



**Nevada Office of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education**  
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**Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 4, 2022**  
**2:00 p.m.**

		<b><u>AGENDA</u></b>
<b>1</b>		<p><b>Call to order and roll call.</b> The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. This meeting was posted in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 241, Nevada's Open Meeting Law (OML).</p> <p>In Attendance: Fred Lokken: Executive Commissioner, Nevada WICHE Dr. Melody Rose: Nevada WICHE Commissioner Cathy Dinauer: Nevada WICHE Commissioner Crystal Abba: Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and Community Colleges, NSHE Yvonne Nevarez-Goodson: Deputy General Counsel, NSHE Jose Quiroga: Research Analyst, Academic and Student Affairs, NSHE Renee Davis: Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, NSHE</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Information Only</b>	<p><b>Public Comment.</b> None.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>For Possible Action</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Acting Director of the Nevada Office of WICHE.</b></p> <p>Vice Chancellor Abba commented that due to the resignation of the previous Director, there is a vacancy in the position of the Director. She recommended the Commission appoint José Quiroga, Research Analyst, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education, as its Acting Director until a permanent Director is appointed. He has a history and experience in financial aid, bringing an important lens to the position and work needed moving forward.</p> <p>Commissioner Lokken called for a motion. Commissioner Rose made a motion to appoint José Quiroga as Acting Director until a permanent Director is appointed. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. All voted in favor of the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.</p>

<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>For Possible Action</b></p>	<p><b>Commission Delegation to Acting Director.</b></p> <p>Jose Quiroga commented that the duties being considered for delegation today to the Acting Director were previously delegated to the Director. The purpose of delegating the duties is for the Acting Director to be able to carry out day to day running of the programs and necessary duties until a new Director is appointed. The duties delegated are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Pursuant to NRS 397.030, authority to transmit proposed language to the Legislative Counsel Bureau pursuant to NRS Chapter 233B for the development of proposed, permanent administrative regulations for future consideration and adoption by the Commission;</li><li>2) Pursuant to NRS 397.062 and 397.063, as amended by Sections 15 and 16 of Assembly Bill 247, respectively, of the 2021 Legislative Session, authority to administer and account for the Nevada Office of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education’s Account;</li><li>3) Pursuant to NRS 397.064, as amended by Section 17 of Assembly Bill 247 of the 2021 Legislative Session and NRS 397.0645, as amended by Section 18 of Assembly Bill 247 of the 2021 Legislative Session, authority to convert a stipend into a loan for failure to satisfy the criteria for a stipend and enter into loan agreements with participants that include the repayment terms, bear the interest rates, and assess default and delinquency charges and attorneys’ fees based upon criteria established in the Commission regulations;</li><li>4) Pursuant to NRS 397.068, as amended by Section 19 of Assembly Bill 247 of the 2021 Legislative Session, authority to determine participant infractions for failure to comply with requirements set forth in the Commission’s regulations and impose authorized fines and/or expel participants from the program based upon criteria established in the Commission’s regulations;</li><li>5) Pursuant to NRS 397.0685, as amended by Section 20 of Assembly Bill 247 of the 2021 Legislative Session, authority to reduce the period of required professional practice for a stipend based upon the criteria established in the Commission’s regulations;</li><li>6) Pursuant to NRS Chapter 397, authority to interpret and enforce any existing participant agreements or contracts.</li></ol> <p>Commissioner Rose made a motion to approve the temporary delegation to the Acting Director of duties listed under Item 4 of the agenda until a new Director is hired. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. All voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Discussion: Commissioner Rose asked whether Mr. Quiroga would be provided additional salary or stipend during the period of service as Acting Director due to increased duties. Vice Chancellor Abba recommended a 20% salary stipend, but mentioned that as an NSHE decision, it does not require Commission approval.</p>
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<p>5.</p>	<p><b>For Possible Action</b></p>	<p><b>Director Vacancy - Job Posting and Search Status; Delegation of Search Process to Executive Commissioner and NSHE Staff.</b></p> <p>José Quiroga gave a summary of the position announcement for the Director of the Nevada Office of WICHE. Mr. Quiroga mentioned that the first year of the new Director’s time will be focused on the items discussed under Agenda Item #6.</p> <p>Commissioner Rose asked which of the items found under Agenda Item #6 will be prioritized by new Director. Vice Chancellor Abba responded that current NSHE Academic Affairs staff is focused on the development of new regulations given the legislative changes from 2021, and it is anticipated that the new director will be hired as during that process. The second priority will be reviewing accounts. Other items will likely be fully taken up by new Director and addressed during first year on the job.</p> <p>Commissioner Rose recommended that equity and diversity language be added to the job description and to make sure the position announcement is posted in places that will reach a broad and diverse audience of potential employees. Vice Chancellor Abba responded that with the Commission’s approval she will make sure to work with Human Resources on the language and posting procedures. Yvonne Nevarez-Goodson commented that the Commission may choose to make a motion to approve the job announcement with the authority for NSHE staff to amend the language in consultation with Human Resources to address equity and diversity, and to confirm that this position is an NSHE employee.</p> <p>Commissioner Dinauer made a motion to approve the position announcement for the Director of the Nevada Office of WICHE with authority to amend language to include equity and diversity component in the announcement. Commissioner Rose seconded. All voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Commissioner Lokken thanked NSHE staff that has worked on this search process.</p> <p>Commissioner Rose made a motion to delegate the first part of the search process to Commissioner Lokken and NSHE Academic and Student Affairs staff, including reviewing initial applications, determining minimum qualifications, and recommending no more than 5 applicants for interview by the Commission. Commissioner Dinauer seconded the motion. Commissioners Rose and Dinauer voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Lokken abstained. Motion passed.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Information Only</b></p>	<p><b>Nevada Office of WICHE Status Report.</b></p> <p>At the discretion of the Chair, Agenda Item #6 was discussed before Item #5.</p> <p>Vice Chancellor Abba commented that Academic and Student Affairs staff has begun a review of Nevada Office of WICHE programs, which is the type of review usually conducted when a staff member resigns. José Quiroga presented a review of the programs and the need to draft new regulations and procedures. The regulations are a high priority since Assembly Bill 247 removed several statutes governing the Nevada Office of WICHE and directed the Commission to regulate</p>

		<p>its operations and programs through regulation. Previous legislative audits have also found the need for stronger policies, procedures and internal controls. The current Procedures Manual is very outdated and will need to be revised once regulations are enacted. Other obligations include the following needs: 1) to create a consistent timeline for awarding of stipends under the Nevada Office of WICHE programs which will align with the goals of the Commission; 2) to project diminishing loan repayments going forward; 3) to review all open loan accounts for failure to meet program requirements; 4) to create an outreach strategy to recruit students; and 5) to review all open and recently closed accounts to make sure all procedures were followed. Since this will take considerable staff time, José Quiroga recommends that searches be carried out as soon as possible for both the new Director position and the vacant Account Technician position.</p> <p>Commissioner Dinauer asked what kind of audits occur. José Quiroga responded that he found documentation of a recent LCB audit with several recommendations, including updating procedures. There is a need to review all open accounts. Some of that work was started under the previous Director. Vice Chancellor Abba commented that there were account reviews that should have been happening in the past but did not, and there were fewer checks and balances because of the nature of a small agency. As part of the Director working within NSHE Academic and Student Affairs, there will be additional support for the agency. Vice Chancellor Abba confirmed that her Department would create written procedures to ensure that accounts are properly administered and increase reporting to the Commission.</p> <p>Commissioner Rose asked about the workload of NSHE legal staff as part of account review. Vice Chancellor Abba responded that the majority of legal resources needed to review statutory and regulatory authority for the Commission to write-off accounts which may have missing documents or other issues. As a preliminary review, between 5 and 18 accounts may have issues which will need to be brought to the Commission. Commissioner Lokken commented that the Commission has previously written off bad debt and that it is appropriate when there has been neglect by the agency.</p>
7.	<b>Information Only</b>	<p><b>New Business.</b></p> <p>Commissioner Lokken mentioned that he may work with the Acting Director to bring information or action items in future agendas regarding supporting workforce needs addressed by community college programs, items that may arise from meetings with potential legislators, and holding a commissioner retreat to discuss strategy.</p>
8.	<b>Information Only</b>	<p><b>Public Comment.</b> None.</p>
9.		<p><b>Adjournment.</b> With no further business, Commissioner Lokken adjourned the meeting at 3:02pm.</p>

