

MEDIA RELEASE

www.wiche.edu
3035 Center Green Drive, Boulder, CO 80301

Contact: Jere Mock, vice president
Programs and Services
303.541.0222, jmock@wiche.edu

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Patricia Sullivan Elected Vice Chair of Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Boulder, Colorado – Patricia Sullivan, Associate Dean for Outreach and Public Service in the College of Engineering at New Mexico State University (NMSU), was elected the vice chair of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) on Nov. 3 during the commission's semi-annual meeting held in Boulder. One of four regional higher education compacts in the U.S., WICHE (www.wiche.edu) and its 15 member states and U.S. territory work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West.

By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life. As the only organization in the West that focuses exclusively on higher education issues, from access and accountability to tuition and fees to technology-enhanced learning and innovation, WICHE strives to find answers to solve some of the most critical questions facing higher education today. WICHE's public policy research and collaborative programs support the West's citizens and its constantly evolving cultures. WICHE's members include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the Northern Mariana Islands (the first of the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states to participate).

Sullivan has served on the WICHE Commission since 2003. She has served on the Commission's executive committee and she chairs its Programs and Services committee. Governors of the member states and territory appoint three commissioners per state to this regional governing body. The other appointed commissioners representing New Mexico are Barbara Damron, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and Sen. Mark Moores of Albuquerque. Sullivan will serve as vice chair for one year along with the commission's new chair, Washington State Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles.

With over 31 years' experience at NMSU, Sullivan is responsible for directing statewide engineering outreach services under the College's Engineering New Mexico Resource Network in areas that include technical engineering business assistance, professional development, and educational outreach programs. In addition, she provides direction for the College's corporate, student career services, media communications, and administration of the College of Engineering's extensive scholarship award program.

She serves as a co-principal investigator on a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to broaden participation among minority engineering students through engagement in innovation and entrepreneurship and also on a U.S. Economic Development Administration grant to the NMSU Arrowhead Center that fosters regional economic development through innovation and new business start-ups. She is also co-lead for a NSF-funded Pathways to Innovation cohort at NMSU with a focus on integrating innovation and entrepreneurship into the engineering curriculum through a blending of industry and educational experiences.

With extensive experience in developing programs that support engineering education and regional economic development, Sullivan also is a member of the executive committee for the NM Consortia for Energy Workforce Development, a member of the board of directors for Enchantment Land Certified Development Company (a program that certifies SBA 504 loans in support of economic development), and a member of the board of directors for the NM Manufacturing Extension Program. She received her PhD in industrial engineering with a focus on renewable energy regulatory policy, a master's degree in public utility economics and a bachelor's degree in biology, all from NMSU.

