

Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)  
Commission Meeting  
Minutes for April 1, 2015  
Disc 1, File #9

In Attendance:

Vic Redding – Executive Commissioner, Nevada WICHE  
Vance Farrow – Commissioner, Nevada WICHE  
Brian Mitchell – Education Fellow, Office of Governor Sandoval  
Greg Ott – Deputy Attorney General (DAG), Office of the Attorney General, State of Nevada  
Dana Westre – Accountant Technician, Nevada WICHE

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Farrow at 11:07 a.m. It was noted Ms. Warner is out on family business and could not attend the meeting.
2. **Public comment.** There was no public comment.
3. **Senate Bill 195, its current status and the State of Nevada Governor's position.** For the record, Executive Commissioner Redding stated at the March 9, 2015 WICHE Commission meeting, the Commission took a neutral position on SB 195 pending discussion with the Governor's office on the following: if a transfer occurs, the Commission's preference is for the cost to remain neutral as submitted by the Commission and as recommended in the Governor's Executive Budget; and, that the existing staff classifications not be impacted during the transition.

Executive Commissioner Redding stated Brian Mitchell of the Governor's office is in attendance via teleconference. Last week, a meeting was held in the Governor's office with Chief of Staff Mike Willden and Director Jeannine Warner to discuss how a transfer might work and whether or not it would be a good structure for the Governor's office. There was agreement from Mr. Willden on the Commission's points discussed. Subsequent to that conversation, Mr. Willden spoke with the Governor and the Governor indicated support of this transfer. Mr. Mitchell stated for the record, yes, the Governor is in support. Executive Commissioner Redding added the Governor's office feels having the WICHE program housed in the Governor's office, as opposed as returning to a stand-alone board and commission, would be a good structure to pursue.

The Commission will meet again to discuss whether or not to change its position on SB 195 in light of the Governor's position.

Executive Commissioner Redding stated some of the issues that existed when the program was stand-alone, not the major driving issues of staffing levels and excessive accounts

receivable, had more to do with administrative minutia and the mechanics because the agency is a very small, stand-alone entity. He believes this was one of the synergies that has existed with the program under the Systems office – the simple mechanics of having access to an administrative infrastructure, a front desk to forward the phones to when both staff are out, another administrative person to sign leave slips and purchase orders and keep things moving. This would be addressed if the agency were housed under the Governor's office. Executive Commissioner Redding added he is very happy with the stature a program like WICHE would have just being under the Governor's office. There is the challenge of being noticed as a 2-person stand-alone entity. Having it under the Governor's office positions the program very well, particularly if it is aligned with other education initiatives that the Governor is undertaking.

Commissioner Farrow agreed with the additional administrative back-up and agency positioning and asked where the agency would be located. Mr. Mitchell stated not only does the Governor's office sympathize with the 2-person office issue and needing a back-up infrastructure, but also that it could be a good fit as part of the Governor's education initiatives. He added discussions can take place regarding location. They are interested in the proposal to utilize the NSHE Musser Street lease, however further discussion will be needed before deciding. Commissioner Redding stated he discussed this with the Chancellor, because the program is moving from under NSHE, and NSHE does not want to give the impression WICHE will be cast aside and there is no interest in their success because nothing could be further from the truth. A concern is how to administratively house a small unit. In the event WICHE is not able to find space within its Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget, whether as a stand-alone entity or part of the Governor's office, NSHE leases office space in Carson City 2 blocks from the capitol building. It is leased for NSHE legislative staff during session. The space will be vacated from June 3, 2015 until February 2017. The Chancellor has agreed to sublet to WICHE if other space that works for them is not available, even though it may be outside of WICHE's budget. NSHE would cover the difference between their rent budget and actual costs. There is already infrastructure for internet and phones. It is certainly an option for a month to month temporary solution if needed. NSHE would like the transition to be as painless as possible.

Executive Commissioner Redding asked for thoughts or comments from attendees. There were none. He stated the current position of the WICHE Commission on SB 195 is neutral. Commissioner Farrow moved to change the WICHE Commission's position on SB 195 from neutral to in support of. Executive Commissioner Redding seconded. Motion approved.

4. **New Business.** Executive Commissioner Redding asked Ms. Westre if there is other business that needs to be taken care of. Ms. Westre stated application certification. It was decided to schedule another meeting after interviews have been scheduled.
5. **Public Comment.** There was no public comment.
6. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.