



# NEVADA & WICHE

## Working Together for Over a Half Century

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Western Interstate  
Commission for Higher  
Education

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

Since 1959 Nevada 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 Nevada joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from Nevada 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, **Nevada students have saved \$72 million** since 1988 when the program was founded. (See “Doing the Math,” below, for Nevada’s return on investment.)
- ▶ Nevada has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ Nevada has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

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

### WICHE’s Student Exchange

Nevada 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 Nevada’s students and families saved over **\$10.6 million**. Nevada saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** Nevada students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond Nevada’s borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1988, **saving on 14,942 annual**

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

In 2011-12 Nevada, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in over **\$10.9 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **86-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, Nevada savings from WUE alone have topped **\$34.9 million**, yielding a **56-fold return** on the state’s investment in WICHE.

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**tuition bills.** In 2011-12, 1,256 students from Nevada are enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$9.4 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$7,486. In the last dozen years, students have saved **over \$58.1 million.**

Nevada benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. Nevada’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 Nevada after graduating. In 2011-12 Nevada received 2,795 students through WUE.

**Professional Student Exchange Program.** Nevada has sent **1,415 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), with 43 students currently studying in a host of critical fields, including optometry, pharmacy, physician assistant, and veterinary medicine. Nevada received 21 PSEP students from other states in 2011-12, along with \$279,099 in support fees. Historically, some 69 percent of PSEP students return to Nevada to pursue their professional careers.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** Nevada’s postgraduates also enroll in degree and certificate programs through the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), which offers access to some 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 Nevada sent 31 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 23.

**Figure 1. Nevada Savings & Revenue through WICHE, 2011**

Student Savings	
WUE	\$9,402,019
PSEP	\$791,226
WRGP	\$414,972
<b>Total Student Savings</b>	<b>\$10,608,217</b>
Revenue to NV Institutions (PSEP)	
	\$279,099
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,887,316</b>

**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

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

**Policy & Workforce Development.** Nevada 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.

Nevada 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. The network 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-related services to the consortium states include grant development and management, program implementation and evaluation, and ongoing expert consultation and guidance.

Nevada is one of four Western states participating in the **Adult College Completion Network** (Colorado, North Dakota, and South Dakota are the others). The ACC Network, funded by Lumina Foundation, is a nationwide collaborative learning network that shares promising strategies among institutions, organizations, state agencies, and others working to increase completion rates for adults with prior college credit. The network offers a listerv and webinars on issues related to adult completion, and an annual meeting of large-scale projects working in this area. Nevada was also chosen for an earlier, related Lumina-funded project: *Non-traditional No More*. WICHE worked with state leaders to identify the **“ready adult” population** – those who have almost enough credits to graduate but who have not yet returned to college – and

## WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER 50 YEARS

“My ‘Aunt WICHE’ from Nevada has made going to optometry school possible. Without her help I’d be on a restricted diet of Top Ramen! My peers who don’t receive assistance from family (like my Aunt WICHE) must go on food stamps to offset their meager loans. Thanks to WICHE’s PSEP, I can pay my rent and buy required optometric equipment. I am proud to be a Nevadan: my state government supports me and values my future profession! I believe I’ll be a valuable part of Nevada’s healthcare system, and I look forward to serving my state.”

- Nicki, Nevada resident, Class of 2012,  
Pacific University, College of Optometry

help them earn their degrees. Over two years the state received \$65,000 and technical assistance.

The state received analytical support as part of a Ford Foundation-funded partnership between WICHE and the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California. WICHE used Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) longitudinal data to examine **student progression** from postsecondary entry through milestones (such as enrollment in college-level English and math courses, the completion of 15 credits or 30 credits, etc.), disaggregated by race/ethnicity, to determine how patterns differ by race/ethnicity. The goal was to inform policymaking with data to improve education outcomes for the state’s growing underrepresented populations. In September 2011 WICHE cofacilitated a retreat for Las Vegas-area institutions’ leaders, to examine how their data looked and what they might do about it.

Nevada 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. Representatives from the state 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.

WICHE President David Longanecker worked with the Nevada System of Higher Education on funding formulas and accountability systems. Staff also consulted with the provost of the University of Nevada, Reno, during his visit to WICHE’s offices for the **Western Academic Leadership Forum** meeting. And WICHE staff has produced targeted documents for the state, including a customized table from our annual *Tuition and Fees* report for NSHE staff usage.

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 Nevada Legislature.

Nevada 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, Nevada State College, University of Nevada Reno, and the University of Nevada Las Vegas 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**, will bring 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. Great Basin College is a member.

**Technology.** Several Nevada 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 partnered with Fred Lokken, dean at Truckee Meadows Community College, in a national webcast on changes in federal distance education policy to broaden awareness of the new requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act and call attention to concerns related to distance education, such as financial aid fraud. In addition, WCET featured the University of Nevada Las Vegas’s “concierge” program for returning adult students in its “Conversations with...” series.

WCET members have access to trusted information on emerging trends, policies, and exemplars of successful learning technology innovation in practice. WCET provides

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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.

**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. The 10 institutions in the Nevada System of Higher Education are insured through the MPP and collectively have **saved several million** on their insurance costs.

## Nevada & WICHE's Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each member state, molds the organization's mission and set its priorities. Nevada's three commissioners are: Joseph Hardy, state senator, Boulder City; Vic Redding, vice chancellor of finance, Nevada System of Higher Education, Reno; and Carl Shaff, educational consultant, Reno.

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 Assembly Member Debbie Smith, Senator Steven Horsford, and

Senator Hardy – 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.

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Joseph Hardy



Vic Redding



Carl Shaff



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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