

Nevada System of Higher Education

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January 15, 2008

Ms. Carol Stonefield
Principal Research Analyst
Legislative Counsel Bureau
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Ms. Stonefield:

EXHIBIT E Education

Document consists of 2 pages.

☒ Entire document provided.

☐ Due to size limitations, pages _____ provided. A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775/684-6827) or e-mail library@lcb.state.nv.us.

Meeting Date 032708

Thank you for your reminder that an update on the actions completed to date by the Nevada System of Higher Education to address Nevada's need for teachers of the deaf would be appreciated. A number of actions were specifically requested by Senator William Raggio, Chairman, Legislative Committee on Education in his January 9, 2007, letter to Board Chair Bret Whipple. Following is a summary of events concerning this matter from the past two years.

WICHE Student Exchange Slots

As you are aware, during the 2005-06 interim, this was a matter of particular interest to the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities under the leadership of Senator Barbara Cegavske. During the course of the Committee's review of such matters, the NSHE recommended two new student exchange slots under the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE) for master's level study for students seeking to specialize in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. If approved, the funds allotted for these slots would provide upfront financial support to students participating in the program who agree to return to Nevada and work at least two years in the field. The Committee included a statement in the final report supporting the WICHE budget proposal to use out-of-state slots for Nevada students to pursue degrees in other states that offer degrees designed to prepare teachers to work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The proposed slots were approved for funding and will be filled in FY 2009 by WICHE.

NSHE Education Curriculum Review

In addition, as a result of the attention paid to this matter by the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities, the NSHE was asked to ensure that its teacher education programs have sufficient content to enable all K-12 teachers to understand the theory and the basic methods for teaching the deaf and hearing impaired, as well as the potential resources available to assist them. Since that time I have requested that our education deans and faculty review the content within their respective teacher education curricula to ensure that this component is incorporated to the fullest extent practical. Additionally, an initiative is currently underway, with the assistance of Nevada Partnership for Inclusive Education and WestEd to ensure content on inclusive teaching practices across all of the teacher preparation program curricula.

NSC New Degree Program

Nevada State College (NSC) received Board approval in June 2007 for a bachelor's of science in Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The degree is designed to prepare students to be teachers of students ages 2 to 21 who are deaf or hard of hearing. Specific emphasis is placed on the seamless transition of students with

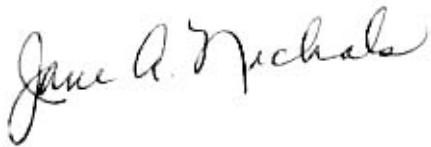
an AAS in Deaf Studies to a bachelor's degree at NSC (2+2 agreement with the College of Southern Nevada). Students receiving a BS in Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing will have received appropriate exposure and preparation to teach general education curriculum to students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Since NSC has a statewide mission, it is hoped that this degree may also be offered as a 2+2 with other institutions such as Western Nevada College in the future as resources become available.

Other Pending Initiatives

The University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas have expressed that they both look positively upon the establishment of a masters program in deaf education. However, because these highly specialized programs require substantial start-up costs, it is not possible for either campus to move forward at this time. To do so would require taking resources from existing programs that in this climate of budget cuts are already struggling to maintain service levels.

In conclusion, much has been done in the prior two years to address this state need. The NSC program and the WICHE slots are positive steps in the right direction. However, the primary obstacle to continue the development of other programs, particularly graduate programs, remains one of sufficient funding for these expensive programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jane A. Nichols". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jane A. Nichols
Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Cc: Chancellor James E. Rogers
Executive Vice Chancellor Daniel J. Klaich