



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. Idaho has been a member of WICHE since 1953.

### Benefits to Idaho

- ▶ Tens of thousands of students from Idaho 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, Idaho students and their families have saved more than \$175.3 million since 1988, when Idaho began participating in the program.
- ▶ Idaho has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ Idaho has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

### Doing the Math: Idaho’s Return on Investment

- ▶ In 2017-18 Idaho, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in some **\$17.3 million** through WICHE and spent \$149,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **116-fold return on investment**.
- ▶ In the last five years, Idaho students’ savings from WUE alone have added up to **\$63.9 million**, yielding a **91-fold return** on the state’s investment in WICHE.

### WICHE’s Student Access & Related Programs

Idaho is active in two of three WICHE **Student Access Programs**: the Western Undergraduate Exchange and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2017-18 Idaho’s students and families saved over **\$17.2 million**. Idaho saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** Idaho students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond Idaho’s borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1988. In 2017-18, 1,964 students from Idaho were enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving \$16 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$8,100. In the last 10 years, students have saved **\$107.2 million**.

Idaho benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. Idaho’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 Idaho after graduating. In 2017-18 Idaho received 2,564 students through WUE.

**Professional Student Exchange Program.** Idaho sent **850 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) in past years. In addition, in 2017-18 the state received four students and \$68,300 in support fees from other Western states.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** Idaho’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 Idaho sent 78 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 60.

**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

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

- ▶ Idaho is projected to produce 21,000 high school graduates per year, on average, between school years 2012 and 2032. Idaho will experience rapid increase in the number of high school graduates through 2026—about 6,000 more graduates by 2026—and then decline about 10% by 2032.
- ▶ Non-White public high school graduates are currently about 18% of all of Idaho’s public high school graduates and will increase to 26% of the total by 2032. The number of Hispanic and Black public high school students is projected to almost double.

**Policy & Workforce Development.** Idaho 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. WICHE President Joe



“I completed my bachelor’s degree in Idaho and was waiting to hear from three graduate schools to find out where I would be continuing my education. I got accepted to Eastern Washington University but was worried because the out-of-state tuition is high. Thanks to WICHE’s Western Regional Graduate Program, I was offered in-state tuition! This has saved me thousands of dollars and I am very grateful. “

– Kevin, Idaho resident, Class of 2017,  
Eastern Washington University, Master’s in Social Work

Garcia spoke to the Idaho President’s Council in September 2016 about Idaho’s emerging position as a leader in the West. Then, in February 2017, he presented to the Idaho State Board of Education and testified before the Idaho Legislature’s Joint House and Senate Education Committee meeting on higher education policy issues and key benchmarks related to Idaho. In June 2017, in partnership with the McClure Center for Public Policy Research at the University of Idaho and the Idaho State Board of Education, WICHE staff facilitated, “Idaho’s Future: Improving the Transition from High School to College and Career,” a three-day meeting of 31 high school career and college counselors and postsecondary academic advisors and career counselors that examined the student pipeline from eighth grade through the first year of postsecondary education, and drafted nine recommendations that were presented to the State Board of Education.

Idaho was one of four original states participating in the Gates-funded Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE) 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. WICHE held one of its working group sessions in Boise, which allowed a larger number of Idaho officials to attend and participate. The success of that pilot led Gates to fund a second phase in which the MLDE project will expand to other states.

**Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives.** Boise State University, Idaho State University, and the University of Idaho 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. North Idaho College and the College of Southern Idaho are members.

<b>Figure 1. Idaho Savings and Revenues through WICHE Programs in 2017</b>	
<b>Student Savings</b>	
WUE	\$15,994,777
WRGP	\$1,224,912
<b>Total Student Savings</b>	<b>\$17,219,689</b>
<b>Revenue to ID Institutions (PSEP)</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,287,997</b>



“WRGP has made it financially possible for me to obtain my graduate studies from a highly respected institution in the field of healthcare informatics. I’m learning from some of the best professionals in the field, and I hope to contribute to the field of nursing informatics in my current location. This opportunity has already helped me advance in my nursing career. WRGP gives students the opportunity to choose the best programs in their field and get their graduate education for an affordable price.”

– Tatiane, Idaho resident, Class of 2017,  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Healthcare Informatics

**Technology.** Several Idaho 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. Boise State University’s Virtual Reality Nursing Simulation won the WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) award in 2015, which recognizes effective and innovative uses of technology to address specific needs in higher education. Boise State University’s Virtual Reality Nursing Simulation won the WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) award in 2015, which recognizes effective and innovative uses of technology to address specific needs in higher education.

**Mental Health.** The state of Idaho behavioral health system has been systematically moving transformation forward across the state. WICHE played a role early in the evolution of the effort, through completing a comprehensive and participatory process of evaluating the existing system and collaboratively identifying recommendations for improvement. Idaho has utilized the WICHE-developed Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Rural Primary Care Settings to strengthen primary care-behavioral health integration. WICHE has also conducted an evaluation of gaps in behavioral health services for adult probationers and parolees as part of the Idaho Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a partnership between Corrections and Behavioral Health.

WICHE is currently working with the Portneuf Health Trust in Southeastern Idaho to assess the region’s gaps and capacity in the context of the behavioral health continuum of care. Using the results of the gap analysis, WICHE will coordinate and lead the development of a regional strategic plan for meeting behavioral health needs across the continuum of care over the next three to five years. WICHE anticipates beginning a similar project to assess gaps in adult mental health services for the Idaho Division of Behavioral Health.

**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. Idaho was among the first WICHE states to become a member of W-SARA in this reciprocal relationship.

**Other Initiatives.** The College of Idaho participates in the **Master Property Program (MPP)**. The program helps institutions in the West 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 \$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. In a third collaboration with MHEC, WICHE extends the benefits of **MHECtech** to



After completing my undergraduate degree at Boise State University, I was really looking forward to attending a graduate school where I could expand upon my knowledge and gain more credibility. The greatest potential roadblock I faced was paying for tuition.

Fortunately, WRGP significantly reduced the cost and I was able to enroll in Utah State’s management information systems program for my master’s. USU’s program is a perfect fit for me, and I am very grateful for WICHE’s WRGP!”

– Promise, Idaho resident  
Utah State University, Management Information Systems



“I live in North Idaho and studied speech-language pathology at Eastern Washington University (EWU) in Spokane. I am married with a young child, and my husband’s academic job required that we not leave the North Idaho/Eastern Washington area. The cost of out-of-state tuition for two-year

programs at the two nearby schools looked prohibitive, but once I realized I could compete for a tuition reduction through WICHE’s WRGP program, I applied to EWU. I am now back in Idaho working at the local nonprofit hospital where I completed my internship. EWU’s program is first-rate, and the skills and education I obtained prepared me well, academically and clinically. Now I am able to bring the most up-to-date, evidence-based practice to the rural community I love. I am grateful for the support.”

– Jeanne, Idaho resident,  
Eastern Washington University,  
Masters in Speech Language Pathology

colleges and universities in the West, enabling them to purchase hardware and software products and services from competitively bid purchasing agreements to reduce costs.

## Idaho & WICHE’s Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each state, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. Idaho’s commissioners are Rick Aman, president, College of Eastern Idaho, Idaho Falls; Matt Freeman, executive director, Idaho Board of Education, Boise; and Julie VanOrden, state representative, Pingree.



Rick Aman



Matt Freeman



Julie VanOrden

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 Rep. Julie VanOrden, Sen. Dean Mortimer, and Rep. Ilana Rubel—has been crucial in this regard. The LAC works to keep WICHE’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 by 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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