

**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, October 16, 2025, 2:00 pm

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

Others Present:
Ms. Patty Porter, Director, Nevada Office of WICHE
Ms. Carrie Parker, Deputy General Counsel, NSHE
Colleen Falkenstern, Director of Evidence and Strategic Initiatives, WICHE
Molly Hall-Martin, Director of Policy Analysis and Research, WICHE
Dr. Dirk Vanderwall, Dean, University of Utah (USU) College of Veterinary Medicine
Ms. Cathy Bandoni, Executive Legal Assistant, NSHE Legal Affairs

Executive Commissioner Fred Lokken called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Charlton shared that they met with WICHE President Demarée Michelau and Nevada WICHE Director Patty Porter for their orientation and onboarding as new commissioner. Commissioner Charlton will be unable to attend the upcoming November 2025 WICHE Commission Meeting in Colorado.

Commissioner Dinauer will also be unavailable to attend November 2025 WICHE Commission Meeting in Colorado.

Executive Commissioner Lokken stated that he will attend the November 2025 WICHE Commission Meeting and will cover any Nevada votes needed in sub-committee meetings. Executive Commissioner Lokken also shared that there will be discussion at the commission meeting regarding salary survey of CEO/Presidents reviewed as compared to WICHE President. Executive Commissioner Lokken had a meeting with WCET Executive Director/WICHE Cooperative for

Educational Technologies and Vice President, Digital Learning, Van Davis and New Mexico WICHE Commissioner to discuss a possible initiative for WICHE.

3. Director Updates

Director Porter shared the following updates:

Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) 2025-2025 slots have been filled except for one Occupational Therapy slot. One recipient declined and the funding from this slot plus additional one created a year 2 slot.

Health Profession Education Program (HPEP) 2025-2026 round 1 slots have been disbursed, and there will be round 2 later, possibly in January 2026. Note that Nevada WICHE must wait for loan repayment revenue to come in to fund remaining slots.

Nevada WICHE Financial Statement for FY 25 has been completed and sent to the Nevada State Controller's Office. Commissioners will have a report on the statement beginning of 2026. Thank you to Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Assistant Chief Financial Officer Rhett Vertrees and staff for their assistance on reconciling FY 2025.

Email will go out to commissioners for possible meeting dates and times for 2026.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken thanked the NSHE finance staff for their support of Director Porter in preparing Nevada WICHE Financial Statement.

4. Minutes

The Nevada WICHE Commission considered approval of the minutes from its July 23, 2025 meeting. *(Ref. 2-WICHE Commission Meeting Minutes, July 23, 2025)*

Commissioner Charlton moved for approval of the July 23, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Dinauer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Appointment to the Regional WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee

Executive Commissioner Lokken moved this item up in the agenda.

Director Porter shared information regarding the possible appointment of Nevada Assemblymember Tracy Brown-May to the regional WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee.

Discussion

- Commissioner Charlton shared that this was a good choice to represent Nevada on WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Dinauer moved to approve the appointment. Commissioner Charlton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Federal Policy Changes and Their Implications on Graduate Programs

Colleen Falkenstern, Director of Evidence and Strategic Initiatives, and Molly Hall-Martin, Director of the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA) and Policy Analysis and Research, provided an update on the 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act is shaping upcoming

regulatory changes, influencing student decision-making in graduate program selection, and affecting state workforce development strategies in critical fields, including a focused discussion on the potential implications for Nevada and its students.

- Ms. Falkenstern and Ms. Hall-Martin discussed [Reference 3-WICHE Presentation to NV WICHE-Federal Implications](#) slides with the commissioners. Ms. Falkenstern stated that in recent rule making meeting they are proposing an interim definition that would allow higher education institutions to self-designate which graduate programs are professional programs through 2027. This would allow more time to come up with a final definition. It was also shared that some borrowers will reach their lifetime cap of \$275,000 and will need to borrow from private lenders.

Discussion

- Director Porter asked if the changes discussed so far in the regulation rulemaking have been finalized and the answer is no. The next negotiated rulemaking meeting is scheduled for November 2025. There is a deadline for publishing the finalized rules two weeks after the next meeting. If there is no agreement among the RISE committee then the US Department of Education can make the final determination of these rules.
- Executive Commissioner Lokken thanked the presenters for sharing the information with the commissioners.

7. Strategy Session Identifying Next Steps to Address Federal Changes on Nevada Graduate Programs

Director Porter led a strategic discussion with Nevada WICHE Commissioners to identify priorities for the 2027 Nevada Legislative Session, including those that may be in response to federal changes affecting graduate programs, as enacted in the 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

- Director Porter shared with the commissioners to take into consideration that the Nevada WICHE Loan and Stipend account, which is made up of appropriated funds and loan repayment revenue, currently funds PSEP, HPEP and Nevada Psychological Internship Stipends. The first program to get paid from this account is the Nevada Psychological Internship. This commission in the last biennium asked for additional funding/enhancement for more Nevada Psychological Internship stipends and was denied.
- Director Porter also added that Nevada WICHE is the only state in Western Regional Compact that funds PSEP fields that are offered at a public institution in their state. If Nevada WICHE followed the practice of other Western Regional Compact states, they would only fund PSEP programs not offered at a Nevada public institution which currently is Doctorate in Pharmacy and Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine.
- Director Porter shared that it is a WICHE practice to not allow residents to apply for PSEP funding if the program is offered at their state public institutions since the purpose of PSEP is to pay difference between in and out of state tuition.
- Director Porter then asked the commissioners if they wanted to continue funding for FY 28 and FY 29 PSEP programs that are offered at Nevada public institutions? Director Porter directed the commissioners to [Reference 5-PSEP Program Fields NV DETER Long Term Projections 2020-2030 Compared to IPEDS Completers 2023-2024](#) and if they wanted to look at capacity/need versus whether it was offered at a public institution.

Discussion

- Commissioner Charlton stated that they needed more information before answering, including the number of completers at Nevada institutions that were residents versus non-residents to address the capacity issue. Director Porter said they would work on getting this information.
- Commissioner Dinauer agreed with Commissioner Charlton regarding the need for more information.

- Commissioner Charlton added that even if Nevada WICHE is different from other compact states they would be in favor of funding Nevada residents in PSEP program attending Nevada public institutions.

Commissioner Charlton left the meeting.

8. Update on Nevada WICHE/Utah State University (USU) College of Veterinary Medicine Health Profession Education Program Contract

USU College of Veterinary Medicine Dean Dr. Dirk Vanderwall presented an update on recruitment of Nevada residents and accreditation.

- Dean Vanderwall thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to update them and briefly looking back in March 2025 USU College of Veterinary Medicine received their Letter of Reasonable Assurance from American Veterinary Medical Association Council of Education (AVMA-COE). After this notice they immediately launched an accelerated application cycle for fall 2025 or class of 2029. To fill the class size of 42 students they received 16 Nevada applicants of which 9 met academic criteria of 2.9 overall and 3.2 science GPA and 2 were admitted. Having matriculated their first cohort of students they were notified recently by AVMA-COE that they are now provisionally accredited and will continue through the graduation of the first cohort in 2029.
- Dean Vanderwall then shared that the application cycle for fall 2026 or class of 2030 will increase to 80 students and the new VME building will be open. With their participation in [Veterinary Medical College Application Service \(VMCAS\)](#), which is the one portal to apply for veterinary medical school, for fall 2026 they received 39 verified Nevada applicants that will undergo review.
- Dean Vanderwall stated that recruiting efforts include in March 2025 Pre-Vet Conference at USU College of Veterinary Medicine and Nevada State University advisor and students attended. Their full-time recruiter Ryan Soleberg has made multiple visits to the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Nevada State University. USU College of Veterinary Medicine Professor of Clinical Program, Dr. Kerry Rood visited UNR this month and made personal visits to clinics in Winnemucca, Elko and Carson City. USU College of Veterinary Medicine has a booth this week at the Wild West Vet Show in Reno and received good traffic and interactions at their booth.
- Dean Vanderwall said that pending changes in the federal student loan program such as the new caps will incentivize Nevada residents to pursue the HPEP program.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken and Commissioner Dinauer thanked Dean Vanderwall for presenting the update.
- Director Porter added that they are taking an outreach trip to Las Vegas from October 22-23, 2025 to present at a Nevada Veterinary Medical Association Continuing Education training for 55 attendees on Wednesday night and then attend Nevada Veterinary Board of Examiners meeting on Thursday.

9. DocuSign Nevada Office of WICHE Quote

Director Porter presented information regarding the proposed DocuSign Master Services Agreement and associated terms and conditions, and approval of terms from December 11, 2025, to December 10, 2026.

- Deputy General Counsel Carrie Parker shared that Director Porter is in the process of working with System Computing Services (“SCS”) to see if Nevada WICHE could use an enterprise Docusign license under one of the institutions’ umbrellas.
- If that does not work, Director Porter and Ms. Parker request authorization for the Executive Commissioner, in consultation with legal counsel, to negotiate and finalize an agreement according to the terms of the attached December 11, 2025 to December 10, 2026 Docusign quote or better.
- Ms. Parker explained that according to the Nevada System of Higher Education policies regarding contracts and provisions that NSHE considers problematic, there are some issues to consider.
 - The quote includes links to a Master Services Agreement and other terms. NSHE recommends terms be printed and finalized in a document, as opposed to referencing links to other documents. It should be clear what we are agreeing to.
 - NSHE prefers choice of law and venue in Nevada because Nevada courts and Nevada state law can be more favorable to state agencies. The Docusign Master Services Agreement includes choice of law of Nevada with venue in San Francisco.
 - Regarding limitation of damages, NSHE prefers to make it clear that we are not waiving sovereign immunity under NRS Chapter 41.
 - NSHE recommends that contracts reference obligations under the Nevada Public Records Act. The Docusign Master Services Agreement includes some confidentiality provisions, including that certain terms are confidential. However, they consented to the current quote being disclosed in this public meeting.
- Ms. Parker explained that these are some of the terms that we would try to negotiate with Docusign. However, given the size of this contract, it is likely that they will not want to negotiate these terms. The current contract with Docusign includes Docusign’s Master Services Agreement.

Discussion

- Executive Commissioner Lokken asked whether State Purchasing uses Docusign for their document signing. Deputy General Counsel Parker noted that she talked with State Purchasing, and they found some of the Docusign terms to be problematic. She said she would look into what they use for document signing.
- If Nevada WICHE is not able to use an enterprise Docusign license under one of the institutions, Ms. Parker requested that the commission authorize Executive Commissioner Lokken, in consultation with legal counsel, to negotiate and finalize an agreement according to the terms or better. Under Nevada WICHE’s statutes, the Commission may delegate such authority.

Commissioner Dinauer moved to authorize the Executive Commissioner, in consultation with legal counsel, to negotiate and finalize an agreement according to the terms of the attached December 11, 2025 to December 10, 2026 Docusign quote or better. Commissioner Lokken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

10. New Business

There were no suggested new business items.

11. Public Comment

There was no public comment

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Prepared and submitted by:

Patty A. Porter

Director, Nevada Office of WICHE

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