



# WICHE & CALIFORNIA

## Partnering for Over Six 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. California has been a member of WICHE since 1955.

### Benefits to California

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from California have attended undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in other Western states through WICHE's Student Access Programs, saving millions of dollars, thanks to reduced tuition rates. In just one of the programs, the Western Undergraduate Exchange, California students and their families have saved \$1.35 billion since 1997, when the state began participating.
- ▶ California has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ California has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

### Doing the Math:

#### California's Return on Investment

- ▶ In 2018-19 California, its institutions, and its students saved **\$187.3 million** through WICHE and spent \$153,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **122,398 percent return on investment**.
- ▶ In the last five years, California students' savings from WUE alone have totaled **\$820.3 million**.

### WICHE's Student Access & Related Programs

California is active in two of the three WICHE **Student Access Programs**: the Western Undergraduate Exchange and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2018-19 California's students and families saved some **\$187.3 million**. California saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** California students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond California's

borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1997. In 2018-19, 17,511 students from California were enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving \$179.2 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$10,200. In the last 10 years, students have saved **\$1.2 billion**.

California benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. California'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 California after graduating. In 2018-19 California received 961 students through WUE.

**Professional Student Exchange Program.** California receives professional students through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). In 2018-19 it received 86 PSEP students and \$1.9 million in support fees.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** California's postgraduates also enroll in graduate programs through the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), which offers access to more than 700 high-quality programs at some 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 2018-19 California sent 528 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 21.

**Interstate Passport<sup>®</sup>** 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

California 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 projections of high school graduates for Alaska and a state profile, which indicates that:

- ▶ California is the #1 highest producer of high school graduates nationally, with 426,400 high school graduates per year, on average, between school years 2012 and 2032. However, California is projected to have an overall decrease in the size of its graduating class of 14% by 2032, declining to 394,100 graduates.
- ▶ Non-White public high school graduates are already 69% of all of California’s public high school graduates, and will increase to 74% of the total by 2032, even though the number of Hispanic graduates will decline by 52,000 (12%).

**Policy & Workforce Development.** California 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 workforce needs and balancing the financial aid portfolio.

**Figure 1. California Savings and Revenues through WICHE Programs in 2018**

### Student Savings

WUE	\$179,172,284
WRGP	\$8,096,880
<b>Total Student Savings</b>	<b>\$187,269,164</b>

### Revenue to CA

<b>Institutions (PSEP)</b>	<b>\$1,889,125</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$189,158,289</b>



“At the time I applied to graduate school, there were no master’s programs focused on human anatomy offered in California. The closest one was at the University of Colorado Denver, so I applied. Before I went to UC Denver for my interview, I told my mom that without WRGP, I’d study something else, like chemistry. But I was putting on a brave face – I knew that teaching human anatomy at a community college was my true passion. Fortunately, I was accepted and offered WRGP! I’m now in my second semester of the program, I’m learning EXACTLY what I need and my skill set will be above and beyond what I’ll need for my future career. I am so grateful for WICHE’s WRGP. Without it, this perfect match would not have been possible, and I wouldn’t be living life to its fullest!”

– Sara, California resident,  
University of Colorado Denver,  
Master’s in Modern Human Anatomy

**Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives.** The California State University (CSU) System; CSU Fresno; CSU Long Beach; CSU Northridge; CSU San Marcos; Sonoma State University; and the University of California, San Diego 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. The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and Cerritos College are members. California hosted the 2017 Alliance annual meeting in Long Beach.

**Technology.** Several California 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,



“I am from California and was able to go to Washington to complete my doctoral program in audiology because of WICHE’s WRGP program. I would not have been able to afford to study at the University of Washington without it. I am grateful that California is a member of WICHE so that I could be considered for the WRGP reduced tuition. WRGP allowed me the opportunity to step outside my comfort zone and study in a place I never even thought I could go. It cut my tuition bill by almost half, which is a HUGE deal, especially for an already-in-debt graduate student.”

– Brittney, California resident,  
University of Washington, Audiology

managing e-learning, faculty success, emerging technologies, and evolving policy issues. University of California College Prep (2005), California State University Office of the Chancellor (2006), and California State University (2008), won the WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) award, which recognizes effective and innovative uses of technology to address specific needs in higher education.

**Behavioral Health.** The WICHE Behavioral Health Program has been somewhat active in California over the past several years. During FY13, WICHE facilitated a learning community of providers engaged in integrated behavioral and primary healthcare, while in FY15 staff conducted trainings around improved community-based services to veterans in Truckee. In June 2015, WICHE facilitated a provider training focused on suicide prevention at the annual conference of the California Rural Indian Health Board.

**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. California is not yet a SARA member.

**Other Initiatives.** The **Master Property Program (MPP)** helps institutions reduce their insurance premiums and improve their coverage. Created by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and expanded to the WICHE region in 2004, the MPP includes more than 160 campuses with total insured values of \$93.4 billion. WICHE is also partnering with MHEC to offer **MHECare**, a health program providing vetted, competitively priced medical benefits for students. Underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources, MHECare offers a variety of plans. California Institute of Technology and the University of South Los Angeles are participants in MHECare. In a 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.

### California & WICHE’s Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each member, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. California’s commissioners are Christopher Cabaldon, president, Linked Learning Alliance, and mayor, City of West Sacramento; Dianne Harrison, president of California State University, Northridge; and Francisco Rodriguez, chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles.



Christopher Cabaldon



Dianne Harrison



Francisco Rodriguez

WICHE also seeks assistance and advice from policymakers,



“Before I heard about WUE, I was a full-time waitress working hard to survive in Irvine, California. I’d already given up my dreams of becoming an engineer. I would never have been able to attend or afford college if it weren’t for WUE. And studying at NMSU has opened up tremendous opportunities

for me. I am serving on the elected body of the university’s student government as a representative of the College of Engineering. I also got to meet and interview with many of the alumni who are now working at major companies like Chevron, Exxon Mobil, Raytheon, and more. Within just my first year here, I have already built a large network that will help pave the way to my future success.”

– Diane, California resident,  
New Mexico State University, Chemical Engineering

educators, administrators, and legislators. WICHE's [Legislative Advisory Committee \(LAC\)](#), composed of legislator-members from each state—including Assemblyman Jose Medina—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 serve the LAC, informing members about emerging policy issues in the West.

## 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:

- Demarée Michelau, president
- Michael Abbiatti, vice president for educational technologies and executive director, WCET
- Patrick Lane, vice president, policy analysis and research
- Jere Mock, vice president, programs and services
- Dennis Mohatt, vice president, behavioral health

## 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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