



# CALIFORNIA & WICHE

## Working Together for Over a Half Century

WICHE

ALASKA

ARIZONA

CALIFORNIA

COLORADO

HAWAII

IDAHO

MONTANA

NEVADA

NEW MEXICO

NORTH DAKOTA

OREGON

SOUTH DAKOTA

UTAH

WASHINGTON

WYOMING

Western Interstate  
Commission for Higher  
Education

[www.wiche.edu](http://www.wiche.edu)

Since 1955 California 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 California joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from California 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, **California students and their families have saved \$311 million** since 1997, when the state began participating. (See “Doing the Math,” below, for California’s return on investment.)
- ▶ California has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ California has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

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

### WICHE’s Student Exchange

California is active in all three of WICHE Student Exchange Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange, the Professional Student Exchange Program, and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2011-12 California’s students and families saved **\$86.7 million**. California saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** California students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond California’s borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1997, **saving on 43,411 annual tuition bills**. In 2011-12, **9,717 students** from California are enrolled in

### Doing the Math: California’s Return on Investment

In 2011-12 California, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in some **\$88 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **703-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, California students’ savings from WUE alone have topped **\$257 million**, yielding a **420-fold return** on the state’s investment in WICHE.

# CALIFORNIA *and* WICHE

out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$83.7 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$8,619. In the last dozen years, students have saved **\$309 million**.

California benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. California’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 California after graduating. In 2011-12 California received 987 students through WUE.

**Professional Student Exchange Program.** California receives professional students through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). In 2011-12 it received 72 PSEP students and \$1.3 million in support fees.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** California’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 California sent 224 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving two.

**Internet Course Exchange (ICE).** WICHE’s newest exchange, ICE, is 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

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

**Policy & Workforce Development.** California has participated in projects supporting 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, WICHE policy experts often visit the state to present or consult on a number of vital issues, including the state’s workforce needs and balancing the financial aid portfolio between grants, loans, and scholarships, as well as between merit- and need-based aid.

WICHE was recently asked by the California Legislative Analyst’s Office for its counsel on how to help the state address proposed cuts to financial aid programs. Staff also served as an expert resource at a Public Policy Institute of California meeting, addressing the changes necessary in the wake of Governor Brown’s decisions to defund the California Postsecondary Education Commission, with the goal of ensuring that CPEC’s data collection was not lost. Staff discussed how to move California’s efforts to link data statewide and across segments forward and provided a brief report of what other states are doing in terms of statewide data governance. In addition, WICHE President David Longanecker worked with the Legislative Analyst’s Office on state governance and testified before legislators on university presidents’ compensation systems.

WICHE’s Lumina-funded project *Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid* 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 California Legislature. In addition, WICHE President David Longanecker did a presentation on student aid based on this research, addressing the state’s Special Committee on Postsecondary Education Reform. Longanecker delineated six principles of good public policy on student aid, provided examples of how California measures up on each principle, and presented particularly strong evidence that California policies result in substantial federal benefits being left on the table.

California partnered with the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California on a just-

<b>Student Savings</b>	
WUE	\$83,750,134
PSEP	\$0
WRGP	\$2,998,504
<b>Total Student Savings</b>	<b>\$86,748,638</b>
<b>Revenue to CA Institutions (PSEP)</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,266,819</b>
	<b>\$88,015,457</b>

## WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER a HALF CENTURY

“WICHE’s WRGP has allowed me to work toward my master’s degree at an out-of-state college while paying in-state tuition. It has reduced my tuition costs by half. Thanks to WRGP and SOU’s participation, I won’t have massive debt awaiting me upon graduation. WRGP is great for students; it opens up financially viable options for higher education beyond the borders of our home states.”

- Dusty, California resident, Class of 2011, Mental Health Counseling, Southern Oregon University

completed Ford Foundation-funded project that examined student progression and graduation rates, looking at differences by race/ethnicity in the achievement of milestones en route to postsecondary success (completion of remediation, 15 credits, 30 credits, postsecondary credential, etc.). The state also participated in the 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** programs for students who move from two-year to four-year institutions, focusing on strategies that increase access to and success in higher education.

California is one of five partner states participating in the *Interstate Passport Initiative*, which seeks to improve graduation rates, shorten time to degree, and save students money by addressing the two-year to four-year institution transfer problem at an interstate level. The two-year pilot project will focus on **forging general education core transfer agreements** based on learning outcomes between 28 institutions, including California State University, Sacramento and Cosumnes River College.

California participated in a Gates-funded meeting in 2008, which brought together the stewards of the data systems in 14 of the WICHE states for discussions around linking data internally and with other states. A central topic of conversation was how to address the challenges to **data sharing** presented by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Another meeting was 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 California State University System and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona are members of the **Western Academic Leadership Forum**, whose members address regional higher education issues and engage in resource sharing. 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. California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and the College of the Sequoias are members.

**Technology.** Several California 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. The four-day WCET 2010 annual conference was held in La Jolla, attracting 350 higher education professionals.

WCET members have access to trusted information on emerging trends, policies, and exemplars of successful learning technology innovation in practice. WCET provides access to peers, colleagues, common interest groups, experts, and decision makers; communications tools that enable members to stay informed about developments affecting technology-enabled teaching and learning; and information about key 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.

**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, program evaluation, and other areas, WICHE’s **Mental Health Program** is another well-used resource. Staff provided technical assistance to five

“When I learned I was accepted at Central Washington University, I was ecstatic to learn that I could enroll through WICHE’s WRGP and pay resident tuition.”

- Grace, California resident, Class of 2011, Primate Behavior, Central Washington University

# CALIFORNIA *and* WICHE

*“Since graduating with my bachelor’s in dental hygiene, I’ve had ambitions of obtaining my master’s. Lack of an in-state program and the financial burden of out-of-state tuition prohibited me from accomplishing my goal. Reduced tuition available by enrolling through WICHE’s WRGP has eliminated this burden. I’m excited for the knowledge I’ll gain and the future ahead of me.”*

*- Andrea, California resident, Class of 2012,  
Eastern Washington University, Master’s in Dental Hygiene*

California-based sites through the federal integrated care grant program of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Health Resources Services Administration. Three California higher education campuses participated in a research study, funded by the National Institute for Mental Health, that focuses on campus mental health and the effects of mental health first aid training for residence life staff.

**Other Initiatives.** Another initiative, the **Master Property Program (MPP)**, helps institutions 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.

## California & WICHE’s Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each state, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. California’s commissioners are Christopher Cabaldon, principal, Capitol Impact, and mayor, City of West Sacramento; Dianne Harrison, president, California State University, Monterey Bay; and Michael Kirst, president, State Board of Education, Sacramento.

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 California

Assembly Member Ricardo Lara and Senator Carol Liu, 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](http://www.wiche.edu) or contact President David Longanecker at 303.541.0201.

February 2012



Christopher Cabaldon



Dianne Harrison



Michael Kirst



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 200, Boulder, CO 80301-2204