



# WICHE & SOUTH DAKOTA

Partnering for Nearly Three Decades

WICHE



ACCESS • COLLABORATION • INNOVATION

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) is a 16-member commission working to boost access to higher education for students in the West and, as importantly, to ensure their success. South Dakota has been a member of WICHE since 1988.

## Benefits to South Dakota

- ▶ 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 more than **\$84.7 million** since 1989, when they started using the program.
- ▶ 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.

## Doing the Math:

### South Dakota's Return on Investment

- ▶ In 2017-18 South Dakota, its institutions, and its students saved **\$4.5 million** through WICHE and spent \$149,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **30-fold return on investment**.
- ▶ In the last five years, South Dakota students' savings from WUE alone have added up to **\$18.5 million**, yielding a **26-fold return** on the state's investment in WICHE.

## WICHE's Student Exchange & Related Programs

South Dakota is active in two of the three WICHE Student Exchange Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2017-18 South Dakota's students and families saved **\$4.5 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. In 2017-18, 563 students from South Dakota were enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$4 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings was \$7,200. In the last 10 years, students have saved **\$36.5 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 2017-18 South Dakota received 1,761 students through WUE.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** South Dakota's postgraduates also enroll in graduate programs through the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), which offers access to 435 high-quality programs at 60 institutions in all WICHE states. WRGP programs run the gamut, but emerging social, environmental, resource-management, and healthcare fields are particular strengths, as are innovative interdisciplinary programs. In 2017-18 South Dakota sent 26 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving nine.

**Interstate Passport** is a program that facilitates block transfer of lower-division general education based on learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It includes learning outcomes for nine knowledge and skill areas developed by faculty at institutions in multiple states as well as an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students designed by registrars and institutional researchers. The goal of the Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students' unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved.

WICHE’s Added Value

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

WICHE’s 9th edition of *Knocking at the College Door* high school graduate projections, released in December 2016 (and updated in September 2017 with additional data), describes how the nation and many states have entered a decade of stabilization in the number of high school graduates through about 2025—with substantial contraction in the number of White high school graduates and rapid increases of non-White populations—before entering a period of fewer high school graduates related to a recent “baby bust.” The WICHE region will generally track the national trend, but less so based on trends with White youth and more due to a projected 20 percent increase of Hispanic high school graduates through 2024 and then decrease by about the same amount between 2025 and 2032.

There is an abundance of information on [knocking.wiche.edu](http://knocking.wiche.edu), including the publication and other reports, projections data, interactive data dashboards, recorded webinars and presentations, and South Dakota’s state profile, which indicates that:

- ▶ South Dakota is projected to produce 9,200 high school graduates per year, on average, between school years 2012 and 2032, reflecting moderate growth through 2025 – about 13% more graduates – and then a relatively stable number of graduates from 2025 to 2032.
- ▶ Non-White public high school graduates are currently about 14% of all of South Dakota’s public high school graduates and will increase to 26% of the total by 2032.

**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 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Helmsley Charitable Trusts, the Ford Foundation, 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. For instance, in 2016, WICHE examined how the state might develop a strategy



“I’m originally from South Dakota and the first in my family to enroll in college. For my master’s at Utah State University, I qualified for in-state tuition for the first time in my academic career, thanks to WRGP! I am currently a preschool teacher for deaf children, and I love my job!”

– Brynn, South Dakota resident,  
Utah State University, Bilingual-Bicultural Deaf Education

for the redesign of state-funded financial aid programs and developed a model for consideration by the South Dakota Board of Regents. South Dakota decision-makers also keep current on pressing policy issues developing all over the nation through WICHE’s extensive network.

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 Sen. Terri Haverly and Rep. Dan Ahlers—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 serve the LAC by informing members about emerging Western policy issues.

**Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives.** Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, the South Dakota Board of Regents, South Dakota State University, and the University of South Dakota are members of the **Western Academic Leadership Forum** (the Forum). Their official representatives are the chief academic leaders of the four-year institutions and their related system and state agencies, who address regional higher education issues, and engage in resource-sharing. The **Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders** (the Alliance) 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, Mitchell Technical Institute, South Dakota Department of Education, Southeast Technical Institute, and Western Dakota Technical Institute are members.

**Technology.** Several South Dakota colleges and universities are active participants in the **WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)**, the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET is widely recognized as one of the most informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organizations regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education. Our growing membership includes more than 350 institutions, state and system-wide higher education agencies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in nearly all U.S. states and many Canadian provinces. WCET members

Figure 1. South Dakota Savings through WICHE Programs in 2017	
Student Savings	
WUE	\$4,081,989
WRGP	\$408,304
Total Student Savings	\$4,490,293



“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,  
Colorado State University, Education and Human Resource Studies

have access to trusted information on emerging trends, policies, and exemplars of successful learning technology innovation in practice. Key WCET activities include an annual meeting, leadership summits, national webcasts, and email list-based discussions among members. Major topics of interest to the WCET membership include student success, managing e-learning, faculty success, emerging technologies, and evolving policy issues.

**Mental Health.** WICHE is very active supporting the South Dakota behavioral health system, both at the community level and at the state psychiatric hospital. WICHE conducts annual reviews of two to three of the state’s six IMPACT Programs (Assertive Community Treatment) and their fidelity to evidence-based standards of care. During a 2015 transition of leadership at the state psychiatric hospital (HSC-Yankton), WICHE provided support and mentoring to interim leadership, including techniques to reduce seclusion and restraint and to improve direct-care staff scheduling and treatment programming. Over the past year, the Mental Health Program reviewed a community collaborative serving children and youth at risk in Yankton, South Dakota to determine its feasibility and to make recommendations for statewide implementation. This project was funded by the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

**State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).** SARA is a voluntary, nationwide initiative of states that makes distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and makes it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The effort initially was funded by \$3.2 million in grants from Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and is now supported by fees paid by institutions. The initiative is administered by the country’s four regional higher education compacts – the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) – and overseen by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states, and better resolution of student complaints. South Dakota is among the WICHE states that are members of W-SARA in this reciprocal relationship.

## 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, former regent, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre; and Michael Rush, former executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre, and WICHE chair 2015.



Robert Burns



James Hansen



Michael Rush

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“I studied and worked in the accounting industry prior to re-enrolling at Metro State to complete a degree that I had started there several years earlier. When I learned about the WUE program, I knew that I could fulfill my dream and earn my bachelor’s in accounting. Thank you for this wonderful program! I plan to spread the word to others about WUE, and how it can help achieve dreams and goals.”

– Tammy, South Dakota resident, class of 2017  
Metropolitan State University of Denver,  
Bachelor of Science in Accounting

## WICHE Commission & Staff

The **WICHE Commission** includes three gubernatorial selected representatives from each member: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Members work collaboratively to provide educational access and excellence for all citizens.

WICHE and its staff are headquartered in Boulder, Colo., 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

**Michael Abbiatti**, vice president for educational technologies and executive director, WCET

**John Lopez**, special assistant to the president and chief administrative officer, and director, W-SARA

**Demarée Michelau**, vice president, policy analysis and research

**Jere Mock**, vice president, programs and services

**Dennis Mohatt**, vice president, behavioral health

**Jeremy Simon**, director of strategic communications

## How can I find out more about WICHE?

Visit our website at [wiche.edu](http://wiche.edu) or contact 303.541.0200.

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