The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and its 16 member states and territories work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education’s contributions to the region’s social, economic, and civic life.

This report recaps WICHE’s work during fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015).

Cover photo: Chautauqua Park – Boulder, Colorado. flickr.com © JaredSpagnola
Photo left: UC Berkeley Main Library. flickr.com © barbaras

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Message from WICHE Chair Michael Rush ......................... 4
A Message from WICHE President David A. Longanecker .......... 6
Programs and Services ...................................................... 11
Policy Analysis and Research .............................................. 15
Mental Health Program ....................................................... 19
State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) ............ 21
WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) ... 23
WICHE Funders and Sponsors ............................................. 27
WICHE Commissioners ...................................................... 29
WICHE Staff ................................................................. 31
A Message from WICHE Chair Michael Rush

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) was developed out of a time-tested practice in the West — neighbors helping neighbors to deal with the harsh realities of living and thriving in a vast frontier. The need for collaboration has not lessened in today’s world.

This past year as WICHE chair has given me a unique perspective to reflect on the value of our organization. I began the year as a Commissioner from Idaho and finished as a Commissioner from South Dakota. I discovered that WICHE provided a robust platform to deal with the challenges that are common among us, but that are also unique to each state. I was able to benefit from national expertise informed by the latest research in higher education policy. I was able to see first-hand how WICHE’s various student exchange programs strengthened and expanded our ability to meet critical needs with limited resources. I was also able to draw from the wisdom of my colleagues, each dealing with similar issues in a variety of complex settings.

Another unique experience that has informed my perspective has been the selection process for a new president. When Dr. David Longanecker announced his retirement earlier this year, he graciously agreed to stay on as long as it took to hire an able replacement. The announcement of his retirement resulted in a wave of unsolicited comments from people across the country about how much they valued and respected the role WICHE has played in higher education policy and delivery. It also resulted in a number of highly qualified candidates applying for the job of president. As of this writing, we are still in the process of deciding on a new leader.

The events of this year have allowed me to reflect on how blessed this organization has been under the stewardship of David Longanecker. His insights and leadership have put a permanent positive stamp on higher education in this country and beyond. He has accomplished this through his willingness to lead where others have shied away, his commitment to helping states wrestle with tough problems, his wisdom, his tireless and generous use of time for constant travel and just-in-time problem solving, and his unflappable good humor and ability to put people from all political persuasions at ease. He leaves an organization that is well respected, on sound financial footing, and positioned for continued effective leadership in higher education. He will be missed.

Michael Rush
Executive Director, South Dakota Board of Regents
The comments that follow will be my last Annual Report message, as I will be retiring from WICHE this coming year after 16 wonderful years with this exceptional organization. Much has happened at WICHE and within higher education in the West since the beginning of the new millennium 15 years ago. Higher education has moved from an era of plenty to a new normal of frugal funding. The 20th century focus on increasing access has expanded into a national preoccupation with student success, most often reflected in efforts to increase completion, particularly for students attending access-oriented institutions. The concept of assuring affordability has shifted from eliminating barriers for low-income students who simply cannot attend without financial assistance to reducing the financial burden for middle-income families and students. Our focus has expanded to include not just recent high school graduates, but also returning adult students. And higher education has significantly transformed the ways in which we educate today’s students, relying much more on technology-enhanced learning opportunities than was the case in the last century.

Not surprisingly, therefore, WICHE has changed significantly since the turn of the century. Our programs and services have grown both in size and number. The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) has increased from serving fewer than 10,000 students in 2000 to more than 34,000 today, currently saving students about $300 million a year. And the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) has grown from a modest number of programs serving even fewer students at the turn of the century to serving more than 1,300 students in nearly 380 programs, saving these students almost $20 million a year. And our original core student exchange program, the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), remains a staple for the organization and the West, serving more than 660 students in 10 medical professional fields.

Our partnership with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) now provides substantial services and financial savings to many institutions via the Master Property Program for insurance and risk management, the MHECtech collective purchasing contracts for computer hardware and software (available to K-12 entities, postsecondary institutions, and local, county and state agencies), and the MHECare student health insurance collective. Through WICHE’s engagement with senior academic officers of two- and four-year institutions, systems, and higher education agencies throughout the West, we have developed the Interstate Passport to establish a competency-based, assured lower-division general education block transfer process across state lines, an Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) to allow students greater access to a wider variety of courses than they can find on their primary campus, and the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) to provide high-quality lab experiences to students studying at a distance from a consortium of institutions’ on-campus labs.

More recently, working with the other three regional higher education compacts, WICHE helped create the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), which provides the venue for states that feel comfortable trusting one another to accept other states’ authorization of institutions to operate. Through the SARA program, students from participating states who take online courses outside their state of residence can be assured that there is reasonable oversight and consumer...
Through our Non-Traditional No More (NTNM) project, we initially focused attention on a set of “willing” states that sought ways to address the most significant barriers to adult student success, and followed that effort by managing the Adult College Completion Network (ACCN), a Lumina Foundation-funded national peer network for professionals in various spheres of influence and action who are engaged in improving college completion among older adult students.

At the urging of Western State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEOs), we also increased our focus on database development and utilization. Of course, we continued and enhanced the Knocking on the College Door work – our national projections of high school graduates – which has become a staple for admissions personnel around the country. But we also developed the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange, which helps participating states better understand the progression and success of their students – from high school, through college, and into the workforce – thus substantially enhancing the capacity for evidence-based decision-making at both the institution and state levels.

Through the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) we also have been on the forefront of the brave new world of technology-enhanced education, which is transforming and improving higher education in America, and will be an essential component in providing more-affordable higher education in the years ahead. Early in the new century, WCET was there to help as more and more institutions and states struggled with how to adopt technology, whether via online learning or blended learning strategies, in ways that assured quality, accountability, and financial viability. As technology-enhanced learning became ubiquitous throughout higher education, WCET’s efforts shifted to include greater focus on transparency, quality assurance, and the sharing of resources. These efforts transitioned into creating one of the first and most prominent pilot efforts in providing predictive analytics to institutions so they have the information they need to enhance student learning. As is often the case under our business plan, WCET incubated this innovation in a project known as the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework and once the proof of concept had been established, we spun the activity off as its own nonprofit organization. Currently, WCET is leading efforts to enhance technology-mediated learning, establish new valid credentialing processes, explore processes and quality assurance methods for competency based learning, and provide individualized learning that is adapted to each learner’s needs.

WICHE’s Mental Health Program has also been breaking new ground in the area of behavioral health. Having developed highly regarded tools for both Mental Health First Aid and suicide prevention, WICHE has attracted support and partnership from the federal Department of Health and Human Services, the Institute of Mental Health, the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration, most state departments of health throughout the West, and many institutions of higher education. Active both within the West and at the federal level, WICHE’s mental health unit has become a highly regarded and utilized national treasure in behavioral health circles. The recent creation of a partnership with the American Psychology Association to provide accredited clinical internships for recent doctorates in clinical psychology is helping to address the dearth of practicing clinical psychologists in the rural West.

As the West has changed, so too has WICHE. It has been an exciting and personally very rewarding time to be associated with an organization with such an ambitious, intellectually gifted, and committed staff. And the staff has had the unique pleasure of working with a tremendously supportive and creative board of 48 members (three gubernatorial appointees from each state and territory) who have contributed greatly to both the vision and quality of this enterprise. We have also benefited greatly over the past 15 years from generous philanthropic support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Lumina Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

I have come to treasure this ride into the new millennium. I often proudly claim credit for the accomplishments of WICHE. But in truth, it has been the exceptional staff, outstanding board, and supportive donors that have made WICHE the great organization it is today, and I’m just proud to have been associated with it.

David Longanecker
President, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
PROGRAMS and SERVICES

WICHE’s Programs and Services unit expands access to higher education through three student exchange programs: the Professional Student Exchange Program, the Western Regional Graduate Program, and the Western Undergraduate Exchange along the WICHE Internet Course Exchange. Staff also foster collaboration and resource sharing in higher education through regional initiatives; convene and partner with academic leaders throughout the West; and work to help institutions and states reduce operating costs through innovative programs. The unit also develops and disseminates WICHE electronic and print publications, including: NewsCap, factsheets, annual reports, state briefings, commission agenda books, the annual workplan, and others, as well as managing the WICHE website, social networking media, and media relations.

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), WICHE’s signature undergraduate tuition reciprocity program and the largest of its kind in the nation, saved almost 34,300 students an estimated $279.4 million in tuition during academic year 2014-15 by allowing them to pay 150 percent of resident tuition instead of full nonresident tuition through enrollment at 156 public two- and four-year institutions in 15 states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Colleges and universities can tailor their participation, including admission requirements and available programs of study, to individual campus needs.

The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides affordable access to 10 professional healthcare fields for students in 10 WICHE states. In academic year 2014-15, 657 students enrolled through PSEP and states invested $14.7 million in their future healthcare providers’ educations. Some 15,000 professionals have received their education through PSEP, most in the healthcare professions. They include dentists, occupational therapists, optometrists, pharmacists, physical therapists, physician assistants, physicians [allopathic and osteopathic], podiatrists, and veterinarians.

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) allows students who are WICHE region residents to enroll in 380 master’s, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 59 participating institutions on a resident tuition basis. In fall 2014, 1,345 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated $19.9 million in tuition.

The Western Academic Leadership Academy is a year-long professional development program aiming to expand the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for four-year institutions in the West. The Academy, through a series of activities, focuses on the context of academic leadership, the development of academic goals and priorities, and specific skill sets that are required of chief academic officers. Its first cohort of 15, nominated by Western Academic Leadership Forum members, was formed in spring 2015. They began the program with an intensive three-day face-to-face seminar at WICHE’s headquarters and throughout the rest of their term they will participate in a series of webinars with Academy faculty, consisting of active and retired members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum.

The Western Academic Leadership Forum brings together academic leaders at institutions with chief executives and chief academic officers for related systems and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and ex-
In October 2015 with $2.8 million in grant funds ($1.6 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and $1.2 million from Lumina Foundation), seven WICHE states will develop the learning outcomes and proficiency criteria for six additional content areas involving the physical and natural sciences, creative arts and humanities, intercultural knowledge (social science and history), information literacy, teamwork and problem solving, and critical thinking. The Academic Leaders Toolkit is a joint project of WICHE’s Alliance and Forum. The Toolkit is a searchable, web-based repository of decision-making tools, contributed by academic leaders. Tools in a broad range of categories – such as program evaluation, creation and elimination, faculty recruitment and retention and student outcomes assessment – help academic leaders address increasing responsibilities.

FINANCE

The Master Property Program (MPP) developed by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) has been available to colleges and universities in the West since 2004, through a WICHE partnership with MHEC. The MPP enables participating institutions to benefit from comprehensive property insurance coverage at rates below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection strategies. Available to two- and four-year public and private institutions, the program currently has more than 150 campuses participating, with total insured values of more than $306 billion; it has generated $34.7 million in savings for the participating institutions since its inception in 1994. The program is currently underwritten by Lexington (AIU), with administration led by Marsh USA Inc. and supported by Caisey Resources Inc. under the direction of a leadership committee representative of the insured institutions. Nine institutions and two systems (with 14 campuses) in the WICHE region participate in the program. Representatives from member campuses are invited to an annual MPP Loss Control Workshop to focus on topics relevant to risk management and asset protection strategies.

MHECare is another WICHE partnership with MHEC, offering institutions and systems a student health insurance plan that MHEC created in 2012-13 through a grant from Lumina Foundation. Working with the program administrator, Mercer, an independent human resources and benefits consulting firm, MHEC and its Student Health Benefits Advisory Committee developed the plan design and selected UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHC) as a national health care provider, to underwrite the program. MHECare offers both standard and customized Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act-compliant plans, depending on the size of the institution and number of students enrolled. UHC supports student health insurance plans and is known for its national network of providers, web-based enrollment and support tools. Mercer and UHCSR were selected through a competitive bid process led by MHEC; consequently, prospective member institutions do not need to conduct a formal request for proposal to obtain a MHECare quote, saving institutions time and resources. Mercer brings its broad understanding of health care to the student program along with compliance services, providing independent underwriting and negotiations to assure that rates are competitive and also conducts financial analytics of the claim utilization.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Interstate Passport Initiative is a new framework for bld Transfer of lower-division general education, based on student-learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It is being developed by faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, and advisors in the West. When Phase II work concludes in the summer of 2016, the completed framework will be ready for scaling to institutions across the country. Fewer unnecessary or duplicated courses means greater motivation for students to complete, faster time to degree, lower cost, less debt, and lower foregone earnings. More completions and faster time to degree improves institutions’ performance metrics, while a transfer system based on learning outcomes instead of original credits, degree improves institutions’ performance metrics, while a transfer system based on learning outcomes instead of transfer agreements. More completions and faster time to degree improves institutions’ performance metrics, while a transfer system based on learning outcomes instead of transfer agreements. More completions and faster time to degree improves institutions’ performance metrics, while a transfer system based on learning outcomes instead of transfer agreements.

WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

The North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO), an alliance of cutting-edge science laboratories affiliated with high education institutions that use software and robotics, allows students to conduct high-quality, openly licensed lab activities for introductory biology, chemistry, and physics online. NANSLO’s master scheduler, located at WICHE, allows institutions to reserve time in the labs on a fee-for-service model and for students to schedule their lab activities at times convenient to them. The Consortium for Healthcare Education Online (CHEO), a U.S. Department of Labor-funded project with Pueblo Community College and Colorado as the fiscal agent, unites eight community colleges in five WICHE states in an initiative to create or transform existing allied health courses for delivery in an online or hybrid format, incorporating NANSLO web-based lab experiments. WICHE conducted professional development workshops in March and August for CHEO career coaches and in May for faculty using NANSLO experiments. Work on a business plan underway to ensure NANSLO’s sustainability and expansion.

The Bridges to the Professoriate initiative managed by WICHE provides the National Institute of General Medical Sciences-Minority Access to Research and Careers’ predoctoral fellows with opportunities to participate in the annual Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. This helps the fellows gain skills needed in doctoral programs and academic careers. The National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) awarded a two-year, $498,719 grant to WICHE and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to support the work of the Compact for Faculty Diversity Research Mentoring Institute. A newly created consortium funded by the National Institutes of Health, the NRMN is designed to enhance the training and professional development of individuals from diverse backgrounds who aspire to careers in biomedical research. The primary focus of the WICHE-SREB initiative will be mentor training as well as mobilizing the extensive cross-disciplinary network of mentors and mentees developed over the 22-year history of the Compact for Faculty Diversity.
POLICY ANALYSIS and RESEARCH

The Policy Analysis and Research unit offers a variety of policy and information resources to support better-informed decision making, principally at the state level. The unit is involved in a number of research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on projections of enrollment demand, college completion, adult learners, multistate data sharing to support educational planning and workforce development, and other areas. WICHE staff serves as a resource on higher education issues, including state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, common academic standards, and various college completion initiatives. Its periodic publications, Policy Insights and Western Policy Exchanges, explore a range of significant policy issues. The unit also undertakes major, long-term grant-funded projects, collaborates with other regional and national organizations, and provides short-term technical assistance to states in the region.

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Knocking at the College Door is WICHE’s well-known high school graduate forecasts produced for more than 30 years and used by policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, schools and school districts, researchers, and the media. In 2013, WICHE released a supplement to the 8th edition of Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by Sex and for Major Metropolitan Areas that disaggregated projections into male and female graduates by state and race/ethnicity and estimated the portion of projected graduates in the 25 largest U.S. metropolitan areas. WICHE staff continues to be consulted on issues of demographic and enrollment demand and has made numerous presentations in 2015. WICHE is actively planning the next iteration of the projections, which is targeted for release in late 2016.

The Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) informs the WICHE Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West. LAC members are appointed by the commission and meet annually. Twenty-four legislators from 14 states participated in the 2014 annual meeting that was held in September in Phoenix, Arizona. The meeting, titled “Striking the Balance: College Affordability, Cost, and Quality,” featured national experts and LAC members speaking on legislative trends in the West, state authorization, higher education finance, degree attainment goals, data, MOOCs, and more.

The Adult College Completion (ACC) Network, funded by Lumina Foundation, is a learning network that unites organizations and agencies working to increase college completion by adults with prior college credits but no degree. The number of network members continues to grow and is now over 750 individuals from state higher education agencies, colleges and universities, community organizations, and other entities. Over the last fiscal year, WICHE staff conducted webinars, gave several presentations, wrote timely and relevant blog posts, and published a Policy Exchanges titled “Collaboration and Coordination to Improve Adult College Completion Efforts.” The brief explores research on the common characteristics of effective multi-stakeholder collaborations, with a particular focus on initiatives working to tackle complex social challenges. It includes examples of collaborative efforts that are uniting diverse stakeholders to support adult degree completion at the state and local levels. The ACC Network and WICHE have become national leaders in the area of adult learners and continue to...
be an important resource to those who strive to better serve nontraditional students. The College Access Challenge Grant program is a federally funded formula grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. To assist states in the Western region with their grants, WICHE manages the College Access Challenge Grant (CAGG) Consortium. Alaska and Idaho currently take part, with WICHE assisting with program administration.

Equity in Excellence, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation, is a WICHE partnership with the Center for Urban Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, and serves as the fulcrum of WICHE’s efforts to help states equip their students for college and careers. The project provides state education leaders in designing or redesigning policies to achieve the goals in the state’s master plan and to make those policies equitable toward all students.

FINANCE

“Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West 2014-15” is the latest update of WICHE’s annual tuition and fees report (http://www.wiche.edu/pub/9), focusing on public institutions in the WICHE region. This includes an institution-by-institution historical review of tuition changes from year to year, as well as those from one, five, and 10 years ago. A related Policy Insights publication, “Tuition and Fees in the West 2014-15,” summarizes the report’s findings and discusses state budget levels, higher education appropriations, state financial aid programs, and other state finance policy innovations.

A Policy Insights brief, “Affordability and Student Success: Recapping 2014 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West,” summarized the key topics and trends addressed during the 2014 legislative sessions and highlights other new and emerging issues to watch in the region. After reaching a low point in 2012, state investment in higher education increased for the second year in a row in 2014—something that had not happened since the Great Recession of 2008 began. With greater stability in some, though certainly not all, state budgets, many Western legislatures in 2014 looked for new ways to contain college costs for students. In fact, affordability was the key theme of this year’s sessions. In an attempt to address affordability, legislators in the WICHE region passed bills freezing or limiting tuition increases and created new scholarships and other financial aid opportunities for students. Many Western states also increasingly looked to higher education as the driver of economic growth, as their legislatures focused more on community colleges and career and technical education, while others sought to encourage partnerships between business and postsecondary institutions. Issues to watch include undocumented students, guns on campus, military and veterans education, and the ongoing implementation of common academic standards that prepare students for college and careers.

Building on WICHE’s States in the Driver’s Seat: Leveraging State Aid to Align Policies and Promote Access, Success, and Affordability report, WICHE staff were engaged in numerous meetings among national thought leaders during FY15 concerning affordability and the appropriate roles for the state and federal government in financing aid for students. Additionally, the framework for state aid programs laid out in the report, reinforced through an accompanying convening WICHE hosted for state financial aid administrators in September, was at the heart of a new program enacted in Nevada during the 2015 legislative session.

WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

In 2015, the Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE) project completed its pilot phase. In its initial phase, the MLDE developed legal agreements among four pioneering states to exchange data on the students each served, in order to better understand their educational and employment outcomes while accounting for their movement across state lines. This was a substantial step forward given how increasingly important such information is to policymakers and to students and their families on the cusp of choosing an educational program or institution to attend. WICHE produced two reports and a policy brief as the first round of funding came to an end. Beyond Borders provided a comprehensive overview of the MLDE, offered a glimpse of some of the findings, and addressed lessons learned. A Glimpse Beyond State Lines went into greater detail on WICHE’s analyses and findings arising out of the work and covered the methods used in the 2015 Policy Insights publication entitled “Building Capacity for Tracking Human Capital Development and Its Mobility Across State Lines,” offering condensed information about the project and lessons learned. The MLDE effort stands as one of the most ambitious efforts currently underway to provide a tool for states and institutions to gather relevant information about how education and economic and workforce development are linked, and has ensured that WICHE staff are deeply engaged in national conversations about our data infrastructure for postsecondary education and workforce development. WICHE’s success in the initial phase also led to substantial new funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation under which WICHE is applying the lessons learned and expanding coverage to new states.

The State Higher Education Policy Database (SHEPD) is WICHE’s online searchable database of higher education policies. It provides state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers with an inventory of state-level policies and resources in key policy issue areas related to access and success in higher education. SHEPD also features a blog and an electronic SHEPD alert distribution list to keep subscribers current on important updates.

The Policy Publications Clearinghouse is a depository of publications, reports, and briefs related to higher education.
MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

The Mental Health Program provides technical assistance, education, consulting, and research services for WICHE’s member states, the federal and local governments, health care providers, funders, and universities. Staff provides evaluation services, prevention and recovery program development and dissemination, and training and workforce development. The program’s training efforts include professional continuing education and pre-professional training, as well as providing community trainings to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. The program works to continually improve the capacity of the behavioral health workforce and the effectiveness of the public behavioral health system.

WICHE recently completed a behavioral health needs assessment for the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health that includes data, analysis, and recommendations about increasing access to behavioral health services in Colorado.

The Suicide Prevention Toolkit and Training in Primary Care provides training on implementing suicide prevention in primary care settings across the region. During the year, WICHE was engaged in numerous suicide prevention planning and education efforts with multiple partners across the country and developed the Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Rural Primary Care Providers.

The Mat-Su Behavioral Health Needs Assessment is a multi-partner effort to identify behavioral health and planning needs in the Mat-Su area of Alaska and to develop strategies for individuals with behavioral health needs to obtain access to services.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In FY15, and ongoing in FY16, WICHE will be engaged in supporting the Idaho Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a state corrections-behavioral health partnership, through data analytics.

Beginning late in FY15 and ongoing into FY16, WICHE is conducting a treatment needs study of the South Dakota Drug Courts for the Department of Judicial Services. In FY16, WICHE will continue to support program evaluation, and additionally begin a focused review of the state’s six IMPACT Programs ( Assertive Community Treatment) and their fidelity to evidence-based standards of care. Finally, during a transition of leadership at the state psychiatric hospital (HSC-Yankton) we will provide support and mentoring to interim leadership.

The WICHE-led Alaska Outcomes Identification and System Performance Project developed self-reported outcome measures used in clinical care and to monitor the performance of behavioral health treatment providers.

WICHE analyzes the results of the annual survey of clients conducted by the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health. The results are used to monitor access to care, quality of care, outcomes, and satisfaction with treatment services.
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
The Western States Decision Support Group provides a platform for collaboration and learning related to improving the capacity of WICHE member states to measure system performance and outcomes, and to use data as a tool in planning and public policy development.

WICHE provides technical assistance to the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health’s Data Integration Initiative to align mental health and substance use data with each other, Medicaid, and new health information technology.

WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY
The successful partnership between WICHE, the Hawai‘i Children’s Mental Health Division, the Hawai‘i Department of Education, and the Hawai‘i Public Safety Department achieved contingency accreditation by the American Psychological Association in FY15. WICHE also provides administrative support, technical assistance, and data collection to the Hawai‘i Psychology Internship Consortium (HI-PIC). During FY15, WICHE and the Hawai‘i Department of Education are launching a partnership to recruit a range of behavioral health professionals to fill vacant positions.

WICHE is working collaboratively with the Oregon State Hospital to build an APA-accredited psychology internship program. In 2015, OSH will matriculate its first cohort of psychology interns. During the next year, WICHE will support the completion of an internship self-study and prepare the program for an accreditation site visit in the 4th quarter of FY16.

The Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium, which matriculated its first cohort of interns in summer 2015, is a unique partnership between the WICHE Mental Health Program, Nevada WICHE, and the state’s Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH). Nevada WICHE has committed funds for internship stipends during the development phase, while DPBH has funded WICHE to develop the internship and support for gaining accreditation. As DPBH achieves the ability to self-fund the internship stipends, Nevada WICHE has expressed a commitment to redirect its funding support to new behavioral health professional education and training initiatives.

The Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium, developed and supported by WICHE over the past three years, expands available training slots and builds the workforce in the state.

The South Dakota Division of Community Behavioral Health Data Systems Improvement Project helps the division review its data collection and reporting procedures with the goal of modernizing and updating its data infrastructure, data collection, and data analysis and performance monitoring based on multi-stakeholder input and needs.

The Alaska Pacific University Doctoral Program Accreditation Project was begun by WICHE staff this year to facilitate the accreditation of a doctoral program in psychology aimed at serving students across the state using a blended education model.

The Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) is a two-year collaboration between WICHE and APPIC to conduct a nationwide evaluation of doctoral psychology internship programs, currently not accredited by the American Psychological Association, to determine the barriers to accreditation and develop a tool to assess accreditation readiness.

The Arizona Evidence-Based Practices Project implements four evidence-based practices in Phoenix’s Maricopa County. In its final year, the project will include the evaluation of service providers of Assertive Community Treatment, supported employment, permanent supportive housing, and consumer-operated services, in an effort to facilitate the behavioral health system and service improvements.

The Arizona Behavioral Health Workforce Recruitment Initiative is one example of WICHE’s efforts to assist several states with the recruitment of individuals to fill vacant behavioral health positions across state public mental health systems.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Children’s System of Care called on WICHE to provide technical assistance for the preparation of a grant application for the CNMI behavioral health system. The Child and Family System of Care Planning Grant has been funded and additional assistance to that planning effort will be provided during FY16.

The Guam Technical Assistance Initiative provides a range of training and technical support by WICHE staff and consultants for system improvements in the public behavioral health system serving Guam.

STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT (SARA)

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a national initiative that makes distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines, as well as making it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. WICHE, as fiscal agent on behalf of its partners—the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)—was awarded $3 million in grants from Lumina Foundation and $200,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to launch the initiative.

States within the WICHE region can join W-SARA, and the states that have done so include Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. Institutions in these states are eligible to participate if they are approved by their home state’s SARA portal agency and pay annual fees to NC-SARA.
The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Its 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 is widely recognized as one of the most informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organizations regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education.


The Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework is a nonprofit provider of analytics, delivering actionable institution-specific insight to member institutions, including two- and four-year, public, proprietary, traditional, and progressive institutions. PAR offers education stakeholders a unique multi-institutional lens for examining dimensions of student success from both unified and contextual perspectives. PAR member institutions collaborate on identifying points of student loss and identifying effective practices that improve student retention in U.S. higher education.

During FY15, WCET, WICHE, and the PAR Framework leadership collaborated to support PAR’s becoming a 501(c)3 nonprofit entity.
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

e-Learning Policy is a source of information on state and federal policies that affect U.S. online and distance education providers. Among the issues tracked are Title IV federal financial aid; state authorization of distance education; regulations for military students, the Higher Education Act reauthorization and financial aid fraud. Information about institutional-level policies – including academic integrity, student preparedness, providing student services, tuition and fees for distance students, and the use of adjunct faculty in online education – is gleaned from the WCET membership and the Managing Online Education survey.

"Busting the Myth: Distance Education Enrollment," a three-part series written by WCET Policy and Analysis Director Russ Poulin and consultant Tami Taylor Straut, examined U.S. Department of Education data on distance education enrollments. The focus was on overall distance education enrollments in 2013; a comparison of 2012 and 2013 enrollments; and data on serving students across state lines, and the implications for state authorizations.

WCET Leadership Summits offer single-issue focused discussions among higher education administrators who are considering adoption of an emergent technology-related initiative. The summits are designed to provide leaders with a checklist of the challenges, opportunities, and options for advancing such initiatives. The 2015 Leadership Summit, "Adaptive Learning in Higher Ed: Improving Outcomes Dynamically," explored the many related issues. The summits are designed to provide leaders with a checklist of the challenges, opportunities, and options for advancing such initiatives.

The Monthly National Webcast Series brings together experts on e-Learning issues. Webcasts in FY15 included: "Busting the Myth: Distance Education Enrollment," "State Authorization for Distance Education: The Future for Regulations;" "State Authorization for Military Students: Navigating the Defense MOU and State Laws;" "Law and Disorder: Revision of Laws Affected by the Internet;" "Lessons Learned with Institutional Data Analytics;" "WCET Google Hangout with Anya Kamenshek, author of The Test: Why Our Schools Are Obsessed with Standardized Testing – But You Don’t Have to Be;" "Using Technology to Foster Collaboration in Education;" "What’s New at Creative Commons;" "Are Smart Devices and Gadgets Smarter Than Teachers?;" and "WCET Google Hangout: Diversity and the Higher Education Pipeline." WCET’s webcasts attract a national audience and webinar archives are available on WCET’s YouTube channel.

Photo: San Jose University Campus © Robert Jackson

NEW WCET EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In November 2014, WICHE President David Longanecker announced the appointment of Mike Abbiatti as the new executive director of WCET. Abbiatti’s career has been a series of successful roles in promoting innovation in teaching and learning and in promoting collaborative solutions. He served as director of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Educational Technology Cooperative and as associate commissioner, Information and Learning Technology for the Louisiana Board of Regents. He led the creation of the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) and the Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network (ARE-ON).
The following agencies, foundations, institutions, and organizations supported WICHE during FY 2015 with grants and/or contracts:

- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Pacific University
- Alaska Trust
- American Psychological Association
- Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- State of Colorado
- State of Hawai‘i
- Health Resources Services Administration
- Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
- State of Idaho
- State of Iowa
- Lumina Foundation
- Mat-Su Health Foundation
- Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care
- State of Nevada
- State of Oregon
- State of South Dakota
- United States Department of Veterans Affairs
- United States Department of Health and Human Services – National Institutes of Health
- University of Alaska
- University of Texas
- Washington State Hospital
- State of Wyoming

Sponsors and partners who supported various WICHE meetings and initiatives in FY 2015.

- Ace Learning Company
- Acrobatiq
- Blackboard
- Brainfuse
- Brightspace by D2L
- Burning Glass
- Cengage Learning
- Career Education Corp.
- CogBooks
- College Board
- Elsevier Research Intelligence
- EMSI
- Instructional Technology Council
- Internet2
- Jones & Bartlett Learning
- McGraw-Hill Education
- MediaSite by Sonic Foundry
- Midwestern Higher Education Compact
- M-SARA
- New England Board of Higher Education
- Online Learning Consortium
- Pearson
- RealizeIT
- SALT – American Student Assistance
- Smart Sparrow
- Soft Chalk
- Southern Regional Education Board
- StraighterLine
- Starfist by Hobsons
- TIAA-CREF
- UPCEA
- VitalSource
- zyBooks
WICHE COMMISSIONERS

WICHE is governed by three gubernatorally-appointed Commissioners from each state and territory. The WICHE Commission molds the organization’s mission and sets its priorities.

Alaska
Susan Anderson, president/CEO, The CIRI Foundation, Anchorage
Diane M. Barrans, executive director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Juneau
James Johnson, president, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Arizona
Chris Bustamante, president, Rio Salado College, Tempe
Eileen Klein, president, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix (Appointment pending)

California
Christopher Cabaldon, principal, Capitol Impact, and mayor, West Sacramento City, Sacramento
Dianne Harrison (WICHE chair), president, California State University, Northridge, Northridge (Appointment pending)

Colorado
Loretta Martinez, general counsel and secretary to the board, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Denver
Diane Kay Thomas, president, Fort Lewis College, Durango

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Sharon Hart, president, Northern Marianas College, Saipan
Jude Hofschneider, senator, Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, Saipan
Joshua Sasamoto, president, Pacific Development LLC, Saipan

Hawaii
David Lassner, president, University of Hawaii, Honolulu
Carol M. Lee, attorney and retired associate dean, University of Hawaii Richardson School of Law, Honolulu (Appointment pending)

Idaho
J. Anthony Fernandez, president, Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston
Matt Freeman, executive director, Idaho State Board of Education, Boise
Wendy Hornman, representative, Idaho House of Representatives, Idaho Falls

Montana
Clayton Christian, commissioner of higher education, Montana University System, Helena
Pat Williams, former U.S. Congressman, Missoula
Franke Wilmer, state representative, Bozeman

Nevada
Vance Farrow, industry specialist for healthcare, Governor’s Office of Economic Development, Las Vegas
Fred Likken, professor, Truckee Meadows Community College, Reno
Vic Reidling, vice chancellor of finance, Nevada System of Higher Education, Reno

New Mexico
Barbara Darmo, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Santa Fe
Mark Micheles, state senator, Albuquerque
Patricia Ana Suvallo, associate dean, College of Engineering, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

North Dakota
Mark Hagerott, chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck
Ray Holmberg, state senator, Grand Forks
Kari Reichert, vice president, National Information Solutions Cooperative, and member, North Dakota State Board of Education, Bismarck

Oregon
Ryan Deckert, president, Oregon Business Association, Portland
Camille Preus, president, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton
Hilda Rosselli, college and career readiness director, Oregon Education Investment Board, Salem

South Dakota
Robert Burns, dean emeritus, SDSU Honors College, and distinguished professor emeritus, South Dakota State University, Brookings
James O. Hansen, former regent, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre
Mike Rush, executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

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

Washington
Don Bennett, deputy director, Washington Student Achievement Council, Olympia
Jeanne Kohl-Welles, state senator, Seattle
Larry Seaquist, former state representative, Gig Harbor

Wyoming
Frank Galley, dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming, Laramie
Sam Krone, state representative, Cody
Kara Leach, president, Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs
WICHE STAFF

The WICHE website, www.wiche.edu, includes a staff directory with phone numbers and e-mail contact information.

President’s Office
David Longanecker, president
Erin Barber, executive assistant to the president and to the commission

Accounting and Administrative Services
Craig Milburn, chief financial officer
Robin Berlin, senior accounting specialist
Allison Murray, accounting specialist

Human Resources
Tara Torline, director of human resources
Georgia Frazer, administrative assistant

IT Services
Jerry Worley, chief technology officer
Willie Dumaine, senior software developer
Derek Englehorn, junior software developer
Kiawa Lewis, junior network administrator

Mental Health Program
Dennis Mohatt, vice president, behavioral health
Jerry Allen, administrative assistant
Ken Cole, director of operations
Brittany Copithorn, project coordinator
Nathana Demers, behavioral health and technical assistance associate
Alyssa Gilden, behavioral health and technical assistance associate
Debra Kupfer, consultant
Sandra Martinez, budget analyst
Nate Mohatt, research scientist
Amanda Strickland, behavioral health and technical assistance associate
Mimi Windemuller, project manager

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) & WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA)
Marshall Hill, executive director, NC-SARA
Alan Contreras, coordinator, NC-SARA and W-SARA
John Lopez, director, W-SARA
Holly Martinez, administrative assistant, NC-SARA and W-SARA
Jennifer Shanika, administrative manager, NC-SARA and W-SARA

Policy Analysis and Research
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Brian Prescott, director of policy research
Peace Brandberger, senior research analyst
Laura Ewing, administrative manager
Carl Krueger, project coordinator
Patrick Lane, project manager, Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange
Sarah Ohle Leibrandt, project coordinator
Christina Sedney, project coordinator

Programs and Services and Communications
Jere Mock, vice president
Candy Allen, senior graphic designer
Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program
John Fellers, web manager
Kay Hulstrom, administrative manager
Kim Nawrocki, administrative assistant
Ken Pepion, senior project director, Bridges to the Professoriate
Angela Rochat, data coordinator, the Compact for Faculty Development Research Mentoring Institute
Sue Schmidt, project coordinator, NANSLO/CHEO
Pat Shea, director, Academic Leadership Initiatives
Kate Springsteen, administrative assistant, Interstate Passport Initiative
Cathy Walker, project manager, Interstate Passport Initiative

WCET
Mike Abbiatti, WCET executive director and WICHE vice president for educational technologies
Rosa Calabrese, coordinator, digital and project services
Cheryl Dowd, director, State Authorization Network
Mollie McGill, director of programs and membership
Russell Poulin, director of policy analysis
Sherri Arts Gilbert, manager, operations
Cali Morrison, manager, communications
Megan Raymond, manager, events and programs
Peggy Stevens, office support manager, PAR Framework