WICHE *NewsCap*

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

Spring at the University of Colorado; CU Boulder

▶ Dave Longanecker's slant on developmental education trends

▶ Participation in W-SARA continues to grow

▶ Western Undergraduate Exchange posts record enrollments

▶ Policy brief examines Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange beginnings

▶ Upcoming WICHE and WCET meetings and webcasts on tap

Message from WICHE President David Longanecker

Some thoughts on how to improve remedial/developmental education

I was fortunate to be included in a recent convening sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that focused on how higher education can improve the success of students who come to higher education with educational deficiencies that impede their progress. I had the unique opportunity to share ideas with about 80 really bright folks, including leaders from all sectors of higher education and organizations that focus on improving student success, and academics who dedicate their teaching and research to serving these students. I want to share some of the takeaways for me from this quite remarkable three-day experience.

First, serving these students is our job, no one else's. Too often we bemoan the fact that so many students come to us needing *remediation*, blaming either the students or their high schools. It's fine to hope that the efforts to better prepare students before they get to us, such as the Common Core and greater P-20 collaboration, will pay off. But once we accept these students, they are ours to educate. We *own* this responsibility, and achieving anything less is failure on our part, not theirs.

Second, we need to understand this aspect of higher education a lot better than we do today. Thanks to the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College we know a lot more today than we did before the turn of the century. Unfortunately, CCRC's research tells us that we couldn't do remediation much worse than we are doing it today; less than a quarter of community college students assessed as needing remedial education ever complete a college course for which they were determined to be deficient.

▶ **W-SARA gains institutional members offering online education.** The number of postsecondary institutions participating in the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA) has grown to 53, in nine states – Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington. Two other states, Hawai'i and Utah, have passed legislation laying the groundwork to sign the agreement, and similar bills are pending in three additional states – California, New Mexico and Wyoming – this session.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education – State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

SARA is a nationwide effort of states committed to making distance-education courses more accessible to students across state lines, and easier for states to regulate – and institutions to participate in – interstate distance education. The initiative is funded by $3 million in grants from Lumina Foundation, $200,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and fees from member institutions. Find out more about W-SARA.

▶ **New policy brief summarizes WICHE's work to date on multistate data sharing.** Over the past five years, WICHE has worked with four of its member states to test how cross-state collaboration and data sharing might inform important questions about the development and mobility of human capital. A newly published policy brief provides a useful summary of the pilot phase of this project – the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE) – including the process of developing governance structures and cross-state agreements, the importance and feasibility of complying with privacy laws, and some policy-relevant results from the cohort of almost 193,000 high school graduates and first-time college students included in the educational and workforce data exchange.

Among other things, the MLDE strengthens the case that public policy is better informed when the movement of students and graduates across state lines is factored into the setting and achievement of state workforce and educational attainment goals. The MLDE is now in the process of expanding to include at least 10 states, some from outside the WICHE region. Questions about the MLDE project or the policy brief may be directed to Brian Prescott at bprescott@wiche.edu, Peace Bransberger at pbransberger@wiche.edu or Patrick Lane, MLDE project manager, at plane@wiche.edu.

▶ **Nearly 35,000 students benefiting from WICHE's tuition-reciprocity agreement in 2014-15.** The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) gives students from WICHE states the opportunity to enroll in participating two- and four-year public institutions and pay 150 percent of resident tuition instead of full nonresident tuition. In the 2014-15 academic year, 34,300 students enrolled at 156 participating WUE institutions, saving more than $279.4 million in tuition costs. Students and parents are grateful for the savings the program provides, and institutions benefit by filling under-enrolled programs, diversifying their student body, and attracting the best and brightest to their campus.

Since WUE began in 1988, students have saved on approximately 427,800 annual tuition bills, which equates to $2.5 billion in savings. WUE's newest members are California State University's Channel Islands campus and Oregon's Klamath Community College. Click here for a full list of institutions that participate in WUE

▶ **National magazine spotlights WICHE internship program.** The January issue of Monitor on Psychology, published by the American Psychological Association, features an article on WICHE`s Mental Health Program and its attempts to reach doctoral students in underserved areas. The article, "Creating Internships in Rural Areas," highlights various aspects of the program, including collaboration with state agencies and other organizations in an effort to expand internship opportunities throughout the rural West and create a better-prepared and highly skilled mental health workforce.

▶ **New grant to WICHE will help advance Smarter Balanced assessments initiative**. WICHE has received a two-year, $520,000 grant from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to help increase the engagement of colleges and universities with the Smarter Balanced assessments and to establish state policies and activities that promote widespread use of the assessments as indicators of college and career readiness, aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

▶ **Spring webcasts from WCET: Creative Commons, smart devices in classrooms and using technology collaboratively**. WCET's webcasts bring together experts on e-learning issues to help your institution anticipate and address current and emerging challenges. The webcasts are free, but registration is required and priority is given to WCET members. The spring lineup includes: on Feb. 12, Using Technology to Foster Collaboration in Education, featuring Jennie M. Carr of Bridgewater Consulting and Alan Greenberg of Wainhouse Consulting; on March 12, What's New at Creative Commons, featuring Paul Stacey of Creative Commons; and on April 9, Are Smart Devices and Gadgets Smarter Than Teachers?, featuring Robbie Melton of the Tennessee Board of Regents.

▶ **Community college academic leaders will convene in April in Rapid City**. The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (the Alliance) will hold its annual meeting April 8-10, 2015, in Rapid City, SD. Rob Johnstone, president of the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, will kick off the meeting, themed "Academic Leaders Facing Change: Asking the Right Questions." The preliminary program features sessions on open educational resources, competency-based education, new approaches to developmental education, prior learning assessment and other hot topics.
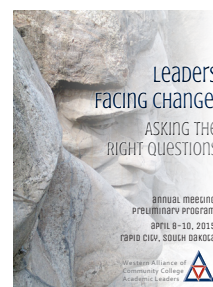
The meeting will include a dinner at Mount Rushmore on Thursday evening, with featured speaker Dr. Marni Baker Stein, chief innovation officer at the University of Texas System's Institute for Transformational Learning. She will be introduced by Alliance Chairman Michael Cartney, president of Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, SD.

The registration deadline is March 25, with early bird registration continuing through Feb. 25. Click here to register.

▶ **WCET State Authorization Network seeks new members and schedules compliance workshops.** Institutions offering distance education programs outside their home states need to understand and comply with regulations for serving students across state lines. WCET's State Authorization Network (SAN) provides updates on state and federal regulatory information, and helps members learn from one another about best practices and changes in approval processes. SAN seeks new members (systems, consortia or

single institutions) for its fifth program year, which begins on April 1.

As a new service, SAN is offering a series of compliance workshops for those who are new (or nearly new) to managing an institution's distance education authorization activities. The workshops are open to both SAN members and non-members. The first workshop, to be held in Atlanta in March, sold out quickly. WCET is planning a second workshop in Colorado in July. To learn more about SAN and the workshops, click here.

▶ **Western Academic Leadership Forum's 2015 annual meeting slated for April in Boise**. Waded Cruzado, president of Montana State University, will be the keynote speaker at the Western Academic Leadership Forum's 2015 annual meeting, to be held April 22-24 in Boise, ID. Sessions will include presentations on leading academic change, the completion agenda, the quest for higher academic quality, intervention strategies to promote student success, and using data analytics and other tools to communicate effectively with internal and external constituencies. A highlight of the meeting will be a Basque-themed reception on Thursday evening in downtown Boise. Click here to browse the preliminary program.
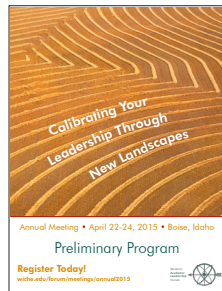
The Forum gives academic leaders in the WICHE states a venue for sharing information, resources and expertise as they address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions. Its members include provosts; academic vice presidents at bachelor's, master's and doctoral-level institutions; and chief executives and chief academic officers for system and state coordinating and governing boards.

▶ **NANSLO makes it possible for more students to do science labs online.** With the opening of a new remote web-based science laboratory at Great Falls College Montana State University, the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) has expanded its reach. During fall 2014, more than 1,500 students performed lab activities over the Internet by accessing sophisticated science equipment at NANSLO laboratories located in Colorado, Montana and British Columbia.

NANSLO laboratories' flexible operating schedules and online delivery are keys in expanding access to STEM fields for those students in the military, working full time, or living in locations distant from a campus. Through NANSLO, students can now enroll in courses with lab activities at a time that is convenient for them, including courses with associated lab requirements that may not have been available to them online in the past. To date, NANSLO has designed and delivered 25 openly

licensed lab activities for introductory biology, chemistry, physics and allied health courses with more on the way. Faculty can use these activities, as developed, or can customize them for their curriculum. Over the Internet, students participate in conversations with their lab partners in other locations as they conduct activities in real time and collect real data for their lab reports.

Find out more about NANSLO's resources, lab activities and scheduling system or contact NANSLO Project Coordinator Sue Schmidt at sschmidt@wiche.edu.

▶ **Adaptive learning in higher education is the focus of WCET's Leadership Summit in June in Santa Fe.** On June 10-11 in Santa Fe, NM, WCET will convene institutional leaders and corporate innovators to explore the challenges, benefits and tools of adaptive learning in higher education. An agenda and registration are forthcoming, but those intrigued by the subject may join the interest list.

▶ **Interstate Passport Initiative's state teams, review board scheduled to meet in February.** During 2015, WICHE will host several meetings of faculty to develop Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Transfer-Level Proficiency Criteria as part of the Interstate Passport Initiative, Phase II, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation. The Passport provides a new framework for block transfer of lower division general education among participating institutions based on these PLOs and proficiency criteria.

The first faculty negotiation meeting will take place at the WICHE office in Boulder, Feb. 10-11. Two- and four-year institution representatives from seven WICHE states will meet to develop the PLOs in two academic content areas: physical and natural world and evolving human cultures. Each state team will come with its own "state set" of learning outcomes as the starting point for the multi-state negotiation. The PLOs drafted at this meeting will then be vetted in the Passport states, and faculty teams will return to Boulder in April to develop the proficiency criteria for the PLOs. This process will be repeated for four other remaining content areas out of a total of nine that will make up the completed Passport. (Three were previously developed during Phase I.)

The Passport Review Board, the policymaking body for the project, will hold its first meeting, on Feb. 11-12 in Boulder. The board will discuss results of the first data collection and analysis from Phase I Passport institutions, as well as the data collection process itself. The Passport project is aimed at developing a new learning- outcomes-based framework for transfer with the goal of improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree and saving students money. Click here for more information about the Passport initiative.

▶ Russ Little named PAR Framework's new chief innovation officer. WCET announced that Russ Little has joined the Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework as chief innovation officer. Little comes to the position after two decades of distinguished service at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, where he led large cross-functional teams of vendor partners, colleges and community members in efforts to create high-quality IPAS (Integrated Planning and Advising System) tools. Little is well known for actively promoting and enabling student success through technology-mediated academic planning and advising. As director of the open source Student Success Plan (SSP), he has received numerous grant awards for his well-applied, pragmatic, practice-based, scalable work.

The PAR Framework is a national, nonprofit provider of learner-analytics-as-a-service, focused on institutional effectiveness and student success. Membership in the PAR Framework is open to any accredited higher education institution committed to student success efforts that improve retention and graduation rates.

Message from David Longanecker (*continued from first page*)

We're more aware of the need for change, but we need even more and better information. We need to measure the success of the various interventions we attempt, with success measured by students' outcomes in their subsequent college experiences, particularly in the courses for which they were ostensibly remediated. We also need to collect the data in ways that allow us to discern more precisely which students we help and which we do not. The equity gaps in higher education remain unacceptably large and persistent and too often this is because of us, not our students. We need to know which interventions reduce these gaps and which ones unintentionally increase them.

Third, we need to change *radically* the way in which we intervene. One of the convening's participants captured the urgency well, stating that we need to move from exploration to intentional deviance. This deviance, however, must be grounded in evidence-based practices. And today we are just on the cusp of knowing how best to prepare these students, thanks to some champions of promising new practices.

Complete College America (CCA), for example, has promoted *co-requisite* courses in which students who are not fully ready for college-level instruction nonetheless enroll in the college course but also take an additional course or tutorial to help them come up to speed. Others, like the Virginia Community College System, have adopted technology-enhanced modularized instruction designed to more accurately assess each student's level of knowledge and provide customized instruction to move them along at their own pace. Others are working on ways to improve traditional remedial coursework with the assistance of predictive analytics or through better intake assessments.

We need stronger research than we have today to determine the actual efficacy of these efforts and whether they have similar results for dissimilar students. We need to be prepared to take some risks because innovation comes with risk, but we also need to be prepared to endorse innovative ideas that pan out and abandon or revise those that don't.

This is critically important because, frankly, we in higher education often find it difficult to abandon failed ideas. Indeed, we have a classic example of this; *learning communities* were one of the early promising practices, adopted by many community colleges. We knew from research at the baccalaureate level that learning communities seemed to greatly enhance student learning – so why wouldn't they work for students requiring remedial education as well? Yet rigorous research conducted by MDRC, in collaboration with CCRC, demonstrates that most learning communities adopted for remediation have not succeeded in increasing participants' persistence or completion.

Fourth, our interventions have to be cost effective. Like it or not, most of our community colleges operate on limited funding. As a result, whatever we adopt as new strategies for enhancing the success of students who come to college poorly prepared have to fit within that frugal financial paradigm. It's that simple.

Fifth, and perhaps more important than all of the rest, our efforts need to be sustained as an intentionally integrated *guided pathway* for each student until they reach successful completion of their educational objective.

So those are my takeaways. Please feel free to correct me where you believe I am wrong, amplify on my musings, or (hopefully) think about how you and your institution(s) could further advance this agenda of enhancing the success of our most vulnerable students.

dlonganecker@wiche.edu