

**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

Thursday, February 1, 2024, 1:00 pm

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. Carrie Parker, Deputy General Counsel, NSHE
Ms. Donna Healy, Executive Assistant, NSHE Department of Academic
and Student Affairs and Community Colleges

Executive Commissioner Fred Lokken called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

1. Information Only – Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Commissioner Updates

The WICHE Commissioners provided the following updates on their activities as commissioners:

- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that he is looking ahead to the May 6, 2024 Regional WICHE Commission meeting and is working on getting a speaker regarding workforce development.

3. Director Update

Director Porter gave an overview of the meeting agenda items.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked if the NV Office of WICHE is following the State of Nevada’s or NSHE’s budget deadlines.
 - Director Porter noted that the office is following the guidelines that are set by the [Governor’s Finance Office](#) (GFO).
 - Even though it is an independent state agency, the NV Office of WICHE budget is “nested” within the NSHE budget.

- Director Porter will participate in the GFO’s kickoff meeting on March 6, 2024 and subsequent hearings.

4. Strategic Planning: Background

Director Porter provided the Commissioners with a background on Nevada Office of WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and Health Profession Education Program (HPEP), including a review of the funding approved for fiscal year 2024/2025 Loan and Stipend and Administration account.

- The NV Office of WICHE currently oversees two programs, the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and the Health Provider Education Program (HPEP).
- Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP): NV Office of WICHE, on behalf of the Nevada WICHE Commissioners, partners with regional WICHE in the selection of PSEP Stipend Grant participants.
 - Regional WICHE has agreements with PSEP institutions that require that the participating school provide a contact in Admissions/Records, Financial Aid/Cashiers and in the Program Field to verify enrollment, disburse funds and academic progress according to regional WICHE requirements.
 - Regional WICHE interacts with PSEP schools and not NV WICHE regarding disbursement of funds and issues with participants.
 - The NV WICHE PSEP application has a consent and waiver section that applicants initial and sign so that Regional WICHE can reach out to a PSEP school regarding the NV WICHE participant.
 - The Consent and Waiver language includes a statement that “information will be made available to Student Exchange Program staff members, designated institutional officials and sent state officials as required to carry out their duties.”

Discussion

- Commissioner Dinauer asked how the programs are approved.
 - Director Porter shared that all programs have to be approved by the Commission; it can be assumed that the current programs were approved by the NV WICHE Commission and included reports such as the recent PSEP Evaluation Report which used US Department of Labor and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that [Regional WICHE](#) has a fabulous institutional research (IR) department which works on major studies.
 - Everything is currently driven by our 16th member, the Pacific Islanders, who need everything.
- Commissioner Erquiaga asked if any of the funded degree programs exist in Nevada.
 - Director Porter noted that the Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy (currently at a private school) programs are at UNLV, and the Physician Assistant (PA) program (currently at a private school) is fully accredited at UNR.
- Commissioner Erquiaga asked if a Nevada student can get PSEP money to attend a Nevada program.
 - Director Porter replied that per the current practice, Nevada PSEP students can only go to PSEP schools that are participating; for now, the answer is no.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that the last time these topics were discussed was when Thom Reilly was the NSHE Chancellor.
 - Part of the discussion was the re-naming of HCAP to HPEP and the need to be more aggressive with that program, and we were told that we were the only one of the 15 states that had an in-state program that tended to mirror some of the aspects of PSEP.
 - From a point of access and affordability point of view, Chancellor Reilly was concerned about the public institutions not stepping up and showing leadership to meet the needs on the list.
 - We are not prohibited from nor encouraged to make changes.
 - Director Porter added that in Nevada, if there is not an available PSEP program, then they go on to an HPEP program.
 - PSEP schools have to be fully accredited.

- Commissioner Erquiaga asked if the public and private Nevada programs take out of state students PSEP funds from other regional compact states.
 - Director Porter stated that they do; Commissioner Dinauer identified that as the reciprocity program.
- The Nevada Office of WICHE [website](#) has been updated to include a benefits section, which breaks out where students are attending.
- Director Porter discussed the Health Profession Education Program (HPEP):
 - This Nevada-based program is overseen by Nevada Office of WICHE on behalf of NV WICHE Commissioners in the selection of HPEP Stipend Grants.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that the Nevada Office of WICHE is the only state agency set up to process loans; we have had great success with this model that is set up to improve the quality of life in this state.
 - The Nevada Office of WICHE does not have agreements with HPEP higher education institutions and it requires more work that is done by regional WICHE for PSEP.
 - Limited information is exchanged to transfer funds for HPEP participants to these schools.
 - Certification of eligible Nevada residents is conducted by NV WICHE requesting information from applicants regarding NV residency and enrollment in professional program for practice field via application, contract, and Practice Questionnaire.
 - A section was added to the NV WICHE HPEP 2023-24 application called “Acknowledgement of consent for educational record transfer” which is similar to the PSEP consent and waiver.
 - Many of the HPEP participants are working full time; it may be helpful to focus on the last two years.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked about offering full-time terminal programs.
 - Director Porter stated that traditional PSEP programs are full-time, but not necessarily for social work and advanced practice nurse practitioner.
 - Graduate programs typically have a timeline requirement.
 - Advanced practice nursing applicants can apply in the last two years of their program.
 - It would be helpful to set up a workable, consistent model.
 - Commissioner Dinauer noted that most of them are already employed and are in part-time programs; it is the nature of the profession.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that we provide incentive funding; would it make the most sense to provide front-end funding rather than back-end funding?
 - Director Porter noted that she is looking at this with the perspective of managing the program.
 - Once students sign their contracts, they give an estimated date of when they believe they will graduate.
 - Part-time programs are more challenging to work with; there is a need to support these programs.
 - Some other agencies are also supporting them, for example, with the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that special funding was given for a two-year geriatric nursing program brought forward by State of Nevada Senator Joyce Woodhouse; we are in an aging state and need more people who are trained to work with that population.
 - The language in the bill was purely generic and would be funding anything that would develop a skillset to serve a specific population.
 - We looked at sets of classes but got lost between the idea and the implementation.
 - As we work with the legislators, we should keep sidenotes on funding to remain aware of the intention.

- Director Porter noted that these ideas are well-intended, but, along with Commissioner Dinauer, questioned how they would be operationalized.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga confirmed that the majority of the students are attending Nevada programs/institutions.
 - Director Porter noted that a majority of the advanced practice nursing and social work students are attending at UNR and UNLV.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that we were able to fund students outside the state but we could not fund them when they attended in-state.
 - Director Porter noted that that is a topic to be explored.
 - Service payback of PSEP is anywhere in Nevada; HPEP service payback is in medically underserved areas, as designated by the federal [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA), with the exception of the Veterinary Medicine USU program, as designated by SB 342, to be anywhere in Nevada.
 - Designating location parameters could discourage many from participating in these programs.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken asked if we want to discuss this with the legislature.
 - Without the trigger of SB 342, how many of the 70 students would, ultimately, not be located in western Nevada or Clark County?
 - Director Porter noted that as we get into long-term planning, we need to consider who we are serving, what types of programs do we want to offer, and if we want to be all about stipend grants or also be a voice in the workforce field.
 - Offering other incentives such as helping to pay for housing would be helpful.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that piloting the veterinary model supports that thinking; not all the incentives would come from this program but would also come from partnerships.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that all three of the zones (that subdivide Nevada) should have an equivalent quality of healthcare and life; we should be driven by the needs of the state.

Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium (NV-PIC)

Director Porter shared the following information regarding the [Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium](#) (NV-PIC):

- A consortium agreement exists between Nevada DPBH, regional WICHE (supervises interns) and Nevada WICHE which funds the internships.
- NV WICHE transferred \$112,500 to fund three doctoral internships of \$33,000 for FY 24.
- NV-PIC was developed to increase the mental health workforce and ultimately help public access to mental health services; NV-PIC is open to out-of-state students.
- NV-PIC offers a one-year, full time doctoral internship.
- Training takes place at two training sites in or around Las Vegas Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services and Carson City Rural Clinic.
- Director Porter visited the Southern Nevada Adult Health Services Forensics site (in Las Vegas) in June, 2023.
- As of June 2023, 20 interns have graduated: 18 graduates from out-of-state, 15 graduates licensed (8 in Nevada).
- Fifty percent of the graduate interns have remained in Nevada and 7 stayed within the state system for postdoctoral fellowships.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken clarified that this program was brought to his attention in spring, 2015 as a means to provide help, and he would like for the Commission to look at it and determine if it should be a part of Nevada WICHE since it provides support for a small number of individuals.
 - Other areas to look include broadband and telehealth patient assessments.
- Director Porter noted that an update has been provided to the commission on how the program is doing.
 - The report dated June 2023 states that 20 interns were funded, 18 were out of state, 15 graduates were licensed of which 8 were in Nevada, 50% graduate interns remain in Nevada and 7 stayed within the state system.
- Director Porter also shared that UNR and UNLV use post-doc interns to staff because they need the hours; they are also given training and stipends.
 - The Veterans Administration (VA) has sites in the north and south; their stipend amount is lower, but they provide additional benefits such as medical and dental insurance, and sick and annual leave time.
 - Their numbers are lower, but there is a huge need for psychologists and post-docs.
- Director Porter noted that the stipend currently being offered for this program is lower than what is being offered by UNR, UNLV and other sites within the United States.
- Director Porter stated that the numbers are small for this program but there is a huge need in Nevada for psychologists, especially post-doctorate.
- Commissioner Erquiaga noted that a new center has been approved by the Board of Regents; it is administratively housed at UNLV, in cooperation with UNR, in the behavioral health workspace.
 - This feels like a legacy program; the money could cover a certain number of slots, but it may be best housed in another agency.
- Director Porter stated that we have one more year in the contract; it goes through 2025.
 - The Commission needs to determine if they should continue this program; it is connected to regional WICHE so if it is not continued, we need to let them know.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that this is the most money we spend for one individual; it is not moving the needle on mental health and the amount of money it is allocated could fund a nursing pipeline program.
- Director Porter noted that she visited the program in person where she met the interns and watched the presentations last year from the interns who completed their projects; in her opinion, the money that was spent was worthwhile and the state of Nevada benefitted.
 - Questions such as whether or not to continue are valid.
 - If we are going to pivot, Director Porter noted that she can move forward with notifying those involved (if that is direction received from Commissioners when they discuss long or short-term planning).
- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked if other partnerships existed that would bring in the rural population.
 - WICHE is always doing mental health projects; this does not resemble the [Arizona mental health initiative](#).

Loan and Stipend Account to Fund PSEP and HPEP Stipend Grants

- Director Porter shared the following information regarding the Loan and Stipend Account to Fund PSEP and HPEP Stipend Grants:
 - The base budget appropriated for FY 24 is \$992,370, Loan Repayment Projection \$105,484=\$1,097,904.
 - The base budget appropriated for FY 25 is \$997,448, Loan Repayment Projection \$100,406=\$1,097,904.
 - 2023-2025 Nevada Office of WICHE Biennial Budget Loan and Stipend Slot Matrix:
 - PSEP stipend grant support fees/slots are more expensive than HPEP due to the cost of professional programs (out of state or private school tuition) for PSEP and increase in support fees which occurs every two years.

- The NV WICHE Commission will vote in May 2024 on the increase of PSEP support fees.
 - HPEP support fees/stipend slots have not increased and most Nevada residents funded are attending public institutions, with a few enrolled in private online schools.
 - Questions to consider:
 - Continue transferring funding to Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) NV-PIC?
 - If yes to fund NV-PIC then with remaining funds what are your priorities for PSEP and HPEP program fields?
 - FY 23, PSEP 39 Slots funded, 29 for HPEP, final.
 - FY 24, PSEP 38 slots funded, 49 for HPEP. Projected.
 - FY 25, PSEP 36 slots funded, 49 for HPEP, Projected.
- Administration Account:
 - Base budget appropriation for FY 24 and FY 25 is \$367,102.
 - This covers personnel salaries & benefits (director, classified, temporary support), travel (WICHE meetings, Nevada Outreach), and operating expenses (\$186,622, \$7,200 such as loan servicer, \$5,100 DocuSign) which includes regional WICHE membership fee (FY 24 was \$164,000, FY 25 will be \$169,000).
 - Questions to consider:
 - Put in FY 26-27 biennial budget: an upgrade of Classified position of Accountant Technician I grade 5 to Management Analyst I grade 5?
 - Put in FY 26-27 biennial budget: continue to fund a Program Officer position (funded by SB342), which made \$8 million provision for the stipend grant for Nevada residents to attend USU Veterinary Medical School?
 - The position is only funded for FY 24-25.
 - Put in FY 26-27 biennial budget an increase in operating to cover the increases in regional WICHE regional membership fee, increase in collections support from loan servicer and outreach for the Nevada Office of WICHE staff?
 - Note that if IFC approves in April 2024 funding for SB342 this will add a third program to the Nevada Office of WICHE.

Discussion

- Director Porter stated that up until May 15, funds that have not been spent must be reverted to the state.
 - Any loan repayment revenue collected between May 16 and June 30 will be retained by the Nevada Office of WICHE.
 - This is documented in a letter of intent from the legislature and Director Porter is tracking these numbers.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that the PSEP payment is due in November; historically (prior to 2017) there were two occasions when we had to notify for a request of coverage due to not having enough funds to cover the stipends.
- Director Porter stated that she is in the process of converting some stipends to loans.
- The Commission will be voting on a proposed increase in support fees; the amounts change yearly.
- If NV WICHE decides to no longer fund the NV-PIC program, those funds may or may not be available for other WICHE funding.
- Director Porter explained the structure of the NV WICHE administration account, with funds for membership, salaries, etc.
 - Director Porter also discussed her 12% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and 1% merit increase will be funded with salary savings; the new temporary staff member will also be funded in a similar manner.

- Commissioner Erquiaga noted that for the \$164K regional membership fee, WICHE runs the PSEP program, the Commission meetings, etc.
 - The Nevada Office of WICHE is paying the WICHE membership fee, with NSHE providing no funding for the membership, even though NSHE uses WICHE for many things.
 - Director Porter noted that the MOU between the Nevada Office of WICHE and NSHE, includes many services and housing for the Office, etc.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that the Commission is obligated under the compact, but it is billed as a state membership.
 - Commissioner Dinauer asked if there is a way to have the billing paid from several NSHE departments.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga asked about the value of services provided to the Nevada Office of WICHE and to NSHE.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that the NSHE memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NV WICHE states that everything will be absorbed by NSHE.
 - Examples of services from NSHE to the Nevada Office of WICHE have recently included legal counsel services regarding the USU contract and an updated website.
 - Director Porter noted that an accounting of services can be provided in the future.
 - The budget moved under NSHE but the agency is still an independent state agency.
 - Director Porter is an administrative faculty member under NSHE.

5. Strategic Planning: Overview of Occupational Data

Director Patty Porter provided the Commissioners with an overview of Nevada occupational data related to current demand and long-term projections for 2020-2030, with a focus on occupational data for currently funded PSEP and HPEP program fields as they relate to U.S. Department of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPED) 2021-2022 completion data.

- The development of a critical needs list is underway.
- Geographic areas of Nevada are described as north, south, northeastern, and central.
- When discussing and deciding upon priorities, we need to consider if we are meeting the capacity needs in our state versus if the state has the programs.

Discussion

- Commissioner Dinauer asked for clarification regarding high demand versus shortages.
 - The term being used by the [Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation \(GOWINN\)](#) is high demand occupational analysis.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that this list is separate from the "high demands, high vacancy" list.
- Commissioner Dinauer noted that healthcare diagnosing and treating is a very small pool.
- Commissioner Erquiaga noted that 6-digit codes are what you see more of than the 3-digit codes.
 - For some reason computer operations systems manager is not included in the code.
 - Previously, the high demand target list was owned by GOED; now GOED, GOWINN, and DETR have to decide who owns it.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that it would be helpful for NSHE to provide information that could be used by the Governor, legislature, and individual campuses as we try to project what degrees we need to develop (to what capacity) and what degrees should be dismantled.
 - For efficiency purposes and best use of faculty and resources, we should be de-commissioning programs that are well past capacity and focus on high demand areas that will grow the economy and quality of life and meet the upcoming needs.

- Commissioner Erquiaga noted that other states, including Colorado, are picking fields that are not only high demand (in terms of where there will be jobs), but also the return on investment for the certificate or degree cost and considering the wages of those jobs.
- Commissioner Erquiaga stated that in our state, health related fields (including mental and behavioral health), account for only about one-third of high demand jobs and asked if WICHE is satisfied with that; would WICHE be more able to meet a need by focusing on it or are we leaving the state without a “player” to meet those needs?
 - Director Porter noted that the challenge is that fields are evolving right now; for instance, computer software developers are currently number one, but the impact of AI has the potential to take over a lot of those duties and titles are morphing.
 - She also shared that when she first came on board in 2022, the agency was called the Health Profession Education Program (HPEP); she successfully encouraged the Commission to revert the name to the Nevada Office of WICHE.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga asked if we should be saying to the legislature that we wish to be a provider of student support for health (physical and mental) or a provider of workforce development.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that for the quality of life in the state of Nevada, we need to figure out what we think the future looks like and be willing to be flexible and pivot; he advocates for being broad and growing our own statewide incentive packages.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga shared that Director Porter may wish to use the 3-digit occupational code (15-1200 computer occupations) because the 3-digit codes apply to everyone.
 - Commissioner Dinauer stated that with computer occupations, using broader codes may be better.

6. Strategic Planning; Long -Term Priorities

Based on the background and occupational data discussion, Director Patty Porter asked the Commissioners to identify up to six long-term priorities for Nevada WICHE Commission and Nevada Office of WICHE.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that he is a big advocate of finding ways to grow the agency in ways that are appropriate and needed.
 - Since a budget increase has not been requested since the 1990’s, we are operating on 1990’s dollars while all program costs have increased; it would be worth asking for a budget increase.
 - He wants to see the organization re-establish its personality as a visible problem solver and facilitator of difficult conversations throughout the state.
- Commissioner Erquiaga agreed with Executive Commissioner Lokken’s priorities and noted the following priorities:
 - The agency should be a participant, player, and leader in the workforce development conversation of the state and problem solving, as well as determine the roles of GOED and DETER.
 - As a mid to long-term objective, this agency could do more in the mental and behavioral health space, as it is only going to get worse.
 - Getting our arms around the mental health needs, such as the psych internships, and the need for social workers and marriage and family therapists, should be a critical role for WICHE.
- Commissioner Dinauer agreed with the priorities of the other Commissioners and fully supports widening the agency’s scope and looking at workforce development and what it entails.
- Director Porter stated that if there is a plan to achieve the priorities as expressed by the Commissioners, the staff must be increased to support those initiatives.

- Being housed in NSHE has enabled things to happen more quickly and has paid dividends.
- To be effective, staffing needs should include the creation of positions such as an assistant director, an accounting person, etc.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken posed the question of whether the NV Office of WICHE should remain a state agency or dissolve and become an entity under NSHE.
 - Nevada is the only member to be a state agency; the rest of the states fall under higher education systems.
 - He also asked if the NV Office of WICHE should seriously consider getting into grant writing as a strategy to pursue growth, which could be a remarkably good thing to do.
 - In the future, the NV Office of WICHE could do its own gathering of data and begin outreach at the elementary school level.
 - The NSHE building could be a future headquarters for an annual summit structure and/or meeting space for bringing in national and international folks to help solve problems.
- Director Porter re-stated the commonality of the items discussed:
 - Expand or grow the scope of the agency.
 - Grow the staff to support resources necessary for accomplishing organizational growth.
 - Become an influencer/leader in Workforce Development.
 - Address the needs of the entire state by identifying regional stakeholders and their regional priorities.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga noted that potential partners could be the regional workforce development boards and regional development authorities that are arranged geographically.
 - Where does NV WICHE agency belong?
 - In the long-term, should it remain under NSHE or become a part of NSHE?
 - This can be addressed as potential changes occur within NSHE.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that with the Utah State University (USU) agreement to form a stakeholder's group, NSHE has been encouraged to develop a statewide stakeholder's group.
 - Many topics could be addressed in a similar manner.
 - Director Porter stated that when she first came into the role as director it seems that the Nevada Office of WICHE's focus was on stipend grants.
 - Currently the Nevada Office of WICHE office is evaluated according to a slot matrix, with no consideration of its role in workforce development, nursing shortage, conversation, etc.
 - Funding should be tied to those areas as well as the spreadsheet.
 - With a shift in focus and priorities, the evaluation criteria should shift and become more inclusive.

Commissioner Erquiaga moved approval for Director Porter to take the suggestions discussed and prepare a document listing no more than six long term priorities for review at a future meeting. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Strategic Planning; Short-Term Priorities Loan and Stipend Account

Based on prior discussion regarding occupational data and long-term priorities Director Patty Porter asked the Commissioners to identify funding priority for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 Loan and Stipend account.

- Commissioner Erquiaga stated that as the proposed budget (based on short term priorities) is prepared, the PSEP total will have to be adjusted based on the regional entities' adjustment of support fees; if the fees have increased, then the budget request will need to be increased.
 - Fund PSEP as established by the regional organization.
- Increase funding for HPEP by adding a broad category of high demand occupations (to be determined in consultation with GOWINN, GOED, DETER, if desired), providing the necessary latitude to identify some pilot in-demand occupations for funding in the next biennium.
 - This would broaden the scope for the NV Office of WICHE to be trusted as the workforce development entity that understands financial aid.
 - It may be beneficial to change the HPEP name so it is not tied only to health.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that Program Officer position is currently funded only for the first biennium; this could be included in an effort to have it funded permanently.
 - The Regional WICHE group has discussed the idea of starting a pilot program for registered nursing; this may be the right kind example to use for that type of request.
 - If Regional WICHE does not move forward with piloting PSEP nursing program then Nevada WICHE could still do it.
- Commissioner Erquiaga stated that requests need to be made for another position or two in the NV Office of WICHE; the Governor is the one who will make that decision.
 - More stipend money should also be requested; if necessary, change the category titles and make them broader.
 - **The three top priorities include increasing stipend funding, broadening the scope of the agency, and requesting more funding / funded staff positions.**
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken and Commissioner Dinauer noted that they agreed with the priorities.
- Director Porter stated that she would ask the HPEP section folks to create broader, more general categories.
 - She also asked the Commissioners if they would like to continue to fund all of the existing programs.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that they are regional categories and he does not see anything that should be changed.
 - Director Porter noted that there are no new slots available and that she would like to add two new slots in the veterinary program.
 - Director Porter also explained that she has to split the budget between PSEP and HPEP; the PSEP used to receive the most funding, but now the HPEP is starting to require more funding.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that Director Porter needs to focus on what budget requests are necessary and not on where the revenue comes from; it is the Legislature's responsibility to give the general fund appropriation and "back out" the loan income.
 - The recommended terminology is to ask for base plus enhancements for HPEP to increase the number of slots (two veterinary and two physician assistants) and also ask for enhancements in the administrative budget for the positions to support the program needs.
 - Make it known that both of the enhancements (increased funding for HPEP and increased funding for administrative support) must be passed.

- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked if there may be an appetite for full loan reversion to the agency.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that would be really rare.
 - The statute could be changed for that and should probably be changed for HPEP.
 - This would require a bill draft request through a legislator.
 - The loan money could be kept by earmarking and tying it to a specific program.
 - If the fund shrinks, then the program would go away.
- Director Porter stated that if we get the enhancements, we will get the staff to support them.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga noted that there is a lag time in hiring positions.

Commissioner Erquiaga moved giving Director Porter the authority to prepare a budget with enhancements to the PSEP program to include veterinarian slots and others as deemed necessary (1), an enhancement to the HPEP program for a nursing pilot or other high demand occupation programs to be determined (2), enhancements to the administrative account to provide sufficient administrative staff to carry out existing programs and proposed enhancements, (3) and increase the transfer to the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) (4). Commissioner Dinauer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Strategic Planning; Short-Term Priorities Administration Account

Director Porter and the Commissioners agreed that the motion and vote in agenda Item 7 covered encompassed agenda Item 8.

Discussion

- Director Porter noted that whether or not an enhancement is received, she needs:
 - An (upgraded) additional position
 - Any positions to match funded enhancements
 - An increase to the operational budget to pay for the increases in PSEP and WICHE membership fees.
 - Director Porter will be asking regional WICHE for some projections of what items will be brought to the Commissioners.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that there needs to be a reasonable level of funding for travel.
 - Director Porter stated that she is working on setting some meetings set with legislators such as Senator Pete Goicochea.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken suggested that they may be able to meet when they are in Las Vegas (for the [WICHE Commission](#) meeting) in May.
 - Director Porter reminded the Commissioners that with the Open Meeting Law (OML) rules, only one Nevada Office of WICHE Commissioner can be present at any meeting.
 - Director Porter noted that she will be going to the [Interim Finance Committee](#) (IFC) on Thursday, April 11 for the University of Utah (USU) contract and that she would like to set up a Commission meeting shortly after that for a briefing of the meetings and review/approval of the proposed Nevada Office of WICHE budget.

- Commissioner Erquiaga noted that the budget preparation discussion could be extended into August, 2024.

9. New Business

- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that any of the Commissioners could have meetings with legislators, based on availability and/or personal connections.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that he would be happy to help with making connections with the [Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation](#) (DETR), the [Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation](#) (GOWINN) and the [Governor's Office of Economic Development](#) (GOED).
 - Commissioner Erquiaga also recommended working with Natalie Brown, Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development and Community Colleges and Alejandro Rodriguez, NSHE Director of Government Relations.
 - It would be a good idea to share the NV Office of WICHE intentions regarding the requests for enhancements with representatives of these groups; this could help to avoid duplicate requests for stipend money.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked the Commissioners if this is a good time to set up local interviews, etc. to publicize the USU contract.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga suggested waiting until IFC has approved the contract; once it is approved, it would be great to share the news with the community.

10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50pm

Prepared and submitted by:

Patty A. Porter

Director, Nevada Office of WICHE