

Monday, November 8, 2004

8.00 - 8.30 am

Pine

Executive Committee Meeting (closed)

Executive Committee Members:

Don Carlson, chair (WA)

Diane Barrans, vice chair (AK)

Chuck Ruch, immediate past chair (SD)

Committee vice chair (AK)

Larry Gudis (AZ)

Robert Moore (CA)

William Kuepper (CO)

Doris Ching (HI)

Gary Stivers (ID)

Sheila Stearns (MT)

Carl Shaff (NV)

Patricia Sullivan (NM)

David Nething (ND)

Camille Preus-Braly (OR)

Tad Perry (SD)

E. George Mantes (UT)

Debora Merle (WA)

Klaus Hanson (WY)

Agenda

Information Items:

Informal review of the executive director's performance 1-3

Executive director's activities 1-7

ACTION ITEM

Auditor's Report for the Fiscal Year 2004

A copy of the auditor's report for the year ended June 30, 2004, and a letter from the auditors regarding internal control are being sent to each commissioner, along with the agenda materials for this meeting. The Denver branch of the national CPA firm Clifton Gunderson, LLP, performed the audit for the second time.

The financial statement formats comply with the Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Cover Letter from Auditors

The auditors commented that the limited number of office personnel prevents segregation of duties necessary to assure maximum internal control. As the auditors note, this situation is not uncommon for organizations of WICHE's size, and management involvement in certain areas reduces the organization's exposure to major error. This comment has been made by WICHE's auditors annually over the past several years.

For example, WICHE units receive a monthly detail of income and expenditures for their accounts, and by monitoring these statements on a regular basis, unit staff can check for proper recording of cash receipts and disbursements. Funds received for federal awards and interest are direct-deposited to WICHE's bank or money market accounts by the payor, and no cash comes into the WICHE office for these items.

Independent Auditor's Report (p. 1)

In the regular audit, which is performed annually, the auditors test whether the financial statements prepared by WICHE accurately portray our true financial position. The auditors report that these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of WICHE as of June 30, 2004, and are in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principals.

Statement of Financial Position (p. 3)

This statement is a summary of the financial position of WICHE as of June 30, 2004.

The lower section titled "Liabilities and Net Assets" is similar to net worth for profit-making companies; "Net Assets Undesignated" consist of the general fund carryover of \$621,977; plus balances in the revolving funds for printing, information technology, and telephone services of \$61,145; the facilities expense fund of \$31,042; and the furniture and equipment fund of \$174,563, primarily the book value of WICHE-owned furniture and equipment.

"Net Assets Designated for the Future Program Activity" primarily reflects the balance in the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

"Net Assets Board Designated for Contingencies" is the \$228,562 minimum reserve, based upon 12 percent of budgeted expenditures, as approved by the commission in May of 2000.

Statement of Activities (p. 4)

This statement reports revenue by source and expenditures, divided between program services and supporting services. Expense totals for program services and supporting services are presented and detailed in the "Statement of Functional Expenses" (pp. 5 and 6). At the bottom of the page, the "Net Assets at the End of the Year" ties to the next to the last line of the previous page.

Statement of Functional Expenses (pp. 5 and 6)

This statement reports program areas by groupings of expenditure categories. The lower portion reports pass-through expenditures for the Student Exchange support fees, the internal charge-back allocations, and the indirect cost allocations.

Statement of Cash Flows (p. 7)

This statement provides an analysis of the changes during the year in cash and "cash equivalents." On June 30, 2004, cash and cash equivalents included funds in checking, interest-bearing savings, and the money market account.

Auditor's Report on Compliance and Internal Control in the Regular Audit (pp. 16 and 17)

In the regular audit, the auditors noted no matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and our operation that they considered to be material weaknesses. An opinion on internal control is expressed by the auditors in a separate letter (summarized above) regarding instances that they determined are not material. When the level of federal expenditures reaches the \$300,000 threshold, an additional audit (summarized below) is needed to test compliance with federal programs. The results of the auditors' tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under government auditing standards.

Auditor's Report on Compliance in the Required A-133 Federal Audit (pp. 18 and 19)

In addition to the regular audit, an audit of federal awards was conducted as required by the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, "Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Non Profit Organizations." This audit tests whether WICHE is in compliance with the requirements of the major federal programs. The auditors report that WICHE was found to be in compliance in all material respects with the requirements of each of its major federal programs.

Action Requested

Approval of the auditor's report for fiscal year 2004.

ACTION ITEM

Executive Committee Conference Call Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2004

Committee Members Attending

Don Carlson, chair (WA)
Diane Barrans, vice chair (AK)
Chuck Ruch, immediate past chair (SD)
William Kuepper (CO)
Doris Ching (HI)
Cindy Younkin for Sheila Stearns (MT)
Carl Shaff (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Diane Vines for Camille Preus-Braly (OR)
Tad Perry (SD)
E. George Mantes (UT)
Jim Sulton for Debora Merle (WA)
Klaus Hanson (WY)

Committee Members Unable to Attend

Larry Gudis (AZ)
Robert Moore (CA)
Gary Stivers (ID)
David Nething (ND)

Staff Attending

David Longanecker, executive director
Cheryl Blanco
Jere Mock
Marla Williams

Call to Order

Chairman Don Carlson called the meeting to order and asked if there were additions to the agenda. David Longanecker said there were two additions: announcement of a contingency conference call meeting of the executive committee; and announcement of an airfare sale by Alaska Airlines. Chair Carlson accepted the additional agenda items.

Action Item

Approval of the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2004

COMMISSIONERS PERRY/YOUNKIN (M/S) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL MEETING OF AUGUST 10, 2004. The motion passed unanimously. (Note: The minutes of the executive committee meeting in May and of subsequent executive committee conference call meetings will be contained in the November meeting agenda book.)

Discussion Item

November 2004 Commission Meeting Schedule

David Longanecker said a few changes have been made to the November meeting schedule since it was last reviewed by the executive committee. He said due to a scheduling conflict, Pam Inman, the director of the Western Governors' Association, will not be able to participate in the meeting. Instead, Julie Davis Bell who is the education program director of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), will present during the policy discussion, "Elections and Implications." He said in addition to this change, some shifts in presentation days and times were made to accommodate speakers' schedules, and the committee meetings have been divided to meet on both days to allow the committees additional meeting time. A new version of the November meeting schedule will be distributed to all commissioners.

Update and Prospective Approval

Office Building Purchase

David Longanecker reported that work is progressing on the purchase of the office building, located at 3035 Center Green Drive (Foothills Parkway and Valmont Street) in Boulder, CO. He said attorneys for the three organizations are reviewing the purchase contract and will be working together to construct a counter proposal.

Longanecker reported that Marv Myers has become ill and said this will definitely slow progress on this effort. He said since Myers isn't expected back in the office for some time; and then, at a reduced amount of time, he would be picking up the responsibility for this project.

Longanecker reported that he may need commission approval on the purchase of the office building prior to the November commission meeting. He said the need for commission approval depends on the timing of the sellers' acceptance of the counter contract and the associated due diligence requirements. He said because of this uncertainty, a contingency conference call meeting of the executive committee has been scheduled for October 21.

Chair Carlson asked about the purchase price for the office building. Longanecker said the price is \$4.4 million. Commissioner Sullivan asked if the cost of renovation was included in the price of the building. Longanecker said it is; \$31.50 per square foot for renovation is included in the price of the office building. Commissioner Hanson asked for clarification about the price of the office building because two amounts were reported in the August 10 meeting minutes. Marla Williams said the two prices reported in the minutes were the sale price of \$4.4 million and the price of \$4.0 million offered in the letter of intent. Longanecker said the sellers were not interested in negotiating on the price of the office building; therefore, the purchase price is \$4.4 million. Longanecker added that the annual cost of purchasing the office building will not exceed WICHE's annual budgeted amount for leasing office space.

Chair Carlson asked about the building's location. Longanecker said it is located approximately 1.5 miles northwest of WICHE's current facility. He said the new building is adjacent to the facilities of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and has the potential of providing direct Internet2 connections to WICHE and its partner organizations.

Commissioner Mantes asked about the facility's square footage. Longanecker said it is 32,000 square feet. He said it is a two-story building and WICHE will be located on the upper level with NCHEMS, SHEEO, and the learning center on the lower level. He said it is slightly more space than needed but it is priced lower than the facility that WICHE is currently leasing.

Commissioner Sullivan asked about the comparison of costs between the new facility, including utilities, etc., and the current leased facility. Longanecker said the total cost of the building payments, utilities, and maintenance, will be essentially the same for WICHE. He said that for NCHEMS and SHEEO, the cost will be substantially higher than what they currently pay for office facilities. He said this amount will go down over time because the only cost that will increase will be the cost of utilities and maintenance. He said he didn't have the figure for utilities and maintenance but he would provide that figure to Commissioner Sullivan.

Commissioner Kuepper said he had been by the new office facility; he thinks it is in a great location and is an attractive building with excellent parking facilities. He asked about arranging for a tour of the new office facility for interested commissioners during the November commission meeting. Longanecker said plans for a tour of the office facility in November will be made as soon as the partners are under contract to purchase the office building.

Chair Carlson asked about whether WICHE would need to purchase new furniture. Longanecker said WICHE would be using some of its existing furniture, especially the modular (cubical) furniture purchased for the current office facility. He said WICHE would use some of its other existing furniture and would also need to purchase some new furniture with funds that have been earmarked for his purpose.

Chair Carlson asked the executive committee members to put the October 21 contingency conference call on their calendars. David Longanecker said this conference call will not be held if it is determined that commission approval can wait until November.

Update

Mental Health Program's Grant Approval

David Longanecker announced that WICHE's Mental Health Program has received notice of a grant award: a four-year, \$499,000-plus per year contract with the Health Resources and Services Administration. He said that while most of the funds will go to the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver and out to the states participating in the program, the grant will pay for some of the Mental Health Program's staffing and provide indirect cost recovery to WICHE. He said this is a good grant for the program.

Other

Announcements:

1. The October 21 contingency conference call meeting scheduled for the executive committee was announced during the discussion about the purchase of the office facility.
2. Alaska Airlines is having its annual PFD sale, and some may be able to take advantage of it to travel to the May 16-17, 2005, WICHE Commission meeting in Juneau, AK. Information about this sale will soon be distributed all commissioners. David Longanecker said he hoped to include a wrap-around event that would include a cruise either from Seattle to Juneau or from Juneau to Seattle around the dates of the Juneau meeting. He added he is not sure this will be possible. Vice Chair Barrans described some of the details of Alaska Airlines airfare sale, which can be found by going to www.alaskaair.com and then to the Alaska PFD sale. Barrans added that one-way fares usually are charged a premium and Alaska Air's sale is for round-trip tickets with travel between October 1, 2004, and September 6, 2005, with tickets purchased by November 4, 2004.

The meeting adjourned.

Monday, November 8, 2004

8.30 - 9.30 am

Interlocken B

Executive Committee Meeting (open)

Executive Committee Members:

Don Carlson, chair (WA)

Diane Barrans, vice chair (AK)

Chuck Ruch, immediate past chair (SD)

Committee vice chair (AK)

Larry Gudis (AZ)

Robert Moore (CA)

William Kuepper (CO)

Doris Ching (HI)

Gary Stivers (ID)

Sheila Stearns (MT)

Carl Shaff (NV)

Patricia Sullivan (NM)

David Nething (ND)

Camille Preus-Braly (OR)

Tad Perry (SD)

E. George Mantes (UT)

Debora Merle (WA)

Klaus Hanson (WY)

Agenda



Executive Committee
minutes of September 23

1-13



Auditor's report for fiscal year 2004

1-17



The purchase of the office building
(tentative item – may be distributed
separately)

Information Items:

Mental Health Program update

1-19

Commission meeting agenda

Other Business

Executive Director's Activities

January 2004

- 9 Regionals' meeting: MHEC (Midwest Higher Education Compact), SREB (Southern Regional Education Board), NEBHE (New England Board for Higher Education), and WICHE, Boulder, CO
- 16 ACE (American Council on Education) Futures Project meeting, Washington, D.C.,
- 16-18 WICHE officers retreat, Seattle, WA
- 21 ACE Center for Policy Analysis Advisory Committee, Washington, D.C.
- 23-24 Northwest Community College Consortium annual meeting, Bellevue, WA
- 26 Meeting with Boeing Company, Seattle, WA
- 28-29 Press release for *Knocking at the College Door*, Washington, D.C.

February

- 2 Testify at Utah Joint Legislative Committee meeting, Salt Lake City, UT
- 3 Nevada Committee to Evaluate Higher Education Programs consultation, Las Vegas, NV
- 5 New Mexico's WICHE 50th anniversary celebration, Santa Fe, NM
- 6-7 ACT (American College Testing Program) Educational Division Advisory Board meeting, New Orleans, LA
- 9-10 NPEC (National Postsecondary Education Cooperative) Executive Committee Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 14-16 NSCL (National Conference of State Legislatures) conference on "Funding Education in Challenging Times," Santa Fe, NM
- 18 Alaska's 50th WICHE anniversary celebration, Juneau, AK
- 20 Presentation, Colorado Mountain College, Eagle, CO
- 20-22 National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education Associates Program meeting, Coronado, CA
- 26 Macromedia Corporation meeting, San Francisco, CA

March

- 10 Idaho's WICHE 50th anniversary celebration, Boise, ID
- 11-12 Utah State Board of Regents meeting, Cedar City, UT
- 13 NGA (National Governors Association) Pathways to Advancement Cross-State Academy meeting, National Conference Center, Lansdowne, VA
- 16-20 CONAHEC (Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration) Board of Directors and annual meeting, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 24 Nevada Committee to Evaluate Higher Education Programs consultation, Las Vegas, NV
- 27- April 2 U.S./U.K. meetings, Bradford, London, England

April

- 15-16 Northwest Academic Forum annual meeting, Reno, NV
- 19 Spencer Foundation meeting, Chicago, IL
- 20 Meeting with Larry Isaak, MHEC, Minneapolis, MN, regarding MHEC's property insurance program
- 23-24 National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN) 2004 annual conference, Minneapolis, MN
- 26 President Chuck Ruch's inauguration as the 17th president of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, SD
- 29 Nevada Committee to Evaluate Higher Education Programs consultation, Las Vegas, NV

May

- 6 Future of Community Colleges, OCCA (Oregon Community College Association) panel discussion, Eugene, OR
- 7 OCCA work session: "National Community College Trends," Eugene, OR
- 16-18 WICHE Commission meeting, Boise, ID
- 20 Facilitator for a Utah Board of Regents meeting, Ogden, UT
- 25-26 "Data Quality, Currency, and Availability" meeting by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, San Francisco, CA

June

- 3 Arizona Board of Regents study session, Tempe, AZ
- 7-9 WICHE meeting: "Changing Direction: Aligning Finance Policies to Increase Access and Success," Seattle, WA
- 12-13 Keynote address to the National University Telecommunications Network (NUTN) "Quality in Distance Learning" meeting, Kennebunkport, ME
- 14-15 AAHE (American Association for Higher Education) assessment conference, Denver, CO
- 17 Nevada Committee to Evaluate Higher Education Programs consultation, Las Vegas, NV
- 20-22 "Governance Roundtable 2004" by the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, held in Santa Fe, NM
- 24 ACE Brownfellows meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 28-29 WICHE meeting: "Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy Technical Assistance Workshop," Denver, CO
- 30 WICHE/NEON (Northwest Educational Outreach Network) planning meeting, Denver, CO

July

- 7 Nevada Committee to Evaluate Higher Education Programs, Las Vegas, NV
- 14 New Mexico Commission on Higher Education consultation, Santa Fe, NM
- 15 New Mexico legislative hearings, Albuquerque, NM
- 19 WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee meeting, Salt Lake City, UT
- 20 Arizona Board of Regents "First Watch" meetings, Phoenix, AZ
- 21 National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), Salt Lake City, UT
- 22-25 State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) annual meeting, Portland, OR
- 26-27 NPEC Executive Board meeting, Washington, D.C.

August

- 3 Diversity Scorecard meeting at Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO
- 16-17 APASS (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success) Advisory Committee meeting, Champaign IL
- 18 University Presidents meeting, Boise, ID
- 19-20 WICHE/MHEC forum: "Increasing Access and Retention in Times of Limited Growth," Minneapolis, MN
- 27-28 Oregon President's Council retreat, Welches, OR

September

- 1 Montana strategic-planning discussion for P-20 education, Helena, MT
- 16 New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, boards and commissions meeting, Santa Fe, NM
- 17-18 Northwest Academic Forum Executive Committee meeting, Richland, WA

- 29 Arizona State University meetings: "Evaluation Criteria" subcommittee meeting, "Feasibility and Planning Study" work group meeting, and "State Experiences" subcommittee meeting, Phoenix, AZ
- 30 Keynote dinner speaker, "Policy Happens! But What if it Works?" at the 2004 Broadmoor Roundtable "Exploring Trends in Higher Education" in Colorado Springs, CO

October

- 4-5 WICHE/AGB (Association of Governing Boards) meeting: "Changing Direction: An Invitational Leadership Institute," Chicago, IL
- 5-6 Lumina grantee meeting, sponsored by CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning), Chicago, IL
- 10-11 AAHE Board, 2004 fall meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 13-14 Keynote speaker, Pacific Northwest Association for Institutional Research and Planning annual conference, Kelowna, B.C., Canada
- 21 ACT annual meeting, Iowa City, IA
- 22-24 Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, Teachers College, Columbia University, seminar for higher education reporters, New York, NY
- 26 Lumina 2, Changing Direction partners meeting, Boulder, CO
- 27 Arizona Board of Regents Feasibility and Planning Study Work Group meeting, Phoenix, AZ

November

- 3 "Shared Leadership for a Stronger Montana Economy" presentation, Helena, MT
- 4 Oregon State Board of Higher Education's Access and Affordability Working Group (AAWG), Beaverton, OR
- 7-9 WICHE Commission meeting, Broomfield, CO
- 10-13 WCET annual meeting, San Antonio, TX
- 30-Dec. 1 NPEC Executive Committee meeting, Washington, DC

December

- 2-3 Western Regional Policy Forum, WICHE/NCHEMS Meeting, Denver, CO
- 8 University of Colorado Board of Regents tuition study presentation, Boulder, CO

INFORMATION ITEM
Executive Director's Performance Objectives
For Fiscal Year 2005 (July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005)
As Approved by the WICHE Commission on May 17, 2004

Administering the WICHE Organization:

Objectives for "maintaining" the organization

- Internal management
 1. Maintain a balanced budget for fiscal year 2005 and beyond. Also work with the commission to establish targets for staff compensation, compared to comparable agencies within the West.
 2. Attend directly to ways to more appropriately align responsibilities among unit directors and their respective staff to continue to serve the agency efficiently, but to 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.
 3. Improve the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity.
- Commission maintenance
 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.
- State relations
 1. Participate, either in official state visits or WICHE-relevant events, in activities in at least one half of the WICHE states. All state visits should include at least one public-speaking or public engagement session.
 2. Sustain the role of WICHE's legislative advisors and secure funding to maintain that activity.

Objectives for "development and innovation" within the organization

- Internal management
 1. Successfully purchase and occupy a new facility for WICHE, in partnership with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) organizations, including a state-of-the-art learning center/small conferencing facility for optimal use by the three organizations, recognizing that fiscal constraints may require completing the full implementation of the learning center/conferencing component beyond FY 2005.
 2. Organize WICHE staff to operate in a more team-oriented work environment, with greater collegiality and less unnecessary redundancy.
- Commission development and innovation
 1. Collaborate with the Association of Governing Boards on strategies that will better inform and engage the commission and governing board members throughout the West and that will improve their understanding of emerging higher education issues.

2. Work with the governors, as appointment opportunities develop, to increase the diversity of the commission's membership.
- State relations development and innovation
 1. Expand our legislative relations activity to include more direct involvement with legislative and executive staff.
 2. Expand partnership relationships, where appropriate, with other organizations, such as NCHEMS, CSG-West, NCSL, WGA, SREB, NEBHE, MHEC, ECS, SHEEO, AGB, the College Board, the Center for the New West, the Center for the Rocky Mountain West, the Center for the American West, EduCause, etc.

Providing Program Services to the Western States:

Objectives for "maintaining" the organization

- Student Exchange Programs
 1. Accomplish those aspects of the commission-adopted workplan that fit within this objective, including particular focus on:
 - a. Stemming the decline in PSEP participation by focusing program more on states' individual needs and interests.
 - b. Managing growth of WUE within existing staff and financial resources, and 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 of supply and demand of educational opportunities.

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.
2. Complete an evaluation of the WUE program and design an appropriate evaluation for PSEP. While I believe that I should continue to seek funding for this initiative, and have imbedded such an evaluation in the student mobility study that is proposed for the workplan, I believe it is our responsibility to evaluate our programs periodically, and we should pursue such program evaluations from within existing WICHE operating budget resources, rather than expecting to do so with outside funding.
3. Implement in stellar fashion the new initiatives for which we secure funding, and possibly develop an additional multistate collaborative program.

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

Objectives for "maintaining" policy, research, and technical-assistance services

1. Accomplish those aspects of the commission-adopted workplan that fit within this objective.
2. Continue WICHE's exceptional work as the regional source for higher education information and policy analysis.
3. Continue the Western Policy Exchange as an initiative to strengthen our policy agenda.
4. Maintain the strength and vitality of WCET, the Mental Health Program, and CONAHEC, and do so without general fund support.

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.
2. Secure external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical-assistance projects consistent with WICHE’s mission and priorities.
3. Further develop and sustain WICHE’s technical-assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues.

Information Item

Mental Health Program Update

The mission of the WICHE Mental Health Program is to support service improvement in the public mental health systems of the WICHE states and to work with higher education to ensure that a high quality workforce is prepared to support and sustain these systems of care. FY2003 strained the resources of the program to meet its mission.

While the program accomplished many positive contributions, the continued crisis in state revenues has limited the ability of state mental health programs to either support their own mission or that of the WICHE Mental Health Program. The program based its operational budget on the assumption that several significant contracts that have been secured would begin producing revenue during the third and fourth fiscal quarters. Delays in contract implementation resulted in these contracts not starting until near the end of FY04 or the beginning of FY05. As a result, the program was not able to reduce or eliminate its negative fund balance. This negative fund balance is expected to be eliminated during FY05.

During FY 2004 the Mental Health Program accomplished several significant projects to support public mental health systems in the WICHE West.

- Cohosted the annual conference of the National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH) in Boulder, attended by a record number of participants.
- Facilitated South Dakota's efforts to improve workforce development of mental health professionals through the design of continuing education opportunities.
- Completed the consumer-focused performance appraisal of the South Dakota and Wyoming public mental health systems.
- Prepared the needs assessment and gap analysis for public mental health services in Oregon, Utah, and California.
- Assisted the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in dissemination of the written report of the Rural Issues Subcommittee of the President's New Freedom Commission for Mental Health.
- Performed a community readiness evaluation for the redesign of the children's system of care for the Division of Mental Health in Wyoming.
- Provided the keynote address, focused on the integration of primary care and mental health services, for several national meetings sponsored by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).
- Collaborated with the University of Alaska System in facilitating statewide strategic planning to improve mental health workforce development.
- Conducted a regional roundtable policy forum on mental health workforce development in Reno, attended by both higher education and mental health leaders.

During FY 2005 the Mental Health Program anticipates several new and continuing activities. The program will:

- Complete a book, under an 18-month contract with HRSA, to be published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, that provides an overview and annotated bibliography focused on rural mental health.
- Continue to work with the University of Alaska System to facilitate implementation of their strategic-planning initiative, focused on mental health workforce training strategies.
- Continue to support children's mental health system innovation in Wyoming and South Dakota.
- Negotiate a contract to support a pilot behavioral health integrated care program for the Division of Behavioral Health in Alaska.
- Work on a two-year Medicaid data project: staff member Chuck McGee will have .50 FTE shifted to contract work with the State of Wyoming for this project.
- Provide technical assistance on rural mental health workforce development to the State of Arizona Behavioral Health Agency, and assist in the facilitation of "Higher Education and Public Mental Health" dialogues.
- Implement the newly funded Rural Mental Health Research Center, a collaboration between WICHE, the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, and the University of Arkansas Medical Center (a four-year, \$499,000.00+ per year contract with HRSA).
- Develop a project to promote evidence-based mental health practice in partnership with the Human Services Research Institute at Harvard.
- Continue efforts to develop the Mental Health Program's capacity to serve its member states.

