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Western Interstate  
Commission for Higher  
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# NEW MEXICO & WICHE

## Working Together for Over a Half Century

Since 1952 New Mexico 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 New Mexico joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Thousands of students from New Mexico 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, **New Mexico students and their families have saved \$61.8 million** since 1988, when the program was founded. (See "Doing the Math," below, for New Mexico's return on investment.)
- ▶ New Mexico has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ New Mexico has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

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

### WICHE's Student Exchange

New Mexico 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 New Mexico's students and families saved some **\$6.9 million**. New Mexico saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** New Mexico students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond New Mexico's borders

#### Doing the Math: New Mexico's Return on Investment

In 2011-12 New Mexico, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in some **\$6.9 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **54-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, New Mexico savings from WUE alone have totaled **\$22.3 million**, yielding a **35-fold return** on the state's investment in WICHE.

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through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1988, **saving on 11,213 annual tuition bills**. In 2011-12, 630 students from New Mexico are enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$4.3 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$6,864. In the last dozen years, students have saved **over \$49.8 million**.

New Mexico benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. New Mexico’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 New Mexico after graduating. In 2011-12 New Mexico received 942 students through WUE.

**Professional Student Exchange Program.** New Mexico has sent **1,449 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), with students studying in two critical fields: dentistry and veterinary medicine. Historically, some 73 percent of PSEP students return to New Mexico to pursue their professional careers.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** New Mexico’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

**Figure 1. New Mexico Savings & Revenue through WICHE, 2011**

Student Savings	
WUE	\$4,324,542
PSEP	\$1,995,368
WRGP	\$615,764
<b>Total Student Savings</b>	<b>\$6,935,674</b>
Revenue to NM	
<b>Institutions (PSEP)</b>	<b>\$68,750</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,004,424</b>

“WICHE’s PSEP allows me to go to dental school in Oregon and pay in-state tuition with the promise of returning to New Mexico. New Mexico doesn’t have a dental school, but through WICHE I can study outside of my home state and then share my professional skills with the people in my home state, which I love. I am extremely grateful, as I see many of my classmates from out of state struggling financially. I thank WICHE and New Mexico for their support of my educational endeavors and look forward to returning home to practice dentistry.”

– Jenna, New Mexico resident, Class of 2013, Oregon Health Sciences University, School of Dentistry

programs. In 2011-12 New Mexico sent 46 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 62.

**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 WICHE states.

## WICHE’s Added Value

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

**Policy & Workforce Development.** New Mexico 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 President David Longanecker has worked with New Mexico Higher Education Department and Legislature to develop a performance-based funding structure, including facilitating a retreat in Boulder on funding and accountability processes with business, education, and government stakeholders.

Most recently, WICHE staff has been integrally involved in the New Mexico Department of Higher Education’s efforts to design and adopt a **new funding model** for the state. WICHE has considerable expertise and experience working with states on such models,

## WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER a HALF CENTURY

“WICHE’s PSEP has offered me a means to pursue my dream career in veterinary medicine. New Mexico does not have its own veterinary school, but PSEP makes veterinary education affordable and feasible! A heartfelt thank you to the residents of New Mexico and our legislators for their continued support of this key program!”

– Logan, New Mexico resident, Class of 2014, Washington State University, College of Veterinary Medicine

which seek to fund higher education institutions for the outcomes they produce (including degree and certificate completions and student academic progress). WICHE’s facilitation of a retreat for senior leaders within the department and among New Mexico’s public institutions and its ongoing involvement in the **policy development process** has helped the state sharpen its focus on how the policy might best meet its needs while taking into account the perspectives of key stakeholders.

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 New Mexico Legislature.

New Mexico 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.

New Mexico participated in a 2009 meeting organized by WICHE and the Sullivan Alliance aimed at improving the production of graduates in **high-demand health-related fields**, with a particular focus on students from underrepresented backgrounds. The state also 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. Another meeting was the **Western Summit on Workforce Certification and Higher Education** for policymakers in the West. 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.

Additionally, the New Mexico State University and New Mexico Highlands University 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. Santa Fe Community College and New Mexico State University Alamogordo are members.

**Technology.** Several New Mexico 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, 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 available to New Mexico. The program is collaborating with Doña Ana County in

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southern New Mexico to provide technical assistance and training to support improved crisis intervention resources. These efforts include mental health first aid trainings, trauma-informed care trainings, and support for a behavioral health “promotoras” initiative.

**Other Initiatives.** New Mexico was chosen to participate in the WICHE-managed **State Scholars Initiative**, a national business/education partnership working to increase the number of students taking 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. Another initiative, the **Master Property Program (MPP)**, 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 has generated some \$65.4 million in savings for its members while expanding their insurance coverage.

## New Mexico & WICHE’s Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each member state, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. New Mexico’s commissioners are: José Garcia, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Santa Fe; Susanna Murphy, lecturer, College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Organizational Learning, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; and Patricia Anaya Sullivan, assistant dean, College of Engineering, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.

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 Senator Dede Feldman and Senator Tim Keller, both of Albuquerque – has



José Garcia



Susanna Murphy



Patricia Sullivan

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, Western Academic Leadership Forum, and WICHE ICE

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



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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