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. Oregon has been a member of WICHE since 1953.

Benefits to Oregon

- 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, thanks to reduced tuition rates. In just one of the programs, the Western Undergraduate Exchange, Oregon students and their families have saved $194.9 million since 1989, when the state joined the program.
- 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.

Doing the Math: Oregon’s Return on Investment

- In 2016-17 Oregon, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in over $17 million through WICHE and spent $145,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a 117-fold return on investment.
- In the last five years, Oregon students’ savings from WUE alone have added up to $62.1 million, yielding a 91-fold return on the state’s investment in WICHE.

WICHE’s Student Exchange & Related Programs

Oregon is active in two of the three WICHE Student Exchange Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange, the Professional Student Exchange Program, and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2016-17 Oregon’s students and families saved $15.2 million in tuition. 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. In 2016-17, 1,417 students from Oregon were enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving $13.7 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to $9,707. In the last 10 years, students have saved $121 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 2016-17 Oregon received 2,987 students through WUE.

Professional Student Exchange Program. Oregon sent 1,258 students to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) in past years. Currently, Oregon is a PSEP receiving state, with 82 students enrolled in professional programs, bringing in over $1.7 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 some 450 high-quality, distinctive programs at 61 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 2016-17 Oregon sent 103 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 108.

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...

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of the Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students’ unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved.

**WICHE’s Added Value**

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

One of WICHE’s most widely known publications is the *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates* series, which for almost 40 years has provided strategic data about how high school graduates are likely to change in the years ahead. The 9th edition of *Knocking at the College Door*, released in December 2016, describes how the nation has entered a decade of stabilization in the number of high school graduates, with substantial contraction in the number of White high school graduates and rapid increases of non-White populations. After about 2025, the nation and most states will produce fewer high school graduates than in recent years, due to a recent “baby bust”. The WICHE region will generally track the national trend, but it will be less impacted by the contraction of White youth and more influenced by 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](knocking.wiche.edu), including the publication and other reports, projections data, interactive data dashboards, recorded webinars and presentations, and Oregon’s state profile, which indicates that:

- Oregon is projected to produce 36,500 high school graduates per year, on average, between school years 2012 and 2032. The number of high school graduates in Oregon will increase by only about 3% by 2026 and then decline about 7% by 2032.
- Non-White public high school graduates will increase only slightly, from 27% to 30% of the public school total between 2012 and 2032, primarily because Hispanic and Asian graduates are not projected to increase in number as robustly in Oregon as in other West states and the number of White high school graduates will remain about the same throughout.

**Policy & Workforce Development.** Oregon has participated in projects supporting better-informed decision making at the state level. WICHE initiatives have been sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, Lumina 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.

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 success of the pilot phase led Gates to fund program expansion, which will allow other states to participate.

The **Adult College Completion (ACC) Network**, funded by Lumina Foundation, was an 800-member learning network that united organizations and agencies working to increase college completion by adults with prior college credits but no degree. Activities included an annual workshop, a webinar series, publications, a listserv, and other resources. The ACC Network and WICHE became national leaders in the area of adult learners and continue to be an important resource to those who strive to better serve non-traditional students.

The **State Higher Education Policy Database (SHEPD)** is WICHE’s online searchable database. It provides state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers with an inventory of state-level policies and resources in key policy issue areas related to access and success in higher education. It contains a blog and an electronic SHEPD alert distribution list to keep subscribers current on important updates. A related resource is the Policy Publications Clearinghouse, a depository of publications, reports, and briefs related to higher education.

Additionally, the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Pacific University, and Portland State University are members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum (the Forum), 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. Chemeketa Community College, Portland Community College, and Umpqua Community College are members.

Technology. Several Oregon 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 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.

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Mental Health. WICHE is working collaboratively with the Oregon State Hospital to build an APA-accredited psychology internship program. In 2015, OSH matriculated its first cohort of psychology interns. WICHE supported the completion of an internship self-study and prepared the program for an accreditation site visit in the 4th quarter of FY16. Additionally, WICHE assisted OSH in its response to a sentinel event at the hospital. Oregon has been very active in the Western States Decision Support Group, which is a learning community for program evaluators in public behavioral health systems across the WICHE West.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). SARA is a voluntary, nationwide initiative of states that will make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and make 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. Oregon is among the WICHE states that are members of W-SARA in this reciprocal relationship.

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 more than 160 campuses with total insured values of over $103 billion. It has generated over $94.7 million in savings for the participating institutions while expanding their insurance coverage. WICHE is also partnering with MHEC to offer MHECare, a new health program providing vetted, competitively priced medical benefits for students. Underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources, MHECare offers a variety of plans. In a

“In a clinical psychology doctoral program, finding a “good fit” to foster your career aspirations is especially important. WRGP allowed me the ability to gain acceptance into a program specializing in Clinical Health Psychology, with faculty conducting research that closely aligns with my focus area. I look forward to the relevant research I’ll be a part of and the amazing education I’ll receive at the University of Colorado Denver as part of my training to become a clinical psychologist. Thank you, WICHE, for affording me this opportunity!”

– Ryan, Oregon resident, Class of 2016, University of Colorado Denver, Clinical Health Psychology
third collaboration with MHEC, WICHE extends the benefits of MHECtech to colleges and universities in the West, enabling them to purchase off competitively bid purchasing agreements to reduce costs on a range of hardware and software products and services.

**Oregon & WICHE’s Leadership**

*The WICHE Commission*, with three commissioners from each member state, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. Oregon’s commissioners are: Ryan Deckert, president, Oregon Business Association, Portland; Camille Preus (2007 chair), president, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton; and Hilda Rosselli, director of college and career readiness, Chief Education Office, Salem.

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. Michael Dembrow and Sen. Richard Devlin – has been crucial in this regard. The LAC keeps 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 also serves the LAC, by informing its members about emerging policy issues in the West.

**WICHE Commission & Staff**

The WICHE Commission’s 16 members include representatives from 15 Western states – 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 (the various entities can decide to participate), Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Members work collaboratively to provide educational access and excellence for all citizens.

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:

- **Joseph A. Garcia**, 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, office of 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 www.wiche.edu or contact President Joseph A. Garcia at 303.541.0201.

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