

State of Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
Commission Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2016

In Attendance:

Las Vegas:

Vance Farrow – Executive Commissioner, State of Nevada WICHE
Dr. Spencer Stewart – Chancellor, Western Governors University

Reno:

Vic Redding – Commissioner, State of Nevada WICHE
Fred Lokken – Commissioner, State of Nevada WICHE
Brian Lauf – Founding Program Director, University of Nevada School of Medicine’s Physician Assistant Program

Carson City:

Brian Mitchell – Director, Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT)
Gregg Ott – Deputy Attorney General (DAG), Office of the Attorney General, State of Nevada
Sean Dodge – Psychologist, Rural Community Health Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public & Behavioral Health (DPBH)
Laura Hale – Manager, Primary Care Office, Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public & Behavioral Health (DPBH)
Jeannine Warner – Director, State of Nevada WICHE
Dana Westre – Accountant Technician, State of Nevada WICHE

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Farrow at 2:35 p.m. This meeting was posted in accordance with the State of Nevada’s Open Meeting Law.
2. **Public comment.** There was no public comment.
3. **Discussion, recommendations, and action regarding the minutes from the December 8, 2015 meeting.** The minutes from the December 8, 2015 meeting were reviewed. There were no questions. Commissioner Farrow moved for approval. Commissioner Redding seconded. Motion approved.
4. **Presentation on the status of the University Of Nevada School Of Medicine’s Physician Assistant Program- Brian Lauf, Founding Program Director.** Brian Lauf spoke to the Commission about the University Of Nevada School Of Medicine’s new Physician Assistant Program. He stated the program is a full-time, 27-month academic professional master’s degree program that includes basic science and clinical coursework, clinical skills training, and supervised clinical practice.

The mission of the program is to train flexible and committed primary care clinicians dedicated to strengthening health care in their communities. The vision of the program is to expand and enhance access to health care for all Nevadans through physician assistant workforce development and advocacy for the profession. There are currently 24 students per class, and will remain at that ratio for the first 3 years. He would like to keep the number under 35 per class as a maximum. See attachment for further detail.

5. **Presentation on the plans and goals of the Western Governors University (WGU) Nevada – Dr. Spencer Stewart, Chancellor, WGU Nevada.** Chancellor Stewart gave an overview of the WGU's national and Nevada landscape, and answered questions from the attendees. He stated that as of February 23, 2016, there are 68,000 students, 3,600 employees, and that there have been 54,000 graduates in fifteen years. This is a short amount of time to take an institution to this scale. WGU is at the forefront of competency-based education, and is one of the largest private, nonprofit, non-denominational universities in the country geared towards underserved students.

WGU is the only university in the history of American higher education to have earned accreditation from four regional accrediting commissions (NWCCU, HLC, ACCJC, WASC). WGU is a national leader in high quality, low cost higher education, competency-based education, and helping students be successful and earn a technology-based education.

The university's fees are based on time, unlike the traditional universities that base fees on credits. WGU's fee is \$3,000 for a 6-month term, \$6,000 for a full 12-month term, and will remain at that rate for the next 5 years. Students are advised to take out only what they need in student loans, lowering student loan debt. WGU is a year-round term, with on-going incoming and graduating students.

Chancellor Stewart emphasized the importance of WGU's self-paced curriculum, online delivery, reliance on assessments to demonstrate mastery, reoriented/unbundled faculty roles, enhanced student support, and tuition structures decoupled from SCH.

There are over 300,000 Nevadans with some college but no degree, and 60 percent of jobs will require a bachelor's degree by 2018. WGU's primary target is working adults with some college experience.

Chancellor Stewart's presentation, *A Competency Based Approach to Higher Education*, is attached for further detail.

6. **Presentation on the Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium (NV-PIC) status updates, Practice Sites Recruitment and Retention surveys, and discussion regarding possible disciplines for future support – Sean Dodge, Psychologist, Department of Health & Human Services.** Mr. Dodge stated the consortium, which currently supports 4 interns, is a collaboration amongst NV-PIC, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), Nevada WICHE, and Regional WICHE. The psychology internship occurs during the last year of school, and is a requirement to graduate. The program began August 2015. All 4 of Nevada's interns are in great standing to complete their internship successfully, and

upon completion have indicated their wish to remain in Nevada to practice in their communities.

Mr. Dodge went on to say the program started with 4 sites: Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (2 interns), Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (1 intern), Rural Community Health Services (1 intern), and Lake's Crossing Center, which has recently dropped from the training program. As Lake's Crossing Center is the only Nevada forensic facility, the amount of time and commitment it takes to train an intern adds to their facility and staff demands and constraints. They will be added back as a training location as soon as their facility constraints allows. The intern was transferred to Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services.

The training program has been accredited by Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers, which makes the program more competitive for applicant recruiting. The next step will be for national accreditation by the National Psychology Association. Mr. Dodge is hoping for the accreditation to occur before this first set of interns graduate.

Executive Commissioner Farrow asked if the Veteran's Administration (VA) qualifies for internship positions. Mr. Dodge answered that the Reno VA has an internship program which is not yet APA accredited. He added he is in conversations with the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas as potential training/practice sites.

Executive Commissioner Farrow stated there has been great partnership success with the expansion of graduate medical education, and if this can be a pathway for the clinical site program it is simply a question of bringing it up in a conversation. He added he is happy to bring this up in conversation. Mr. Dodge expressed his appreciation and stated he is always open to collaborative opportunities.

Mr. Dodge stated the Division of Public and Behavioral Health will ask for the funding for this program going forward, and thanked Nevada WICHE for their part in the program's start and success. Ms. Hale thanked the Commission for their support and she looks forward to future collaborations with Nevada WICHE.

7. **Discussion, recommendations, and action regarding the WREC Administration Budget (101-2995) and Loan and Stipend Budget (101-2681); preliminary discussions including, but not limited to, WICHE/WREC-supported programs, administration of programs, possible healthcare fields and financial support for the 2017-2019 Executive Budget request. Includes information regarding the new University of Nevada School of Medicine's physician assistant program.** Ms. Warner stated it is time to begin development of the next biennial budget. The current biennial budget was provided as reference and is attached. After a lengthy discussion the Commission made the following decisions/suggestions/comments:

- Numerous new programs are on the horizon and the information that has been and will be gathered will assist to shift resources for the Nevada WICHE program. Funding for the psychiatric internships will be separate from WICHE which will

open up those funds. The Commission has not had the opportunity to expand to new programs or expand existing programs in a long while.

- The new Regional WICHE statistical report on the Student Exchange Program will be reviewed by each commissioner for discussion at the next meeting. This information will help reveal where the region is going.
- Regional WICHE's Margo Colalancia will be asked to present at the next meeting on the trends of the PSEP program in other states.
- Nevada has returned to a growth period. There will be greater need in the next 5 years with this growth, and it is best to be proactive instead of continually reactive.
- The Commission wants to see its funds produce the biggest output, whether it be nursing, behavioral health, etc. They and staff will look at the performance from the last few years of currently funded fields, and discuss at the next meeting.
- Nevada is a physically large state, and with the challenges it has, the Commission is trying to place professionals in the rural areas and build on the existing infrastructure. Technology could open the door for the needs in the rural areas. Nevada WICHE can provide leadership in the state by continuing to support pilot programs like the psychiatric intern program, which would demonstrate how effective technology based support is. Nevada WICHE could create an alliance with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), the Nevada Primary Care Office, etc., and support growth within those communities. The WGU presentation pointed out the satisfaction with high touch virtual connections, and how relationships can be developed over time, and with states like Texas already experimenting with it, ground does not have to be broken; WICHE can build upon that.
- There needs to be changes to how WICHE programs are funded. There are budgeting procedures used by other state agencies that allow retention of funds to create an acceptable account to draw from so the program can be built. Caps can be put in place, and the funds can be audited and monitored. Nevada WICHE is a long-serving agency that can be trusted. Its budget is under the Governor's office and is monitored. The Commission agreed to include further discussion regarding a retention account. Nevada WICHE used to have a reserve account; however, it was swept over a decade ago. The programs budget faces an approximate \$200,000 reversion this year, yet a veterinary medicine slot may not be funded because of revenue issues in next year's funding due to previous payoffs. One veterinary slot was not filled because it is not known if sufficient funds will be available to support an additional student.
- Carry forward language can be put into place for the new biennium, which will involve discussions with the Governor's finance office to include ideas for the best way to fund the program. Nevada WICHE provides affordable professional healthcare students alternatives for Nevada residents for fields where no in-state

program is available. The current structure undercuts the entire economic development strategy because people are brought here and they find they had a far better support structure than any of Nevada's professional roles. That speaks to the quality of life in a state that is trying to redefine itself economically. The economic development argument can be made that this is a key strategy to assist economic development going forward. The program is in a death spiral where it funds fewer students because of revenue flow, then have fewer repayments, then fund fewer slots, then have fewer repayments... It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

- It was suggested the Commission further empower the Director to allow more administrative efficiency.
- The Commission would like to see hard data on why professionals relocate. The data will assist to better design the programs, as well as assist the educational system to better track the professional schools they are creating. The WICHE Director referred Regional WICHE to John Packham's and Bob Pott's office for the statistics they put out on Nevada's workforce as well as regional workforce data. Information from the community college level would be useful and is easy to probe
- The website and other marketing strategies need to be revamped to increase Nevada WICHE and Regional WICHE awareness. The previous program officer position did the marketing, outreach, and data retention for statistical and performance measures. That position was eliminated during the recession when budget cuts occurred. A lot of the tasks were consolidated, and more electronic marketing methods were implemented, such as the website, etc. Currently, staff can provide data on WICHE participant service rates and service payback rates, but collecting data on long-term retention of Nevada WICHE graduates is not feasible due to staffing constraints.
- Direction for the next meeting:
 1. Consider notions to shift support within the programs to include the different levels of nursing, behavioral health, and to shift funds to other fields with need.
 2. Review the regional data on what other states are doing and what their workforce needs are, and prepare to discuss. For example, of the 648 regional students, 170 of them are in veterinary medicine; there is potential to move some funds from this field.
 3. Will the focus be Health Care Access Program (HCAP) or Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) or both? PSEP offers financial support to Nevada students who want to attend a public in-state professional school that Nevada does not have. HCAP offers support to students that attend programs that do exist in Nevada public higher education, but are

incentivized to provide service in underserved areas. Are the service requirements something to look at as well? Prepare for discussion on PSEP versus HCAP need. Perhaps there will be a reset of the HCAP program, particularly in nursing. A big question will be are the awards enough to incentivize behavior or are funds going to people who would already stay in the state.

- Pharmacy slots are both PSEP and HCAP as far as service requirements and monetary payback. PSEP has a 25% student loan payback and a 4-year service requirement anywhere in the state, while HCAP has a 10% student loan payback and a 2-year service requirement with an underserved population. It was the desire of the state for some of them to have the 4-year service requirement, and for some to have the underserved requirement. Which model makes sense from a participant's standpoint as well as a Nevada standpoint; does one model provide a workforce that is better than the other; how many stay in the state after their requirement? Given Nevada's landscape almost everywhere is an underserved area in the current Nevada WICHE professions, particularly in mental health.

8. **Fiscal Reporting. Review of Fiscal Year 2016 2nd Quarter Reports: Budget Status Report, Income Statement, Aging Report, and Accounts Receivable Report.** The reports were reviewed. The Administration Budget is currently under review for estimated annual expenses for the next biennium. To be determined is the need for additional Administrative Services Division (ASD) services, what will the Enterprise Information Technology Services (EITS) costs be now that the office location is solidified. There are a lot of unknowns at this time.

The potential \$200,000+ programs reversion amount was discussed. Payoffs are projected low to avoid a funding shortage for the program. Participants refinance their WICHE loans because of the high monthly payment, which includes an 8% interest rate. Perhaps staff can recommend ways to assist participants so they do not have the need to refinance and the program does not lose anticipated future revenue.

Collection accounts at the Controller's Collection Department will remain there for 1 more year. The licensure portion of their system is newly underway, and they want to attempt collections from the angle of licensure.

9. **New Business.** Executive Commissioner Farrow stated the Legislative Committee on Healthcare is meeting tomorrow and he is speaking regarding GME. There will be portions of those conversations that will assist the Commission as it makes decisions.

Commissioner Redding stated the budget instructions come out March 9, 2016, so an early to mid-April meeting will work best. Staff will arrange an April meeting.

10. **Public Comment.** There was no public comment.
11. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 4:32 P.M.