



WICHE & THE U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

Partnering for Five Years

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. The U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states has been a member of WICHE since 2012.

Benefits to the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states

The **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)** and **Guam** are the first of the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states to become active in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's programs and initiatives. The third U.S. Pacific territory, American Samoa, and the three freely associated states – Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, also are eligible to participate and as they sign on, they will join CNMI and Guam collectively as the 16th member of WICHE. As part of their membership in WICHE, CNMI and Guam participate in the Western Undergraduate Exchange and the Western Regional Graduate Program, which allow students from member states and territories to enroll in academic programs in other member states and territories at deep discounts. CNMI joined the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) in Summer 2017.

WICHE Programs

The **Student Exchange Program (SEP)** provides students with access to out-of-state higher education options, along with significant tuition savings. Over 42,000 students are enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs outside their home states through SEP, saving \$403.8 million in 2017-18. In WICHE's **Western Undergraduate Exchange**, students pay no more than 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, substantially less than standard nonresident tuition. In AY 2017-18, CNMI enrolled 87 WUE students and saved \$680,000 and Guam enrolled 56 WUE students, saving over \$780,000. Through the **Western Regional Graduate Program**, 1,534 students enrolled in 435 graduate programs at 60 institutions. CNMI and Guam each enrolled one WRGP student, saving more than \$31,000 in AY 2017-18. More than 15,800 professionals have received home

state support when enrolled in programs in another Western state through the **Professional Student Exchange Program**, which CNMI joined in 2017.

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 **Policy Analysis and Research** unit supports better-informed decision-making at the state and territory 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. WICHE policy experts often visit members to present or consult on issues including workforce needs, financial aid policy, governance, and performance funding.

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.

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“I visited four high schools in Saipan and student interest was high; 30 to 100 students attended each presentation and many have applied. They were hungry to learn more about college options and were appreciative that a representative would travel a great distance to meet with them. Many have never been to the mainland and wondered how they would adjust and wanted to know the resources available to help them succeed so far from home. Many are high-achieving students and enthusiastic leaders in their communities. Many are bilingual and have much to contribute culturally to any campus community.”

– Kenley Jones, Associate Director of Admissions,
Southern Utah University

Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives. The Northern Marianas College is a member of the **Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders** (the Alliance), an organization managed by WICHE that 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 **WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)** is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET is widely recognized as an informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organization regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education, and includes more than 350 institutions, state and systemwide higher education agencies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in nearly all U.S. states and many Canadian provinces. Key activities include an annual meeting, leadership summits, national webcasts, a popular *Frontiers* blog, issue briefs, and email list-based discussions among members. Major topics of interest to the WCET members include student and faculty success, the Internet of Things, managing e-learning, emerging technologies, broadband and learning innovations, and evolving policy issues.

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. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is not yet a member of W-SARA.

Mental Health. The behavioral health system in CNMI is operated by the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation through their Community Guidance Center. WICHE assisted CNMI in implementing a federally funded Child and Family System of Care Planning Grant. The Mental Health Program also facilitated preliminary planning to build a partnership for Northern Marianas College students to pursue their bachelor of social work degree through the University of Alaska-Fairbanks distance delivered Bachelor of Social Work program. The Mental Health Program also assisted in building the partnership for Northern Marianas College students to their bachelor of social work degree through the University of Alaska-Fairbanks distance delivered Bachelor of Social Work program, which is now accepting students.

WICHE’s Leadership

The **WICHE Commission**, with three commissioners from each member, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. The U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states are represented by three commissioners: Carmen Fernandez, president, Northern Marianas College, Saipan; Jude Hofschneider, senator, Saipan; and Vincent Leon Guerrero, special assistant, climate change and education, Office of the Governor of Guam, Hagatña.



Carmen Fernandez



Jude Hofschneider



Vincent
Leon Guerrero

WICHE also seeks assistance and advice from policymakers, educators, administrators, and legislators. WICHE’s **Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)**, composed of legislator-members from each WICHE member—including Sen. Jude Hofschneider of CNMI and Sen. Dennis Rodriguez, Jr. of Guam—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 by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West.



“The community college in Saipan didn’t offer all of the classes I needed for my major. Fortunately, CNMI became a member of WICHE, so I have more options. WUE gave me an affordable post-secondary education and a first-rate science education. I am currently an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, majoring in biology. Once I graduate, I plan to pursue pharmacy school. Without WICHE’s WUE program, I would not have been able to pursue better educational opportunities in order to fulfill my academic and future professional goals. And for that, my parents and I are forever grateful.”

– Aldreen,

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands resident,
Class of 2018, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, Biology

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 or contact 303.541.0200.

January 2019

The Commission as of January 2019

Alaska

Susan Anderson, president/CEO, The CIRI Foundation, Anchorage
Stephanie Butler, executive director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Juneau
James Johnsen, president, University of Alaska System, Fairbanks

Arizona

Rita H. Cheng, president, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff
Kathleen H. Goepfing, president and CEO, Midwestern University, Glendale
1 Appointment pending

California

Christopher Cabaldon, president, Linked Learning Alliance, and mayor, West Sacramento
Dianne Harrison, president, California State University, Northridge
Francisco Rodriguez, chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles

Colorado

Antwan Jefferson, clinical assistant professor, University of Colorado Denver
2 Appointments pending

Hawai’i

David Lassner, president, University of Hawai’i System, and interim chancellor, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, Honolulu
Carol Mon Lee, attorney, retired associate dean, University of Hawai’i, Richardson School of Law, Honolulu
Colleen Sathre, vice president emeritus, University of Hawai’i, Honolulu

Idaho

Rick Aman, president, College of Eastern Idaho, Idaho Falls
Matt Freeman, executive director, Office of the State Board of Education, Boise
Julie VanOrden, state representative, Pingree

Montana

Laurie Bishop, representative, Montana State Legislature, Livingston
Clayton Christian (immediate past WICHE chair), commissioner of higher education, Helena
Sheila Stearns, past president, University of Montana, Missoula

Nevada

Gillian Barclay, Nevada Governor’s Office of Economic Development, Las Vegas
Chester Burton, chief financial officer, Nevada System of Higher Education, Reno
Fred Lokken, professor, Truckee Meadows Community College, Reno

New Mexico

Barbara Damron, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Santa Fe
Mark Moores, state senator, Albuquerque
Patricia Sullivan (WICHE chair 2017), associate dean, engineering, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

North Dakota

Nick Hacker, president, North Dakota Guaranty and Title Co, Bismarck
Mark Hagerott, chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck
Ray Holmberg (WICHE chair), state senator, Grand Forks

Oregon

Ben Cannon, executive director, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Salem
Camille Preus, executive director, Oregon Community College Association, Salem
Hilda Rosselli, director of college and career readiness, Chief Education Office, Salem

South Dakota

Paul Beran, executive director and CEO, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre
Robert Burns, distinguished professor emeritus and dean emeritus, South Dakota State University, Brookings
James Hansen, former regent, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States

Carmen Fernandez, president, Northern Marianas College, Saipan
Jude Hofschneider, senator, Saipan
Vincent Leon Guerrero, special assistant, climate change and education, Office of the Governor of Guam, Hagatña

Utah

David Buhler, commissioner, Utah System of Higher Education, Salt Lake City
Patricia Jones, CEO, Women’s Leadership Institute and member, Utah Board of Regents, Salt Lake City
Peter Knudson, state senator, Brigham City

Washington

Don Bennett, deputy director, Washington Student Achievement Council, Olympia
Gerry Pollet, state representative, Seattle
Thomas L. (Les) Purce, president emeritus, The Evergreen State College, Olympia

Wyoming

Fred Baldwin, senator, Wyoming State Senate, Kemmerer
Karla Leach, president, Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs
Laurie Nichols, president, University of Wyoming, Laramie



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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