

**Nevada Office of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
(Nevada WICHE Commission) Minutes**

Nevada System of Higher Education
System Administration Building
2601 Enterprise Road
Reno, NV 89512
Room 114

Video or Telephone Conference Connection from the Meeting Site to:

Nevada System of Higher Education
System Administration Building
4300 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Room 105

Friday, January 20, 2023, 10:00 am

Members Present: Mr. Fred Lokken, Executive Commissioner
Ms. Cathy Dinauer, Commissioner
Mr. Dale Erquiaga, Commissioner

Others Present: Ms. Patty Porter, Director, Nevada Office of WICHE
Ms. Renee Davis, Interim Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs
and Community Colleges
Ms. Lynda King, Associate General Counsel, NSHE
Ms. Donna Healy, Executive Assistant to the Interim Vice Chancellor,
Academic and Student Affairs and Community Colleges

Executive Commissioner Fred Lokken called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. Information Only – Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Approved – Minutes

The Nevada WICHE Commission approved the minutes from its November 18, 2022, meeting. (*Ref. 2-WICHE Commission Meeting Minutes, November 18, 2022*).

Commission Dinauer moved approval of the
November 18, 2022, meeting minutes. Executive
Commissioner Lokken seconded. Motion carried.

3. Information Only - Nevada WICHE Executive Commissioner Updates

Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that he will be serving as the ed tech liaison to the regional WICHE Executive Committee. He explained that Regional WICHE is looking to serve a greater

role in the western states; it already provides cyber security insurance and has been doing cybersecurity checks through the [Department of Homeland Security](#). The regional WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies ([WCET](#)) is a principal element of this effort and is working on proposals to provide more services. He will be moderating a session in an upcoming virtual WCET summit.

Commissioner Dinauer shared an experience regarding a recent discussion with a Reno nursing student who has a second baccalaureate and was wondering why she was not able to qualify for related WICHE funds. She stated that the student's questions have been answered; and thanked Director Patty Porter for her assistance with that issue.

Commissioner Dinauer also shared that she was asked to serve on a regional WICHE committee looking to address workforce issues, including nursing shortages. She recommended involving the nursing school deans at UNR and UNLV, and the director of the hospital association. The first committee meeting will occur via webinar in February.

Commissioner Erquiaga noted that he is grateful for the appointment. He deals with the WICHE staff and other western system heads frequently; they are planning to visit in February.

4. Information Only – Patty Porter, Director, Nevada Office of WICHE: Update on the Nevada Office of WICHE activities

Director Patty Porter provided updates on the following matters.

- Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS): Registered Nurse (RN) to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Program
 - At a video meeting on December 29, 2022, Cindy Pitlock, Administrator at Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, shared information regarding \$6,000,000 in APRA funding; this amount will fully fund tuition and fees for 50 RN to APRN students at the UNR and UNLV schools of nursing.
 - APRA funds will end FY 25; this funding is a sub-award to UNR and UNLV.
 - Both institutions will select and certify that the graduate students are Nevada residents and in good standing in their programs.
 - The institutions will also track the students for one year after graduating (regarding practicing in Nevada).
 - The institutions discussed not overlapping in outreach to students and if there was enough of a pool to meet both program goals.
 - Administrator Pitlock had referred Director Porter to Dr. Cameron Duncan, Interim Dean at the UNR Orvis School of Nursing, for more details.
 - Based on Director Porter's conversation with Dr. Duncan on January 4, 2023, it was determined that there would be enough graduate students between this program and the Nevada Office of WICHE's Nevada Health Profession Education Program (HPEP) to meet targeted numbers.
 - Director Porter emailed Administrator Pitlock with the update.
 - Discussion

- Director Porter stated that in further conversation with Dr. Duncan the \$6,000,000 is divided with \$3,000,000 for UNR and \$3,000,000 for UNLV. The Deans from School of Nursing are the point person for the funding.
- Commissioner Dinauer shared that \$6,000,000 for 50 slots is a lot of money.
- Director Porter stated the funding is almost a full ride for the student.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken said that it is an incredible amount of money. It must include administrative costs.
- Director Porter said in conversation with Dr. Duncan the funding only covers tuition and fees. It does not cover housing, living expenses.
- Director Porter also stated that this funding is handled as a sub award to UNR, and UNLV and they are responsible for certifying that the participants meet the program requirements and then reporting back to the DCFS. Director Porter stated that it is understandable why they are sub awarding out the funds and shifting work to awardees with them reporting back.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated philosophically, this is concerning; certainly, the agency's mismanagement over an amazing period has taken us out of circulation. The "piecemeal" approach versus using focus and coordination in reviewing the multiple approaches to determine if it is a good fit for Nevada.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken suggested that we can hold a retreat session with a deep dive regarding this topic.
- Director Porter shared that the reason APRN was selected was due to them being sole providers which means they; they do not need a collaborating physician as opposed to Physician Assistants (PA's) who do. Also, this was a way to address the immediate need of sole providers in Nevada.
- Commissioner Dinauer stated that they have independent practice authority in the state of Nevada thus for the rural areas it works very well.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked if there is there a stipulation that require 3-4 years of service in the state?
- Director Porter stated that the goal is to have graduates stay in Nevada. In conversation with Dr. Duncan, they will track the student for one year after program completion.
- Director Porter stated that in conversation with DCFS Administrator they stated that in general most stay in Nevada after they earn their APRN license. Commissioner Dinauer state it would be nice if they could work in underserved areas for three years.
- Commissioner Erquiaga asked how long the program of study for an APRN? Commissioner Dinauer state it depends but approximately two years and postgraduate.
- Director Porter stated that these are ARPA funds; they must be spent by 2025 and once the funds are spent, the funding will not be extended.
- Commissioner Erquiaga stated that he agrees with Executive Commissioner Lokken. In Commissioner Erquiaga other role, they have been asked about Nursing slots in workforce development and having coherence in where the money goes will be useful. Commissioner Erquiaga will do their part to ensure that Director Porter/Nevada Office of WICHE is included in this discussion.

Agrees that keeping track of this will be important. There has been a push for more Nursing slots. Commissioner Dinauer said that there has been a push for Nursing faculty and enrollment but there has been pushback. Commissioner Erquiaga stated that there is issue with keeping Nursing faculty when they can go and become traveling nurses and get paid more money. The issue is when you increase more nursing slots you need more faculty and thus the need to have some coherence to where the money goes (during the legislative session and beyond) will be useful.

- **Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) FY 20 Audit Summary**
 - As requested by the Legislative Bureau Counsel (LCB) Auditor, Daniel L. Crossman, an update on the progress of the FY 20 LCB audit recommendations was submitted by Director Porter via email on Monday, January 9, 2023.
 - The update addressed the Nevada Office of WICHE progress before and after the move to NSHE.
 - Due to number of agencies appearing before the sub-audit committee at the January 2023 meeting, the Nevada Office of WICHE may appear during the legislative session if there is another meeting; if not, they will appear after the session.

- **Request for Expanded Program Narrative for Loan and Stipend and Administration Account**
 - On December 20, 2022, a request was received from Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, and Marilyn Dondero-Loop, Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, regarding an expanded program narrative for each of the budget accounts included in the Executive Budget to assist committee members in their review of agency budgets.
 - Agencies should be prepared to discuss the information contained in the expanded program narrative and to address questions during the budget hearings.
 - Director Porter submitted a final draft for consideration in the NSHE Budget by the deadline, Wednesday, January 18, 2023; the draft information will be added to the NSHE Budget expanded program narrative.
 - The deadline to submit budget information to the LCB Fiscal Analysis Division 5 pm on Friday, January 27, 2023.

- **Performance Indicators/Measures in Expanded Program Narrative**
 - Amended from last FY 22-23 Expanded Program Narrative to reflect change in NRS 397 eliminating loans and for possible action under agenda item 7.
 - Number of Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP): 56 actuals for FY 22, 43 projected for FY 23, 30 projected for FY 24, 28 projected for FY 25.
 - Number of Health Profession Student Education Program (HPEP): 9 actuals for FY 22, 28 projected for FY 23, 33 projected for FY 24, 36 projected for FY 25.
 - Number of Participants Practicing in Nevada (based on active lists) are 70 actuals for FY 22, and 70 are projected for FY 23-25.
 - Discussion

- Director Porter stated that were going to redirect funding for 12 slots for RN to BSN Pipeline program to the community college, TMCC, CSN, GBC and Nevada State College.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that the focus of NV WICHE has been at the graduate level, but when you look at the critical needs the addition of RN to BSN slots fills a big hole.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken added at the upcoming retreat discussion, we would like to see a larger revenue stream into WICHE once we stabilize and fix our issues; we are the logical partner to accelerate programs and can do so much more for Clark County and the rural counties. Need to look at how we help Veterinarians and Allied Health.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that if the legislature is not satisfied with the performance indicators, then they can approve more funding.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that Nevada WICHE is still being funded at the 1990's level and not asked for additional funding We are starting to get reconnected to partners in the state and have Commissioner Dinauer getting Nursing back in the conversation.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that it is possible with this legislature session they will look for places to put additional money addressing behavioral health, especially in social work. We should keep our ears and eyes open during the session.
 - Director Porter shared that the request to move funding from the account technician position to contract services was not approved by Governor's Finance Office; we will have to make a special request.
 - Director Porter stated that the number of Nevada WICHE participants serving in Nevada is 70 for FY 23 and used this as the baseline for FY 24 and FY 25. Director Porter utilized the techniques regional WICHE uses to follow up on participants practicing in Nevada.
- **Executive Order 2023-003 issued January 12, 2023: Order Freezing the Issuance of New Regulations and Requiring a Review of Existing Regulations by All Executive Branch Agencies, Departments, Boards and Commissions**
 - Undertake comprehensive review of the regulations subject to enforcement.
 - On or before May 1, 2023, provide a report to Governor's Office detailing how regulations subject to its enforcement be streamlined, clarified, reduced, or otherwise improved to ensure regulations unnecessarily inhibiting economic growth.
 - The report should include not less than ten (10) regulations (NV Office of WICHE has 8 regulations) recommended for removal, ranking them in descending order of priority.
 - Prior to submitting a report, shall hold a public hearing, after providing reasonable notice per NRS 233B, to key stakeholders to vet changes and provide a summary in the report.
 - Section 4 states no new regulations shall be proposed, approved, or acted on unless stated in Section 5, which for NV Office of WICHE (item c) - regulations that are necessary in the pursuit of federal funds and certifications and (item d) - regulations that affect the application of powers, functions, and duties essential to the operation of the agency.

- Lynda King, Associate General Counsel, has indicated that the Nevada Office of WICHE falls under Section 5 of the Executive Order.
- Discussion:
 - Associate General Counsel King noted that the office recommends moving forward with the regulations submitted to LCB. Despite having been removed from the Office of the Governor, compliance with the executive order is required; the compact appointment of Commissioners by the Governor makes the Office of WICHE a state agency. Associate General Counsel King stated they will continue to work with Director Porter in submitting a written explanation to Governor's Office.
 - Director Porter asked Associate General Counsel King what happens to the regulations submitted to the LCB? Associate General Counsel King stated that those regulations are subject to how LCB chooses to move them forward; however, the executive order itself should not be an obstacle to moving forward with the regulations.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that in the 2021 legislative session, several actions were taken forward such as moving items in Nevada Revised Statute to Nevada Administrative Code to make changes more easily than passing legislation. We seek to have more flexibility; we are using the regulations to establish our purpose and operations going forward.

5. Approved - ECSI Heartland Loan Servicer FY 23-25 Contract

The Commission considered the approval of the ECSI Hartland Loan Servicer FY 23-25 contract and authorized Director Patty Porter to execute the contract on behalf of the Commission, subject to any State contract authorization requirements. (*Ref. 5-ECSI Independent Contractor Form, ESCI Master Services Agreement, Selecting Select Service Order Form*).

Director Porter presented for approval of the ECSI Heartland Loan Servicer FY 23-25 Contract. Director Porter explained that the loan servicer provides a database for tracking student stipends; students can check their accounts at any time. If students complete their requirements, their accounts are closed. If students do not complete their requirements, the loan servicer converts the student stipends into loans and manages the billing, etc. The new contract will include an increased dollar amount to provide additional services to the students.

Commissioner Erquiaga moved approval of the ECSI Heartland Loan Servicer FY 23-25 Contract and authorization of Director Porter to finalize the contract subject to any State contract authorization requirements. Commissioner Dinauer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

6. Approved - Appointment of Regional WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee Member

The Commission considered taking action to appoint Nevada State Senator Melanie Scheible to the regional WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee.

Director Patty Porter presented for approval the appointment of Nevada State Senator Melanie Scheible to the regional WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee. Executive Commissioner stated that the last two meetings had a good attendance. There used to be two and now there are four appointees serving two-year terms; we try to have equal party and senate/assembly representation. It is a great opportunity for legislators to further their work as champions of higher education and to connect with their counterparts in other states.

Commissioner Dinauer moved approval of the appointment of Nevada State Senator Melanie Scheible to the regional WICHE legislative Advisory Committee. Commissioner Erquiaga seconded. Motion carried.

7. Approved – Performance Indicators for Agency

The Commission considered taking action to approve the following performance indicators for the Nevada Office of WICHE for FY22 through FY 25:

- Number of WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and Nevada Health Profession Education Program (HPEP) filled slots.
- Number of WICHE PSEP and Nevada HPEP participants practicing in Nevada.

Director Porter presented for approval the performance indicators for the Nevada Office of WICHE for FY 22 through FY 25.

Chancellor Erquiaga moved approval of performance indicators as presented. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. Motion carried.

8. Information Only – 2023 Nevada Legislative Session

Director Patty Porter provided an update and facilitated discussion regarding the 2023 Nevada Legislative Session and bills which may possibly impact the Nevada Office of WICHE.

- [AB37](#)
 - Authorizes the establishment of the Behavioral Health Workforce Development Center of Nevada. (BDR 34-361), An ACT relating to behavioral health; authorizing the establishment by Board of Regent of the Behavioral Health Workforce Development Center at one or more institutions within NSHE for outreach/recruit high school/adults, decreased time from graduation of program to practice as provider, creates consortium, internships,

partnerships, strategic plan for state, and coordinate to promote efficient utilization of state resources.

- Purpose related to NV Office of WICHE which is to increase the number of providers of behavioral health care who have the specialized training necessary to address the most critical shortages of such providers in the State.
- Also defines provider of behavioral health care as licensed as physician, physician assistant or registered nurse and practices in psychiatry, addiction medicine or another specialty related to behavioral health; or school counselor or school psychologist. Note: Funding for implementation is not provided.

Sponsors: Committee on Education

Status/Location: First Reading

Most Recent History Actions: 12/1/2022

Discussion

- Commissioner Erquiaga stated that the proposed bill would create a center at NSHE. As Acting Chancellor Commissioner Erquiaga worked with Rural Behavioral Health Board to propose this bill.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga will be proposing this to the Board of Regents (as the Acting Chancellor) to support this bill and there will be a fiscal note which has not come out yet. Once the fiscal note released this information would go to the legislature. It would be funded out of the biennium budget. The center is modeled after one in Nebraska and replicated in one other state. They have worked with UNR and UNLV in the design of this bill This would be housed at NSHE and administrated probably by UNLV.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated this is a good piece of legislation and will see if board agrees. It is possible that Nevada WICHE could also be a source of stipends for these students going through this program. Unsure if funding will just fund stipends or just the administrative side.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that regional WICHE has a rural health initiative has in place in Arizona and other states that could provide more information. Director Porter mentioned that Nevada WICHE funds psychological internships for doctoral students and will send Commissioner Erquiaga more information on this program.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that the outreach model of the center starts in middle/high school with career awareness in public behavioral health field and has an internship program in postsecondary education where interested students get placed.
- [AB45](#)
 - Creates a program to repay the student education loans of certain providers of health care. (BDR 18-359), Amending NRS 226, on behalf of the State Treasurer and administrator of the program called “The Student Loan Repayment for Providers of Health Care in Underserved Communities Program.”
 - Requirements to include:
 - Nevada residency
 - Graduation on or after July 31, 2023, from an NSHE institution or another accredited higher education institution in the state.
 - A degree in health-related field.

- Be actively licensed, certified or registered in good standing to practice in the state as provider of healthcare; and
 - Commitment to at least five years of clinical practice as provider of health care.
- The program may not provide more than \$120,000 for repayment of student loans.
- The State Treasurer may employ staff necessary to administer the Program. Funding of \$5,000,000 each year must be transferred to Student Loan Repayment for Providers of Health Care in Underserved Communities.

Sponsors: Committee on Government Affairs

Status/Location: First Reading

Most Recent History Actions: 12/1/2022

Discussion

- Director Porter stated that in the bill it defines provider of health care using Nevada Revised Statute 629.031 which is a broad list ranging from certificate, associate, bachelor and graduate degree.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga asked if the funds can be used to repay WICHE loans?
 - Director Porter stated it is possible for students with loans who graduated after July 1, 2023.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated then it would apply to NV WICHE but Director Porter stated that there might be more participants with stipends who do not fulfill their commitment have their stipends converted to loans though this is not the goal of the program. Goal is to keep providers in Nevada and not collecting loan revenue.
 - Director Porter said for discussion for the Commission later is whether Nevada WICHE should be issuing stipends on the front end or be on the back end of repaying loans. Participant completes service and then agency send a check to loan servicer to repay the loan.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that regional WICHE said that other states are doing grants, not loans, so we may lose students for that reason.
 - Director Porter stated that the bill also includes outreach.
- [AB69](#)
 - Expands the loan repayment program administered by the Nevada Health Service Corps to include certain providers of behavioral health care. (BDR 34-399); existing law (NRS 396) authorizes the University of Nevada School of Medicine to establish a Nevada Health Corps to encourage practitioners of certain health care professions to practice in shortage areas of the state.
 - This bill expands to include providers of behavioral health care such as licensed, certified, or registered physicians, physician assistants or registered nurses and practices in psychiatry, addiction medicine or other specialties related to behavioral health.

- A provider of behavioral health care must have an active license, commit to serving in a position for at least two years, and the employer of the provider must accept Medicare, Medicaid and apply the Children's Health Insurance Program as full payment.
- This is a loan repayment program; funding for [Nevada Health Service Corps](#), pursuant to NRS 396.900, is the sum of \$1,500,000 to repay loans on behalf of providers of behavioral health care.

Sponsors: Committee on Education

Status/Location: First Reading

Most Recent History Actions: 12/1/2022

Discussion

- Director Porter stated the requestor is the Washoe Behavioral Health Policy Board and an expansion of a current Nevada Health Corps program through the UNR School of Medicine.
- Director Porter stated that all these bills have the theme of behavioral health, loan repayment and some are attaching required practice ranging from 2-5 years of service.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated the revolving door gets very frustrating, especially with establishing relationships in the behavioral health field; five years is a long time. This also points to a lack of coordination. This could be a topic at our retreat. One idea is Nevada WICHE or NSHE hosting an annual summit to bring all the players together. Is there something like that?
- Commissioner Dinauer stated that there are existing groups in the state, but they operate on a piecemeal basis. Director Porter asked if there is a Nursing Consortium and Commissioner Dinauer said no there is no center where groups fall under.
- Director Porter is curious how these other entities are going to track their participants. NSHE has been very generous in helping to create Nevada WICHE Access database. In Montana, they use the Salesforce portal to manage their state financial aid programs but is a very expensive system.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that when these students leave the state, years and years of bad debt can accumulate.
- Director Porter stated the proposed bills are interesting and they all want to keep graduates in Nevada. It will be interesting to see how other agencies certify and track their participants.
- Commissioner Erquiaga stated that the research analyst staff has both these bills on their list, and they are under Education Committee.
- Commissioner Erquiaga asked what Nevada WICHE involvement wants to be? Does NV WICHE want to be involved in the conversation around loan repayment; does WICHE want to play a role in this topic? It might be helpful to have a meeting with the bills sponsors to offer guidance before it goes before the legislative committee. WICHE commissioners could serve as subject matter experts.

- Director Porter said that loan repayment offered by the Treasurers Office could be offered two years at a time after documentation of two years of practice in Nevada thus the work is on the back end after graduation and used as an incentive to recruit into health care fields. Commissioner Erquiaga stated that is why there is outreach in the bill.
- Commissioner Erquiaga asked Director Porter and Executive Commissioner to think if the committee chair asked for advice would you go? Not the whole body of Nevada WICHE Commission but offering expertise, so they do not process bad legislation.
- Executive Commissioner said opportunity to provide greater coordination will provide consistency to the state that avoids chaos and contradictions or competition.
- Director Porter is willing to offer lessons learned as a new Director of Nevada Office of WICHE.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken said another big value to consider is whether WICHE remains a state agency or melds into NSHE; this could be discussed at a future retreat.

9. Information Only - New Business

There was no new business.

10. Information Only - Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Prepared and submitted for approval by:

Patty A. Porter

Director, Nevada Office of WICHE