

**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, November 18, 2022, 10:00 am

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

**Others Present:** Ms. Patty Porter, Director, Nevada Office of WICHE  
Ms. Renee Davis, Interim Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student  
Affairs and Community College  
Ms. Tina Russom, Esq., Deputy General Counsel

Executive Commissioner Fred Lokken called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

**1. Information Only: Public Comment**

- There was no public comment.

**2. October 21, 2022, Minutes Approval** (*Ref. 2-WICHE Commission Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2022*)

Commissioner Dinauer moved to approve the minutes from October 21, 2022. Executive Commissioner Lokken seconded. Motion carried.

**3. Information Only: WICHE Commissioner Updates**

- Commissioner Dinauer shared that she recently attended the regional WICHE Commission meeting in Portland, Oregon; it was incredibly informative.
  - She also noted that she has participated in a discussion with Director Porter regarding funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that may be available for APRN studies.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that he also attended the regional WICHE Commission meeting and noted that it was devoted primarily to strategic planning.

- Conversations occurred regarding where WICHE wants to be in terms of programs, activities, and relevance; they also discussed their fit and level of service/effectiveness to member states. Shared copy of the WICHE Commission Meeting Program with Director and NSHE Chancellor since they act as ambassadors for WICHE.
- Regional WICHE budget is in great shape.
- In Colorado, regional WICHE's home state, an initiative recently passed regarding extending the family leave period; WICHE has been reviewing the topic for approximately six months.
  - The recommendation at the conference was to not participate.
  - WICHE is seen as a government entity under Colorado law, but because of the nature of their 501C status, they chose to waive it for their 80 employees, many of whom work in other states and would not be eligible for the extended leave.
  - They will work to find ways to extend family leave time within the consistency of the Colorado law for all their employees.
- He held many conversations with Kevin Carman, new WICHE Commissioner, former Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Nevada, Reno and currently the Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Wyoming.
- A PowerPoint presentation explained the "westernness" of WICHE and identified why this compact arrangement makes sense.
  - We are the most urbanized of all the United States regions; with all the assumptions that are made about the west, we share so much together.
- Commissioner Dinauer is a member of the Research Committee and Executive Commissioner Lokken is a member of the Policy Committee. When the new Commissioner comes on board there will be a committee assignment for them.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that he has been designated as the liaison for the executive WICHE committee regarding grant funded WICHE programs.

**4. Information Only: Patty Porter, WICHE Director, Update on the Nevada Office of WICHE response to the Governor's Finance Office (GFO) and Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) questions regarding the 2023-25 (FY 24-25) Budget**

*(Ref. 4a-2023-2025 Nevada Office of WICHE Slot Matrix)*

- Director Porter noted that the budget was submitted the Governor's office last August and shared some information regarding the Governor's office response:
  - Director Porter expressed appreciation to NSHE staff who were instrumental in preparing the WICHE response included Tammy Johnson, Assistant Budget Director, and Julia Teska, Budget Director.
  - The budget must balance to the cap; a reduction was made because not all stipend funding was spent, there were some unfilled support positions, and money that was not spent prior to May 15 was reverted to the state.
  - When constructing the budget, a few errors were corrected, including some small penalty adjustments.
  - The LCB wanted to know how the calculations were made; Director Porter noted that she contacted ECSI, the loan servicer, which gave her a month-by-month projection report, broken down by principal and interest.
  - The LCB also requested information regarding the slot matrix; Director Porter updated the format as requested, including the 2023-25 numbers.

- The administration account also had a base reduction due to an unfilled position and less (than estimated) travel incurred.
- Since prior year budgets are used as templates for the upcoming year, adjustments were made for monies unspent in the past and added back into the upcoming year budget.
- Some accounts were “collapsed” into an operating account due to making the budget items transfer properly into NSHE’s financial system, Workday.
- The WICHE director salary and title were incorrectly submitted in the amended biennium budget; they have since been changed to reflect the correct salary and title in Workday.
  - The director job description and salary range were approved by the WICHE Commission on January 4, 2022. The director was hired at \$85,000 and currently \$85,850 due to COLA and merit increases.
  - In 2021 NRS 223.700 statute that lists state unclassified positions removed the Director of the Nevada Office of WICHE as an unclassified position. In addition, recently codified NRS 397 that governs the Western Regional Compact does not list the Director of the Nevada Office of WICHE as unclassified.
- Director Porter noted that on August 5 and October 21, 2022, the director shared with the WICHE Commission the Account Technician position being changed from classified to shared professional between NSHE and Nevada Office of WICHE to improve the search and increase higher level responsibilities. The request was incorrect process to pursue. Later in this meeting for possible action the director will make a request to the Commission to approve moving the Account Technician position salary and fringe to the contract category, so that higher level services can be provided by NSHE Administration to the Nevada Office of WICHE.
- Interim Vice Chancellor Davis noted that NSHE will try to make this hire as a shared position to meet Nevada Office of WICHE needs.
- Executive Commissioner Fred Lokken stated that this is a creative solution and helps with increasing the salary of the position.
- Director Porter stated that by contracting with NSHE to provide higher level services for the Nevada Office of WICHE it would be more efficient than sharing a position. It would also add to the support in the areas of accounting and legal services NSHE administration already gives the Nevada Office of WICHE and makes sense since physical location of the agency resides at NSHE.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that in the MOU discussion we recognized in one sense the Commission could have requested the legislature to dissolve our agency status which certainly would have made it easier. There were a variety of reasons why it was left in place but that still an issue to follow up.
- Director Porter explained that WICHE employees are not participating in the state employee bond indicator because contracted services with NSHE employees are covered under a separate fidelity policy.
- Interim Vice Chancellor Davis stated that it helpful that WICHE does not have to pay additional charges now that they are receiving NSHE administrative services. Director Porter pointed out that Nevada Office of WICHE does not pay rent due to being housed at NSHE. Now that WICHE is a hybrid organization,

some items are challenging since some things apply because of the agency status and other due to NSHE; it will take time for everyone to understand the structure.

- Director Porter also shared that there were additional questions regarding travel, WICHE membership fee and contracted items such as ECSI Loan Servicer.

**5. Approved: Addition of Slots for 2024-25 Slot Matrix**

Director Porter requested the addition of three Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) slots for Physician Assistant and three additional Health Profession Education Program (HPEP) slots for Social Work for Fiscal Year 2025.

Commissioner Dinauer moved to approve the additional slots as requested. Executive Commissioner Lokken seconded. Motion carried.

**Discussion:**

*Commissioner Dinauer asked how the numbers for this request were determined.*

- Director Porter stated that there was \$76,363 to work with within a window of time; she looked at the programs and did the calculations, trying to stay away from programs that were most costly.

**6. Approved: Reallocation of 2023-25 (FY 24-25) Administration Budget to Contract Services**

Director Porter requested reallocation within the administration account of salary and fringe for the Program Coordinator (formerly Account Technician I) position to the contract services category for 2023-2025 (FY 24-25).

- This change will enable the Nevada Office to operate more efficiently and to access expertise and services at a higher level of support by contracting with the Nevada System of Higher Education for the duties that would otherwise be performed by the Account Technician.

Commissioner Dinauer moved to approve the reallocation of funds as requested. Executive Commissioner Lokken seconded. Motion carried.

**7. Information Only: New Business**

- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that since Demarée Michelau took the role of regional WICHE CEO there has been a major effort for President Michelau to reach all the states have not visited since started position; for the next meeting, it would be good if we can confirm details of a February 2023 visit.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken mentioned need to follow up with State Senator Goicoechea regarding inclusion of Veterinary Medicine stipend slots in the state budget (and not require a separate bill draft).
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that the Executive WICHE Commissioner is supposed to be a two-year term and reviewed by the Commission. Waiting for appointment of the third WICHE Commissioner.

- Commissioner Dinauer asked if a possibility of the commission receiving a legislative update regarding items related to WICHE.
  - Tina Russom, Esq., Deputy General Counsel, noted that commissioners may request those types of updates.
  - Director Porter noted that she will provide an update at the next meeting.

**8. Information Only: Public Comment.**

- There was no public comment

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 am

Prepared and submitted by:

Patty A. Porter

Director, Nevada Office of WICHE