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Higher Education Reform: A Time for Action

The Lincy Institute

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HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM: A TIME FOR ACTION

Friday, Dec. 7, 2018
8:30 - 10:30 am
GREENSPUN HALL AUDITORIUM
The Lincy Institute has been at the forefront of research and analysis on higher education governance reform in Nevada. Following numerous statewide studies, The Lincy Institute has produced reports and policy briefs recommending significant structural changes to the State’s higher education landscape. To provide future generations of students with quality education and training in our 21st-century economy, researchers will summarize findings and present model legislation to improve the quality of education offered by Nevada’s eight institutions of higher learning. All Nevadans should demand an honest and transparent discussion of higher education reform. The 2019 legislative session will be a time for action. This colloquium will summarize research efforts, propose model legislation, and conclude with a panel of key stakeholders who will offer insight on higher education governance reform in Nevada.

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:05 AM
Welcome & Introduction
William E. Brown, Jr.
UNLV Director, Brookings Mountain West

9:05 – 9:30 AM
The 2017 Session of the Nevada Legislature: The Failure of Higher Education Reform
David F. Damore
Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, UNLV

9:30 – 9:55 AM
The 2019 Session of the Nevada Legislature: The Agenda For Higher Education Reform
Robert E. Lang
Professor and Executive Director, The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West, UNLV

9:55 – 10:25 AM
Panel Discussion
MODERATOR
Magdalena Martinez
Assistant Professor and Director of Education Programs, The Lincy Institute, UNLV

PANELISTS
Lindy Schumacher
CEO, The Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas

John Gwaltney
Former President, Truckee Meadows Community College

10:25 – 10:30 AM
Closing: The Need For Reform
Robert E. Lang
Professor and Executive Director, The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West, UNLV
The 2017 Session of the Nevada Legislature:
The Failure of Higher Education Reform

David F. Damore
Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, UNLV

During the 2017 legislative session, after a series of Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) scandals including allegations of plagiarism, sexual harassment and the submission of a falsified document to a legislative committee, the legislature approved a number of reform bills. But, as detailed in our study of the 2017 legislative session, most of the bills died in committee and Governor Sandoval vetoed those that passed. The efforts to push out UNLV President Len Jessup, and now startling revelations of Medicare/Medicaid fraud involving the UNR School of Medicine, once again put NSHE in the headlines and demonstrate the need to reform the administration and governance of higher education in Nevada. The corresponding policy brief on Nevada’s higher education policy – or lack thereof – joins an ever-growing body of work on this topic from The Lincy Institute. The policy brief arrives as the state’s governing body for higher education, the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada, and the state agency for higher education, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), continues “… to use the same unitary higher education structure that delivers one of the lowest shares of college educated populations in the country and is one of the least efficient in producing college graduates” (p. 2). The report chronicles Nevada’s long history of failed reform efforts in higher education governance and administration and offers hope that “… next year may prove the beginning of the end for Nevada’s ‘unique’ way of governing and administering its colleges and universities” (p. 36)

The 2019 Session of the Nevada Legislature:
An Agenda For Higher Education Reform

Robert E. Lang
Professor and Executive Director, The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West, UNLV

This talk covers 2019 legislative priorities related to higher education reform in Nevada. It recommends that two main bills be developed to improve how higher education in the state is administered and governed. The first piece of legislation is the "One System Act," which establishes a single administrative office for the state, while enabling community and state colleges to be under separate governance from the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada. The second bill, the "University of Nevada Equity Act," provides for an equitable distribution of resources between the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Other reforms suggested in the talk include a second affirmative vote on AJR5, which in the 2017 Nevada Legislative session began the process of removing Nevada’s Board of Regents from the state constitution. Finally, the legislature should override the veto of AB407, a bill that reaffirms the land grant status of the three parts of the University of Nevada--UNR, UNLV and the Desert Research Institute.

CONTRIBUTORS

William E. Brown, Jr. received his undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1978 and his graduate degree from the University of Michigan in 1981. He has held appointments as an academic research librarian, faculty member, and administrator at Yale University, the University of Miami, and the University of California, Berkeley, before joining UNLV in 2005. As UNLV Director of Brookings Mountain West, Brown coordinates the programs, lectures, and activities of Brookings Mountain West in Southern Nevada, including the Brookings Public Policy Minor at UNLV.

David F. Damore is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in American Politics and Research Methods and serves as Department Chair. Damore’s research focuses on electoral politics and applied public policy. In addition to his roles at UNLV, Damore is a Nonresident Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution’s Governance Study Program, a key vote advisor for Project Vote Smart, and a Senior Analyst at Latino Decisions. Damore is also serving as the Past President of the Southwestern Political Science Association. He also regularly comments on Nevada politics for local, national, and international media outlets. Damore holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis, a M.A. from the University of Georgia, and a B.A. from the University of California, San Diego, all in Political Science.

John Gwaltney brings over 30 years’ experience and leadership to higher education. During his distinguished career he served administrative roles in Illinois, Kansas, and Nevada. In Illinois, he served as an instructor at Olney Central College of Illinois. Gwaltney later moved to Wabash Valley College in Illinois, where he served as an administrator and Dean of Instruction for 12 years. He served his first academic presidency at Pratt Community College in Pratt, Kansas. In
1986, Gwaltney was named President of Truckee Meadows Community College, where he became a fierce advocate for the community college sector in Nevada. His career and leadership have primarily focused on expanded access to new college entrants, aligning workforce training to local business and industry needs, and working collaboratively with key community stakeholders to achieve the mission of community colleges. Today, he remains active in higher education and state policy as a Nevada member of the State Board of Education since 2008. Gwaltney holds a Ph.D. in Education Law and Finance from Southern Illinois University.

Robert E. Lang is a Professor of Public Policy in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs and serves as the Executive Director of both The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is also a resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. Lang holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Rutgers University. Prior to his current position, Lang was a Professor and Chair in Urban Planning at Virginia Tech’s College of Architecture and Urban Studies in Alexandria and Blacksburg, VA. He was also a Senior Director of Urban and Metropolitan Research at Fannie Mae in Washington, D.C. before teaching at Virginia Tech. Lang began his career as a Research Associate at the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. Lang is an internationally recognized authority on urban growth, economic development and population dynamics, including the interplay between politics and growth in America’s metropolitan areas. His research has been featured in numerous print media outlets, including USA Today, The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and US News and World Report and he has appeared an expert commentator on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS News, ABC News and National Public Radio. Lang has authored dozens of opinion editorial pieces that have run in newspapers and periodicals nationally. He also twice served as Editor for the academic journal Housing Policy Debate, which is published by Routledge in the United Kingdom.

Magdalena Martinez is an assistant professor in the School of Public Policy and Leadership at UNLV’s Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, and serves as Director of Education Programs at The Lincy Institute. Her areas of expertise include education policy, leadership, access and equity for underrepresented student populations and the role of higher education in a diverse society. She regularly provides expert testimony (K-12 and post-secondary) on education policy issues and is involved in numerous efforts to build capacity through education research and policy. Prior to UNLV, Martinez served as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the Nevada System of Higher Education. In her role she was responsible for strengthening P-16 education partnerships and examining education policy in order to increase access, equity, and success for underrepresented student populations. Martinez holds a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Michigan, an M.Ed. from Harvard University, and a Bachelor of Science in Business from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Lindy Schumacher is CEO of the Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas, a non-profit that works to open the eyes of first-generation students to the option of college and assist them until college graduation. This is no easy task; in Nevada only 9.8% of students graduate high school on time, go directly to college and earn a degree within six years. According to ACT scores which are mandated for all juniors, 11% are prepared for the rigor of college. Beginning operations in Clark County just seven years ago, the Fulfillment Fund serves over 1600 students, with a high school graduation rate of 100 percent and college matriculation of 97 percent. Participating students are not cherry picked, but instead the Fulfillment Fund serves students and families as equals. Previously, Schumacher was employed as the Director of Nevada Giving for The Dream Fund at UCLA. She worked at The Lincy Foundation and other entities serving Mr. Kirk Kerkorian’s philanthropic visions for over ten years. In 2009, Schumacher joined the Andre Agassi Foundation Board, and has previously served as a board member at United Way of Southern Nevada. In 2018, Schumacher joined the Cristo Rey St. Viator Las Vegas board. Schumacher brings a wealth of knowledge through her background in finance and accounting, specifically through her role as an auditor for Arthur Andersen and as CFO for The Las Vegas Monorail Company. Schumacher is a graduate of the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and became a Certified Public Accountant in 1997.

About The Lincy Institute

Established in 2009, The Lincy Institute conducts and supports research that focuses on improving Nevada’s health, education, and social services. This research is used to build capacity for service providers and enhance efforts to draw state and federal money to the greater Las Vegas. The Lincy Institute also highlights key issues that affect public policy and quality-of-life decisions on behalf of children, seniors, and families in Southern Nevada. Robert E. Lang, Ph.D. serves as the Executive Director of The Lincy Institute.