



# SOUTH DAKOTA & WICHE

## Working Together for Over Two Decades

WICHE

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Western Interstate  
Commission for Higher  
Education

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

Since 1988 South Dakota 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 two-plus decades since South Dakota joined the commission, the state has benefitted in a number of essential ways.

- ▶ Thousands of students from South Dakota have attended undergraduate and graduate 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, **South Dakota students and their families have saved nearly \$63 million** since 1989, when they started using the program. (See "Doing the Math," below, for South Dakota's return on investment.)
- ▶ South Dakota has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ South Dakota has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

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

### WICHE's Student Exchange

South Dakota is active in two of the three WICHE Student Exchange Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2011-12 South Dakota's students and families saved over **\$3.7 million**. South Dakota saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** South Dakota students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond South Dakota's borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1989, **saving on 15,972 annual tuition bills**. In 2011-12, 546 students from South Dakota are enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150

### Doing the Math: South Dakota's Return on Investment

In 2011-12 South Dakota, its institutions, and its students saved some **\$3.7 million** through WICHE and spent \$125,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **29-fold return on investment**.

In the last 5 years, South Dakota students' savings from WUE alone total more than **\$18.8 million**, yielding a **30-fold return** on the state's investment in WICHE.

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**Figure 1. South Dakota Residents' Tuition Savings through WUE & WRGP, 2011**

**Student Savings**

WUE	\$3,437,910
WRGP	\$267,724
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,705,634</b>

percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$3.4 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$6,297. In the last dozen years, students have saved over **\$49 million**.

South Dakota benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. South Dakota'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 South Dakota after graduating. In 2011-12 South Dakota received 1,435 students through WUE.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** South Dakota'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 South Dakota sent 20 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 10.

**Internet Course Exchange (ICE).** The South Dakota System of Higher Education is a member of WICHE's 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.

"Without WUE, I wouldn't have had the chance to experience Colorado and benefit from the educational programs and research that is abundant here. I'm extremely appreciative of the opportunities WUE has provided; they'll help me prepare for medical school in the future."

– Molly, South Dakota resident, Class of 2012, Colorado State University, Health & Exercise Science, Sports Medicine

## WICHE's Added Value

South Dakota gains added value from WICHE's programs in policy, workforce development, technology, mental health, and other areas.

**Policy & Workforce Development.** South Dakota 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. South Dakota decision makers also keep current on pressing policy issues developing all over the nation through WICHE's extensive network.

South Dakota is one of four Western states participating in the **Adult College Completion Network**. 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. South Dakota 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 help them earn their degrees. Over two years the state received \$65,000 and technical assistance.

WICHE facilitated a 2009 meeting in Pierre, bringing state officials and data stewards together to focus on South Dakota's efforts to address legal issues related to the **sharing of data across education and workforce sectors**. The previous year, the state participated in a Gates-funded meeting that 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

## WORKING TOGETHER *for* OVER 20 YEARS

“Without WRGP I could not afford tuition for my doctoral degree. After graduation I’ll return to my home on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. As the recent ‘20/20’ episode about our community showed, the needs of our youth are overwhelming but not insurmountable. I believe strongly in the resilience of our Lakota people and with my education, I’ll be able to help strengthen our Lakota lifeways. I’ll be the first generation in my family to earn a doctorate. My late parents would be very proud, as they were strong supporters of higher education. A big ‘wopila’ (‘thank you’ in Lakota) to WRGP!”

– Ethleen, South Dakota resident, Class of 2014, Colorado State University, Education and Human Resource Studies

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’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 South Dakota Legislature.

South Dakota 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 South Dakota Board of Regents and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology 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. Lake Area Technical Institute is a member.

**Technology.** Several South Dakota 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. As part of its EduTools initiative, WCET conducted a webinar for South Dakota institutions on open source learning management systems (LMS) options. WCET also contracted with the South Dakota Board of Regents to provide assistance in developing a plan and an RFP for a statewide LMS vendor selection process.

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 supports the Department of Human Services’ Mental Health and Substance Abuse divisions in a number of initiatives, including the evaluation of two major federal grants to support the development of services for persons with co-occurring substance abuse and mental illness and to support local suicide prevention efforts for youth. WICHE also supports the development of improvements in services to children with serious emotional disturbance and their families.

Additionally, the program provides technical assistance in relation to quality and outcome data analysis. The program is working on a prevalence and unmet need study of persons with serious mental illness to inform state planning. The program also worked with state partners to present a training opportunity to improve community

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providers' capacity to work with returning veterans, Guardsmen, reservists, and their families who may seek services in their home communities rather than at military or Veterans Administration facilities. In addition, one South Dakota higher education campus 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.** South Dakota was chosen to participate in the WICHE-managed **State Scholars Initiative (SSI)**, a national business/education partnership effort working to increase the number of students who take 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. In 2008 South Dakota sent a team to the National Summit on Rigor and Relevance in Boston, sponsored by SSI.

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.

## South Dakota & WICHE's Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each member state, molds the organization's mission and set its priorities. South Dakota's commissioners are: Robert Burns, dean emeritus of Honors College and distinguished professor emeritus of political science, South Dakota State University, Brookings; James O. Hansen, regent, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre; and Jack Warner, executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre.

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 Jeff Haverly, Pennington County, and Senator Jim Putnam, Armour – 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



Robert Burns



James Hansen



Jack Warner

## 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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WICHE

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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