



OREGON & WICHE

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Western Interstate
Commission for Higher
Education

www.wiche.edu

Since 1953 Oregon 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 Oregon joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from Oregon have attended undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in other Western states through WICHE’s Student Exchange Program, saving millions of dollars in all, thanks to reduced tuition rates. In just one of the programs, the Western Undergraduate Exchange, **Oregon students have saved \$133 million** since 1989, when the state joined the program. (See “Doing the Math,” below, for Oregon’s return on investment.)
- ▶ Oregon has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ Oregon has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

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

WICHE’s Student Exchange

Oregon 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 Oregon’s students and families saved **\$13.4 million**. Oregon saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

Western Undergraduate Exchange. Oregon students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond Oregon’s borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1989, **saving on 23,994 annual**

Doing the Math: Oregon’s Return on Investment

In 2011-12 Oregon, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in some **\$15.3 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **122-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, Oregon savings from WUE alone have totaled more than **\$58.9 million**, yielding a **95-fold return** on the state’s investment in WICHE.

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tuition bills. In 2011-12, 1,490 students from Oregon are enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$12.3 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$8,228. In the last dozen years, students have saved \$109 million.

Oregon benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. Oregon’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 Oregon after graduating. In 2011-12 Oregon received 2,147 students through WUE.

Professional Student Exchange Program. Oregon has sent **1,258 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), with students studying in a host of critical fields in the health sciences. Currently, Oregon is a PSEP receiving state, with 110 students enrolled in professional programs, bringing in almost **\$2 million** in revenue.

Western Regional Graduate Program. Oregon’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 Oregon sent 84 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 24.

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

“As an Oregon resident from one of the many families that make too much money to qualify for financial aid but still struggle to pay for college, WUE meant that I could study in California as I had dreamed of, enroll at a college with a good business program, and take out minimal student loans. I can’t even begin to describe how much the reduced tuition through WUE has meant for my family and me.”

- Aften, Oregon resident, Class of 2012,
California State University–East Bay,
Business Administration, Accounting, and Entrepreneurship

among two- and four-year institutions in the 15-state WICHE region.

Oregon 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 Eastern Oregon University and Columbia Gorge Community College; and University of Oregon and Lane Community College.

WICHE’s Added Value

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

Policy & Workforce Development. Oregon 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. Oregonians also keep current on pressing policy issues developing all over the nation through WICHE’s extensive network.

Oregon 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. The state also participated in a Gates-funded meeting in 2008,

Figure 1. Oregon Savings and Revenue through WICHE, 2011

Student Savings	
WUE	\$12,259,266
WRGP	\$1,124,439
Total Student Savings	\$13,383,705
Revenue to OR Institutions (PSEP)	
	\$1,935,635
TOTAL	\$15,319,340

WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER 50 YEARS

“I’ll be the first member of my family to receive a college degree. Without the reduced tuition available through WUE, it would have cost over \$100K to attend college. I have learned so much in my first semester at Central Washington University. I hold tremendous gratitude for the WUE program. WUE is a worthy investment; it’s allowed me to improve my life, and I feel called to give back to the community in honor of the assistance extended to me.”

- Kelsey, Oregon resident,
Class of 2014, Central Washington University

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, 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.

WICHE staff provided intensive technical assistance to the gubernatorially appointed Access and Affordability Working Group. WICHE offered expertise and modeling for a wholesale **redesign of the state’s principal student financial aid program**. The proposed program was enacted into law by the 2007 Legislature; WICHE continues to be consulted on program management.

WICHE’s Lumina-funded project *Getting What You Pay For: Understanding Higher Education Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid (GWYPF)* 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 Oregon Legislature. In addition, WICHE President David Longanecker, along with National Center

for Higher Education Management Systems President Dennis Jones, met with state leaders and addressed a joint hearing of the **education and workforce development committees** of both the House and Senate about the role, scope, and mission of higher education, with a particular focus on mission creep, a topic of one of the GWYPF policy briefs. Longanecker worked with the Legislature on developing a new higher education governance structure and with the Governor’s Office on creating a new state education investment board.

Oregon 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, the Oregon University System, Portland State University, Pacific University, Oregon State University, and University of Oregon 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 Oregon Board of Education is a member.

Technology. Several Oregon 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 has consulted with and written grants for the Western Institute of Nursing at Oregon Health & Science University with the Nursing Education Exchange (NEXus) project.

“After 10 years of professional experience as an educator, I decided to return to academia for a master’s in human resource management. My home state of Oregon only offered one such program in a private university, so the expense was prohibitive. Through WRGP I was able to pursue my chosen degree in a partner state and I am thrilled with the quality of the program. WRGP truly made my higher education possible, and I couldn’t have done it otherwise.”

- Matthew, Oregon resident, Class of 2011,
Utah State University, Human Resource Management

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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. The program recently performed a cost-benefit analysis for the State of Oregon of an early-intervention program designed for persons with serious, early-onset psychiatric disorders.

Other Initiatives. Lewis & Clark College, Reed College, and Willamette University are members of the **Master Property Program (MPP)**, which 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 over \$65.4 million in savings for the participating institutions while expanding their insurance coverage.

Oregon & WICHE's Leadership

In 2007 Camille Preus, commissioner of the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Salem, chaired the **WICHE Commission**, whose members mold the organization's mission and set its priorities. Oregon's other two commissioners are: Ryan Deckert, president, Oregon Business Association, Portland; and Tim Nesbitt, consultant and columnist.



Ryan Deckert



Tim Nesbitt



Camille Preus

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 Oregon Senator Richard Devlin, Tualatin, and Representative Michael Dembrow, Portland – 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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