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INTERCOM—A Message from the President

The days are getting longer rapidly. Surely at this time of year those who have to spend the winter in Tucson and Tempe must envy the burst of enthusiasm and renewed vigor experienced at this time of year by those RMAIR members in Laramie and Pocatello who once again are emerging from the February depression that results every year from the true temperate zone climate at this end of the region. Not to mention Saskatoon, since we don’t know which comes first up there, spring or the 4th of July. It is amazing that the higher education issues have so much in common across a region of such diversity in altitude and latitude.

Our next chance to get together will be coming soon. I hope a large number of our members will find it possible to attend the AIR Forum in Chicago, May 16-19. Program booklets and registration materials should be sent to you soon. You will see a number of RMAIR members listed as participants in the Forum program. We are well represented not only as presenters and facilitators, but as officers and committee members. RMAIR is an active region and we do our part in the national organization as well.

The RMAIR Special Interest Group at the Forum meeting is set for 12:15-1:15 on Monday, May 17. The agenda will include discussion of preliminary details of our fall 1993 conference in Tucson and other RMAIR business. There is usually time to share ideas on topics of common interest in the informal atmosphere for which RMAIR is well known. We have not ordered a catered lunch for our group because of cost and the difficulty of estimating the exact number who may attend. We are told that the Forum is planning a luncheon service nearby which should be convenient for individuals to purchase up lunch items of their choice and bring them to the meeting. Hope to see you there!

FROM THE EDITOR

For those who think Arizona is a land of sunshine and clear skies, think again. We have already had half our annual rainfall, 5.5 inches in Tucson, and it is only the middle of February. I am hoping it will rain itself out by the end of October and we will have perfect weather for the annual RMAIR shindig this coming October 27-29.

For your reading pleasure this issue, John Porter has reviewed a SHEEO piece entitled "Statewide Student Data Systems and Capabilities to Report Postsecondary Graduation Rates" by Charles S. Lenth and Alene Bycer Russell. Note that this is a companion piece to the one written up by Steve Chambers in the March 1992 issue of Panorama, you might want to review Steve’s piece to fill out the coverage of
student right to know and statewide data systems. Also see the description by Mike Smith of what is happening in Colorado along this line.

I am putting out a call for special feature articles to be published in Panorama. If you have something to share with your fellow RMAIRians, why not write it up and get it in. If you have any questions regarding what is involved, please contact Ginny Feagler or me. As our Emperor has said in the past, 'if you like to read 'em, why not write 'em;' or something to that effect.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAUSE Announcement

May 1, 1993 is the deadline for paper proposals for CAUSE93, the conference for managing and using information technology in higher education. Conference theme this year is: "Managing Information Technology as a Catalyst of Change."

CAUSE93 will be held in San Diego this year from December 7-10. For more information contact CAUSE, 4840 Pearl E. Circle, #302E, Boulder, Colorado 80301; (303) 449-4430; info@CAUSE.colorado.edu; fax (303) 440-0461.

News from the Finance Officer
by Diane Muntal

Contrary to the dismal state of state economies in general, I am pleased to announce the RMAIR finances are in excellent shape.

As a result of the membership invitations sent to those who were not fortunate enough to attend the Coeur d'Alene conference, I have received thirteen renewals and three new members have joined thus far! With renewals still coming in the mail, we have 57 paid members as of February 10.

We also have a record breaking $2,965 in our bank account, which I am sure Emperor Hunter will put to good use.

Many thanks to our Membership chair, Jacquelyn Storn, University of Colorado Boulder, for coordinating this year's successful membership drive!

Evaluation of the RMAIR 1992 Conference, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, September 30 -October 2, 1992

Results of the evaluation forms for the RMAIR Conference held at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, September 30 -October 2, 1992, are reviewed below.

The highest ratings were for the dinner/cruise and the ease and accuracy of registration. These were followed closely by the ratings for the meals and location. Only slightly lower were the ratings for program planning and preparation and the keynote speaker. All items were rated highly towards excellent. No item received a poor rating. Only a single event received more than two ratings toward the poor side of the scale, the the Wednesday evening event received three.

Twenty-six of those attending returned a completed evaluation form. A validity check of sorts was obtained when an item which did not pertain to this year's conference was inadvertently left on the form when it was revised. Sixteen of the responders marked that item N/A or left it blank. Thus less than forty percent misunderstood the item or were using blanket ratings to show their impression of the conference. Overall the ratings and comments seem to indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the conference.

IN REVIEW

Statewide Student Data Systems and Capabilities to Report Postsecondary Graduation Rates by Charles S. Lenth and Alene Bycer Russell

Reviewed by John Porter

This SHEEO monograph brings to our attention the fact that statewide student data systems were omitted in developing the requirements contained in Student Right to Know. Whether the omission was intentional or not, the authors are concerned that Student Right to Know will replace these systems; or at minimum, create a vacuum of uncertainty surrounding the future of these efforts.

As it stands now, those administering statewide tracking systems are uncertain what role, if any, their information will serve in the Student Right to Know arena. The unfortunate fact is that in most cases, the information contained in the statewide data sets is far richer and informative than the data required by Student Right to Know. In their monograph, Lenth and Russell raise a legitimate question: Will the impetus to develop and maintain statewide tracking systems wane under Student Right to Know? If so, postsecondary education will lose an important resource for studying student persistence through graduation.

Beyond this important point, Lenth and Russell's monograph is really a case study about the capabilities and development of seven of the 27 states which have statewide tracking systems. The first section of the monograph contains a useful summary of the capabilities of each of these systems and the status of those systems currently under development. If you are contemplating developing a tracking system for your institution or state, this monograph is must reading for you.
Lenth and Russell's monograph is incomplete without a companion piece by Peter Ewell and Dennis Jones: *Assessing and Reporting Student Progress: A Response to the "New Accountability."* This latter monograph focuses on the conceptual underpinnings of student tracking, along with the definitions and standard reports which should be part of any tracking model. Together the monographs provide a wealth of useful information in this area.

Unfortunately, Lenth and Russell are too late and too general to inform the dialogue surrounding Student Right to Know. However, I do not believe that Student Right to Know will sound the death knell for statewide tracking. If anything, statewide student data systems should flourish and prosper as states attempt to respond to the myriad of questions raised by Student Right to Know. For example, why is my state lower than your state? Sound familiar?

The point Lenth and Russell make concerning the need for linkages between the states and the federal government is something that should not fall on deaf ears. If anyone in Washington, D.C. is listening, this monograph has made a major contribution to the field!

**NEWS
FROM STATES AND PROVINCES**

**ARIZONA**
by Phyllis Edamatsu

**Institutional Assessment at the University of Arizona**

A Program for Assessment of Institutional Priorities (PAIP) at the University of Arizona will be completed this spring. Initiated last summer by the president, the program is designed to assess institutional priorities by academic and administrative unit. Each unit has been instructed to evaluate its role in the university via a five-page report, with appendices. These reports will be reviewed and analyzed by a series of committees which will evaluate strengths and weaknesses of each unit and make recommendations. Altogether some 110 faculty and staff will be reviewing these reports.

**Other News**

The Student Minority Progress Report has been released to the Arizona Board of Regents. Produced by a Tri-University and Board of Regents committee, the report shows that the three state universities have met overall minority recruitment and graduation goals set by the Board 5 years ago. There is ongoing discussion to set new goals for minorities.

Discussion is also continuing with the three universities and the Board on the retention and graduation of all students, freshmen, in particular. Plans are to identify admission standards which may influence retention and graduation.

Budget recommendations from the governor's office for 1993-94 include a 1.9 percent decrease from the 1992-93 appropriation for the state university system. This recommendation marks the third straight year of university budget reductions.

The Arizona Board of Regents appointed Planning Commission is nearing consensus on the way the state should handle the 55,000 student increase predicted by Carol Frances & Associates to occur by the year 2010. Financial estimates and sequence of implementation are currently being worked on by the universities, ABOR staff, and a Planning Commission subcommittee.

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**COLORADO by Jacki Stinn**

Colorado Association of Planners & Institutional Researchers (CAPIR)

CAPIR will hold its spring meeting on April 21 (afternoon only) at the CCCOES conference room, 1391 N. Speer Blvd, Denver. For more information, please contact Lou McClelland at: (303) 492-7067; or bitnet MCCLELLAND_L@CUBLD.R.COLORADO.EDU.

**Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System**
By Gregory Smith

Colorado higher education has had legislatively mandated accountability requirements since 1985. The first reports were submitted to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in 1988. These accountability reports include outcomes information on students' gains in knowledge, skills, etc. between entry and exit; completion and retention; after-graduation performance; and student, alumni, and employer satisfaction.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 required each state to develop and implement, by September 24, 1992, a system of standards for performance and measures of performance for vocational education. The Act, section 115(b), states that each system of core standards and measures of performance shall include measures of learning and competency gains and one or more measures of performance which shall include only competency attainment, job or work skill attainment or enhancement, retention or completion, and placement in additional training or education, military service, or employment.
Given the obvious overlap between the two mandates, Colorado community colleges are busy incorporating the new vocational performance measures into existing accountability practices in order to avoid any duplication of effort. For similar reasons, the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System is also revising its program review policy and procedures.

Panorama Research Brief
by Gregory Smith

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has had a Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS) since 1985. The existence of SURDS allows Colorado community colleges to track former students to Colorado public 4-year institutions. The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System recently completed a study of five graduate cohorts (1986-87 through 1990-91). Transfer rates, acceptance rates, grade point average, and persistence at 4-year institutions were examined.

Colorado community college Associates of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) graduates (N=4,967) transfer to Colorado public 4-year institutions at a rate of about 50%. The five year acceptance rate for community college graduates to the 4-year institutions is 93.1% (N=5,590). Cumulative GPAs of the five graduate transfer cohorts (N=3,964) were 3.0 at 4-year institutions and 3.2 at community colleges (i.e., on a 4-point scale). About 75% of graduate transfers complete and persist at the transfer institution. Over 60% of the AA/AS graduates who transferred in academic years 1986 and 1987 (N=776) had completed a 4-year degree (BA/BS) by spring 1991.

Overall, the data show that Colorado community college graduates transfer to Colorado 4-year institutions at reasonable rates, are almost guaranteed access to 4-year schools, and perform well once they transfer. Currently, two additional follow-up studies are underway; one examines the correlates of transfer and after-transfer performance; the second examines the performance of all transfer students, rather than only graduate transfer.

Colorado Mountain College

Colorado Mountain College is conducting community surveys at three of its seven campuses this year. Alpine Campus in Steamboat Springs, Summit Campus in Summit County, and the Aspen Campus are canvassing residents door-to-door to ask them about programs and services, and about their evaluations of the College. Surveys conducted in the past using this method have generated upwards of a 95% response rate. The survey is created with a community development focus and has been instrumental in revising schedules, courses, and services to meet students' needs.

CMC's President, Dennis Meyer, has resigned effective July 1, 1993. The search committee is screening applications for a new president. Call Kathy Chandler-Henry at (303) 945-8691 for more information.

University of Colorado

UC Colorado Springs. UCCS Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Merrill Lessley has been named interim chancellor at UCCS. He was appointed for a six-month period beginning February 1. He replaces Dwayne Nuzum who did not seek reappointment after serving as chancellor for seven years.

UC Denver Former UCCS Chancellor Dwayne Nuzum was appointed Dean of UCD's College of Architecture and Planning beginning February 1. The college is the result of the reunification of UC-Boulder's College of Environmental Design and UCD’s School of Architecture and Planning. Although plans for the new college call for the dean to be housed in Denver, he will initially have offices on both campuses.

Western State College

Recently a new calendar was approved by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education for Western State College in Gunnison. The new calendar divides the academic year into two 12-week and two 8-week sessions. The 8-week and 12-week sessions will be alternated during the academic year. Students will typically take 12 credit hours during the 12-week session and 6 credit hours during the 8-week session. Students can graduate in four years if they attend both 12-week sessions and one of the 8-week sessions each academic year.

Legislative News (excerpted from The Silver and Gold Record)

Action on a bill capping the amount of money raised by tuition, easing intra-institutional transfer by students, and ensuring Coloradans are in the majority at state colleges and universities was introduced in the legislature by Senate Majority Leader Jeff Wells.

The wide-ranging bill calls for legislative approval of the amount of money that higher education institutions may raise through tuition and fees although it would leave governing boards free to set tuition levels. The bill would require that at least 55% of incoming freshmen at the University of Colorado, Colorado State University, Fort Lewis College and the University of Southern Colorado be state residents and that not less than two-thirds of undergraduate and graduate enrollment be resident students.

The bill also calls for the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to devise new policies to smooth the way for intra-institutional transfers by students.

Under the bill credit hours earned by a student prior to making a transfer that are required by the new degree program must be counted toward graduation, students who transfer cannot be required to complete a
greater number of required courses than students who originally began in the program, and the grade point average to transfer into the program cannot be higher than that required to graduate from the program.

IDAHO
by Jerry Engstrom

As in most other states, immediately after Santa Claus we get the legislature. It has been in session for over a month, now. But, it is still too early to know what our elected representatives will do for higher education.

Prospects are not especially encouraging in spite of the fact that Idaho’s economy is doing very well. In each of the last several years, tax revenues have exceeded expectations. Unfortunately, prison and health and welfare needs have been growing more rapidly than the economy. The demands from these two areas are consuming all of the growth in state tax revenues.

Unlike the national elections this last fall, the state results brought an even more substantial Republican majority to the state legislature. While our Democratic governor has proposed major tax modifications that would result in lessening reliance on property taxes and corresponding increases in a number of state taxes, the legislature appears headed for barely more than a maintenance budget.

There is early talk of partially funding the direct educational costs created by the substantial enrollment increases that public higher education has seen over the last few years. But, there seems to be little hope for much more. Cries for faculty salary equity are still heard, but there is scant hope they will be heeded.

The best guess at this point is that there will be a 1 to 2% increase in employee compensation.

In terms of other potential legislative action concerning higher education, the annual talk of splitting the responsibilities of the State Board of Education into separate boards dealing with public and higher education is again in the air. This year the proposal even has been made part of the Governor’s legislative package. That alone does not assure change, however. Also making the Governor’s list is a proposal to begin statewide administrative cost savings by reducing the staff of the Office of the State Board of Education by 20 percent.

A couple of other pieces of proposed legislation that could have significant impact on the higher education system in the state is a proposal to amend and expand the Board’s relationship with proprietary schools and a proposal to begin legislative performance audits of all state agencies—including campuses.

The final bit of news to report is that while campus enrollment has continued to increase, the rate of increase dropped significantly this spring. Academic enrollment for our college and universities increased by 2% for headcount and 4% for FTE.

MONTANA
by Cel Johnson

Like many other states, Montana is projecting a budget deficit for the next biennium, and we’re in the middle of a legislative session that’s sure to have a major impact on higher education throughout the state. The newly-elected governor and the legislature seem to be in agreement that higher education’s budget will be a major player in reducing the deficit by some $23 million system-wide over the next biennium. The allocation of this cut among system units is still being hotly debated, but MSU’s share will probably total $7-10 million. The governor has announced that the university system is top heavy with administrators, who should be cut to spare instruction. However, he’s including coaches, counselors, security guards, etc., in his count of administrators. Interesting. This legislative session promises to be a depressing one for anyone associated with higher education in Montana.

While the state legislators debate how much money to carve out of MSU, the university will celebrate its founding as the first public institution of higher education in the state on February 16. One of the highlights of the celebration will be a 7’x 11’ cake baked as a replica of the state of Montana, decorated with such features as the Rocky Mountains, the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, and other points of interest across the state. Slices of cake will be distributed to all comers at 11:00. The Founder’s Day Convocation features a lecture by Charles Kuralt, CBS News correspondent, who will also receive an honorary doctorate from MSU.

It’s with much regret I report that MSU’s budget director Bruce Shivley has jumped ship and taken a similar position at University of Nevada-Reno. Our loss is most definitely their gain, and I envy Jan Brown’s future of working with my departed buddy!

NEVADA
by Jan Brown

University and Community College System of Nevada

The Nevada legislature is
currently in its biennial session and is facing major fiscal problems that will require shifts in program funding levels. The Governor has submitted his budget for the 1993-95 biennium; cuts made in higher education for the 1991-93 biennium have been made permanent, and the higher education 1993-95 budget has been built on the reduced base. No salary increases are provided, but some additional funds provide for a 2% merit pool. No additional cuts are foreseen at this point in time. Overall, the UCCSN will have a budget barely above what it had last year after the cuts.

Higher education's share of the state's general funds has generally stayed at approximately 20%, but as the Governor has recommended a shift of funding toward K-12, this share will drop to approximately 18%. Enrollments, however, continue to rise in Nevada's colleges and universities.

The Governor's proposed budget also calls for a reorganization of state government into six new "super-agencies." The changes would save the state about $10 million and eliminate 268 positions. One of the most controversial aspects of our "education governor's" plan is the merging of the departments of Education and Human Resources into a Department of Education, Health and Human Services.

In this rather dismal budgetary year, the only positive news is that the Governor has said he supports the use of "triggers" that automatically would provide more money for higher education as the economy improves. In past years, Nevada governors and the legislature routinely passed laws that "triggered" salary increases for employees when surpluses reached specific figures. He indicated that he would support the repeal of the "anti-trigger" law passed at the end of the last legislative session because of concerns that it contributed to the growth of the state budget.

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

As a result of reduced state funding, UNLV is studying the various methods of limiting enrollments. UNLV President Maxson dismisses the idea of raising admissions standards, claiming they are already high enough. At present, entering freshmen need a grade point average of 2.3, which will increase to 2.5 by 1996.

Maxson prefers Chancellor Dawson's suggestion of giving preference to Nevada residents who wish to enroll. Eighty-six percent of UNLV students are residents. Also under consideration is the elimination of the system's "Good Neighbor" policy, which allows students from counties bordering on Nevada to pay greatly reduced out-of-state tuition.

Following the inconclusive results from the interim legislative committee charged with investigating the firing of Jerry Tarkanian, pro-Tarkanian forces launched a petition drive in support of recall elections for two members of the Board of Regents perceived as Maxson supporters. Hearings this week will determine whether a recall election will be held.

**NEW MEXICO**

by Richard Cady

Nelle Moore has replaced Mary Jo Clark as Director of Institutional Research, Grant Development, and Planning at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. Mary Jo Clark, who had served at ETS and New Mexico Highlands University, retired.

Nelle comes to New Mexico from Arizona State University where she was in IR for five years. She holds a M.A. in Education Psychology and is ABD in Leadership and Policy Studies at ASU. Her paper on sex equity in salaries will be published in Research in Higher Education. (Ed.: This paper was reviewed by Sandy Johnson in the last Panorama.)

The New Mexico Legislature is in its 60-day session. Here are the summary data, statewide:

FY 93 Appropriations - 363.9 million. FY 94 Commission recommendation - 393.6 million. FY 94 Governor's request - 382.0 million. FY 94 Legislative Finance Committee recommendation - 385.7 million

This increase in funding is close to projected price inflation in the HEPI. A tuition increase of 5% is demanded and will probably be higher. Postsecondary education will slip a bit in its share of annual appropriations by the state.

There is talk in the Legislature of establishing either an interim (temporary) or permanent legislative oversight committee on postsecondary education.

The New Mexico Commission on Higher Education is once again searching for an Executive Director. In the meanwhile Interim Executive Director Dr. Karen Becklin, who is on loan from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces until April 30, 1993, is continuing her efforts to assist the Commission in arriving at a consensus regarding its role, issues, and priorities. Frequent turnover in the commission staff, including the Executive Director's position, is one symptom of the ongoing difficulties faced at the Commission. Other problems include woefully inadequate staff salaries and understaffing (e.g., South Carolina, with approximately the same number of higher education institutions, has about three times the
staffing for its Commission). The Commissioner hopes to have the new Director on board no later than July 1, 1993. -- Tom Field

Redesign of the Commission on Higher Education's statewide database is progressing. Current collection is suspended in a partial moratorium while the overall structure of data collected likely will not be much different from that of the old system, clarification of data definitions and a new submission schedule should improve efficiency. After decades of contracting with the University of New Mexico for its data processing the Commission staff is looking now to maintain its own system, probably on an in-house PC-LAN, possibly with remote access to the state mainframe data processing facility. Each higher education institution in the state will be responsible for submitting its edited data to the Commission. These edits will be preformed locally at each institution on a Commission-specified hardware (PC) platform using Commission provided "black box" software designed to assure accuracy and consistency. The Commission tentatively plans to hire two or three new staff members to support this new system, including one person to serve as liaison between the Commission staff and the two dozen plus higher education institutions, detailing data definitions, etc. Preliminary discussions about the recruitment of this person have happily centered on the desirability of getting someone with an Institutional Research background with some programming experience rather than looking for a total technodweeb. -- Tom Field

Wyoming
by Mike Dover

University of
Wyoming

On December 19, 1992, the Trustees of the University

of Wyoming approved a faculty workload policy. The standard teaching responsibility for full-time University of Wyoming faculty is twelve credits per semester for faculty assigned exclusively to undergraduate teaching. Nine credits per semester will be standard for those faculty whose responsibilities include research, creative activities, extension, service, or administration. Teaching responsibility may vary depending upon the nature and significance of other faculty assignments. This policy was the culmination of several months of consultation with many groups, including the Deans' Council and Faculty Senate.

One of the goals of the faculty workload policy is to establish teaching as a primary function of the University. In an effort to enhance this function, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) has been established. The purpose of CTE is to provide vital support for teaching and learning excellence. CTE is designed to enhance faculty teaching skills by providing assistance in classroom communication techniques, training with the latest classroom technology, and improving the design and delivery of undergraduate courses.

The Office of Institutional Analysis has new electronic mail addresses. The addresses are:

Connie Brizuela: HANUMAN@UWYO.EDU
Angie Bulea: BULESA@UWYO.EDU
Susan Jones: SJONES@UWYO.EDU
Sue Keller: SSAVOR@UWYO.EDU
Lisa Muller-Scott: LISASCOT@UWYO.EDU
Elaine Rodgers: SOLOMAN@UWYO.EDU

From the Community Colleges

The Wyoming Community College Commission has embarked on a massive rewrite of the rules governing activities of the seven state community colleges. There continues to be extensive discussion on the role of the Commission in the governance of each institution. Historically the community colleges have been governed by locally elected boards (the Commission is made up of members who are appointed by the Governor). Initial rule proposals called for the Commission to become intimately involved in personnel decisions at each institution, approve each and every course offered as well as administer the distribution of state funding through the formula. The Wyoming legislature has refused to fund additional personnel positions for the Commission thus effectively blocking the ability of the Commission to perform additional governance functions.

Requests to this year's legislature for modest salary increases appear to have fallen by the wayside during early budget hearings strongly suggesting another year without raises.

Some community colleges are actively involved in developing assessment models which will be satisfactory in upcoming North Central Association visits. Evaluation of various testing instruments as well as portfolio methodologies is occurring in a number of campus settings. It is anticipated that the new COLLEAGUE administrative data system will prove helpful in tracking student performance in a number of areas.

Several of the community colleges will begin large scale building and/or renovation projects this year. They continue to work on interim space utilization standards adopted last year. The voters in the districts have shown a willingness to approve bond issues of several millions of dollars in order to expand physical plants to accommodate growing enrollments.