Applications invited for the position of

President
WICHE, the Organization

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and its 16 member states and territories works collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among its members and their institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education’s contributions to the region’s social, economic, cultural, and civic life. WICHE’s student exchange programs, policy analysis and research services, cooperative for educational technologies (WCET), and mental health unit work to find answers to the most critical questions facing higher education in the West today and tomorrow. WICHE is the only Western organization that focuses exclusively on higher education issues involving finance, innovation, workforce, accountability, and student access and success.

Three governor-appointed Commissioners from each member state and territory comprise the Commission, which includes membership from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai‘i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (the first of the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states to participate). Each member state/territory pays annual dues of $141,000, which supports WICHE’s core activities and represents about a third of the organization’s operating budget. Grants from foundations and corporations, federal support, fees for participation in unique activities, and other external funding leverage state investments by more than a two-to-one ratio, maximizing the return on taxpayer dollars invested in WICHE.

WICHE was established in 1953 as the Western Regional Education Compact upon approval by the Congress of the United States, as required by Article I, Section 10, of the Constitution, and signed into law by the President of the United States in August, 1953. The organization is recognized as a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization.

WICHE has a long-term commitment to diversity throughout its organizational structure, internal relationships, program activities, and relationships with external constituencies. The organization strives to hire, support, and promote diverse personnel at all levels.

WICHE’s Environs

WICHE’s offices are located in Boulder, Colorado. We share office and conferencing space in the State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC), an exceptionally attractive and contemporary facility co-owned by WICHE, SHEEO (the State Higher Education Executive Officers), and NCHEMS (the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems). WICHE’s Boulder location, in the foothills of the Rockies, is 30 minutes from downtown Denver and 45 minutes from Denver International Airport. The Western region served by WICHE includes some of the most magnificent geography of the United States – from the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam. The Denver/Boulder area is rich in educational, cultural, sporting, and individual athletic and enrichment opportunities. All but one of WICHE’s five past chief executive officers have enjoyed their job enough to stay until they retired, and the fifth returned to Boulder after retiring as the president of the Ohio State University; this is a great community to live in and a great organization with which to be associated.

The President’s Position

WICHE’s president serves as the chief executive officer of the organization and at the pleasure of the 48 member WICHE commission. As the chief executive, the president administers the agency under programmatic and fiscal policy guidelines established by the Commission. The business of the Commission is conducted at semi-annual meetings and, between those meetings, by the executive committee and the officers of the Commission.

The president must be both an exceptional manager and leader.

As a manager, the president oversees an exceptionally talented staff of approximately 60 professionals, organized into five operating units – Policy Analysis and Research, Programs and Services, the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technology (WCET), Behavioral and Mental Health, and Administrative Services. To operate effectively requires that these staff work collaboratively, thus the president must foster and support teamwork throughout the organization. The president, working with the staff, presents an annual workplan to the Commission for its approval and then has responsibility for assuring that the work produced to accomplish this work plan is of exceptional quality and relevance to higher education in the West.
As an educational leader, the president must work collaboratively with the leadership of other regional and national organizations involved with higher education. Key to success in this venue is working with the governors and legislative leaders (and their staff) throughout the West, with state and institutional leaders of higher education, and with federal legislative and executive branch leaders. To be successful in working with these individuals, the president must be perceived as being able to work well with individuals with quite divergent philosophical and political perspectives. Because a substantial share of the budget for WICHE comes from external sources other than state dues, the president must also work successfully in seeking financial support from foundations, corporations, and federal and state agencies.

The Candidate Profile

The person best qualified for the presidency of WICHE will be a recognized leader of higher education, but one who is recognized more for her or his vision of the future than solely for past accomplishments. This person will not only need to understand the policy and practice issues and opportunities facing American higher education, but must demonstrate a particular interest in and affinity for the unique nature of the West; its higher education, politics, culture, and pride.

More specifically, this person must demonstrate:

• Strong management acumen, appropriate to managing within a non-profit organizational environment, including working with an engaged governing board and an eclectic and diverse staff.

• Strong leadership skills, including an understanding of and appreciation for working with state and federal government and comfort with and the savvy to engage a wide variety of external constituencies in partnership with WICHE.

• Knowledge of both the practice and policy issues and opportunities of greatest importance to the West.

• The ability to think creatively and to communicate clearly, effectively, and candidly both in writing and in public presentations, and to tailor these efforts to various audiences, but particularly to lay and political folk.

• An aggressive commitment to equity and diversity, both within the WICHE staff, and within the policy and practice work of the organization.

• The exceptional interpersonal skills necessary to accomplish all of the above.

• Success in seeking external funding via grants and contracts.

• An advanced degree demonstrating WICHE’s enduring commitment to the value of higher education, preferably at the doctoral level.

• Willingness and ability to travel regularly.
Compensation and Benefits

**Compensation:** The president serves at the pleasure of the Commission, thus the Commission establishes the salary and benefits for the president, in line with an overall compensation structure for all of the Commission staff, and consistent with the experience and qualifications of the selected candidate. The salary range is from $225,000 to $250,000.

**Retirement:** WICHE participates in the TIAA-CREF retirement programs through a federal 403 (b) retirement instrument. WICHE matches two dollars for each one dollar employee contribution, up to a combined contribution of fifteen percent, not to exceed the aggregate amount allowed by the federal government for 403 (b) plans.

**Additional Benefits:** A generous benefits package includes health, dental, disability, and life insurance; annual observation of 11 holidays, 22 days paid vacation and personal leave, and 12 days sick leave; relocation expenses; and other lesser benefits.

Applying for the Position

WICHE encourages qualified individuals who are interested in the position to apply by providing to the WICHE Presidential Search Committee a letter indicating both your interest in and qualifications for the position, a resumé, and references that can attest to your ability to serve as president of the organization. The search committee will begin reviewing applications of interest on September 15, 2015. The position will remain open until filled.

Please provide this information via e-mail to: WICHEPresidentialSearch@wiche.edu.

For additional information individuals may contact our search consultant, Dr. Tad Perry, at tadp3@pie.midco.net or 605 222 7437.

*WICHE is an Equal Opportunity Employer: Gender/Minority/Veterans/Disabled*