



Nevada Governor's Office of the Western Regional Education Compact for the Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (NV WICHE)

Commission Meeting Minutes
June 19, 2019
3:30 p.m. – 4:44 p.m.

In Attendance:

Fred Lokken: Nevada WICHE Executive Commissioner
Dr. Gillian Barclay: Nevada WICHE Commissioner
Dr. Thom Reilly: Nevada WICHE Commissioner
David Gardner: Senior Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General
Colleen Lennox: Nevada WICHE, Accountant Technician 1

Guests:

There were no guests.

- 1. Call to order and roll call.** The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Lokken at 3:31 p.m. This meeting was posted in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Law (OML).
- 2. Public Comment.** There was no public comment.
- 3. Discussion, recommendations and action, regarding the minutes from the April 24, 2019, Commission meeting.** Commissioner Lokken deferred this to the next meeting.
- 4. Summary and status of academic year 2018-2019 funding slots filled.** Ms. Lennox stated there are Master/Doctorate Nursing and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner slots available. Applications have been received that may help fill the open slots.
- 5. Discussion, recommendations and action, regarding, approval of appointments to the Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee.** The Regional WICHE Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee has two representatives from each state. Committee representatives typically consist of one representative with a background in veterinary science and one representative who is a legislator.

Nevada's veterinary science representative recently completed his second four-year term. Commissioner Lokken presented Coretta Patterson, Veterinary Internist at the University of Nevada, Reno, Department of Agriculture, Veterinary & Rangeland Sciences as a replacement candidate. Discussion ensued regarding Ms. Patterson's credentials and national involvement in veterinary medicine issues. Nevada's legislative representative is Senator Pete Goicoechea. Commissioner

Lokken called Senator Goicoechea's office to ask him about serving another term and was waiting for a response. Commissioner Lokken asked the Commission for their direction regarding these choices.

Commissioner Reilly stated he was fine with approaching Ms. Patterson and asking Senator Goicoechea to continue. Commissioner Lokken requested this item to be included on a future agenda for possible action.

- 6. Discussion and update on the Regional WICHE Meeting in North Dakota.** Commissioner Lokken updated the Commission on the regional WICHE meeting in June which included three presentations: (1) the future of higher education, (2) the future of accreditation and (3) the future of adult learners in higher education. Financial reports showed a strong cash position for regional WICHE and growth in programs. All reports and presentations were available on the regional WICHE website.

The next regional WICHE meeting is in Denver, Colorado, on November 7, 2019 through November 8, 2019 at the Brown Palace. Nevada is in the rotating schedule to host the regional meeting in 2022. After an update from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the order of host states will be reconsidered in the November 2019 meeting to include the CNMI.

- 7. Discussion, recommendations and action regarding, assignments for WICHE committees.** Commissioner Lokken stated there was no need for action on this item. Commissioners had already indicated their preferences for Regional WICHE Committee assignments.
- 8. Discussion, recommendations and action regarding, election of Executive commissioner.** Commissioner Lokken informed the Commission the role of Executive Commissioner was a two-year term that ended on July 1, 2019. Formal action was needed to elect the next WICHE Executive Commissioner for the next two years.

Nevada's Executive Commissioner has been performing duties not usually done by the Executive Commissioner due to the turnover in the Nevada WICHE office. The Executive Commissioner's customary role was to attend the regional meeting of the plenary body and attend the Executive Committee, which serves as the steering committee of WICHE's governing body, the WICHE Commission. Commissioner Lokken had never seen a list of duties, but in the absence of a director he has certified contracts and had a role in hiring new directors.

Commissioner Reilly stated he was fine with Fred remaining as Executive Commissioner and asked Commissioner Barclay if she agreed to reelect Commissioner Lokken for the two-year term ending July 2021. Commissioner Barclay stated she has only been a commissioner for one year and Commissioner Lokken had the most experience. Commissioner Reilly agreed and motioned for Commissioner Lokken to continue as Executive Commissioner. Commissioner Barclay seconded the motion.

Commissioner Reilly asked Commissioner Lokken if he was willing to continue. Commissioner Lokken answered that he could continue, but if he were to resign before the term was up, a new election would decide the next Executive Commissioner. Commissioner Lokken mentioned that Senior Deputy Attorney General, David Gardner, advised that early resignation is outlined in the bylaws. Alternatively, the Commission could agree that one of the other commissioners would move into the role in the next term.

Commissioner Reilly and Commissioner Barclay voted aye, Commissioner Lokken abstained. The motion carried.

9. **Discussion and update on search for a new director.** Commissioner Lokken provided some history for Commissioner Reilly's benefit. Jeanine Warner was the Nevada WICHE Director for 14 years before resigning in May 2018. After Ms. Warner's resignation, the office hired a new director on July 31, 2018 who resigned on January 18, 2019. Another director was hired on February 11, 2019 and resigned on April 12, 2019.

The hiring criteria for a new director included a strong background in finance and personnel management experience. For each of the recruitments, the search for a new director was organized by Mr. Brian Mitchell, the Director of the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT). Mr. Mitchell developed the job description, posted the job through the Division of Human Resources Management, wrote the interview questions and organized the interviews. Commissioner Lokken participated in the recruitment process as Executive Commissioner. The Commission as a whole has not been involved because a meeting involving two or more Nevada WICHE commissioners is subject to open meeting law. This would require interviews to be noticed as public meetings and may discourage people from applying. Commissioner Lokken explained the job has been posted, applications have been received and the interview process was underway.

Commissioner Reilly asked whether the Commission would be notified once a finalist is identified or if the finalist was chosen. Commissioner Lokken explained the candidate was to be chosen by Mr. Mitchell in coordination with the Governor's Office. Commissioner Barclay asked if the resumes could be shared with the other two Commissioners. Commissioner Lokken answered that could not be done without creating an open meeting law issue.

Commissioner Lokken explained that Senate Bill 76 of the 2015 Legislative Session moved Nevada WICHE from the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to the Governor's Office under OSIT. Before the organization moved to NSHE in 2009, Nevada WICHE was an independent agency. Each organizational structure, from operating as an independent agency, as a part of NSHE, and now under the Governor's Office – had its own set of challenges. Commissioner Lokken has been honest with the Governor's Office and with Mr. Mitchell about the prospect of relocating Nevada WICHE during the 2021 Legislative Session. A bill would need to be approved by the Legislature and the Governor to move the agency.

Discussion ensued among Commission Lokken and Commissioner Barclay regarding confusion and the need to further define the affiliation and details of the relationship between Nevada WICHE, OSIT and the Governor's Office. Commissioner Barclay requested a copy of the current organizational chart and written documentation/authorization from the Governor regarding Nevada WICHE's affiliation with OSIT. Commissioner Barclay had requested this several times. Commissioner Lokken indicated the requested documentation should have been part of the Commission's orientation materials, but the Commission has not had a formal orientation. Commissioner Lokken stated he would find out if there was such a thing.

Senior Deputy Attorney General David Gardner interjected, stating the conversation was now going off topic from the agenda item. He suggested this could be placed under new business for discussion in the future.

- 10. Discussion and update of audits and budget.** Commissioner Lokken requested to place this as a future agenda item to allow the Commission to discuss it in depth.
- 11. Discussion, recommendations and action regarding, scheduling of a strategic planning meeting.** Commissioner Lokken expected NV WICHE to have a new director by July 1, 2019, and the new director should be a part of the strategic planning meeting. The next meeting should be in August or September to allow the new director time to orient prior to the meeting. Commissioner Lokken expected to spend most of time on planning and direction of the agency.
- 12. Discussion with Marc Gelinas, regarding the NSHE generated loan calculation spreadsheet compared to function of Margill Loan Manager Database and the effects of loan calculation method to WICHE's loan portfolio.** Commissioner Lokken recommended skipping this item.
- 13. Discussion and update of file review status for participant, Michael Olma (Informational Item).** Mr. Olma was properly noticed of this meeting per the open meeting law (OML). Per OML, this update does not qualify for a closed session. Commissioner Lokken stated Ms. Lennox was asked to audit Mr. Olma's account for accuracy and report the results to the Commission. Mr. Olma's grant was converted to a loan when he did not return to Nevada to practice as an optometrist in accordance with his contract. Ms. Lennox explained the update involved late fees assessed to his loan. Mr. Olma asserted his late fees were unjustified due to late processing of his payments by Nevada WICHE staff. Ms. Lennox had Nevada WICHE's student loan processor, Educational Computer Systems, Inc. (ECSI), audit the late fees on his account. The last time his account was current was in June 2018. Between June 2018 and present, only three payments were applied, resulting in late fees. Mr. Olma asserted he was sending checks and they were not being applied to his account. Ms. Lennox asked Mr. Olma to provide copies of the cancelled checks to verify they had been cashed. Mr. Olma had not yet answered. It was concluded the late fees assessed to his account were correctly applied.
- 14. Discussion, recommendations and action regarding ending check payments through WICHE's Carson City office and to have ECSI process all payments through electronic transfer.** Commissioner Lokken motioned to have all payments processed through ECSI. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried unanimously.
- 15. Discussion, recommendations and action regarding, filling a fourth Veterinary Medicine slot, how many slots are available and clarification of the name of the student discussed for funding in the March 27, 2019 meeting.** Commissioner Lokken said this item was unnecessary, because no funding was available.
- 16. New Business: Proposed future meeting dates.** On a future agenda, the Commission requested a copy of the organizational chart (as discussed in item nine) and Nevada WICHE financial reports.
- 17. Public comment:** There was no public comment.
- 18. Adjournment.** Having no further business and receiving no public comment the meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.