NEVADA LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT A STUDY CONCERNING THE COST AND AFFORDABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

(Assembly Bill 202 [Chapter 150, *Statutes of Nevada 2017*])

SUMMARY MINUTES

The fourth and final meeting of the Committee to Conduct a Study Concerning the Cost and Affordability of Higher Education for the 2017–2018 Interim was held on Monday, June 4, 2018, at 1 p.m. in Room 2135, Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401, Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada, and to Room 102, Great Basin College, 1500 College Parkway, Elko, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio or video recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's meeting page. The audio or video recording may also be found at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Granicus/. Copies of the audio or video record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) (publications@lcb.state.nv.us or 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Assembly Member Amber Joiner, Chair
Senator Ben Kieckhefer
David H. Sanders, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Vice Chair
Senator Yvanna D. Cancela
Assemblyman Chris Edwards
Assemblywoman Heidi Swank
Alicia L. Contreras-Martinez

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer Ruedy, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division
Jen Sturm, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division
Asher A. Killian, Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Brody Leiser, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division
Jennifer Ouellette, Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division
Maria de la Luz Aguayo, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division

Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.

AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

Chair Joiner welcomed members and the public to the fourth and final meeting of the Committee to Conduct a Study Concerning the Cost and Affordability of Higher Education. She explained the meeting would be dedicated to the work session and reviewed meeting protocol.

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Douglas A. Unger, Ph.D., Professor, Department of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), pointed out that educators are the only class of state employees who have no process for in-rank raises in pay other than cost-of-living increases, which have not kept up with inflation. He stated that faculty in higher education represent the most educated and skilled state employees. Dr. Unger noted that due to stagnant salaries and inadequate healthcare, it is difficult to recruit applicants from an already competitive pool, especially women and minorities. He concluded by asking the Committee to establish a comprehensive, sustainable salary system for faculty and professional employees and to recommend special funding so that institutions may address compression and equity issues.

Robert Manis, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, Department of Human Behavior, College of Southern Nevada, stated his support for the in-rank advancement system mentioned by Dr. Unger and for the performance pool promoted by the chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). He stated salary compression and tying individual pay to institutional performance is bad for morale, and joint funding between the Legislature and NSHE institutions is good for accountability and beneficial to students.

Sara Hunt, Ph.D., Director of Mental and Behavioral Health Coalition, and Assistant Dean of Behavioral Health Sciences, School of Medicine, UNLV, called attention to the mental health workforce in Nevada. She asked the Committee to consider mental health professionals for Letters and Statements (LS) Recommendations 15 and 19 of the Work Session Document (WSD) (Agenda Item IV A).

Kent M. Ervin, Ph.D., Legislative Liaison, Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA), stated NFA's support of the efforts to enhance and simplify various state scholarships and student aid programs. Further, he said establishing a regular compensation system can help fix the salary compression issues in installments over time. Lastly, he called attention to the proposals submitted by NFA, which were included as Attachment A in the WSD (Agenda Item IV A).

Mika Alvarez, Senator for Reynolds School of Journalism, and Chair of the Committee on Public Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada (ASUN), testified in support of the proposal for faculty compensation included in the WSD and reiterated the sentiments expressed by the previous testifiers.

Olivia Komanduri, Assistant Director of Legislative Affairs, ASUN, testified in support of expanding the Silver State Opportunity Grant (SSOG) to students enrolled in universities within NSHE.

Katie Worrall, Director of Legislative Affairs, ASUN, testified in support of the proposed changes to the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship (GGMS). Additionally, she asked that gender-neutral language be used in any proposed changes to include gender-nonconforming, binary, or nonidentifying students.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 17, 2018

MOTION: Senator Kieckhefer moved to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018, meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator Denis and passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM IV—WORK SESSION—DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS ON RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO:

A. Professional Employee and Faculty Compensation

B. Financial Aid and Scholarships, Including the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Program, Silver State Opportunity Grant, and the Nevada Promise Scholarship

C. Grant Writing and Management Support for Community and State Colleges

D. The Nevada Regents Service Work Study Program

E. Economic and Workforce Development Programs

F. Creation of a Standing Legislative Committee or Subcommittee

Jennifer Ruedy, previously identified, called attention to the WSD (Agenda Item IV A) and explained that the first 4 items are recommendations for bill draft requests (BDRs) and the subsequent 20 items are recommendations for letters or statements of intent.

Chair Joiner stated the Committee is allotted five BDRs; however, because only four BDRs are listed in the WSD, she clarified that:

- Any of the letters or statements of intent could be drafted as a bill; or
- One of the four BDRs could be split into two.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed BDR Recommendation 1 of the WSD.

Assemblywoman Swank expressed the importance of moving forward with a solution to the issues of faculty compensation.

Vice Chair Denis agreed.

Discussion ensued between Committee members and staff regarding: (1) potential fiscal impact; (2) professional merit funding prior to Fiscal Year (FY) 2010; and (3) statutory parameters for a comprehensive and sustainable faculty compensation system.

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to approve BDR Recommendation 1 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Assemblywoman Swank and passed unanimously.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed BDR Recommendation 2 of the WSD.

Discussion ensued among Committee members; Crystal Abba, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, NSHE; and Renée Davis, Director of Student Affairs, NSHE, regarding the: (1) appeal processes for when a student loses the GGMS; (2) grade point average (GPA) requirements for the GGMS; (3) percentage of students who drop out after losing the GGMS; and (4) "two-strikes" provision.

In response to a question from Senator Kieckhefer, Ms. Abba noted that 7 percent, or approximately 680 students, of the file studied would have been impacted by the proposed increase to the first-year GPA from 2.6 to 2.75. However, she added the proposed revision to the "two-strikes" provision would soften the blow of the increased GPA requirement.

MOTION: Assemblyman Edwards moved to approve BDR Recommendation 2a, b, and c and the proposed effective date as stated in the WSD, and to revise the "two-strikes" provision in subsection 5 of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 396.934 to provide that a student may continue to receive the GGMS in the student's succeeding semester of enrollment after failing to meet the continuing eligibility requirement during a semester of enrollment, since more students may fail to meet the increased GPA requirement; however, if the student fails to meet the requirements during a second semester at any time during the student's enrollment, the student is no longer eligible for the GGMS. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Denis and passed. Senator Kieckhefer voted no.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed BDR Recommendation 3 of the WSD.

Committee members discussed concerns regarding funding, and Chair Joiner suggested starting the program as a pilot.

Chair Joiner called attention to an email regarding estimated costs of university grant programs (Agenda Item IV B).

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve BDR Recommendation 3 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Senator Cancela and passed. Senator Kieckhefer voted no.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed BDR Recommendation 4 of the WSD.

Discussion ensued among Committee members regarding the credit hours required by the SSOG Program.

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to approve BDR Recommendation 4a and b as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Assemblywoman Swank and passed. Assemblyman Edwards voted no.

Regarding the suggestion made during public comment to include gender-neutral language in the BDRs, Asher Killian, previously identified, clarified that BDRs must use consistent language across NRS and the *Nevada Administrative Code*. He added that a separate BDR could address that issue; however, it is beyond the scope of what the Committee has authority to do.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 1 of the WSD.

There was discussion among the Committee members regarding the language used in Recommendation 1d.

Dr. Sanders suggested revising LS Recommendation 1d to:

> Fund a one-time base-pay salary adjustment in FY 2020 to partially address equity and salary compensation and inversion issues. It should be noted that an independent study was conducted by the Board of Regents that was presented during the May 8, 2018, meeting of this Committee. [During] this meeting, Gallagher Benefit Services testified that one-time costs to address this issue could total as much as $38.4 million for administrative faculty and $49 million for academic faculty.

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve LS Recommendation 1a, b, and c as stated in the WSD, and 1d as revised by Dr. Sanders. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Denis and passed. Senator Kieckhefer and Assemblyman Edwards voted no. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 2 of the WSD.

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to approve LS Recommendation 2 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Senator Kieckhefer and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 3 of the WSD.

Discussion ensued among Committee members regarding the intent of the language.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 3.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 4 of the WSD.

Dr. Sanders suggested redacting ". . . so those institutions have access to the same resources as the University of Nevada, Reno, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the Desert Research Institute . . ." from the recommendation.

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve LS Recommendation 4 as revised by Dr. Sanders. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Denis and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 5 of the WSD.

Senator Kieckhefer stated he was of the opinion that the current funding formula for higher education is working well.

Discussion ensued among Committee members regarding the intent of the recommendation.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 5.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 6 of the WSD.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and Ms. Abba regarding the intent of the recommendation.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 6.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 7 of the WSD.

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve LS Recommendation 7 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Denis and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 8 of the WSD.

Senator Kieckhefer stated he was of the opinion that different programs were created to target different populations and uniformity could complicate matters.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 8.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 9 of the WSD.

MOTION: Senator Kieckhefer moved to approve LS Recommendation 9 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Denis and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 10 of the WSD.

Senator Kieckhefer and Assemblyman Edwards expressed concern over funding.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 10.

Chair Joiner reviewed LS Recommendation 11 of the WSD.

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve LS Recommendation 11 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Senator Kieckhefer and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy read LS Recommendation 12 of the WSD.

Assemblywoman Swank expressed she would like to establish a more central way to have information regarding age-appropriate volunteer opportunities available for institutions and students.

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve LS Recommendation 12 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Denis and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 13 of the WSD.

Discussion ensued among Committee members regarding the verbiage used to list the challenges presented by NSHE and whether it is necessary to send a letter to the 2017–2018 Interim Legislative Committee on Education (LCE).

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to send a letter to LCE noting that at the March 22, 2018, meeting, NSHE institution representatives provided detailed testimony related to the Nevada Promise Scholarship, which may be helpful if any statutory revisions to the scholarship are contemplated by LCE for the 2019 Legislature. The motion was seconded by Assemblywoman Swank and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 14 of the WSD.

MOTION: Assemblyman Edwards moved to approve LS Recommendation 14 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Senator Kieckhefer and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 15 of the WSD.

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to approve LS Recommendation 15 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Assemblyman Edwards.

Chair Joiner questioned whether language regarding mental health should be added to the recommendation, as requested during public comment.

Senator Kieckhefer suggested indicating there are a lot of economic middle skill job opportunities available, but not to discourage students from obtaining four-year degrees.

Vice Chair Denis agreed.

MOTION REVISED: Vice Chair Denis moved to revise his motion to include a list of various examples of middle skill jobs, including mental health. The motion was seconded by Assemblyman Edwards and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 16 of the WSD.

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to approve LS Recommendation 16 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Assemblywoman Swank and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 17 of the WSD.

MOTION: Assemblywoman Swank moved to approve LS Recommendation 17 as stated in the WSD. The motion was seconded by Senator Kieckhefer and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 18 of the WSD.

MOTION: Vice Chair Denis moved to approve LS Recommendation 18 of the WSD. The motion was seconded by Assemblyman Edwards and passed. Senator Cancela was absent for the vote.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 19 of the WSD.

Assemblyman Edwards was of the opinion that NSHE is already conducting a strategy for recruiting and retaining faculty in high-demand areas.

Senator Kieckhefer agreed.

Dr. Sanders suggested simplifying the language.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 19.

Ms. Ruedy noted LS Recommendation 20 had the same exact language as LS Recommendation 18 of the WSD; therefore the Committee would not be going over the recommendation.

Ms. Ruedy reviewed LS Recommendation 21 of the WSD.

Committee members discussed whether standing legislative committees already address higher education policy issues.

No action was taken on LS Recommendation 21.

AGENDA ITEM V—PUBLIC COMMENT

Kent M. Ervin, previously identified, thanked the Committee for its work and support.

AGENDA ITEM VI—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maria de la Luz Aguayo
Research Policy Assistant

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Jennifer Ruedy
Senior Principal Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assembly Member Amber Joiner, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item IV A	Jennifer Ruedy, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB)	Work Session Document
Agenda Item IV B	Jen Sturm, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB	Email regarding estimated costs of university grant programs

The Summary Minutes are supplied as an informational service. All meeting materials are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/About/Contact/feedbackmail.cfm.