

# Tuesday, November 9, 2004

8.30 - 9.30 am

Interlocken B

## **Policy Discussion: Elections and Politics**

The 2004 election will have occurred by the time the commission convenes in November. The results will have important implications for higher education nationally and throughout the WICHE region. Four WICHE states will conduct gubernatorial elections; in three of those states – Montana, Utah, and Washington – there will be new governors because the incumbents are not running. Only in North Dakota is the incumbent a candidate. In virtually every state, the change in the state legislatures could be significant, either because of term limits or simply because of natural turnover. The West also leads the nation in initiative and referendum efforts. Though only “the penny for education” initiative in Washington relates directly to education, a number of other measures will clearly affect higher education by constraining funding available for public services in general, either through reductions in tax revenues or via the dedication of limited funds to other public services.

## **Biographical Information on the Speaker**

**Julie Davis Bell**, the education program director for the National Conference of State Legislatures, will join the commission to discuss the implications of the election for higher education in the West. She has been with NCSL for 14 years and has directed the Education Program for 12 years. In that capacity she oversees the 10-person Education Program staff and is responsible for setting program priorities, responding to constituent needs and requests, developing new education projects, and interfacing with other national education policy organizations. She also serves as the program policy specialist for higher education issues. She recently published articles in *State Legislatures* magazine on college affordability, school safety, class-size reduction, and educational adequacy. She received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of California at Davis in 1986. Prior to joining NCSL, she was a policy associate with the Center for Policy Research in Denver and taught political science courses at the University of Colorado.

