



Rocky Mountain Association
for Institutional Research

Panorama

April 2009

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2009 RMAIR Annual Conference

Flagstaff, Arizona October 21-23

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It has been over twenty years in the making, but in October 2009 RMAIR returns to Flagstaff, Arizona! Northern Arizona University and Coconino Community College are teaming up to make the 2009 conference an intellectually stimulating, IR career advancing, and colleague commiserating, rip roaring, not to be forgot anytime soon, good time.

Very soon, President Mark Meredith will be making the call for presentations, papers and panels for this year's conference. Consider sharing some of your hard work with other IR professionals by being part of the conference program. More details on submissions will follow shortly.

The 2009 conference will be held at NAU's High Country Conference Center. The Center is brand new and continues to receive rave reviews by those groups who have already hosted events there. We have slated a block of rooms at the adjacent Drury Inn for our use but there is a host of nearby lodging options available.

The Conference Center and Inn are on the NAU campus. It is a short walk from there to the NAU historic district, which features one of the largest and best preserved collection of historic sandstone buildings, and historic downtown Flagstaff. More conference details, information about Flagstaff and the scenic surrounding area can be found on the RMAIR web site at: <http://www.rmair.org/page.asp?page=1246>

- ✚ Mark your calendar October 21-23, 2009
- ✚ The conference hotel is the *Drury Inn & Suites - Flagstaff, AZ*

Letter from the Editor

Lisa Muller

Spring time greetings RMAIRians.

Budget Cuts, Tuition increases, Furloughs and Stimulus dollars oh my!

It appears that the economy is dominating much of our institutional planning with many RMAIR offices involved in discussions about cutbacks or scenario planning budget cuts of 2%--18% including those of us who have not yet seen dramatic actions. Many of us have state estimated budget gaps from \$130 Million to \$3.1 Billion Dollars. Wyoming and Montana were not listed when this data was published in January 2009 but are beginning to have impacts as well.

<http://www.uwyo.edu/presidentsupport/outbox/Spring%2009%20Faculty%20Meeting/Budget%20Woes-A%20State-by-State%20Snapshot.pdf>

We still need a reporter in Colorado and Nevada. Thank you to our new Idaho reporter Chris Lighty. Please consider nominating yourself or someone in your office for a turn at writing up your state events.

I hope everyone is considering the October RMAIR conference in Arizona. The planning team is hard at work getting ready for the conference. Following the state reports are remarks of President George Dennison from our 2008 RMAIR Conference. Thank you Jim (Rimpau) Montana State University for requesting Dr. Dennison's permission for publication in Panorama.

I found the following short article (2 pages) on higher education worth sharing. *The Challenge to States: Preserving College Access and Affordability in a Time of Crisis* from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

Conclusion "The issues of how America will finance higher education in the 21st century will require a new framework and consensus among taxpayers, public officials, state and federal government, and students and families. But in the immediate crisis, the leadership of governors, legislatures, and governing boards is critical. They must devise and implement strategies to preserve college opportunity while stimulating innovations to prepare for a future that will require enhanced access, quality, cost-effectiveness, and productivity."

http://www.highereducation.org/crosstalk/ct0309/Challenge_to_the_states.pdf

RMAIR Business Meeting Minutes

Oct. 17, 2008 – Missoula, Montana
Farah Thompson, RMAIR Secretary

Missoula Conference Notes

Mark Chisholm welcomed everyone to the Business Meeting and shared that he felt the conference was a great success and thanked the conference chairs for a job well done. He then turned the time over to Sue Koller.

Announcement of New Vice-President and Treasurer

Sue Koller announced that Ellen McGregor will serve for three more years as Treasurer and then announced that Archie George was elected as the new Vice-President.

Thanking our Out-Going Past-President

Dawn Kenney then thanked Sue Koller for her efforts and presented a gift. She then thanked Chris and Jim for putting together the program. Bill and Liz were also thanked for their efforts toward the conference.

Treasurer's Report

Mark then turned the time over to Ellen McGregor. Ellen indicated that she has not received the funding

from AIR (a check in the amount of \$8500). Interest of 3.24% for the last Certificate of Deposit which comes due at the end of September or the beginning of October of each year. Ellen indicated that based upon the contributions and work by the local RMAIR-ian's we expect a profit for this conference. Ellen thanked the local arrangements people for their efforts in making the conference a great success. Ellen then said that she sent a receipt to everyone so everyone would have the proper documentation for reimbursement. Ellen also said that RMAIR has approved three conference rates:

1. Emeritus members
2. Conference Attendees
3. Student Rate

She also said that Train-the-Trainer at AIR is a wonderful opportunity, but RMAIR has had a difficult time to find someone who is willing to attend this training and would encourage any who are interested to contact her.

Ellen indicated that when Ron Haggerman passed away RMAIR donated money in his name for a scholarship. Ellen indicated that Larry Hunter passed away and wanted to know if we should again donate money. Archie George asked if he could take a few minutes. Archie said, "Larry always wanted to keep the funding at the conference. Larry died on the golf course on a very hot day. He was in a coma for a week and the family made the decision to let me go. He has three sons." Ellen indicated that Larry was so willing to share his knowledge that perhaps RMAIR could set aside funds for students to attend a RMAIR conference, or an AIR conference, or obtain publication, or perhaps we could set-up a memorial scholarship.

Mark Chisholm said he supported these ideas, but wanted to set-up language in the by-laws to indicate what the money should be used for. It was suggested that RMAIR donate \$200 and others can donate additional money if they would like. Chris Fastnow seconded the proposal. Archie George suggested working on this for a while instead of determining the entire issue now. He suggested setting aside substantial enough money to have a roll-over account. This account must be used for student attendance for IR purposes. Archie suggested that we finalize these plans at the AIR Conference or vote on-line.

Mark asked if anyone had any concerns that they wanted to address at this time. No one responded. Archie thanked everyone for their support.

Travel Grant

Mark indicated that during the business meeting in Reno - Carrie and Mark were supposed to get together and look into a travel grant. This was not done. Ellen said the Southeast AIR group has this type of travel grant on an application type basis. Sue Koller asked if it was popular. Archie said the grant often only had two or three applicants and several individuals in his office applied for and received the grants; and appreciated receiving them. Pam Niesslein, Ph.D., College of Charleston a.k.a. "Miss South Carolina" said that she was so glad that she attended our RMAIR conference. She said that hearing and learning thing she had not learned before has been invaluable. She would really encourage developing a travel grant.

Archie, Ellen, and Mark are to work on putting the guidelines together so we can have a vote on the travel grant for Atlanta. Archie said he would put together some information on what the Executive Committee should consider such as an application based process and it would be available on the web page. Mark Chisholm motioned and Ellen McGregor seconded.

Panorama Editor Report

Lisa Muller indicated that she needs state reporters for Idaho and Nevada. Please contact her if you are interested in serving as a Panorama Reporter.

Arizona Conference Update

Flagstaff, Arizona - October 20-22, 2009 (October 20 will be pre conference workshops). The conference will be held at NAU's new conference center. Ellen McGregor indicated that you will be within walking distance of downtown Flagstaff. 45 minutes from Sedona (Meteor Creator) and 90 minutes from the Grand Canyon. Ellen indicated that northern Arizona has natural beauty, warm and friendly people and she encouraged everyone to bring family and really enjoy the northern Arizona's beauty. A video was shown. Mark indicated that the video will be put on the website for viewing. Mark indicated that Colorado is next on the list for the 2010 conference and then New Mexico for 2011.

Joseph Curtin indicated that Bill Neal and Paul Freebair from PACAIR (Pacific AIR - Hawaii)

has invited RMAIR to come to do a joint conference. Mark said he loved the idea, but the travel costs are extensive. Mark suggested that Joseph invite them to getting with us at our business meeting in Atlanta to further discuss details.

Goodie Giveaway

Names were drawn for great gifts donated by University of Montana and others.

Other Issues?

Sue Koller said she didn't get any nominations for emeritus members. She asked if everyone would please think about nominees.

Mark ask if everyone would please complete the Conference Evaluation Forms as they are very important and useful.

Mark asked if there would be a demand for RMAIR shirts. He indicated that RMAIR used to sell them and would like to again and perhaps put them for sell on the web page. Joseph Curtain said the had a lot in stock, but they finally did sell all of the "first order". Joseph said that he would contact the company that did the original order and see if they still have the RMAIR logo in their system. Joseph said that everyone really liked the denim and polo shirts. It was decided to take orders for the shirts and Joe was asked to look-up the original company to find out if they still had the logo and see what the prices are.

Mark thanked everyone for coming to the conference and wished everyone a safe trip home.

Meeting was adjourned.

November 25, 2008

Submitted by Farah Thompson

News from the States

ARIZONA

State Reporter: Ellen McGregor (Pima Community College)

Arizona News

Annual Conference

The 20th Annual AzAIR Conference was held on April 3, 2009 at the Conference Center of Rio Salado Community College. The focus was on "Preparing for the Future in Challenging Economic Times." President Linda Thor welcomed the 59 attendees. Our keynote speaker was Grady Gammage Jr. who is a Senior Research Fellow at the Morrison Institute for Public Policy. He noted the tendency of reports and comments to devalue our state and not truly reflect our progress in education. The in-state joke about, "Thank God for Mississippi" is not always true – often times the comparison measures are mismatched since we do not include capital expenses in state expenses for education so our per pupil expenses does not reflect what is spent. After his keynote address, he joined a panel (Dan Anderson of the Arizona Board of Regents, Steve Chambers from Coconino Community College, and Rick Kroc from the University of Arizona) to continue the discussion.

During these rather stressful times (waiting on the State to make budget changes in order to accept the Federal stimulus dollars), we added "Icebreakers" to the program. We found out that some of our members were attending AzAIR for the first time while four of us had attended the first conference. Other highlights were the number of members who had piloted or co-piloted a plane and one member is a world record holder.

We had a presentation about the Decision Theater at ASU and a lively discussion on data sharing. Our Table Topics covered changes in IPEDS (suggest everyone look at the later news from AIR regarding changes in the 2009-2010 collection year re tuition and fees in Institutional Characteristics and Financial Aid Survey), Environmental Scanning, Data Sharing, ASSIST issues, Strategic Planning, Student Retention Data Exchange, and Student Success.

Steve Chambers became President of AzAIR moving from his Vice-President's position and John Fulginiti is now Past President. Rick Sears of the University of Arizona is our new Vice President.

Cuts in Arizona

Northern Arizona University [will lay off 45 employees](#) and close four satellite campuses because of state funding cuts, the Arizona Republic reports. Most of the positions are in the [distance learning and enrollment departments](#). [They do not include any faculty members](#).

The layoffs are in addition to 100 positions that have been left unfilled. The four satellite campuses are in Nogales, Payson, Globe, and Holbrook, and officials also are closing dorm computer labs and suspending plans for occupational therapy and [physician-assistant programs](#).

Further layoffs are possible, as are university-wide furloughs next year. About \$21 billion was cut from Northern Arizona's budget, or about 13 percent of its state funding. In total (including the [Arizona State](#) and the University of Arizona systems), the state cut \$141 million this year. ASU has laid off 285; left 268 positions unfilled, and will not renew 205 non-tenured faculty positions. UA has laid off 120 and left 500 positions unfilled. UA also has instituted five furlough days for FY 10.

Here are some notes from Cochise College:

- All budget managers were asked to trim 5% from operational for FY10 on top of 2% for FY09 but so far nothing from salaries. However, we have been informed that there will be no cost of living adjustments for the next year. So far we have had no layoffs but each opening is evaluated for how essential it is so it means that vacancies are not being automatically refilled.
- Our spring 2009 enrollments were up about 4.5% from last spring and we anticipate that our fall numbers will also be higher.
- As to stimulus funding, it is uncertain just yet how much we will receive. We have applied through Dep. Labor for about 3M grant for green technology programs and expect another 2M for building retrofitting to add more energy efficient cooling/heating systems for Douglas campus. Also, we are working with the county workforce investment team who have \$2,000,000 over two years to support dislocated workers in their quest for workforce training/certificate programs so we may receive a portion of that.

Pima Community College notes

- The Arizona Legislature recently reduced our state appropriations an additional seven percent. This fiscal year, the College's total reduction in state appropriations is 26%. In the past 12 months, we instituted a series of cost containment measures to address the decreasing revenue. These include:
 1. Reducing administrative positions
 2. Installing a hiring freeze
 3. Implementing travel restrictions
 4. Deferring signing new services contracts
 5. Deferring replacement of equipment
 6. Eliminating or reducing overtime
 7. Eliminating all non mission-critical expenses
 8. Eliminating non-critical employee training
 9. Increasing collection of monies owed
- Currently, 14% of our positions are vacant and many will not be refilled. Additionally, ten percent of our administrative positions will be eliminated by the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Maricopa Community College Board decided not to raise tuition for the 2009-2010 year. Coconino Community College also will not raise tuition. No pay raises for employees are anticipated at any public institution. Currently Arizona State University (ASU) is using a furlough process where staff is on leave without pay one day per pay period. University of Arizona is not filling vacancies. All of the public

institutions are waiting on the Federal Stimulus funds to balance out the financial issues. Many community colleges are experiencing enrollment growth.

COLORADO

State Reporter: Open position

CAPIR was held in early April with about 35 in attendance. We talked about Achieving the Dream, CU's website, and CDHE affairs. Gregory B. Appling Aims Community College

Please contact Lisa Muller if you are interested in serving as Colorado state reporter. Her contact information is at the end of this newsletter.

IDAHO

State Reporter: Chris Lighty (University of Idaho)

The **University of Idaho** is engaged in a transformational process. An Academic Program Prioritization Process is under way at the University of Idaho. The University is reviewing its program offerings to make sure that they have the right programs to carry them successfully into the future while honoring their mission. A "Request for Innovation" was sent out to members of the University community to find new ways to organize, consolidate and/or realign programs to address efforts to become a more sustainable university economically, socially and culturally. The University seeks to build on their strengths to increase quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

Astronaut Steven Swanson carried a University of Idaho flag with him aboard the Discovery Space Shuttle on March 15, 2009. His nephew, Greg Swanson, is a nominee for the NASA International Year of Astronomy Student Ambassador for the state of Idaho and an electrical engineering graduate student at the University of Idaho. At the Engineering EXPO Dean's Reception on April 30 in Moscow, ID, the flag will be presented to the President of the U of I, the Dean of the College of Engineering and the Director of NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium.

Around the state:

Boise State University and the City of Boise are using some money from the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill (signed by President Obama March 11, 2009) to fund phase one of a project to extend the City's current geothermal system to Boise State University. This project is expected to provide an efficient, clean and renewable energy source while saving money and creating jobs. Hands-on research opportunities for BSU student and faculty to study clean energy development are an added bonus provided by this project. The initial phase will save over \$80,000 per year in heating costs and future plans to convert and/or construct buildings to take advantage of natural geothermal water will save even more in the future.

Idaho State University has launched a website to help provide financial advice and assistance to students hoping to combat high dropout rates due to debt burdens. The new Financial Wellness Center and its website are tasked with promoting financial awareness, financial literacy, one-on-one advising and resource networking in the hope of improving student retention. The program provides steps to financial wellness and suggests ways to keep money in your pocket.

Lewis-Clark State College has seen an increase in its enrollment for the fourth semester in a row based on 10th day enrollment figures. The Fall 2008 enrollment was the largest on record with more than a 7% increase over enrollment one year before. The number of minority students doubled, including a 23% increase in Native American students since last spring. Their Professional Technical student population has also seen a large increase of about 30% this spring semester as compared to last spring.

North Idaho College's Judy Hodge, Dean of Professional, Technical and Workforce Education, is confident that the poor economy will bring a surge of interest and enrollment in the college's professional-technical programs, which range from apprenticeship programs to associate's degree options to 10-month technical certificates and even shorter-term basic programs. New measures are being implemented at NIC to increase program space and class availability and flexibility. This will help them deal with the coming combination of new growth and funding issues due to the poor economy. Signs of increasing enrollment at North Idaho College include a spring semester enrollment increase of 10.2 percent over that of spring 2008. Full-time equivalency rose even more sharply in professional-technical programs, which saw a 15.8 percent increase from their enrollment last spring.

Eastern Idaho Technical College won an Idaho Falls "*energy challenge*" award for 2008. EITC was recognized by the city of Idaho Falls as the business that had reduced its electrical bill by the largest percentage last year. The College recently established a *Green Initiative* with the intentions of becoming a "Green Campus." It's all about starting with simple things like turning off your office or classroom lights, minimizing waste by recycling paper, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans. EITC feels that it is important to be a good citizen and a leader in the community.

The Idaho State Board of Education named Steven-Daley-Laursen as Interim President of the University of Idaho. In July 2008, Daley-Laursen succeeded Dr. Timothy P. White who took a position of Chancellor of the University of California at Riverside. Prior to being named Interim President, Daley-Laursen served as Dean of the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources and Professor in the Department of Forest Resources. He has twenty-eight years of experience working in land grant universities and brings experience from the University of Idaho, Montana State University, the University of Montana and the University of Minnesota. As reported in the press release, Timothy White stated: "Steven Daley-Laursen has a strong grasp of both the University of Idaho and the needs of the state of Idaho. The Board of Regents' choice of Steve is brilliant. He is recognized and respected strongly the faculty, staff and administrators of the university, and will be well-received by the donor and political communities both in the state and nationally." Daley-Laursen studied international relations at the College of William and Mary, and earned a bachelor's in conservation and resource development from the University of Maryland. Daley-Laursen will lead the University as a proud alumnus; he earned a master's in forest resources management and a doctorate in forest science from the University of Idaho in 1979 and 1984, respectively.

MONTANA

State Reporter: Jim Rimpau (Montana State University-Bozeman)

Budgets in Montana

As I watch the news from other States, I realize that I shouldn't complain to fellow RMAIRians about the budgets in Montana. A common refrain in Montana this year is 'it could be worse'. Montana's budget is still slightly in the black. Unemployment has risen but is nowhere near the national level. Real estate prices have flattened or decreased slightly but not crashed.

We are anticipating State appropriation levels that will not cover our inflationary increases and there is much discussion about how much, if any tuition increase is appropriate to get us to a breakeven point. Montana resident students have not had a tuition increase over the last two years. The discussion has been made even more interesting by the arrival of the "stimulus money". There is much discussion about whether or not stimulus money should be used to essentially buy down or eliminate tuition increases. Of course, the stimulus money is one time so if we use it to shield current students from increases, we could be setting up conditions for a very large increase in the next budget cycle when the stimulus money is gone.

And of course, there are always those who suggest that if we were just more efficient we wouldn't need all that money anyway. That's just life under the Big Sky.

MSU president announces plans for retirement

Students, faculty and staff returned from spring break to hear President Geoff Gamble announce his plan to retire. Three years ago, Gamble and his wife Patricia decided that 2009 would be the end of his 25-year career as an administrator. Gamble plans to teach courses annually in MSU's Department of Sociology and Anthropology. "In retirement, you'll still see me around campus," Gamble said in his letter. Gamble and his wife plan to travel the state and spend more time with family. The search for the next MSU President will be conducted by the Montana Commissioner of Higher Education Sheila Stearns on behalf of the Board of Regents. Gamble plans to stay in office through the transition even if the search carries over into 2010. Gamble is the 11th president at MSU.

New Provost: Montana State U.-Billings.

The Montana State University campus in Billings has a new Provost. D'Ann Campbell, has been named provost and academic vice chancellor. Dr Campbell was formerly director of the American History Projects and dean of academics at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy,

Enrollment is up on most MUS campuses

Montana State University set a record fall enrollment with 12,369 students up nearly 200 from last year. Graduate student and out-of-state enrollment account for much of the increase. This year's enrollment breaks the record set in 2006 by 31 students. MSU Northern and MSU Great Falls COT campuses also saw an increase in enrollment; while MSU Billings saw a 4% decline.

The University of Montana Missoula campus has broken their enrollment record, set two years ago in 2006, by 246 students. There are 14,207 students attending the UM campus with 1641 of those students enrolled at the COT. UM Helena COT, Montana Tech of UM in Butte, and UM-Western in Dillon also surpassed enrollment projections for this year. These strong enrollment figures come during a time when the number of high school graduates in Montana is declining.

Montanans accept six-mill levy despite economic woes

Every 10 years, voters in Montana are asked to reapprove a six-mill levy that generates funding for higher education. In the last election, Montana voters passed the six-mill levy despite growing concerns over economic conditions. Opposition to the levy was only loosely organized and led by a couple of Bozeman area Republican legislators who are generally against all taxes and a group of Montana gun enthusiasts who were trying to pressure the University system to allow concealed weapons on MUS campuses. The levy will provide about \$13 million a year to the state's universities. The \$13 million is about 8 percent of the state's total funding for its university system. A third of that money will go to the University of Montana's Missoula campus, another third will go to Montana State University's Bozeman campus and the remainder will be divided between other universities in the state. If the levy had not passed, the result could have been a 6.5 percent increase in tuition costs and a reduction in the number of programs offered at the universities.

Fiber optics project will upgrade MSU, UM

A network of fiber optic cable will be lighting up two flagship campuses in Montana. The Board of Regents approved a request made by MSU and UM, in January 2009, to obtain a \$2 million loan to activate some dark fiber owned by AT&T. The partnership between the two Montana universities and the Pacific Northwest GigaPOP (affiliated with the University of Washington) in Seattle will complete the final section of a network between Seattle and Minneapolis. Campuses in Missoula, Bozeman, Billings

and Miles City will connect to the line. In the case of MSU's Bozeman campus, bandwidth will increase from the current 2.5 Gbps to 10 Gbps. The plan is to have the enhanced interconnection of the entire line working by July 1 of this year.

NEVADA

State Reporter: Open position

No report. Please contact Lisa Muller if you are interested in serving as Nevada state reporter. Her contact information is at the end of this newsletter.

NEW MEXICO

State Reporter: Carol Bernhard (University of New Mexico)

New Mexico definitely has news about budgets and cutbacks... The state budget passed by the Legislature now awaits action by the Governor. No salary increases were provided for any state or educational employees in the appropriation bill. Also, the Legislature increased by 1.5% the amount all employees covered by PERA and ERA must pay into their retirement fund, and decreased the contribution from employers into PERA and ERA by the same 1.5% beginning on July 1, 2009, and continuing through 2011.

University of New Mexico:

The state budget passed by the Legislature now awaits action by the Governor. It features a 4.7% reduction in UNM revenues or a loss of about \$15.7 million for main campus, HSC, the branches and special projects. The Legislature also approved a 2.5% tuition credit.

The UNM Regent's are holding a special Budget Hearing this Thursday, April 9, to approve tuition, fees, and salary guidelines for the coming fiscal year, as well as to review the budget plans of the university and the recommendations of UNM constituency groups. As background, tuition was increased last year by 4.85% for incoming resident undergraduate students. The upcoming FY 2010 budget currently includes a 2.5% in-state tuition credit and an 8% out-of-state tuition credit.

UNM is also undergoing its Accreditation site visit from the Higher Learning Commission, from April 6-8, with 15 members from the HLC. Sunday evening, April 5, UNM's site visit got off to a good start with a brief tour of the campus and an informal reception for the team at University House. Monday, April 6, they'll begin their work in earnest, conducting more than 100 separate interviews with members of the UNM community. At the conclusion of their visit on Wednesday, the team will present their initial findings. They'll give us a preliminary indication of any contemplated reports, additional visits, etc., but the HLC Board will make the actual decision on those actions some months from now.

Report on the New Mexico Association for Institutional Research and Planning (NMAIRP) Bruce Martin on the NMAIRP meeting February 2009

New bylaws were adopted and new officers were elected during the New Mexico Association for Institutional Research and Planning's (NMAIRP) 2009 annual meeting at the Hotel Albuquerque on February 26. The organization was established in 2001, but had not previously operated under a formal set of bylaws, which include formal recognition of the affiliation status with AIR.

NMAIRP members also welcomed presentations from state agency staff, including the New Mexico Higher Education and Public Education departments. Representatives from the state agencies discussed

new reporting requirements, and efforts to establish a state level “data warehouse” that should help research efforts involving students’ transitions between the public secondary school system and post-secondary institutions.

The new officers of NMAIRP are President Judy Bosland, Vice-President Candice Guzie, and Past-President Bruce Martin. NMAIRP leadership plans to continue efforts at improving communication between institutions and state agencies, and acting on the results of a survey of organizational members conducted in 2008.

UTAH

State Reporter: Steve Jones (Weber State University)

Statewide Increase in Student Enrollment

According to a February 20th news release from USHE, Spring 2009 enrollment has increased 7.4% from the previous year; A total headcount of 9,548 more students and 4,695 FTE students system-wide. William Sederburg, the Commissioner of Higher Education stated “The year-to-year increase in Spring 2009 is consistent with the growth we experienced in Fall 2008...We expect a continuing growth trajectory in higher education for the 2009-2010 academic year.” Enrollment details for each university can be found at http://www.utahsbr.edu/PressRelease/PR_2009/PR_Feb_20_2009.html.

Tuition Increases Approved

A March 27th news release from USHE announced that the State Board of Regents approved tuition increases for the 2009-2010 academic year. On average, tuition will be increased by 7% for Utah institutions. The rate increase was made in an effort to help mitigate budget cuts. In general, the increase is expected to offset about one-fourth of the ongoing base budget-cut of 17.5 that have been applied to higher education from state legislatures during the past and present year. Details of the cuts for each university can be found at http://www.utahsbr.edu/PressRelease/PR_2009/PR_Mar_27_2009.html.

Budget Cuts and Other Higher Ed. Impacts from the Recent Utah Legislative Session

Despite the dire economic times, the recent legislative session was able to meet many higher education needs. Nearly all Board of Regents’ priorities were approved including a provision allowing public institutions the leeway to move funding between line items in an effort to better deal with deep budget cuts. A bill was also passed to ensure that courses offered by concurrent enrollment programs are actually college-level courses. Economic stimulus money and \$106 million in bonding enabled several higher education building projects to proceed at various state institutions. As for students, stimulus money also was used to secure class offerings and faculty and staff at least for FY2010. Source: “Higher Education breathes a sigh of relief, offers a B+,” Wendy Leonard of the Deseret News, March 13, 2009

For FY2010, budget cuts for each institution are about 9%, about half of what was anticipated. The decrease in funding has prompted state institutions to offer incentives for early retirement and voluntary layoffs, along with other program cutbacks, hiring freezes, and additional layoffs considerations. The ongoing base reduction is still expected to be 17 to 17.5% for the FY2011 base budget. The state’s Rainy Day Fund is expected to be saved for possible shortfalls in 2011. Sources: “Budget capsule: Higher education,” Wendy Leonard of the Deseret News, March 12, 2009; Higher Education Legislative Summary, USHE, March 4, 2009.

WYOMING

State Reporter: Lisa Muller (University of Wyoming)

Wyoming had a \$900 million dollar surplus projection in October 2008 but by the January 2009 legislative session the state budget projection for a surplus was \$250 million. The tone of the 6 week 2009 budget session was to be cautious and to ultimately give the Governor opportunity to make changes as needed. In early April 2009 what once looked like a surplus has a forecast to be a deficit and the mandated May 2009 state agency scenario planning exercises of 5% and 10% cuts may not be adequate. The Governor has instituted a state wide hiring freeze which at UW is being called a "hiring squeeze". The state "rainy day fund", an essential part of boom bust funding will not be considered for the current year but will be considered in the January 2010 session.

Governor Forecasts Budget Cuts

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - Gov. Dave Freudenthal forecast significant budget cuts for the State of Wyoming beginning in July of this year at a news conference on April 2, 2009.

<http://governor.wy.gov/press-releases/governor-forecasts-budget-cuts-state-challenges-wolf-delisting.html>

Overall, Wyoming still looks like a state that has treated higher education well. There are potential modest salary raises passed in the January 2008 biennium and matching funds for endowments were available until April 1st, 2009. Buildings are still being remodeled or completed, and additional funds were allocated in the January 2009 session for excellence faculty positions whose current endowment accounts had decreased due to the national economy. Clean coal technology and a GE High Plains Gasification Advanced Technology Center remain high state priorities.

University of Wyoming

Academic Planning Process

The University of Wyoming planning process University Plan 3 follows months of writing and is the basis for white paper suggestions of possible budget cuts. Recent vice-presidential candidates for administration and finance have commented positively about the Wyoming planning process.

<http://www.uwyo.edu/presidentsupport/outbox/Spring%2009%20Faculty%20Meeting/University%20Plan%203.pdf>

Tuition increase discussions

State political discussions have kept the University of Wyoming resident undergraduate tuition increases to a minimum, including a decision in December 2008 to not increase resident undergraduate tuition for the 2009-10 academic year. All other tuition categories will increase approximately 5%. In budget shortfall discussions tuition increases are likely to be part of ideas about financial diversification. In general the state of Wyoming has provided more state funding per student than the rest of the country and this has allowed resident undergraduate tuition to be one of the lowest anywhere for a research institution. <http://oia.uwyo.edu/charges/20wug.pdf>

Buildings and Remodeling Projects Continue

The University of Wyoming outdoor projects have continued despite snow and cold. Pedestrians have gotten used to finding alternative routes around campus. The new college of business building is located directly across from the dorms so an entire freshmen class has spent time watching a steel structure erected. The library expansion is getting close to completion, the Cheney international studies building remodel continues and the new information technology building will have a grand opening soon.

Transportation

Buses around campus in Laramie, Wyoming have actually become part of the normal visual landscape. An abandoned parking lot has allowed for parking south of the University and will soon be purchased with state funds. The hope is that stimulus funding will help to purchase buses. (I can always wish that they will be electric buses.

Wyoming Community College Commission report

Belinda J. Kolb, MBA

The 2009 Legislative Session brought about the passage of HB114 which in statutory form embodied the guiding work of both a 2008 statewide community college Task Force and the preceding 2007 community college Blue Ribbon Panel. The community college amendments establish a statewide college system operations and facility funding mechanism based upon a prescribed system wide strategic planning process attaching state funding to state interests. Governor Freudenthal signed the bill on 3-19-2009 after vetoing three specific features of the act. Currently, a 15 member statewide Advisory Council is assisting MPR Associates, Inc. in the development of the statewide community college system strategic plan. A draft plan is expected by July 2009. MPR is also currently completing site visits to each of the community colleges in the state. Institutional Researchers at each community college are beginning to entertain queries regarding the availability and accessibility of data in this overall planning process. The Wyoming Community College Commission is currently analyzing the legislation, implementing new processes and updating various rules and policies which facilitate the Commission's ability to continue to advocate for the community college system and comply with all statutory duties.

Transitions

Idaho

Chris Lighty is our new IR Analyst, replacing Barbara Zuck who is now a faculty member at Montana State Northern. Chris comes to us from Coldwater Creek clothing in Sandpoint, Idaho, where she worked in the business Intelligence unit. Chris has a M.S. in Statistics from the University of Idaho, so is coming back to the institution in a sense.

Wyoming

Wyoming Community College Commission:

Retiring in February 2009, were both Commissioner Don Bryant and Commissioner Jack States. The WCCC recognized and thanked for them for their many years of dedicated service at a luncheon during the February meeting of the commission. As of March 1, 2009, the WCCC welcomed new Commissioners Charlene Bodine of Sheridan and Wendy Sweeney of Worland. Commission staff changes include the addition of Ms. Cayse Cummings joining the WCCC in November 2008 as the new Enrollment Auditor and Ms. Belinda Kolb who joined the WCCC in the position of Policy Analyst in February 2009. Central Wyoming College reports the addition of Xiaoying Liu to their IR office and Northwest College welcomes Lisa Smith to their new IR position as of April 1, 2009.

University of Wyoming:

Vice president for administration Phill Harris and budget director Edward Oleske are retiring in May 2009. Douglas H. Vinzant, University of Illinois (Urbana) senior associate vice president for planning and administration, has been named vice president for administration at the University of Wyoming. Dr. Vinzant was also at Arizona State University until 2002 as Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis. Welcome to Wyoming !

Welcome Remarks

Rocky Mountain Association of Institutional Researchers Conference

President George Dennison was our introductory speaker at last October's RMAIR Conference in Missoula. Dr. Dennison has been the president and leader of the University of Montana since 1990. I always enjoy listening to President Dennison and I believe he is one of the most insightful leaders in higher education today. I thought his remarks that morning were particularly good and would be of interest to anyone working in IR. I asked President Dennison if I could include them in some future issue of Panorama and, with his consent, here they are. *Jim Rimpau, Montana State University*

George M. Dennison
President, The University of Montana
Friday, 17 October 2008
Holiday Inn - Downtown at the Park, Missoula

Good morning and welcome. I am George Dennison and I have the honor and privilege to serve as President of The University of Montana, my *alma mater*.

I take special pleasure in welcoming you, the members of the Rocky Mountain Association for Institutional Research (RMAIR,) to this year's annual Conference, hosted by The University of Montana and Montana State University. In addition, I commend the organizers, Bill Muse and Jim Rimpau and their staffs, for the excellent program that will certainly hold your attention during the Conference. As one who has always placed great value on using institutional data to inform planning and decision making, I believe it impossible to exaggerate the role institutional research professionals play in a University environment. I respect and rely on their use of objective and effective analysis to turn data into information, and admire the ways they assist all campus administrators to develop effective strategies without seeking to control the discussion. This role has evolved and continues to change as we seek the most effective ways to allocate scarce resources, and as we increasingly find new revenue streams and assure the most effective and efficient use of resources to achieve desired outcomes.

As a member of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, I have visited numerous campuses to conduct accreditation reviews. In my experience, without fail, the condition and support of the Institutional Research Office explains in large measure the success or lack of success of the institution in planning and analyzing its own performance for improvement. In brief, the evidence strongly suggests that the absence of a robust institutional research function leads to serious planning and resource challenges.

In today's world of increasing public concern about productivity and accountability, the linkages of assessment to planning to resource allocation represent not just good sense but the essential methodology for managing the resources of any University. All higher education administrators have learned at their peril the reality of evidence-based accountability relationships with governing boards, accrediting agencies, the private sector, and policy makers in the executive and legislative branches of the State and Federal governments. The spirited dialog between Secretary Margaret Spellings and her colleagues in the U.S. Department of Education and the leadership of the higher education community will in all likelihood continue whoever wins the election this year and whoever succeeds Spellings. We already see the impact of the discussion in our evolving relations with federal agencies, accrediting bodies, and lawmakers. We will have even greater need for the critical functions of institution research as we seek to deal with these rising challenges.

I want to take a moment to extend a special welcome to Christine Keller, Director of Research and Policy Analysis of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, as the Conference's keynoter. The University of Montana took an active role in the development of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), initiated primarily by Peter McPherson, the President of NASULGC, and we became an early adaptor of this tool. Ms. Keller provided the national coordination for the work that produced the VSA, which initially involved representatives from 70 institutions and 7 task forces. Over 300 colleges and universities have now committed to implement VSA, a very timely and prudent development, from my perspective. The product of that work, entitled "College Portrait," provides an effective, objective, easy-to-use tool for prospective college students and their families to evaluate and inform their college choices. With VSA, higher education has taken the first highly visible and effective step to demonstrate that we understand the need for transparency and accountability.

I applaud the foresight and the efforts of the volunteers who developed the system and the institutions involved. We still have much to do. We must continue the effort to develop and implement a fully responsive, informative, reliable, cost-effective, flexible, and responsible outcomes assessment system—one that does not make the mistake of assuming that one size fits all—and make it readily available to all. In that regard, I commend your decision to make accountability the central theme for this Conference. State and federal policy and budget deliberations increasingly focus on the outcomes of investments and

returns on the investments, rather than funding institutions. While we may not like the rhetoric, and we may continue to think that the value of what we do only becomes fully apparent years after we do it, we must nonetheless develop an accountability system that satisfies the public appetite for good and reliable information. Everyone knows that state funding for public higher education has declined as a percentage of operational budgets these past four decades. If we want to reverse that trend, we must work to provide better outcomes data that policy makers find meaningful. Some may conclude that the current economic conditions bolster the predictions made earlier by Harold Hovey and Dennis Jones - that our best hope lies in moderating the downward trend, given the projections for state revenues without some change in tax policies. But whatever the perspective, it strikes me that better outcomes data and more transparency will enhance our ability to have an impact on our own position.

In fact, from my perspective, successful accountability programs hold most of the promise to assist us in this effort. Through accountability measures, we acknowledge responsibility for achieving desired outcomes and we retain the initiative in helping to define those outcomes. Policy makers have a collaborative role and the responsibility to provide the resources and the regulatory environment to facilitate the objective of restoring the United States to world leadership as defined by the educational attainment of its citizenry. If we come to agreement on outcomes and benchmarks for progress in attaining those outcomes, funding decisions become less arbitrary because of shared and understood expectations by stakeholders.

Achieving this goal requires that the evolution of the institutional research function continues. Traditionally, campuses have focused more on counting inputs than measuring outcomes. We track enrollment, retention, transfer, and graduation, but not measured increases in knowledge. Most campuses and systems cannot even accurately measure outcomes in terms of placement of graduates or increased earnings, much less the value added to society as a result of an educated citizenry. I have often argued, as a member of the Northwest Commission and on this campus, that with the state of our outcomes assessment programs, we cannot with great conviction determine whether our students do well because or in spite of what we do to them. We generally determine what things cost, but have done a poor job of measuring the actual outcomes, the changes that occur in students. We must come to view assessment as an essential part of education, the part that focuses almost exclusively on student success. In a very real sense, assessment forms the bedrock of effective teaching and learning. The collaborative and innovative partnership of faculty, administrators, and staff seems to me absolutely essential to define and realize student success in terms of the value added. It seems apparent as well that the institutional research function will prove even more critical as we pursue that objective.

In closing, I again welcome you all to The University of Montana. I have no doubt that you will enjoy your visit, and that you will find the discussions during the Conference stimulating and inspiring. Thank you for all you do and will do as we respond together to the challenge of returning the United States to world leadership in educating its citizenry.

Thank you.

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