



WICHE

Six Decades of Collaboration in the West

The [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education](#)

and its 16 members

work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among its members and their institutions, [WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life](#). Our programs – Student Exchange, Policy Analysis and Research, WCET, and Mental Health – are working to find answers to some of the most critical questions facing higher education today. WICHE is the only organization in the West that [focuses exclusively on higher education issues](#), from finance, innovation, workforce issues and accountability to access and success.

The WICHE Commission's 16 members include 15 Western states – Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (the first of the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states to participate). Members pay annual dues – \$137,000 for FY 2015 – which cover about a third of WICHE's budget, supporting our core programs. Grants from foundations and corporations, federal support, and other [external funding leverage state investments by more than a two-to-one ratio](#), maximizing the return on taxpayer dollars.

WICHE's Student Exchange & Related Programs

[State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#). SARA is a voluntary, nationwide initiative of states that will make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and make it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The effort is funded by over \$3 million in grants from Lumina Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and fees paid by institutions. The initiative is administered by the country's four regional higher education compacts: the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and overseen by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states and better resolution of student complaints.

Our [Student Exchange Program \(SEP\)](#) provides students with access to a broad range of out-of-state higher education options, along with significant tuition savings. More than 36,300 students are currently enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs

outside their home states through SEP in 2014-15. States benefit as well: their institutions can avoid the unnecessary duplication of programs and devote their resources to improving their educational offerings to meet critical workforce needs. In WICHE's [Western Undergraduate Exchange \(WUE\)](#), students pay 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, substantially less than standard nonresident tuition.

Almost 34,300 students enrolled in 2014-15, saving more than \$279.4 million in tuition. Through our [Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\)](#), more than 15,300 professionals, most in healthcare, have received home state support when enrolled in programs in another Western state. The majority of PSEP students return to their home states to practice their careers. In 2014-15, 657 students enrolled in the program, which offers 10 fields of professional education. In addition, over 1,345 students enrolled in some 383 distinctive graduate programs at 60 institutions through our [Western Regional Graduate Program \(WRGP\)](#); these students paid in-state tuition, saving \$19.9 million in 2014-15. WICHE's [Interstate Passport Initiative](#) provides a new framework for block transfer of lower division general education based on learning outcomes and proficiency criteria to accelerate and streamline transfer students' pathways to graduation. Both two-year and four-year institutions participate.

Policy & Information Resources

WICHE's [Policy Analysis and Research](#) unit offers policy and information resources that support better-informed decision making at the state level. Our publication series, including *Policy Insights* and *Western Policy Exchanges*, explore a wide range of significant policy issues. In-depth works such as *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates* and the *Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West* include data and analyses on fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators.

WICHE is involved in a number of research projects and collaborative initiatives. WICHE manages the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Consortium, assisting participating Western states with program implementation and administration related to the federal CACG program, which fosters partnerships among national, state, and local governments and organizations through matching grants aimed at increasing the number of low-income students prepared to succeed in postsecondary education.

The Gates-funded pilot project Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange, which involved four states – Idaho, Hawai'i, Oregon, and Washington – sought to enable a more comprehensive regional view of the creation of **human capital** and its flow among multiple states by exchanging data across K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the workforce. The success of the pilot phase led Gates to fund a second, expanded phase which will work with up to ten states, some outside of the WICHE region. WICHE also facilitates the Adult College Completion Network

(ACCN), a collaborative learning initiative that aims to unite agencies and organizations working to increase college completion by adults with prior college credits but no degree.

The WICHE Commissioners created the [Legislative Advisory Committee \(LAC\)](#) in 1995 to inform the Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education; provide input on WICHE initiatives; and advise staff on program considerations related to WICHE's policy workshops. Today, the LAC serves these purposes and also works to strengthen state policymaking in higher education in the West by engaging legislators who are appointed by the WICHE Commission in the discussion of relevant higher education issues and by seeking their input on strategies for interstate collaboration.

What other resources does WICHE provide?

The [WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies \(WCET\)](#) is the leader in the practice and policy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET's mission is to accelerate the adoption of effective practices and policies, advancing excellence in technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education. WCET is nationally recognized as one of the most informative, reliable and forward-thinking organizations regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education. Key WCET activities include an annual meeting, leadership summits, national webcasts, listserv-based discussions among members. Major focus areas include student success, managing e-learning, emerging technologies, adaptive learning, evolving policy issues, and the high school to higher education transition.

A nucleus for researching mental health policy and a provider of technical assistance in such areas as service innovation, system reform, workforce development, program evaluation, and other areas, WICHE's [Mental Health Program](#) is another well-used resource. The program works with the public mental health systems of the West, higher education, mental health practitioners and administrators, and consumers and family members to improve training in mental health, expand public mental health resources, and provide research and information. The [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) (the Forum) gives academic leaders in the WICHE states a forum for sharing information, resources, and expertise as they address issues of common concern and work together on innovative solutions, while the [Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders](#) (the Alliance) brings academic leaders of community colleges and technical schools and systems together with state governing and coordinating boards associated with two-year institutions to exchange ideas and information, share resources, and collaborate on regional initiatives.

The [Master Property Program \(MPP\)](#), with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) helps institutions reduce insurance premiums and improve coverage. The MPP includes more than 170 campuses with total insured values of over \$120 billion. WICHE is also partnering with MHEC to offer [MHECare](#), a healthcare program providing vetted, competitively priced medical benefits for students. In a third collaboration with MHEC, WICHE extends the benefits of [MHECtech](#), a cost saving technology purchasing program, to institutions in the West.

How can I find out more about WICHE?

Visit our website at www.wiche.edu or contact President David Longanecker at 303-541-0201 or dlonganecker@wiche.edu.

June 2015



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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The Commission as of June 2015

Alaska

Susan Anderson, president/CEO, The CIRI Foundation, Anchorage
Diane Barrans, executive director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Juneau
James Johnsen, senior vice president, Alaska Communications, Anchorage

Arizona

Leah Bornstein, president, Coconino Community College, Flagstaff
Chris Bustamante, president, Rio Salado College, Tempe
Eileen Klein, president, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix

California

Christopher Cabaldon, principal, Capitol Impact, and mayor, West Sacramento
Dianne Harrison (immediate past WICHE chair), president, California State University, Northridge
Linda Thor, chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Sunnyvale

Colorado

Joseph Garcia, Colorado lieutenant governor and executive director, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Denver
Loretta Martinez, general counsel and secretary to the board, Metropolitan State University of Denver
Dene Kay Thomas, president, Fort Lewis College, Durango

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Sharon Hart, president, Northern Marianas College, Saipan
Jude Hofschneider, senator, Tinian
Joshua Sasamoto, president, Pacific Development and Marianas Home, Saipan

Hawai'i

Francisco Hernandez, retired vice chancellor for students, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu
Carol Mon Lee, attorney, retired associate dean, University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law, Honolulu
Appointment pending

Idaho

J. Anthony Fernandez, president, Lewis-Clark State College
Wendy Horman, state representative, Idaho Falls
Michael Rush (WICHE chair), executive director, Idaho State Board of Education, Boise

Montana

Clayton Christian, commissioner of higher education, Helena
Pat Williams, former U.S. congressman, Missoula
Franke Wilmer, professor, Montana State University

Nevada

Vance Farrow, industry specialist, healthcare, Governor's Office of Economic Development, Las Vegas

Vic Redding, vice chancellor of finance, Nevada System of Higher Education, Reno

Appointment Pending

New Mexico

Barbara Damron, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Santa Fe
Mark Moores, state senator, Albuquerque
Patricia Anaya Sullivan, assistant dean, Engineering, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

North Dakota

Ray Holmberg, state senator, Grand Forks
Kari Reichert, vice president, National Information Solutions Cooperative, and member, North Dakota State Board of Education, Bismarck

Larry Skogen, interim chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck

Oregon

Ryan Deckert, president, Oregon Business Association, Portland
Camille Preus, president, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton
Hilda Rosselli, deputy director of college and career readiness, Oregon Education Investment Board, Salem

South Dakota

Robert Burns, distinguished professor and dean emeritus, South Dakota State University, Brookings
James Hansen, former regent, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre
Jack Warner, executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

Utah

David Buhler, commissioner, Utah System of Higher Education, Salt Lake City
Dan Campbell, chair, Utah Board of Regents, Provo
Peter Knudson, state senator, Brigham City

Washington

Don Bennett, deputy director, Washington Student Achievement Council, Olympia
Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WICHE vice chair), state senator, Seattle
Larry Seaquist, former representative, Gig Harbor

Wyoming

Francis Galey, dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming, Laramie
Sam Krone, state representative, Cody
Karla Leach, president, Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs

WICHE Staff

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