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ABSTRACT

This report describes the strategic directions and accomplishments of the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) for 1995-97. First, the System's Board of Regents are described and strategic directions identified by the Regents in April 1996 are reviewed. Funding and goals for the 1995-97 biennium are then discussed, indicating that the 2-year budget totaled \$604.2 million. Accomplishments for the period are then described for the following key goal areas: (1) ensuring that higher education in the state is a good value, indicating that tuition was among the lowest in the western United States and that students paid only 22.5% of the costs of their education; (2) increasing access through initiatives related to financial aid, distance education, and flexible scheduling; (3) increasing the rate of students continuing on to college through such initiatives as a statewide "Go to College" campaign; (4) maintaining and enhancing educational quality, indicating that the System undertook the construction of state-of-the-art facilities in the period; (5) increasing partnerships with business and industry, describing efforts related to educational innovation and workforce development; (6) increasing partnerships with the K-12 sector, indicating that community college high schools and hi-tech centers on high school campuses were established; and (7) conducting research to meet state needs. For each goal area, specific programs at System universities or community colleges are described. (HAA)

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The demands on higher education are great; the expectations large. The basis of a democratic society relies on a citizenry that is educated and able to participate in a meaningful manner, able to make decisions and choices in an ever more complex world. For American society to prosper in the twenty-first century, it will need the contributions of all its citizens. As knowledge and technology evolve and change, and as the demographics of the nation change, the challenge will be to provide the education necessary for all citizens to thrive and prosper.

As Nevada's public system of higher education, the UCCSN is committed to providing access and opportunity to a quality educational experience for the State's residents. In order to fulfill this commitment, the UCCSN community must embrace a shared vision for higher education and endorse common directions for reaching this vision. The Regents' Strategic Directions define this vision. In April 1996, the Regents identified eight key issues that will shape the goals of the UCCSN over the next decade. These are the UCCSN Strategic Directions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

To Achieve Excellence in:

- Undergraduate Access & Growth
- Research and Graduate/Professional Education
- Meeting State Needs

By Means of Enhanced:

- Accountability
- Planning
- Resources
- Technology
- Productivity

In addition to these eight directions, the Board of Regents reaffirmed its position regarding values and ethics. The Board recognizes the important role that higher education plays in building common societal values and ethics in Nevada and the country and continually seeks ways to promote and enhance this role.

NEVADA HIGHER EDUCATION IS GOOD VALUE

Low Tuition

Higher education is often described as an investment -- an investment in the intellectual potential of individuals, an investment in their future productivity. The University and Community College System of Nevada should be seen as an investment of particularly good value. The UCCSN has some of the lowest tuition and fee rates in the western United States. For the 1995-96 academic year, undergraduate and graduate fees at the two Nevada universities ranked 14th (lowest) among the 16 WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) states. In this same year, Nevada community colleges ranked 8th among the 14 WICHE states in average fees.

Students Pay Small Share of Cost, 22.5%

Low tuition and fee rates mean that students pay a comparatively small portion of their education while the State subsidizes the larger portion. In the 1995-97 biennium, UCCSN students paid on average 22.5% of the cost while the State assumed the remaining 77.5%. The September 30, 1996 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* cited the average UCCSN undergraduate university tuition of \$1,830 as only 5.1% of the median household income, the second least expensive average tuition rate in the nation. These figures demonstrate Nevada's commitment to access in making postsecondary education highly affordable.

Academic Breadth & Excellence, Workforce Development

The UCCSN is also a "good value" investment in providing academic breadth and excellence. In 1996, the **University of Nevada, Reno** was once again ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of 229 prestigious national universities. The **University of Nevada, Las Vegas** is known throughout the world for its award-winning College of Hotel Administration and has embraced a goal to become a premier urban university. Nevada's community colleges are the State's leaders in workforce development, providing a range of career opportunities. The State's four community colleges seek to meet regional needs in the areas of workforce preparation and enhancement, providing a broad range of training from operation logistics for warehousing to health care specialists to mining engineering technology.

Great Basin College in Elko has been a leader in distance education. Currently, over 150 students are enrolled in a variety of GBC classes from their home or office by modem. Emerging technologies are being used to improve access in a variety of other ways. At the University of Nevada, Reno, students can now locate admission information and go through university orientation at the university's home page on the World Wide Web. UNR's personalized Degree Audit Reporting System helps students stay in school and on track to graduation. This new computerized advising system guides students through their college careers, saving them time and money that might be spent taking unnecessary classes.

Programming for Complex Lives

Twenty-seven WNCC students realized their dream in fall, 1996 when they completed peace officer training in a new program which enables students to keep their daytime jobs and live at home while attending POST on evenings and weekends.

Limitations in programming, class offerings and scheduling are other key elements of the access issue. Here, UCCSN institutions moved aggressively in the 1995-97 biennium to accommodate the needs of a Nevada student body that is, in general, non-traditional. Nevada students are older than traditional college students with 33.5% between 22 and 29 years of age and 19.5% between 30 and 39; most work on a part-time or full-time basis and many have financially dependent children. For most UCCSN students, going to college is only one facet of their complex and highly demanding lives.

The Community College of Southern Nevada saw its credit enrollment (headcount) surge 50% during the biennium by offering more than 2,500 class sections in 70 expanding career fields with flexible class times, seven days a week, matching the region's work and life styles. CCSN also implemented free on-campus evening youth supervision, staffed by area Boys & Girls Clubs, for children of CCSN students. This innovative program has proven extremely effective in improving access to CCSN for students who are single parents and require affordable, reliable child care in order to attend college.

In terms of Full-Time- Equivalent (FTE) enrollment,* the UCCSN achieved an FTE enrollment of 40,016 as compared to fall, 1995 FTE of 36,937, for an increase of 8.3%. UCCSN was budgeted for 37,070 FTE for the 1996-97 academic year, a figure that was surpassed by 7.9%. Accordingly, the UCCSN met and exceeded its obligation to the State in terms of serving some 6,000 more students than the level funded in the 1995-97 biennial budget.

QUALITY

In 1995-97, the UCCSN successfully met the challenges inherent in balancing access and quality.

The other side of the access issue in higher education is quality. Public higher education systems cannot jeopardize the quality of their product -- a college education -- in the face of access demands. Campus infrastructure in the form of facilities and equipment, particularly in the area of computer hardware and software, must be continuously upgraded. Similarly, campuses must be vigilant with regard to maintaining high caliber faculty and academic programming.

State-of-the-Art Instructional & Research Facilities

In the 1995-97 biennium, state funds built and equipped two major facilities at the **Community College of Southern Nevada's** Cheyenne Campus: a 100,000-sq.-ft. School of Resorts & Gaming and a major Academic & Computing Center. State funds also built a 76,000- sq.- ft. Academic & Computing Center on the CCSN West Charleston Campus, a campus which is devoted primarily to the health professions. Between 1995 and 1996, the number of students working directly with computers at CCSN doubled to over 5,000 as these two "super labs" came on line.

* FTE enrollment is a statistical measure of the instructional workload generated by students taking courses. 1 FTE is equal to registration in 15 credit hours, whether taken by one student or by the combination of several students. The State of Nevada uses FTE as a measure of workload in determining the budget for the UCCSN.

At Truckee Meadows Community College a new \$7.3 million library was dedicated in January, 1996 supported by a community gift of over \$250,000 for furniture and equipment. A new \$7.4 million Advanced Technology Building was completed on schedule and opened to students in January, 1997. During the biennium, TMCC also purchased an 85,000 sq.-ft building in the industrial area of Sparks, the Center for Applied Technology, for \$1.2 million of which nearly \$900,000 was provided by community contributions. These new facilities resulted in over 50% increase of square footage for instruction and student development at TMCC.

Excellence in Faculty & Academic Programs

Recently, a Dee Gold Mine supervisor in Elko had a crisis to resolve. The primary crusher for the mine has failed and the mine's mechanics were out of town. A newly hired GBC student who had just completed the Mill Training Program was asked to address the issue. By reviewing the product manual, he and fellow workers successfully fixed the crusher, in record time -- that is quality education.

Great Basin College in Elko provides superior, student-centered education. GBC has a top quality mill training program where occupational students are well-prepared for the workplace. In 1995 and 1996, 100% of GBC graduates passed the national exam for registered nurses, a very difficult, demanding examination.

In 1995-1996, the **University of Nevada, Las Vegas** embarked on a year-long planning process. One of the principal aims of this activity was to make the university more student-centered and user-friendly. Through this process, UNLV determined its mission as a premier urban university. It established goals that speak to high quality, broad participation, and unlimited opportunity for those within the larger university community. In 1996, UNLV mechanical engineering professor Brendan O'Toole was named the Nevada Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. O'Toole is one of an elite group of state winners selected from 585 candidates nationwide.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Since its inception in 1995, more than 250 Nevada companies have contacted the Manufacturing Assistance Program with remarkable success. In excess of 20 research projects have been launched for companies and more than 100 management or employee training programs have been completed.

Innovation

Innovative partnerships with business and industry are helping to meet increased needs and expand services by leveraging valuable state resources. The Manufacturing Assistance Program (MAP) was initiated by the **University of Nevada, Reno** and has now spread statewide with field agents in Reno, Elko, Carson City and Las Vegas bringing university and community college support services, expertise and counseling to this key sector of Nevada's economic engine. Recently, MAP expanded its services to Nevada's construction and mining industries. In 1996, MAP received \$200,000 in interim funding from the Legislature. This State's support led to a three-year \$700,000 federal grant announced this fall.

Great Basin College has taken a leadership role in its community by creating "Team Elko." This unique and pro-active community partnership - created and hosted by the College - includes all the tax-based organizations in the area, such as the college, the city, county, hospital, Chamber of Commerce, school district, and Convention Center. These groups come together in an advisory capacity to share plans, to avoid duplication of efforts and to review and critique new projects in a concerted effort to prepare for Elko's dynamic future.

One of the newer campus partnerships is the "Innovations in Reuse for Education" project in which **University of Nevada, Las Vegas's** Environmental Studies Program joins forces with the Clark County School District, area private schools and businesses. Area businesses give the Reuse Center materials that would otherwise be wasted. The Reuse Center sends these materials to classrooms where they can be put to good use, thus realizing a direct and immediate benefit in recycling. For instance, discarded film canisters become seedling planters in elementary school classrooms and scrap papers and poster board become the raw materials for art projects.

Truckee Meadows Community College's Business and Industry Division expanded its services to the northern Nevada community. In collaboration with the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada and MAP, the College created the Basic Entry Skill Training program known as "BEST." The College also targeted the region's top 25 firms for specialized curriculum design and provided on-site training for major employers. Expanding its service to the Incline Village area, TMCC is now offering the only two-year ski resort management degree west of the Rockies.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH K-12

The current focus on increasing Nevada's college-continuation rate has led to a greater emphasis on meaningful partnerships with the K-12 public school system in an effort to create a seamless educational experience.

Senate Bill 204

During the biennium, an estimated 105 distance education course sections served an estimated 1,300 high school students throughout Nevada.

In the 1995-97 biennium, SB 204 provided \$5 million to the UCCSN for distance education programs. This funding enabled all seven UCCSN institutions to offer courses not only to college students at UCCSN sites, but also from colleges to high schools within the State, between high schools and to Nevada teachers. As most postsecondary students in Nevada are first generation college-goers, the UCCSN must help make college a logical choice for the years immediately after high school. The delivery of college courses to high school students via distance education technologies is an effective way to help high school students get a positive college experience. SB 204 funded projects included the delivery of instruction over all available distance education technologies. Two-way interactive video, cable television and the Internet all were used to maximize service delivery across the State.

In 1995-97, the **Community College of Southern Nevada** provided general education, business and other courses to 28 high schools in southern Nevada through cable television and the Internet. **Great Basin College** offered a variety of courses to sites in Elko, Ely, Winnemucca and Battle Mountain. **Western Nevada Community College** provided lower-



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