

## State Scholars Advisory Board conference call

Thursday, August 23 at 9 A.M. (MTN)

Meeting minutes

### Advisory Board members attending:

Roderick Chu  
Brian Fitzgerald  
Leon Lederman  
Marshall Lind  
Barry Munitz  
Suellen Reed  
Piedad Robertson  
Arthur Rothkopf (Proxy: Karen Elzey)  
Susan Traiman  
Stephen Wing

### WICHE staff and consultants attending:

David Longanecker  
Jere Mock  
Terese Rainwater  
Christian Martinez  
Michelle Medal  
Diana Robinson

### OVAE staff attending:

Nancy Brooks

### Advisory Board members unable to attend:

Mike Cohen  
Charles Kolb  
Jane Nichols  
Raymond Paredes  
Janis Somerville  
David Spence  
Deborah Wilds

---

## MEETING MINUTES

---

### ★ Introduction of Stephen Wing

Terese Rainwater thanked everyone for joining the State Scholars Initiative (SSI) advisory board conference call. She began by welcoming Stephen Wing, director of government relations, CVS Pharmacy, to the SSI advisory board. She also mentioned that the SSI state director in Virginia is interested in hosting Mr. Wing in Virginia for a presentation to the business community. Wing responded that he is excited to be a part of the advisory board and is looking forward to taking an active role as a board member.

### ★ National Summit on Academic Rigor and Relevance (April 29-30, 2008)

Rainwater spoke about the National Summit on Academic Rigor and Relevance to be held in Boston, MA at the Park Plaza Hotel on April 29-30, 2008. The summit will begin with an advisory board meeting on April 29, 2008. One focus of the conference will be on policy reform efforts aimed at increasing academic rigor and improving academic relevance in high school. She said that WICHE is in need of advice on speakers and

authors for the conference plenary sessions and papers and requests the input of the board.

David Longanecker added that within the high school reform effort there is a focus on curriculum, but this conference will concentrate on competencies. He stated that greater involvement of business in education is one new approach to achieving the objective of student learning. Rainwater stated that this summit will include the involvement of the business community and its perspectives on rigor and relevance. Papers written and distributed to participants before the conference will be on the following five topics:

1. Meta-analysis of high school rigor and relevance
2. Demographic analysis directed at the business community
3. Rigor and aligned competency and assessment in high school coursework
4. The importance of science and math in a global economy
5. The business role in high school reform: an agenda for success and promising practices

Rainwater added that she will e-mail the draft summit proposal to all advisory board members after the call to get their feedback. She added the summit will be open to all states, regardless of their participation in SSI. Participation is limited to state teams of six members.

Piedad Robertson suggested that WICHE invite Dr. Judith S. Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) because of her knowledge of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, to speak or write a paper for the conference. Rainwater thanked Robertson for the recommendation.

Rainwater asked Nancy Brooks if she had anything to add. Brooks said she would be interested in what the SSI advisory board recommends after their review of the national summit draft proposal. Rainwater outlined the six desired outcomes of the national summit:

1. Guidance toward a strategic vision for sustainability of the State Scholars Initiative.
2. Expansion of the State Scholars Initiative to a nationally representative program.
3. Strengthened understanding in the community about the value of a rigorous course of study, the value of business involvement, and definition of the relationship between rigorous coursework and student competency.
4. Continued emphasis on STEM fields.
5. Continued emphasis on the connection to community colleges.
6. Continued emphasis on the benefits of offering a rigorous sequence of career and technical education courses in a career cluster to complement the State Scholars Initiative core course of study for all students.

Leon Lederman expressed his concern that schools must focus on math, and especially science, and that students are made to understand that these are important courses they need to take.

Rainwater clarified that the SSI Core Course of Study requires that students take specific courses, including Physics, and that students have shown that they are up to the challenge of these higher-level courses when given the opportunity to take them.

Rainwater invited board members to take a look at the summit proposal and give their feedback. She also invited board members to join WICHE on a national planning committee.

Susan Traiman asked if the summit would give some attention to course competencies. Rainwater responded that the summit's focus would move from looking not only at what courses students are taking but to a deeper investigation of what students are learning in the courses.

Piedad Robinson volunteered herself as a participant on the summit national planning committee as a representative of community colleges.

Leon Lederman inquired about the overall outcome of the summit.

Rainwater responded that one goal of the meeting is to assist states who are currently in the State Scholars network, as well as states that want to become involved. The approach to this goal is to help states craft plans for action for the next five years.

David Longanecker added that the national SSI program may not exist after the current administration. If the federal government is not interested in providing continued financial support to the administration of this program, this summit may provide an opportunity to find other sponsors.

Robertson commented that continued funding may be a goal for WICHE, but the question about outcomes is really about the type of recommendations the summit will produce.

Rainwater responded that the summit will provide state team members an opportunity to meet together and synthesize information gathered during other meetings they have attended, learn from other states, and begin to work towards integrating high school reform efforts. This interaction will help everyone to conceptualize how to move forward on rigor and relevance.

The meta-analysis paper written for the summit will strive to provide a more specific definition of academic "rigor." There are diverse definitions of rigor as shown by WICHE's recent review all 50 state's Department of Education Web sites. One possible outcome of the summit would be to arrive at one definition that can be used by all states.

The summit will also look at whether there is room for change within the SSI program, and if the program should be expanded. Instead of providing more reports, we hope to provide the states with tools, and a sense of direction for implementing a more rigorous course of study.

Lederman commented that there are many good reports available, but the failure has been in the implementation of their recommendations. He suggested that SSI focus on inter-state communication and help bring together P-20 councils to discuss initiatives such as STEM.

Barry Munitz remarked that he is the chair of the P-20 council in California, and that STEM has garnered more attention recently, so that linkage does exist in some states.

Rainwater remarked that Wyoming is an example of a state that used SSI to leverage the influence of their P-16 Council. In Wyoming, the council serves as program administrator of the program. This is true of Louisiana as well, in which the SSI program is the first large project of their business-education partnership.

Lederman questioned whether it might be possible for the summit to bring attention to the importance of coherence of programs across states. Rainwater reported on her recent visit to Virginia. She met with Governor's office and Commonwealth Scholars staff to discuss ways that the state high school reform efforts and federally-funded programs could work together to support student achievement and success.

Steve Wing volunteered to serve as a member of the summit planning committee and represent the business community. Rainwater thanked him for his willingness to participate.

Rainwater stated that a copy of the summit proposal would go out via email, along with an invitation to join her and other SSI staff in Washington, D.C., on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast.

#### ★ WICHE Year Three Continuation

WICHE has been granted a no-cost extension and will continue to serve as administrator of the State Scholars Initiative through September 30, 2008.

WICHE has submitted a draft annual report to OVAE, and advisory board members are welcome to request a copy. We will be producing another "Year in Review" for 2007.

#### ★ State Update

Virginia: The governor has taken an interest in the SSI program and \$100,000 for each of the next three years has been allocated for the continuation of the program.

Commonwealth Scholars has been working with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and other entities or organizations and has an idea about how to get information to students in rural areas.

Connecticut: Building on work in Connecticut Scholars pilot school districts, Connecticut Business and Industry Association has applied for a National Science Foundation Advance Technological Education (ATE) grant.

Kentucky: Kentucky Scholars is pursuing additional funding from the legislature.

Utah: Utah was granted a state appropriation of \$500,000 to continue and expand Utah Scholars. Utah will also be meeting with key business and foundation leaders to solicit SSI financial support from the private sector.

Wyoming: Wyoming Scholars has developed a research model in which the SSI Core Course of Study and the new Hathaway Scholarship's College Success Curriculum will be compared. In February, David Longanecker and Terese Rainwater traveled to Wyoming to provide technical assistance and to support early implementation efforts.

One of WICHE's responsibilities under the Cooperative Agreement with OVAE is to put together an evaluation of state performance. Data will be collected and analyzed by October 2007. Findings will be included in the "2007 Year in Review," which will be more focused on data than the previous annual report.

#### ★ OVAE update

Nancy Brooks thanked WICHE for their excellent administration of the State Scholars Initiative. She shared that Troy Justesen, Assistant Secretary, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, is taking a personal interest in the design and outcomes of the national summit. He has requested that WICHE think about community colleges and their role in the transition from high school. An emphasis on STEM and Career and Technical Education (CTE) are his priorities as well.

#### ★ Program Update

Rainwater said that WICHE and OVAE have been working on a SSI Core Course of Study policy letter which will be sent to advisory board members. Also, issues surrounding adding new school districts have been resolved and new districts that join the program must adhere to the same requirements as the pilot school districts.

Rainwater added that OVAE conducted a monitoring visit to the WICHE offices on June 20, 2007. It was a good site visit, with just a few minor recommendations made in the subsequent report.

★ Other

Rainwater reiterated that she would like to invite advisory board members to a breakfast meeting on Oct 3, 2007, in Washington, D.C. The location will be sent out in the follow-up email to this meeting.

Rod Chu suggested that WICHE add some guiding questions to the summit proposal so authors and speakers would know where to focus their thoughts and words. Rainwater agreed this would be helpful, and will add questions before sending out the proposal.

Rainwater closed the meeting by requesting that advisory board members submit their feedback and suggestions to WICHE by September 5<sup>th</sup>.