Greetings to all.

I want to begin by congratulating Sue Koller (associate director for the Office of Institutional Analysis at the University of Wyoming), who was recently elected as RMAIR’s 2005-2006 vice president. Recalling Sue’s excellent work as program chair for the 2002 meeting in Jackson Hole, I know she will serve RMAIR well over the next three years—as vice president, president, and past president.

In addition to electing Sue, the membership also elected to induct John Porter as an emeritus member. Prior to his current position as associate provost for Institutional Research and Analysis for the New York SUNY system, John worked as the director of Institutional Analysis at Arizona State University. He worked hard on RMAIR’s behalf and has been a major figure in AIR as well. He has served as AIR’s treasurer, forum chair, and president. John will always be a part of RMAIR, and it is great to be able to honor him as an emeritus member.

It was great seeing many of you in Edmonton. Our annual meetings are always a great time to build knowledge and skills and to renew and establish relationships. Along with Jeff Donnelly, the program chair for the Canadians, Ellen McGregor put together an excellent program. Ellen was the person responsible for recruiting Patrick Terenzini as one of our plenary speakers. One of the great things about pooling resources with the Canadians was the number of workshops made available to conference attendees. Instead of our usual two or three workshops, there were eight workshops to choose from.
(although workshop presenters were mostly RMAIRians). Those of us who were in Edmonton felt the meeting was well worth attending, and we appreciated the gracious welcome from our neighbors to the north. I understand that CIRPA will be posting conference papers to their website, and I will let you know when I hear they have been posted.

Congratulations to Gary Levy for winning the best paper competition with his paper “Relations Among Undergraduate Students’ Teaching Evaluations and Course Final Grades as a Function of Instructor.” Given that I was attended a different session that ran concurrently with his, I will make sure and catch his presentation at AIR in Chicago. I hope many of you will do so as well.

It was disappointing that RMAIR attendance was low in Edmonton. While there was fairly broad support for going to Edmonton, we will need to find out why attendance did not pan out. We did hear that some folks were not able to attend the meeting because it was held outside the United States. Given that membership is mostly tied to attendance at the annual meeting, we will need to work hard over the next year to rebuild our membership numbers. One positive development has occurred. Brian Shuppy has worked out an agreement with AIR to set up membership collection using a credit card service. This will make it much easier for you to renew your membership.

I will work on promoting membership over the next year and encourage you to talk to your colleagues about getting involved in RMAIR. We have a lot going for us as an organization. As Steve Chambers said to me in a recent email, “I would never have been [AIR] forum chair had it not been for our folks pulling together. It makes me very proud to be a part of RMAIR! We are the smallest regional affiliate [of AIR] but we do more pound for pound than the rest of them put together.” I will be developing some promotional materials to send out next summer prior to our annual meeting in the fall, so I appreciate any thoughts you would like to send me on the advantages of membership in RMAIR. I have a growing list, but am always interested in receiving input.

Speaking of Steve Chambers, don’t forget to vote for him in the AIR election. He is running for vice president, and Wendy Miley is running for a seat on AIR’s Nominating Committee. Both of these RMAIRians are dedicated professionals, and by voting for them, it also allows us to continue to flex our RMAIRians muscles!

I hope you all have a great holiday and a wonderful new year!

Letter from the Editor
Wendy Kappy

Greetings RMAIRians! I hope you are all well.

As Panorama editor and this year’s president of RMAIR, I would like for you to think about getting involved in RMAIR as editor of Panorama. Passing the torch would enable me to better focus on my presidential duties and responsibilities, but I genuinely believe that the more important issue is freeing up opportunities for others to get involved in RMAIR. In RMAIR, these opportunities include organizing conferences, serving as state reporters, and serving as Panorama’s editor, and it is through these positions that new leadership has historically emerged. If you are interested in the editorship, please contact me at wkappy@unm.edu.
Dawn Kenney, the state reporter for New Mexico, has decided to step down after a few years serving as state reporter. Thanks Dawn for your service. We all appreciate the work you’ve done. Carol Bernhard from the University of New Mexico has agreed to take over as the New Mexico state reporter. Welcome Carol, and thank you for volunteering for this position.

Please contact me if you have any ideas for improving Panorama. Nothing is ever set in stone, and the publication can only benefit from broad input and fresh ideas.

Annual Business Meeting Report

Ellen McGregor
Edmonton, Canada – October 2005

The meeting was held during the joint CIRPA/RMAIR Conference at the Fantasyland Hotel, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Brian Shuppy, our out-going President, introduced our new President, Wendy Kappy. Wendy welcomed the group, and while we had only 24 members in attendance, all states in RMAIR were represented. Wendy acknowledged Ellen McGregor’s work on the conference. Our president-elect is Susan Koller. John Porter was approved as an emeritus member of RMAIR.

RMAIR received a BIRC Grant (Building Institutional Research Capacity) from AIR, and it was used to support the pre-conference computer based workshops at the Edmonton conference.

Brian announced the site for the 2006 conference, Park City, Utah.

We approved the raising of our annual dues from $14 to $20, starting with the next conference and membership year, 2006-07. Proposals restricting use of the Train-the-Trainer stipend and the Best Paper award ($500 each) to those demonstrating financial need were defeated. The support will remain the same.

Membership and conference attendance were discussed. It was noted that some institutions do not support out-of-country travel. We agreed to survey our members, and also we acknowledged the need to create brochures and documents to increase our membership and rate of participation. Credit cards will be able to be used for the next conference, since AIR will provide that support and collect the registration fees. Denise reminded us to vote in the AIR elections and to attend the Forum. In 2010, the AIR Forum will be in Chicago, and it will be the 50th anniversary of the Forum.

Reflections on Edmonton Meeting

Brian Shuppy, Weber State University

What an amazing conference, eh! I'm not sure what was funnier, the Improv troupe during dinner or Wendy’s Rules of Order. The presentations were first rate and several could have received the best presentation. I never did get a toque (ski hat) because I was unsure about the conversion value I needed to claim upon return. For those of you worried that customs officials wouldn't let me back in, please know that once I recommitted to paying social security taxes for another TWENTY SIX years and
explained in detail all the Banner conversion issues I had to get home to, I was pushed on the plane. It was great seeing everyone again!

Ellen McGregor, Pima Community College

Edmonton, Alberta was not as cold as I feared. The Canadian hosts were very gracious. Our keynote speakers were excellent, and after each address, we had an opportunity to attend a small group discussion session. I would recommend doing that at future conferences. For RMAIRians who had their families with them, they found the mall very inviting. As for me, I relaxed with a day trip to Jasper. The Rockies are beautiful beyond words.

Mark Chisholm, University of New Mexico

I took my wife and 13-year-old son with me to the CIRPA/RMAIR conference, and we spent a very enjoyable four days indoors. I would have loved to get out and explore more of the physical area, but the meeting sessions were too full of interesting topics for me to play hooky, so we limited ourselves to mall living.

During our time there, we surfed in the ocean, played 72 holes of golf, played pool against crafty Canadian pool sharks, watched sea lions dance for their food, and went for long walks through what seemed like miles of prime retail space. In between we ate delicious food that we could choose from a variety of international venues, selected movies from a couple dozen available shows, and stared in awe at rides in an amusement park where the roller coaster seemed to be upside down more often that right side up. Overall we had a great time, and I hope we can return when we have a chance to relive some of those good memories, and also get out into the countryside. We greatly appreciated CIRPA's hospitality and how they welcomed us, and everyone we met in the mall was friendly and helpful. We did have some trouble with the language, but once we learned how to utter a quiet “eh,” everything went smoothly.

Dan Paulien, Paulien & Associates, Inc.

The CIRPA/RMAIR Conference included good camaraderie with our Canadian colleagues. They were great hosts for two evening events (an opening night reception and a banquet with local entertainment).

The highlight for me was three tours, each led by the same individual, Cameron Malcolm of Out an’ About Tours. Two were all day van tours. One visited the world renown Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology in Drumheller, Alberta, and it also included seeing an overlook where the native peoples used to stampede buffalo over a cliff and then butcher them and use their meat for food and their hides for warmth. We also saw unusual rock formations called the Hoodoos. The second full day tour took our group to Jasper National Park, which is one of the true jewels of the Canadian Rockies. We had wonderful mountain views, saw a number of waterfalls close up, and saw a whole herd of elk along the roadside. One of the highlights was Maligne Canyon where water runs through a steep box canyon which you view from above. The third tour was a Sunday afternoon tour of the heart of Edmonton and involved significant walking along the river valley, as well as seeing the highlights of downtown and the provincial government buildings. This tour also took us through some upscale neighborhoods including the home where Pat Bowlen, owner of the Denver Broncos, used to live.

Cameron was a wonderful driver and guide who communicated with us almost all the way—giving us extensive information about his province, its history, its peoples, and its politics. These tours were a very special experience.
The Fantasyland Hotel, the conference hotel with its theme Roman, Polynesian, and other special rooms, was a unique experience. So was the attached West Edmonton Mall with its indoor water park, amusement park, and skating rink, and its many retail and restaurant vendors.

While we did not get a large RMAIR turnout for this conference, my impression was that those who attended enjoyed the experience of our fall jaunt north of the border.

**RMAIR 2006 Conference in Park City, Utah (Oct. 18-20, 2006)**

Brian Shuppy

The 2006 RMAIR Conference, entitled “Opportunities for Improved IR Effectiveness,” to be held in lovely Park City, Utah is developing well. We in Utah are extremely excited to host our fellow RMAIR “IR Olympians” to the “Beehive State.”

The local and program arrangements committees are committed to making this conference the best in RMAIR's thirty-five-year history. The committee has worked on finding a site that is affordable yet plush enough to spoil, and a program unmatched in quality. Take a virtual tour of this great Park City resort by going to the following website: www.chateaux-deervalley.com/resort.php/CHATEAUX

We are making every effort to put together an AFFORDABLE and VALUABLE conference so your conference experience will be worthwhile. We anticipate registration for this 2-3 day event will be no more than $100, and this will include all meals (except for the optional closing gala event extravaganza).

Let’s face it: Ultimately it is the affordability, quality, and “take home” usefulness of training events and conference presentations that attracts RMAIR members to the conference. As such, Gary Levy, our program chair, is planning on:

(a) inviting presenters from at least each of the eight primary RMAIR states,
(b) arranging top notch training consistent with the conference theme of providing practical tools that attendees can learn and take back to their IR departments to make them more effective and efficient,
(c) providing interesting and relevant plenary speeches that should provide lasting impressions.

We pledge that as you plan your conference and training opportunities for this next year, there will be no greater value or value added than RMAIR Park City 2006!

**AIR Election**

Attention all AIR members. Please remember to vote in the AIR elections, going on now through January 16, 2006. RMAIR is well known for providing AIR with excellent leadership. Both AIR's current immediate past president, Denise Sokol, and the incoming president, Fred Lillibridge, are RMAIRians. Let’s continue the tradition by voting for Steve Chambers, who is currently running for AIR vice president! In addition, Wendy Miley, who are served as RMAIR’s president in the past, is currently running for a seat on AIR’s Nominating Committee.
News from the States

ARIZONA
State Reporter: Ellen McGregor  (Pima Community College)

AzAIR Annual Conference will be held on March 30 and 31 at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. The 30th will include time for the spring meeting of ASSIST representatives from the community colleges and public universities.

President Selected for Yavapai

James F. Horton, Jr., PhD, was offered and accepted the position of president of Yavapai College. He started his duties on August 15. Yavapai College is a community college located in Prescott and Cottonwood. Dr. Donna Michaels, District Governing Board spokesperson, said, “The Board is thrilled about Dr. Horton accepting the presidency. He brings the requisite skills and vision to take Yavapai College to the next level in serving our students, community, and county in their lifelong learning needs.” Michaels said that community colleges are challenged in providing quality educational experiences that translate to economic-based opportunities.” Jim has such a track record of success and inclusion in building initiatives that provide the certification, degrees, and training to build a strong economy for county residents. We’re particularly excited about Jim’s accomplishments in that area.” In addition to an engaging demeanor and a philosophy of openness and inclusion, Dr. Horton—who likes to be addressed on a first-name basis—brings a depth and breadth of experience to this position that will serve the college and community well. He spent 14 years as a campus president in a multi-college system, six years as the Chancellor of a multi-college system and, most recently, three years managing a 12-college system in the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East. He also has teaching experience at the community college, technical college and university levels, and a track record of extensive community involvement. Some of Horton’s accomplishments include a 23% increase in enrollment during his tenure; development and oversight of a $112 million bond program to build six new buildings, three high tech learning centers and three performing arts centers; the creation of an aerospace training academy that also became a catalyst for training high school science teachers; developing entrepreneurial partnerships with the business community; and adding or modifying 30 degree programs based on the needs of government agencies and industry groups, among others. Horton is most excited about getting back to education.” I’ve been more like a CEO in my recent positions,” he explained, “and I’m looking forward to being closer to the faculty and students.” He plans to spend his first month or two on the job “meeting and talking to everyone I can and learning as much about the college as possible.” Asked if he has any initial goals, Horton replied, “You’ve got a new strategic plan, and a lot of thought went into it. It’s a good one. I see no reason to immediately change direction and will work to make sure the high-priority initiatives outlined in the plan are implemented.”

UA – Search for a New President

On April 29, 2005, Arizona Board of Regents President Gary Stuart appointed Regent Fred Boice to chair the committee responsible for conducting the search for the next president of the University of Arizona (UA). UA President Peter Likins has announced his intention to retire on June 30, 2006, having served as president since 1997. The firm of Academic Search Consultation Service in Washington, DC, was selected to provide consulting services for the presidential search. Dr. Ann Hasselmo, managing director, is the lead consultant, and she will be assisted by Dr. Stan Ikenberry. Academic Search has completed hundreds of searches at colleges, universities, foundations, and other not-for-profit organizations. The search committee has begun regular meetings starting in September. Finalists recommended by the
search committee will participate in campus visits. The appointment of the next president of the University of Arizona will be made by the Board of Regents. The Board anticipates appointing a new president at its March 2006 board meeting.

Enrollment Soars at ASU, Tempe

ASU’s Tempe campus now has the largest enrollment in the United States, with 51,612 students, and outranks the University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus at 51,175 and Ohio State at 50,504. ASU officials have anticipated the growth for several years and have been moving academic programs to the West Campus and the Polytechnic Campus in Mesa, both of which are growing faster than Tempe.

Grant Awarded to Maricopa Community College District

The Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation has been awarded a $1 million federal grant that will be used to expand the Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program. The ACE Program works to keep minority, low income, and at-risk youth in high school and transition them into college. U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz. guided the grant through Congress via the annual Energy and Water Appropriations Act, which included funds for education, water, and environmental needs in the Phoenix area.” I am pleased that Congress saw the wisdom in funding these Phoenix projects. It is important that we continue them because they not only meet the basic needs of our residents, they improve the quality of our lives,” Pastor said. ACE is a scholarship-based program that has served more than 5,100 high school students throughout Maricopa County since it was established in 1988. Nine of the 10 Maricopa Community Colleges now offer ACE through partnerships with 58 area high schools. A tenth program meets similar needs among an adult student population. This year more than 1,400 students are enrolled in the ACE program countywide. ACE addresses two critical issues in Arizona: high school dropout rates that are far too high and college enrollment rates that are too low, especially among at-risk students. The program identifies these students in their sophomore year of high school and provides a positive experience that encourages them to stay in school and earn up to 24 transferable college credits. The program fosters parental involvement, provides individual academic support, and facilitates continuous interaction between ACE program staff and participants.” We are grateful to have received significant funding for such an important program that helps to keep students in school and move them forward in their education and their lives,” said Rufus Glasper, Maricopa Community Colleges chancellor. According to Steve Schenk, Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation chief executive officer, the new funding will allow the ACE Program to significantly expand outreach to at risk students in Maricopa County.

COLORADO
State Reporter: Stephen Chambers (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs)

Victory for Higher Education, At Last

As past issues of Panorama have shown, it has been the duty of the Colorado state reporter to inform readers of yet one more unnerving, troubling, and desperate saga in a series of unnerving, troubling, and desperate sagas. Perhaps RMAIRians everywhere have come to view the Colorado state reporter as having signs of manic depression? For someone who is relatively upbeat, this undesirable image has been assumed out of the desire to inform colleagues of the actual condition of higher education in Colorado, with no sugar coating added.
At long last, there is good news to pass along. On November 1, Colorado voters approved Referendum C that sets aside about $440 million in collected revenues over the next five years to primarily support higher education, K-12 education, and health care. The referendum passed by a slim margin of 52% in favor and 48% against. This narrow margin of victory is amplified in view of the defeat of a companion measure, Referendum D, which failed with 49% in favor and 51% against. Referendum D would have approved bonding for a number of much needed transportation and school and college construction projects.

Both referendums were put forth in a bi-partisan compromise between Republican Governor Bill Owens and the leadership of the Democratic controlled House and Senate. The campaigns for and against ‘C and D’ were full of controversy, mud-slinging, and nasty tempers on both sides. A full-scale media blitz was launched from both camps of sufficient magnitude to confuse and knock-off balance even the most seemingly informed voter. Prior to voting day, Owens had taken considerable heat for being a traitor to TABOR, a measure he had long supported and advocated being adopted in other states. It is also certain that millions of dollars from anti-tax interests flowed into Colorado from elsewhere to defeat the proposed referendums.

The $440 million, that will now be spent to keep state government at a functional level, would have otherwise been returned to the taxpayers as stipulated in a constitutional amendment known as the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR). Had Referendum C failed, the State Planning and Budgeting Office projected cuts in already depleted support to higher education of 20%, as well as funding reductions for public safety and state parks, and would have closed a good number of smaller state agencies altogether. Under that scenario, the closure of some rural community colleges and four-year colleges loomed as a likely outcome.

Colorado higher education is breathing a sigh of relief with the passage of Referendum C. It will aid in restoring some of the funding removed in past budget cuts and will help pay for higher utility costs, but not much more than that. It is a five year long band-aid that may give Colorado some time to develop the capacity for dealing with the pressing need for more permanent constitutional reform.

IDAHO
State Reporter: Archie George (University of Idaho)

As with most of you, we are welcoming winter back to the state after a couple of years without. Also, the state’s budget situation seems to be improving, which is also the case in many western states. Our challenge is to convince legislators that spending on higher education is an investment as much as building roads. According to the latest Idaho Outlook (http://dfm.idaho.gov/Publications/EAB/Outlook/I02006/outlooknovember2005.pdf), general fund revenue exceeded expectations so far this year by more than $33 million. The increase is primarily due to higher individual income tax receipts. We’ve more than got our fingers crossed, of course. I personally was called before the Interim Legislative Committee on State Employee Compensation to present a 10-year history of U of Idaho faculty salaries in comparison with national land grant college and universities. I stressed that the figures were created for internal management, not publication, and that U Idaho was not alone in the state in being way below our peers in other states. Ten years ago the average U Idaho professor salary was 8% below the national average. This fall the difference has increased to 16% below.

Idaho IR officers met in Boise on Dec. 2nd to discuss statewide priorities, strategies, and data sharing. Scott Berghstrom, BYU Idaho, and I demonstrated dashboard reporting capabilities we have developed for management reporting. Steve Schmidt, Boise State U, mentioned their office had been combined with the
Assessment office, and additional positions added to develop a data warehouse. We participated in an interactive, on-line training session with the National Student Clearinghouse, focused on using the StudentTracker service. The Idaho Office of the State Board of Education has purchased membership in the StudentTracker for all Idaho public post-secondary institutions, and is working on an agreement that would also cover all Idaho high schools. This would enable high schools to track their students into colleges nationwide.

We also discussed data sharing needs between the Department of Commerce and Labor and higher education. We need to know where our former students are employed, in which fields, and how much they are making. Commerce and Labor needs to know in which training program displaced workers are participating for their federal reporting requirements. A model system in Washington State was discussed, and plans laid for additional research into this area.

OSBE Chief Technology Officer Nancy Szofran then presented the highlights of the national IPEDS training for state coordinators, and gave us all a pile of documents to take back for further study. We all then headed back out into a brief period of sunshine in the afternoon before the snow storms on the drive home.

Workforce training is a big item in the state right now, especially as the interim executive director of the State Board of Education, Dwight Johnson, was formerly assistant deputy director for Idaho Commerce & Labor. “I’m looking forward to this new responsibility and working with the board members to ensure that Idaho has an education system that is second to none,” Johnson said. Providing strong and vibrant educational opportunities is not only important to the families and children of Idaho, but it is critical to ensure Idaho’s economy will remain healthy and growing.” During Johnson’s tenure at Commerce & Labor, he was actively involved in critical workforce training issues. Johnson helped ensure the passage of Idaho’s Workforce Development Training Fund, which reimburses companies for workforce training costs and has proved be a popular incentive for companies relocating or expanding in Idaho. He also helped pass the Farm Worker Minimum Wage law, and played a key role in the rewrite of Idaho’s wage and hour law and in the rewrite of the state’s employment security law.

In other news, Idaho State University Academic Vice President Dr. Robert Wharton will present “Exploring the Ice-Free Dry Valleys of Antarctica” at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 19 in the Idaho Museum of Natural History building’s Room 204. Wharton will take the audience on a visual trip of Antarctica, exploring the landscape and learning about its physical and biological restraints.

The State Board of Education recently approved a new doctoral program in electrical and computer engineering at Boise State University, and university officials say they will admit the first students to the program in spring 2006. The new Ph.D. is the third doctoral program to be offered at Boise State. The university already offers a Ph.D. in geophysics and an Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction.

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

The campuses of the Montana University System (MUS) are working to complete their budget requests for the FY08-09 biennium. The four Montana State University campuses and the four University of Montana campuses have each been asked to propose a list of new initiatives that would equate to just over 3% of the current budgets. At the same time, the budget officers around the system are trying to estimate what level of tuition increases would be required in the 08-09 biennium to carry forward the current level
of services. Early estimates suggest that it is about 7% per year, but there are many assumptions and estimates built into the calculation that could impact the final number.

The Montana legislature gives the MUS Board of Regents one appropriation (known as “the lump”), and the Board divides that money between all the institutions in the system. For over a decade, that division has been driven by the use of an allocation model (copied from New Mexico many years ago). The allocation model has been so heavily modified over the years that it is no longer tied to real costs on the campuses. The BOR has charged a group of MUS budget and planning officers to recommend a new approach. The group is working with Dennis Jones (NCHEMS) to develop a new allocation process that will consider information from peer institutions. We expect to have a final recommendation by March of 2006.

In spite of declining numbers of high school graduates, several MUS campuses, including the two largest in Missoula and Bozeman, set enrollment records this fall.

**NEVADA**

**State Reporter: Pat Casagranda (Nevada System of Higher Education – NSHE)**

Dana Named Associate Director to Manage $13.5 Million System-Wide Research Grant

The Nevada System of Higher Education has named Dr. Gayle A. Dana as associate director of a three-year research project funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) grant. The grant is comprised of $9 million in federal funds plus a $4.5 million state match provided by the EPSCoR Special Projects Allocation from the state’s general fund. It will fund collaborative research beginning August 1, 2005. Researchers from the Desert Research Institute, University of Nevada Las Vegas, and University of Nevada Reno will concentrate their research on arid soils, sensor technology, and cognitive information processing.

GPA Requirements Changes for Nevada Universities

President Carol C. Harter, of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), announced a proposal to raise the required GPA of high school students applying to UNLV from 2.5 to 3.0 by the year 2007. The proposal was originally planned for 2010. To avoid confusion, University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) president, John Lilley, proposed the standards should be the same for both universities.

The GPA is not only an attempt to set higher standards at UNLV and UNR, but it may also assist with growth rate, by making it more manageable. If UNLV and UNR are more selective, it may assist in the lack of space on campuses as enrollment rates continue to reach record-high numbers. The increasing of admission requirements is also a bid to make the Nevada universities more nationally recognized schools.

As standards for UNLV and UNR students and applicants rise, GPA is not the sole factor in accepting students. Many factors are being taken into consideration, such as the impact raising the GPA may have on the campus diversity and student accessibility to higher education. The issue is still being debated.

Fritsen Appointed NASA Director for Nevada Higher Education

The Nevada System of Higher Education has appointed Dr. Christian H. Fritsen as director for the statewide NASA programs to include the Space Grant Consortium and NASA EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research). Fritsen, an associate research professor in the Division of
Earth & Ecosystem Sciences at the Desert Research Institute, is currently building a research laboratory that allows for the study of microbes in extreme environments. The research will focus on the relevance of the exploration and detection of habitable zones for life in our solar system.

The Space Grant Consortium grant receives nearly $1 million in federal funds plus $500,000 in a state match provided by the special projects allocation from the state’s general funds. These funds are used to expand opportunities for Nevadans to understand and participate in NASA's aeronautics and space programs by supporting and enhancing science and engineering education, research, and outreach programs.

Nevada NASA EPSCoR receives $700,000 and is matched 1:1 with the special projects allocation from the state, for a total of $1.4 million per year. These research projects are closely related to one of NASA's four strategic enterprises: Aeronautics, Human Exploration and Development of Space, Mission to Planet Earth, and Space Science. NASA EPSCoR emphasizes building research infrastructure and capacity.

Regents Name Crowley UNR Interim

The Nevada Board of Regents today unanimously approved the selection of Dr. Joseph Crowley as the interim president for the University of Nevada, Reno. He is to replace Dr. John Lilley, President of UNR, who is moving to Baylor University in Texas.

Crowley left the presidency of the University of Nevada, Reno in January 2001, after nearly 23 years in the position. He served during the 2001 Nevada State Legislative Session as the coordinator of legislative activities for the University and Community College System of Nevada, then returned to the faculty as regents professor and president emeritus, teaching American political and constitutional history. He retired, formally, in January 2003, but then served for a year (2003-04) as interim president of San Jose State University.

University of Nevada
– by Diane Muntal –

UNLV’s President Carol Harter, UNR’s President John Lilley, and NSHE Chancellor Jim Rogers presented a proposal to the Board of Regents earlier this month to require a 3.0 HSGPA for admission to Nevada’s universities by the fall of 2007. Currently, entering freshmen students must have a minimum 2.5 HSGPA to be admitted to UNLV or UNR; transfers must have a minimum 2.0 HSGPA. In 2001, the Board of Regents raised the current standards for entering freshmen to 2.75 as of fall 2006 and 3.0 as of fall 2010, based on 13 core courses only. Transfers students having earned a minimum of 24 credits at another institution must have attained a 2.3 GPA as of fall 2006 and a 2.5 GPA as of fall 2010. The president’s proposal accelerates the process by raising the requirement to 3.0 for entering freshmen and 2.5 for transfers three years earlier and offers alternative admission test score requirements of 1040 on the SAT or 22 on the ACT. Students not meeting UNLV’s admission requirements may attend Nevada State College or the Community College of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas.

The proposal is designed to moderate the impact of enrollment increases at the universities; in the past five years, 65% of the growth in the system occurred at the two universities, representing an increase of more than 9,000 students. Unlimited growth has affected course availability, time to degree, rates of graduation, and the ability to hire sufficient full-time faculty to keep up with teaching needs. Stay tuned for the Board of Regents decision in future issues!

The Nevada State Legislature also increased the standards for students qualifying for Nevada’s Millennium Scholarship Program. The graduating classes of 2005 and 2006 must complete high school
with at least a 3.10 GPA, calculated using all high school credit granting courses. The GPA requirement increases to a 3.25 for the 2007 graduating class and later. In addition, beginning January 1, 2006, the GPA requirement to maintain eligibility will be calculated “per term” rather than on a cumulative basis and Millennium Scholars will be able to regain the scholarship only one time after losing eligibility. Millennium Scholars must maintain a 2.6 GPA for each semester of their first year, and a 2.75 GPA for each term after completion of 30 or more credits.

NSHE Board of Regents is considering the extension of benefits to domestic partners to enhance the System’s ability to recruit and retain faculty and to ensure that compensation and benefit programs provide for the equitable treatment of employees. The Domestic Partner Benefit Proposal was formulated by a committee consisting of chief HR officers of NSHE and received a positive response from the Council of Presidents. The UNLV Faculty Senate adopted a resolution in support of offering inclusive benefit programs to faculty and staff this past fall. The Board is examining the fiscal impact of the proposal and a common means of recognizing the existence of a domestic partnership for the purpose of establishing benefit eligibility.

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) has issued an RFP from qualified, experienced, and financially sound firms for the purchase and implementation of a web-based integrated information system to replace the current NSHE financial, human resource, and student administration applications. Only tightly integrated, comprehensive solutions are being considered. The primary objective of the NSHE Integrated Information System Project (or Integrate) is to adopt a single uniform set of data definitions, data-capture procedures, administrative rules for each human resource, finance, student, and data warehouse records. The goals for the Integrate Project include the enhancement and integration of management information, the enhancement of student conveniences and academic success, the increase of administrative efficiencies, and the assurance that the underlying technologies and technology staff support the project goals.

If you would like to share the challenge of establishing the data administration function at UNLV, and work with a terrific IR team, consider applying for the new University Data Administration position at UNLV. Or, if you prefer assessment, consider applying for the Director of Academic Assessment. Lead the university’s assessment program and build upon assessment activities in place in preparation for a focused interim visit on the issue of assessment by the NWCCU in fall 2007. Both positions are posted on higheredjobs.com!

NEW MEXICO
State Reporter: Dawn Kenney (ATVI Community College)

No report.

UTAH
State Reporter: Valerie Stegeman (Weber State University)

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY – BYU in top 20 of U.S. Universities
with Students Studying Abroad

The Institute of International Education has released its annual Open Doors report on U.S. students studying abroad, listing Brigham Young University in the top 20 schools sending the most students abroad.
This ranking shows the dedication of BYU’s faculty and administration, according to Lynn Elliott, International Study Programs director at the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies. “It also represents the efforts of many faculty and administrators who see the value of international education and who are willing to do the hard work necessary to make these opportunities available to students.”

Major differences between BYU and the other universities in the top twenty are that BYU runs its own programs, sends out primarily its own students, and offers 60 unique programs for academic credit. http://byunews.byu.edu/archive05-Nov-studyabroad.aspx

DIXIE STATE COLLEGE – Fall Enrollment Up 6% at Dixie State College

ST. GEORGE, UT – Sept. 23, 2005 - Dixie State College today announced third week enrollment totals for fall semester 2005. Overall enrollment is up six percent over last fall, with a total of 9,114 students, as compared to 8,564 last year.

“This is our largest fall third week enrollment total in our history,” said Vice President of Student Services Dr. Phil Alletto. “It certainly is an indication of our growing reputation for quality throughout Utah and the western U.S.”

In terms of FTE* (full-time equivalency), the equivalent of 4,495 student were enrolled, down slightly from last year’s 4,518. http://www.dixie.edu/pr/news.htm#fallenrollment092305

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY OF UTAH – Enrollment Continues to Rise at SUU

The growth of Southern Utah University continues this fall, despite the fact that there was no growth in the number of Utah high school graduates this past summer. SUU’s student body has grown by another 187 students, after leading the state in growth this same time last year. This increase takes SUU’s enrollment to 6,859, another all-time record student body for the 108-year-old school.

The increase in headcount represents a 2.8 percent growth compared to this time last year and the enrollment report includes some very encouraging signs. For example, the increase in nonresident students is quite impressive, jumping from 561 last fall to 788 this year—a leap of some 40 percent! SUU’s executive director of enrollment, Stephen Allen asserts, “This year’s incoming class of freshmen and transfer students are one of the most academically prepared and geographically diverse groups we have ever had at SUU.” Non-resident students now make up 11.5 percent of the University’s total population.

This fall includes the largest-ever class of first-time freshmen—totaling 1,182 new additions to the SUU campus. Also, there is a significant increase within the graduate student enrollment—moving up from 291 students last year to 394 students this fall. This 35% percent increase in graduate students is partially due to the new master’s degree program in Professional Communication that began in August. http://www.suu.edu/news/viewarticles.asp?HS=November%202005%20Headlines&ID=253

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY – USU’S Innovation Campus Celebrates 20 Years

After 20 years of successful, steady growth, Utah State University’s Innovation Campus held an anniversary celebration Monday, Nov. 21, from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The celebration was held in the auditorium of the Calibration Building at 489 East Research Parkway, in North Logan, located on the Innovation Campus.
The state of Utah’s Senior Advisor for Economic Development Christopher Roybal was the keynote speaker, discussing the role Utah State University and the Innovation Campus play in Utah’s economy. Roybal is former president and CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of Utah.

Innovation Campus has reason to celebrate. Starting in 1985 with one building in a North Logan field, the campus has grown into a bustling, high-tech research center that employs nearly 2,100 people. Innovation Campus companies generate approximately $121 million in revenue per year.

http://www.usu.edu/ust/index.cfm?ArticleID=6117

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH - Financial Times Ranks David Eccles School of Business EMBA Program among the Top 75 in the World – Only Utah Program to be Ranked –

October 24, 2005 – The Financial Times has announced that the David Eccles School of Business (DESB) Executive MBA program ranks among the top 75 in the world. The popular British newspaper and web site published its rankings list Monday, October 24. For the second year in a row the Executive MBA program at the University of Utah is the only program in Utah to be ranked. The David Eccles School of Business placed 66th overall and 37th in the United States. The school’s overall ranking shows an increase of one spot from the year before.

Now in its fifth year of ranking the top 75 executive MBA programs, the Financial Times analyzed feedback from more than 3,000 alumni. The final ranking of each school is calculated on its performance in three main areas:

- Career progress of the alumni
- Diversity and the international experience offered
- The schools intellectual output and research

The list is based on data gathered from the Executive MBA class that graduated in 2002. The value of a DESB Executive MBA is confirmed by the Financial Times, in part, through alumni salaries as well as the published research by faculty members in leading journals. The 2002 graduates have shown an increase of 56% in salaries, according to the survey. The Financial Times ranked the David Eccles School of Business faculty 27th in the world in research output. http://www.utah.edu/unews/releases/05/oct/rankings.html

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY – WSU Working on Remodel Plans

OGDEN – A flurry of spackle and sawdust continues across Weber State University as building remodels and upgrades progress, and administrators also have high hopes for future potential projects such as replacing Buildings 1 and 2.

The university Board of Trustees reviewed its quarterly construction progress report during its meeting Tuesday.

The university’s request to rebuild Buildings 1 and 2 has been ranked sixth out of 23 statewide projects by the Utah Building Board. The list will be submitted to the state Legislature next year for possible funding. http://www.standard.net/standard/67891/
Salt Lake City – For the first time in its history, Westminster College was included in the Kaplan/Newsweek “America’s Hottest Colleges” 2006 Edition, as one of the “most interesting schools” in America. Westminster was chosen, along with 366 other schools, to be featured in this edition of the guide, published by Newsweek.

The Kaplan Guide to America’s 367 Most Interesting Schools is an alphabetical list of some of the best colleges and universities in America. They are deemed “interesting” based on their academic strengths and student body, as well as any specialty programs that they have to offer.

Westminster College President Michael Bassis remarked, “I am pleased that Westminster was included in this prestigious list of colleges. We work very hard to create a challenging and supportive learning environment for our students, and it is always exciting when outside organizations recognize us for that achievement.”

http://www.westminstercollege.edu/campusnews/WYOMING

**WYOMING**

**State Reporter: Lisa Muller (University of Wyoming)**

The Wyoming legislative session is scheduled for February 2006 to make budget decisions for the next biennium, and conversations abound about how much money should be put away in the Permanent Mineral Trust Fund. Governor Dave Freudenthal’s budget calls for saving $1.2 billion over the next two years. Several prominent legislators, however, are concerned that the Governor’s recommendations don’t put enough of the state’s surplus into permanent savings. Wyoming is projected to have approximately 1.2 billion dollars surplus in 2005 and 1.8 billion dollars in 2006, all courtesy of the natural gas boom.

“Michael McVay, administrator of the state Budget Division, said the governor’s budget recognizes that Wyoming faces some increases in social costs, infrastructure, and operating costs associated with the energy boom, but that the state also needs to take advantage of good financial times so it’s prepared when revenues aren’t so rosy.” (AP wire reports)

The Governor’s proposal contains 22.7 percent (approximately) budget spending increases over the last biennium, although much of it includes one-time funds. The proposal calls for school construction for K-12, funding for Hathaway scholarships starting in fall 2006, road widening projects, local governments (especially those most impacted by oil and gas development), a Wyoming Wildlife Trust Fund, low-income heat and home weatherizing program, and a state retirees subsidy towards health insurance.

For additional information on the Hathaway scholarship fund, which is planned to benefit most Wyoming students at community colleges, technical schools, and at the University of Wyoming, please go to http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/SFA/Hathaway.doc

For the University of Wyoming, the governor’s proposal supports faculty and staff salary increases and additional key faculty positions as identified by UW’s academic plan. The library, technology center, and a parking garage were all included in the proposal, as is support for the UW academic plan suggestion of a School of Energy Resources. http://www.uwyo.edu/news/showrelease.asp?id=4602
The University of Wyoming has reinstated a B.S. degree in petroleum engineering beginning in fall 2006 and will seek accreditation by ABET (Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology).

There have been two resignations by UW Vice Presidents in 2005. Serving as the interim vice president for student affairs is Sara Axelson, former associate vice president for enrollment management and director of student affairs. Elizabeth Hardin, vice president for administration and finance, will follow former UW President Phill Dubois. VP Hardin is headed to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte at the end of December.

As reported previously, the UW Foundation campaign has continued to be successful and has gone over the original goal of $125 million and the $10 million (with a state match of $10 million) athletic campaign. The Governor’s budget proposal would authorize an additional $50 million dollar match program, which is a nice recognition of the program’s success.

Wyoming Community College Commission Report  
– by Nicole Novotny, Wyoming Community College Commission –

Enrollment figures for the 2004-2005 academic year were approved by the Wyoming Community College Commission in October 2005. During the last four years, the Wyoming community colleges have experienced a steady increase in enrollment, averaging 2.9% increase each year. Headcount for the summer 2004, fall 2004, and spring 2005 semesters was 21,635 students. Demographically, 61.2% of students enrolled during this time were women, and 38.8% were men. In comparison to the previous year’s enrollment figures, enrollment as a percentage of population has increased or remained steady in 16 of Wyoming’s 23 counties.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, five community colleges experienced accreditation activities for the delivery of new programs and certificates via distance education instruction methods, self-study analysis, and admittance into the Academic Quality Improvement Program.

On the state agency level, Dr. Jim Rose was hired as the new director for the Wyoming Community College Commission staff in January of 2005. Ms. Nicole Novotny replaced Mrs. Andrea Bryant as the agency Policy Analyst in July of 2005.

Transitions

RON ASHCROFT is the incoming director of Institutional Research at Snow College. He will start in January.

LOU ATTINASI is leaving Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona for Suffolk County Community College on Long Island, in New York. His new position is associate dean for Institutional Effectiveness. Good luck Lou. We hope you will always consider yourself a RMAIRian.

CAROL J. BERNHARD was promoted in October 2005 from data analyst to institutional researcher in the office of Institutional Research at the University of New Mexico. Congratulations Carol!

KATHY DEAN, an Idaho native who most recently worked in medical research in Providence, Rhode Island, became the fourth institutional research analyst since the position was created at U Idaho in 1976.
JASON MAYER, programmer analyst, another Idaho native and U Idaho graduate, left the IR and Assessment office to become a data base manager in the U Idaho Information Technology Department. He has been replaced by Lisa Jennings, who comes from the Idaho Tax Commission in Boise. Lisa moved to Idaho with her family when she was about a year old, so is nearly native.

PAUL RASMUSSEN, Director of Institutional Research at Snow College, retired in July 2005. Paul is currently in China with the International Language Program from Brigham Young University.

DR. DI SHEN started work as executive director for Research and Planning at Pima Community College on October 4. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in Psychology. He had been the senior research associate for Research and Education at CARF International, located in Tucson. He had worked at CARF since 1997.

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