Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

The Alliance, CHEO, and NANSLO

The Consortium of Healthcare Education Online (CHEO) involves eight Alliance member institutions in five WICHE states. With a four-year grant of $14.2 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program, CHEO was established in October 2012.

CHEO’s Goals

During an open discussion at the Alliance’s 2012 annual meeting, several academic leaders shared the necessity to educate more students in the allied health field to satisfy increasing workforce needs, especially in the West’s rural areas. This discussion led to the submission of the proposal that resulted in the award of the TAACCCT grant funding CHEO to develop or convert courses in new or existing allied health programs into hybrid and/or online formats to increase student access.

The CHEO programs are designed to offer students the opportunity to acquire stackable certificates leading to continuous progress in their professions as working adults. A web-based career hub currently under development will help students learn about programs available through consortium member institutions and about employment opportunities across the region. A career coach at each member institution ensures that students are aware of regional opportunities and tools provided through the career hub to help them succeed in their studies and in securing employment.

CHEO Partners and Alliance Members

All eight of the CHEO partner institutions are Alliance members. Pueblo Community College serves as the project lead on the DOL grant. Partners include:

- **Alaska**: Kodiak College/University of Alaska
- **Colorado**: Otero Junior College, Pueblo Community College and Red Rocks Community College
- **Montana**: Flathead Valley Community College and Great Falls College Montana State University
- **South Dakota**: Lake Area Technical Institute
- **Wyoming**: Laramie County Community College

Major partners in the DOL grant include the Colorado Community College System; North Island College, British Columbia; and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

NANSLO’s Role in CHEO

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 in to one of the labs’ web interfaces and manipulate a microscope or other scientific equipment using a remote web-based control panel, participate in conversations with lab partners, ask for assistance from a knowledgeable lab technician in real time, and collect data and images for their lab assignments. Working with faculty at the CHEO institutions, NANSLO is developing lab activities for the allied health courses. Students enrolled in the CHEO courses use NANSLO’s online scheduling system to sign up for an appointment to conduct these lab activities in the window reserved by their instructor. They log in at the appointed time, talk with their lab partners about the activity, and manipulate the controls on the equipment to collect the data and images required for their assignments. In addition to learning the subject matter through the NANSLO lab activity, they are gaining skills in collecting and analyzing data through remote access and reaching conclusions on the data collected—skills similar to those required to work with patients at a distance who are using medical devices that relay data about their physical condition via the phone or computer to the practitioner serving them.

The NANSLO network’s hub is based at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) in Boulder, CO. WICHE 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.

For More Information

- About CHEO  
  www.pueblocc.edu/CommunityOutreach/CHEO
- About NANSLO  
  www.wiche.edu/nanslo