Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and Nevada Governor’s Office of the Western Regional Education Compact Commission Meeting Minutes July 14, 2016 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

In Attendance:
Vance Farrow – Executive Commissioner, State of Nevada WICHE
Fred Lokken – Commissioner, State of Nevada WICHE
Vic Redding – Commissioner, State of Nevada WICHE
Jeannine Warner – Director, State of Nevada WICHE
Kim Weisenthal – Accountant Technician, State of Nevada WICHE
Gregg Ott – Deputy Attorney General (DAG), Office of the Attorney General, State of Nevada

Guests:
Sean Dodge, Ph.D.- Licensed Psychologist I, Department of Health and Human Services, Public and Behavioral Health, Rural Clinics
Brian Mitchell – Director, Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT)
Dr. Maureen Rubin, Ph.D – Assistant Professor, UNR School of Social Work

1. Call to order. The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Farrow. This meeting was posted in accordance with the State of Nevada’s Open Meeting Law (OML).

2. Public Comment. There was no public comment.

3. Introduction of new staff: Accountant Technician I. Kim Weisenthal was introduced to the Commission by Ms. Warner. Kim gave a brief statement about herself, including she was born and raised in Carson City and has 18 years of state work experience.

4. Discussion, recommendations, and action regarding the minutes from the April 18, 2016 Nevada WICHE Commission meeting. The minutes from the April meeting were reviewed. There were no questions, comments or changes. Commissioner Lokken moved for approval; Commissioner Redding seconded. Motion approved.

5. Presentation on the organizational and reporting structure of the Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the Nevada Governor’s Office of the Western Regional Education Compact (WREC) in conjunction with the Nevada Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) including: revised Nevada Governor’s Office of the Western Regional Education Compact Mission Statement; Governor’s Office-approved Western Regional Education Compact Organizational Chart (ref: NRS 233.700); transfer of WICHE Administration Budget’s (101-2995) administrative authority from Nevada WICHE Commission and Director to Governor’s Office liaison.

Mr. Mitchell provided a brief explanation of the Governor’s office-approved organizational chart. He stated there were some issues that had to be worked out with the transition, but
he believes everything has been working well and the staff have been working hard to make sure the program has been running.

Commissioner Lokken noted the agenda item is an information item not requiring any action by the Commission, and the message has been received. He understands the dilemma but is not sure anything can be drawn that would explain the existing relationship. He stated the harmony and level of cooperation has been great, but as a Commissioner he has continuing concerns based on the structure of the organizational chart. As the chart is currently outlined, the Commissioners have no relationship with the OSIT Director, and would have to go directly to the Governors' Office to have a conversation with someone who has a direct role of supervision over the Nevada WICHE Director. The dashed line from the Commissioners to the Nevada WICHE Director does not explain what the relationship is between the two parties. An additional issue is when the sitting Governor terms out, the newly elected Governor could potentially make more changes to the organizational chart.

Commissioner Lokken asked if an addendum could be drafted and attached to outline the relationship of the Commissioners to the OSIT Director, and the Commission to the Nevada WICHE Director. Commissioner Farrow, as the Chair, could draft a simple memorandum that would provide verbiage that establishes the relationship the Commission has with their Director, the role the Commission is supposed to play, identify the role of Mr. Mitchell and his role as Director, and use as an addendum to the organizational chart that will explain what that organizational chart establishes as a relationship. It will help, especially, with the next governor.

Mr. Mitchell stated the current Nevada WICHE organizational chart was designed after other organizational charts in the state that are similar in structure by incorporating state employees and advisory or appointed bodies. He further explained how the organizational chart reflects the relationship between all parties. The Governor appoints the three Commissioners; the Commissioners work with and direct the work of the WICHE Director to carry out the WICHE Programs. The WICHE staff reports to the Governor's office through the Director of OSIT; and, the Director of OSIT is the liaison between the Commissioners and the Governor's office. He feels it is a very simple structure. He referenced the GME Task Force as an example, the principle is the same. The Task Force is appointed by the Governor, the Governor's staff staffs the work of the council; the Task Force works with the council to make recommendations to the Governor, and then the Governor's staff serves as the direct liaison to the Governor. Another example is the Nevada Commission on Aging. There is staff and an agency director; below him is the Director of the Department of Aging; then there is a Governor-appointed commission that works with the Department of Aging who reports up through the DHHS director; the DHHS director works with his Governor's office liaison. He agrees it would be a good idea to create a clarifying addendum if the organizational chart isn't clear enough, but this structure is fairly common in the state.

Commissioner Lokken stated he is not clear what his relationship is as a WICHE Commissioner to the OSIT Director. Mr. Mitchell responded he is the liaison to the Governor's Office. Commissioner Lokken stated the chart does not reflect that or any relationship to the OSIT Director, so a memorandum of understanding would be beneficial to resolve this question. Executive Commissioner Farrow supported the idea of putting something in writing. He engages on a semi-regular basis with Mr. Mitchell outside of and within WICHE. He would like Commissioners Redding and Lokken to have that same opportunity to ask questions; or, have the Commissioners come to the Executive Commissioner and collectively have one voice going to Mr. Mitchell if there is something to discuss or take to the Governor's office. It is an interesting question, as he has meetings with Mike Willden on occasion as part of the job he has. When he looks at the next
Executive Commissioner, the same opportunity for interaction may not occur depending on their job position. He stated he is sensitive to the issue because he does not know if the interaction would occur otherwise. There are times the Commission will need to ask questions and get clarification from the Governor's Office. Therefore, there should be rules of engagement that will serve on beyond the current commission and into future regimes that clarify how the Commission functions at its optimum level. Mr. Mitchell agreed it would be a benefit and requested the WICHE Executive Commissioner and Director to create an addendum as clarification to the organizational chart. As the current Commissioners' terms expire, there will be something existing that will explain the structure.

Commissioner Redding expressed his thanks to both Mr. Mitchell and the WICHE folks, as this situation is a bit difficult to determine, and NSHE struggled with the exact same structure issue when WICHE was housed there. He feels the addendum makes sense, it is a beneficial and the best approach. He also suggests detailing some of the big mechanical issues: who approves expenditures; who has signature authority; who approves staff leave; who/how is the WICHE Director evaluated, etc. Although the current Executive Commissioner is a state employee, the next may not be and therefore may not be appropriate to have the Executive Commissioner have signature authority on the state budget accounts. Commissioner Lokken wants to ensure there is a sanctity to the budget, that a different approach to administration does not allow the budget to be siphoned away or taken advantage of with the current chart.

Mr. Mitchell addressed the questions of leave, evaluation, and signature authority. WICHE has two different budgets. Regarding the Administrative Expenses budget, the two employees are employees of the Governor; therefore, evaluations and leave requests go through the OSIT office. The WICHE Director will continue to manage the budget, but expenditures, purchase orders, and other administrative activity go through Mr. Mitchell. The state budget office is building the biennial budget, so the WICHE Director will be in charge of coordinating that. It is up to the Commission to determine how the Loan & Stipend Budget should be spent in conjunction with the WICHE Director, and Mr. Mitchell does not get involved in that budget.

Commissioner Redding had no concerns and stated an outline will allow future Commissioners to clearly understand what they are accountable for, what their action items are, and what is and is not in their purview. Commissioner Lokken agreed, but did not hear where the Commission provides input in the regular evaluation of the person with whom they work, and what role the Commission has in the hiring process should a replacement be needed. Mr. Mitchell responded that regarding the WICHE Director's evaluations and new hires, he would seek recommendations and input from the Commission, especially since the interactions with the WICHE Director between the OSIT Director and the Commission differ. He will communicate on behalf of the Commission its concerns or other information to Mike Willden and the Governor's Office.

Commissioner Farrow recommended an additional line from the Commissioner level to the OSIT Director to create a level of communication and connection. Commissioner Lokken agreed with the addition, but stated an MOU is still needed to answer many questions. Commissioner Redding liked the recommendations, as it addresses the moving of WICHE into the OSIT office and gives opportunity to collaborate with other activities within the state. This formalizes WICHE as being a part of the bigger OSIT operation.

It was agreed by the Commission and Mr. Mitchell the organizational chart will include an additional line straight across from the Commissioner level to the Director of OSIT, establishing a clear and direct line of communication on paper. Commissioner Farrow will with work with Commissioners Redding and Lokken to outline the additional points on paper and make an agenda item in the future to get the MOU established.
Deputy Attorney General Gregg Ott cited NRS 397.062, which states the Account for Administrative Expenses “shall” be administered jointly by the Commission. He stated the discussed structure is consistent with statute. The Governor shall appoint the Directors and the Commissioners so he clearly has the authority to organize this any way he wants. However, the monetary authority was given to the Commissioners, so if the Commission wishes to formally delegate the administration of the funds to the OSIT Director, it needs to set an action item for an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Farrow will work on an addendum/MOU to further clarify the organization chart, specifically rules of engagement of the OSIT Director, Nevada WICHE Director, the Commissioners, and the Governors’ Office. Commissioner Lokken thanked the group for the conversation. (Agenda item was information only; no action taken.)


   Dr. Dodge gave a brief update on the accreditation of NV-PIC. The American Psychological Association has confirmed NV-PIC is on the agenda for consideration for accreditation. The association will review the self-study submitted to them in March 2016. If the study is approved, the next step is to schedule a site visit. That is the step that ultimately determines if they are approved for accreditations and will occur perhaps in late fall or early winter.

   The first cohort of interns will be graduating August 5, 2016, and everyone is invited. The second cohort for the 2016-2017 training year will start August 8, 2016. There are four students, all of which are funded by Nevada WICHE. Two students are located in Las Vegas, including one who will be primarily doing forensic work at the newly opened Stein Forensic Unit on the Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Campus; one will be working in the rural community; and, one intern will be placed in Reno at Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Campus.

   Commissioner Farrow inquired about the fifth intern slot funded by Department of Health and Human Services, if the funding was for this year or next year’s program. Dr. Dodge clarified the funds were approved and available to fund the fifth position for the current year’s program; however, the applicant pool did not produce the quality of applicants to fill the fifth position. Dr. Dodge continued by stating he believes the best way to be competitive as a training program and to generate a better quality of applicants is to complete the accreditation.

   Having no further questions for Dr. Dodge, the Commissioners thanked him for his time and the update.

7. **Review of Fiscal Year 2016 3rd Quarter financials for WICHE’s Administration Budget Account (101-2995) and Loan & Stipend Budget Account (101-2681)**

   Ms. Warner stated the reports are provided in the meeting packet. The end-of-year budget reports will be provided in the next quarterly meeting. Commissioner Farrow asked the status on the veterinary medicine slot that was being held due to lack of funds. Ms. Warner reported an unexpected loan payoff came through near the end of the fiscal year, allowing the program to fund the remaining veterinary medicine slot that has been held open as the program waited for revenue to come in. Commissioner Farrow said things look in very good order. There were no other questions.
8. Discussion, recommendations, and action regarding the proposed program
descriptions for the WICHE Loan & Stipend Budget Account 101-2681 (ref: NRS
397.063) and WICHE Administration Budget Account 101-2995 (ref: NRS 397.062).

Proposed programs descriptions currently in the NEBS system for accounts 2995 and 2681
were provided. The Budget Office is asking for any changes.

Commissioner Redding stated nothing appeared unusual under 2681. However, regarding
the duties for Budget Account (BA) 2995, he asked Ms. Warner if, in her opinion, the
language "minimizing delinquent debt" is appropriate and an accurate reflection of what the
administrative office mainly does. Ms. Warner stated the Commission has already taken
forward steps to reduce delinquency. The language in question is more historic and agreed
is should be updated since the Commission has successfully established policies and
procedures for minimizing the delinquent debt for the program. She would support taking it
out at the Commission's recommendation.

Commissioner Redding recommended more positive and representative language of what
the Commission is doing today such as: "The office facilitates the recruitment of
professional students in these fields and facilitates the collaboration for other related
initiatives within the state in healthcare." This description will head up that budget account
when the Executive Budget comes out, so it is the Commission's one paragraph to shine.

Ms. Warner noted that this pertains to BA 2995 Administration Budget, and she offered to
bring the description to and work with Mr. Mitchell on recommendations in consideration of
this new organizational structure and bring back to the Commission at its next meeting.
Commissioner Redding also recommended adding the collaboration with OSIT, as well.

Executive Commissioner Farrow thinks it is important that in as many instances as
possible, the Commission both take credit and educate on what it is they are doing. He is
not sure one sentence can fully encapsulate all that the Commission does. He would like
addressed the collaborative efforts and their vision, which his to promote health
professionals and provide assistance and resources as they matriculate and provide
services to Nevadans. A lot of people literally don't know about WICHE, so if the
information is put where people can see it, that helps. He will work with the Executive
Director to create language and have it brought back to the Commission.

Commissioner Redding motioned for a review and update by the Chair, OSIT Director and
Nevada WICHE Director of the current language to reflect the current structure regarding
the proposed program description for the WICHE Administration BA2995. The budget is to
be submitted by the September 1, 2016 budget deadline. The motion included approving
the language agreed upon by Chairman Farrow, Director Mitchell, and Director Warner.
Commissioner Lokken seconded the motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

9. Discussion, recommendations, and action regarding the Nevada Governor's Office
of the Western Regional Education Compact's proposed modifications to the WICHE
Loan & Stipend Budget (101-2681) request for the 2017-2019 Biennium; selection of
Nevada WICHE Commission's supported health care programs, fields and financial
support including but not limited to: response from the Governor's Finance Office
(GFO) regarding the Commission's Budget Enhancement Concept Request;
proposed modifications to programs and fields; required 5% budget reduction plan
and funding priorities; proposed budgetary BDRs including possible solution(s) for a
revised revenue structure of the WICHE Loan & Stipend Budget; confirm no
proposed Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) or Technology Investment Requests
A presentation on the State's budget instructions and requirements was made to the Commissioners by Ms. Warner. She further reported that out of 561 Budget Enhancement Concept Requests received by the Governor's Office, only 8 were approved. Unfortunately, WICHE was not one of them. Additionally, there is a required 5% budget reduction plan to submit. The reduction will not become effective unless the General Fund projections do not come through at the State level.

Dr. Maureen Rubin arrived and spoke to the Commissioners on the shortage of social workers, specifically in the area of behavioral health. Many in the state are working hard to build that workforce and meet the need. One of the directions she and Ms. Warner discussed was providing stipends for Master of Social Work (MSW) level students who could go out in the workforce to get trained during their internship. The UNR MSW program offers a full educational program of 62 credits for anyone without a BSW, consisting of 450 hours at the foundation level and 450 hours at the concentration level (900 hours total). The focus of possible funding was more on the concentration level because that is just before the students graduate, and students can choose agencies or sites in which to work that are providing services for individuals with behavioral health needs. That way, students can be encouraged to do the work and be provided a stipend while they are at that point and time. Currently, UNR's MSW program has a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded project which is in its final year. Students can be awarded up to $10,000 each if they are placed in an agency that serves children, adolescents and transitional-aged youth up to 24 years of age. Unfortunately, the HRSA funds do not allow support to those students placed within agencies servicing just the elderly or adults over the age of 24. Dr. Rubin was wondering if the Nevada WICHE Program is able to support the students in the MSW program who will serve the entire age range from zero to elderly, possibly match funds the way they are currently doing with HRSA, and encourage people to move through the workforce and build up a workforce pipeline. They need this educational piece so they can enter the workforce with adequate skills.

Ms. Warner explained Nevada WICHE's Health Care Access Program (HCAP) residency, fiscal and service obligations. Dr. Rubin felt that the repayment and service agreement were compatible with other programs offered to UNR students.

Dr. Rubin explained to the Commissioners UNR's new online MSW program. The online program was primarily designed to reach and aid students in Nevada's rural population. The first cohort starts in fall 2016. Currently, the majority of the students applying are from Pahrump, Ely and Elko. UNR can work with and inform the students of WICHE's stipulations.

Commissioner Redding stated it is a balancing act to find the right amount of money to solve the problem or incentivize behavior. In the past, with a small stipend amount some students were willing to take WICHE's penalty and not return to Nevada to complete the service requirement portion of the stipend agreement and accept a signing bonus elsewhere. He asked Dr. Rubin if she had any indicators of what the right dollar amount or range is to incentivize behavior, to actually solve a problem or change behavior, enabling a student to complete something they otherwise wouldn't be able to do and not just paying them for something they were already going to do.

The HRSA funding amount established by the federal government was $10,000 for the master degree, which was to be given in the student's final year. Another requirement was the internship should be 6 months of clinical work. From the student perspective, to determine if the amount is too much or too little, the school asked the students how the $10,000 stipend helped them. The response is that it is very helpful by avoiding a second or part-time job, they didn't have to worry about childcare; and, they were able to be a fulltime student and
complete their studies sooner, which means they are getting into the workforce sooner. Nobody has said they do not want the funding with the requirements. Further, she started live streaming to Elko, Pahrump and Carson, and opened up education to people in the community by offering 3 CEUs.

Dr. Rubin estimated 80-90% of graduating MSW students remain in Nevada. One of the greatest factors, she believes, that students are deciding to stay in Nevada is because the Department of Education is hiring close to one thousand social workers in the next upcoming years, per the Governor’s movement to build the School of Social Work. This was presented to the Commission in April by Dr. Ableser.

Commissioner Farrow inquired as to the cost of obtaining a MSW from the student perspective. Dr. Rubin was not able to report on the exact cost but roughly estimated $22,000-$25,000. She stated she will send an email confirming the dollar amount. The face-to-face and online programs are financially comparable. There will be 30 students accepting the HRSA funding, and there is a cohort of 90. The first year was 16 awards; last year, they gave 26, and this year they plan to give 30 awards primarily to students in the rural areas applying for the online program. Their funding ends this year, FY2017. They are applying for another cycle but they cannot guarantee they will get the HRSA funds. Commissioner Farrow asked how they prioritize who gets the funding. Dr. Rubin stated there is an application process. The student must provide a reason for why they are entering social work, why they are committed to working with this population, and also a statement as to how they are going to be working within their specific site with this population. It is not a first come, first served basis. Four of them meet, review the applications, and then decide who will receive the awards. The application deadline is mid-August, and a decision is made by early September. Some students have a different area of interest, such as those who want to work with elderly or at the V.A., and they do not apply.

Having no further discussion or questions for Dr. Rubin, she was thanked for her presentation and time.

The meeting was turned over to Ms. Warner in order to assist the Commissioners in building BA2681. Discussions took place on the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) fields of study, amount of funding for slots, and the number of slots in each field that could be funded. Commissioner Redding asked, for the record, if the UNR School of Medicine’s Physician Assistant (PA) program students would be eligible for PSEP funding. Ms. Warner responded no, the policy is that PSEP only funds out-of-state or non-public in-state schools; no public in-state students are eligible for funding. Commissioner Redding wanted on record this information as well as his disclosure statement that his wife works for the PA program and her program would not be a recipient of Nevada WICHE funding.

A motion was made by Commissioner Redding to approve the matrix as outlined, subject to technical adjustment authorized by Ms. Warner for the 2017-2019 Biennial Budget Request:

- Pharmacy: 5 new slots (3 and 4 year programs) at the Regional WICHE amounts
- Physical Therapy: 2 new slots (3 year program) at the Regional WICHE amounts
- Physician Assistants: 3 new slots (2 year program) at the Regional WICHE amounts
- Veterinary Medicine: 3 new slots (4 year program) at the Regional WICHE amounts
- Occupational Therapy: 2 new slots (2 year program) at the Regional WICHE amounts
- Nursing: FY18 – 8 and FY19 - 9 new RN to APRN slots (2 year program) @ $7,700
- Nursing: 4 new MSN (2 year program) @ $6,000
- Psychology: 3 new slots (1 year program) @ $37,500
- Social Work: 5 new slots (2 year program) @ $5,000
• BDRs: there were no budgetary bill draft requests (BDRs), including possible solution(s) for a revised revenue structure of the WICHE Loan & Stipend Budget proposed.
• CIPs/TIRs: No proposed Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) or Technology Investment Requests (TIRs) were proposed.

Commissioner Lokken seconded. Having no further discussion, all were in favor. The motion carried.

The discussion continued, addressing the required 5% budget reduction plan and funding priorities. Ms. Warner reported the target amount of the 5% budget cuts is $113,210. The full reduction can be taken from the Loan & Stipend Account (BA 2681) and/or the Administration Account (BA 2995) combined.

After a brief discussion, Commissioners Redding made a motion for a reduction to the Loan & Stipend Account. Based on a location quotient of .91%, he proposed to cut one new Veterinary Medicine slot each year totaling $97,200 from BA 2681. This is 4% of the 5% required reductions. BA 2995, the Administration Budget, will be required to cut 1% equaling $16,010. Upon further review with the Director of OSIT, if the dollars required for the proposed 1% cut are not available, then a recommendation shall be brought back to the Commissioners for their review. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lokken. Having no further discussion, the motion carried.

10. **Director’s Report.**

There were no question or comments regarding the Directors Report submitted to the Commissioners.

**Review quarterly activities (AY2015 3rd Quarter).** There were no questions or comment on the 3rd quarter activities.

**NRS 397 and NAC 397 codified.** All the changes submitted during the last Legislative Session to NRS 397 and NAC 397 were approved. Both NRS and NAC 397 have been codified, they are in statute. Copies have been submitted to the Commission.

**Status of General Fund Advance.** The $55,000 advance from the General Fund to meet the fiscal needs of the program for the beginning of Fiscal Year 2016 is currently in the process of being paid back through a work program prepared by the ASD office.

**Status of FY2016 Veterinary Medicine slots.** The program had some payoffs come through at the end of May 2016, which allowed the funding of the additional veterinary medicine slot.

**Interim Finance Committee meeting-June 30, 2016.** During the June 30, 2016 Interim Finance Committee meeting, the program did have a work program to switch budget numbers. The program's work program was not called upon.

**Practice Sights Database project.** Ms. Warner reported the program is working in collaboration with Division of Public and Behavior Health on the Practice Sights database. Practice Sights will keep track of when our students graduate and, upon graduation, reach out to them regarding their practice. Our participants can report their Practice Questionnaire
information directly to Practice Sights. This database, most importantly, will generate reports providing important information, such as how many that received funding provided the required service; did the WICHE funds have impact on their choice of working location; and reasons why did they chose the geographical area where they are working. The database will be able to provide basic performance measures, service reports, and retention reports including a two year follow-up after the student completes their service obligation to the State. This information will be very important when reporting back to Legislature on how many Nevada WICHE participants remain in the state after their service obligation has been fulfilled.

11. **New business.** There was no new business. Future meeting dates to be determined.

12. **Public comment.** No public comment was received.

13. **Adjournment.** Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.