



The CSN Chronicle

Holiday greetings to all! This is the last *Chronicle* for 2011 and the last time the logo for our 40th year will be used. During the days prior to the December Board of Regents meeting and at the meeting many actions were taken that will impact CSN.

Please Note: During January, I will again hold roundtable meetings on each campus. You will be e-mailed an invitation shortly. We can discuss any of the following topics as well as other issues you may wish to raise.

PEBP Benefits

Previously, I have mentioned the PEBP task force and its recommendations. Those efforts are continuing. Carolyn Collins and Tina Petrie are able representatives for us, and Jennifer Yonesawa and Rob Telles are also participating in the work of the task force. A consultant has now been retained to offer additional suggestions and directions.

It appears that the earliest NSHE can separate from PEBP is 2015 because legislative action would be needed during the 2013 session. If separation is approved, NSHE would need time to get a new plan in place. This timeframe has led the task force to consider short-term solutions, and the consultant is expected to focus on what can be done now to improve our benefits. We are vigilant on this critical issue. It has become the most serious issue we face in NSHE and at CSN. Its impacts on recruitment and retention of faculty and staff already constrain us.

You might be interested in the results of a health benefits survey conducted by the UNLV Faculty Senate and Classified Council:

- Employees are suffering as a result of PEBP changes. They are delaying medical care and not filling prescriptions.
- The Board of Regents should direct the NSHE PEBP Task Force to proceed with haste to obtain other health coverage for employees.
- As the Task Force's research has already shown, the level of access to health care is inferior.
- The Board of Regents should implement either a supplemental insurance policy or provide a supplement to Health Savings Accounts.
- We are not seeking "added" benefits. We are seeking a return to an acceptable level of access to health care.

At the Board of Regents' meeting all campuses were encouraged to survey their employees regarding PEBP access and coverage. You will likely be hearing more about this early spring semester.

National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy and Complete College America (CCA)

During the first week of this month, various discussions and presentations regarding CCA and NGA goals were shared with faculty, staff, students, legislators, city and county officials, and Regents. A team of state officials attended the NGA policy academy in Atlanta and returned with a draft of state goals and metrics:

Goal 1: Increase the number of students graduating with a high quality degree or credential in accordance with the goals of Complete College America.

Goal 2: Align degree productivity with the state's economic development goals to meet the needs of Nevada's workforce and establish Nevada's "new economy."

Metric 1: How many students are we graduating relative to Nevada's CCA goals?

Metric 2: How many students are graduating relative to the overall student population?

Metric 3: What is the return on the state and student investment in public institutions in terms of certificates and degree completions?

Metric 4: How can institutions demonstrate that gains in efficiency are not achieved at the expense of student learning?

Details of this draft need further discussion and testing, but the momentum and intent of this issue is clear: goals and performance metrics are being adopted. In the coming weeks the governor's office will convene an informal task force whose charge will be to review these metrics and refine them as appropriate. The governor's office and legislative leaders want to link the metrics to higher education funding.

NSHE's new strategic directions document, available [here](#), bears directly on NGA/CCA goals, and I encourage you to become more informed on the state's new direction.

Tuition/Fee Increases

The Board of Regents approved an 8 percent increase in student registration fees for FY 2013.

Institutions were directed to work with students and faculty on final plans for using the fee revenue, and we will be working on this over the next month. CSN and other institutions provided a preliminary plan that directed the revenue toward:

- Scholarships and need-based financial aid;
- Staffing in Student Affairs;
- Improving our full- and part-time ratio with more full-time faculty;
- Establishing and staffing math resource centers on three campuses; and
- Enhancing advising and academic support services.

Final plans will be provided to the Board of Regents at a special meeting in January.

Work Climate and Diversity

During the Regents' meeting each institution reported on diversity efforts, including work climates at NSHE institutions. I reported briefly on the work climate committee and survey as part of our efforts to

improve the organizational culture of CSN. I know our committee has been meeting each month, and plans a follow-up survey next spring.

I have been asked about media reports on litigation that is pending. While I cannot comment on specific cases, it is our position at CSN that whenever a legal matter arises, involving CSN or its employees, we expect full cooperation with authorities, as well as true and accurate testimony.

Questions from Faculty and Staff Members:

“What are the changes in CSN’s admission policy?”

Beginning next fall, community colleges in Nevada will require a high school diploma or GED for admission of degree or certificate seeking students. Institutions may also adopt an alternate pathway for admission. This is standard practice at most community colleges in the country to impress on prospective students, parents and others the need for college readiness. The alternate pathway we have adopted will allow prospective students, who score above a certain threshold on placement tests, or those who have transfer credits from accredited institutions, to gain admission to CSN.

“What is the change in ACT testing?”

The Board of Regents approved a resolution urging the State of Nevada and district superintendents of public K-12 instruction to adopt the statewide administration of the ACT test for all high school students in their junior year. Additionally, when the test is adopted statewide, the Board of Regents will consider policy revisions requiring the ACT test for admissions at all NSHE institutions and requiring Nevada high school graduates who have taken the ACT be placed into a college-level course based on the ACT cut score. Also, in time, the presidents and many of the superintendents would like to replace the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam with the ACT test.

“What is the status of the funding formula study?”

You may recall that the Legislature authorized a study to update and revise the higher education funding formula. A committee comprised of legislators, Regents, and gubernatorial appointees is conducting the study. One meeting has been held to organize and to issue a request for proposals for a consultant to assist the committee. The next meeting of the committee will be on January 11th.

“How are the Regents’ accepting the Fresh Look at Nevada’s Community Colleges Task Force recommendations?”

In its review of community colleges in Nevada, a task force, established by the Chancellor, was asked to develop recommendations. Ten recommendations were submitted. The Regents’ received the report, and concurrently, not as a result of the task force report per se, some of the recommendations are going forward: revision of the funding formula, alignment of workforce and state economic development goals, development of meaningful certificates and degree, and public/higher education partnerships. The NSHE strategic directions document includes a reference to explore implementing recommendations of the task force.

Happy Holidays to all of you!

--Mike Richards