



WICHE & NEW MEXICO

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. New Mexico has been a member of WICHE since 1952.

Benefits to New Mexico

- ▶ Thousands of students from New Mexico 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, New Mexico students and their families have saved more than \$83 million since 1988, when the program was founded.
- ▶ New Mexico has received funding to be part of numerous WICHE policy initiatives, including those focused on financing and financial aid, workforce policy, and other areas.
- ▶ New Mexico has participated in WICHE initiatives related to distance education, workforce development, and behavioral health.

Doing the Math:

New Mexico's Return on Investment

- ▶ In 2016-17 New Mexico, its institutions, and its students saved or brought in **\$7.6 million** through WICHE and spent \$145,000 for membership in the commission, yielding a **53-fold return on investment**.
- ▶ In the last five years, New Mexico students' savings from WUE alone have added up to **\$21.3 million**, yielding a **31-fold return** on the state's investment in WICHE.

WICHE's Student Exchange & Related Programs

New Mexico is active in all three WICHE Student Exchange Programs: the Western Undergraduate Exchange, the Professional Student Exchange Program, and the Western Regional Graduate Program. In 2016-17 New Mexico's students and families saved over **\$7.6 million**. New Mexico saved money, too, through not having to establish and maintain costly programs in a number of areas, including some in healthcare.

Western Undergraduate Exchange. New Mexico students have enrolled in undergraduate programs beyond New Mexico's borders through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) since 1988. In 2016-17, 650 students from New Mexico were enrolled in out-of-state programs at reduced rates (150 percent of resident tuition), saving more than \$4.9 million in tuition and fees – the average student savings amounted to \$7,622. In the last 10 years, students have saved **\$43.6 million**.

New Mexico benefits from WUE in another way: by receiving students from out of state. New Mexico'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 New Mexico after graduating. In 2016-17 New Mexico received 1,060 students through WUE.

Professional Student Exchange Program. New Mexico has sent **1,553 students** to professional programs through the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), with students studying in two critical fields: dentistry and veterinary medicine. Historically, some 88 percent of PSEP students return to New Mexico to pursue their professional careers. In addition, in 2016-17 the state received 3 students and over \$22,000 in support fees from other Western states.

Western Regional Graduate Program. New Mexico'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 New Mexico sent 92 students to out-of-state institutions, while receiving 33.

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

New Mexico 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:

- ▶ New Mexico is projected to produce 20,200 high school graduates per year, on average, between school years 2012 and 2032. New Mexico high school graduates are relatively the same in most projected years, with a brief new high number of graduates in 2026 being only 5% higher than 2012, before declining 14% by 2032.
- ▶ Non-White public high school graduates are currently about 71% of New Mexico's public high school graduates and will increase to 77% of the total by 2032.

Policy & Workforce Development. New Mexico 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



“Coming from Edgewood, New Mexico, I grew up on the back of a horse chasing steers and the back of a dirt bike chasing my buddies. As a youngster, I received regular dental care and orthodontics. I always appreciated the work that was done by my dentist. As I matured and after a few hard crashes, I began to understand that my dreams of riding Pro Motocross were probably not in the cards! I shifted my vision to the field of dentistry and felt a desire to give back to the State of New Mexico. WICHE's PSEP made the difference! Being part of the WICHE program has enabled me to accomplish my goals, while still finding time to ride my Honda (I started a club called “The Fox Race Team”!). I still enjoy riding every chance I get, and New Mexico's assistance through PSEP is helping me to continue my education and start a career that will enable me to live life to the fullest. Thank you!”

– Silas, New Mexico resident, Class of 2017, A.T. Still University, Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health, Doctor of Dental Medicine

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. WICHE staff has worked with the New Mexico Higher Education Department and Legislature to develop an outcomes-based funding structure, including facilitating a retreat in Boulder on funding and accountability processes with business, education, and government stakeholders.

Most recently, WICHE staff has been integrally involved in the New Mexico Department of Higher Education's efforts to design and adopt a new funding model for the state. WICHE has considerable expertise and experience working with states on such models, which seek to fund higher education institutions for the outcomes they produce (including degree and certificate completions and student academic progress). WICHE's facilitation of a retreat for senior leaders within the department and among New Mexico's public institutions and its ongoing involvement in the policy development process has helped the state sharpen its focus on how the policy might best meet its needs while taking into account the perspectives of key stakeholders.

Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives. New Mexico State University, the University of New Mexico, and Western New Mexico 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, share resources and expertise,

Figure 1. New Mexico Savings and Revenues through WICHE in 2016

Student Savings

WUE	\$4,953,984
PSEP	\$1,294,462
WRGP	\$1,368,040
Total Student Savings	\$7,616,486

Revenue to NM

Institutions (PSEP)	\$22,083
TOTAL	\$7,638,569



“As a New Mexican resident, my state’s diverse cultures fuel my passion for global health. When it was time to pursue a Master’s of Public Health (MPH), I wanted a program with a strong global presence, and the University of Arizona’s MPH in Family and Child Health with a Global Concentration was the perfect fit. When I found out that I qualified for reduced tuition through WRGP, I could not believe my luck! As an autistic woman, it takes a team of professors, staff, and support facilities to enable my success in the classroom. The college’s altruistic staff combined with the university’s fantastic disability services are helping me thrive in Tucson. And they encourage students to pursue challenging experiences that will enrich my degree. Thank you WICHE for letting me be a part of a community that is working on health concerns across the globe. I have total confidence in my future career plans!”

— Katey, New Mexico resident, Class of 2018,
University of Arizona, Master’s of Public Health

and collaborate on regional initiatives. New Mexico State University Alamogordo and New Mexico Military Institute are members.

Technology. Several New Mexico 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.

Mental Health. WICHE has been engaged in a workforce-focused series of projects in New Mexico, beginning with a comprehensive behavioral health workforce study in FY08. WICHE also supported an initiative for Doña Ana County focused on improving community capacity in the area of behavioral health crisis response.

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 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. New Mexico is among the WICHE states that are members of W-SARA in this reciprocal relationship.

Other Initiatives. The **Master Property Program (MPP)** 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 over \$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 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.



“Four years ago, I pulled into the New Mexico state fairgrounds at 4 a.m. and saw a long line of people; it was four people wide and stretched as far as I could see. They were not lining up for the newest iPhone, but for the first “New Mexico Mission of Mercy,” which provided free dental care to anyone who came out that weekend. Seeing the long line, hearing stories of camping out for days, and witnessing the significant demand for dental care is why I wanted to become a dentist and practice in my home state of New Mexico. The first time I starting worrying about student loan debt was when I received the exciting news that I had been admitted into Midwestern’s dental program. I even questioned my decision to enroll, because of the amount of debt I was going to take on. I am fortunate and proud to have received funding from my home state through WICHE’s PSEP. I look forward to the day I can return and practice dentistry in New Mexico.”

– Cori, New Mexico resident, Class of 2017,
Midwestern University Glendale,
College of Dental Medicine-Arizona

New Mexico & WICHE’s Leadership

The WICHE Commission, with three commissioners from each member state, molds the organization’s mission and set its priorities. New Mexico’s commissioners are: Barbara Damron, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Santa Fe; Mark Moores, state senator, Albuquerque; and Patricia Anaya Sullivan, WICHE chair, and associate dean, College of Engineering, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.



Barbara Damron



Mark Moores



Patricia Sullivan

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. Mark Moores, Sen. John Sapien, and Rep. Larry Larrañaga—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.

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:

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, 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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