

Nevada 1 of 6 states to participate in Policy Academy

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – The National Governors Association announced this week that Nevada has been selected as one of six states to participate in a Policy Academy on strengthening post-secondary education performance measures.

The NGA defines a Policy Academy as a highly interactive, team-based process for helping a select number of states develop and implement an action plan to address a complex public policy issue.

In announcing the project, the NGA said: “States must have a strategy for getting more career-ready graduates for the dollars they have, and the NGA Policy Academy will focus on helping states build that strategy.”

“Having good performance metrics is important, but it is not enough,” said Dane Linn, director of the NGA Center for Best Practice’s Education Division. “Governors and other policymakers must be equipped to use performance measures, whether in developing budgets, approving or evaluating programs or deciding how or whether to regulate administrative and academic services. This Policy Academy will help states focus on those measures.”

Gov. Brian Sandoval said, “Nevada is diligently working to improve accountability systems and measures throughout the K-12 system and this Policy Academy will enable us to expand that work through the higher education realm.”

The work will complement the Legislature’s interim funding study, he said.

“As always, higher education’s goals have been focused on continuous improvement in how we educate our students and how we help Nevada’s economy prosper,” said Dan Klaich, chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education. “I’m excited we were selected for the Complete to Compete Initiative and I am looking forward to working with the governor and representatives of the Legislature to define accountability metrics that will support our ongoing initiatives related to student success and effectiveness and efficiency.”

The NGA Policy Academy is aimed at improving post-secondary education accountability systems and consists of two workshops, technical assistance from NGA Center staff, and grants of up to \$30,000 per state for additional expertise.

The academy is designed to help states strengthen their post-secondary education systems by focusing on efficiency and effectiveness metrics in their accountability systems and incorporating those metrics into their decision making processes.

The NGA Center will help selected states in their efforts to review and revamp their existing state post-secondary accountability system. States will also work with the NGA Center to identify ways to use efficiency and effectiveness metrics as part of the state’s higher education policy agenda.

Funding for the academy is provided by the Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Nevada’s governor-appointed state team consists of: Heidi Gansert, chief of staff to Sandoval; Julia Teska, a budget analyst from the Department of Administration; Denice Miller, vice president of government relations, MGM Resorts International; Assemblyman Marcus Conklin, D-Las Vegas; Klaich; and Neal Smatresk, president of the UNLV.