

Minutes are intended to note: (a) the date, time, and place of the meeting; (b) those members of the public body who were present and those who were absent; and (c) the substance of all matters proposed, discussed and/or action was taken on. Minutes are not intended to be a verbatim report of a meeting. An audio recording of the meeting is available for inspection by any member of the public interested in a verbatim report of the meeting.

These minutes are not final until approved by the Committee at a future meeting.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE TRAINING & PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
(AB 450 - Chapter 246, Statutes of Nevada, 2021)

Nevada System of Higher Education
Board Room
4300 South Maryland Parkway
Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Video Conference Connection from the Meeting Site to:
System Administration, Reno
2601 Enterprise Road, Conference Room
and
Great Basin College, Elko
1500 College Parkway, Berg Hall Conference Room

Call to Order: Ms. Crystal Abba, serving as the Committee's Co-Chair, called the meeting of the Community College Workforce Training & Programs Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 PM.

Members Present:

Ms. Crystal Abba, Co-Chair
Ms. Stacey Bostwick
Ms. Myisha Boyce
Ms. Jhone Ebert
Mr. Kurt Thigpen
Mr. Chris Trolson
Mr. Ryan Woodward

Members absent were Co-Chair Derrick Hill and Dr. Federico Zaragoza.

Also in attendance were Daniel H. Stewart, NV Governor's Office, NSHE Vice Chancellor Constance Brooks, NSHE Deputy General Counsel Tina Russom, NSHE Acting Vice Chancellor Renée Davis and NSHE Research Analyst José Quiroga.

1. Information Only – Public Comment:

Mr. Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance, said the primary grant of federal funds is a good start toward making workforce training programs affordable at our community colleges. He said he believes a pilot scholarship program is an appropriate direction, as many students are struggling financially, juggling school, work, and family responsibilities. He noted when considering a new program, it is important to keep in mind how confusing it can be for students to wade through the various requirements of so many different programs, such as scholarships, state opportunity grants, Pell grants, and student loans. Requirements can include GPA, credit load, service load, and counseling requirements. Missing one requirement in one program can cascade into ineligibility with other programs, so assessment of a new pilot program should

include making sure it will fit with existing programs and not cause harm or conflicts between them. He further stated that a pilot program for students does not create or expand the educational programs right away; that happens only with formula funding through student credit hours and with a two-year or more delay. Mr. Ervin reiterated support for the proposal as a good step in the right direction and expressed appreciation for the Committee's work.

Member Bostwick arrived at the meeting

Mr. Peter Grema, UNLV student, stated he has studied higher education and has been following this committee since its inception, so he is familiar with the intent of the Committee. He noted that Governor Sisolak asked the legislature to work with the Nevada System of Higher Education over the next two years to develop a framework for traditional community colleges to better prepare Nevadans for the workforce. Mr. Grema said he feels the Committee has hardly addressed the issue of governance of Nevada community colleges. He added that the web page for the Committee states the purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the national structure of funding but that is not on the agenda. He hopes that in the limited time the Committee has left to meet, it will consider structures in funding and look at what other states are doing in terms of funding formulas and what student outcomes are in relation to the money spent on our community colleges. He said the \$5 million is only a short-term grant for students over the next two years with little accountability or sustainability. While it's good that the Committee is trying to make college more affordable, the money should be used to invest for long-term outcomes for student success. Mr. Grema urged the Committee to work with the Governor's Economic Development team to improve opportunities for students.

2. For Possible Action – Consideration of April Meeting Minutes:

Member Thigpen moved approval of the minutes. Member Trolson seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion and the minutes were approved by all members.

3. Discussion Only – Report from the Co-Chairs:

Co-Chair Crystal Abba noted that Co-Chair Derrick Hill could not attend this meeting. She pointed out that there is only one committee meeting left. She said it's truly fortunate that we were given the incredible opportunity of the \$5 million dollar grant for the purpose of developing or expanding free college which will be discussed further today. Since the focus of the next meeting will be a work session, she went back through the minutes to review the various areas of discussion and comments from past meetings. She stated her office will be formulating a formal work session document which will put into writing all of the recommendations which will be brought back to the Committee at its June meeting for a formal vote. She asked the members to email her if there are other items they would like added to the final agenda and so they can be included in the work session document.

Co-Chair Abba then outlined the areas of recommendation coming forth for June's meeting. She reminded the Committee that they have been directed by the Governor's office to establish a recommendation concerning the expansion of free college, so one of the recommendations being brought forward at the work session will be to consider the Workforce Incentive Grant which will be presented at this meeting under agenda

item four. Co-Chair Abba noted one of the challenges observed by the community college presidents is the issue of limited capacity with some of the programs. To that end, through the biennial budget process her team will be recommending to the Board of Regents, as part of their annual budget priorities, the creation of a Workforce Investment Fund, the details of which will be provided to the Committee at June's work session. Co-Chair Abba said she would like the Committee to consider a letter of support to the Board of Regents for the Workforce Investment Fund, because that would allow the community colleges to build capacity within those programs. In addition, there is about a million dollars in the WINN fund. She noted the Workforce Incentive Program should be up and running by spring of 2023, so this would give the community colleges the opportunity to build capacity now in preparation for spring of 2023. She also asked the Committee to consider a letter of support that the community colleges could utilize and add to any applications they have for the WINN fund.

Co-Chair Abba referred to agenda item four regarding a funding formula study. She reminded the Committee that various presidents have expressed concerns about the funding formula and the adequacy of that distribution, for community colleges in particular. She noted the Committee has been unable to delve into this issue or make a specific recommendation but in independent conversations with the community college presidents it was brought up that by tweaking one lever of the funding formula there may be unintended negative consequence for the community colleges. However, Co-Chair Abba believes that since the formula has been in place for over a decade, that it is an appropriate time to consider a holistic approach through a funding formula study. To that end, she recommended the Committee consider a letter of support to the legislature supporting a legislative BDR that would establish a funding formula study.

Lastly, Co-Chair Abba recommended the Committee consider a general letter of support to the Interim Finance Committee supporting funding for the Workforce Incentive Grant. She said she has discussed with Daniel Stewart, from the Governor's office, the challenges with ARPA funding in formulating this grant proposal in such a way that it works within the framework of the requirements and the limitations of ARPA. She said it would make sense for the Committee to consider a letter of support to the IFC for that purpose.

Co-Chair Abba stated that while she sees these five general areas as positive outcomes or recommendations from the Committee, she encourages the members to share any other thoughts they may have via e-mail or an offline conversation. She suggested that, while the Committee's work is coming to an end, any items that were outlined for AB450 that were not dealt with can be deferred to the Board of Regents' Workforce Committee for further consideration. She assured the Committee that this is a good avenue to continue these discussions.

4. Discussion Only – Workforce Incentive Grant:

Co-Chair Abba pointed out a typo on the agenda for this item, the correct name is the Workforce Incentive Grant (WIG). She introduced two members of her team, Acting Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and Community Colleges Renée Davis, and NSHE Research Analyst José Quiroga. She explained their responsibilities include jointly overseeing the three state-supported financial aid programs, including the Millennium Scholarship, and acting as liaisons with the Treasurer's office. They are keenly involved in data and all things policy-related to the Millennium Scholarship,

the Silver State Opportunity Grant, and the Nevada Promise program. She stated that Ms. Davis played a significant role in the development of the Nevada Promise program which is the newest program of the three. Co-Chair Abba also commended Ms. Davis for playing a key role in the development of the legislation and implementation of the Silver State Opportunity Grant (SSOG). She added that Ms. Davis and Mr. Quiroga oversee the Nevada Promise program in terms of supporting the community colleges and answering policy questions, as well as ensuring the various aspects of the programs are in alignment with provisions of the statute.

Ms. Davis began by stating she will be taking a deep dive into the Workforce Incentive Grant proposal, along with Mr. Quiroga who has been instrumental in developing the proposal. She noted a few changes have been made since the high-level presentation the Committee received on April 13, as her team has been trying to make sure the funding from ARPA is a good fit for this program. These changes, based on ARPA requirements, will be discussed in detail at this meeting, as well as a slight change to the timeline. She reported the pilot will be starting one semester later due to the need to go to IFC in August for the funds for the program.

Mr. Quiroga gave a brief outline of the three statewide financial aid programs to set the context of current statewide financial aid in Nevada. He said the largest program is the Guinn Millennium Scholarship program, funded by a tobacco settlement and the State General Fund. It is a merit program that targets a population of recent high school graduates who are high achieving, with an eligibility period of six years after high school graduation, with some exceptions. He noted it requires nine credits of enrollment at the community colleges and has a maximum award amount of \$1,200 per semester or \$2,400 per year at the community colleges and a cap of \$10,000 that can be used by the student over those six years.

Mr. Quiroga then explained the perimeters of the Silver State Opportunity Grant, a need-based program that targets students with high financial need that are college-ready in math and English. There is no time or age limit, but statutorily there is an enrollment requirement of a minimum of 12 credits with those taking 15 credits or more being given a priority. He noted this is funded by State General Funds through the NSHE state-funded budget. He additionally noted that because these are limited funds, the program has only been able to award students at 15 credits or above, up to this point. The award amount for the SSOG is up to \$5,500 per year.

Mr. Quiroga described the third resource, the Nevada Promise Scholarship, as neither a need-based nor a merit-based scholarship but instead is a little bit of both. Nevada Promise seeks to pay for students' mandatory registration fees and other mandatory fees not covered by state financial aid or federal financial aid. The target population is recent high school graduates but requires that during the students' senior year of high school they must submit a separate application for the program, complete volunteer hours, and meet with a mentor. The eligibility window for Nevada Promise is three years. It has an enrollment requirement of 12 credits per semester but there is no limit or aggregate cap to the award amount. He added the funding for the program comes through the State General Fund via the Treasurer's office.

Mr. Quiroga said that while looking at the three programs, his team observed there is a need for statewide financial aid that targets or includes older students that are not recent Nevada high school graduates, as well as students who are unable to enroll full

time and should be one that targets critical workforce programs such as nursing, teaching, and other workforce development areas.

Ms. Davis pointed out that the WIG program is specifically and deliberately designed for students attending Nevada community colleges. This is in line with the workforce goal for our state to support our community colleges and the goal expressed by the Governor. She reminded the Committee of the April presentation where there was a brief discussion of the breakdown of aid to students at our institutions across the state, including the amount of state financial aid that goes to students at the universities versus what goes to students at the community colleges. It was reported that only 23 percent of aid dollars go to the community colleges, even though community colleges enroll 53 percent of students across the state. This disparity is one of the reasons the Silver State Opportunity Grant program is targeted the way it is. The WIG program is another step in that direction, trying to level the playing field and support our community college students as best we can with our available resources.

Ms. Davis explained to be eligible for the Workforce Incentive Grant, a student would need to be enrolled in a program of study, which would be a degree or certificate for an eligible, in-demand occupation as shown in Appendix A for this agenda item. She reminded the Committee of the need to support part-time students with state financial aid, which is the reason the proposed enrollment requirement for WIG was set at six credits. Federal aid award requirements list half-time enrollment as six to 8.5 credits: three-quarters as nine to 11.5 credits, and full-time as 12 credits and above. Ms. Davis emphasized the need to not only serve part-time students, but also to have an eye toward degree completion. She emphasized the importance of reporting on student progress and completion at the end of the pilot program. Data shows that students starting at a higher credit level have a better success rate, but all NSHE campuses are working hard to support part-time students to the point where they have the same success rates as students taking more credits. She said six credits is about two classes per semester.

Ms. Davis further explained that a student needs to be classified as a resident for tuition purposes to be eligible for the grant, in alliance with existing policies for students. So, when a student registers or applies for admission the first time, if it's determined they are a resident, they only pay registration fees and not out of state tuition. If an existing student applies for WIG, they must come in making satisfactory academic progress according to federal guidelines, which is the federal progress requirement in Title IV. This means that a student must have at least a 2.0 GPA and complete roughly 67 percent of the classes they're enrolled in each semester. She said every effort was made to align the program guidelines with these existing standard requirements, with an eye toward what would be the simplest to explain to students and what would be a measure of progress to be consistent for all programs. There is also a requirement that a student must not have previously earned a bachelor's degree to keep the focus on students who will benefit the most from a chance to earn a credential and get into the workforce. The most important requirement is completing the typical Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), but there is not any extra application the student needs to fill out. Eligibility is assessed by filling out the FAFSA and being enrolled in a qualifying program. Ms. Davis pointed out that not having an extra application will help with marketing but since it's a pilot program it will take time to build name recognition and for people to understand the program.

Ms. Davis noted that one change since the April presentation is the use of Pell eligibility as a determination for funding. Also, options were added for DACA students since they are not Pell eligible. DACA students would still be required to fill out the FAFSA but can qualify if they are at or below the 200 percent poverty guideline set by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. Her team is developing a new non-FAFSA filer application for students who can't fill out the FAFSA so they will have a way to demonstrate need for the purpose of receiving financial aid. This same form will be available for the WIG pilot program, the Silver State Opportunity Grant, and for use by some NSHE institutions for use in their institutional aid. Ms. Davis remarked that this is a win-win and is good timing because it won't apply to the intended first semester of WIG grant funding, but instead will be for the next full year when everything is in place.

Member Bostwick asked if there is an aim toward a particular eligibility bucket in the ARPA funds. Neither Ms. Davis nor Mr. Quiroga could recall the exact wording for the category but said students who were Pell eligible are presumed under ARPA to be affected by the COVID pandemic, so that was the driving category. Member Bostwick asked if it was the assistance to low-income households category or perhaps the assistance to unemployed/underemployed workers. Ms. Davis said they went with the low-income category. Pell eligibility is something very simple and concrete and does not require the student to have to prove anything regarding employment or any NSHE interface with DETR. Pell eligibility will be something quite simple to determine, even for DACA and undocumented students once the non-FAFSA filer form is implemented, trying to make it as clear and simple as possible to students.

Member Thigpen asked if there is any feedback yet on this point or any data to show how many students are anticipated to qualify or apply for this grant. He also asked if it is anticipated that the funds could dry out before 2024 or 2025. Ms. Davis replied that it's hard to estimate for a new financial aid program wherein you're expecting students to fill out the FAFSA who may not have filled out the FAFSA before. She said we can only go back and look historically at financial aid filers in the past but those financial aid filers may not have been in the programs we're trying to target now. She added that an attempt was made but abandoned as it was felt the estimate would not have much credibility.

Regarding the question of funds drying up, Ms. Davis said the plan is to not make the whole amount available when the pilot starts in the spring in order to make the next full academic year the first big year of the program. The hope is to learn a lot in the spring, to figure out what kind of need is out there and use that to determine how to move forward. It is not necessarily expected to fund all eligible students, but that's often the case with pilots and new financial aid programs. Ms. Davis gave the example of the Silver State Opportunity Grant (SSOG) where they started with \$2.5 million a year for the biennium, so a total of \$5 million, and were able to then assess students who were eligible. Once the program was going, her team was able to use the data to demonstrate that the available funds weren't sufficient to fund all eligible students and the legislature was able to double the amount to \$5 million for the first biennium and \$5 million per year after that. She said it still doesn't quite cover all eligible students, but it is very close.

Co-Chair Abba added that the best-case scenario is to run out of funds as was the case with the SSOG where the funds only covered about 55 percent of eligible students. This showed how much demand there is here that went unmet, which made for a convincing argument with the legislature for including the funding in our base

budget which means we don't have to go back every legislative session to ask for money as now the funding is doubled and built into the base. The issue with WIG is trying to figure out what is the appropriate dollar amount to set aside for that first semester, spring of 2023, so that there is enough to then serve students in a full, second academic year. Co-Chair Abba stressed the importance of trying to find the right balance of making sure the program is permissible under often less-than-friendly federal provisions, and more importantly, making sure there is adequate data that shows to the state that we have a return on investment. This goes back to the issue of the credit load as there are challenges when you go below 12 credits. She cited data that was used for NSHE's 15-to-Finish campaign several years ago that compares graduation rates for students at two-year institutions based on credit load. While it's older data, it's important to note there was a 22.6 percent graduate rate for students that were in at least 15 credits in their initial term compared to 2.6 percent for those in less than 12 credits. She said the hope is to have enough data after the first full academic year of the program to show a persistence and retention rate from fall to spring to show the legislature a reasonable return on investment.

Member Thigpen asked if the award amounts listed in the proposal would cover 100 percent of the programs listed or a partial amount as he is wondering if a student can really attend completely for free. Ms. Davis gave the example of the nursing program where in addition to the registration fees there are additional fees because it's a more costly program. In that case the listed amounts alone would not cover the entire nursing program cost, but it would cover all the registration fees for any eligible program for however many credits. For example, the \$1000 for six to 8.5 credits would cover the registration fees. She said to think of the WIG as part of the overall financial aid package, especially since it targets Pell eligible students, as it will go along with the Pell grant award of about \$1700 dollars. So, a half-time student getting the Pell grant would have approximately another \$1700 dollars or so on top of the \$1000 for the semester from the WIG and between the two, everything would be covered, with hopefully some extra left over. She noted it will vary from program to program and some of the programs listed don't have any additional fees, so the student may actually get a small amount back that they could apply toward books, supplies, or even living expenses. So, while it's not going to cover 100 percent of the most expensive programs, the WIG along with Pell grant is going to put the students in good shape. Another positive is the WIG program will bring in first-generation and adult students who really haven't thought about going to college and the community colleges will help them find out about other opportunities as well, such as institutional scholarships. The hope is that, in addition to Pell and the WIG that there will be other aid that can be combined to give students even more support, because the ultimate goal is to cover students' entire need so their time can be freed up to study.

Member Boyce said she appreciates the information provided because she had concerns around the six-credit limit, but that is the make-up of part-time learners. Looking at data from CSUN, she shared that 80 percent of part-time students are 25 years and older with over 70 percent being minority students. She said she sees this as an opportunity to really take a stand in addressing some of the systemic barriers that are not allowing these groups to graduate. Looking at the previously noted two percent graduation rate for half-time students it is important to also get behind future studies to see how we can move the needle for these students to be successful.

Co-Chair Abba agreed and pointed to the progress of the past decade in creating need-based programs as proof that while we may not be able to solve the issues raised

by Member Boyce next year or the year after, we are headed in that direction. Raising these issues provides an opportunity to begin the dialogue to solve them.

Ms. Davis added that there will be students who may attend half-time one semester and three-quarter time in another, but they are not stuck at a certain level based on how they started, so amounts can be adjusted accordingly as described on page three of the proposal.

Mr. Quiroga explained that he and a student ombudsman identified the occupation areas covered by WIG by doing a deep dive into the areas listed by the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation, matching them to the degrees and certificates offered at each institution. The in-demand occupations were broken down by state and region, so they tried to match degree programs from institutions to both the state needs and to the regional needs of the communities they serve. He noted their initial draft of in-demand areas was sent to the community colleges to ensure the Governor's list of high-need, in-demand areas matched what the community colleges were finding as well. Mr. Quiroga urged the Committee members to review Appendix A and said that in the interest of time, he would not take them through all 40 occupations but would highlight one or two to explain the process used to come up with these areas.

Mr. Quiroga noted the first occupation listed in Appendix A is that of registered nurses, licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses at the College of Southern Nevada. He explained that at CSN, nursing and K-12 education are areas of focus by the Governor's office because they're needed across the state. All four of the community colleges have registered nursing programs, but CSN has practical nursing which is unique in the state and needed across the state. He referred to the list for Great Basin College, where the second occupation listed is K-12 teachers, where there is a statewide need and GBC is the only community college in the state that has a bachelor's degree program, which is needed for licensure in teaching K-12. It is unique to the GBC list because, while other community colleges may have the first two years of a degree, WIG is targeting programs that can be completed at the community college. He noted GBC also has an industrial machinery mechanic program which is unique to the community's need for industrial millwright technology associate degrees and certificates. He pointed to Logistics is an area unique to Truckee Meadows Community College and that matches many of the in-demand occupations throughout the state. On the list for Western Nevada College, Mr. Quiroga highlighted a program for construction managers and supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers. He said although it is not unique to WNC, the credentials are stackable, so a student can earn skill certificates that will stack onto another as they work toward their final goal which increases employability. He stated that WIG would provide funding for the student in all of these areas and, as Co-Chair Abba noted, the Committee can request funding for capacity building of these programs.

Member Jhone Ebert stated that Nevada is in crisis across the entire state with regard to a shortage of K-12 teachers but wonders why early childhood education and infant childhood education are not included for the other institutions. Mr. Quiroga replied that while those are areas that are in demand across the state, they weren't included because K-12 education is higher on the in-demand list that they reviewed. He added that there is a need statewide and as the list is revised annually, those early education areas could potentially be added in the future. Member Ebert strongly recommended that the list be revisited in that area because people that engage in early childhood

education tend to become future elementary educators and we are really missing the mark by not having those included for other institutions.

Moving on to the topic of continuing eligibility, Mr. Quiroga explained that once a student has received WIG funding for the semester they're monitored for academic progress. If a student starts meeting academic progress, they're fine but if they fall behind the requirement, they can appeal through the financial aid office and if approved, they can get WIG funding again. If denied, they can take enrollment on their own without WIG funding and regain funding if they acquire the required GPA. This is consistent with other financial aid programs including the SSOG

Member Bostwick said she understands the need to monitor eligibility but is concerned about sustainability of the program if evaluating eligibility from semester to semester and she finds it disconcerting that students are not guaranteed funds for any extended period of time. She feels it's not going to help completion rates if we pull the rug out from under eligible students in the middle of their program when the money is gone. She said she believes some guarantee or continuity is needed for students in terms of this funding. Mr. Quiroga clarified that it would only be guaranteed for one semester that first semester of the program in spring of 2023, but it will be guaranteed for the entire academic year for fall 2023 and spring 2024, as long as the student maintains satisfactory academic progress. Co-Chair Abba added that there is a guarantee when we get to the full academic year, for fall and spring, so for example, Jane Doe would be awarded the full year, but if she dropped out in the spring then the funds reserved for her would be put back to the fund. She clarified that there would not be a scenario where a student gets WIG in the fall but doesn't get it in the spring. The precedent was set with the SSOG and is this is the standard for many of these programs.

Member Bostwick asked that since defined credit costs are known, once a student declares a program, why would that not be assigned as a lump sum and set aside for the student, assuming they maintain compliance, versus bringing it back on an annual basis with the idea that maybe it will be there, maybe it won't. She noted the vast barriers students face and she is not sure that it's the right thing to make them revisit that, like a revolving door. Ms. Davis explained it is difficult when you don't have funding for all eligible students to set aside so much money. Obviously the intent is to ensure funds for those who are eligible but it makes it incredibly difficult to manage funds from one year to the next if you have to set aside so much that you can't award because you're holding aside pots of money and can't incentivize other students to enroll, even though funds will be refunded to the program for those students that drop out or become ineligible. She emphasized that it is a difficult decision when designing a program, but once we get students enrolled in their initial period, we'll be able to communicate with them and get them in the groove of applying for financial aid and improve their chances of returning. She said the hope is that they will be more timely getting that second year FAFSA filed and will give them a better likelihood of being awarded. She agreed it is difficult and we may have to tweak some of these things as we go and as we see what the interest is and in which programs. She stated this is something her team will keep an eye on for the future as it is a pilot program.

Member Bostwick stated that with the ARPA money, there is a finite end date so you can clearly define a cost, for example, if someone has declared a Bachelor of Science in nursing and they're just beginning, you can clearly articulate the cost because you know what the end date is. It doesn't matter if they're done with the program, the money must stop at that point, so that is something to consider.

Regarding the timeline, Mr. Quiroga stated the initial awards are planned for spring 2023. He explained this was moved back a semester because of the need to go to the Interim Finance Committee in August of this year, but the silver lining is the delay will allow more time for marketing to students and recruiting students to these programs. It will allow time for the institutions to go out into their communities to tell students about the program and set it up prior to disbursement. Awards will continue for the academic year fall 2023 and spring 2024 and if there is funding available it could go into fall 2024 due to the way funds can be spent across institutions. We know that the College of Southern Nevada, being the largest institution, will have the most funding, then Truckee Meadows Community College and potentially GBC and WNC depending on their enrollment. For messaging and marketing of this program, the NSHE System office will maintain a general marketing website for external stakeholders to be able to learn what the program is about, and it will list the program contacts at the community colleges. The targeted messaging and marketing to students will be done by the institutions in their communities, as they are already talking with students about their financial aid opportunities and encouraging them to fill out the FAFSA. It's important because financial aid advisors are urging students to fill out the FAFSA, regardless of whether or not they know about WIG, because they could potentially be eligible. The NSHE System office will work with the institutions to make sure certain aspects of the messaging is consistent across the state. Mr. Quiroga thanked the Committee for their work and support of this critical program and noted he and Ms. Davis will continue to be available for questions.

Member Ryan Woodward said he is trying to understand how many people this will affect and the return on investment. He asked if it is known how much of the grant is going to be spent on administration and was told zero dollars. He asked if there is any idea yet what the general pool might be of eligible people. Ms. Davis replied that it is not yet known, it depends on how good of a job is done on marketing and getting the word out. We would like to know who all is in those programs, but we don't know who might now fill out the FAFSA or even who might enroll in one of these eligible programs. The intent of the program is to get students in. She said her team compiled estimates for the SSOG, but they had a more finite data set than for this, so it's wide open and there are too many variables with this to get an estimate. She said unfortunately, the expectation is that not all eligible students will be funded, but after the first spring semester, her team will be able to do some projections and figure out what it's looking like at that point. For example, if there is a certain percentage increase, what will the next year look like and that will help to communicate the needs of the state for this type of program. She noted there are other things that could increase or decrease, such as the number of eligible occupations.

Co-Chair Abba added that it is really a moving target and one of the challenges is that historical data is not a crystal ball. We can look at historical data for all the community colleges and see who was in these programs, but students in those programs may or may not have filled out the FAFSA, and both of those elements are needed. She pointed out that when you focus on an estimate based solely on historical data, you miss the point of the program, which is to incentivize people to enroll in the institution. She emphasized the point is to get to those students who aren't enrolled right now and to those students who are enrolled but haven't filled out the FAFSA who may be eligible. We want to make sure we spend all of this money, and it would be great to have more students than we can serve because it makes a compelling argument to the state.

Member Ryan Woodward said he wonders how to engage students when this is just a one-time deal and then it goes away. He also asked how future funding needs will be projected. Co-Chair Abba replied that her team will look at the first cohort of students and the key is strong return on investment to the state because that resonates with all parties north and south. If it can be shown that students who received the award graduated at a higher rate, that's gold, and that's exactly what was done with the SSOG because the first cohort of students that went through graduated at around 80 percent and we were able to show that. Part of the challenge is that now we'll have four state-supported financial aid programs, and we must look at all the elements of these programs to find out where are we putting the money that has the best "bang for the buck." We need to make sure those dollars are going to the students that need it the most and those are very difficult conversations to have.

Co-Chair Abba said she believes that real progress has been made since the first program, the Millennium Scholarship, was created in 1999 because we've improved in tracking that return on investment and we've gotten better at making arguments on which populations need to be served. When designing WIG, we looked at the three existing financial aid programs to decide what populations aren't being served because that gets to Member Boyce's earlier point that there are significant populations that aren't being served. She added that there are students in need who are not accessing these programs, not necessarily because they're not completing the FAFSA, but because of other program requirements. All of this means we must make difficult decisions in terms of what those eligibility requirements are, which will ultimately cut some students out, but you must make that determination and slowly build on the argument. We built on the argument for over a decade and went from one state-supported financial aid program to three. She stated it is unknown if this can be sustained over time, but we do know that we're going to have more data than we've ever had before and we're going to be able to make better educated decisions in terms of serving the students that need it most.

Member Boyce stated the importance of accountability and tracking. She would like to see, in the final iteration of this plan, some type of metrics showing the people that are participating, who it's working for and not working for. She stated the need to really assess the data for these populations and what type of supports might be needed to ensure everyone is successful. Co-Chair Abba replied oversight will include a reporting requirement and will be formalized to the greatest extent possible.

Member Bostwick asked if there was consideration for the capacity of the programs listed in the appendix considering the possibility of increased enrollment in those programs. Co-Chair Abba replied that the answer is both "yes" and "no" as there are programs already bucking up against capacity. The irony is in some of the programs where there is greatest demand like nursing. One of the recommendations in the work session document is for this committee to support a recommendation that will go to the Board of Regents for NSHE's biennial budget request for a Workforce Investment Fund that will allow institutions to apply to that fund to access funding to increase capacity. In addition, we want to frame the Workforce Investment Fund so that institutions can utilize those funds to also invest in student services that will help these students, because as you bring more students into the institution, many of the low-income students need wrap-around services to succeed, such as tutoring and things of that nature. She noted that by the time we get to 2023, we'll be in the middle

of a legislative session and if we get funding for the Workforce Investment Fund, we will be able to address some of those capacity concerns.

Member Bostwick said she is concerned about the requirements around prior bachelor's degrees and the residency requirement and part of her concern comes from the idea of just who ARPA is meant to serve. It is designed as a response to those impacted by the pandemic. There are individuals whom the DMV considers residents of Nevada that we, within NSHE, are not considering residents. She added that considering the prevalence of skill certificates being offered at the community college level, this sends the wrong message to someone who received a bachelor's degree in an area of contraction or recession and who can't find a job or gainful employment, and for example, they need a welding certificate. Co-Chair Abba replied that residency for the purpose of tuition is not residency in the traditional sense, its residency for tuition purposes and she would be happy to go into more detail offline. Regarding the issue with the bachelor's degree, because it is a pilot program, tough decisions had to be made between that a student who already has a degree versus the student who doesn't, because ultimately, we're trying to increase degree attainment in the state. That student who already has a bachelor's degree is already counted in the statewide student attainment number, but if we can reach the student that doesn't have a degree, we're moving two needles – we're moving the needle in terms of making them workforce eligible and we're moving the needle on the percent of the population that has a bachelor's degree. This was not an easy choice but it the choice made for the purpose of the pilot program. She added that it doesn't mean that once we get through the pilot we can't revise it, but again, if we can show that we impacted the college attainment rate it improves the return-on-investment argument.

Member Bostwick asked to clarify if the focus is workforce training or education attainment. She said if the design is simply to create a mechanism for it to be affordable for more people, then she thinks it meets that objective, but if the idea is to incentivize enrollment in in-demand occupations so that people impacted by the pandemic can regain full employment then she thinks it may be missing the mark. She also asked if NSHE has developed talking points about the program for the Committee members, should they receive questions about the proposal. Ms. Davis replied that her team would be happy to do so in preparation for the next meeting.

Regarding marketing being left up to the institutions, Member Kurt Thigpen asked if the community colleges have communicated any concerns about added staffing needs or marketing costs that might be incurred with having to promote the program and if any of the funds can go toward alleviating this. Ms. Davis replied that NSHE is used to doing things on a shoestring budget, but ideally, funds to help administer and market the program would be ideal, but we have a history of trying to get as many of the dollars as possible to the students, which usually means all of the dollars, so our institutions unfortunately absorb some of that. In terms of marketing for financial aid programs, it really comes down to that one-on-one contact with the students during the recruiting and outreach process and that's also the beauty of the whole FAFSA process which is a student applying for the WIG without even knowing it. It's also a matter of recruiting students into the in-demand fields and that kind of work is already happening on all of the campuses. So, we're trying to piggyback on that work and be very frugal with the dollars to make sure they go to the students rather than to cover other costs. She admitted it's a compromise, but it's one NSHE is used to making.

Member Thigpen asked if there will be an effort to connect with K-12 school districts to help them with talking points to encourage their new high school graduates to look for this program. Ms. Davis said it is an excellent idea that hadn't been thought of, but she will add that to her team's to-do list. Co-Chair Abba asked Member Ebert for her help on this, if the proposal is approved, since she has that conduit for distribution. NSHE would provide all the materials to her and ask that those materials be provided to district superintendents for distribution to their high school principals across the state. Member Ebert said she would be more than happy to do so and will contact the high school counselors directly as well.

Member Ebert stated she wants to make sure that there is good analyzing and reporting on this new program, especially looking at how it affects the entire population of those wanting to continue on, whether it's a certificate or higher education. She said she is thankful for the shift in the timeline as there have been other things recently identified that need to be addressed, so she is thankful that was noted by IFC. The time has given the Committee and the NSHE team more opportunity to think deeply about the implementation. She said she'll remain vigilant for the expansion of early childhood education and infant/toddler education in the other institutions.

Member Trolson observed that there is a need for truck drivers, but they can't get the grant because that's not credited. Co-Chair Abba reiterated the challenge of creating the program lists because most of the top in-demand occupations require a bachelor's degree, most of which are not offered at the community colleges. Since the focus is on community colleges, her team matched programs offered at the community colleges that support those occupations. She noted the lists are not set in stone and there are still many opportunities to revisit them to ensure we get it right. Co-Chair Abba stated the key to all of this is flexibility.

Member Trolson stated one of his concerns is the lists seem shy on the skilled workforce jobs such as construction workers, heavy equipment operators, and carpenters, which is something his organization is working for as apprenticeship programs. He wonders how to make those programs more attractive, because unless we have people to build roads, buildings, and infrastructure, it all goes away.

5. Discussion Only – New Business:

Member Bostwick asked to revisit the marching orders received for the Committee given there is only one meeting left, with the report due to the LCB in August. She said she doesn't think the Committee has done everything it was designed by law to do and feels they are missing some of the pieces, so she is wondering if an extension is needed. Co-Chair Abba agreed and recommended it be included in the work session document because the Board of Regents have a Workforce Committee, and this committee can respectfully defer those remaining items to that group. She said one of the most significant items left undone was receiving input from a national expert with respect to the question of removing the community colleges from the System. She said that question was answered in the last LCB study where the SB391 Committee from that time period had the exact same charge and they checked all the boxes on the issue, so while we were unable to revisit that issue, there is still an opportunity to defer.

Member Trolson said he would like to take up the offer made by Mr. John Gwaltney from TMCC, who at the last meeting offered his services with six presidents. Co-Chair Abba said there may be legal concerns and deferred the question to NSHE Deputy

General Counsel Tina Russom. Ms. Russom stated if there's something any member would like to have addressed on a future agenda or separately, they can privately reach out to Co-Chair Abba to discuss, but there cannot be a substantive discussion during this new business portion.

6. Information Only – Public Comment:

Mr. Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance, stated he has three points to offer, the first regarding metrics and tracking these programs. He noted the most valuable thing going to the legislature for the Silver State Opportunity Grant was that in the early years it was over-subscribed so you could compare the rates of students who got grants with those who didn't. If that happens in this program, the best way to track the success of those students is to randomly assign who gets the fortunate students who receive the grants in order to compare more scientifically the success of the program. His second point was that capacity in these programs is not magically created. He said it requires funding and just supporting the students doesn't create capacity which is why it's so important to go to the legislature to get capacity funding. Lastly, he pointed out that all higher ed programs are workforce development programs, not just the skills-based career and technical programs. He said that while the Committee is charged with focusing on community colleges, as Co-Chair Abba said, bachelor's degrees are in high demand in this state and the advantage of a unified system is that you can build the programs to bring students up through all levels of higher education to meet the overall workforce development demands in the state.

Ms. Elisa Cafferata, Director of the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) stated she has information to share regarding some of the topics that came up. In terms of the in-demand occupations, the list is updated on an annual basis. She suggested pointing to a specific occupation or grandfathering folks in, so they don't end up not being on the in-demand track as they're going through their certificate or credential program. Secondly, she stated DETR did have a request from this committee for a list of the funding that is coming from ROA and other workforce programs and going to the community colleges. She said she was able to provide that list to Vice Chancellors Brooks and Cage so that should be forwarded to the Committee. She highlighted the fact that funding comes not only to the classes defined in the lists, but also to pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, so there are a lot of dollars in this space. She stated these are things to be aware of when looking at this program and what the community college are getting or not getting.

Seeing no other public comment, Co-Chair Abba reminded the Committee that the next meeting is June 7 at 3 pm but the locations will be different, so she encouraged everyone to please check the agenda for the locations. The meetings will not be held at the System office, but instead at the CSN West Charleston Student Union in Las Vegas and at Desert Research Institute in Reno. The GBC site will also be different. Deputy Counsel Tina Russom noted there was no written public comment submitted.

Meeting Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM.