

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 \$210.8 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 2017-18 Oregon, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in some **\$19.3 million** through WICHE and spent \$149,000 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 **\$65.6 million**, yielding a **93-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 2017-18 Oregon's students and families saved **\$17.4 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 2017-18, 1,599 students from Oregon were enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving \$15.8 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$9,900. In the last 10 years, students have saved **\$126.4 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 2017-18 Oregon received 3,389 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 83 students enrolled in professional programs, bringing in over **\$1.86 million** in revenue.

Western Regional Graduate Program. Oregon'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 Oregon sent 98 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 95.

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


Oregon 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:

- ▶ 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, Lumina Foundation, Carnegie



"Everyone can relate to the fact that college is extremely expensive, especially if you're paying out-of-state tuition. I have always wanted to attend a college out of my hometown and WUE has made paying for college easier. Thanks for this amazing opportunity to study at CSU East Bay. WUE is awesome!"

– Vivian, Oregon resident,
California State University, East Bay, Sociology

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. In August 2017, WICHE President, Joe Garcia, presented to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission about Oregon higher education in the Western context and offered strategies for success moving forward.

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.

Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives. 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). 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. 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 systemwide higher education agencies, nonprofit

Figure 1. Oregon Savings and Revenues through WICHE Programs in 2017	
Student Savings	
WUE	\$15,861,752
WRGP	\$1,538,992
Total Student Savings	\$17,400,744
Revenue to OR Institutions (PSEP)	
TOTAL	\$19,263,319

“Before I was awarded the Western Undergraduate Exchange scholarship, I was limited to in-state study because of tuition prices, and none of the schools were the best fit for my academic goals. Thanks to WUE, I am able to attend my dream school – Western Washington University – and pursue a concentration along with my degree through the Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies. I am so thankful to be a recipient of this award because it allowed me to attend the college that fits me best. WICHE rocks!”

– Lauchlan, Oregon resident,
Western Washington University, Environmental Science

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. In 2013, Lane Community College’s OER Faculty Fellowship won the WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) award, which recognizes effective and innovative uses of technology to address specific needs in higher education.

Mental Health. Over the last several years, WICHE worked 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, a learning community for program evaluators in public behavioral health systems across the West.

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. 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 \$93.4 billion. It has generated over \$114 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 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: Ben Cannon, executive director, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Salem; Camille Preus (2007 chair), president, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton; and Hilda Rosselli, director of college and career readiness, Chief Education Office, Salem.



Ben Cannon



Camille Preus



Hilda Rosselli

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 staff also serve the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West.

“Admission to graduate speech language pathology programs is highly competitive. WRGP gave me additional program options and kept school affordable as well.”

T., Oregon resident, Class of 2017,
Idaho State University, Speech Language Pathology

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 Longaneker, 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 or contact 303.541.0200.

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