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STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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SHEEO Announces Inaugural Excellence Awards Winners

Association recognizes leadership, dedication, and innovation in state higher education policy and administration

Park City, Utah – As members of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) convened at the association's 65th Annual Meeting in Park City, Utah, officials from SHEEO announced the winners of the organization's inaugural SHEEO Excellence Awards. The awards recognize the leadership, dedication, and innovation of exceptional SHEEOs, agency staff, and agencies at a time when state policy success is increasingly linked to student success and, in turn, states' economic and social prosperity.

- The winner of the Exceptional Leader Award is Teresa Lubbers, Commissioner for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education.
- The winner of the Exceptional Agency Award is the Office of the Idaho State Board of Education.
- The winner of the David L. Wright Memorial Award is Andrew Rauch, Director of Institutional Finance at the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

Reflecting on the inaugural SHEEO Excellence Awards, Dr. Robert Anderson, president of SHEEO, said, "SHEEO is proud of the work of all the state higher education executive officers, their agencies, and the agency staff members. These individuals and agencies work every day to improve outcomes for students and to advance the public good. It is, therefore, an honor to recognize the winners of these inaugural awards."

EXCEPTIONAL LEADER AWARD

The Exceptional Leader Award is presented to a current state higher education executive officer from a member agency who has shown exceptional leadership, a commitment to higher education, a contribution to the greater good, and service to the SHEEO Association within the last year.

Commissioner Lubbers has served as the commissioner of higher education in Indiana for nine years. During that time, she has led the development and implementation of Indiana's higher education strategic plans, including the recently adopted third plan, "Reaching Higher,

Delivering Value.” Teresa has embraced a commitment to “paying for what we value” through performance funding metrics for institutions and students. She has tirelessly focused on improving completion and on-time completion rates for all Hoosiers, with a focus on closing achievement gaps. Finally, Teresa has worked to align higher education preparation with workforce needs by working with policymakers, educators and employers.

Commissioner Lubbers has also served the wider, state higher education policy field by mentoring new state higher education executive officers and serving the SHEEO Association on its executive committee for a total of six years and as the committee chair.

Mitchell Daniels, Jr., president of Purdue University and former governor of Indiana, said: “As a long-standing legislator and now for years in her current post, Teresa has upheld standards of the highest quality in her commitment to education. As a friend of almost half a century, I may be permitted to note that the excellence of her character equals or even surpasses the quality of her performance of her public duties.”

Sue Ellspermann, president of Ivy Tech Community College, further praised Commissioner Lubbers: “During her time as Indiana’s Commissioner for Higher Education, her policies have resulted in Indiana students completing at higher and faster rates...[while] pursuing equity for all students, and with a keen eye to the credentials which move Indiana’s economy forward.”

EXCEPTIONAL AGENCY AWARD

The Exceptional Agency Award is presented to a member agency whose innovative actions, policies, or practices advanced student success in their state; which displayed exceptional governance practices; which overcame exceptional challenges; or displayed other meritorious attributes within the last year.

The Office of the Idaho State Board of Education has demonstrated a consistent commitment to advancing postsecondary education and student success within the State of Idaho. This commitment has remained unwavering even in the face of external challenges and an expansive scope of responsibility, with a small but mighty staff.

Accomplishments in recent years include:

- Idaho’s Direct Admissions program admitting all Idaho high school students to at least six of the eight public colleges and universities in the state
- Launched “Apply Idaho,” enabling students to submit applications to all of Idaho’s public institutions simultaneously, with no application fees
- Support and implementation of Idaho Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter’s Higher Education Task Force recommendations designed to help Idaho reach its goal of 60 percent of adults having a postsecondary degree or professional certificate

Idaho is one of only two states in the nation with consolidated governance of K-20 education under one board. The success of the Board in advancing an innovative policy agenda focused on student success is remarkable. As Idaho State Board of Education Executive Director Matt

Freeman is quoted as saying: “Any success we have enjoyed is because of a talented and dedicated team with a singular focus on what is in the best interests of students. After all, students are the reason our institutions exist.”

Dr. Robert Anderson, president of SHEEO, said this of the Idaho State Board: “The Board epitomizes what it means to be innovative in the face of challenges and to place students at the center of everything it does. Idaho is better because of the effort of the Idaho State Board.”

DAVID L. WRIGHT MEMORIAL AWARD

The David L. Wright Memorial Award is named in honor of the late David Wright, an esteemed colleague and leader in state higher education, who served in the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, and the Florida Governing Board. This award recognizes a current SHEEO agency staff member, from a member agency, who embodies the exceptional commitment, work ethic, and ethical practices of David Wright, and who has made outstanding contributions to their agency.

During challenging years, Andrew Rauch has stepped up to serve higher education and the State of Colorado in countless capacities. Included among the areas he led are the development of the state higher education budget, management of the Colorado performance funding allocation model that distributes the funds, overseeing financial aid distributions and management, and hiring and managing new staff. For many states, this list would be the work of entire teams. Thanks in part to Andrew’s efforts, FY 2018-19 represented one of Colorado higher education’s best years.

Kim Hunter Reed, Louisiana’s commissioner of higher education and former executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, shared, “What an outstanding choice. Andrew is a unique talent – smart, innovative and absolutely mission focused. I enjoyed watching him grow in his new role and I am delighted to applaud him for this well-deserved recognition.”

Alexis Senger, former chief analyst and higher education advisor to Governor John Hickenlooper, adds: “Andrew embodies the qualities of hard work and professional ethics for which the award is named. The State of Colorado and our students in institutions of higher education are the better thanks to his tireless efforts.”

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The State Higher Education Executive Officers is the national association of the chief executives of statewide governing, policy, and coordinating boards of postsecondary education.