WHAT IS THE NSA?

The Nevada Student Alliance is a coalition of student representatives from all of the institutions within the Nevada System of Higher Education. NSA advocates for and on behalf of common issues that affect all of Nevada’s college and university students.

The NSA is constitutionally charged to:

- Promote, foster, advance, represent, and protect the interests and welfare of the students of the Nevada System of Higher Education;
- Give the students of the Nevada System of Higher Education a unified voice before all systems and legislative bodies;
- Aid in the enactment of legislation for the common good, as well as the good of students;
- Aid member schools’ student governments in the attainment of their goals without undue interference in their internal affairs.

NEW DIRECTION FOR FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEVADA

Senate Bill 374, adopted in the previous legislative session, created the Committee to Study the Funding of Higher Education with the main objective being the creation of a new higher education funding formula. This particular legislative committee has been busy over the last nine months hearing various presentations from interested stakeholders ranging from access for minority and low-income students to funding formulas in other states – all of which can be found here: http://tinyurl.com/9uv55fa

Additionally, Chancellor Klaich introduced his new funding formula proposal during the Spring 2012 semester. An updated version of his proposal can be found here: http://tinyurl.com/8vkjwr

In it, the Chancellor proposes that institutions retain any tuition and fees collected on the individual campus together with an additional $362 million divided between the eight NSHE institutions. State funding will also be distributed based on a discipline matrix regardless of the institution’s size, type or mission. The discipline matrix assigns weights to each degree program based on the cost to the state. One of the debating points is how these weights are determined and whether specific degree programs should be weighted more to better reflect higher education’s alignment with the state development goals.

The main thrust of the Chancellor’s proposal is to bring Nevada in line with best practices found in other states’ higher education funding decisions and that is to reward institutions based on performance metrics specifically related to output/outcome measures.

The next steps for the Committee will be to come up with a list of recommendations for a new, transparent and easy-to-understand formula that will be presented to the 77th Regular Session of the Nevada Legislature – a formula all stakeholders, including students, will be able to support.

- Michael Gordon, Chair NSA
FEBRUARY 25TH DAY FOR EDUCATION AT THE CAPITOL

As most NSHE students know, the past two Nevada Legislative Sessions have resulted in massive budget cuts to education in this State. At each of our campuses programs have been closed, faculty positions eliminated, and student fees have risen while services have been cut. Believe it or not, however, the damage to our NSHE institutions likely would have been much more extensive had it not been for the important role that the Nevada Student Alliance played in lobbying our State’s decision-makers.

Members of the NSA worked hard to organize numerous rallies for education across Nevada; lobbied behind the scenes in face-to-face meetings with individual Legislators, staffers in the Governor’s office, and members of the Board of Regents; and wrote editorials and other promotional materials to educate the State’s students and voters as to the seriousness of the proposed cuts.

One of the most effective things that NSA did was organize a Day for Education during the Legislative Session in Carson City. NSA members organized buses to bring students to the Capitol and arranged for meetings with influential Legislators who listened to our concerns. The Day for Education was covered by the media and some Legislators expressed the importance of that day in influencing how they ultimately voted. In the end, the cuts to education budgets were much less than originally proposed, as painful as they were.

At the 2013 Legislative Session approaches, the NSA, once again spared no efforts to ensure that our voices are heard and our influence felt at the Capitol. On February 25th we once again arranged for a successful Day for Education at the Capitol. However, the efforts to get student voices heard are ongoing. Please join us to ensure that student voices are always represented. E-Mail NSA Vice-Chair Orion Cuffe at cuffe@unr.edu.

- Orion Cuffe, Vice-Chair, NSA

MANY COMMUNITIES, ONE CAMPUS

At Great Basin College the Student Government Association (SGA) has pursued an idea of: “Many Communities, One Campus”. GBC has a service area of 62,000 square miles within the state of Nevada with one main campus in Elko, and four other branch campuses in Battle Mountain, Ely, Pahrump, and Winnemucca. There are also SGA representatives at each of these locations. At the beginning of this last academic year the SGA was confronted with the issue of a lack of unity among the various campuses and communities that are served through the college. Thus, the theme “Many Communities, One Campus” was established for the year and since then it has been a main goal for the SGA to live to the expectations of this idea.

The whole meaning is that, even though there are many students around the state currently at different campuses and residing in different communities, they are still associated with a home institution, and that should have a sense of still being one campus. When it comes down to it we, as students, are all here for the similar reasons and are alike in many ways. Even with a geographical difference there are students taking classes from the same teachers and receiving the same education. This idea can also be taken one step further onto the state level. Even though there are many different and diverse institutions, the people who are on the campuses every week (or on their computers for online classes) and in the classes are students who are all making progress towards the dream of receiving an education.

- Alex Porter, President, Great Basin College
**E-LEARNING IN NEVADA**

Recently, the Chancellor appointed a taskforce of individuals from every facet of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to look over the e-learning environment that the system currently utilizes. I was very excited to be part of this endeavor so students would have accurate representation (having taken many online and distance education courses myself) on this very important and influential project.

The E-Learning Steering Committee is made up of at least one individual from every NSHE institution and one student representative. We are aided by Richard N. Katz & Associates; a consulting firm that have helped review many education systems across the country in their own online learning environments for similar purposes to ours. We are very happy to have their assistance because we wouldn’t have the data that they have collected otherwise.

So far the committee has met one time in person, and had a teleconference with all the members. The next meetings are scheduled in November and through January. This way we are able to continue the stimulating conversation with only little time intervals in between. The meetings have consisted mostly of national trends, what Nevada has in place right now, and what direction we are looking towards. This direction is looking at ways that e-learning can better serve students and add to the transparency, accessibility, and ease of use.

Richard N. Katz & Associates have just recently completed a full NSHE data collection. They traveled around the state to each institution talking to various administrations, faculties, staffs, and most importantly students at every institution of NSHE. They looked at every institution separately to look at how e-learning is being utilized and ideas on how it could be improved. This data is going to be very helpful for the committee to solidify our direction for e-learning system wide. Being included on this committee has been very exciting and showed me just how important it is, and it will be very interesting to see where everything lands.

- Alex Porter, President, Great Basin College

**NSHE’S NEW WEAPONS POLICY**

At the September 2012 Board of Regents meeting at the Truckee Meadows campus, an amendment was approved that allows university presidents to give written permission to individual students to carry or possess a weapon on each individual NSHE campus.

It will be up to each campus and president to establish its own internal procedures to handle to handle such requests. It is anticipated that requests be in writing and evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the personal safety, ability and background of the individual taken into consideration. Campus presidents will have ten business day to respond to each request. The deadline could be extended under certain conditions for instance if the background investigation has not been completed.

Under the amendment, any peace officer will be excluded from the requirement. A peace officer includes an off-duty law enforcement official.

Several states allow individuals to carry weapons on campus without permission from college presidents.

For more information on this amendment, please contact Vice-Chancellor of Legal Affairs, Brooke Nielsen, at the System office.

- Michael Gordon, Chair NSA
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD—JASON GEDDES

As the Chairperson of the Board of Regents and the Regent representing District 11 (Washoe and Pershing counties), Jason Geddes is proud of the work he has done at Nevada System of Higher Education.

NSHE is comprised of 8 institutions, which are DRI, UNLV, UNR, NSC, CSN, GBC, WNC, and TMCC and the System Office and represent over 105,000 students, 14,000 faculty, staff and tens of thousands of alumni.

The Board of Regents is the constitutionally elected governing body for the NSHE under Article 11, Section 4 and Jason Geddes is its chairperson.

Despite having to deal with the limitations of economic realities of the past few year; under his leadership, after the 2011 session the Board entered a Strategic Visioning Process—NSHE 2004 Strategic Plan, NSHE Plan for Nevada’s Colleges & Universities from 2011, Legislative “Envisioning Nevada’s Future”, and GOED State Plan for Economic Development. This process let the Board focus their efforts and resources on four key priorities:

1. Increase student achievement, retention and success
2. Increase transparency, accountability and performance
3. Review and revise programs to support innovation and responsiveness
4. Ensure accessibility and affordability

According to Geddes, in the short time since setting those priorities, NSHE and the board have made great strides on those priorities. Geddes feels that given the progress made towards those priorities will help pave the way for the future of NSHE and its students.

- Navgeet “King” Zed, President, TMCC SGA