

ARIZONA & WICHE

Working Together for Over a Half Century



WICHE



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Western Interstate
Commission for Higher
Education

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Since 1953 Arizona has been a member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), a 15-state commission working to boost access to higher education for students in the West and, as importantly, to ensure their success.

In the five-plus decades since Arizona joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from Arizona have attended undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in other Western states through WICHE's Student Exchange Program, saving millions of dollars, thanks to reduced tuition rates. In just one of the programs, the Western Undergraduate Exchange, **Arizona students and their families have saved some \$57 million** since 1998, when Arizona began using the program. (See "Doing the Math," below, for Arizona's return on investment.)
- ▶ Arizona has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ Arizona has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

WICHE and Arizona have shared a remarkably fruitful history. But their prospects for the future are even more exciting.

WICHE's Student Exchange

Arizona is active in all three WICHE Student Exchange Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange, the Professional Student Exchange Program, and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2011-12 Arizona's students and families saved over **\$13 million**. Arizona saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

Western Undergraduate Exchange. Arizona students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond Arizona's borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1998, **saving on 9,093 annual tuition bills**. In 2011-12, 1,173 students from Arizona are enrolled in out-

Doing the Math: Arizona's Return on Investment

In 2011-12 Arizona, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in over **\$15.3 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **121-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, Arizona students' savings from WUE alone have totalled **\$35 million**, yielding a **56-fold return** on the state's investment in WICHE.

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of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$8.4 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$7,167. In the last dozen years, students have saved **\$56.4 million**.

Arizona benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. Arizona’s institutions can choose how many out-of-state slots to offer and in which areas, allowing them to make the best use of their resources by accepting students in underenrolled programs. There’s a workforce benefit for the state, too, as students often stay in Arizona after graduating. In 2011-12 Arizona received 5,208 students through WUE.

Professional Student Exchange Program. Arizona has sent **2,352 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), with students studying in a host of critical fields, including dentistry, occupational therapy, optometry, physician assistant, osteopathic medicine, and veterinary medicine. Historically, 76 percent of PSEP students return to Arizona to pursue their professional careers.

“I was born and raised in Arizona. Enrolling through PSEP has helped me provide for my family while going through medical school. The tuition I’m paying at a private osteopathic medical school is close to what I would have paid if I had enrolled in Arizona’s public medical school at the U of A. I would like to thank the people of the State of Arizona for allowing our state government to support me and other students, in an effort to build the healthcare workforce. I look forward to serving you as an Arizona physician in the near future!”

- Michael, Arizona resident, Class of 2012,
Midwestern University, Glendale,
Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine

Western Regional Graduate Program. Arizona’s postgraduates also participate in graduate programs through the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), which offers access to over 250 high-quality, distinctive programs (“distinctive” meaning that they’re offered at only four or fewer institutions in the WICHE region) at 47 institutions in all WICHE states. WRGP programs run the gamut, but emerging social, environmental, and resource-management fields are particular strengths, as are innovative interdisciplinary programs. In 2011-12 Arizona sent 53 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 199.

Figure 1. Arizona Savings and Revenues through WICHE, 2011

Student Savings	
WUE	\$8,406,354
PSEP	\$3,890,775
WRGP	\$709,468
Total Student Savings	\$13,006,597
Revenue to AZ	
Institutions (PSEP)	\$2,325,680
TOTAL	\$15,332,277

Internet Course Exchange (ICE). Northern Arizona University is a member of WICHE’s newest exchange, ICE, an alliance of member institutions and systems with a set of policies, procedures, and support systems for sharing distance-delivered courses among two- and four-year institutions in the 15-state WICHE region.

WICHE’s Added Value

Arizona gains added value from WICHE’s programs in policy, workforce development, technology, mental health, and other areas.

Policy & Workforce Development. Arizona has been an active participant in projects to support better-informed decision making at the state level. WICHE initiatives have been sponsored by the Ford Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, the U.S. Department of Education, and others. In addition, teams of policymakers and educational leaders from Arizona participate each year in regional policy forums and meetings hosted by WICHE. In addition, WICHE has worked closely with Arizona decision makers in a number of key areas, including performance funding, the alignment of college education with workforce demand, and financial aid. Arizonans also keep current on pressing policy issues developing all over the nation through WICHE’s extensive network.

WICHE’s Lumina-funded *Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid* project promoted informed decision making and the **alignment of higher education appropriations, tuition, and financial aid** policy by state legislators, to improve student access and success. WICHE sent copies of the project’s eight policy briefs to all members of the Arizona Legislature.

Arizona also participated in another Lumina project, *Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems*, which seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how states coordinate their **articulation and transfer**

WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER a HALF CENTURY

“After graduating with my Ph.D. in cancer biology from the University of Arizona, I set out to continue my journey of lifelong learning in veterinary medicine at Colorado State University. I am extremely appreciative of WICHE’s continued excellence and applaud their success in making a difference in the lives of the students they support, both financially and personally. Thanks to Arizona’s assistance through WICHE, I am confident I will one day contribute to scientific discoveries in veterinary and comparative animal medicine.”

- Jessica, Arizona resident, Class of 2013, Colorado State University, College of Veterinary Medicine

programs for students who move from two-year to four-year institutions, focusing strategies that increase access to and success in higher education.

Arizona participated in a Gates-funded meeting in 2008 that brought together the stewards of the data systems in 14 WICHE states for discussions around linking data internally and with other states. A central topic was how to address the challenges to **data sharing** presented by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. State representatives also attended the Western Summit on Workforce Certification and Higher Education for policymakers in the West, held in response to the national demand for more highly skilled workers in a host of fields, from healthcare to high tech. Participants explored how states might use a **workforce certification system** – which would allow business and higher education to communicate with a common language about workforce demand and supply – to improve their ability to prepare individuals for productive careers and enhance the health of their economies.

Additionally, the Arizona Board of Regents participates in the **Western Academic Leadership Forum**, whose members address regional higher education issues and engage in cooperative resource sharing. Stephanie Jacobson, associate vice president of academic and student affairs at the board, is chair of the Forum. A new WICHE initiative, the **Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders**, 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 expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Maricopa Community Colleges and all its institutions are members, as are Arizona Western College, Eastern Arizona College, and Yavapai College. Both the Forum and the Alliance will hold their 2012 annual meetings in Phoenix in April.

Technology. Several Arizona colleges and universities are active participants in the **WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)**, a membership cooperative that accelerates the adoption of effective practices and policies to **advance excellence in**

technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education. Institutional members have access to trusted information on emerging trends, policies and exemplars of successful adoption of learning technology innovation in practice. WCET membership provides unparalleled access to peers, colleagues, common interest groups, experts, and decision makers, who themselves are pushing effective adoption of educational technologies to improve access to quality educational programs. Specific resources available to Arizona institutional members include communications tools that enable them to stay informed of developments affecting technology-enabled teaching and learning, from dynamic listservs to communities of interest on student retention, student authentication, academic integrity, and e-learning management structures. WCET also keeps its members informed about key federal developments affecting e-learning providers, such as new federal rules pertaining to distance education. WCET also manages multi-institutional projects, one aimed at adult online learners and another on large-scale student data aggregation and predictive analytics to improve student outcomes. In 2008 Phoenix was the host city for WCET’s 20th annual conference, one of the country’s premier e-learning conferences, attracting 400 attendees from across the U.S., Canada, and other countries.

A number of Arizona colleges and universities have received recognition for cutting-edge uses of educational technology tools and practices to enhance teaching and learning through the **WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) award**. Rio Salado College, Arizona State University, Cochise College, University of Arizona, and the University of Phoenix have been recognized for their effective and innovative uses of technology in education. Rio Salado College is a participant in the *Transparency by Design* project, a consumer education and accountability strategy benefiting adult students and the online higher education community.

Mental Health. A nucleus for researching mental health policy and a provider of technical assistance in such areas as service innovation, system reform, workforce development, and program evaluation, WICHE’s Mental

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Health Program is another well-used resource. The program recently completed a study for the Arizona State Hospital in Phoenix, making recommendations to improve how the hospital's security department functioned. WICHE was also asked to recommend ways that interactions between patients, residents, medical staff, visitors, and security personnel at the Arizona State Hospital and Arizona Community Protection and Treatment Center could be bettered. In addition, one Arizona higher education campus participated in a research study, funded by the National Institute for Mental Health, that focused on campus mental health and the effects of mental health first aid training for campus residence life staff.

Other Initiatives. Arizona was chosen to participate in the WICHE-managed **State Scholars Initiative (SSI)**, a national business/education partnership effort working to increase the number of students who take a rigorous curriculum in high school; its program was funded by a grant of \$300,000 from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

The Pima County Community College system, with six campuses and four learning and education centers, participates in the **Master Property Program (MPP)**. The program helps institutions in the West reduce their insurance premiums and improve their coverage. Created by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact in 1994 and expanded to the WICHE region in 2004, the MPP includes 50 member institutions with total insured values of \$78.9 billion. It has generated some \$65.4 million in savings for the participating institutions while expanding their insurance coverage.

Arizona & WICHE's Leadership

Leah Bornstein, president of Coconino College, Flagstaff, is the vice chair of the **WICHE Commission**, whose members mold the organization's mission and set its priorities. Arizona's other commissioners are: Thomas Anderes, president, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix; and Chris Bustamante, president, Rio Salado College, Tempe.



Thomas Anderes



Leah Bornstein



Chris Bustamante

WICHE also seeks assistance and advice from policymakers, educators, administrators and legislators. WICHE's **Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)**, composed of legislator-members from each state – including Arizona Rep. Steve Court, Mesa, and Rep. David Schapira, Tempe – has been crucial in this regard. The LAC works to keep the commission's Executive Committee and staff current on significant legislative issues related to higher education, provides input on WICHE initiatives, and advises staff on a host of issues. WICHE staff also serves the LAC, by informing its members about emerging policy issues in the West.

WICHE Commission & Staff

The WICHE Commission includes 45 members from 15 Western states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

WICHE and its staff are headquartered in Boulder, CO, and operate out of the State Higher Education Policy Center, which WICHE owns with the State Higher Education Executive Officers association and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Staff leadership includes:

David Longanecker, president

Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program

Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis

Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services

Dennis Mohatt, director, Mental Health Program, and vice president, behavioral health

Brian Prescott, director of policy research

Pat Shea, director, Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders, WICHE ICE and Western Academic Leadership Forum

Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET

How can I find out more about WICHE?

Visit our website at www.wiche.edu or contact President David Longanecker at 303.541.0201.

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Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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