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Dr. Stephen said NCHEMS was an outstanding organization that has served the public good for decades. If NCHEMS claimed that the weights provided were the best synthesis of the four states, that was undoubtedly true.

Regarding the data provided by the State of Texas, Dr. Stephen pointed out that the weights at every level of the engineering discipline rose dramatically over the past four years; although not as dramatically as in the optometry discipline. He noted that the costs underlying the weights were driven by faculty salaries. He explained that if there was a policy decision by the higher education system in Texas to build its STEM capacity, funding for new faculty and new facilities would be allocated to that end. That policy decision would be embodied in the weights assigned to those discipline clusters for 2011. The weights showed a measurement of cost, but that cost also reflected Texas' policy choices, rather than simply the market for engineers. He commented that engineering programs were very expensive.

Dr. Stephen said the NCHEMS provided Nevada with cost-informed weights that embodied both the costs and the policies of the states from which they were derived. He pointed that out to address Chairman Horsford's comment that the policy objectives in the state should be met through the base as well as through the performance pool. Dr. Stephen agreed with Mrs. Gansert's suggestion to increase the size of funding in the performance pool, because that was where the economic development policies resided. He said it must be acknowledged that there is a mix of policy and cost in the base formula.

Chairman Horsford agreed, and noted either approach was better than the current formula. He said, he was not comfortable using the NCHEMS assumptions without more information as to the cost and the policy considerations underlying the weights. He did not agree with applying the weights developed by other states without cost study information that was specific to Nevada. He agreed that the weights for Texas were specific to Texas, but noted the information behind the weights was data driven.

Chairman Horsford said he had asked at a prior meeting for a list of the degree programs within the weighted categories of the NSHE proposal. He noted there were some degree programs in the Texas model, such as teacher education, that were not included in the NSHE proposal. He pointed out that Nevada was ranked at the bottom of the states for K-12 education, there was ongoing talk about the need for qualified teachers and educational leaders, yet there was no extra weight given to that discipline in the NSHE proposal. He said discussion was needed to develop recommendations as to what part of the weights should be policy driven rather than cost informed.