Intercom – Message from the President

Connie Brizuela

What a great RMAIR meeting at Vail! Many thanks to Denise Sokol and Charlene Wellborn for a wonderful job with the local arrangements—especially for that sumptuous welcome reception! Jacki Stirn did double duty as Past President and Program Chair, and what a fantastic program it was! Thanks to all the presenters, especially to Hans L’Orange for moderating the “State of the States” panel, and to Mark Chisholm, Kari Coburn, Pat Meade, and Tom Rhodes for their participation. It was fun—and informative—to see what the “hot topics” were for each state. A special thanks to Steve Chambers for presenting the Web Database Design workshop. And last, but not least, congratulations to Ruth Ann Wilson and Joe Fleishman for “Bringing Order to Chaos,” our best paper. Let’s all go to their presentation again, in Toronto!

Thanks to Bruce Higley for another great year for RMAIR! Your contributions have helped to expand and build on the strengths of this great organization. And congratulations to Wendy Miley, our new Vice President. She’s a dear friend and will be a wonderful leader!

We are really excited about the 2002 RMAIR conference plans. We have an unbelievably gorgeous venue—in Jackson Hole, with incredible views of the Tetons. The cost of the conference will be unbelievably reasonable. With great activities and a beautiful locale, this conference will be remembered for years to come! For more details, be sure to read Sue Koller’s article in this newsletter.

And, of course, be sure to attend the 42nd Annual Forum of AIR, in Toronto, Canada, June 2-5. It will be a celebration of the Association’s international span, in a truly international city, and an unforgettable experience!

I want to thank all of you, the members of RMAIR, for supporting this organization that does so much for the institutional researchers in the Rocky Mountain region. This year, let’s make an effort to reach out to other institutional researchers who may not be aware of the great advantages of membership, especially those at smaller schools in the region. Let’s continue our wonderful traditions of friendship and “esprit de corps,” and see if we can also include others. It would be great if all of the higher education institutions in the Rocky Mountain region were represented in RMAIR and were able to take advantage of the professional development, networking opportunities, and camaraderie that we have to offer. See you in Toronto! —Connie
Welcome to the March 2002 issue of PANORAMA. In this issue, you will find an article on the upcoming 2002 RMAIR conference in Jackson Hole. The article, written by local arrangements chair Sue Koller, provides some general information on Jackson Hole, the conference facility, and conference activities. There are a couple of WWW links you can follow for more information. Sue is soliciting ideas for pre-conference workshops. Look for additional information on submitting session proposals in the next issue of PANORAMA.

Of course, this issue contains our regular feature “News from the States.” This winter has been very busy for everyone, and my attempt to get out an issue of PANORAMA in December did not quite get off the ground. However, some of the state reporters submitted their reports in December and some more recently.

Upcoming 2002 RMAIR Conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming
Sue Koller

The fall 2002 RMAIR Conference will be nestled in the beauty of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Block out October 9-11 on your calendar because you won’t want to miss this locale. The luxurious Spring Creek Ranch will accommodate the conference. After sending a small contingency to Jackson to check out the Wort Hotel, we found that their conference facility was a bit small for our needs. You won’t be disappointed though. The Spring Creek Ranch is every bit as lush as Vail, and the views are the most breathtaking I’ve seen. Each room has its own fireplace and exquisite balcony views. The conference facility is being newly built and will have 3200 square feet of meeting area—so let’s fill it up! Check out the conference site at www.springcreekranch.com. The pictures don’t lie! The Tetons are in clear view from every window and balcony. And for your convenience, Spring Creek Ranch offers complimentary shuttle service to and from the Jackson Hole Airport. For information on transportation and other activities in Jackson, go to http://www.jacksonholechamber.com/.

Our activity for the conference includes more extraordinary views upon horseback, or, if you prefer, in a covered wagon Thursday afternoon (weather permitting). To accommodate the activity, we will shift the conference schedule slightly to serve lunch on Thursday and adjourn early. For those who would like to pass on the trail ride, the conference motel has shuttle service around Jackson for activities such as shopping, golfing, wildlife tours, the National Elk Refuge, and the National Museum of Wildlife Art. Later, we will all meet back at the ranch for a fun filled evening complete with mouthwatering food, reminiscing with old friends, making new acquaintances, door prizes, and last, but most importantly, a live band for “kickin’ up your heels!”

Please be thinking of presentations to submit in June so we can continue the tradition of a quality program. If you have any requests for pre-conference workshops, please contact me at ssavor@uwyo.edu. Mark your calendars and prepare to be wowed!

Wendy Miley Elected RMAIR Vice President
Wendy Kappy

Wendy Miley, Principal Research Specialist at the University of Arizona, has been elected as RMAIR’s Vice President for 2002-2003. Wendy, who has been with Decision and Planning Support at the University of Arizona since 1989, brings a wealth of professional experience to her position. A member of RMAIR since 1992, she has served our organization in a number of roles: Panorama State Reporter 1992-1995, Local Arrangements Co-chair in 1993, Panorama Editor 1994-1998, and Program Chair in 2000. She is a regular paper presenter at RMAIR
meetings, and received the Best Paper Presentation Award in 1997. Wendy’s leadership, hard work, and infectious enthusiasm have been a tremendous asset to RMAIR, and we know we can expect great things as she serves as Vice President, President, and Past President over the next three years!

A Message from Wendy Miley

Welcome all members, especially those who have just found about Rocky Mountain AIR. I look forward to seeing all of you if not this spring in Toronto, then this coming fall in Wyoming. Given the state of Arizona’s economy, and whether the legislature can come up with creative solutions to the looming $800 million budget deficit, travel plans at the University of Arizona will be scant.

News from the States

ARIZONA
State Reporter: Ellen McGregor

ASSIST to the Rescue

The Community Colleges in Arizona have met their December reporting obligations to both the state and federal governments with help from other agencies. Using the cohort of completers from 1999-2000 who had met the state criteria of enrolling for 7 or more credits in a vocational program, taken collegiate-level math or English, and had left the community college, we were able to use data from DES Unemployment Insurance Files and Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST). In both cases, care was taken to be in compliance with FERPA. The Maricopa Community College District provided technical support, and ASU worked with individual community colleges in using the state system. These links within Arizona will enable institutions to meet reporting requirements and learn more about the movement of students within the state. We appreciate the assistance from DES and ASSIST in providing important data. BTW, my e-mail is now Ellen.McGregor@pima.edu.

COLORADO
State Reporter: Steve Chambers

New Legislation Takes Aim at Colorado Coordinating Board

The Denver Post reported on March 2nd that there is a move afoot to place new limits on authority of the statewide coordinating board, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). According to the article written by Steven K. Paulson, under legislation to be proposed, CCHE would “lose some of its independence and be made more accountable to the Legislature.”

The pokes at CCHE may be backed up with some teeth. Stan Matsunaka, Senate President and chair of the Senate Education Committee, is the one proposing the new legislation.

Paulson writes that “Matsunaka said he came up with the proposal because of complaints from universities about the amount of paperwork required by the CCHE to govern the state's universities and colleges.” The newspaper article further notes that “over the past eight months, four college presidents have resigned in a trend critics said stems from lack of funding and state education policies.”
In recent years, Colorado has also placed around 48\textsuperscript{th} among the 50 states in state support for higher education per student FTE. A unified voice in favor of statewide higher education interests has not been present as six different governing boards have fended for their own piece of the limited higher education fiscal pie. The result has left CCHE as the agency speaking for all of higher education. However, in recent years a role of watchdog has suited CCHE’s temperament more than that of advocate.

Paulson’s Denver Post article ends with Matsunaka stating that his goal for the new legislation “is not to interfere with academics, . . . is to let higher education institutions do their job.”

**IDAHO**

**State Reporter: Archie George**

The Idaho legislators are about to wrap up what might be one of the shortest sessions in recent history. Last year a large budget surplus led to generous appropriations to higher education, but also inspired substantial tax cuts, especially for business interests. Revenue shortfalls in the current year, combined with the tax cuts which have just gone into effect, resulted in across the board cuts in most state appropriations, and education was not exempt. Attempts to scale back or delay the tax cuts have been unsuccessful so far.

Idaho institutions of higher education face a 10\% budget reduction from last year. Most are planning faculty and staff layoffs, usually based on seniority. At Lewis-Clark State College, for example, all employees hired in the last two years are at risk. The faculty were the first to hear, as their contracts are signed earlier than the staff contracts. Similar policies are being implemented at Idaho State U and Boise State U, although Boise State had more reserve and seems to be affected the least.

At the University of Idaho, the state revenue shortfalls have been combined with a realization that institutional spending has outpaced revenue for several years. This resulted an additional, internal reallocation based on “strategic initiatives” (see http://www.uidaho.edu/budget/ for details).

Most academic colleges and administrative units have had to identify and implement strategies to cut about 18\% of budget between FY2001 and FY2002. In the Institutional Planning and Budget office, we’re losing one vacant Management Analyst position and one filled Management Assistant position. The individual colleges and units were told how much to cut, but the process and policies were left to the individual “responsibility managers” to determine. Very few, if any, chose seniority as a criterion, and few instituted a hiring freeze.

In order to encourage people to leave voluntarily, an early retirement/voluntary separation incentive plan has been announced at the U of Idaho. Employees with age plus years worked equal 76 or greater are eligible. Those signing up will get two week's pay for every year worked, up to their annual salary. About 13\% of 2,500 full-time permanent employees are eligible. Many of us (yes, to my great surprise, I'm on the list) simply enjoy our work, have kids in school, consider ourselves indispensable, and/or like where we're living too much to make the break. Three out of the four senior staff in the Institutional Planning and Budget office are eligible, but it appears at this time that none of this group will go for it.

In other news, the U of Idaho is preparing for a NASC Accreditation visit in 2004. Our office is laying the groundwork for the self-study. Click on http://www.its.uidaho.edu/NASC/ for a good time. Oh yes, simply cancel any password requests you might get when opening documents. We're operating under a false sense of security.
That's the news from north Idaho, where the women are strong (i.e., graduate at a higher rate), the men are good looking (i.e., have a higher FTE), and the children are all above average (i.e., obtain more advance placement every year).

MONTANA
No Report

NEVADA
State Reporter: Virginia Moore

University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN)

The UCCSN Board of Regents has taken action to increase admissions standards at the state's two public universities. According to the revised policy, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the University of Nevada, Reno will increase their minimum grade point average requirement for incoming freshmen from 2.5 to 2.75 starting in fall 2006. The GPA will once again increase to 3.0 by fall 2010. The revised proposal brought to the Board on Thursday also called for weighted GPAs to be used when calculating the students' GPA. A weighted GPA will only include classes within the core curriculum, not electives. Additionally, by fall 2006, the percentage of students admitted by alternate criteria will increase from 6 percent to 10 percent. The Board also approved a revised admission policy for transfer students. Effective fall 2006, transfer students who wish to enter UNLV or UNR must have earned a minimum of 24 semester credits at another academic institution, an increase over the current minimum of 12 credits, as well as have attained a 2.3 GPA. This GPA will once again increase to 2.5 in fall 2010. All students with an associate's degree are automatically eligible for admission to the two state universities. The universities will conduct impact studies in spring 2008 to determine the effect the revised policies have on students and to make any changes as necessary.

University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)

University of Nevada, Reno, Fire Science Academy is projecting 1,500 students for the first fiscal year after the school reopens, and it likely will take five or six years to bring the school enrollment up to the design capacity of 7,000 students. The academy near Carlin, NV is scheduled to reopen May 1; 300 students are enrolled so far, with the first class beginning May 5. The $27 million academy opened in the spring of 1999, but halted firefighting classes last summer and closed its doors last fall because of facility problems that included ground water contamination. A settlement of lawsuits over the academy's design and construction calls for owner All Star Investments, general contractor Clark and Sullivan Constructors, and subcontractors to do roughly $5 million worth of repairs through their insurance companies. In turn, UNR and the state's University and Community College System must pay GMAC Commercial Mortgage $30 million for the facility and land. UNR was leasing the school from All Star, but under the settlement UNR will be the owner. The Board of Regents plans to act in January on a proposal to increase student fees at UNR to back up the bonds that will be issued for the $30 million.

Phase III of UNR’s Strategic Planning process is now under way, with recommendations from the University Planning Council due on March 1. Phases I and II were undertaken by individual departments and programs and by major academic and administrative units, respectively, over the past 3 months. The strategic planning process of the university is designed to collect the best ideas of faculty, staff, students, and friends about the strategic direction of every facet of the university. The process is designed to make the university stronger and of greater service, consistent with its land-grant mission of teaching, research, and outreach. The intent of this process is for the university to become recognized over time as one of the top-tier national flagship universities. The process is
also designed to be consistent with the strategic directions of the University and Community College System of Nevada and to prepare for the biennial budget process.

Some reorganization has taken place since the arrival of our new President, John Lilley, in July. The former Vice President for Academic Affairs position is now that of Executive Vice President and Provost of the University. John Frederick is filling the position as interim, and a search is underway. UNR now has a Vice President for Information Technology, Steven Zink, who is responsible for all facets of information technology on campus. This new division includes Administrative Computing and Continuous Quality Improvement (both formerly in Administration & Finance), technology-based Student Information Services (formerly in Student Services), and IT functions supporting development and alumni relations, as well as Academic Computing and Teaching & Learning Technologies. The new Vice President for University Relations position (a search for which is currently underway) will oversee integrated marketing, communications, and public relations functions.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) - by Diane Muntal

UNLV won approval from the Legislative Interim Finance Committee to buy three buildings off campus to start its dental school, which will accept students starting in fall 2002. Revenue bonds, which will be paid off with UNLV student fees, will be issued to pay for the school facilities. Students who enroll next year will be temporarily housed on the main UNLV campus.

The Tonopah Living, Learning and Scholarship Complex opened in time for the fall semester. With the 433-bed addition to UNLV’s original residence hall (opened in 1966), the complex now houses a total of 648 students. With the opening of the addition to Tonopah, UNLV now provides residence hall rooms for 1,500 students.

A $2 million gift from Joyce Mack and the Thomas Family will provide funds to support a legal clinic in UNLV’s William S. Boyd School of Law. The clinic will focus primarily on issues of importance to Nevada’s families and children, specializing in cases of abused or neglected children and juvenile delinquency.

During the past year, a number of new graduate programs consistent with the recent trend toward “smart” degrees have been developed by UNLV and approved by the UCCSN Board of Regents, as have several new doctoral/research programs. “Smart degrees,” intended to provide innovative, flexible, and “real-world” training to specific target audiences, include the new Executive MBA, Executive Ed.D., and the Professional M.A. in Criminal Justice. A new M.S. in Biochemistry will provide scientists for the developing biotechnology industry in Southern Nevada. The emerging trend for interdisciplinary programs is seen in a new dual degree program offering the MBA/M.S. in Hotel Administration. Several new Ph.D. degrees (Ph.D. in Learning and Technology, Ph.D. in Teacher Education, Ph.D. in Special Education, and the Ph.D. in Educational Leadership-Higher Education Administration and Post-Secondary Education) will position UNLV as a leader in education research and technology. Graduate program growth and the progressive increase in the number of doctoral graduates bring UNLV closer to its goal of becoming a Doctoral/Research Extensive University.

NEW MEXICO
State Reporter: Richard Rindone

The New Mexico Association for Institutional Research and Planning (NMAIRP), organized during the summer of 2001, is planning a training workshop for March 14-15, 2002. President Dawn Kenney of Albuquerque TVI-CC reports that the following workshops will be offered:

- Enrollment Projection Techniques
- Accountability in NM for Community Colleges
Other officers of this new organization include Judy Bosland (NMSU) as President Elect and Christy Vines (Clovis CC) as Secretary-Treasurer. Member Fred Lillibridge of the Dona Ana Branch CC of New Mexico State University has developed a website (http://www.nmsu.edu/~NMAIRP/), which is hosted at NMSU. And member Mark Chisholm of the University of New Mexico has developed a member list serve, hosted at UNM.

As with other states, New Mexico's economy is slowing. Tax revenues from the extraction industry (mining and oil) are down and are projected to be further down into 2002. Projected revenue figures for the next fiscal year indicates there will only be $8 million new dollars. The governor—this is his last legislative session!!!—is promoting educational reform for K-12 and a tax cut. To pay for his educational reform measures he proposes taking $15 million from the state school equalization formula and $1.7 million from the State Department of Education budget. The governor's reform measures include vouchers. Lowered revenue from the extraction industries means less money for capital outlay projects for all levels of education, including higher education. The Legislative Finance Committee is predicting a cut of 0.3% in the overall higher education budget, which includes an assumption that tuition will increase up to 1.5% statewide.

UTAH
State Reporter: Valerie Stegeman

Utah State University – Kermit L. Hall Presents “State of University” at Utah State

He said the university needs to improve its standings among peer institutions and its rankings in publications such as “U.S. News & World Report's” annual “American's Best Colleges and Universities.”
http://www.usu.edu/news/news@usu/archive/09-28-01.htm#target1

University of Utah - Alligators on Treadmills Hint at How Dinosaurs Breathed

November 19, 2001. University of Utah biologists trained alligators to walk on a treadmill during studies that revealed new clues about how dinosaurs breathed. The researchers discovered that alligators, unlike lizards, are able to walk and breathe at the same time by using a rocking pubic bone - part of the pelvis - to help them inhale and exhale. http://www.utah.edu/unews/releases/01/nov/alligator.html

Utah Valley College - Another UVSC Enrollment Record

Official Fall Semester 2001 enrollment at Utah Valley State College (UVSC) shows that 22,609 students are attending classes, a 7.9 percent increase over last year. The higher enrollment equates to a 12.3 percent increase in the college’s full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. “The continued growth at UVSC is a reflection of the continued population increase in Utah, Wasatch, and Summit Counties. By all measures, we should expect demand for admission to continue to grow for at least the next five to ten years,” said Kerry D. Romesburg, president of UVSC. “The more surprising number this fall is the nearly unprecedented jump in full-time students, a likely reflection of the increased demand for our four-year programs.” The growing number of students has been
accommodated by the partial completion of the new computer sciences and engineering building and a ten-classroom addition to the Gunther Trades Building. Future enrollment growth will be possible due to the construction of a 125,000 square foot classroom building beginning spring 2002.  
http://www.uvsc.edu/relations/releases/25sep01.html

Dixie State College - Dixie State Motion Picture Students Produced “Mountain Meadows Massacre”

“Finally, we have a piece that talks about this story objectively,” said one viewer of the *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, a new documentary produced this past year by the Motion Picture Production class at Dixie State College. http://www.dixie.edu/pr/news/news.htm#elderhostel

Snow College - Michael T. Benson Named President of Snow College

The State Board of Regents has selected Michael T. Benson, current Special Assistant to the President and Secretary to the University of Utah, as the 14th President of Snow College. The Board voted Thursday to name Benson as the new President, at a special meeting held at Snow College, in Ephraim. Dr. Benson will replace President Gerald J. Day, who resigned in January after more than eleven years of service, and Interim President Rick Wheeler, who has served in that capacity since January. President Benson will assume his duties in January 2002.  http://www.snow.edu/general/presannnc.html

Brigham Young University - BYU announces no tuition increase for 2002-2003 school year

PROVO, Utah (November 20, 2001)—Brigham Young University announced that undergraduate and graduate tuition will not increase for the 2002-2003 school year, citing the current state of the economy.  
http://www.byu.edu/news/releases/archive01/Nov/tuition.htm

Westminster College - Westminster College Names Dr. Michael S. Bassis as 16th President

Salt Lake City, December 11, 2001—After the full board's unanimous vote on the candidate of choice, Ginger Giovale, chair of the Westminster College Board of Trustees today announced that Dr. Michael S. Bassis has accepted and will become Westminster College's 16th president, effective July 1, 2002.

WYOMING
State Reporter: Lisa Muller

Wyoming is headed into Legislative session soon, and the Governor’s priorities this year include education. The national slowdown has not yet impacted Wyoming, so the Governor’s proposal includes increases in spending on education. Like all other areas of the country, increased health care costs are a concern and a new study on prison building conditions will be a part of the legislators’ budget discussion. However Wyoming’s educational community is likely to see increases in budgets.

The University of Wyoming President Philip Dubois spent a good deal of the autumn traveling around the state visiting with legislators about the need to get faculty salary dollars back to a nationally competitive level. The Governor’s proposed budget includes several University of Wyoming items: $5.6 million for a technology incubator center in Laramie, $26 million in salary increases, maintenance, and a public affairs research center. In addition the Governor recommended supporting financing a 14 million dollar College of Health Science
Remodeling effort with state revenue bonds. Community colleges would receive $18 million. All state employees would receive more to cover the increased costs of health insurance premiums. The significant increases in health care costs ($76 per month per employee and $175 per month for families) came in December.

UW’s enrollment increased this fall by 5%. At the University of Wyoming there has been a temporary suspension of the Parking and Transportation Plan implementation to allow more input from faculty and staff. The Capital Facilities Plan has been completed and includes a basis for long-term priority setting and fund raising. The tuition-restructuring plan has an expected target of Fall 2003 for conversion from the current full-time (12-20 hours) charge to a tuition cost per credit. Mandatory Student Fees are being reexamined as well.

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