

# Monday, November 2, 2009

**3.30 - 5.00 pm**

SHHEO Mingle Conference  
Room, Suite 103

## **Self-funded Units Committee**

Kaye Howe, chair  
Position vacant, vice chair  
Jane Nichols (NV), ex officio

Marshall Lind (AK)  
Joel Sideman (AZ)  
Position vacant (CA)  
Committee chair (CO)  
Roy Ogawa (HI)  
Robert Kustra (ID)  
Mary Sheehy Moe (MT)  
Warren Hardy (NV)  
Patricia Sullivan (NM)  
Dave Nething (ND)  
Camille Preus (OR)  
James Hansen (SD)  
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT)  
Ann Daley (WA)  
Tom Buchanan (WY)

Presiding: Kaye Howe, chair

Staff: Louis Fox, vice president, WICHE Technology and Innovation  
Dennis Mohatt, vice president, behavioral health, and director,  
Mental Health Program  
Russell Poulin, interim executive director, WCET

## **Agenda**



Approval of the Ad Hoc Committee for  
Self-funded Units meeting minutes of  
May 18, 2009

9-3



Selection of a vice chair for the Self-funded  
Units Committee

## **Information Items:**

Mental Health Program update – Dennis Mohatt  
Discussion of budget and new projects  
Overview of a new National Institute of Mental Health  
research project focused on campus mental health

WCET update – Russell Poulin  
Transparency By Design  
Discussion of budget and new projects  
WCET executive director position

Technology and Innovation update – Louis Fox

Overview of recent technology grants involving or led by  
WICHE: proposals for the National Telecommunications and  
Information Administration’s Broadband Technology  
Opportunities Program (BTOP) and the National Science  
Foundation’s Academic Research Infrastructure Program:  
Recovery and Reinvestment (ARI-R<sup>2</sup>)

Northern Tier Network “golden spike” events

# ACTION ITEM

## Issue Analysis and Research Committee Minutes

### Monday, May 18, 2009

#### **Committee Members Present**

David Skaggs (CO), committee chair  
Patricia Brown Heller (AK)  
David Lorenz (AZ)  
Roberta Richards (HI)  
Dan Harrington (MT)  
William Flores (NM)  
Jane Nichols (NV)  
Robert Burns (SD)  
William Sederburg (UT)  
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA)  
Tom Buchanan (WY)  
Debbie Hammons (WY)

#### **Committee Members Absent**

Roy Ogawa (HI)  
Arthur Vailas (ID)  
William Goetz (ND)

#### **Staff Present**

David Longanecker, president  
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis  
Patrick Lane, project coordinator

Chair Skaggs convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee on May 18, 2009, and a quorum was established.

#### **Action Item**

#### **Approval of the minutes of the November 10, 2008, Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting**

Chair Skaggs asked members to review the minutes of the previous meeting. COMMISSIONER HELLER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2008, ISSUE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING. COMMISSIONER SEDERBURG SECONDED THE MOTION. The minutes were approved unanimously by the committee.

#### **Discussion Item**

#### **The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Proposed Federal Government Budget for 2010**

David Longanecker provided an overview of the portions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that are relevant to the committee. He described WICHE's meeting last December with member states to discuss the development of databases capable of tracking individuals from elementary school through postsecondary school or training and into the workforce. This effort was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. With additional funding from Gates, WICHE selected Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho for pilot projects to develop these databases. The three Northwestern states were chosen partially due to their proximity, so that the projects can explore ways to track individuals who migrate across state lines.

As this effort progressed, the ARRA was approved with \$250 million in funding for these types of state databases. Longanecker said that this funding may make the pilot process somewhat redundant, as all WICHE states will now have access to funds to develop longitudinal databases. He noted that this means WICHE states will not be able to use the pilot projects as a learning process.

Longanecker also explained that, in order to receive stimulus funds, states are required to provide assurances that they will develop databases that integrate K-12 and postsecondary systems. He expressed concern that some state leaders may not be fully aware of these provisions. Commissioner Flores told committee members that these assurances must be submitted by July 1.

Longanecker also reported that WICHE will encourage the federal government to include language in the database-funding regulations that would promote the development of interstate systems, rather than individual ones. He

expressed confidence that this would allow substantial savings and efficiencies from economies of scale, in addition to helping states track migrating individuals.

Outside of funding in the ARRA, Longanecker reported that President Obama's budget request includes \$2.5 billion for access, persistence, and completion. He also gave a brief update on the so-called "Race to the Top" funds, explaining that these are likely to be funneled into the K-12 system.

Longanecker told committee members that WICHE staff looks forward to working with states that are interested in developing regional databases and assured members that WICHE has already received advice that these systems will be able to meet federal privacy requirements.

As discussion shifted to broadband Internet access, Commissioner Kohl-Welles said that states will receive at least one grant, which will go to the state itself or to a nonprofit, private-sector, or other organization. Longanecker expressed WICHE's commitment to work with university consortia on this issue. WCET is uniquely positioned to lead the organization's efforts in this area. However, he noted the large role played by the telecommunications industry in the West: the industry will likely push to be included in grant-funded projects to expand broadband access.

### **Action Item**

#### **Approval of the FY 2010 Issue Analysis and Research Workplan**

Chair Skaggs asked committee members to review the Issue Analysis and Research workplan, which Demarée Michelau summarized. She noted that the *Getting What You Pay For* project activities were completed under budget. She asked committee members, as part of their overall approval of the workplan, to approve the use of the surplus funds to support a meeting of the Legislative Advisory Council (LAC). This would also require approval from Lumina Foundation for Education, but Michelau did not expect this to be a significant obstacle.

Michelau said the meeting would likely take place in Boulder at the State Higher Education Policy Center in August or September and that staff would let the commissioners know as soon as more information is available. Michelau asked committee members to review a handout that showed the makeup of the LAC and requested that members note vacancies on the committee. Commissioner Harrington noted that there may be issues with his membership on the LAC because he is no longer a member of the state legislature.

Michelau also noted that as part of the *Getting What You Pay For* project, WICHE is able to provide technical assistance to states interested in integrating financing and financial aid policies. The project is also funding an update of the State Policy Inventory Database Online, known as SPIDO, which is now functional, as well as a meeting of the Legislative Education Staff Network, which will be cosponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Michelau described the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce, including a meeting convened by WICHE staff on April 20-21. This work will continue in the coming year.

Michelau reported on WICHE's efforts in the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Consortium and Network, explaining that WICHE staff is working with Alaska, Nevada, North Dakota, and Washington to assist in implementation of this federal grant program. The first meeting of the network took place in April. States interested in assistance with their CACG programs are still able to join the network or the consortium.

Chair Skaggs asked if the president's budget is likely to eliminate the CACG or incorporate it into another grant program. Michelau responded that even though the program was initially approved for two years, Congress may decide to continue the funding. There are some redundancies with the Grants for Access and Persistence program, and this might be addressed somehow.

The WICHE Policy unit has also begun conceptualizing a project to address the unique postsecondary needs of military veterans, in addition to work that began in the Mental Health Program. She asked for input from committee members on the effort. Commissioner Flores said that both the Mental Health Program and Policy unit should broaden their focus to include family members of current and former military members. Chair Skaggs expressed strong support for this effort, noting that Colorado has an extensive military population. Chair Nichols told members that she has spent a substantial amount of time on this issue in the last six months and would very much appreciate WICHE's examining the policy issues. Chair Skaggs suggested that both the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense may

be possible funding sources for such a project. Commissioner Flores said that New Mexico has received a grant from the Veterans Administration to study the severity of the issue.

Michelau then explained that the development of workforce policy briefs has been removed from the workplan as a standalone item. Instead, these briefs will be included as part of the unit's regular policy brief efforts. Chair Skaggs noted that the formal deletion of the workforce briefs would be considered during the approval of the workplan.

Chair Skaggs asked that Michelau provide an update on the Policy Analysis and Research unit. Michelau said that since the departure of the vice president, she and Brian Prescott have managed the unit as codirectors. She introduced Patrick Lane, a Policy project coordinator, and also noted that WICHE has hired Carl Kruger as a project coordinator and Brandi Van Horn as a research analyst.

Commissioner Sederburg asked for clarification on the "on the horizon" section of the workplan. Michelau answered that these projects are in the conceptualization phase and that no funding has been sought or received yet. She said that before any of these projects move forward, staff would seek approval from commissioners.

Commissioner Sederburg noted that Utah has received funding from Lumina Foundation for Education for a project related to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's international benchmarking effort and that there may be other funding opportunities for this. He then asked whether WICHE works extensively with individual institutions or whether it works mainly with state offices. Michelau responded that WICHE mainly works with state offices, but with certain projects, it works on the institutional level. Chair Nichols noted that WICHE mainly focuses on state policy but may undertake institutional work on a case-by-case basis; however, this is not a focus of WICHE.

Commissioner Buchanan asked for clarification on how the five categories of the workplan are selected. Michelau explained that these categories are selected by the commission and that WICHE does not seek to implement projects outside of these five categories. Commissioner Buchanan inquired about the process for developing the categories. Chair Nichols noted that the categories were discussed and approved by the commission last year but can always be revisited by commissioners.

COMMISSIONER LORENZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2010 ISSUE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH WORKPLAN.  
COMMISSIONER RICHARDS SECONDED THE MOTION. The workplan was approved unanimously.

### **Discussion Item**

#### **WICHE Evaluation of Colorado's College Opportunity Fund (COF)**

Chair Skaggs presented an overview of COF, which provides funding for higher education institutions in the form of vouchers given directly to students. The implementing legislation required an evaluation of the program. The Colorado Department of Higher Education, with assistance from the Donnell-Kay Foundation, contracted with WICHE staff to carry it out. The evaluation highlighted several shortcomings in the implementation of the program. The resulting report may be of interest to other commissioners. Commissioner Sederburg asked whether other states can contract WICHE for similar services. Chair Skaggs answered affirmatively.

Chair Skaggs adjourned the meeting.

# **ACTION ITEM**

## **Proposed Project:**

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

#### **Summary**

WICHE proposes to work with the Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California as a subcontractor to assist with a project to progress the equity agenda in state-level policymaking. It will enable the two organizations to work collaboratively to make racial equity more transparent in states' policy and programmatic efforts to increase degree completion. The project will familiarize state leaders with tools and techniques to enable them to better monitor the state of equity in college completion, create a cohort of professionals with these capabilities, and strengthen the development and use of benchmarks and metrics for assessing and tracking equity in college completion.

#### **Relationship to WICHE Mission**

This project directly supports WICHE's mission to promote access and success in postsecondary education of underrepresented populations.

#### **Background**

CUE has been an innovator in furthering the ways data are used to inform how underrepresented students perform in college and what contributes to educational attainment gaps. CUE has developed the Equity Model, consisting of various self-assessment inventories and data investigation protocols, as well as a methodology for working with colleges and universities and state-level governing boards to identify problems and lead them to solutions. WICHE has previously partnered with CUE on an Institute on Equity Research Methods and Critical Policy Analysis, which was hosted at SHEPC in July 2009, and the proposed project will build on that previous effort.

It is clear that reducing equity gaps is the best way to meet President Obama's goal (as well as the goal of Lumina and Gates foundations) of ensuring that the nation's young population become better-educated. CUE's approach has had success in providing a means by which to reduce those gaps in various settings, including individual colleges and their academic departments, as well as through a project with the state of Wisconsin. This project will allow WICHE states greater access to CUE's promising approach.

#### **Project Description**

The primary goal of this new project is to collaborate with CUE in order to support policy and programmatic efforts targeted at degree completion by providing states with tools and information about equity and student outcomes. In doing so, the project will train teachers and practitioners to more effectively use qualitative and quantitative data and will develop a cohort of equity-minded professionals in the ranks of institutional researchers and state higher education policy communities. In particular, the project aims to scale up strategies that have worked to reduce equity gaps at a smaller scale and to focus on reducing those gaps with cost-effective strategies.

CUE has already received the grant award from the Ford Foundation for this new project and intends to contract with WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit. WICHE will employ a project coordinator responsible for the administration of the project. In addition to offering its own expertise, WICHE will also help by using its contacts within states to disseminate the tools and techniques. The project began October 1, 2009, and is scheduled to go for two years.

#### **Action Requested**

Approval to receive and expend funds to support WICHE's involvement as a partner in this project.

#### **Staff and Fiscal Impact**

The project will fully support the costs of employing a full-time project coordinator within the Policy Analysis and Research unit for the duration of the project. A portion of other staff members' time will also be covered through the contract with CUE.

# Summary of Workplan Activities – FY 2010

## Issue Analysis and Research Committee

### Existing Activities

**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 for easy comparisons and providing 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. Currently, we are examining how we might contemporize the report to allow for the calculation of enrollment-weighted averages and also how we might make it available online.

**Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners.** With funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, *Non-traditional No More* is working with five states – Arkansas, Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, and South Dakota – that were selected through a competitive process 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: identifying ready adults and 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 in partnerships with other public or private data system partners to identify each state's ready adults. The second strategy is comprehensive and focuses on academic affairs, financial aid/financing, student support services, and communications (marketing and information strategies designed to reach out to the ready adult population).

### **Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid.**

With funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, WICHE and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) have partnered to build upon the work conducted as part of *Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy*, a four-year project also funded by Lumina that yielded many important lessons and insights about financial aid and financing policies in the states. Specifically intended to reach out to the nation's state legislators, the project continues the effort to expand access and success for all students through eight concise policy briefs (disseminated to every state legislator in the country), designed to identify promising practices and ensure that every available state dollar works for students, not against them. Understanding the hard economic choices states currently face and clearly communicating the higher education financing options available to legislators are critical, especially now, as states fight through another recession.

**Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC).** 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 forums. 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 meetings.

**State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO).** The State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO) is a searchable online database of state-level higher education policies. It is designed to be a useful resource for state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers.

**Evaluation of Colorado's College Opportunity Fund (COF).** The Policy Analysis and Research unit has conducted an evaluation of the nation's only voucher-based approach to higher education finance policy. The project relied on interviews with the policy's champions, focus groups with institutional and agency administrators, and analysis of student unit record data to examine the original intent of the legislation that created COF, how postsecondary education participation changed under COF, and how institutions responded to COF. The report concludes with a set of possible policy alternatives.

**Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity.** This report 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,

Policy Analysis and Research unit staff have made numerous presentations on its findings (and related demographic information) and continue to respond to media and other inquiries.

**Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce.** The Policy Analysis and Research unit coordinated an effort involving all units within WICHE to bring together institutional and agency representatives from all sectors of public higher education in eight Western states and to seek ways to expand the pipeline of underrepresented populations into the health professions. A meeting was held April 20-21, 2009, in Aurora, CO, and was cohosted by the Sullivan Alliance, a Washington, D.C., organization led by former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan and the Anschutz Medical Campus of the University of Colorado, Denver.

**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. As part of this effort, WICHE is working with state partners through two mechanisms: the CACG Consortium (comprised of Alaska and Nevada) and the CACG Network (comprised of Alaska, Nevada, North Dakota, and Washington, with Idaho expected to join in the coming year). 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.

**Best Practices in Statewide Transfer and Articulation Systems.** A joint project of WICHE and Hezel Associates, and in partnership with WCET, with funding from Lumina Foundation for Education, *Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems* seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how states coordinate their articulation and transfer programs for students who move from two-year to four-year institutions. In addition to surveying all 50 states and developing in-depth case studies of selected state systems, WICHE, WCET, and Hezel Associates are examining how state colleges and universities use Web portals in the articulation and transfer process to determine the characteristics that make them effective and if similar models can be used in other states. The project is also examining how well states promote, market, and disseminate information about articulation and transfer to students, faculty advisors, admissions staff, and other administrators. Upon completion of the initial research and case studies, WICHE and Hezel Associates will distill key findings into a best practices guide, featuring clear recommendations for policy and decision makers. Additionally, information from the project will be presented to a national policy audience as part of the State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO). Ultimately, the goal of *Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems* is to guide policy and practice within state higher education organizations, particularly the state higher education executive officers. Along with regional and national meetings specifically focused on articulation and transfer, the project's findings should be a valuable resource to state higher education executive offices and other policymakers as they confront issues related to postsecondary access and affordability in the years to come.

**Fostering Collaborative State-Level Education and Development Workforce Database.** This Gates Foundation-funded project featured a meeting in December, which brought together the individuals responsible for K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data systems in 14 of 15 WICHE states. The goal was to help those states make progress on developing linked longitudinal data systems that track individuals from early grades through employment in order to better inform policy and practice. Follow-up activities included replicating that meeting in several states and working toward creating a pilot effort that may serve as a model for building this capacity in other states.

**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 resource for the WICHE states. The documents include studies, reports, surveys, and policy briefs published by various research and public policy organizations

## New Directions

**Technical assistance with state financial aid program design and funding (single-state support, as requested).** Policy Analysis and Research unit staff members have become recognized as experts 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.

***Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity* methodology review and expansion.** The Policy Analysis and Research unit is seeking funding to conduct a review of the cohort survival ratio (CSR) methodology that the *Knocking* series has used to make projections throughout its 30-year history. Given changes in data and technology, it is prudent to examine whether there is a better, more accurate approach to making these projections. In addition, the current proposal includes an effort to expand the analyses to disaggregate by income and other useful characteristics and to contemporize the delivery of the projections through a dynamic, Web-based interface.

**Initiatives to expand educational equity for underrepresented ethnic students.** WICHE has partnered with the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California and the Association for the Study of Higher Education to assist in the development of an Institute on Equity Research Methods and Critical Policy Analysis. The institute expects to engage scholars and researchers on higher education in order to more appropriately and effectively frame the issues of educational inequities for public policy debates.

## On the Horizon

**Residency policies.** Residency policies are widely linked to tuition levels for students, yet limited analyses have been conducted on these policies in higher education. Interest in residency requirements has escalated, in the form of concerns related to issues such as undocumented immigrants, financial aid eligibility, exemption of certain groups from residency requirements, criteria for establishing residency, and the role of residency status as a revenue stream. Each of these issues links back to affordability and access, and while WICHE has thus far not been able to secure funding for a project related to these issues, the Policy unit intends to continue exploring options for work in this area.

**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.

**Broadening on-campus and online educational options for active service members and veterans.** With approximately 2 million military personnel returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, states and postsecondary institutions are faced with how to best serve them at a time of increased demand for higher education and tight fiscal times. WICHE is examining possible ways to assist the Western states in 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. Historically, it has been based in a belief that those who are incarcerated should be rehabilitated if possible. But the 1980s brought a significant shift in philosophy, 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 have 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 (other, similar initiatives also exist). The Policy Analysis and Research unit has been trying to

stay abreast of such developments and is 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 departments of labor and workforce development.** The Policy Analysis and Research unit recently wrapped up a Ford Foundation-funded project called *Escalating Engagement* that in part focused on highlighting 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 for 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 those 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 how to dismantle silos in workforce development and higher education and 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.

**Extending the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce initiative into other states.** As described above, this effort is to help states expand the pipeline of underrepresented populations into health professions fields, but the initial meeting only reached eight WICHE states. Pending the success of the first meeting and our ability to secure additional funding, WICHE would be interested in replicating the meeting, including lessons learned, in other member states.

**International comparisons of 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 (OECD). Likewise, the public is demanding to know what they are getting out of higher education, increasingly in terms of learning outcomes. The U.S. government participates in international benchmarking of learning outcomes at the K-12 level but so far has balked at taking part in similar efforts involving postsecondary education. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is examining how it might help states apply and participate in the OECD's efforts to benchmark postsecondary learning outcomes.