Hello all!

If you are heading to Tampa this spring, remember RMAIR is hosting their Best Paper Presentation on Tuesday, May 20, from 4:20 to 5:00 pm and is scheduled in Meeting Room 4, Level 2. As the dates and times are from the preliminary schedule, please check final dates and times. Mike Ellison from the University of Las Vegas will be presenting “Exposing Faculty? Web-Based Tools for Collecting and Reporting Faculty Workload.” With many folks from Rocky Mountain actively participating in this year’s Forum, RMAIR continues to contribute to the profession. I encourage all of you who would like to get more involved or continue with your participation to seek out opportunities. Volunteering is the lifeblood of the AIR family, and without all of your support and contributions, these professional growth and development opportunities would not exist. Especially for those first-timers at an AIR Forum, please contact me with any questions you may have. We can also schedule a time to meet at the Forum so I can introduce you around.

Speaking of AIR, congratulations are in order for Denise Sokol and Steve Chambers, both from Colorado. Denise Sokol, Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Analysis at the University of Colorado at Denver, is the newly elected vice-president-elect of AIR. Steve Chambers, Office of Institutional Research/Assessment, Director and Associate Professor of History, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs is the newly elected Associate Forum chair-elect (San Diego Forum).

Oh! Don’t forget the RMAIR SIG meeting at AIR has changed to Tuesday evening.

Enjoy the rest of the winter and hope your spring semester proceeds without a snafu. In Arizona, we may not have money but we may see the return of the wildflowers. After a 5 or more year drought, we are finally receiving at least the average monthly annual precipitation for February and March—yeah for El Nino. Those years that the area receives adequate rainfall in the winter months, lupine, desert poppies, globe mallow, Mexican Hat flowers, and a host of other desert wonders bloom throughout the early spring.
From the Editor
Wendy Kappy

Greetings RMAIRians. Welcome to another issue of Panorama. About time, right?! Unfortunately, work has a way of intervening in the Panorama publishing schedule.

In this issue, you will find useful information about the upcoming AIR Forum in Tampa. (Thanks to Wendy Miley). You will also find some preliminary information about our upcoming RMAIR meeting in Santa Fe. Kayleigh Carabajal and I are currently working on the arrangements for the keynote speaker and the pre-conference workshops. Details to follow. Look for the call for papers in your e-mail next week.

Thanks to our state reporters, we again have an array of interesting and informative state reports. I am looking for a Montana state reporter, as Cathy Burleson had to step down. I appreciate the work she has done in the past. Please contact me if you would be interested in becoming the state reporter for the great state of Montana (wkappy@unm.edu or 505-277-7658).

AIR Forum
Wendy Miley

The spring semester is well underway and before you know it will be time for the annual AIR Forum. The AIR Forum will be in Tampa, Florida this year from May 18th through the 21st. AIR has gone semi-paperless this year sending out the preliminary program on CD; the final program will be in hardcopy. So if you have not received a CD in the mail, please contact AIR. The AIR website has their Forum information on line as well. As an FYI, if training and travel funds are extremely scarce in your shop as they are in Arizona this year, AIR has set up a Roommate request site at http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=408 to help save some dollars.

Agenda for RMAIR SIG at AIR Forum

The RMAIR Special Interest Group at the AIR Forum will meet Tuesday, May 20, from 5:10-5:50 p.m. in “Grand Salon I, Level 2.” Here is the proposed agenda:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Secretary/Treasurer Report
- Panorama Report
- Business
  - Emeritus Nominations (Bruce Higley, Others?)
- 2003 RMAIR meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico and Call for Papers
  - Kayleigh Carabajal
- 2004 RMAIR meeting in Idaho
  - Archie George
- Other Business
- Adjourn to dinner

See you there!
“The Information Revolution: Bridging the Past to the Future” is the theme for the 2003 RMAIR Conference. Our world as IR professionals has been irrevocably changed over the last year and a half by world events, economic developments, and changing technologies. Our theme focuses on bridging the experience gained from the past to the ever-expanding expectations we face in the future. How are IR offices impacted? How can IR professionals proactively adapt? What ideas can we share to assist IR offices and institutions negotiate in our changing environment?

Conference organizers, Wendy Marsh Kapp (wkappy@unm.edu) and Kayleigh Carabajal (kcarabajal@tvi.edu) have been working since last fall to assemble an outstanding program at a conference site located in the heart of historic Santa Fe. As with previous conferences, professional growth and development opportunities will include pre-conference workshops, stellar presentations, and networking events that will expand your abilities to deal with IR challenges and opportunities.

The 2003 conference will be held at the deluxe Hilton of Santa Fe, located just two blocks from the city’s plaza. Santa Fe, renowned for its old world charm, is the second oldest city in the United States. Santa Fe has a vibrant cultural life featuring unique architecture, numerous art galleries and museums, performing arts, outdoor activities, spas, great dining, and world-class shopping.

The conference website is located at the following URL: [http://www.unm.edu/~oir/RMAIR2003/index.htm](http://www.unm.edu/~oir/RMAIR2003/index.htm). The call for papers will be sent out by e-mail early next week and will be posted on the conference website as well.

Please consider presenting a paper, panel or demonstration to share your expertise and/or institutional experiences. Mark your calendars now for this exciting conference event October 15-17, 2003!

**News from the States**

**ARIZONA**

State Reporter: Ellen McGregor

**New Chancellor for Pima Community College**

On March 17, 2003, Dr. Roy Flores, former President of the Community College of Allegheny County in Pennsylvania, became Pima Community College’s new Chancellor. Dr. Flores has also served as President of Elgin Community College in Illinois; Executive Vice Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System; Dean of Financial and Administrative Services for Northern Virginia Community College; Vice President for Business Affairs for Pan American University; Special Assistant for Economic Affairs, U.S. Department of State; and Director of the Human Resources Center at Pan American University. He has also been an Associate Professor of Economics and Business at Pan American University, and an Instructor of Economics at Iowa State University. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Indiana State University, and received his doctorate from Iowa State University. Dr. Robert Jensen will officially retire on June 30th after serving as Chancellor for 8 years.
Tuition Increases Approved

The Board of Regents has unanimously approved a $1,000 (39%) increase in tuition for public university undergraduates. The board’s action raised the total annual cost for tuition for in-state undergraduates to $3,593. Non-resident undergraduates will pay $12,113 at ASU and NAU and $12,363 at UA. In addition, the regents approved a measure increasing the amount of tuition set aside for financial aid to needy students from 8% to 14%. The Board of Governors at Pima Community College also approved a tuition increase, from $39 a credit to $41. Higher education in Arizona is facing increased costs and decreases in state funding.

AZAIR Conference to be held at ASU, April 11

Arizona State University and Maricopa Community College District are co-hosting the 14th Annual AZAIR Conference. The conference will be held at the Main Campus of ASU in Tempe, AZ. The keynote address, “Five Shoes Waiting to Drop on Arizona’s Future,” will be given by Rob Melnick of the Morrison Institute for Public Policy. The conference includes two panels, two demonstrations, and three presentations.

Report from Lou Attinasi
Director of Institutional Research at Pima Community College & President of NCRP

The National Council for Research and Planning (NCRP), an affiliate of both AIR and the American Association of Community Colleges, is the only national organization devoted exclusively to the improvement of institutional research and planning in the community college. Our members include institutional researchers and others interested in the practice and study of research and planning in two-year institutions. Several upcoming NCRP events may be of interest to Panorama readers.

Panel Session at the Annual Convention of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC): NCRP is sponsoring a panel session at the Annual Convention of the American Association of Community Colleges in Dallas, Texas at the Adam’s Mark hotel on Sunday, April 6. Moderated by NCRP President-elect Gayle Fink and entitled "Building a Culture of Evidence: The Backbone of a Learning College," the session will focus on how data have changed the culture of the Community College of Baltimore County—how data now feed the College's planning, outcomes assessment, and institutional improvement. A representative of the League for Innovation in the Community College will comment on the CCBC experience and describe how other community colleges are "building cultures of evidence."

NCRP Events at the Annual AIR Forum: NCRP is sponsoring several events at the Annual AIR Forum in Tampa. The NCRP Dinner will take place at 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 17. The Annual Board Meeting is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 18, followed by a panel session on reconfiguring the NCRP regions for better membership service from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. NCRP’s Best Presentation session will occur on Tuesday, May 20 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:10 p.m. NCRP’s Best Presentation is “The Effects of Motivational Instruction Versus Embedded Items on Assessment Test Performance” by Anthony Napoli, Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at Suffolk County Community College.

If you would like more information about these events, please e-mail me at louis.attinasi@pima.edu. To learn more about NCRP or to become a member, visit the NCRP website at http://www.nmsu.edu/~NCRP.
COLORADO

State Reporters: Stephen Chambers & Jacki Stirn

Governor Set to Bust Deal Between Legislature and Higher Education
By Steve Chambers

Months of discussion over pending budget cuts to Colorado’s public institutions of higher education have led to a painful compromise with the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) of the state legislature. The JBC approved a $150 million reduction in state spending for higher education coupled with an 11.9% tuition increase. The tuition increase pales in comparison to hikes contemplated in other Rocky Mountain states and would be used to blunt further elimination of degree programs, reduction in workforce, and other cost-cutting measures that have transpired in the past year.

The higher education institutions were still reeling from the shock of the $150 million, likely permanent, cut when Governor Bill Owens said that he would veto any spending bill that included the 11.9% increase in tuition. Last year, Owens vetoed a similar bill that would have increased tuition by 7.7%.

Owens followed his threat of a veto by insisting that the state colleges and universities need to become more efficient. Perry Swanson, reporter for the Colorado Springs Gazette, quoted Owens as saying “We’re really trying to force higher ed out of this four-day-a-week, eight months-a-year routine.” Apparently that is all the time the Governor is convinced that classrooms are in use. Owens further insisted that higher education costs are spiraling due to students taking longer to graduate, which in turn causes additional time demands on professors and classrooms.

A subsequent editorial published in the Denver Post came out in support of the JBC proposed tuition hike by reminding Colorados that it had been a condition for allowing the steep budget cuts to take place. The Post editorial called the tuition increase “painful,” but insisted that “the only alternative would be worse—dismantling those programs that make a college degree worthwhile in the first place.” The Post editorial ends by concluding that cutting state funding along with Owens’ veto of a tuition increase “would reduce Colorado higher education to little more than a diploma mill.”

CAPIR
By Jacki Stirn

The Colorado Association of Planners and Institutional Researchers met on February 28th at Front Range Community College. The meeting included presentations about a variety of issues and also included a panel discussion about the State of the State. The group confirmed the decision to move to once a year meetings around this time of year (February-March). For anyone who did not receive information concerning the meeting, contact Jacki Stirn at jstirn@wiche.edu for directions on subscribing to the CAPIR listserv. For anyone planning to attend the CAPIR SIG listed in the preliminary AIR Forum program, please don’t since it has been cancelled.

IDAHO

State Reporter: Archie George

The financial situation in Idaho is pretty grim, as is the case in most states. The legislature is passing "no tax increase" budgets, which will require substantial cuts in the current year (additional holdbacks), as well as the next couple of years. The situation was not improved when news broke about loans between the University of Idaho and the Idaho Foundation, which had not been approved by the State Board of Education. The loans were to pay various up-front costs for a massive, multi-agency building project in Boise. There has been some question as to whether these loans even needed to be reviewed by the SBOE, but that doesn't keep the situation from causing
alarm among many critics of higher education. "If they had all that money for real estate investment..." The University of Idaho chief financial officer, who was also the Foundation's treasurer, has taken medical leave and has asked to be re-assigned to an academic department upon his return.

The governor vowed at the beginning of the legislative session to veto any spending blueprints that included additional cuts to education, but there is some question about his resolve at this point. On the bright side, there is a lot of support for a bonding initiative, which would fund construction of buildings across the state, with at least one major building on each college campus. Idaho has the lowest indebtedness of any state, according to some analysts, and interest rates have never been lower. This program would put a lot of people to work across the state and provide much needed facilities for the growing student population.

in other news, Boise State University is looking for a new president, and the president of the U of Idaho is on a six-month medical leave for scheduled surgery and recovery.

Tune in next time, when we will know whether the SBOE has approved institutional requests for about 10% higher fees, or follows through with stated intentions to limit fee increases to about 4% in order to preserve access for low-income students.

MONTANA
State Reporter: None

If you are from Montana and are interested in becoming a Panorama state reporter, please contact Wendy Kappy (wkappy@unm.edu or 505-277-7658).

NEVADA
State Reporter: Virginia Moore

University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN)

The Nevada State Demographer’s office released its 2002 population estimates for the State of Nevada and its counties in January. Overall, Nevada grew by an estimated 73,524 persons or 3.4 percent. That compares with 109,120 or 5.4 percent from July 2000 to July 2001. “Even though our growth rate has slowed, we were still estimated to be the fastest growing state in the nation from 2001 to 2002 according to the U.S Census Bureau,” said State Demographer Jeff Hardcastle. Rural Nevada continues to struggle with job and population loss but it appears that may be leveling off in some cases, according to Hardcastle.

Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn has recommended a budget for the coming biennium that funds the University system at 86% of the amount generated by the new funding formula, which was implemented in fall 2001. 86% funding is an improvement over that received during the current biennium, but the ability to provide funds at that level will depend upon passage of new taxes. The Governor has also proposed the largest tax increases in the history of the state of Nevada. Legislative debate over the State’s tax structure and the proposed changes to it is ongoing.

Some of the Regents have requested a discussion about whether remedial education at the universities should continue to receive state general fund support or whether these programs should be self-supporting as of fall 2004. Their view is that the state college and community colleges should be responsible for remediation, and that it is a waste of taxpayer’s dollars to fund remedial education at the universities. The Regents’ Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Council will study this issue and then bring an appropriate recommendation back to the Board for discussion. It is likely that such a change, if adopted, would be phased in over the next few years.
The University of Nevada, Reno continues to experience significant growth in enrollment. Spring saw an 8% growth in FTE over the previous spring, and 2002-03 annualized FTE is 8% higher than last year. Meeting the needs of this growing number of students has been a real challenge in this time of cuts made to already limited budgets.

A study is underway to assess the impact of a 2-week partial closure of campus that took place during winter break. In addition to determining the dollars saved on utility bills, the report will include the results of faculty, staff, and student surveys regarding their reactions to this year’s closure and their support for similar closures in future years.

The re-organization proposals coming out of the University’s strategic planning process have not been without controversy. The Faculty Senate recently approved a report that questions the placement of the Mackay School of Mines into a new College of Science and a major reorganization of the College of Arts & Science. The report, prepared by an Ad Hoc Review Committee, contends that “there are too many unresolved issues and unanswered questions” to move forward immediately with either proposal. The report also calls for benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of the proposals in meeting its objectives, urges modification to include data to support claims of benefits for efficiencies, fund raising and visibility; it asks for one-, three-, and five-year progress reports on the effectiveness of any reorganization; and it proposes more discussion of the current structure and possible alternatives. The Senate vote to approve the report now sends the document to the university administration for additional review and comment. An internal reorganization of the College of Education has recently been proposed as well.

After a community outcry in response to reports about the imminent destruction of the Fleischmann Planetarium to make way for a new parking garage, the University’s consultants were asked to look at alternatives for the mid-campus master plan that would save the unique structure. More time will be provided for the program to find a new community-based home, which the Friends of the Planetarium have been seeking, and the building itself will be preserved and put to other uses.

Advanced degree candidates at Nevada’s May commencement ceremony will be walking the stage on the University Quadrangle a day earlier than they have traditionally. Students in line for advanced degrees will participate in commencement exercises on a Friday evening, and commencement for undergraduate students will be held the following day. Traditionally, graduate students have participated in commencement on the same day as other graduating students: the third Saturday in May. Shannon Ellis, vice president for student services, said a change in format is needed in light of the university’s growing enrollment and the campus’ desire to focus an equal amount of attention on its graduate students. “The university enjoys celebrating the graduation of our students in a personal way,” she said. “The Friday evening ceremony allows us to continue that tradition.”

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)
By Diane Muntal

After experiencing a record breaking 9.3% increase in FTE students in fall 2002, UNLV’s enrollment increased by 5.8% in spring 2003. This significant enrollment increased comes at a time when the university system budget was cut by 3 percent, prompting hiring freezes which resulted in longer registration lines for UNLV students due to cutbacks in staffing.

According to UNLV President Harter, UNLV will have to cap enrollments next year if tax revenues are not raised to fund Governor Kenny Guinn’s proposed budget for higher education. Chancellor Jane Nichols indicated that the best scenario would result in $706 million in general fund support for higher education in the 2003-05 budget, or about $2 million less than the system receives now. Guinn has estimated that he needs $700 million in new general tax revenue merely to pay for growth in state programs, including higher education, over the next two years.
UNLV’s Boyd School of Law received full accreditation from the American Bar Association less than five years after it opened, making it one of the fastest accreditations allowed under ABA rules. The school has 454 law students. Before opening its doors in 1998, the school received 400 applicants for 140 seats. The number rose last year to 1,100 applicants and is expected to increase to 1,400 applicants next year.

The law school has also attracted luminaries such as 9th U.S Circuit Court of Appeals appointee, Jay Bybee, the nation’s foremost expert on bankruptcy law. Before his appointment to the Court of Appeals, Bybee served as constitutional law adviser in the Department of Justice.

In the attempt make the university more accessible, UNLV is holding classes this semester at the Cheyenne campus of the Community College of Southern Nevada. About 180 students have signed up to take university classes at CCSN, which will be followed by two final years of study at UNLV. The “two-plus-two” program is designed to grant more bachelor’s degrees and accommodate the unprecedented growth in students in southern Nevada.

NEW MEXICO
State Reporter: Dawn Kenney

New Mexico Association of Institutional Research and Planning Holds Second Annual Workshop

The New Mexico Association for Institutional Research and Planning (NMAIRP) held its second annual workshop in Albuquerque, New Mexico on April 2nd and 3rd. The meeting was well attended; many two- and four-year institutions were represented. NMAIRP’s current president, Judy Bosland from New Mexico State University, put together a great program. Session topics included the following: Curriculum Terminology: Issues and Challenges of Definition beyond Majors and Minors, American Factfinder Revisited, The Ins and Outs of Survey Research, New Mexico Funding Formula, BANNER from an Institutional Research Perspective, MS Access, an Introduction and Beyond: Building a Data Warehouse In-house, IR Issues Across the State, and Using DEAR and IPEDS Data to Compute and Report on Commonly Requested Accountability Measures. Information about NMAIRP can be found on the Association’s home page (http://www.nmsu.edu/~NMAIRP/).

UTAH
State Reporter: Valerie Stegeman

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY - Major Changes in Higher Education Looming

The face of higher education in Utah could change significantly if recommendations by the Employers Education Coalition are implemented.

Most of the dialogue generated to date about the coalition report, issued in mid-December, has been focused on public education, Charles E. Johnson acknowledged. But no effort to make major repairs to the state's beleaguered education system can ignore the post-high-school crowd, he said. Johnson, former chairman and now a member of the State Board of Regents, represented higher education on the coalition.

A bill proposed by Sen. David Gladwell, R-Ogden, could get the higher education proposals into the public debate arena. SB168 is expected to create a legislative task force to study the issues during the interim. The bill is in Senate Rules, waiting the body's decision on which of a number of issues will be studied in the 2003 interim. http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,465030244,00.html
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY OF UTAH - SUU Develops Study Abroad Program with Coordinator Position

Dr. Alla Paroiatnikova (par-o-yacht-tee-nee-koh-va) has been chosen as the coordinator of the developing Study Abroad program in Southern Utah University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Dr. Paroiatnikova comes highly qualified for this position. She once provided similar services at the University a few years ago before the position was closed. In her current position, she will maintain contact with other universities and study abroad agencies to help process exchange and study abroad opportunities for SUU students and faculty. Anyone wanting more information on the SUU Study Abroad program is encouraged to call Dr. Paroiatnikova at 435.586.1995 or email at parioatnikova@suu.edu. http://www.suu.edu/news/StudyAbroad.htm

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH - U of U Students Identify Goods That Indicate Social Status

February 18, 2003 – What possessions or experiences increase a person's "cool factor?"

According to 400 University of Utah students, clothing, vacations, Palm Pilots and laptop computers, furniture, luxury cars, and sports utility vehicles (SUVs) all elevate social status. Undergraduate students from seven different colleges at the U were surveyed to identify an array of goods that college students believe indicate social status. Research confirmed that status commodities usually are either visible by others or are easily talked about in social situations.

The results of the study, conducted by Jessie X. Fan and John R. Burton, University of Utah associate professors in the Department of Family and Consumer Studies, appear in Financial Counseling and Planning (2002), Vol. 13 (1) and will be used as the impetus for more detailed research of status consumption and its possible relationship to financial management problems. This information is especially relevant, considering the fact that Utah was first in the nation in personal bankruptcy filings per household at the end of 2002.

http://www.utah.edu/unews/releases/03/feb/status.html

UTAH VALLEY COLLEGE UVSC - Larry King to speak at UVSC

This year graduation at Utah Valley State College will be more than news worthy; it will be gripping, entertaining and star-studded. On April 25, Larry King and his wife, Shawn, will be presented with honorary doctorates of Humanities and Arts, and King will also be the featured speaker.

“We are very pleased to have Larry King as our commencement speaker,” said Lucille Stoddard, interim president at UVSC. “Not only does he have a very high profile in the media, but he has a reputation for being credible and having integrity, as does Shawn.”

The couple has a residence in Provo, Utah, and they have been long-time supporters of the Utah County community. CNN’s Larry King is the host of the network’s Larry King Live, the first worldwide phone-in television talk show and the network’s highest-rated program. King has won an Emmy and is the author of 12 books. In 2002 alone, King had more than 60 exclusive interviews with world leaders, celebrities, and others. He has broken cable industry rating records throughout his career and continues to be a leader in the broadcast industry.

http://www.uvsc.edu/relations/releases/27feb03.html

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY - Computerized Genealogy Conference at BYU

PROVO, Utah – Genealogy experts and beginners can observe the latest in technology during the sixth annual Computerized Genealogy Conference on Thursday and Friday, March 13 and 14, at Brigham Young University.
Workshops, speakers, and vendors will provide updated information and training on genealogical software programs, computer databases, e-mail, and the Internet to help genealogists make better use of traditional research methods. Workshops will also review existing computer programs and evaluate new programs genealogists may consider acquiring.

http://byunews.byu.edu/releases/release.aspx?y=archive03&m=Feb&f=genealogy

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE - Westminster College Board of Trustees Finalizes Plans for Restructuring

Final decisions by Westminster’s Board of Trustees affect fewer people than previously expected; unfilled vacancies and consolidations of positions enable the College to retain more employees.

Fulton, MO – The Westminster College Board of Trustees voted unanimously Monday to approve the administration’s restructuring plan to include a $1 million budget cut for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2003. The plan includes eliminating a total of 12 staff positions. However, due to vacancies and consolidation of positions, only five staff members will be released. Of faculty members, 5-7 non-tenured faculty positions will be eliminated over a three-year period.

“Thanks to some creative thinking by leaders of Westminster’s faculty and staff—as well as the wise guidance of our Board of Trustees—we’ve been able to retain more people than we originally estimated,” said Westminster College President Fletcher M. Lamkin.


WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY - Cats Finish Off Undefeated Big Sky Regular Season

Portland, OR – Weber State became only the second team in Big Sky conference history to go undefeated in the league schedule with an 83-73 win over Portland State on Saturday night. In familiar fashion, the Wildcats made a second half surge to produce the victory. WSU trailed 41-36 at the half and with 18:17 left in the game, the ‘Cats trailed by seven at 45-38. Then the run came. Over the next 7 minutes and 55 seconds, Weber erased the seven-point deficit and turned it into an 11-point lead, outscoring the Vikings 27 to 9 over the span.

http://departments.weber.edu/athletics/MBasketball/Recaps/Portland%20State2.htm

DIXIE STATE COLLEGE - Dixie State accredited at four-year level

For the first time in school history, Dixie State College of Utah is accredited at the baccalaureate level. College officials received that word Tuesday in a written letter from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and Universities, which also reaffirmed Dixie State’s accreditation at the associate level.

As a result, accreditation has been extended to each of the college’s three bachelor’s degrees, including business administration, computer and information science, and elementary education. The four-year accreditation status is retroactive to Sept. 1, 2002. "We’ve been eating, drinking and sleeping accreditation for a long time now—it’s nice to finally have it under our belt," said DSC president Dr. Robert Huddleston.

In October, several years of planning and self-evaluation culminated in a full-scale evaluation by an accreditation committee representing the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and Universities. At that time, the committee interviewed students, faculty, and staff and scoured an institutional self-study headed by Dean Joe Peterson. The committee then reported six general commendations and four recommendations, first to the college in October and then to the accreditation commission last month. http://www.dixie.edu/pr/news.htm
Following completion of Wyoming’s six-week legislative session in early March and the adoption of a supplemental budget, it is clear that Wyoming continues to buck current trends in state government due to the luxury of having additional funds. The biggest change is in health insurance funding. Wyoming used to pay 100 percent of premiums for state employees but nothing for dependents. The supplemental budget changes that to 85% of premiums starting April 1, 2003 for both dependents and employees. The price tag of the additional coverage is $23 million dollars. Wyoming, like some other states, was confronting a problem of adverse selection in the pool of aging employees and having huge insurance increases as a consequence. Hopefully the pool will regain lots of families with young children who are statistically less expensive to insure. Governor Dave Freudenthal went out of his way to thank Wyoming Public Employees Association for their support in no longer having 100% of premiums paid for employees.

The University of Wyoming also received funding for a new Health Science Complex of $15 million (with $12.5 million in cash and $2.5 million to come from the universities bonding authority) and $5.3 million for the development and construction of a Wyoming Technology Business Center on the UW campus. The WTBC funding is contingent upon the university raising an additional $3.18 million by April 2004. Both UW and the Wyoming community colleges received additional funding for major maintenance projects.

In the March meeting the University of Wyoming board of trustees voted to approve a per-credit-hour tuition restructure with a 3 percent increase for inflation starting fall 2003. Students taking an average load of 15 credit hours will pay slightly less next fall than if the tuition restructure had not occurred. Part-time undergraduate students will save $20 per credit hour under the new structure compared to the old system adjusted for inflation. The trustees also approved a new child-care facility and approved the purchase of an off-campus Farm Bureau Headquarters building. In addition, concerns about abandoned fraternity houses have resulted in the trustee decision to demolish one fraternity house, spend up to $224,000 to renovate another as a learning-living house, and have a committee look into using a third fraternity house to create an additional on-campus honors house for up to 48 high academic achievers.

Enrollment increases continue with an overall 2 percent increase over last spring. The largest increases in enrollment occurred in the UW Outreach School. Additionally ethnic minority enrollment continues to grow.

Administrative searches are underway for the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the College of Business, the Vice-President for Administration and Finance, and the director of the Physical Plant.

I hope to see many of you at AIR. I’m excited that RMAIR has so many willing to serve at both the regional and national levels! I am also delighted that as chair of Tract 5, I have the honor of introducing Elizabeth Stanley of Zayed University as a Tuesday plenary speaker. Elizabeth’s plenary is entitled “The Practice of Institutional Research: Establishing IR Functions in New Institutions Abroad.”

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