



IDAHO & 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 Idaho 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 Idaho joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from Idaho 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, **Idaho students and their families have saved \$102 million** since 1988, when Idaho began participating in the program. (See "Doing the Math," below, for Idaho's return on investment.)
- ▶ Idaho has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ Idaho has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

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

WICHE's Student Exchange

Idaho 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 Idaho's students and families saved over **\$10.3 million**. Idaho saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

Western Undergraduate Exchange. Idaho students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond Idaho's borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1988, **saving on 19,832 annual**

Doing the Math: Idaho's Return on Investment

In 2011-12 Idaho, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in over **\$10.3 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding an **82-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, Idaho savings from WUE alone total more than **\$41.5 million**, yielding a **67-fold return on** the state's investment in WICHE.

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tuition bills. In 2011-12, 1,235 students from Idaho are enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$9.5 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$7,732. In the last dozen years, students have saved over **\$83.9 million**.

Idaho benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. Idaho’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 Idaho after graduating. In 2011-12 Idaho received 2,380 students through WUE.

Professional Student Exchange Program. Idaho has sent **850 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), with three students currently studying optometry. In addition, in 2011-12 the state received three students in four professional schools and over \$37,000 in support fees from other Western states.

Western Regional Graduate Program. Idaho’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 Idaho sent 56 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 21.

Internet Course Exchange (ICE). Boise State University and Lewis-Clark State College are members of WICHE’s

“Without WICHE I could not attend graduate school. As an adult student and parent, I have no flexibility in geography, and options for master’s degrees are few in northern Idaho. Washington State University Spokane is conveniently located and offers a robust master’s of health policy and administration program. When I was laid off recently, I knew pursuing a master’s was the best option for me and my family, but I could not afford out-of-state tuition. Thanks to WICHE’s WRGP, I now have an exciting career ahead of me.”

- Amy, Idaho resident, Class of 2010,
Washington State University Spokane,
Health Policy and Administration

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

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

Policy & Workforce Development. Idaho 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. The state’s decision makers keep current on many pressing policy issues developing all over the nation through WICHE’s extensive network.

Idaho is one of four states participating in the Gates-funded *Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange* pilot project, which attempts 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. WICHE held the fifth working group session of the exchange project in January in Boise, which allowed a larger number of Idaho officials to attend and participate. In addition, WICHE has provided counsel to Idaho State Board of Education related to its own efforts to build a state longitudinal data system. The state also participated

Figure 1. Idaho Savings and Revenues through WICHE, 2011

Student Savings	
WUE	\$9,548,855
PSEP	\$47,400
WRGP	\$749,626
Total Student Savings	\$10,345,881
Revenue to ID Institutions (PSEP)	
TOTAL	\$10,383,548

WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER a HALF CENTURY

“As a husband and father of three children, the challenge of funding my professional optometry education has been overwhelming. My undergraduate advisor encouraged me to apply for WICHE PSEP funding, and I am glad I followed her wise counsel! When I received the award letter from the State of Idaho notifying me that I was selected, I felt a great sense of appreciation – and relief! PSEP has reduced my financial stress, allowing me to dedicate myself to my family and maintain a healthy work-life balance, which ultimately contributes to my success as a student.”

- Dylan, Idaho resident, Class of 2013, Pacific University, College of Optometry

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.

Idaho participates in WICHE’s **College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Consortium and Network**, a federally funded formula grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who enroll and succeed in college. WICHE provides CACG Consortium states with assistance with grant development and management, program implementation and evaluation, and ongoing expert consultation and guidance. Consortium states are also members of the CACG Network, which provides a forum for developing, implementing, and maintaining state CACG efforts, with states sharing best practices and lessons learned and receiving current evidence-based research.

WICHE’s Lumina-funded project *Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations*,

“I was a senior in chemistry at Idaho State University when I first discovered the field of food science. Then I enrolled in Washington State University’s graduate program in food science through WRGP. Now I work for a major U.S. company designing new consumer food products. Without the WRGP reduced tuition rate, my dream of becoming a food scientist/technologist would not have been possible.”

– Josie, Idaho resident, Class of 2007, Washington State University, Food Science

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 Idaho Legislature.

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

Additionally, Boise State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and the University of Idaho 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. The College of Southern Idaho is a member.

Technology. Several Idaho 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.

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,

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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. The program supported the Idaho Governor's Office and the Legislature in a strategic-planning process focused on supporting improvements in the state's behavioral health system. This included conducting research for and providing technical assistance to the Governor's Transformation Workgroup. The program also provided technical assistance to the Division of Mental Health in its efforts to examine the need for a forensic psychiatric hospital facility. In addition, two Idaho 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 campus 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.

Idaho & WICHE's Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each member state, molds the organization's mission and set its priorities. Idaho's commissioners are: Duane Nellis, president, University of Idaho, Moscow; Michael Rush, executive director, State Board of Education, Boise; and Mack Shirley, state representative, Rexburg.



Duane Nellis



Michael Rush



Mack Shirley

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 WICHE Commissioner Mack Shirley – 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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