

**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, August 1, 2024, 2:00 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
Mr. Daniel Archer, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs,
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 2:00 pm.

1. Information Only – Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Minutes

The Nevada WICHE Commission approved the minutes from its April 17, 2024 meeting. (*Ref. 2-WICHE Commission Meeting Minutes, April 17, 2024*)

Commissioner Erquiaga moved approval of the April 17, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Commissioner Updates

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

- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that there has been some successful dialogue regarding the Utah State University (USU) project and that he is looking forward to making it all happen.
- He also stated that he just attended the [State Authorization Network](#) (SAN) meeting as a presenter in St. Louis, MO. and will be attending the October 9-11 [WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies](#) (WCET) meeting; he will be presenting and chairing a panel that will involve the WICHE President, Dr. Demarée Michelau.

- In a meeting next week, Executive Chair Lokken will update President Michelau about the conversations with USU.

4. **Director Update**

- Nevada WICHE/Utah State University (USU) College of Veterinary Medicine Contract
 - Director Porter presented an amended contract and supporting documents on Thursday, June 13, 2024, to the Interim Finance Committee (IFC); the amended contract was approved unanimously.
 - Director Porter expressed thanks to Nevada State Senator Pete Goicoechea, who along with several bipartisan sponsors of Senate Bill 342, saw the critical need for veterinarians in the State of Nevada and pursued the passage of SB 342 in the 2023 legislative session.
 - Appreciation and thanks were also expressed to the following:
 - Nevada WICHE Legal Counsel, Carrie Parker, for the time and effort in negotiating, drafting, and finalizing the contract; her assistance was invaluable.
 - Nevada WICHE Commissioners for their input and support throughout this process.
 - The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Dean of College of Agriculture, Biotech, Natural Resources, Dr. William A. Payne, Pre-Veterinary Professor, Dr. Mike Teglas, and Sheila Bray, UNR Director of Government and Community Relations, for their dream, input, and support.
 - The Dean of the USU College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Dirk Vanderwall, and USU Associate General Counsel, Ryan Brady, for their collaboration in negotiating the contract, and for Dr. Vanderwall's attendance at the June 13, 2024 IFC meeting.
 - Patty Charlton, Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Interim Chancellor, Daniel Archer, NSHE Vice-Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs (ASA), Donna Healy, Assistant to NSHE Vice-Chancellor of ASA, Renée Davis, Associate Vice Chancellor (ASA), the NSHE Finance Staff (Accounting/Budgeting), and all NSHE System Administration staff.
 - Executive Chair Lokken interjected with thanks to the Nevada Veterinary Association for their valued input and Director Porter for proceeding in a "textbook" way to establish the partnership with USU.
- Next Steps for Implementation of Nevada WICHE /USU College of Veterinary Medicine Contract
 - The Nevada Office of WICHE has begun the process of working with USU College of Veterinary Medicine Dean, Dr. Dirk Vanderwall, and Director of Veterinary Medicine Admissions, Dr. Cathleen Kovarik, to implement the USU Veterinary Medicine Accreditation Information Plan that was submitted with the contract.
 - Regarding the information plan, Dean Vanderwall has emailed NSHE institutions, NSU, UNR and UNLV, establishing contact and informing them of the courses needed to apply to the USU Veterinary Medical School.
 - Recruitment of a temporary Program Officer I position (funded for one-year) will start soon.
 - The process of reclassifying the Accounting Technician I to Program Officer I is under review at Business Center North (BCN) Human Resources.
 - Director Porter is currently in the process of drafting a webpage to be added to Nevada WICHE website with information regarding SB 342 funding and including links to the [USU Veterinary Medical School Accreditation](#) page, which includes admission requirements.
- [Professional Student Exchange Program](#) (PSEP) and [Health Profession Education Program](#) (HPEP) 2024-2025 Application and Selection
 - PSEP

- There are a total of 36 slots; all of them projected to be funded.
- Director Porter is currently in process of working with regional WICHE to confirm acceptance and, if already enrolled, to determine whether students are meeting academic progress in their programs; it is helpful to have the support of regional WICHE in this selection process.
- Upon verification, contracts will be sent for review
- HPEP
 - There are 49 slots; they are all projected to be funded.
 - This is a Nevada Office of WICHE program; we not only certify the students but also verify enrollment and academic progress.
 - The application process has been closed and the review process is underway.

Discussion

Executive Commission Lokken shared that the PSEP and HPEP processes are being handled much earlier than in the past and thanked Director Porter for her work on them.

- Director Porter expressed thanks to Megan Van, Nevada Office of WICHE staff, for her work with the processes.
 - Loan Disclosure Form
 - After some extensive research and obtaining a legal opinion, the Nevada Office of WICHE will be including a Loan Disclosure Form sent three times to the participant; it is sent first with application, second with the contract, and third before disbursement with 2024-2025 Nevada WICHE PSEP and HPEP contracts.
 - In accordance with the federal [Truth in Lending Act](#) (TILA) which requires lenders to disclose borrowing costs, interest rates, and fees in upfront and clear language, the Nevada Office of WICHE is required to provide information at the time of application, contract, and before disbursement of funds.
 - Nevada WICHE provided loan disclosures until 2020-2021; in 2021 the legislative session ceased to offer loans with stipends.
 - Upon her hire in May, 2022, Director Porter was not aware that the Nevada Office of WICHE still needed to provide disclosures upon awarding stipend grants.
 - In April 2024, Director Porter inquired as to whether the Nevada Office of WICHE still needed to provide the US Department of Education Private Education Loan Disclosure Form; that inquiry, a June 2024 legal opinion stated that the Nevada Office of WICHE not only had to continue to provide the form, but also provide a loan disclosure document.
 - The Nevada Office of WICHE will implement the provision of loan disclosure approval form when sending out the 2024-2025 Nevada WICHE Stipend Grant contracts, along with a follow-up loan disclosure final form that gives students three days to decline the award.

Discussion

Executive Commission Lokken noted that as a Commission we want transparency and clarity for our prospective students; including this information and posting the forms on the website would be a highly appropriate thing to do and help the students to be aware of the estimated time it would take to complete their applications.

- For a future Commission meeting conversation, it would be a good idea to discuss the interest rate; Director Porter noted that the current rate is capped at 8% and that the Commission could set it at a lower rate.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that Alaska and Nevada are the only states in WICHE that charge interest on loans; the decision to go to the legislature in 2021 was to switch to grants instead of loans.
 - Nevada WICHE was never given adequate staff to manage the portfolio.
 - The loan portfolio will now be a smaller one and easier to manage.
- Director Porter stated that contact was made with certifying officials in Arizona and Montana to inquire if they were providing loan disclosure; they do not.
 - Decisions on providing loan disclosure are made by each state’s legal counsel.
- Nevada WICHE 2020 Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) Audit Update
 - Director Porter noted that she received an invitation to appear before Audit Sub-Committee at 9am on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 to provide an update on the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) 2020 Nevada WICHE Audit recommendations.
 - The LCB Auditor requested copy of updated Nevada Office of WICHE Internal Controls, which was updated in January 2024 by Director Porter, to review and determine if they address 2020 recommendations.
 - The Sub-Audit Committee has been relocated to the Senate with the committee Chair, Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop.
 - Director Porter requested that one Nevada WICHE Commissioner be present in-person or by video; Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that he would attend the meeting.
 - Director Porter shared that the Nevada WICHE Executive Commissioner is copied on emails regarding audit from the LCB to the Nevada Office of WICHE.

5. 2025-27 Nevada WICHE Biannual Budgets

- Director Patty Porter provided the Commissioners with the 2025-2027 Nevada WICHE Biannual Budget with enhancement requests for the loan and stipend account.
- Regarding revised Reference #3 (with the base and loan repayment revenue both figured into the budget):
 - FY26 projected loan repayment revenue is \$97,242.98 and for FY27 it is \$63,093.90.
 - A loan repayment revenue decrease will occur in FY27.
 - As approved in a previous Commission vote, PSEP support fees are increasing for FY26 and FY 27.
 - In an effort to keep a balanced budget, the increase in support fees for some PSEP slots has been reduced for FY26.
 - With the reduction in HPEP loan repayment revenue, some slots were reduced to stay within the amount of projected loan repayment revenue for FY26.
 - The FY27 budget is similar, but with drop in projected loan repayment revenue there are more slot reductions; this proposal has reductions but no enhancements.
- Regarding revised Reference #4 (enhancements for the slot matrix with the aim of restoration of funding):
 - FY26-27 includes restoration of funding for eliminating slots, some minor slot increases based on state need, and increase in support fees, as well as increase in funding Nevada Psychological Internship Consortium.

Discussion

Commissioner Dinauer asked about the “umbrella” title of Advanced Practice Nursing; Director Porter confirmed that they all can be any title that falls within the category and are all post-baccalaureate level.

- Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that we should talk about getting the revenue back for the geriatric positions.
- Director Porter stated that she would like to see a general category like Advanced Practice Nursing and not have specifics, such as geriatric, which would lead to being subsequently tied to those programs and not having the flexibility to award variety specialties under this category.
 - Additional specialties also include Nurse Practitioner, which covers Geriatrics and Psychiatric, and also Nurse Midwife.

Commissioner Dinauer moved approval of the 2025-2027 Biannual Loan and Stipend Budget as presented; Revised Reference 3 (with reductions), and Revised Reference 4 (with enhancements), and allow for flexibility as necessary and determined by Director Porter. Commissioner Erquiaga seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- Director Porter provided the Commissioners with an overview of the 2025-2027 Nevada WICHE Biannual Budget including reductions to stay in balance and enhancement requests for the administration account.
 - The proposed FY 26 budget with reductions is included in Reference #6; to accommodate for increased regional WICHE State membership fees and the Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA), the travel budget has been slightly decreased.
 - Regarding the FY 27 proposed budget, due to an increase in membership fees and COLA, there will be a shortfall in the 2027 fiscal year and inability to pay for [DocuSign](#) and [ECSI](#).
 - ECSI has been used for many years by the Nevada Office of WICHE to manage student loan accounts and not having the ability to use it would be a huge problem.; this is why enhancements are being requested.
 - Executive Commissioner Lokken noted that we have been a member of this organization for decades and wondered if the Governor’s office automatically builds up the budget when membership fees are increased.
 - Commissioner Erquiaga stated that the budget office process is a “one size fits all” and the computer system used for budgeting does not know how to accommodate these kinds of increases.
 - The “looks like” reductions and “add back” enhancements process that become necessary for state agencies are driven by a computer program, not the law.
- Director Porter noted that the enhancement requests are as follows:
 - Reference 7 is a request to make the position (provided in SB342) permanent.
 - Reference 8 is a request to add funding to cover the membership fee; if granted, this will add enough funding to cover DocuSign and ECSI.
 - Reference 9 is a request to upgrade the Accountant Technician position to Program Officer 1 at Step 4; it is very competitive to find employees and this would be helpful with recruitment.
 - Reference 10 is a request to restore travel funds that had been reduced.

Commissioner Erquiaga moved approval of the Nevada WICHE 2025-2027 administration biennial budget with reductions to comply with the budget cap as reflected in Reference 6; to further approve References 7,8,9, and 10

reflecting enhancements to the administration budget and allow for flexibility as necessary and determined by Director Porter. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Interlocal Contract between the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) and Nevada WICHE

- Director Porter and Carrie Parker, Deputy General Counsel, presented for possible action an interlocal contract between DPBH Nevada Psychological Internship Consortium and Nevada WICHE for July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025.
- While Nevada WICHE approved a previous version at the April 17, 2024 meeting, DPBH has proposed two changes in the version as presented.
 - Carrie Parker, Deputy General Counsel, explained that in Section 7, the new language for services specified in Section 6, Incorporated Documents, is at a cost of \$112,500 *annually*.
 - The previously approved version read “submission of billing claim” and the change is in reference to when the billing is due; there is no substantive difference in the contract.
 - The other change is in the signature block; the only signature required is of the Executive Commissioner.

Commissioner Erquiaga moved to approve the revised contract between NV WICHE and the DPBH as noted in Reference 5, and authorization of the Executive Commissioner to execute the contract on behalf of the Nevada WICHE Commission. Commissioner Lokken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. New Business

- There was no new business.

8. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 3:16pm

Prepared and submitted by:

Patty A. Porter

Director, Nevada Office of WICHE