

**SHEEO**

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State Higher Education Executive Officers

***FY 2007  
Annual Report***



**CHICAGO**

***From the Staff  
To the Members***

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**Natalie Mischler**, Assistant to the Director, SHEEO/NCES Network

**Kelli Parmley**, Senior Research Analyst

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**Takeshi Yanagiura**, Data Analyst

# State Higher Education Executive Officers ANNUAL REPORT

July 20, 2007

The mission of SHEEO, the association of State Higher Education Executive Officers, is to help its members and the states develop and sustain excellent systems of higher education.

SHEEO pursues its mission by:

- *Organizing professional development meetings;*
- *Maintaining regular systems of communication and providing ready access to relevant studies and publications;*
- *Serving as a liaison between the states and the federal government;*
- *Studying higher education policy issues – publishing reports to inform the field; and*
- *Implementing projects to enhance higher education in the states.*

Together these activities enable the Association to provide a collective voice and leadership on public policy issues for higher education.

## The Year in Brief

Developing and sustaining excellent systems of higher education is becoming increasingly recognized as an urgent national priority.

As SHEEOs assembled in Anchorage for the 2006 Annual Meeting, the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education, appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, was debating the text of its final report. Although the Commission report, *A Test of Leadership*, has received mixed reviews, it has, without question, expanded and intensified the national dialogue on higher education.

During the past year, SHEEO and its members continued their deep involvement in initiatives to strengthen higher education policy leadership in the states while participating extensively in the dialogue intensified by Secretary Spellings' Commission. Highlights of the year include:

- Submitting letters to the National Commission in response to its draft report and a formal statement recommending state responses to the Secretary's "Action Plan" for implementing the Commission report. (see Appendix A)
- Co-sponsoring with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact a "Summit" of state policy leaders to review *A Test of Leadership* and consider its implications for state policy.
- Collaborating with Achieve, the American Council on Education, and the National Association of System Heads in a range of activities to involve higher education more deeply in improving high school preparation for college.

- Participating in the Department of Education's negotiated rule-making panels on student assistance programs (Stan Jones) and accreditation (Jim McCormick and Marshall Hill).
- Assembling a group of SHEEOs to meet with state legislative leaders who were involved in the report, *Transforming Higher Education: National Imperative, State Responsibility*, developed by the National Conference of State Legislatures' Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education.
- Providing (with Ford Foundation support) in collaboration with the Association of Governing Boards, a seminar for board members and SHEEOs or system heads on developing and pursuing a state policy agenda for higher education in response to the report of the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, *Accountability for Better Results: A National Imperative for Higher Education*.
- Recruiting four former Governors, Garry Carruthers, Jim Hunt, Frank Keating, and Dick Riley to write to each sitting governor concerning the need for policy leadership in higher education, including copies of national reports and articles on the topic.
- Publishing the annual study, State Higher Education Finance, FY 2006, and sending copies to all state budget directors and legislative finance staff as well as to SHEEO agencies and other policy analysts.
- Participating (16 SHEEOs attended) in Secretary Spelling's March 2007 "National Summit" on the future of higher education.
- Achieving the five-year renewal of SHEEO's contract with the National Center for Education Statistics to operate the SHEEO/NCES Network.
- Sponsoring (with Gates Foundation support) a seminar for K-12 and postsecondary data systems managers to discuss how to enhance K-12 and higher education data systems and obtain greater benefits by linking them.
- Sponsoring (with Lumina Foundation support) a seminar on the assessment of student learning at the state level.
- Releasing a statement on federal, state, accreditor, and institutional roles in accreditation and the assessment of student learning. (See Appendix A.)
- Organizing three national conferences for SHEEOs and their staff: the Annual Meeting, the Professional Development Conference, and the Data Conference.
- Publishing articles and making numerous presentations and contributions to the national policy dialogue. (These are summarized in Appendix B, Staff Activities.)
- Purchasing SAS software to continue developing the capacity for providing data on key policy indicators to state higher education policy leaders.

- Supporting the P-16 Professional Development Collaborative, and working for the continuation of this federal grant program through the reauthorization process now underway.
- Continuing services to the states through information exchanges, surveys of state practices, and formal, and informal consultation.

## Professional Development Meetings

High-quality professional education among peers is the founding purpose of SHEEO and its core function.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association, held in Anchorage, Alaska, from July 19-22, 2006, was attended by 63 SHEEOs and national higher education leaders. The annual SHEEO Professional Development Conference in Chicago, Illinois, from August 15-17, 2006, drew 177 participants. The SHEEO/NCES Network Conference and IPEDS Workshop in St. Petersburg, Florida, May 8-11, 2007, involved 159 professionals engaged in the development, maintenance, and utilization of data and information systems for higher education policy analysis.

The work of the Association also involved smaller meetings and conference calls that brought together SHEEOs and senior agency staff to discuss common concerns. Many of these are described below in discussions of the Association's projects.

## The SHEEO/NCES Network and Systems of Communication

For 30 years, the SHEEO/NCES Network has provided a mechanism for higher education professionals to enhance data analysis, information systems, knowledge networks, and policy development through communication, cooperation and collaboration.

The SHEEO communication systems are used extensively by the members of the Association and by others involved in state and national higher education policy issues. Key components of the communication network include:

- SHEEO website ([www.sheeo.org](http://www.sheeo.org))
- Comprehensive E-mail network - 68 lists linking 1,500 individuals
- Formal interaction between SHEEO and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
- *Network News* quarterly newsletter
- Personnel Exchange program – funded state-to-state peer visits
- Involvement in the Access and Excellence Initiative and related SHEEO information and knowledge sharing strategies
- Ad hoc queries and data sharing of summary results.

The SHEEO website contains multiple links to higher education information and resources including:

- SOAR – (SHEEO Online Access to Information)
- *Compendium of National Data Sources on Higher Education*
- *Compendium on Teacher Quality*
- Links to SHEEO, state, federal, and national publications on current issues

Direct face-to-face interaction is also extremely productive; a primary function of the Network is to coordinate meetings of state and national data personnel. The most visible example of this interaction is the Annual Network Data Conference and IPEDS Workshop. The conference provides approximately 150 participants a comprehensive IPEDS Workshop, as well as plenary sessions from national experts, data use and policy presentations, training sessions on data tools, and a series of table topic discussions.

The SHEEO/NCES Network actively supports the work of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) to identify and address national data and policy issues. Staff were directly involved in planning and managing the November 2006 National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success attended by over 400 policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

Work has begun on designing and developing a set of "state policy profiles" to support various data and analysis needs in the states. The profiles will draw from various data sources, incorporate analytic tools, and will be adaptable for use in all states. These state profiles have two simple but ambitious goals: (1) help state policymakers gain an increased understanding of their state higher education environment and (2) enable them to use that information to identify priorities and work with various constituencies within their state to improve performance. Through the generous support of the Lumina Foundation for Education, new software from SAS Institute and a dedicated server have been purchased to support this activity.

The current contract with NCES supporting the Network was renewed in September 2006 for an additional five years. This support provides SHEEO the ability to remain active in state and national data issues that are of mutual concern to the association and the Department of Education.

## National Data Issues

National awareness continues to grow regarding the value of data and the impact data can have on policy development. SHEEO staff remains involved in several national initiatives that include a data focus.

### Student Unit Record Systems

Many of the questions about student progress and success can be addressed with unit record data that report on students' activity regardless of where and when they attend college. Continuing activity in this area demonstrate its continuing importance as well as the ongoing controversies involved in the use of student-level data. These activities include the March 2005 report of the SHEEO-sponsored National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education which encouraged the development of national student unit record systems to monitor performance. In a similar vein, Secretary of Education Spellings' Action Agenda calls for the development of a student unit record database as a tool for improving state and federal higher education policymaking. The recent NCHEMS publication ***Critical Connections: Linking states' unit record systems to track student progress*** describes the current status of state level K-12 and postsecondary data systems along with the benefits and challenges of these systems.

At the May 2006 SHEEO/NCES Data Conference in Washington DC, NCES commissioner Mark Schneider suggested a national student unit record system compiled from existing state databases as an alternative to a system administered by the federal government. Other voices have suggested the development of a “federated” consortium of state data systems to address the concerns. While no such alternative is currently being planned, the SHEEO Data and Information Committee has recommended investigating the ability of states to populate such a system.

#### Data Quality Campaign

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to:

1. Improve the collection, availability and use of high-quality K-12 education data; and
2. Implement state longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement.

The campaign’s strategies for these goals are (1) to provide tools and resources for states to use as they develop quality K-12 longitudinal data systems and (2) serve as a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among like-minded organizations. The campaign is managed by the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) and supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

SHEEO is a Founding Partner and active participant in the DQC; our participation was requested at the leadership level of the campaign to provide a focus on the connection between higher education and K-12 data systems. The 10 essential elements of longitudinal data systems recommended by the DQC report, ***Measuring What Matters*** include college readiness indicators and the ability to match K-12 and postsecondary students’ records.

#### P-20 Data Alignment

SHEEO Vice President Hans L’Orange and NCHEMS Vice President Peter Ewell collaborated on a DQC-sponsored policy brief ***P-16 Data Systems: An Alignment Status Report*** to highlight the status and issues of aligning K-12 and postsecondary data systems. The DQC is also convening a national meeting of thought leaders in August 2007 to help develop strategies to encourage and improve alignment. A number of similar meetings including the Gates Foundation-sponsored SHEEO P-16 Data Systems Workshop serve to highlight the growing interest in this topic. The continuing development of K-16 councils also demonstrates the continued concern with finding ways to improve the educational pipeline.

Interest also remains high in developing ways to align postsecondary data and labor data to further demonstrate the value provided to the states by higher education. Several states have developed relationships between the higher education community and their labor market information systems to analyze data of mutual interest. SHEEO continues to monitor and participate where possible in these initiatives.

## Federal Relations

*A Test of Leadership*, the report of the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education in September 2006, and Secretary of Education “Action Plan” to implement the most significant of its recommendations generated a substantial amount of activity among national higher education associations. Appendix A includes several SHEEO statements addressed to the Commission before its report was released and in response to its final report.

SHEEO members also served on two of the four negotiated rule-making committees appointed by the Secretary of Education, Stan Jones on the committee on federal grant programs, and Jim McCormick (joined by Marshall Hill as an alternate) on the negotiating committee on accreditation.

The negotiated rule-making process on accreditation, however, did not end in closure. The Congress has actively begun consideration of the Higher Education Act, and the Secretary of Education has decided, in response to Congressional requests, to defer rule-making activities until Congress takes action on reauthorization.

Since 2002 SHEEO has been actively engaged in continuing discussions on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. SHEEO’s various statements and staff articles on the topic were summarized in the 2006 Annual Report and can be found at [www.sheeo.org](http://www.sheeo.org).

SHEEO and many SHEEO members have also recently contacted members of Congress to urge the reauthorization of Title II A Subpart 3 of *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, which provides for the K-12 teacher professional development grant programs administered by State Agencies for Higher Education (SAHEs in the language of the statute.) These programs have been productive and an important link between higher education and K-12 teacher capacity building.

## P-16/Access and Diversity/Teacher Quality

In 2005, the National Governor’s Association (NGA) and Achieve, supported primarily by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, sponsored the National Education Summit on High Schools. The “Summit” established a five point *Action Agenda for Improving America’s High Schools*: restore value to the high school diploma; redesign high schools; give high school students the excellent teachers and principals they need; set goals, measure progress, and hold high schools and colleges accountable; and streamline and improve educational governance.

In November 2005, SHEEO received a grant from the Gates Foundation to work with postsecondary leaders in meeting our responsibilities in improving student preparation. The staff has worked closely with Achieve, NASH, and ACE in planning and implementing our work on this project. Its components include: 1) Preparing a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Student Success: Statewide P-16 Systems*, published in 2003; 2) Organizing a national “summit” of postsecondary leaders to articulate our role in improving high schools; and 3) Convening multi-state conferences of K-12 and higher education leaders to share experience and work on state initiatives. These activities focus primarily, but not exclusively, on states in the ADP (American Diploma Project) network and those receiving grants under the NGA Honor States initiative.

SHEEO made significant progress on its Gates work this year. The second edition of *Student Success*, entitled *More Student Success: Statewide P-20 Systems*, will be published this

summer. Last fall, SHEEO worked with NASH, ACE, and Achieve to organize the national higher education leadership summit, "Advancing College Readiness: Higher Education's Role in Improving America's High Schools"; the summit was held in Washington, DC on January 22, 2007. Leading up to the summit, SHEEO worked with its partner organizations to publish an opinion piece in the December 15, 2006 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "A Coordinated Effort to Prepare Students for College", as well as a special supplement to the Winter 2006 issue of the ACE publication, *The Presidency*, to build energy and engagement among postsecondary leaders around the high school reform agenda.

Conversations emerging from the Summit highlighted the need for practical work with the states in implementing the high school reform agenda. SHEEO organized and ran a workshop for state teams in June 2007, "Linking K-12 and Postsecondary Data Systems", and is planning a second multi-state workshop, to be held in October 2007, on increasing the effectiveness of P-16 Councils. SHEEO is also working with ACE and Achieve to develop a series of workshops to assist states developing and implementing a common Algebra II exam, and with the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) to plan a P-20 Leadership Meeting.

SHEEO also has continued its active membership in the *Pathways to College Network*, which seeks to increase the successful participation of underrepresented students in postsecondary education. *Pathways* focuses on policies, support services, and outreach programs that encourage adequate preparation for college, aspiration to attend, and confidence that college is affordable. SHEEO's *Pathways* participation during the past year included numerous conference calls and representation by *Pathways* staff in multiple SHEEO meetings, including the Gates P-16 data linkages workshop mentioned above, as well as the upcoming SHEEO Professional Development Conference.

Finally, the P-16 Professional Development Collaborative (started in 1994 under the name Eisenhower Higher Education Coordinators Network) includes the representatives from each state who administer the state agency of higher education (SAHE) professional development partnership grants under the "No Child Left Behind Act." Collectively, the Collaborative Members administer competitive grant programs awarding roughly \$70 million annually for K-12 teacher professional development.

The main function of the Collaborative is to provide a forum for soliciting assistance from colleagues or the U.S. Department of Education staff and to exchange information on the administration of the grant programs. SHEEO maintains a website with general information about the Collaborative, a directory of the state representatives and links to state, regional and national organizations and information. SHEEO also maintains the listservs through which members submit their queries and exchange information, and runs a yearly Data Survey to gather basic information at state and national levels regarding SAHE-administered teacher professional development grants.

In addition to ongoing information exchange services for the Collaborative members, SHEEO organized two meetings of the Collaborative in the past year, first in conjunction with the Professional Development Conference in August 2005 and then in Washington, DC in April 2006. An additional meeting has been organized in conjunction with the August 2006 Professional Development Conference in Chicago. Within the framework of the upcoming reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, SHEEO has worked with the Collaborative to prepare a letter to Congress stressing the importance of continuing the SAHE grants program. A copy of this letter is available in Appendix A of the annual report.

## Higher Education Accountability / Access and Excellence Project

The movement toward greater accountability in higher education continues to gain strength, with SHEEO contributing in a number of important ways. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, during the past year the Association participated actively in the ongoing national dialogue on accountability. We also continue to improve our own data and analysis capabilities in order to provide additional comparative data and performance indicators to states. And we provide a wide range of professional development opportunities and other services to SHEEO members related to components of the broader accountability agenda. Much of this work has been undertaken as part of the ongoing Access and Excellence Initiative and other grant-funded projects.

At the state level, several states and SHEEO members have launched new accountability initiatives, while many others continue to improve their state-level reports and other components of well-established accountability systems. Within states as well as for the Association, accountability raises and encompasses a broad range of activities, including the following:

- The 2005 report of SHEEO-sponsored National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, *Accountability for Better Results*, continues to be an important, widely-used document for presentations, communications, and outreach. Over 5,000 copies have been printed and continue to be used with a range of state and national policy audiences, including state boards, legislative committees, institutional leaders and associations, community leaders, and public media.
- The SHEEO President and senior staff continue to use the report along with other SHEEO materials in our interactions and working relationships with national higher education associations, accrediting organizations, state-level roundtables and policy summits, legislative leaders and staff, the education writers' association, and in small group meetings with policy leaders at the state and national level.
- SHEEO organized policy workshops and seminars for SHEEO agency staff and others on core components of accountability systems, including the development and use of linked K-12 / higher education data systems, the assessment of college learning outcomes, and workforce and economic development outcomes. A follow-up learning assessment workshop will be held in conjunction with the SHEEO Profession Development Conference in Boston during August 2007.
- In May 2007, SHEEO collaborated with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) to organize a two-day workshop on developing and leading a state policy agenda for higher education. Teams of board leaders and the chief executive from 14 states participated, with a second workshop scheduled for October 14-16, 2007. Both workshops are supported through a Ford Foundation grant.

Through these and other activities, improving accountability in higher education remains a central concern and focal point for SHEEO. These efforts will continue with the direction and support of both the SHEEO Executive Committee and the SHEEO Accountability Committee. SHEEO staff worked with the Accountability Committee, chaired in 2007 by Susan Heegaard (Minnesota), to prepare a report for discussion at the 2007 Business Meeting. During the coming year, staff will prepare proposals for grant renewals and additional external funding from the Lumina Foundation and other sources to support these activities.

## **Financial Policy**

This year SHEEO published the fourth edition of *State Higher Education Finance, Fiscal Year 2006* (SHEF) early in March. A news release and executive summary of the SHEF report were distributed to education writers around the country, and it was covered by the Associated Press and a wide variety of national and local media. As SHEF becomes more visible, it is increasingly cited and being used to improve the understanding of state and national trends in higher education finance.

In June, 1000 copies of *State Higher Education Finance, Fiscal Year 2006* were printed and distributed to SHEEO agencies, state budget officers, and legislative fiscal staff in every state.

## **Conclusion**

It is appropriate for the SHEEO staff to conclude its annual report with thanks, acknowledgements, and announcements. First, thanks to the members of the association and especially the members of various committees who contributed time and counsel to the work described in this report. This year SHEEO committees were asked to contribute more to association activities, and they responded superbly.

In November 2006, Matt Gianneschi joined the SHEEO staff as a Senior Policy Analyst, and joined Takeshi Yanagiura in assuming primary responsibility for producing SHEF, FY 2006. At the end of January, 2007, newly elected Governor Bill Ritter of Colorado asked Matt to become his senior advisor for education, and Matt ended his brief, but highly productive career at SHEEO. In May, Kelli Parmley succeeded Matt as Senior Policy Analyst. Kelli came to SHEEO from Northern Colorado University and previously from SUNY-New Paltz, where she held senior positions in institutional research and budgeting.

At the end of May, Dianne Peterson, after 12 years of dedicated service to SHEEO resigned to spend more time with her family, and especially new grandchildren. As the longest-serving SHEEO staff member, Dianne's conscientious and highly professional service has been well-known in the SHEEO community. Effective July 1, Dianne has been succeeded by Natalie Mischler, as Assistant to the SHEEO/NCES Network Director. Natalie joins SHEEO, like Kelli Parmley, after recently moving to Colorado from upstate New York.