Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Monday, November 10, 2014
10:45 am – Noon
Ballroom
WICHE Commission Meeting

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10:45 am - noon
Ballroom

**Programs and Services Committee Meeting**

Patricia Sullivan (NM), chair
Clayton Christian (MT), vice chair

Diane Barrans (AK)
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Dianne Harrison (CA)
Dene Thomas (CO)
Josh Sasamoto (CNMI)
Carol Mon Lee (HI)
Wendy Horman (ID)
Committee vice chair (MT)
Vance Farrow (NV)
Committee chair (NM)
Kari Reichert (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Jack Warner (SD)
Dan Campbell (UT)
Larry Seaquist (WA)
Karla Leach (WY)

**Agenda**

Presiding: Patricia Sullivan, committee chair

Staff: Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program
John Fellers, web design manager
Pat Shea, director, academic leadership initiatives

- **Action Item**
  
  Approval of the May 12, 2014 Programs and Services Committee meeting minutes 4-3

**Information Items:**

- Updates on WICHE’s Student Exchange Program – Margo Colalancia 4-6

- Updates on Programs and Services Regional Initiatives 4-9
  
  The Passport Initiative: an Update on the Next Phase – Pat Shea

  Cost Savings Initiatives: Partnering with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact to Benefit the West – Jere Mock

- A Guided Tour of WICHE’s Redesigned Website – John Fellers

**Other business**

Adjournment
Committee Members Present
Patricia Sullivan (NM), chair
Clayton Christian (MT), vice chair
Leah Bornstein (AZ)
Dianne Harrison (CA)
Dene Thomas (CO)
Joshua Sasamoto (CNMI)
Carol Mon Lee (HI)
Vance Farrow (NV)
Duaine Espegard (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Frank Galey for Karla Leach (WY)

Committee Members Absent
Clayton Christian (MT), vice chair
Diane Barrans (AK)
Jack Warner (SD)
Dan Campbell (UT)
Larry Seaquist (WA)

Staff Present
Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program
Rhonda Epper, director, W-SARA
David Longanecker, president, WICHE
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Pat Shea, director, academic leadership initiatives

Guests Present
Russ Chan, certifying officer, University of Hawai‘i
Christine Inos, outreach counselor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Louise Lynch, director, WICHE student exchange programs, Arizona Board of Regents
Darren Marshall, WICHE certifying officer and manager of audit and financial services, Utah State Board of Regents
David Matthews, general counsel, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Samantha Moreno, senior associate dean for admissions, student life and inclusion, School of Dental Medicine, University of Colorado Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus
Loreen Olney, administrative specialist III, Utah State Board of Regents
Heather Romero, financial aid director, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Lisa Shipley, manager of student advising and WICHE certifying officer, University of Wyoming
Laurie Tobol, WICHE certifying officer and student assistance manager, Montana University System
Jeannine Warner, WICHE certifying officer and director of programs, Nevada

Committee Chair Patricia Sullivan called the meeting to order and welcomed the committee members.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Programs & Services Committee Minutes of November 11, 2013

Chair Sullivan asked for a motion TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 11, 2013 COMMITTEE MEETING. Commissioner Espegard motioned to approve the minutes and Commissioner Mon Lee seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Programs and Services FY 2015 Workplan

Jere Mock presented highlights of each of the items listed in the Program and Services FY 2015 Workplan described in Tab 4 of the agenda book on pages 5-8. She noted that all of the initiatives included in the workplan have been previously endorsed by the Programs and Services Committee, the Executive Committee, and/or the Committee of the Whole. The programs and initiatives included in the workplan will be funded by nearly $755,000 in general fund support and more than $3 million in non-general fund revenues if the Committee of the Whole approves the proposed FY 2015 budget on May 13. The workplan’s major focus areas are improving student access and success and fostering collaborations across higher education systems and institutions to increase institutional effectiveness. Programs and Services staff will continue to manage WICHE’s four-pronged Student Exchange Program and a number of other initiatives that help students and
institutions – at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels – save money and make good use of available resources. The workplan also includes projects that bring together the West’s higher education leaders to work toward common goals; assist in smoothing and expediting the transfer process; link students with next-generation learning opportunities; and help institutions to achieve cost savings through collaborative purchasing. Commissioner Sullivan asked for a motion to approve the workplan. Commissioner Thomas made the motion TO APPROVE THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES WORKPLAN. Commissioner Rosselli seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**ACTION ITEM**

**Approval of the Professional Student Exchange Program Support Fees for 2015-16 and 2016-17**

Margo Colalancia reviewed the biennial fee-setting process for WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program. She explained that the proposed increase is in concert with the HECA (Higher Education Cost Adjustment) index, which increased by 1.8 percent between 2012 and 2013. Support fee setting is a balancing act. The goal is to keep students’ financial burden as low as possible; meet public institutions’ tuition differentials (the difference between resident and nonresident tuition) so that they have sufficient incentive to save seats for WICHE students; and keep support fee rates affordable for states so that they can support as many PSEP students as possible.

As tuition has increased at professional schools, the support fee has proportionately decreased, and PSEP no longer provides as significant a financial incentive to some receiving institutions, in some cases nonresident tuition exceeds the support fee and resident tuition paid by the student. From 2012 to 2013, tuition and fees increased an average of 4.1 percent across all of the PSEP healthcare fields. The lowest increase was in veterinary medicine (2.4 percent) and the highest increase was in physical therapy (6.2 percent). A policy approved by the WICHE Commissioners in November 2011 and that took effect in Fall 2013 for newly funded PSEP students helps ameliorate the tuition differential shortfalls. The new policy allows public institutions whose differentials are not being met to credit the support fee against full nonresident tuition and have the student pay the balance. PSEP students enrolling in Fall 2012 and prior in public institutions are grandfathered and continue to pay resident tuition.

Colalancia explained that the WICHE certifying officers have evaluated the fiscal impact of the proposed support fee increases and sought input from their agency executives. All concur that the proposed increases are necessary and relatively minimal in light of the substantially higher tuition increases that most professional healthcare programs are anticipating for the coming academic year. The WICHE certifying officers unanimously approved the proposed 1.8 percent increase for all PSEP fields during their meeting on Sunday, May 11 preceding the commission meeting.

Colalancia noted that support fees are notably low in two fields: physical therapy and osteopathic medicine. For several years now, partner programs in osteopathic medicine have expressed concern that their fee rate is considerably lower than allopathic medicine ($20,900 compared to $31,500 for the 2014-15 academic year). PSEP students’ tuition responsibility in the two fields has been comparable over the past decade, until this year. PSEP osteopathic medical students now pay an average of $1,250 more than allopathic students. WICHE staff considered proposing a fee adjustment increase but given the fact that state budgets are still recuperating, decided against it for this support fees setting session. Physical therapy support fees are falling short as well; staff decided against proposing an adjustment increase for the same reason. Staff hope that by the next support fees setting session in May 2016, our PSEP states’ budgets will be sufficiently robust to support fee adjustments of approximately $1,000 to $2,000 in both osteopathic medicine and physical therapy, in addition to a percentage increase for all fields (historically between 2 and 4 percent).

Commissioner Sullivan said the information in the action item regarding the mean starting salaries and estimated debt loads for professionals in many of the PSEP fields was helpful, and she would like to have that information for all of the fields. Colalancia said that, unfortunately, some of the professional associations do not collect or publically share student debt load data, but she will continue to pursue it for future support fees settings write ups. Commissioner Harrison made a motion TO APPROVE THE 1.8 PERCENT INCREASE IN SUPPORT FEES FOR ALL PSEP FIELDS FOR THE 2015 AND 2016 BIENNIAL. Commissioner Bornstein seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**ACTION ITEM**

**Consideration of the Participation of Private Institutions in the Western Undergraduate Exchange**

The third action item related to the potential participation of private institutions in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). Administrators of a private institution in Arizona have approached Margo about participating in WUE. No other privates have participated since the original WUE state agreements were signed in 1987. The staff took a neutral stance on this issue. While the committee members expressed appreciation for the important role that private institutions play in
the WICHE region, they did not see value for either private institutions or the students wishing to attend these institutions to participate in WUE, because private institutions already are free to discount their tuitions without participation in our regional exchange program. Commissioners Bornstein and Sullivan also indicated that their states want their state-appropriated WICHE dues to continue to support the administration of the program for public institutions. None of the committee members advanced a motion in support of adding privates to WUE.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Rhonda Epper, the director of the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA), provided more details about the implementation of the agreement, the staff activities that have occurred in several Western states since the Dec. 10 regional SARA forum, and the outcomes of the April 21 meeting of the W-SARA Steering Committee. The committee is responsible for reviewing applications from states wanting to participate in the reciprocity agreement and making recommendations on those applications to the full WICHE Commission. The committee has recommended approval of five states to join W-SARA: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, and Washington. The committee of the whole will vote on that recommendation during its meeting on May 13. The next two deadlines for state applications are July 15 and October 15. Commissioner Rosselli asked whether California is pursuing membership in SARA. David Longanecker said he and Commissioners Calbaldon and Harrison recently met with a member of the governor’s staff to pursue getting support for a California SARA portal agency included in the governor’s 2014-15 May revision to the state’s annual budget. If that does not happen within the next two weeks then it will need to occur during the 2015 legislative session. Epper noted that New Mexico and Wyoming will need to enact legislation in 2015. David Mathews, general counsel of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, attended the committee meeting and said that New Mexico’s SARA authorizing legislation has been drafted and it will be pre-filed in December 2014 for the 2015 session. Chair Sullivan thanked Epper for her leadership and wished her the best in her new position as the chief student success and academic affairs officer at the Colorado Department of Higher Education, beginning May 27. Mock said she and Longanecker will soon begin recruitment efforts for the new W-SARA director.

Pat Shea reported on a recent grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that is supporting two convenings at WICHE that bring together policymakers and educational practitioners who are working to address streamlined transfer mobility for students while ensuring a high quality learning experience along the way. The first convening was held in March and the next one is tentatively scheduled for July 28-29. Participants are examining ways to more closely align initiatives to expand their collective impact and to increase their effectiveness, while helping students to overcome the barriers to transfer. Pat also encouraged commissioners to persuade institutions in their respective states to get involved in the Interstate Passport Agreement’s Phase I if they are not already involved. Sixteen institutions in four states have signed onto the five-year agreement to award the Passport to students that achieve their outcomes-based lower-division general education in oral communication, written communication, and quantitative literacy at the proficiency level for transfer. Developing learning outcomes and proficiency criteria for the remainder of lower division general education will be the focus of the Interstate Passport’s Phase II activities.

Colalancia raised an additional issue related to the Western Undergraduate Exchange. She said it has recently come to the staff’s attention that some WUE institutions are marking up tuition and fees by 150 percent despite the fact that per the WUE agreement, the “WUE rate” equals 150 percent of resident tuition, plus fees. She ran some projections and discovered that if institutions included fees as part of their WUE calculation, it would increase the WUE rate an average of $1,000 for WUE community college students, and an average of $2,000 for students enrolled at four-year WUE institutions. Commissioner Thomas said institutional fees should represent actual costs and should not vary for resident and nonresident students. The committee agreed that while institutions should be allowed to include differential fees charged for specific academic disciplines, institutions should not be allowed to include college operational fees in their WUE rate calculations.

Chair Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 12:35 PM.
INFORMATION ITEM
Student Exchange Program Update

Western Undergraduate Exchange. The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a regional tuition-reciprocity agreement created in 1987 which has become WICHE’s most widely used student exchange program. WUE allows students from WICHE states to enroll in participating two- and four-year public institutions and pay 150 percent of the enrolling institution’s resident tuition. In 2013-14, 33,812 WUE students and their families saved more than $264.7 million in tuition costs. Residents of WICHE member states can choose from some 155 participating WUE institutions.

California State University’s Channel Islands campus is the newest member of WUE. Tohono O’odham Community College (a small tribal college in Arizona) has expressed its intent to join. Klamath Community College (in Oregon) and Shoreline Community College (in Washington) are also interested in joining the WUE network.

All indications are that WUE enrollments will continue to grow once again in 2014-15. WUE plays an especially important role providing undergraduate options for residents of Western states and territories, that’s particularly true for California and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in recent years. Staff will have final estimates of this year’s WUE enrollment statistics at the November 2014 commission meeting.

WICHE staff conducted a survey of WUE institutions to find out if they offer online degree programs and what tuition rate WUE students would pay for them. Eighty-three (83) out of 155 WUE institutions responded: 35 community colleges and 48 four-year institutions. Of the respondents, 93 percent offered some programs online. Sixty-nine percent offered fully online associate’s or certificate programs and 49 percent offered fully online bachelor’s programs. When asked which division handled their online programs, the majority (76 percent) said they were offered by their academic colleges or departments; 36 percent said a centralized distance education division administered them, and 15 percent indicated that their continuing education division handled them. The total of the responses exceeds 100 percent because some institutions identified more than one entity responsible for administering distance education delivery on their campuses.

It appears that nonresidents from WICHE states may pay less for online programs at WUE institutions, compared to nonresidents from outside of the WICHE region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuition Rate Charged for Online Programs</th>
<th>Nonresidents from WICHE States</th>
<th>Nonresidents from Non-WICHE States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident tuition</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WUE tuition (150% of resident)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresident tuition</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special online tuition rate that is the same for all online programs</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online tuition rate that varies by program</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey also collected additional detail about specific online majors available at our participating WUE institutions; staff would be happy to share that information with states upon request.

Western Regional Graduate Program. WRGP allows master’s, graduate certificate, and doctoral students who are residents of the 15 participating states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to enroll in some 350 high-quality programs at 58 participating institutions on a resident tuition basis. In fall 2013, 1,130 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated $15.9 million in tuition. Staff anticipates that program enrollments will continue to increase and will present estimated enrollment numbers at the November 2014 meeting.

WICHE is accepting nominations for new WRGP programs this fall. Graduate deans and provosts at all public institutions in the WICHE region have been notified of the November 21, 2014 submission deadline and nomination process. WICHE is particularly interested in adding graduate programs in healthcare (for fields not available through WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program) and on-the-rise sectors including microtechnology and nanotechnology; green building and building energy conservation; emerging media and communications; biotechnology and bioinformatics; computer and cyber security; alternative energy technology and sustainability; geospatial technology; market research, data mining, data
science and analytics; homeland security and emergency and disaster management; user experience management; and elder care specialists.

To be eligible for WRGP, programs that aren’t related to health must be “distinctive,” meaning they must be offered at no more than four institutions in the WICHE region (exclusive of California). Healthcare-related programs are not subject to the distinctiveness criteria because of their high workforce demand. However, nominated programs must be of high quality to be approved for participation.

WRGP is a tremendous opportunity for WICHE states to share distinctive programs (and the faculty who teach them) and to build their workforces in a variety of disciplines, particularly in healthcare and the sciences. More than 120 healthcare-related programs are now offered through WRGP, including those in addiction studies, assistive technology for children and adults with disabilities, bioengineering, and much more.

Participating programs have found WRGP to be a valuable recruitment tool and an effective resource in diversifying their student pool. Participating programs can choose to limit the number of WRGP awards each academic year to ensure that their participation is feasible over the long term. Application forms and nomination information are available on the WRGP website (www.wiche.edu/wrgp). WICHE staff encourages WICHE commissioners to spread the word to any graduate programs in their state that might be interested.

Professional Student Exchange Program. The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides students in 10 Western states with access to a wide range of professional programs that otherwise might not be affordable for them because the fields of study are not offered at public institutions in their home states. California, Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands do not support students through the program. The home state pays a support fee to the admitting schools to help cover the cost of the student’s education and the student pays reduced tuition. Each state determines the fields and the number of students it will support. Through PSEP, students have access to professional degree programs in 10 healthcare fields: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, physician assistant, and pharmacy.

During the 2014-15 academic year, approximately 658 students are enrolled through PSEP, with support fees totaling almost $14.7 million. As of this writing, student enrollment numbers equal those of last year; staff will have exact participation numbers at the November commission meeting, once all contract changes have been processed.

May 2014 Certifying Officers Meeting. In addition to student exchange program administration issues, certifying officers led discussions on best practices to verify PSEP graduates’ employment locations and fulfillment of their service commitment (Jennah Kitchell from Colorado) and new healthcare insurance requirements that are creating out-of-state residency dilemmas (Lisa Shipley from Wyoming). The group also hosted three guest speakers on topics pertinent to the students WICHE serves. Dennis Mohatt of WICHE gave a talk on suicide prevention and tips for recognizing students at risk. Christopher Ramirez, director of the Men of Color Initiative at the University of New Mexico, spoke on tuition equity laws for “DREAMERS” who are undocumented students who grew up in the United States. Finally, Samantha Moreno, senior associate dean for admissions, student life and inclusion of the University of Colorado Denver’s School of Dentistry, talked with certifying officers about dental admissions and dentistry workforce issues.

WICHE’s June 2014 Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee Meeting. Members met in June 2014 and discussed topics including best practices for veterinary medicine student mental health and wellness; the current excess capacity in the veterinary workforce; and strategies for enhancing student financial literacy of prospective and graduating veterinary students who are accumulating unprecedented amounts of student debt. Members also discussed admissions trends at our five cooperating colleges of veterinary medicine and our continued efforts to facilitate input from participating states regarding their respective applicant pools. Additionally, updates on curricular changes including new methods of assessing clinical competencies and emphasis on problem-based learning were also discussed. Members also heard from an expert panel on Hawaii’s recent experience with anti-GMO legislation (Bill 113) and its implications for farming, dairy and livestock. If they haven’t already addressed this issue, many WICHE states may be dealing with similar legislative initiatives that have the potential to adversely affect farmers’ and ranchers’ livelihoods and state agricultural production, according to the panelists.

Out-of-State Students’ Options for Healthcare Insurance. Some unintended consequences of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) may have a negative impact on students’ ability to obtain health insurance. Many employer plans have raised their employee premiums so high that parents can no longer afford to keep their dependent children on the family
policy. And some institutions’ student health plans are being discontinued because the coverage does not meet the ACA’s minimum standards, and bringing those policies into compliance makes them cost prohibitive.

In some cases students are being encouraged to seek coverage through their home state’s exchanges. However, if a student signs up in his/her home state and attends a college or university out of state, it is unclear if there will be a sufficient number of in-network providers in the state where the student is studying. Signing up for a state healthcare program in the state where a student is attending school usually means that he/she has to accept residency in that state. For students participating in WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) accepting residency in the state where they are enrolled is violation of their home state’s requirement to maintain residency in their home state.

This is a complex issue and WICHE staff are interested in learning which of our partner institutions still provide student health insurance, and if their plans are voluntary or mandated for students who are not covered under another plan (such as their parents’, a state plan, or Medicaid). Staff is also interested in learning if students enrolled in the home state’s insurance program will have sufficient provider coverage in the state where they’re studying. Staff recently spoke with representatives of the American College Health Association (ACHA; www.acha.org/) and are evaluating the aggregate results of their spring 2014 survey to see if further action is needed.

**Updates on Veterinary Medical Education in the WICHE region.** The growth surge in new veterinary programs continues. Two new ones began admitting students in fall 2014. The new Montana Cooperative Veterinary Program between Montana State University (MSU) and Washington State University (WSU) enrolled its first class of 11 Montana resident students in August; Montana also funded nine new veterinary students through WICHE’s PSEP. Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona – a private institution – admitted its first class of 100 students as well. WICHE PSEP students cannot enroll in the programs until they are fully accredited.

The University of Arizona’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences received a $9 million grant from the Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation to start a new veterinary college which plans to admit its first class of students in Fall 2015. The school was approved by the Arizona Board of Regents in September. The accelerated program will be designed to provide the equivalent of 11 semesters of education in four years. Some of the students targeted for admission will be upperclassmen who are close to completing their undergraduate degree in veterinary or animal sciences.

The American Veterinary Medical Association’s most recent survey of veterinary medical students graduating in 2013 reports that their mean full-time starting salary was $67,136. Veterinary medical graduates’ educational debt continues to rise; median educational debt load for all graduates was $140,000 in 2012 and rose to $150,000 in 2013.

In response to the flat demand for veterinary services which is making it difficult for some graduates to find employment, two WICHE partner colleges of veterinary medicine – Colorado State University (CSU) and the University of California Davis – have hired full-time career services directors dedicated to assist veterinary students. Their roles include helping students explore nontraditional veterinary career options, prepare them for the job market by enhancing their interview and resume writing skills, and organizing electronic job databases. Colorado State University is also seeking to hire a financial education specialist to educate students and alumni on debt management and other personal and business practice financial issues. CSU and Davis are also partnering to design a Leadership Academy for veterinary students.
WICHE Internet Course Exchange
The WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) is a robust administrative tool designed to support multi-institution collaboration among faculty offering online courses. Through ICE, participating institutions expand their students’ access to high-quality online courses and programs taught by faculty at other member institutions. Seamlessly, students enroll, obtain advising, and use financial aid from their home campus, which transcribes the course. The primary user of ICE, today, is the Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus), a consortium of 17 universities sharing excess capacity in doctoral nursing courses.

Other ICE members include the South Dakota System of Higher Education and the University of Wyoming. These institutions/organizations and others are exploring the opportunity to create a consortium focused on the sharing of courses among Native American Studies programs across the West. Together, these small departments may be able to strengthen their programs by giving students the opportunity to take courses from the pool of institutions. Faculty may benefit too by being able to offer certain courses on a more regular basis and/or new courses to the expanded student body. Several community colleges are also in discussions about creating a consortium supporting the exchange of courses in the laboratory sciences and other disciplines.

WICHE ICE provides a secure encrypted database accessible via the web for sharing data about courses and students. WICHE provides the financial transaction services supporting the student exchanges. A listserv enables members to keep in touch with one another about enrollment needs. A policy manual provides detailed instructions and resources for participating institutions. The WICHE ICE website (www.wiche.edu/ice) provides more information about how the program works, as well as other resources for members.

Western Academic Leadership Forum
The Western Academic Leadership Forum (the Forum) gives academic leaders in the WICHE states a venue for sharing information, resources, and expertise as they address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions. This organization’s members are provosts; academic vice presidents at bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral-level institutions; and chief executives and chief academic officers for system and state coordinating and governing boards. The Forum is funded primarily via membership dues, with additional funding provided by sponsors of the annual meeting.

The Forum will hold its 2015 annual meeting in Boise on April 22-24 with the working theme “Calibrating Your Leadership in New Landscapes” and sessions will include presentations on leading academic change, the completion agenda, the quest for higher academic quality, intervention strategies leading to student success, and ways that data analytics and other tools can be used to effectively tell the academic story to internal and external constituencies. Small group discussions will delve deeper into two topics: finding the sweet spot between the tensions of completion and quality and addressing moral hazards and practicalities.

Current Forum members are listed on page 4-15.

Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders
The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (the Alliance), established in 2010, is modeled after the Western Academic Leadership Forum. The Alliance provides academic leaders of two-year institutions and their related systems and state coordinating and governing boards with a venue for sharing information, resources, and expertise among community colleges and technical schools. Together, the members address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded from membership dues and sponsorship of the annual meeting.

The Alliance will hold its next annual meeting April 8-10, 2015, in Rapid City, SD. The theme will be “Leaders Facing Change: Asking the Right Questions.” Noted speaker Rob Johnstone, president, National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, will kick off the meeting with some intriguing questions for the group. Other sessions will focus on open educational resources, competency-based education, new approaches to development education, prior learning assessment, and other hot topics. A highlight of the meeting is a dinner at Mt. Rushmore on Thursday evening where
interstate passport initiative

the interstate passport initiative (www.wiche.edu/passport) is a grassroots effort by academic leaders in the WICHE region to reform transfer using a regional approach. at the request of these academic leaders, WICHE staff is leading the work to create a new learning-outcomes-based framework for transfer with the goal of improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree, and saving students’ money. the new framework focuses on the lower-division general education core, the common denominator among institutions – concentrating on it as a whole, not on individual courses – and allows for a cross-border “match” of outcomes-integrated general education cores for block transfer. the passport is being rolled out in phases. phase I, which was funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, concluded in April 2014. phase II was launched in October 2014 with the award of $2.8 million in grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation.

the academic areas included in the Passport are based on the Liberal Education and America’s Promise Essential Learning Outcomes (LEAP ELOs) developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and widely adopted by institutions across the country. Seventeen two-year and four-year institutions from five states (HI, ND, OR, UT, WY) in the WICHE region have signed the Passport Agreement for Phase I. Two other institutions are expected to do so before the end of the year: the University of Hawai’i-Hilo and South Dakota State University, adding South Dakota to the signatory list. The Passport’s five-year agreement includes the academic content areas of oral communication, written communication, and quantitative literacy. Students who complete the Passport Block at one Passport institution will receive credit for the lower-division general education requirements in these content areas when they transfer to another Passport institution, and will not be required to repeat any courses in the receiving institution’s Passport Block.

In Phase II, 22 two-year and four-year institutions from seven states (CA, HI, ND, OR, SD, UT, WY) in the WICHE region will develop Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and transfer-level proficiency criteria in the remaining lower-division general education content areas (creative arts; intercultural knowledge (social science); natural and physical sciences; information literacy; critical thinking; and teamwork/problem solving), acknowledging that their institutions’ lower-division general education learning outcomes in these areas are equivalent to the PLOs. Institutions are not required to use the same language as the PLOs in their learning outcomes, but rather, to ensure alignment to the PLOs.

the passport is based on the concepts of faculty agreement and tracking. Faculty members at a Passport institution agree with their colleagues at other Passport institutions to: 1) provide their respective students with appropriate learning opportunities addressing the PLOs; 2) assess these students’ proficiency in achieving the PLOs; and 3) award the Passport to students who have earned it. Each institution agrees to send data to the Passport Central Data Repository (CDR) on the academic performance of Passport and non-Passport students who transfer into their institution for two terms after they transfer. the CDR sorts the data from the receiving institutions and forwards it to the relevant sending institutions for use in their continuous improvement efforts. the CDR also forwards aggregate data to the Passport Review Board for its annual review of the overall performance of the Passport program. Registrars and institutional research representatives from the Passport pilot institutions developed the processes for recording the Passport on student records, and for tracking and reporting on Passport students resulting in a set of guidelines published on the Passport website.

Other institutions and WICHE states may now apply for participation in the Passport’s first phase. The Passport Review Board, whose members are representatives from each Passport state, reviews and approves new institutions/states for participation. Other work during the two-year term of Phase II will include involving the registrars and institutional researchers from the participating institutions in revising and expanding the Passport’s student verification and academic
progress tracking systems. Additionally, staff and consultants will author a business plan for sustainability and a data management plan to prepare the Passport for nationwide deployment at the conclusion of this two-year project.

When the Passport Initiative is complete, it will encompass all lower-division general education content areas, simplifying the transfer process for many students, and be ripe for expansion beyond the WICHE region. With approximately 33 percent of today’s students transferring – and nearly 27 percent of them crossing state lines according to a study by the National Student Clearinghouse – the Passport promises a new way to streamline transfer students’ pathways to graduation.

Current Phase II participating institutions are listed on page 4-16.

**North American Network of Science Labs Online**

The North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) is an alliance of cutting-edge science laboratories that provide students enrolled in higher education science courses with opportunities to conduct their lab experiments on state-of-the-art science equipment over the Internet. From any computer, students can log into one of the labs’ web interfaces and manipulate a microscope or other scientific equipment, participate in conversation with lab partners, ask for assistance from a knowledgeable lab technician in real time, and collect data and images for their science assignments.

NANSLO’s labs feature high quality scientific equipment whose controls are enabled through software and robotics manipulated by students over the Internet. State-of-the-art Nikon microscopes, spectrometers, and air tracks equipped with cameras are included in the current inventory so students can see how the equipment moves in response to their keyboard clicks on a web interface to the instrument’s control panel. Via NANSLO’s premium equipment, some colleges are able to give their students access to higher quality equipment than they could provide locally due to financial limitations.

The NANSLO network’s hub is based at the WICHE, which serves as the public’s primary resource for information about NANSLO, coordinates communication among the network’s lab partners, provides the centralized scheduling system, and oversees selected contracting and financial transaction services for the partners. Three labs—referred to as nodes—are currently on the NANSLO network. The Colorado node is located at Red Rocks Community College, the Montana node is located at Great Falls College, and the British Columbia node is located at North Island College. Other nodes with different equipment and lab activities supporting a growing number of scientific disciplines are expected to be added over time.

During the next two years, NANSLO will support institutions offering online lab courses developed in the Consortium for Healthcare Education Online project, described below. In addition, it will seek funding to conduct a robust research project identifying best practices in lab exercises using lab kits, remote labs, and simulations in online science courses. It will also explore opportunities for additional partnerships and expanding its collection of remote lab experiments.

**Consortium for Healthcare Education Online**

In September 2012 the Consortium for Healthcare Education Online (CHEO) was awarded a four-year grant of $14,171,229 through the U.S. Department of Labor’s TAACCCT initiative (www.doleta.gov/taaccct). TAACCCT funding assists colleges to meet the needs of displaced workers, veterans, and the underemployed by emphasizing the provision of educational and career-training programs that can be completed in two years or less.

Funding for CHEO consortium members supports the development of allied health certificates delivered in a hybrid or online format and the development of comprehensive academic support and employment services, to include the hiring of a career coach for each college partner. The consortium is led by Pueblo Community College in Colorado and includes seven other colleges: Kodiak College, AK; Otero Junior College, CO; Red Rocks Community College, CO; Great Falls College—MSU; Flathead Valley Community College, MT; Lake Area Technical Institute, SD; and Laramie County Community College, WY.

The following certificate and degree credentials will be made available by members of the consortium: polysomnography, emergency medical services (basic, intermediate, and advanced), health information technology, occupation endorsement certification, medical office support, medical lab technology, occupational endorsement certificate, nurse aide, home healthcare, hospice care, medication aide, healthcare core, prenursing, paramedicine, radiation technology, medical lab technician, practical nursing, nurse aide certificate, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and A.A.S. degrees.

Others involved in the project include the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), funded to support the use of the NANSLO production lab at CCCS and the development of a faculty “sandbox” lab for testing new experiments and
training; BCcampus, which is developing two open textbooks supporting allied health courses; and North Island College (BC) which is developing, with the assistance of CCCS staff, 12 new allied health experiments for use by CHEO members and establishing a new production lab to serve students involved in CHEO courses in Alaska.

Each institution has hired a career coach to support the academic and career needs of students enrolled in the online allied health certificate programs. These coaches engage in professional development at both the consortium and local level and will make use of a career portal, to be designed and supported by College in Colorado, an online resource designed to help students plan, apply, and pay for college. The CHEO portal will be a platform for interaction between allied-healthcare employers, community colleges, and local workforce centers as they train and employ dislocated workers, veterans, underemployed workers, and other adults. A new NANSLO production lab is also being established at Great Falls College to support CHEO students in Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

As a contractor for the CHEO consortium, WICHE is providing

- Professional development activities, including annual workshops and webinars on best practices in career coaching, designing and teaching courses in online and hybrid environments, and the most effective use of RWSLs in lab exercises.
- A communications infrastructure to members of the discipline panels and coaches’ network to support the ongoing sharing of promising practices in the design and use of online labs and in career counseling.
- Programming and implementing a software solution to support the multicampus use of NANSLO production labs and the financial transaction system associated with partner campuses providing lab services to other CHEO institutions.

This $872,259 contract supports a portion of the salaries and benefits for seven employees, totaling 1.6 FTE in years one to three and one employee in year four at .50 FTE. Additionally, it provides funds to hire consultants to assist with the professional development workshops and webinars; to support faculty experts leading discipline panel activities; and to contract with a consultant to develop the new NANSLO lab-scheduling software. Other funding will cover workshop costs and staff travel to conferences for presentations. WICHE will earn $62,837 in administrative overhead during the four-year period.

**A Convening: Transfer Solutions Through Cross Organization Alignment**

At the request of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and with a grant of $173,440, WICHE, in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities, conducted a convening to develop a better understanding of the current transfer marketplace. Two meetings were held with representatives of organizations, states, and institutions working on transfer reform – March 23-24 and July 27-28. The goal of the convenings was to find broader scale solutions that will provide more choice and mobility for transfer students while ensuring a high quality learning experience all along the way.

In addition to experts in transfer research and practice, representatives of several initiatives made presentations and participated in the discussions. These included those from the California State University’s Give Students a Compass and other higher education reform efforts, the AAC&U’s General Education Maps and Markers (GEMS) project, the WICHE facilitated Interstate Passport Initiative, and the State Higher Education Executive Officer’s VALUE/Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Outcomes Assessment project. The outcome of the convening is a white paper summarizing the conclusions from these discussions with a set of recommendations on possible next steps. To download a copy, go to http://www.wiche.edu/passport/resources

**MHECare: A Student Health Insurance Collaborative to Benefit Students and Institutions**

At its semiannual meeting in May 2012, the WICHE Commission voted to partner with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to expand the benefits of the MHECare student health program to public and private institutions in the WICHE region. The New England Board of Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board subsequently got involved, so that institutions in 47 states are eligible to participate. The plan includes competitively priced medical benefits; vision or dental insurance is not included at this time.

Twenty-one campuses in the WICHE region are participating in the program for the 2014-15 academic year. They are listed on page 4-16.
WICHE offers participation in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact’s Master Property Program (MPP) to colleges and universities in the West. Institutional members benefit from comprehensive property insurance coverage tailored to their specific needs, while improving their risk management and asset protection strategies. The program is available to two- and four-year public and private higher education institutions, subject to approval by the MPP Leadership Committee. Currently, 150 campuses (58 members) have total insured values of $86.4 billion. In FY2013, it was estimated that the program saved its participating members $13.4 million during the year. The base program rates are typically below industry averages and help members to reduce their insurance costs while improving their asset protection. The average program rate has fallen 42 percent since 2002-2003, from .045 cents to .026 cents with enhancements to coverages and services. Members also have the opportunity to earn annual dividends, based on the consortium’s comprehensive loss ratios. Current members have expressed strong satisfaction with the program as evidenced by the program’s 95 percent retention rate since the 2000-2001 year.

The MHEC program was created in 1994; WICHE has partnered with MHEC in offering the program since 2004. The New England Board of Higher Education began participating in the MPP in 2009 and beginning in November 2013, institutions in the Southern Regional Education Board states also became eligible to participate in the property program. The base program is currently underwritten by Lexington (AIG) and Zurich and is jointly administered by Marsh and Captive Resources under the direction of a Leadership Committee representative of the participating insured institutions. Thirteen members currently serve on the committee, including Craig Kispert, associate vice president for business and planning at Seattle Pacific University, and Laura Peterson, risk manager at the University of Wyoming, represent WICHE member institutions on the MPP leadership committee. Jere Mock represents WICHE at the Leadership Committee meetings. Because of the size and complexity of the program, the Leadership Committee has developed four subcommittees to work...
on specific areas of the program and to make recommendations to the full committee. The subcommittees include the:
Executive Subcommittee, Underwriting and Marketing Subcommittee, Engineering and Loss Control Subcommittee, and
Finance and Audit Subcommittee.

Nine institutions and two systems (with 14 campuses) in the WICHE region are members of the Master Property Program.

Representatives from member campuses will participate in a March 12 - 13, 2015, MPP Loss Control Workshop in St.
Louis, with a focus on topics relevant to risk management and current events in higher education. The workshop included
risk managers; and campus security, facilities, and environmental health and safety staff who exchange best practices and
lessons learned during the workshop.

WICHE staff continues to work with the program administrators to provide information on the Master Property Program
to institutions in the West.

Participating systems and institutions are listed on page 4-16.

MHECtech

WICHE also partners with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact on its MHECtech program, which enables colleges
and universities in the Midwest, South (Southern Regional Education Board member states) and West to purchase off
competitively bid purchasing agreements to contain or reduce their purchasing costs. WICHE region institutions are
eligible to purchase computers at discounted rates under the MHECtech contracts with Dell, Oracle, ASI Computers
(Systemax Computers including Global Government & Education Solutions and CompUSA B2B) products and services; Dell
and Xerox printers and peripherals; and data networking offered by Juniper Networks. Other contracts provide preferred
pricing on products including VMware for virtualization licenses and support, consulting and training through Arrow
Enterprise Computing Solutions; advisory services to IT challenges through Info Tech Research Group; creative software
for design, print, media and web from Corel Corporation; and CampusCloud services from Campus EAI Consortium,
including storage, virtual and machine hosting, and web hosting. Two additional contracts include elQ Networks which
offers SecureVue®, the industry’s first and only situational awareness platform that provides security and compliance
professionals with solutions across all enterprise security information; and Parchment, an industry leader in education
credentials technology including electronic transcripts and other student credentials.

Several of the purchasing agreements are also available to K-12 organizations; local, county, and state governments;
and nonprofit organizations. The agreements aggregate volume purchases to lower product costs and reduce the
time institutions must spend developing and conducting bids themselves. MHEC undertakes the time and expense of
the RFP process, and institutions can purchase the goods or services knowing that the due diligence in selecting the
vendor has already been done. The MHECtech website (www.mhectech.org) and WICHE’s website (www.wiche.edu/
costSavingPurchasing) provide details on the vendors, contracts and eligible entities.
### Current members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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### Current members of the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

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Oregon
Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development
Central Oregon Community College
Chemeketa Community College
Mount Hood Community College
Portland Community College
Southwestern Oregon Community College
Treasure Valley Community College
Umpqua Community College

South Dakota
Lake Area Technical Institute
Mitchell Technical Institute
South Dakota Department of Education
Southeast Technical Institute
Western Dakota Technical Institute

Utah
Salt Lake Community College
Snow College

Washington
Big Bend Community College
Cascadia Community College
Columbia Basic College
Community Colleges of Spokane
Edmonds Community College
Renton Technical College

Wyoming
Casper College
Laramie County Community College
Western Wyoming Community College

Current members of the Interstate Passport Initiative Phase II

California
Three Two-Year Institution, TBD
Three Four-Year Institution, TBD

Hawai‘i
Leeward Community College
University of Hawai‘i West Oahu
University of Hawai‘i Hilo

North Dakota
Lake Region State College
North Dakota State College of Science

South Dakota
South Dakota State University

Utah
Dixie State College of Utah

Wyoming
Laramie County Community College
University of Wyoming

Current members of MHECare

Alaska
University of Alaska, Anchorage
University of Alaska, Fairbanks

California
California Institute of Technology
Fresno Pacific University
Southwestern Law School
University of South Los Angeles

Colorado
University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Colorado, Denver
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Nevada
Sierra Nevada College

North Dakota
The North Dakota University System’s 11 campuses

Current members of the Master Property Program

Arizona
Pima County Community College - six campuses and four learning and education centers (AZ)

Colorado
Colorado College
University of Northern Colorado

Idaho
The College of Idaho

Nevada
Nevada System of Higher Education:
  • Community College of Southern Nevada
  • Desert Research Institute
  • Great Basin College
  • Nevada State College at Henderson
  • Truckee Meadows Community College
  • University of Nevada, Las Vegas
  • University of Nevada, Reno
  • Western Nevada Community College

Oregon
Reed College (OR)
Willamette University (OR)

Utah
Westminster College (UT)

Washington
Seattle Pacific University (WA)

Wyoming
University of Wyoming