RFP. If funded, WICHE would receive \$500,000 per year for five years. A funding decision is expected in January 2011.

INFORMATION ITEM
Outreach to New Governors

Longanecker shared information about WICHE's collaboration with the National Governors Association and Lumina Foundation for Education to develop strategies for outreach to new governors. Seven new governors were recently elected in the West, and all of them are going to have to deal with extremely difficult fiscal conditions. Because some of them have limited higher education experience, WICHE is working with NGA on strategies to help these new governors develop metrics detailed in NGA's Complete to Compete initiative, while also facilitating ways to help them preserve access and affordability and promote success. WICHE staff asked committee members to assist in making contact with governors, identifying education policy advisors, and generating conversation. NGA is also publishing a series of short policy briefs to help educate the new governors; WICHE staff wrote the one focused on serving adult learners.

INFORMATION ITEM
Adult Degree Completion Program Network

Michelau updated the committee about a four-year, \$1.1 million grant from Lumina Foundation, in which WICHE will serve as the intermediary organization for the *Adult Degree Completion Program Network*. WICHE will convene meetings, develop an interactive website, create listservs, and engage in other activities designed to foster communication between states, municipalities, institutions, and others who are working to help individuals who dropped out of college with at least 75 percent of the credits they needed to graduate come back and finish a postsecondary degree. Kohl-Welles asked if WICHE was making concessions for those adult students who want to change their majors once they return to college. Michelau responded that the project is working with states and institutions to assist students in taking the credits they'd already earned and applying them to another degree. Sederberg asked if WICHE was coordinating the program nationwide, and Michelau explained that 19 states are involved, including some outside the West. If other states are interested in serving this population of students, WICHE can provide a model and assist states with funding opportunities for adult-learning projects.

INFORMATION ITEM
Data Resources Review

Staff also informed the committee about the results of a data resources review that included a survey of commissioners and other data users about the *Fact Book*, *Benchmarks*, and *Tuition and Fees* publications. The most recent of release of *Tuition and Fees* contained some substantial changes, based on the results of the review. Changes to improve the usability of the *Fact Book*, informed by the survey, are also being considered. The committee provided additional suggestions during the meeting for how to make these resources more useful.

DISCUSSION ITEM
The 2011 Workplan

Finally, staff led a discussion regarding the progress in crafting the 2011 workplan, which is progressing as expected. Specific project highlights included the Policy unit's partnership with the Center for Urban Education, which examines student progression in Nevada based on race and ethnicity; the conclusion of the *Non-traditional No More* project, which focused on adult learners; the Legislative Advisory Committee; and SPIDO, the State Policy Inventory Database Online, the nation's only online searchable database of higher education policies.

Chair Burns adjourned the meeting.

WICHE WORKPLAN FY 2012

(Issue Analysis and Research activities are highlighted)

EXISTING ACTIVITIES

Finance

- Annual *Tuition and Fees* report (general fund: GF)
- Performance measurement improvement in the Western states public mental health programs (WSDSG dues)
- MHEC/WICHE/NEBHE Master Property Program (self-funding)
- Collaborative purchasing via MHECtech (self-funding)
- Legislative Advisory Committee (GF)

Access & Success

- Student Exchange Programs: Professional Student Exchange Program, Western Regional Graduate Program, Western Undergraduate Exchange (state-funded and GF)
- WICHE ICE – Internet Course Exchange (member dues and GF)
- Bridges to the Professoriate (National Institute of General Medical Sciences)
- Adult College Completion Network (Lumina)
- *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity*, including a methodology review and expansion (ACT, College Board, and GF)
- Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners (Lumina)
- SPIDO – State Policy Inventory Database Online (GF, Lumina)
- Children’s mental health improvement project in South Dakota (South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health)
- College Access Challenge Grant Program Consortium and Network (state subcontracts, U.S. Department of Education)
- Ongoing work on articulation and transfer systems (GF)
- Education Equity and Postsecondary Student Success, a CUE and WICHE Partnership for Policy Research and Analysis (Ford)
- Ongoing work on the implications of the Common Core State Standards on higher education in the West (GF)
- National Institute of Mental Health challenge grant to improve identification of persons with behavioral health issues on college campuses (NIMH)
- Participation and leadership in the college completion agenda
- Explore data, policies, and issues related to undocumented students

Technology & Innovation

- Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (Gates Foundation)
- The Forum: Western Academic Leadership Forum (member dues and TIAA-CREF and Pearson Education grants)
- The Alliance: Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders (member dues)
- Facilitation of Internet2 connectivity throughout the West (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- State Authorization Network (SAN), an advisement service to help institutions respond to new federal regulations (subscription fees)
- National survey of the instructional, operational, and technological infrastructure of distance education through the Managing Online Education project, in partnership with the Campus Computing Project (Campus Computing Project)
- Ongoing work on HealthNet, LibraryNet, JusticeNet, and K20Net concepts and proposals (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Publishing an electronic series on innovative practices, technology trends, and policy on developments related to technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education (WCET dues)

- Expanding WCET’s knowledge base and member resources to help institutions and organizations evaluate their own policies and practices in: student retention in online learning; recruitment and retention of quality adjunct faculty; strategies for learning management systems’ transitions; and management of e-learning consortia (WCET dues)
- Transitioning EduTools to a new model focused on community contributions and user experiences, initially in the areas of identity authentication technologies and learning management systems (Hewlett grant, sponsors)
- Providing professional development in e-learning for the higher education community through WCET’s annual conference event, Catalyst Camp, and invitational summits (fees and sponsors)
- Serving as a knowledgeable resource for higher education on promising practices and policies that address academic integrity and student verification in online learning (WCET dues)
- Webinar series of national education technology debates: retention strategies, authentication, completion strategies (WCET dues and sponsor)
- Extend the reach of WICHE’s policy and research work by leveraging WCET’s national network and technical assistance with new media communications (WCET dues)
- Build out WCET’s capacity as a third-party provider of grants management and oversight for complex technology-related projects among WCET member institutions and other partners (Lumina, Gates)
- Partnership to establish the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Health Resources and Services Administration Center for Integrated Care, a national technical assistance center to support federal efforts to promote the adoption of integrated primary care and behavioral health delivery systems (SAMHSA/HRSA)
- Working with Doña Ana County (Las Cruces), New Mexico, to improve crisis intervention services (Doña Ana County)

Workforce & Society

- Development of Student Exchange Program responses to critical workforce shortages, especially in rural and underserved areas (GF)
- Mental health first aid (self-sustaining)
- Convening and supporting the Regional Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council (GF)
- Building partnerships for competency: public behavioral health workforce development (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority)
- Behavioral health training initiatives to expand the rural workforce capacity (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority)
- Increasing community capacity to serve returning National Guard members and their families (Department of Defense)
- Suicide prevention toolkit for rural primary care providers (self-sustaining)
- Increasing health and behavioral health provider knowledge of returning veterans’ service needs (Citizen Soldier Support Program)
- Workforce briefs: *A Closer Look at Healthcare Workforce Needs in the West* (GF)

Accountability

- *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* (GF)
- *Electronic Regional Fact Book: Policy Indicators for Higher Education* (GF)
- *Policy Insights* on a range of higher education issues (GF)
- *Western Policy Exchanges* on WICHE-sponsored meetings and discussions among the West’s higher education leaders (various sources)
- Facilitation of the Western States Decision Support Group for Public Mental Health (state-funded)
- *Electronic Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts* (GF)
- Policy Publications Clearinghouse (GF)
- Work on Transparency by Design’s College Choices for Adults website, to help adult students become better-informed consumers of online education (Lumina)
- Assessing the landscape for state policy on student-learning outcomes

NEW DIRECTIONS

(approved by the commission)

Finance

- Technical assistance with state financial aid program design and funding (single-state support, as requested)

Access & Success

- Interstate Passport, a grassroots initiative to develop consensus on essential learning outcomes supporting seamless student transfer in the WICHE region
- Expanding access to cyberinfrastructure, research and education networks, and applications for geographically remote or underserved institutions, including minority-serving institutions in the West (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Expanding the opportunities for rural rotations for healthcare students participating in PSEP (GF)
- GOALS II: Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study, a collaborative project to develop blueprints on web accessibility for institutions to use during the continuous improvement process for reaffirmation by regional accreditors (FIPSE)
- Expanding access to predictive analytics and pattern strategy services to improve decision making related to retention and completion (Gates, pending funding)
- Serving Student Soldiers of the West: Policy and Practice Solutions

Technology & Innovation

- North American Network of Science Labs Online, a collaborative project to use open educational resources and remote web-based labs in introductory online courses in biology, chemistry, and physics courses (Next Generation Learning Challenges grant)
- Expansion of WICHE ICE (ICE member dues)
- Launching Predictive Analytics Reporting project to build models and middleware to examine predictive patterns of student achievement (Bill & Melinda Gates, pending funding)
- Developing action and information agendas to assist higher education institutions with issues of mobility (mobility of learners, mobile technologies, mobile services), digital content ownership and use (copyright, e-textbooks, virtual labs), and e-learning programs and services for adult learners (WCET dues)
- Academic Leaders Toolkit, a Web-based repository of strategic-planning and decision-making tools for academic leaders (Forum membership dues)
- Managing production of publication *Managing Online Education – A Handbook for Practitioners* (Wiley Publishers, WCET dues)
- Working with Internet2 and National Lambda Rail on the Unified Community Anchor Network project (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, pending funding)
- Creation of an “eScience Institute” for WICHE states’ commissioners, higher education leaders, and other public policy leaders (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Project to broaden the use of open educational resources in teaching, learning, and other areas of higher education (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Technology and Innovation and Mental Health partnership on mental health and IT-supported clinical services and education in a project with the State of Alaska (pending funding)
- Developing a regional learning center for State Higher Education Policy Center (pending funding)
- Expansion of WCET (membership base dues)

Workforce & Society

- Surveying Professional Student Exchange Program medical, dental, and veterinary medicine schools’ rural track and pipeline programs to identify best practices (GF)
- Expanding a behavioral health training program for military communities (Department of Defense)
- Expansion of WICHE ICE to develop and support new multi-institution collaborations to exchange online courses and programs in high-need and niche disciplines (ICE member dues)

- Advising Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training partnership with enterprises and community colleges (WCET dues)

Accountability

- Continuing development of Transparency by Design's College Choices for Adults website, to improve the institutional and program data offered, recruit more institutions to participate, amplify marketing to attract more users, and expand resources for adult learners (pending funding)

ON THE HORIZON

(not yet submitted to the commission)

Finance

- Research and analysis of outcome-based funding approaches

Access & Success

- Improving access and outcomes for people with co-occurring behavioral health disorders (State of Alaska)
- Exploring strategies for improving the delivery of remedial and developmental education
- Identifying the most effective college persistence and success projects and working to bring them to scale
- The Completion Agenda
- Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities

Technology & Innovation

- Establishing a data-driven decision-support center for proactively deploying student retention, authentication, and management solutions at demonstrated points of need
- Developing more effective Web portals
- Broadening access to innovative new academic programs on energy research and development in the West through WICHE's Student Exchange Program
- Academic Leaders Reading Program, an initiative to support members reading books on higher education topics of common interest and sharing perspectives (Forum member dues)

Workforce & Society

- Policy and Mental Health collaboration on recidivism reduction in the prison population
- Assisting states in identifying academic program development needs or collaboration options when existing programs are eliminated
- Health and allied health workforce development and policy
- Workforce credentialing systems
- Forging collaborations between Western higher education agencies and institutions and state departments of labor and workforce development
- Expanding the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce
- Campus safety and security
- Workforce issues within higher education

Accountability

- Research and analysis of outcomes-based funding approaches

Summary

Issue Analysis and Research Committee

FY 2012 Workplan Activities

Existing Activities

Adult College Completion Network. WICHE developed and is managing a learning network to support a Lumina Foundation adult degree completion initiative called the Adult College Completion (ACC) Network. The ACC Network aims to unite organizations and agencies working to increase college completion by adults with prior college credits but no degree. Key components include: 1) an interactive website (www.adultcollegecompletion.org); 2) meetings and conferences for grantees and others invited to participate in network activities; 3) webinars to highlight effective strategies for serving adults; 4) briefs and reports on lessons learned; 5) a repository of higher education policies related to adult learners; 6) a listserv to expedite network communications; 7) presentations at regional and national meetings; 8) social and communications media use to engage grantees and other stakeholders in discussions about adult degree completion; and 9) activities to be determined once the network is operational, in consultation with Lumina Foundation (e.g., hosted “lab” visits to best-practice locations and leveraging activities with programs such as the College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network).

Annual Tuition and Fees report. WICHE’s Policy Analysis and Research unit annually produces a report detailing tuition and fees charges for every public institution in the West. The report includes charges for resident and nonresident graduate and undergraduate students in a number of tables, allowing easy comparisons and some historical information. The unit has made several changes over the years to ensure a higher quality of data and is always looking for ways to make the report more usable and effective. The 2010-11 edition incorporated a number of changes designed to: reduce the number of tables overall and reduce duplication; add enrollment-weighted averages to state and institution-type tables to ensure that the report could better reflect the prices typical students face; and make the data publicly available in Excel format online.

Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners. With funding from Lumina Foundation, *Non-traditional No More* has worked with Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, North Dakota, and South Dakota to identify their “ready adult” population – those adults who are close to having enough credits to obtain a degree but have not yet returned to college. The project employs two strategies: (1) identifying ready adults; and (2) building a path to college success. The first strategy is designed to help states and institutions identify their ready adults. This work includes mining state data systems and engaging partnerships with other public or private data system partners to identify each state’s ready adults. The second strategy focuses on academic policies, financial aid/financing, student support services, and communications (marketing and information strategies designed to reach out to the ready adult population). Work continues with North Dakota on this project.

Legislative Advisory Committee. WICHE created the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) in 1995 to inform the WICHE Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education; provide input on WICHE initiatives; and advise staff on program and participant considerations related to WICHE’s policy workshops. In addition, WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West. The LAC meets annually, and members are invited to various WICHE activities, such as regional and national policy forums.

State Policy Inventory Database Online. State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO), the nation’s only online searchable database of higher education policies, provides state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers with an inventory of state-level policies and resources in key policy issue areas related to access and success in higher education.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity methodology review and expansion. *Knocking* is widely used throughout the nation by postsecondary institutions, state agencies, legislatures, governor’s offices, K-12 schools, media, libraries, businesses, and others interested in the future size and composition of enrollment demand for higher education. In the wake of the most recent edition’s publication in March 2008, the Policy Analysis and Research unit staff has made numerous presentations on its findings (and related demographic information) and continues to respond to media and other inquiries. The unit has also received commitments from its traditional partners, ACT and the College Board, to review

the methodology to ensure that the projections continue to be based on the most appropriate data and estimation methods and to prepare the next edition of the publication.

College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network. The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) is a federally funded formula grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. In 2010 Congress passed the Student Financial Aid and Responsibility Act, which increased annual funding for the CACG program from \$66 million to \$150 million, boosted the minimum annual grant award to \$1.5 million, and extended the program through FY 2014. States can participate through the consortium, which involves WICHE administering the state program, or through the network, which is a collaborative council composed of designated staff from each of the states. While the level of WICHE-related services differ, both options allow CACG states the opportunity to learn from each other, share best practices and lessons learned, and receive current, evidence-based research. The CACG Consortium is composed of Alaska, Idaho, and Wyoming, and the CACG Network is made up of Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. States are still welcome to join either the consortium or the network.

Education Equity and Postsecondary Student Success: A CUE and WICHE Partnership for Policy Research and Analysis. A subcontractor to the Center for Urban Education (CUE), WICHE is assisting on this Ford Foundation-funded project, aimed at helping states make use of CUE's innovative approaches for making policies more intentionally equity-minded. WICHE's responsibilities include: consulting with CUE on the overall direction of the project, gathering state-level data for populating CUE's data tools, and organizing and leading an affiliates' program of promising scholars and policy analysts. WICHE is currently analyzing data from the Nevada System of Higher Education to track student progress by race/ethnicity through a set of momentum points (i.e., successful remediation, 30 credits, 60 credits, transfer, etc.) and will use the findings to inform a conversation in Nevada about improving equitable outcomes.

Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange. The principal objective of this project is to pilot a data exchange among several states, allowing for more comprehensive analyses of the production, stock, and flows of human capital through a regional, multistate approach. Working initially with four member states – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Hawaii – WICHE is coordinating efforts to develop the necessary architecture for the exchange of data, effectively govern the exchange, produce standard reports, and ensure the protection of privacy. This project complements many other efforts to develop statewide longitudinal data systems (stimulated by the infusion of \$400 million in federal grants over the last several years and many more millions in philanthropic support). Specifically, it will focus on answering two principal policy questions, with evidence drawn from the participating states: 1) How are former high school students from participating states performing in postsecondary education or the workforce in participating states? and 2) How are former postsecondary students from participating states performing in the workforce in participating states? In doing so, the multistate data exchange will provide rich information about the stock and flow of skills and abilities (represented by education and training) of various populations within a given state; gaps in attainment and employment between population groups based on demography and socioeconomic status; and the mobility of the U.S. population across state borders.

Benchmarks: WICHE Region. This annual document tracks 15 indicators of progress toward improving access and success, affordability, and higher education finance from a regional perspective.

Electronic Fact Book: Policy Indicators for Higher Education. This online repository of data relevant to higher education policy is regularly updated. Its domains include access, affordability, demographics, economic indicators, faculty, finance, preparation, progression, and workforce. Data are provided at the state level for all WICHE states.

Policy Insights. *Policy Insights* is a short report series covering a wide array of timely higher education policy issues.

Electronic Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts. *Policy Alerts* and *Stat Alerts* are WICHE's periodic e-mail notices of new policy and data-related reports.

Policy Publications Clearinghouse. The Policy unit maintains a database of policy publications in a continuing effort to serve as a clearinghouse for the WICHE states. The documents include studies, reports, surveys, and policy briefs published by various research and public policy organizations.

Western Policy Exchanges. Reports on the meetings and discussions among the West's key leaders in higher education policy issues.

New Directions

Technical assistance with state financial aid program design and funding (single-state support, as requested). The Policy Analysis and Research unit has become a recognized expert on the “shared responsibility” model for distributing need-based financial aid, as well as other state grant aid funding approaches. We occasionally receive requests to assist states with rethinking their program design. Such projects are typically done on a contract basis, depending on how well they fit in with existing workload.

On the Horizon

Explore issues related to undocumented students. WICHE staff will explore data, policies, and issues related to undocumented students, as this is an issue that is of interest and concern to policymakers and higher education leaders in the West.

Serving Student Soldiers of the West: Policy and Practice Solutions. With many veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, states and postsecondary institutions are faced with how to best serve them, given increased demand for higher education and tight fiscal times. WICHE is proposing a project that will work to increase access to and success in higher education for military students and their families in the Western region. Specifically, the project aims to increase awareness of state and institutional policymakers about the demographics, needs, and challenges of the military population in higher education; identify state and institutional policies that create barriers to or enhance access and success for military students and their families; and assist states and institutions in developing clear, seamless degree pathways for military personnel, veterans, and their families.

Research and analysis of outcome-based funding approaches. Increasingly, states are recognizing that enrollment-based funding formulas do not create particularly powerful incentives for institutions to prioritize degree/certificate completion. A few states are making adjustments (or are considering doing so) in their financing strategies to reward institutions for retaining and graduating students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is interested in researching how such policies have impacted educational attainment, as data allow.

Exploring strategies for improving the delivery of remedial and developmental education. Remedial education is currently very expensive for states and institutions, and the results are unsatisfactory. WICHE intends to develop a project that would build on current emerging practices in the field to help states more effectively and efficiently target remedial education to students, particularly adult learners.

Identifying the most effective college persistence and success projects and working to bring them to scale. As the United States responds to the current economic crisis and the increased demand for a more educated workforce, many are looking to postsecondary education and training for solutions. For the last several years, multiple college access and success initiatives have been implemented at both state and institutional levels. The evidence from these initiatives strongly suggests that proactive interventions can substantially improve student success. Despite this, American higher education has been slow to adopt proven strategies. And as a result, educational attainment, as measured by degree completion, remains constrained. WICHE is seeking funding to launch a program that identifies the most effective – and cost-effective – college persistence and success projects and bring them to scale.

Developing more effective web portals. WICHE and WCET are currently examining state web portals designed to help students navigate the transfer process. Future work will build on this effort.

Policy and Mental Health collaboration on recidivism reduction in the prison population. State corrections policy has endured significant changes in the past 25 years. The 1980s brought a significant shift in philosophy, from one historically based in a belief that those who are incarcerated should be rehabilitated if possible to one that focused more on punishment than on rehabilitation. State policymakers heeded the call to be “tough on crime” and passed much more punitive legislation, including mandatory sentencing and “three strikes you’re out” laws, which over time has resulted in increased pressure on state budgets. In 2001, however, there was yet another shift in public opinion. The 9/11 attacks propelled terrorism onto the forefront of the public’s mind. *Public Agenda* reports that in 2006, 80 percent of Americans felt that defending the U.S. against terrorism should be a top priority for Congress, while 62 percent felt that reducing crime should be. With corrections comprising a larger share of state budgets and the public no longer focused as much on crime, the time might be right for state policymakers to revisit their stance on the issue. WICHE is exploring a project related to reducing recidivism through higher education in an effort to develop

more effective and sustainable policy resulting in reduced pressure on state budgets, less crime, and in some cases, maybe even economic development strategies.

Workforce credentialing systems. ACT has been pushing a National Workforce Readiness Certificate based on its WorkKeys assessments (and there exist similar initiatives). The Policy Analysis and Research unit has been trying to stay abreast of such developments and would be interested both in helping states forge stronger ties between postsecondary education and the business community through the development of a common language surrounding competency that this activity helps promote and in conducting research on the efficacy of such efforts.

Forging collaborations between Western higher education agencies and institutions and state department of labor and workforce development. The Policy Analysis and Research unit has in the past worked with states to highlight higher education's workforce development mission. It also sought to help states strengthen the connection between the activities of their higher education institutions and their workforce development training programs. We hope to build upon that body of work by proposing a new project that more explicitly focuses on how state workforce needs can be met specifically through better service to racial/ethnic minorities and other underrepresented populations. It is apparent that in many states failure to adequately prepare these fast-growing populations in high-demand fields (not just get them a degree) could severely impair their economic prosperity in the long run. At the same time, the fast-growing, traditionally underrepresented populations present an opportunity to meet workforce demands, if only states could find scalable models of particular effectiveness. Additionally, there are too few resources available to states to help them understand not only how to dismantle silos related to workforce development and higher education but also how state-level and federal policies related to the two areas can be made complementary. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is interested in pursuing the capacity to build upon its expertise in these areas as part of the project targeting underrepresented populations.

Expanding the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce initiative. Building off a successful meeting in April 2009 of representatives from six WICHE states, this effort is aimed at helping states expand the pipeline of underrepresented populations into health professions fields. Pending our ability to secure additional funding, WICHE would be interested in replicating the meeting, including lessons learned, in other member states.

Assessing the landscape for state policy on student learning outcomes. International benchmarking is an increasingly valuable source of information in a globally competitive marketplace, as shown by the visibility and perceived relevance of the educational attainment figures released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Likewise, the public is demanding to know what they are getting out of higher education, increasingly in terms of learning outcomes. And with heightened attention to increasing graduation rates and numbers, concern has risen about whether such pressures could lead to reductions in the quality of education offered and received. While the current efforts to enhance state-level student record databases will provide much better information on the quantity of higher education's output, these efforts will do little to address issues of quality. Yet it will be just as important for states, institutions, and students themselves to know whether students are learning what they need to know and be able to do. The next wave of policy will almost certainly focus on issues of measuring and improving student learning.

Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities. WCALO will work to increase the successful participation of low-income students in advanced placement courses and tests. The program will expand opportunities for low-income and rural students to take college-level classes and earn college credit while still in high school (with an emphasis on subjects related to the STEM fields). Building on a successful design from a previous WICHE project, WCALO will provide direct financial assistance to three WICHE states to serve rural schools and districts with high concentrations of low-income students that either cannot maintain current programs independently or where advanced placement has not been available previously. WCALO will also engage in consortiumwide activities and serve additional WICHE states that receive awards with an array of professional development and other activities.

ACTION ITEM

Proposed Project

Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities

WICHE proposes a project titled the Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities (WCALO), which will work to increase the successful participation of low-income students in advanced placement courses and tests. The program will expand opportunities for low-income and rural students to take college-level classes and earn college credit while still in high school. Specifically, the WCALO project has two goals:

- **Goal A:** Increase the successful participation of low-income students in advanced placement courses in rural schools with a high concentration of low-income students, with emphasis on subject areas related to the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields.
- **Goal B:** Increase the successful participation of low-income students in advanced placement tests in rural schools with a high concentration of low-income students with emphasis on subject areas related to the STEM fields.

Building on a successful design from a previous WICHE project, WCALO will provide direct financial assistance to three WICHE states to serve rural schools and districts with high concentrations of low-income students that either cannot maintain current programs independently or where advanced placement has not been available previously. WCALO will also engage in consortiumwide activities and serve additional WICHE states that receive awards with an array of professional development and other activities.

Relationship to WICHE Mission

This project will assist states in the WICHE region to better prepare low-income students in rural areas for postsecondary education (with an emphasis on STEM fields) through opportunities for earning college credit while still in high school.

Background

In 2000 WICHE began a successful, large-scale effort called the *Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities*, which worked with nine WICHE states to increase the successful participation of low-income students in advanced placement courses and tests. Building on this model, WICHE will engage in a smaller, one-year project that will focus on rural areas and subjects related to STEM fields.

Project Description

WCALO is grounded in a network of Western states and has two major elements that contribute to an exceptional approach to address the aforementioned goals: (1) direct services to students, teachers, counselors, and administrators; and (2) multistate or consortiumwide services. The project will span one year and will include subcontracts to three WICHE states to deliver services related to online advanced placement courses, teacher and counselor professional development, vertical team building, and other areas deemed appropriate. Further, the network component will be composed of a representative from the K-12 and higher education agency in each of the participating states; these representatives will meet twice in person and engage in other means of communication throughout the project to share successful strategies to overcome common challenges associated with the effective delivery of advanced placement in rural areas.

Staff and Fiscal Impact

The total budget of the proposed project is \$650,000 over one year. The intended funding source is the U.S. Department of Education's Advanced Placement Incentive Program. If awarded, the grant will support a portion of the salaries and benefits for several current employees (approximately 1.0 FTE), all of whom reside in the Policy Analysis and Research unit. The grant would also cover a portion of David Longanecker's time (.05 FTE).

Action Requested

Approval to seek funding to support WICHE's leadership of this project.

INFORMATION ITEM

Temporary Internship Program

WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research Unit has designed an internship program to provide qualified graduate students in relevant programs a chance to experience the kind of policy work that we and similar organizations do. Interns will also make a real contribution to the unit's work through the assignment of mutually beneficial activities. Below is the announcement we used to recruit candidates.



Equal Opportunity Employer

INTERNSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

- Unit:** Policy Analysis and Research
- Classification:** Temporary Internship
- Compensation:** \$17.50/hour
- Available:** May 1 – August 31, 2011 (the timing is negotiable, but a 12-week commitment is anticipated)
- To Apply:** For full and timely consideration, a detailed resume should be submitted to WICHE Human Resources at jobs@wiche.edu. WICHE's mailing address is 3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 200, Boulder, Colorado, 80301-2204. **Review of interested candidates will begin immediately;** internship will remain open until filled.

WICHE has a long-term commitment to diversity throughout its organizational structure, internal relationships, program activities, and relationships with external constituencies. The organization strives to hire, support and promote culturally diverse personnel at all levels.

THE ORGANIZATION

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education – WICHE – is a regional agency established in the 1950's through an interstate compact. WICHE was created to promote and to facilitate resource sharing, collaboration, and cooperative planning among Western states, their colleges and universities, and their systems of higher education. By constructing cooperative arrangements and developing and sharing information, WICHE strives to help states and their residents to meet the needs for an educated workforce. Member states are: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. For more information, please visit www.wiche.edu.

WICHE shares a building in Boulder, Colorado and maintains strong, collaborative relationships with two other major state higher education policy organizations: the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

THE UNIT

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

The Policy Analysis and Research Unit is involved in the research, analysis, and reporting of information on public policy issues of concern in the WICHE states. The unit provides policy support for policymakers, education leaders, board members, and others in the Western states. Key activities include providing research, analysis, and reports on public policy issues; convening constituents through multistate policy forums and state roundtables on issues critical to their needs; monitoring social, demographic, fiscal, economic, political, and market trends to identify emerging higher education issues; tracking state legislative, executive office, and board activity; reviewing publications from other organizations and associations; and responding to inquiries and special requests. Current project areas include adult learners, college access and success, higher education finance, financial aid, and workforce development. Related ongoing research involves a regional fact book; a series of short reports on emerging policy issues (e.g., financial aid, tuition, information technology, high school graduates, and legislative activity related to higher education); and an annual survey on *Tuition, Fees in Public Higher Education in the West*.

INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

This internship is intended to provide a unique opportunity for a graduate student in a related field to work on issues of public policy relevance within an organization that is deeply connected with key state higher education leaders in the West and elsewhere. During the internship, the successful candidate will complete a project of mutual benefit for him or herself and the policy unit. Specific activities that may be assigned include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Provide assistance with demographic research and projections methodologies in advance of the upcoming eighth edition of *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity*. This publication is received as a vital resource for a broad audience including state policymakers, state agencies responsible for K-12 and higher education, postsecondary institutions, associations, other researchers, the media, and the business community.
2. Conduct research on student progression through postsecondary education.
3. Participate in an effort to update and contemporize an online data resource with public policy relevance for Western states. This activity will involve extracting and preparing data drawn from secondary data sources such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS – the principal federal data source for data on higher education) and the Census Bureau to develop and exhibit indicators.
4. Track and analyze state legislation, policies, and procedures related to college access and success in the 50 states. The result of this analysis will form the basis of an update of WICHE's State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO). This project will require populating SPIDO with current policies and identifying outdated data for removal.

Interns will work on-site at WICHE's offices in Boulder. WICHE will not be responsible for securing housing for a candidate from out of town, but we will provide whatever assistance we can in helping to locate housing.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

1. Bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
2. Currently enrolled as a master's or doctoral student at an accredited postsecondary institution in a relevant program.
3. Demonstrated ability to work in a self-directed and highly organized manner, accompanied by solid analytical skills and the ability to efficiently handle multiple priorities and tasks.
4. Ability to think creatively, write accurate and timely written reports, and speak and write clearly and effectively.
5. Demonstrated ability to maintain appropriate confidentiality with materials and information.
6. Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective, cooperative, and cordial working relationships internally and externally.
7. Willingness to learn and acquire additional duties and responsibilities as necessary.

Preferred:

1. Knowledge of higher education state structures and policy issues, including an ability to understand and work with state statutes and other state-level policies.
2. Experience working with state policymakers, including legislators, legislative staff, governors' staff, or state education or workforce agency officials; higher education board members or institutional officials; and representatives from regional or national policy organizations and associations.
3. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of state legislative processes and procedures, including familiarity with web-based statutes, policies, and procedures.
4. Basic understanding of how to update web content.
5. Experience reviewing proposed and enacted state legislation and state agency policies.
6. Experience with manipulating publicly accessible data sources such as Census or IPEDS data and proficiency working with statistical software such as Excel, SPSS, or SAS.

Organizational Responsibility: Reports to co-directors of the Policy Analysis and Research Unit.

Travel: N/A

WICHE provides a smoke-free work environment for its staff.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

03/03/11