Work for the Hewlett Foundation  
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems  
January 31, 2011

**Work Project**

The Hewlett Foundation has contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Services ("NCHEMS" or "Consultant") to assist in implementation of the common agenda of the Partnership for Assessment and Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and the Smarter/Balanced Assessment Consortia (SBAC) to ensure meaningful higher education involvement in the two K-12 assessment consortia. NCHEMS will undertake the following activities.

**Areas of Focus**

Develop a set of criteria by which to:

- Indicate what it means to have "meaningful higher education involvement" - what are the hallmarks of such involvement? This will include participation in developing assessments and engagement in activities required to ensure student learning (e.g., curriculum framework, pre-service and in-service teacher education, etc.).

- Define the characteristics and capacity of state-level leadership/governance necessary to ensure systemic implementation and investigate the strengths and weaknesses of existing state structures when juxtaposed against this set of criteria. We anticipate that in many instances states with strong governing or coordinating boards and states that have strong pre-existing K-12/Higher Ed collaborative relationships would make the best partners. This is particularly true in cases in which the relationship is already focused on the K12/Higher Ed transition.

1. Using this set of criteria, create an initial list of at least six states in each consortium to be considered for selection as participants in the Hewlett Foundation/SBAC/PARCC consortia and other funder activities (supporting higher education involvement in assessment consortia). In order to select the six, we will attempt to rank the states within each consortia (at least in several groups, if not high to low).

2. Conduct focused interviews in each selected state to gather additional information about the states' willingness and capacity to fully and appropriately involve higher education in the proposed development and implementation activities. Based on NCHEMS' prior work in some of the likely candidate states, and in-depth knowledge of them, it should be possible to gather the necessary information for a few states by conducting telephone interviews. NCHEMS will make two-day site visits to as many as 10 of the states to acquire necessary information.
In each state, interviews will be conducted with:

- Members of the state implementation team members
- State school superintendent (Chief State School Officer)
- Governor's education aide
- State higher education executive officer
- Leaders of all existing P-16/20 entities
- Academic officers from selected institutions/systems of higher education (both community colleges and universities)

Discussions will focus on the nature of higher education involvement in:

- The development of consortia assessments
- Extent of the commitment to use these assessments for placement purposes by colleges and universities (e.g., all institutions, certain sectors, etc.)
- Plans for higher education involvement in creating conditions to help ensure that students are successful on the assessments (e.g., collaborating in development of curriculum frameworks, undertaking a systemic and systematic program of teacher preparation and in-service training to equip teachers with the knowledge and pedagogical tools needed, etc.)
- The capacity of the state's higher education coordinating/governing entities and existing K-12 partnerships to lead and sustain implementation.