WICHE Commission Meeting

Monday, May 16, 2016

10:45 am - noon
Salon B

Issue Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), chair
Dave Buhler (UT), vice chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
Chris Bustamante (AZ)
Committee chair (CA)
TBD (CO)
Sharon Hart (CNMI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Tony Fernandez (ID)
Franke Wilmer (MT)
Vic Redding (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ryan Deckert (OR)
Robert Burns (SD)
Committee vice chair (UT)
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA)
Karla Leach (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Christopher Cabaldon, committee chair

Staff: Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Peace Bransberger, senior research analyst
Laura Ewing, administrative manager
Patrick Lane, MLDE project manager
Sarah Ohle Leibrandt, project coordinator
Christina Sedney, project coordinator

Action Item

Approval of the November 3, 2015, Issue Analysis and Research Committee meeting minutes 5-3

Action Item

Discussion and approval of the FY 2017 workplan sections pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research unit’s activities 5-8

Information Items:

Staff Updates

Policy Insights: Tuition and Fees in the West 2015-2016
Legislative Advisory Committee Update

Discussion Item:
Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange

Other business

Adjournment
ACTION ITEM
Issue Analysis and Research Committee Minutes
Monday, November 3, 2015

Committee Members Present
Christopher Cabaldon (CA), chair
Dave Buhler (UT), vice chair
Susan Anderson (AK)
Chris Bustamante (AZ)
Sharon Hart (CNMI)
David Lassner (HI)
Tony Fernandez (ID)
Franke Wilmer (MT)
Vic Redding (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WA)
Karla Leach (WY)

Committee Members Absent
TBD (CO)
Robert Burns (SD)
Ryan Deckert (OR)

Staff Present
David Longanecker, president, WICHE
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Brian Prescott, director of policy research
Laura Ewing, administrative manager
Sarah Ohle Leibrandt, project coordinator
Christina Sedney, project coordinator

Chair Cabaldon convened the Issue Analysis and Research Committee meeting on November 3, 2015, at 8:00 a.m. Demarée Michelau called roll, and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Issue Analysis and Research Committee meeting minutes of May 11, 2015

Chair Cabaldon asked committee members to review THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 11, 2015, COMMITTEE MEETING and then asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Anderson moved approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Fernandez. The minutes were approved.

INFORMATION ITEMS

WICHE’s Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE)
Brian Prescott updated the committee on the MLDE project, noting it was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with the goal of combining education and employment data. According to Prescott, the project is moving forward steadily, but the biggest current hurdle is establishing a contract with a vendor that satisfies the personal information protection needs of the states and the data requirements of the project itself. MLDE has been in discussion with up to 26 states, but has struggled to find traction in certain states, such as California, due to the lack of a centralized administrative structure. The project’s four initial states are: Washington, Oregon, Hawai‘i, and Idaho. A draft data sharing agreement is circulating among potential state participants, and several states have expressed interest to date including: Colorado, North Dakota, and Utah in the WICHE region, as well as Minnesota, and to a lesser extent Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island. Other states that have expressed interest include the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Prescott mentioned that two states have incorporated employment outcomes into their performance funding formulas, Florida and Texas. Florida is using a statewide measure of employment rate and median wages at the institutional level in its formula – though this measure is not broken down by program type. Meanwhile, Texas is taking a unique approach focused on affordability. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board adopted a new strategic plan, “60x30TX,” and as a part of this, Texas is measuring cumulative debt data paired with employment wage data to understand cumulative...
debt in comparison to first-year wage data. This is an effort to try to define affordability, which Prescott considered very interesting and also potentially problematic for a variety of reasons.

The MLDE project had not been actively soliciting Wisconsin’s participation in an effort to avoid presidential politics; however, the state’s Labor Department recently expressed interest in the project. The grant is designed to ultimately support 10 states, yet interest from a large number of states—well beyond 10—positions the project well to expand down the road. Prescott mentioned that the grant required a national focus, which is why the project was working with states outside the WICHE region.

Commissioner Leach suggested that staff should notify commissioners of their activities and interactions with other stakeholders in the commissioners’ home states. Commissioner Damron agreed that commissioners should be informed of activities in their states.

Chair Cabaldon said that he was recently at a meeting at the Federal Reserve, where discussion focused on the implications of the rising freelance economy for using wage data. Principally, that existing wage data structures (such as unemployment) might not capture true financial outcomes of graduates operating in a freelance economy. Commissioner Fernandez asked about the general reliability of wage data. Prescott noted that there is currently great energy around collecting wage data in various forms—including the MLDE, College Scorecard, Burning Glass, and others—but that these efforts do not necessarily triangulate well. Prescott highlighted concerns around efforts that rely on first-year wages instead of wages over time. Prescott described how the MLDE is situated in both the accountability and the consumer information space. He suggested that the MLDE is valuable to both accountability and consumer information use case scenarios, but it does not address institutional-level outcomes. Further, he noted that Texas provides an interesting example of defining what is “acceptable” in terms of affordability, and that this type of use case is different from that which will be provided by the MLDE.

Commissioner Wilmer commented that publicly available debt-to-earnings data exists for law schools. Commissioner Lassner pointed out that while everyone in higher education is struggling to identify income data, the IRS has it, for example with Adjusted Gross Income numbers. He asked if there might be a way for a coalition of national players to coordinate access to this data. Commissioner Lassner went on to note that since schools have Social Security numbers for all their students, there should theoretically be a way to access earnings information for their students, perhaps in a way that de-identified the data. Prescott responded that the Social Security Administration’s Pass-back does provide an aggregate wage measure for cohorts of individuals, but has not been implemented widely due to issues with federal bureaucracy.

Commissioner Lassner asked if there was something the committee or commission might do to proactively address this issue. Prescott replied that proactive action would be a good idea, but that the group would need to think about how a data request would be structured. For example, would such a request ask for program or institutional data and what type of sample size would be needed? Commissioner Lassner noted that with data, these questions could be answered and that states ought to be able to have access to data in a more disaggregated fashion. Lassner further noted that states do not have access to employment and tax data. Prescott agreed that such a project could be important. Chair Cabaldon replied that this is an important issue and suggested that perhaps time could be set aside at the next meeting to scope out issues and provide feedback on the direction of such a project.

**Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates**

Prescott noted that WICHE received funding from the College Board and some funding from ACT to support this effort. The next edition is targeted for December 2016, with Peace Bransberger leading the effort. The federal government has been slow to release graduation rate data, and the calculation of Average Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) has complicated state record-keeping in terms of diplomas awarded. As a result, WICHE may need to reach out to states directly for data, and Bransberger will also work directly with U.S. territories.
**Benchmarks: WICHE Region 2015**

Prescott referred to the *Benchmarks* document in the meeting materials, explaining that the metrics were set some time ago and suggested that the committee may want to revisit them. Commissioner Hagerott asked if there was a way to disaggregate the data to avoid large states, such as California, dominating the results. Prescott responded that in other WICHE documents, such as *Tuition and Fees*, the data are broken out with and without California for this reason. Commissioner Hagerott replied that a comparable subgroup of data would be helpful in working with the North Dakota Legislature.

**Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West 2015-16**

Prescott explained that WICHE receives varying degrees of cooperation from states in terms of providing their tuition and fee data for this report, although noted that on the whole the cooperation level is excellent. He went on to note that while WICHE typically publishes this report in the spring, this year data were not available to complete the brief until the fall. Commissioner Hart asked if there was any way to get the report out earlier, particularly the data piece, since this is important for the board and the legislature in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to see before they make decisions about setting fees. Prescott replied that WICHE unfortunately does not receive data from some institutions until late fall. The brief used data from the State Higher Education Executive Officers FY14 State Higher Education Finance Report, which is released in February, but it could be done without this information if there is a need for it to come out earlier. Commissioner Hart remarked that benchmarking is most effective with recent data, and therefore it would be useful to have the report earlier. Chair Cabaldon responded that institutions in California do not have tuition and fees data until fall due to the nature of the state budget cycle and that the earliest California could possibly provide the data would be September.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Legislative Activity in the West

**Policy Insights. Targeted Recovery: Recapping 2015 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West**

Michelau updated the committee on the release of this report, noting that its goal is to capture general trends rather than to be a complete inventory of legislative activity. She went on to note that the general theme of higher education legislative activity was affordability as many, though not all, states are starting to recover financially. In addition, there has been a great deal of activity in state legislatures around sexual assault on campus. Common academic standards and college readiness have also played a part in 2015 legislative activity; however, things have remained fairly constant on these fronts. She noted that Colorado is the exception, as the legislature prohibited the state from mandating that districts require 11th and 12th graders to take exams. Furthermore, many states have acted to give military and veteran students in-state tuition in response to federal legislation. Michelau concluded by noting that the *Policy Insights* brief is now run by the states in advance of publication in response to last year’s committee suggestion.

Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) Annual Meeting – What We Heard

Michelau gave an overview of the most recent LAC meeting, noting that 21 legislators from 12 states attended. She mentioned that there are still some LAC vacancies, and further, that some late LAC appointments resulted in some new members being unable to attend due to insufficient time to make arrangements. Overall, the evaluations were very positive with 100 percent of respondents indicating that the meeting was worth their time and effort to attend.

Commissioner Kohl-Welles noted that one new LAC appointment, Representative Gerry Pollet of Washington, was thrilled with the meeting and found the material to be incredibly useful, particularly in providing a perspective on what is going on in other places and offering many new ideas. She encouraged full LAC appointments from all states. She further noted that the LAC engaged participants in an in-depth discussion of the sexual assault issue. Michelau added that the legislators are a particularly strong group and all meaningfully contributed to the meeting.

Chair Cabaldon asked what other issues arose at the meeting. Michelau replied that a session on accreditation was well received and allowed legislators to develop a better understanding of the accreditation process. Peter Ewell from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and Mary Ellen Petrisko of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) presented on the jurisdiction and goals of accreditors. Chair Cabaldon asked
if legislators brought up any emerging issues or new topics during the meeting. Michelau responded and Longanecker confirmed that the overarching concern expressed by legislators was affordability. Michelau went on to describe the LAC sessions on affordability, highlighting that Donna Desrochers of the Delta Cost Project led a discussion on affordability from the student perspective and noted that the group talked about Oregon’s $10,000 degree, which generated rich discussion. Prescott added that the Washington tuition cut is interesting in how it interacts with policies currently in place. Commissioner Kohl-Welles responded that Washington is the only state in the country that enacted a tuition decrease this year. However, she went on to note that this resulted in a revenue loss for institutions and that the legislature had to ensure that this did not happen. Commissioner Hagerott asked where the legislature was able to find funds for this “backfill.” Commissioner Kohl-Welles replied that these funds were largely from marijuana revenue from the general fund and that marijuana revenue is not a permanent solution to affordability concerns.

Commissioner Damron indicated that there is much interest in higher education in the New Mexico state legislature, but that legislators sometimes seem to receive different information from various higher education groups. She noted that legislators from New Mexico have, for example, attended WICHE, Complete College America (CCA), and National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) events, and have returned to the state with different priorities. Commissioner Damron suggested that WICHE be sure to disseminate its information to legislators and in addition that WICHE should work to coordinate with CCA and NCSL to ensure that legislators are receiving as aligned a message as possible. Michelau replied that WICHE does partner with both groups on a regular basis, for example co-sponsoring the NCSL Higher Education Legislative Institute. Commissioner Damron noted that NCSL attendees from New Mexico expressed interest in drastically altering the state’s funding formula after attending the NCSL event, though she noted that this may have resulted from a misperception on the legislators’ part. Longanecker noted that this interest likely arose from a different NCSL meeting – not the Institute which WICHE co-sponsored. Michelau added that WICHE should discuss collaboration further.

Chair Cabaldon suggested that, to reinforce the LAC brand, a memo could be sent to all commissioners on key topics covered by the LAC so that commissioners can reinforce this information with their legislators and do pre- and post-event follow-up. Commissioner Kohl-Welles noted that WICHE does invite all commissioners from the local area where the LAC is held, and that the LAC should look to do this even more. Michelau added that sometimes local legislative staffers are invited as well.

Commissioner Hart mentioned that the CNMI representatives were unable to attend the LAC in the wake of this year’s typhoon and that in general they find the timing difficult because September is the final month of their fiscal year. She asked if there might be a different time, for example after October 1, when the meeting could be held. Commissioner Leach noted that after October 1 is impossible for those from Wyoming. Michelau replied that WICHE does try to analyze everyone’s needs, but that due to November elections anything later than September is difficult for most legislators. She went on to mention that participation has been strong from California despite challenges with the September timing. Commissioner Hart asked if there was a way to leverage technology to attend remotely. Michelau mentioned that WICHE has traditionally discouraged this to encourage in-person participation, but that it might be appropriate for the CNMI given their unique travel burden. Longanecker added that there are three objectives for the LAC – information sharing, relationships built in-person, and carrying information back to the state legislatures – and went on to suggest that relying too much on remote attendance and technology might hurt these objectives.

Chair Cabaldon noted that the Colorado action of prohibiting the 11th and 12th grade testing requirement was of great interest. California is looking at relying on 11th grade assessments for college readiness determination and would do this with the expectation that these 11th grade assessments would replace placement exams nationwide. If certain states do not participate in mandatory 11th/12th grade assessments, this has implications for all states. Longanecker noted that Colorado is unique because all high school seniors are required to take the ACT and that the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) was an additional assessment to be given in the 11th grade, although it is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Colorado has been seeing challenges generally because people are rallying around the notion of too much testing. Further, ACT has been working to align its content with the CCSS, and it may have been suggested to legislators behind the scenes that the PARCC assessment for older grades was therefore unnecessary. Commissioner Damron noted protests in New Mexico on the subject of the CCSS and Commissioner Leach added that ACT is in a similar position in Wyoming; however, in Wyoming ACT seems to be “losing the battle.”
OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Cabaldon thanked Prescott for his service and commitment to WICHE and congratulated him on his new job. Longanecker explained the Policy and Analysis unit’s leadership transition, noting that Michelau will be taking on all leadership duties for now, and that Longanecker will work together with the new WICHE president to decide how the leadership of the unit evolves.

As there was no other business, Chair Cabaldon adjourned the IAR Committee at 9:07 am.
ACTION ITEM
Policy Analysis and Research FY 2017 Workplan

The Policy Analysis and Research unit offers a variety of policy and information resources to support better-informed decision making, principally at the state level. The unit is involved in a number of research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on college completion, adult learners, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development. WICHE staff serves as a useful resource on a number of higher education issues, including state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, the Common Core State Standards, and various college completion initiatives. The unit’s publication series, including Policy Insights and Western Policy Exchanges, explores a wide range of significant policy issues. The unit also undertakes major, long-term grant-funded projects, collaborates with other regional and national organizations, and provides short-term technical assistance to members.

EXISTING ACTIVITIES
ONGOING

Continuing work supported by the general fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Geo Scope</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.025 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Finance, access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society, technology &amp; innovation, accountability</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.10 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE members</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Higher Education Policy Database</td>
<td>Finance, access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society, technology &amp; innovation, accountability</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>.20 FTE</td>
<td>National Conference of State Legislatures, Lumina Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Publications Clearinghouse</td>
<td>Finance, access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society, technology &amp; innovation, accountability</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>.025 FTE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benchmarks</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.025 FTE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.025 FTE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Insights</td>
<td>Finance, access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society, technology &amp; innovation, accountability</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>.05 FTE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Policy Exchanges</td>
<td>Finance, access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society, technology &amp; innovation, accountability</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.05 FTE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### EXISTING ACTIVITIES

**PROJECTS & INITIATIVES**

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants or contracts. All work in this category is considered high-priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Geo Scope</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult College Completion Network</strong></td>
<td>Access &amp; success; workforce &amp; society</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Lumina Foundation: $1,133,800</td>
<td>1.65 FTE</td>
<td>10/2010 - 9/2015</td>
<td>Lumina Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Consortium</strong></td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>Western states</td>
<td>State memoranda of agreement/ U.S. Dept. of Education: Year 7 revenue, $120,000</td>
<td>.70 FTE</td>
<td>Year 7 ends 8/2016</td>
<td>2 Consortium states (AK, ID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Dakota Board of Regents; State-Funded Financial Aid Redesign</strong></td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>South Dakota Board of Regents: $30,000</td>
<td>.35 FTE</td>
<td>1/2016 - 9/2016</td>
<td>South Dakota Board of Regents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>University of Hawai‘i: Analysis of University of Hawai‘i Graduates</strong></td>
<td>Accountability; workforce &amp; society</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>University of Hawai‘i: $30,000</td>
<td>.15 FTE</td>
<td>1/2016 - 12/2017</td>
<td>University of Hawai‘i</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates</strong></td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>ACT, College Board: $350,000</td>
<td>1.0 FTE</td>
<td>1/2016 - 12/2017</td>
<td>ACT, College Board</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange</strong></td>
<td>Workforce &amp; society; access &amp; success; accountability</td>
<td>Western, expanding nationally</td>
<td>Gates Foundation, $5,000,000</td>
<td>2.5 FTE in Year 2</td>
<td>8/2014 - 7/2018</td>
<td>Original states (HI, ID, OR, WA) Expansion states, SAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College Access Challenge Grant Consortium.** For seven years, states have participated in the CACG Consortium, in which WICHE works closely with each state to administer its federally funded formula grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. This is the final year of federal funding for Alaska and Idaho, so work will be ending in August 2016.

**South Dakota Board of Regents Contract.** WICHE is examining how the state might develop a strategy for the redesign of state-funded financial aid programs.

**University of Hawai‘i Contract.** WICHE is conducting an analysis of University of Hawai‘i graduates who work in other states, and an analysis of Hawai‘i high school students who go to universities in other states and their work patterns.

**Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates.** The Policy Analysis and Research unit (and its predecessors) has been producing state-by-state forecasts for high school graduates for over 30 years, during which time it has become the nation’s most widely consulted resource of its kind for a diverse audience of policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, schools and school districts, researchers, and the media. Staff has begun working on the 9th edition and will release the new projections in December 2016.

The **Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE)** project is a follow-up to WICHE’s successful pilot project, both of which are aimed at stitching together state longitudinal data systems in order to better track the development of human capital through K-12 and postsecondary education and its deployment in the workforce, while accounting for individual mobility.
Commissioner-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

- ⚫ = Urgency (mission critical)
- ● = Opportunity (funding)
- ■ = Competence (staff/consultants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Geo Scope</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitting the Ground Running: Leveraging Work-Based Learning to Improve Educational Outcomes and Meet Workforce Demands</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; workforce &amp; society</td>
<td>☂ ☂ ☂ ● ● ●  ■ ■</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td>1.75 FTE</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Reentry Programs</td>
<td>Access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society</td>
<td>☂ ☂ ● ●  ■ ■</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>2 FTE</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safer Spaces: Aligning Policy and Practice to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses in the West (Phase One)</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; accountability</td>
<td>☂ ☂ ● ●  ■ ■</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>.75 FTE</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Washington State Council of Presidents and Washington and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safer Spaces: Aligning Policy and Practice to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses in the West (Phase Two)</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; accountability</td>
<td>☂ ☂ ●  ■ ■</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>1.5 FTE</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Two to three additional states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and WICHE Research Initiative (Fueling the Race 2.0)</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; accountability</td>
<td>☂ ☂ ●  ■ ■</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>$76,000</td>
<td>.10 FTE</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streamlining Implementation of Outcomes-Based Funding Models</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>☂ ☂ ● ●  ■ ■</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>$2.25 million</td>
<td>2 FTE</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>American Council on Education, NCHEMS, SHEEO, National Association of System Heads</td>
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<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Geo Scope</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serving Student Soldiers of the West</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; workforce &amp; society</td>
<td>★ ★</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td>1.35 FTE</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Mental Health Program, U.S. Dept. of Defense, Service-members Opportunity Colleges, American Council on Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Assessments: Finding Solutions to Cross-State Challenges (Expansion)</td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>Western and additional bordering states</td>
<td>$1.75 million</td>
<td>1.35 FTE</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>SBAC, PARCC, MHEC*</td>
</tr>
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* Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC); Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC); Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC).

Note: The shaded initiatives are of lower priority for staff in the context of their current workload than the other four initiatives.

Hitting the Ground Running: Leveraging Work-Based Learning to Improve Educational Outcomes and Meet Workforce Demands. The goal of this work is to help states (and perhaps metropolitan areas) facilitate the development of partnerships among institutions and businesses to ensure effective linkages between the workplace and the classroom through co-op/internship programs.

A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Reentry Programs. The overall goal of this project is to reduce the fiscal and social impact of recidivism on states by helping former inmates, upon release from the correctional system, to be successful individually and be productive, contributing members of society through effective, comprehensive prison education and reentry programs.

Safer Spaces: Aligning Policy and Practice to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses in the West (Phase One). WICHE will conduct research examining how contemporary policy approaches to sexual-violence prevention at postsecondary institutions are being implemented, with the goal of identifying those that research suggests have the greatest potential to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence. The initial stage of the research will be structured as a case study of the state of Washington’s implementation of recent state and institutional policies designed to reduce sexual violence at postsecondary institutions, with the goal of identifying facilitators of and barriers to implementation as described in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Policy Evaluation Framework.

Safer Spaces: Aligning Policy and Practice to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses in the West (Phase Two). Informed by the findings from stage one, WICHE will launch a competitive RFP process to select two additional states as sites to scale up the successful strategies and practices that were identified in Washington.

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and WICHE Research Initiative (Fueling the Race 2.0). Five years ago, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) conducted the first national, multi-institutional study examining the academic outcomes of adult students who take advantage of prior learning assessment (PLA). In Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success: A 48-Institution Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes, CAEL found that adult students with PLA credit were two-and-a-half times more likely to complete their degrees than adult students without PLA credit. Much has changed in higher education since then, making another comprehensive study examining the impacts of PLA timely. Thus, CAEL seeks to engage WICHE as a partner on a proposal for a multi-part PLA research project addressing four main areas: impact on student outcomes, return on investment, academic integrity of PLA, and access to PLA nationally. Spanning three years, this effort would consist of three parts: the main institutional study of PLA and academic student outcomes; the return on investment for institutions, states, and systems; and the predictive validity of PLA.

Streamlining Implementation of Outcomes-Based Funding Models is a project to assist states and postsecondary institutions in adopting outcomes-based funding policies in ways that best ensure policy goals are achieved.
Serving Student Soldiers of the West: Policy and Practice Solutions is a project whose goal is to increase access to and success in higher education for military students and their families in the Western region.

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Assessments: Finding Solutions to Cross-State Challenges (Expansion). The overall goal of this expanded project is to bring together key state leaders involved in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and assessments to discuss challenges associated with student movement across state lines, and identify practical solutions.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for review or approval). In addition, at the end of this section, we list projects that staff previously considered pursuing but that staff now proposes to remove from the workplan.

Ideas Proposed from the Survey of Commissioners, including Impact of Western Demographic Changes on Student Services and Curriculum, Promising Practices in Innovation to Replicate in States, Federal Engagement, Governance and Leadership.

The Impact of Dual and Concurrent Enrollment on Student Success in Postsecondary Education is a project that would assess the impact of enrolling students in (and their successfully completing) dual and concurrent enrollment courses while still in high school on their success in postsecondary education.

Changing Direction 2.0. A project building off WICHE’s previous national project of the same name but addressing the new post-recession fiscal climate, which would promote the adoption of contemporary higher education finance policies that link appropriations, tuition setting, and financial aid policies.

Informing Career and Technical Education and Economic Development Programs to Meet State Workforce Needs. A project to explore how career and technical education and economic development programs can be best organized and informed with contemporary workforce data, in order to meet state workforce needs.

Assessing the Landscape of State Policy on Student-Learning Outcomes: A project that would assist states in understanding the various efforts underway to better capture student-learning outcomes, especially with respect to the Degree Qualifications Profile and its applicability to statewide and institutional curriculum design and assessment.

Exploring Strategies for Improving the Delivery of Remedial and Developmental Education Policies and Practices. A project that would build on current emerging practices in the field to help states more effectively and efficiently target remedial education to students, particularly adult learners.

Addressing Workforce Needs with the Emerging Majority-Minority. A project that would build on previous work that strengthened the connections between higher education institutions and workforce-training programs in an effort to promote a more explicit focus on how state workforce needs can be met through better service to racial/ethnic minorities and other underrepresented populations.

Previously considered projects that we propose to remove from the workplan. None at this time.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2016.

Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) Contract. WICHE was hired to assist the department with state-level strategic planning and execution of work related to its Strategic Priority Initiative #1 (to reduce the attainment gap at least by half by 2025).