

Adjusting & Adapting: Crafting Postsecondary Policy in the COVID-19 Era

WICHE LAC Meeting

3:00-5:00 pm MT | November 17 & 18 | 2021

Agenda

Wednesday, November 17

3:00-3:15 pm Welcome & Member Introductions

3:15-5:00 pm How has COVID-19 impacted higher education?

This session will explore the changes to the postsecondary landscape between 2019 and 2021. The session will open with an examination of the available data that illustrate regional and state shifts. The trends discussed in the data overview demonstrate that Western states and territories need to be thinking about a wide range of issues, from enrollment and retention to aligning higher education with changing workforce needs. How are states investing their state—and federal—resources to address these challenges?

Speakers:

Ben Boggs, Chief of Staff, *Colorado Department of Higher Education*

Colleen Falkenstern, Senior Research Analyst, *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*

Thursday, November 18

3:00-3:05 pm Welcome & Member Introductions

3:05-3:45 pm Interaction of Federal and State Policy: 2021 Edition

2021 has featured an unprecedented level of activity at the federal level with a direct impact on states, with potentially more to come. From an array of existing federal stimulus funding streams—each with different parameters and requirements—to the prospect of trillions of dollars in additional social spending, there is much for state lawmakers to consider as they craft their own budgets and agendas. This session will include an update from DC and discussions around how states are responding to a constantly evolving federal landscape.

Speaker:

Tom Harnisch, Vice President for Government Relations, *State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)*

3:45-5:00 pm Changing Demographics, Changing Perceptions

With strong demand from LAC members to explore these topics, this discussion will cover the changing landscape of higher education in the Western states and territories. As data demonstrate, the next generation of Western college students will be increasingly diverse. To meet attainment and economic goals we must effectively serve these students, yet there is no consensus as to how higher education should

evolve in response. Our region features wide-ranging perspectives as to the level of legislative input into campus curricula and initiatives—including around the concept of Critical Race Theory—the types of supports students need, and the role of equity initiatives.

Speakers:

Liliana Diaz, Policy Analyst, *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*

Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research, *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*

Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization, *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*