

Study Plan of Action

Submitted to the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)

by the

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

June 30, 2016

Introduction

In Fiscal Year 2017, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) received funding from the Washington Legislature to complete a higher education needs assessment for southeast King County and to prepare a program and operating plan to meet the higher education needs identified in the assessment. WSAC identified the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) as the agency contractor with the skills and resources necessary to conduct the assessment in the timeframe provided in the budget proviso.

Objectives

The objectives of this work are to complete a higher education needs assessment for southeast King County, Washington (defined as rural suburban cities such as Covington, Enumclaw, Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and urban and rural portions of unincorporated King County), and to prepare a program and operating plan to meet the higher education needs identified in the assessment.

Project Management

WICHE will manage all aspects of the higher education needs assessment and the development of the operating plan in collaboration with staff from WSAC. This work will be conducted in consultation with an Advisory Committee organized and convened by WSAC.

Project Partners

WICHE will subcontract with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) — a private nonprofit (501)(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve strategic decision making in higher education for states and institutions in the United States and abroad — to conduct portions of the assessment and assist with the development of the operating plan. NCHEMS has considerable experience in conducting these types of assessments having done such studies in more than 20 states and regions across the country.

WICHE will also obtain assistance from Russell Poulin, Director, Policy and Analysis, of the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET). Poulin will help analyze and assess the existing distance education landscape in southeast King County, as well as review emerging trends in distance education that may affect the region. WCET is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education.

Biographies of all key personnel are included in Appendix A.

Key Activities

In order to conduct the higher education needs assessment and develop the operating plan to meet the higher education needs identified in the assessment, WICHE will engage in seven key activities as described below.

1. Coordinate and Convene Advisory Committee (ON-GOING)

WSAC will identify civic, business, and education leaders from southeast King County to form an Advisory Committee to guide the work of the assessment, ensure the integrity of the process, and provide stakeholder input to WSAC and WICHE staff. WICHE will work with WSAC to coordinate and convene the Advisory Committee at key points during the project period as well as consult with members on an as-needed basis.

2. Hold Biweekly Meetings (ON-GOING)

To keep WSAC staff informed of progress toward goals, WICHE will meet with WSAC staff every other week throughout the duration of the project via conference call or video conference. WICHE staff will provide WSAC staff with an agenda prior to the meeting. Meetings will occur every other Thursday at 10:00 am PDT/11:00 am MDT and include the following staff members:

WICHE	WSAC
Joe Garcia, J.D. President	Randy Spaulding, Ph.D. Director of Academic Affairs and Policy
Demarée K. Michelau, Ph.D Director of Policy Analysis	Ellen Matheny, M.S., M.A. Assistant Director of Operations
Christina Sedney, M.P.P. Project Coordinator, Policy Analysis and Research	Daryl Monear, Ph.D. Associate Director, Academic Affairs and Policy

Staff may reschedule the biweekly meetings if scheduling conflicts arise.

3. Convene In-Person Meetings (DATES OUTLINED BELOW)

Meeting in person over the course of the study period will be critical to the success of this effort, so WICHE staff intend to come to Washington at least four times between July and December. The tentative schedule is as follows:

Type of Meeting and Purpose	Meeting Date
<p>Kick-Off Meeting WICHE will participate in a kick-off meeting that will have three key goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce primary WICHE personnel to the key stakeholders. 2. Review and approve the work plan and timelines for conducting the higher education needs assessment and the development of the operating plan. 3. Examine initial data about the study region, including general demographic, economic, education, and other relevant data. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Week of July 11, 2016</p>
<p>Presentation of Preliminary Quantitative Data, Research Visit, and On-site Interviews WICHE and NCHEMS will convene the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff to accomplish the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present preliminary regional descriptive data about the study area. 2. Present preliminary data about postsecondary enrollment trends, student transfer patterns, and college participation rates in the study area. 3. Present preliminary data about economic need and workforce demand. <p>WICHE staff will also conduct additional research, convene focus groups, and engage in on-site interviews with key stakeholders.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">August 26, 2016</p>
<p>Presentation of Preliminary Data on Qualitative Interviews and Proposed Approach for Program and Operating Plan WICHE and NCHEMS will convene the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff to accomplish the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present preliminary data on the stakeholder qualitative interviews. 2. Present proposed approach for the program and operating plan for feedback from the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff. 	<p style="text-align: center;">September 27, 2016</p>
<p>Presentation of Preliminary Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment and Preliminary Operating Plan WICHE and NCHEMS will convene the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff to accomplish the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present the preliminary report to the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff. 2. Solicit feedback and input before finalizing the report that will be submitted to the Governor and Legislature. 	<p style="text-align: center;">October 11, 2016</p>

Type of Meeting and Purpose	Meeting Date
<p>Presentation of Final Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment and Preliminary Operating Plan WICHE and NCHEMS will convene the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff to accomplish the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present the final report to the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff to ensure that everyone is clear about the findings and recommendations of the final report. 	<p>November 18, 2016</p>
<p>Presentation of Final Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment to Legislature (if necessary)</p>	<p>January and February, 2017</p>
<p>Additional Presentations of Final Report including Initial Program and Operating Plan of Higher Education Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Through April 30, 2017</p>

4. Collect Relevant Data (September 15, 2016)

WICHE will work closely with NCHEMS to collect relevant data to inform the report. At minimum, these data will include:

- Factors outlined in RCW 28B.77.080
- Postsecondary enrollment trends
- College participation rates
- Postsecondary transfer patterns
- Existing postsecondary programs
- Needed postsecondary programs
- Strategies for promoting program participation
- Economic demand and workforce needs
- Demographic data
- Population changes
- Commute times for area residents to existing higher education options
- Commute times for area residents to employment

Specifically, WICHE and NCHEMS will request state-level data from the Washington Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), which was created by the Washington Legislature to, among other things, coordinate with other state agencies to compile and analyze education data. WICHE and NCHEMS will also rely on other publicly available data, including the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.

To assess economic demand and workforce needs, WICHE and NCHEMS will consider data from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges on the supply and demand for workforce education, certificates, and associate degrees. WICHE and NCHEMS will also work with Burning Glass to acquire real-time job market information for the region to further inform the analysis.

In addition, WICHE and NCHEMS will conduct interviews and focus groups with local employers, workforce development professionals, and other relevant stakeholders to assess regional employers' needs. Topics to be covered will include projected needs by program type, degree level, and current barriers to fulfilling area staffing needs.

Finally, WICHE will collect data from WSAC postsecondary institutions (e.g., Green River Community College, Renton Technical College, Western Governors University-Washington) serving the study region about existing programs to compare against data indicating perceived and projected need.

5. Summarize and Interpret Findings; Draft a Preliminary Report (September 30, 2016)

WICHE will summarize and interpret findings from all partners and develop a draft program and operating plan based on these results. WICHE will submit this draft preliminary report to WSAC staff to solicit feedback and collect additional relevant information for the study.

6. Submit Preliminary Report to WSAC Staff (November 1, 2016)

WICHE will submit a preliminary report summarizing the findings and recommendations that includes a program and operating plan with a projected cost assessment based on all quantitative and qualitative analysis. WICHE will solicit feedback and collect any additional relevant information from the Advisory Committee and WSAC staff that will further inform the study.

7. Submit Final Report To WSAC Staff (December 1, 2016)

WICHE will submit a final report of the higher education needs assessment and operating plan to WSAC staff and the Advisory Committee. WSAC will submit the final plan and recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature.

Deliverables

WICHE will supply the following deliverables to WSAC by the dates shown:

Deliverable	Date
<p>Proposed Study Plan of Action To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of any subcontractors and additional partners • Key Activities to Meet Objectives • Timeline 	<p>June 30, 2016</p>
<p>Draft Preliminary Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors outlined in RCW 28B.77.080 • Postsecondary enrollment trends • College participation rates • Postsecondary transfer patterns • Existing postsecondary programs • Needed postsecondary programs • Strategies for promoting program participation • Economic demand and workforce needs • Demographic data • Population changes • Commute times for area residents to existing higher education options • Commute times for area residents to employment • Estimated cost to meet assessed need • Consideration of higher education options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branch campus ○ University center ○ Private university ○ Online learning center 	<p>September 30, 2016</p>

Deliverable	Date
<p>Preliminary Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors outlined in RCW 28B.77.080 • Postsecondary enrollment trends • College participation rates • Postsecondary transfer patterns • Existing postsecondary programs • Needed postsecondary programs • Strategies for promoting program participation • Economic demand and workforce needs • Demographic data • Population changes • Commute times for area residents to existing higher education options • Commute times for area residents to employment • Estimated cost to meet assessed need • Consideration of higher education options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branch campus ○ University center ○ Private university ○ Online learning center 	<p>November 1, 2016</p>
<p>Draft Final Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment Program and Operating Plan</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors outlined in RCW 28B.77.080 • Postsecondary enrollment trends • College participation rates • Postsecondary transfer patterns • Existing postsecondary programs • Needed postsecondary programs • Strategies for promoting program participation • Economic demand and workforce needs • Demographic data • Population changes • Commute times for area residents to existing higher education options • Commute times for area residents to employment • Estimated cost to meet assessed need • Consideration of higher education options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branch campus ○ University center ○ Private university ○ Online learning center 	<p>December 1, 2016</p>

Deliverable	Date
<p>Final Report of Higher Education Needs Assessment Program and Operating Plan To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors outlined in RCW 28B.77.080 • Postsecondary enrollment trends • College participation rates • Postsecondary transfer patterns • Existing postsecondary programs • Needed postsecondary programs • Strategies for promoting program participation • Economic demand and workforce needs • Demographic data • Population changes • Commute times for area residents to existing higher education options • Commute times for area residents to employment • Estimated cost to meet assessed need • Consideration of higher education options including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branch campus ○ University center ○ Private university ○ Online learning center 	<p style="text-align: center;">December 30, 2016</p>

Appendix A. Biographies of Key Personnel

WICHE/WCET

Joe Garcia was appointed President of WICHE in June 2016. He served as the Lieutenant Governor of Colorado and as the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, beginning in 2011. He had previously served on the WICHE Commission for nine years, including serving as its chair in 2011. During his time as Lt. Governor and as the SHEEO for Colorado, Garcia focused on increasing equity in outcomes for all students, particularly those from low income backgrounds and communities of color. Prior to being elected Lt. Governor, Garcia served as President of Colorado State University-Pueblo, which was named the Outstanding Member Institution by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities during his tenure. He also served as President of Colorado's second largest community college, Pikes Peak Community College, where he was twice named President of the Year by the State Student Advisory Council. His previous public service positions included serving as a member of the Cabinet of Gov. Roy Romer and as a White House appointee under President Bill Clinton at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He also was employed in the private practice of law for 10 years at the law firm of Holme Roberts & Owen, where he became the first Hispanic partner in the 100 year history of the firm. Garcia earned his B.S. in Business at the University of Colorado-Boulder and his J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Demarée K. Michelau is the director of policy analysis at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). In this role, she manages the WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit and oversees externally-funded projects related to adult learners, projections of high school graduates, college access and success, and the development of a multistate longitudinal data exchange. The author of numerous reports and policy briefs, she also has experience in a variety of higher education policy issues, including articulation and transfer, equity and attainment, accelerated learning options, college affordability, common academic standards, and K-16 reform. Previously, she worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures as a policy specialist. Michelau received her bachelor's degree in public law from Northern Illinois University and her master's degree and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Russell Poulin organizes WCET's national policy and research activities, edits WCET's *Frontiers* blog, coordinates WCET's research efforts, and works on e-learning consortia issues. He represented the distance education community in the U.S. Department of Education's 2014 Program Integrity Negotiated Rulemaking process. Previously, he coordinated distance education activities for the North Dakota University System.

Christina Sedney is a project coordinator in the Policy Analysis and Research unit at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). She coordinates WICHE's Adult College Completion Network, working to identify and share policy and practice solutions which help adults with prior college credit complete high-value credentials. Prior to WICHE, Christina served in multiple roles with Teach For All and City Year and completed a fellowship with the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. She holds a B.A. from the University of Virginia and a Masters in Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

NCHEMS

Dennis Jones is the President Emeritus of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). Jones has more than 40 years of experience in research, development, technical assistance, and administration in the field of higher education management and policy-making. A member of the NCHEMS staff since 1969, he assumed increasing levels of responsibility within that organization, becoming president in 1986. Under his leadership, and in collaboration with an extraordinarily talented staff, NCHEMS has achieved a position of preeminence as a leader in the development and promulgation of information-based approaches to policy-making in higher education.

Mr. Jones is widely recognized for his work in such areas as:

- Developing “public agendas” to guide state higher education policy-making.
- Financing, budgeting, and resource allocation methodologies for use at both state and institutional levels.
- Linking higher education with states' workforce and economic development needs.
- Developing and using information to inform policy-making.

Mr. Jones has written many monographs and articles on these topics, has presented his work at many regional, national, and international conferences, and has consulted with hundreds of institutions and state higher education agencies on management issues of all kinds. Mr. Jones is a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and served as an administrator (in business and institutional planning) there for eight years prior to his joining the NCHEMS staff. He has served as an advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Lumina Foundation for Education, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and to numerous other associations, policy organizations, and state agencies.