

WICHE

Annual Report 2016

WICHE



Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Hawai'i
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
New Mexico
North Dakota
Oregon
South Dakota
U.S. Pacific Territories &
Freely Associated States
Utah
Washington
Wyoming





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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 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016).

Cover photo: Front Range of the Rocky Mountains from Denver. Bigstock © photojohn
Photo left: Commencement, University of Nevada, Reno © larapenny

A Message from WICHE Chair Jeanne Kohl-Welles

Fiscal year 2016 caps a period of significant accomplishments and notable transitions for WICHE. As chair of the organization's 48-member Commission, I am pleased to report that WICHE is well positioned this year to build on its past successes in pursuit of new avenues of collaboration and support as members continue to foster strong partnerships among our states and institutions.

In 2016, we celebrated 17 years of accomplished and dedicated leadership by David Longanecker as WICHE's president. During his tenure, which came to an end in early June, Dave consistently elevated the reputation and effectiveness of our regional compact both in the West and nationally.

When it came time to select a new leader, we had a strong response from a number of highly qualified applicants. Following an extensive selection process led by WICHE Chair Mike Rush, my Commission colleagues and I were delighted to appoint Joseph A. Garcia as WICHE's seventh president. Joe's intellect, professional experience, and higher education and legal credentials are impressive. Likewise, his steadfast dedication to broadening educational



Fiscal year 2016 caps a period of significant accomplishments and notable transitions for WICHE.

accessibility is inspiring. Throughout his career, Joe has demonstrated an enduring commitment to growing enrollments and to building stronger linkages for higher education with legislative and executive branch leaders. Civic leaders and minority advocacy groups alike have lauded his efforts to improve the success rates of low-income, minority, and nontraditional students and to bring greater racial and ethnic diversity to the ranks of faculty and staff.

Joe graduated from Harvard Law School in 1983 before working as the first Hispanic partner at the firm Holme Roberts & Owen in Denver. Joe then served as president of Pikes Peak Community College and Colorado State University-Pueblo until he was elected lieutenant governor of Colorado in 2010. Following his election, the legislature confirmed Joe as the executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

As a Westerner with deep roots in New Mexico, Colorado, and Alaska, Joe possesses a strong understanding of the challenges facing our region and our states. This includes the knowledge that by better serving the needs of the growing numbers of minority, adult, and academically underprepared students, we in turn diversify the workforce and strengthen the economic health of the West. To accomplish this, institutions of higher education must foster inclusive and safe campuses, focus on affordability, and help and streamline transitions from secondary to postsecondary education.

There is much we can learn by facilitating shared solutions among members and that, of course, is the purpose and essence of WICHE. With Joe in the lead directing the efforts of his talented staff and with the support of those education, government, and nonprofit sector leaders who serve on the Commission, WICHE is more than up to the task. I look forward to what we will accomplish in the upcoming year.



Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Chair
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

A Message from WICHE President Joseph A. Garcia

While I'm a newcomer to WICHE as its president, my association with the organization includes nearly 10 years representing Colorado on the WICHE Commission, including serving as its chair. That tenure helped me to fully appreciate the value that WICHE brings to the West and its citizens. Through collaborations with our many stakeholders, WICHE continues its work to elevate public higher education as a state investment priority and to focus on several issues that we know are, and will continue to be, of key importance to our members.

My personal interests closely align with WICHE's mission. My highest priority in my professional career has been to ensure that ALL Coloradans have the opportunity to pursue a high-quality college education, regardless of where they live, their parents' level of education, their financial means, their cultural or racial heritage, or the language they speak at home. I fully realize that my life is dramatically different now because I had that opportunity when I was younger, and



that is why I'm committed to helping others throughout the West to realize their educational dreams and their full potential.

We know that the West continues to lag other regions in the U.S. in the share of the population with a college degree. Equally troubling is the fact that the Western states are also disproportionately represented among those states with the largest discrepancies in college attainment between the majority and minority adult populations. This is especially problematic given the fact that Hispanics are the fastest-growing demographic in our country under the age of 18 and they will constitute a significant percentage of our future workforce. As more jobs require some postsecondary training, we will face major workforce shortages that will hurt our economy and our competitiveness if we do not do a better job of serving that population.

Objective evidence demonstrates that people with higher levels of postsecondary educational attainment are better off financially over the course of their lives than high school graduates. Besides improving their individual and family economic circumstances, college educations also contribute to better health, greater social and civic engagement, and stronger communities. It is, therefore, in our mutual interest as well as our

shared obligation to develop the potential of all of our region's residents. By doing so, we will not only help them to improve their lives, but we will build stronger communities, a stronger region, a more robust economy, and a healthier democracy.

In the following pages you will read about WICHE's work across a range of programs and policy initiatives centered on five areas of inquiry and action: protecting and expanding access, finding smarter ways to finance the enterprise, enhancing quality through technology and innovation, helping to build the right workforce for the future of the West, and assuring that Western higher education and WICHE are truly accountable in each of these areas. We look forward to continued partnerships with our members as we facilitate solutions to regional challenges and advance education through collaboration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

Joseph A. Garcia, 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 Western Undergraduate Exchange, the Professional Student Exchange Program, and the Western Regional Graduate Program) and 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, fact sheets, 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, saved some 35,600 students an estimated \$308.8 million in tuition during academic year 2015-16 by allowing them to pay 150 percent of resident tuition instead of full nonresident tuition through enrollment in 159 public two- and four-year institutions in 15 states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Of the 159 institutions, 72 are two-year institutions (eight of which offer baccalaureate degrees) and 87 are four-year institutions. All but seven institutions offer the WUE rate to incoming transfer students, although some may limit the WUE-eligible majors available to transfer students. Colleges and universities can tailor their participation, including admission requirements and available programs of study, to individual campus needs. WUE is the largest regional tuition reciprocity program in the U.S.

The [Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\)](#) provides affordable access to 10 professional healthcare fields (allopathic medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) for students in 10 WICHE states (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado,

Hawai'i, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming). In academic year 2015-16, 640 students enrolled through PSEP, and home states invested \$14.7 million in their future healthcare providers' educations. PSEP began in 1953 and has helped more than 15,000 students since its inception.

The [Western Regional Graduate Program \(WRGP\)](#) allows students who are WICHE region residents to enroll in 401 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 58 participating institutions on a resident tuition basis. In fall 2015, some 1,450 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated \$21.1 million in tuition. WICHE solicits nominations for new WRGP programs each fall. Nominated programs are reviewed for quality, and those not related to healthcare must be distinctive, meaning they are offered at no more than four institutions within the WICHE region. Programs approved in 2016 cover a wide variety of studies, including environmental geosciences, real estate development, health administration, indigenous and tribal nation-building, and biostatistics.

WICHE Internet Course Exchange (ICE) enables students, through their home institutions, to seamlessly access online

courses and programs offered by other two- and four-year institutions. This robust web-based platform supports both statewide and multistate, discipline-specific consortia aimed at providing more online course choices to students while using institutional resources more effectively. The major user of ICE is the Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus), a consortium of 18 universities sharing excess capacity in doctoral nursing courses.

The [Western Academic Leadership Academy](#) is an annual 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 second cohort of 15, nominated by Western Academic Leadership Forum members, was formed in spring 2016. Designed and offered by several of the region's sitting campus provosts and system chief academic officers, the program also includes ongoing mentoring and coaching by the Academy faculty, along with webinars and other resources for participating academic leaders.

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 expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum conducted its annual meeting, themed "Calibrating Your Leadership through New Landscapes" in April in Boise. The forum is funded primarily via membership dues, with additional funding provided by sponsors of the annual meeting.

The [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders](#) convenes academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives for the two-year higher education sector. The Alliance's annual meeting was in Rapid City in April. The theme was "Leaders Facing Change: Asking the Right Questions." Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded from membership dues and annual meeting sponsorships.

ACCOUNTABILITY

[Interstate Passport](#)SM is a new program for block transfer of lower-division general education, based on student-learning outcomes. WICHE facilitated the program's collaborative development by faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, and advisors in the West over a five-year period that concluded this spring. Institutions across the nation can now apply for participation in the Interstate Passport Network. Students who earn a Passport and transfer to another Network member institution will not be required to repeat learning already achieved in the Interstate Passport's nine knowledge and skill areas. 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 course-by-course articulation allows greater curricular flexibility and requires less time spent in negotiation of equivalencies. Funding for the program has been provided by a \$550,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 2011, \$2.8 million in grant funds in 2014 (\$1.6 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and \$1.2 million from

Lumina Foundation), and a \$2.99 million First in the World grant from the U.S. Department of Education awarded this year. The latter supports four new areas of development: a pilot to map critical assignments to the Passport Learning Outcomes; the creation of two new services tracking academic progress of Passport students by the National Student Clearinghouse; production of three webinar series targeting faculty, registrars and institutional researchers, and academic advisors; and a robust research project focused on the efficacy of the Interstate Passport.

The [Academic Leaders Toolkit](#) is a joint project of WICHE's Alliance and Forum. The Toolkit is a searchable, web-based depository 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. The Toolkit is searchable by category, state, and type of institution or organization. The Provost's Graduation Initiative submitted by California State University, Fresno and the Faculty Handbook submitted by Laramie County Community College were named winners in the Academic Leaders 2016 Tool of the Year competition.

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 83 member institutions, totaling some 165 campuses, with total insured values of more than \$106 billion; it has generated \$114.5 million in savings for the participating institutions since its inception. The program is currently underwritten by [Lexington \(AIG\)](#) and Zurich, with administration led by [Marsh USA Inc.](#) and supported by Captive Resources Inc. under the direction of a leadership committee representative of the insured institutions. Eleven institutions and two systems (with 20 campuses and centers) in the WICHE region participate in the program. Representatives from member campuses are invited to an annual MPP Loss

Control Workshop in March 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 (UHCSR), 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. UHCSR specializes in student health insurance plans and is known for its national network of providers and 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.



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

[MHECTech](#), a third collaboration with MHEC, extends the benefits of MHECTech to colleges and universities in the West, enabling them to purchase off competitively bid master purchasing agreements for hardware, software, and technology services to contain or reduce costs. WICHE region institutions are eligible to purchase under the new master agreements with Dell and Hewlett Packard, Lenovo, and Walker and Associates (for Ciena) for hardware including desktops, laptops, tablet devices, servers, and network equipment. A print management solution is also available through Xerox. Other contracts provide preferred pricing on software products including Arrow Electronics VMware for virtualization licenses and support; creative software for design, print, media, and web from Corel Corporation; and campus license discounts from Oracle, and statistical and analytical

solutions from SAS Institute. A master agreement with Info-Tech Research Group provides research and advisory services to campus leadership to improve core IT processes. The MHEC e-Transcript Initiative (ETI) with Parchment offers a mechanism to facilitate the transfer of student transcript information in a consistent format between WICHE-region public and private high schools and WICHE-region public and private colleges and universities. The initiative also facilitates the transfer of such information among participating postsecondary institutions. Several of the purchasing agreements are also available to K-12 organizations; local, county, and state governments; and education-related nonprofit organizations. The agreements aggregate volume purchases to lower product costs and reduce the time institutions must spend developing and conducting bids themselves.

WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

The [North American Network of Science Labs Online \(NANSLO\)](#), an alliance of cutting-edge science laboratories based at higher 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, based 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 (2012-16) with Pueblo Community College in Colorado as the fiscal agent, united eight community colleges in five WICHE states in an initiative to create or transform existing allied health and science courses for delivery in an online or hybrid format, incorporating NANSLO web-based lab experiments. WICHE concluded its work on the project in March with the delivery of a business plan targeting NANSLO's sustainability and expansion post-grant along with two open source lab manuals that can be customized by biology and chemistry faculty for use in both their physical and online laboratories

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 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.



Photos, l-r: Aaron Mayes, UNLV Photo Services; Native Woodcarving, Evergreen State College; University of Wyoming Photo Services, Kyle Spradley



Photo: Shelly Hanks, Washington State University Photo Services



LAKE AREA
STUD

First-year Lake Area Technical Institute students in Watertown, SD, participate in Kick-Off Day to familiarize themselves with the campus and meet program faculty. Photo courtesy of Lake Area Technical Institute.

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 college completion, equity, adult learners, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development. WICHE staff serves as a useful resource on a number of higher education issues, including finance, state and federal financial aid, articulation and transfer, common academic standards, and various college completion initiatives. The unit's publication series, including *Policy Insights* and *Western Policy Exchanges*, explores a wide range of significant policy issues. Staff members also undertake major, long-term grant-funded projects, collaborate with other regional and national organizations, and provide short-term technical assistance to members.

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Knocking at the College Door is WICHE's well-known high school graduate projections by state and race/ethnicity, which has been produced for about 40 years. This widely used resource is relied upon by policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, schools and school districts, researchers, and media. The ninth edition will be released in December 2016, and will include a new website complete with an interactive data tool. WICHE staff continues to be consulted on issues of demography and enrollment demand and expect to be visible through 2017 presenting on the new projections and the opportunities for education in the future.

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-one legislators from 12 states participated in the 2015 annual meeting that was held in September in Portland. The meeting, titled "Recovering Smartly – Not the Same Old, Same Old," featured national experts, WICHE staff, and LAC members speaking on legislative trends in the West, trends in higher education funding,

college affordability, sexual assault on college campuses, higher education accreditation, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, military and veteran students, 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 now includes more than 800 individuals from state higher education agencies, colleges and universities, community organizations, and other entities. In November 2015 in Denver, the ACCN convened more than 80 practitioners and policymakers focused on serving adult learners. The workshop featured a diverse array of perspectives, with participants from 22 states and the District of Columbia representing two- and four-year institutions, state systems and agencies, policy organizations, philanthropies, and nonprofits. Attendees spent a packed day-and-a-half sharing strategies, learning from subject-matter experts, and discussing topics ranging from digital badges to rehabilitating federal student loans. The ACCN also released a *Western Policy Exchanges* brief, titled "Exploring, Engaging, and Expanding

with the Adult College Completion Network,” to share lessons learned from the workshop. The publication highlights innovative programmatic and policy approaches for serving adult learners and the implications of recent research and new technologies for this group. It is intended to serve as a resource for groups, institutions, agencies, policymakers, and others interested in staying up to date on the latest efforts targeting adult credential completion around the country. This year’s workshop moved from an invitation-only event to an open-attendance format as the ACCN works to welcome new initiatives from around the country into the network. Additionally, over the last fiscal year, WICHE staff conducted webinars on relevant topics, including for example, innovations in credit for prior learning, flexible credentialing pathways leading to family-sustaining jobs, developing a common language for connecting credentials, and advising adult learners. Staff also wrote timely and relevant blog posts and gave several presentations around the country sharing effective strategies for serving adult learners.

WICHE has also been working closely with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) as a thought partner and consultant on its Close the Gap initiative, which has at its core the goal to close the

attainment gap by at least half by 2025. As part of this collaboration, WICHE staff has led a comprehensive planning and execution process for the initiative, supported planning infrastructure, worked with CDHE senior leadership to refocus efforts in key areas, and provided leadership and guidance on outreach efforts. This work will continue through FY 2017 and expand its focus to include keeping college affordable and better serving adult students.

Finally, the Policy Analysis and Research unit released a Western Policy Exchanges brief titled [“Stories from the Front Lines of Student Success: The Implementation and Progress of Near Peer Mentoring Programs in Alaska and Idaho.”](#) This brief provides an overview of the implementation and impact of near peer mentoring programs in Alaska and Idaho from the standpoint of both existing research and the near peers themselves. In addition to offering strategies and promising practices that have helped foster a college-going culture in both states, the brief provides testimonials from mentors and the students they have served – students who might have never considered college as an option without the extra support of a near peer or college guide.

ACCOUNTABILITY

[Benchmarks: WICHE Region 2015](#) presented information on the West’s progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. The information is updated annually to monitor change over time and to encourage its use as a tool for informed discussion in policy and education communities, focusing on demographics related to access, success, and finance in the West. Since 2013, the Benchmarks indicators have been available as downloadable data tables and graphics.

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 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 developments.

The [Policy Publications Clearinghouse](#) is a depository of publications, reports, and briefs related to higher education.

FINANCE

“Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West 2015-16” is the latest update of WICHE’s annual Tuition and Fees report (<http://www.wiche.edu/pub/tf>), focusing on public institutions in the WICHE region. It 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 2015-16,”](#) summarizes the report’s findings and discusses state

budget levels, higher education appropriations, state financial aid programs, college affordability, and related college finance topics and news.

A Policy Insights brief, [“Targeted Recovery: Recapping 2015 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West,”](#) summarizes key policy themes over the past year and highlights emerging issues to watch in future legislative sessions. Affordability was the dominant theme of the 2015 sessions. Legislators in the WICHE region passed

bills freezing or limiting tuition increases, increasing need-based aid, and even offering low-cost degrees in an effort to improve financial assistance opportunities for students. Many Western states also increasingly looked to higher education as a driver of economic growth, as their legislatures focused on career and technical education and STEM fields, while others sought to encourage partnerships between business and postsecondary institutions. Issues to watch include

allowing guns on campus, preventing sexual assault on campus, military and veterans education, and the ongoing implementation of common academic standards that prepare students for college and careers.

WICHE also assisted states with issues related to financial aid. For example, in South Dakota, WICHE examined how the state might develop a strategy for the redesign of state-funded financial aid programs.

WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

In 2016, the [Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange \(MLDE\)](#) continued its expansion from its pilot phase. The work creates linkages between state education and employment data systems to provide more-complete information to policymakers, students and their families, and other key education and economic development stakeholders. Currently, the MLDE is expanding from the four states that participated in the pilot project to include at least 10 states from across the country. The MLDE stands as one of the most ambitious efforts currently underway to provide a sustainable tool for states and institutions to gather relevant information about how education and economic and workforce development are linked. It has ensured that WICHE staff is deeply engaged in national conversations about the data infrastructure for postsecondary education and workforce development. In FY 2016 and continuing in FY 2017, WICHE also is conducting an analysis of University of Hawai'i graduates who work in other states, and an analysis of Hawai'i high school students who go to universities in other states and their work patterns.

A [series of 11 papers focused on improving the nation's postsecondary data infrastructure](#), published recently by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), includes a brief co-authored by Patrick Lane, WICHE's project manager for the MLDE, and Brian Prescott, formerly of WICHE and now with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. "[Fostering State-to-State Data Exchanges](#)" draws on lessons

learned from the MLDE to identify how a broader state-to-state exchange could be established to help answer key questions about postsecondary education. Among the key findings summarized in the paper: the very real barriers to establishing such an exchange are surmountable, and these exchanges can produce vital information for students and their parents as well as policymakers.

The Policy Analysis and Research unit also released a *Policy Insights* brief, "[Coordinating Postsecondary Education and the Public Workforce System in Workforce Planning](#)," which focused on forging stronger links between the public workforce and postsecondary education systems. Among the most notable features of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) is that it paves the way for states to make greater use of cross-system partnerships, career pathway models, performance measurement and data-driven improvement, and other mechanisms for bringing their workforce training and higher education agendas into better alignment. This brief provides a useful overview of the key components of WIOA, and looks at how state higher education leaders can be instrumental in facilitating the engagement of their institutions with such partnerships at both the state and local levels. It presents specific opportunities for forging stronger links between the public workforce and postsecondary education systems and provides examples of states that are making progress on that front.





MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

The Mental Health Program provides technical assistance, education, consulting, and research services for WICHE's member states, local governments, health care providers, funders, and universities. Staff provides program evaluation and technical assistance 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 community trainings to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. The program works to improve the capacity of the behavioral health workforce and the effectiveness of the public behavioral health system.

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

WICHE, in partnership with the federal Veterans Health Administration, is in the second year of a three-year pilot project in Colorado. The *Suicide Prevention for Rural Veterans: A Community-Based Approach* project addresses the need for increased access by rural veterans to suicide prevention programs. The project is designed to decrease suicide risk among rural veterans by improving access to both VA and community-based care, resources, and support services that are tailored to the specific needs of individual rural communities.

[The Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Rural Primary Care Practices provides training](#)

on implementing suicide prevention in rural primary care settings across the region. Each year, WICHE engages in several suicide-prevention planning and education efforts with multiple partners across the country.

WICHE provided consultation and training services to the Wyoming Department of Health.

WICHE has created webinars to increase access to training to help rural and frontier mental health and substance use disorder providers develop clinical and administrative competencies for Early or First Episode Psychosis.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Arizona Evidence-Based Practices Project implements four evidence-based practices in Phoenix's Maricopa County. WICHE staff conducts evaluation of provider compliance with Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), supported employment, permanent supportive housing, and consumer-operated services, in an effort to facilitate behavioral health system and service improvements. WICHE also reviews ACT programs and provides similar evaluations of EBP fidelity for the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

WICHE is studying Colorado's behavioral health funding system for the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budget. The *Colorado Behavioral Health Funding*

Study focuses on service utilization and funding levels for Medicaid and non-Medicaid individuals and the impact of the Affordable Care Act on accessibility to behavioral health services. The study also includes an audit of service payments made for non-Medicaid individuals to determine if payments were made for these individuals while they were eligible for Medicaid.

WICHE completed a gap analysis of behavioral health services provided to Idaho probationers and parolees. The *Idaho Behavioral Health Gap Analysis of Probationers and Parolees* examined the effectiveness of funding for behavioral health services provided as part of the Idaho Justice Reinvestment Initiative.

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. The group has focused on staying up to date with national and federal initiatives, and on the development of a website to provide a Western states inventory and reference for data collection and outcome measurement.

During FY 16, WICHE provided 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. Also during FY 16, WICHE completed the [South Dakota Division of Community Behavioral Health Data Systems Improvement Project](#) to help 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.

WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

The [Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium](#) (HI-PIC), a partnership between the Hawai'i Children's Mental Health Division, the Hawai'i Department of Education, the Hawai'i Public Safety Department and WICHE Mental Health, achieved contingency accreditation by the American Psychological Association in FY 15. HI-PIC is slated to receive full accreditation once it meets a customary data-reporting requirement in early 2017. WICHE provides administrative support, technical assistance, and data collection to HI-PIC. During FY 17, WICHE and the Hawai'i Department of Education have also continued a partnership to recruit a range of behavioral health professionals to fill vacant positions in Hawaii's school districts.

WICHE provides consultation and technical assistance to the [Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium](#) (NV-PIC) related to obtaining and maintaining accreditation by the American Psychological Association (APA). In FY 17, WICHE will facilitate a mock site visit, assist NV-PIC in completing a site visit and all related documentation, and assist NV-PIC in coming into compliance with the Standards of Accreditation

(SoA). WICHE staff and consultants also will continue assisting in the administration of the internship and the implementation of internship policies and procedures. Finally, WICHE provides employment opportunities for NV-PIC interns.

The [Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium](#) program allows students enrolled in the University of Alaska's Ph.D. Program in Clinical-Community Psychology and other psychology doctoral students who wish to train and work in Alaska to complete internships throughout the state. WICHE facilitates intern and faculty travel for training and program activities, supports distance technology activities, provides technical assistance to maintain accreditation through the APA, provides quarterly reports to the DHSS, and maintains program evaluation data and data regarding the in-state retention of internship graduates

WICHE provided the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) with technical assistance to implement a federally funded [Child and Family System of Care Planning Grant](#). WICHE anticipates providing additional assistance during FY 17.

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, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, 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 number of new and renewal SARA institutions in FY 2016 totaled 929, 175 of which were W-SARA institutions.







WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES (WCET)

The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Our growing membership includes more than 360 institutions, state and systemwide 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.

Sponsors and partners for WCET’s annual meeting, leadership summit, and other initiatives include Blackboard, Civitas Learning, MaxKnowledge, Realizeit, Wiley, Ed Map, Carolina Distance Learning, ilos, Pearson, Soomo Learning, StraighterLine, Ranku, Schoology, Smart Sparrow, MediaSite, and Samsung.

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Connecting Communities of Broadband and Learning Innovation bridges the expertise of e-learning and distance leaders with the technology innovators of broadband to generate resource-rich learning in both the physical and the virtual classroom. WCET membership includes many leading universities that are active in the deployment of broadband networks. WCET initiated several strategic

alliances with other higher education and technology organizations to begin a national dialogue about the Internet of Things (IoT) relative to education. IoT has been a major focus for WCET in FY 16. WCET also serves as WICHE’s representative to the Northwest Academic Computing Consortium.

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 policies including state authorization of distance education, regular and substantive interaction, teacher preparation requirements, the Higher Education Act reauthorization, and financial aid fraud. Information about institutional-level polices – including

academic integrity, accessibility for educational technologies, the price and cost of distance education, and the use of adjunct faculty in online education – is gleaned from the WCET membership and surveys of the community-at-large.

“WCET Distance Education Enrollment Report 2016: Utilizing Department of Education Data” is a report conducted in partnership with the Babson Survey Research Group. The bulk of the report,

which examined U.S. Department of Education data on distance education enrollments, was written by WCET Policy and Analysis Director Russ Poulin and consultant Terri Taylor Straut. The focus was on overall distance education enrollments in 2014; a comparison of 2012, 2013, and 2014 enrollments; and data on serving students across state lines, and the implications for state authorization.

WCET develops and maintains resources in several Focus Areas (and issues within each area) on the [WCET website](#). Current focus areas include Emerging Technologies (badges, mobile learning, IoT), Faculty Success (21st century faculty), Managing E-Learning (third-party providers, open educational resources), Policy & Regulations (accessibility, state authorization) and Student Success (academic integrity, adaptive learning, competency-based education, credentials, learning analytics, prior learning assessment, student authentication).

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 2016 Leadership Summit, “21st Century Credentials: Learners + Institutions + Workforce,” convened pioneering higher-education and workforce leaders to consider new mechanisms for credentialing both formal and informal learning for students in ways that are dynamic and pragmatic and span a lifetime, not a single season of life. The goal of the summit was to stimulate participants’ thinking about the changing landscape for tomorrow’s learners who will need the ability to represent, in digital format, their validated competencies and skills. Implicit in the process of crafting inclusive credentials is strengthened ties between the academy and workforce, which benefits all – learners, institutions, and the workforce.

WCET’s 28th Annual Meeting, held in October 2016 in Minneapolis, brought together innovative thinkers to explore pragmatic solutions to issues in higher education. The event featured keynote speaker Jaime Casap, education evangelist from Google, and included a mix of facilitated discussions, in-depth sessions on trending topics, an edtech meet and greet, and panel presentations.

WCET recognizes both institutions and individuals in higher education with various awards. At the 2016 Annual Meeting, five organizations were honored

with the WCET Outstanding Work Award (WOW), established to recognize innovative solutions to key problems. Recipients included California State University, Northridge, for creating faculty-authored instructional apps to augment learning resources; Colorado Technical University, for the development of CTU Mobile, which offers students access to a personalized learning experience on the go; University of Central Oklahoma, for its Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR), which tracks and assesses students’ beyond-disciplinary learning in both the curriculum and the co-curriculum; University of Hawai’i System, for Scaling Integration of Data Analytics and Tools to Transform Decision-Making for Student Success, an initiative that is producing great results with student retention; and Western Governors University, for “responsible borrowing” initiatives that help students make sound decisions about borrowing.

In addition, Robbie Melton, associate vice chancellor of Mobilization and Emerging Technology, Tennessee Board of Regents, received the Richard Jonsen Award, given annually to a WCET member whose career has been committed to improving postsecondary educational programs and services through innovative uses of technology. Dale Johnson, adaptive program manager at Arizona State EdPlus, was awarded the Sally M. Johnstone Award. The award recognizes a professional who has made an outsized contribution to the technology-enhanced teaching and learning community in terms of leadership and excellence in practice.

The State Authorization Network (SAN), now in its sixth year, is a membership service for individuals charged with ensuring that their institutions’ out-of-state activities comply with regulations governing online learning, field experiences, recruiting, and marketing. WCET provides training on state and federal regulations, access to experts, and strategies on meeting state requirements, and maintains a community of practitioners to share effective practices and latest developments. Participation in SAN is an additional fee-for-service opportunity for WCET member institutions, systems, and consortia. SAN has worked closely with state regulators, including conducting a joint session and its own meeting in conjunction with the national conference of state regulators.

WCET Membership Services offer numerous benefits, including issue briefs in the Talking Points and Q&A series, on emerging technologies, student success, faculty success, policy and regulations, and managing

e-Learning. In addition, through member-only email discussions, WCET's popular Frontiers blog, and regular Twitter updates ([@wcet_info](https://twitter.com/wcet_info)), educators from institutions nationwide can readily tap into WCET's network of e-Learning experts. The number of members on the email discussion list exceeds 3,500 North American subscribers. WCET's Academic Leadership Forum provides provosts, deans, and senior academic leaders with a peer-to-peer networking

opportunity on the engagement of adjunct faculty, data analytics, and other topics.

The Monthly National Webcast Series brings together experts on e-Learning issues. Webcasts in FY 16 have focused on topics ranging from data collection to adaptive learning, connected credentials, and state authorization. For webcast archives and information on future sessions, visit [WCET Webcasts](#).

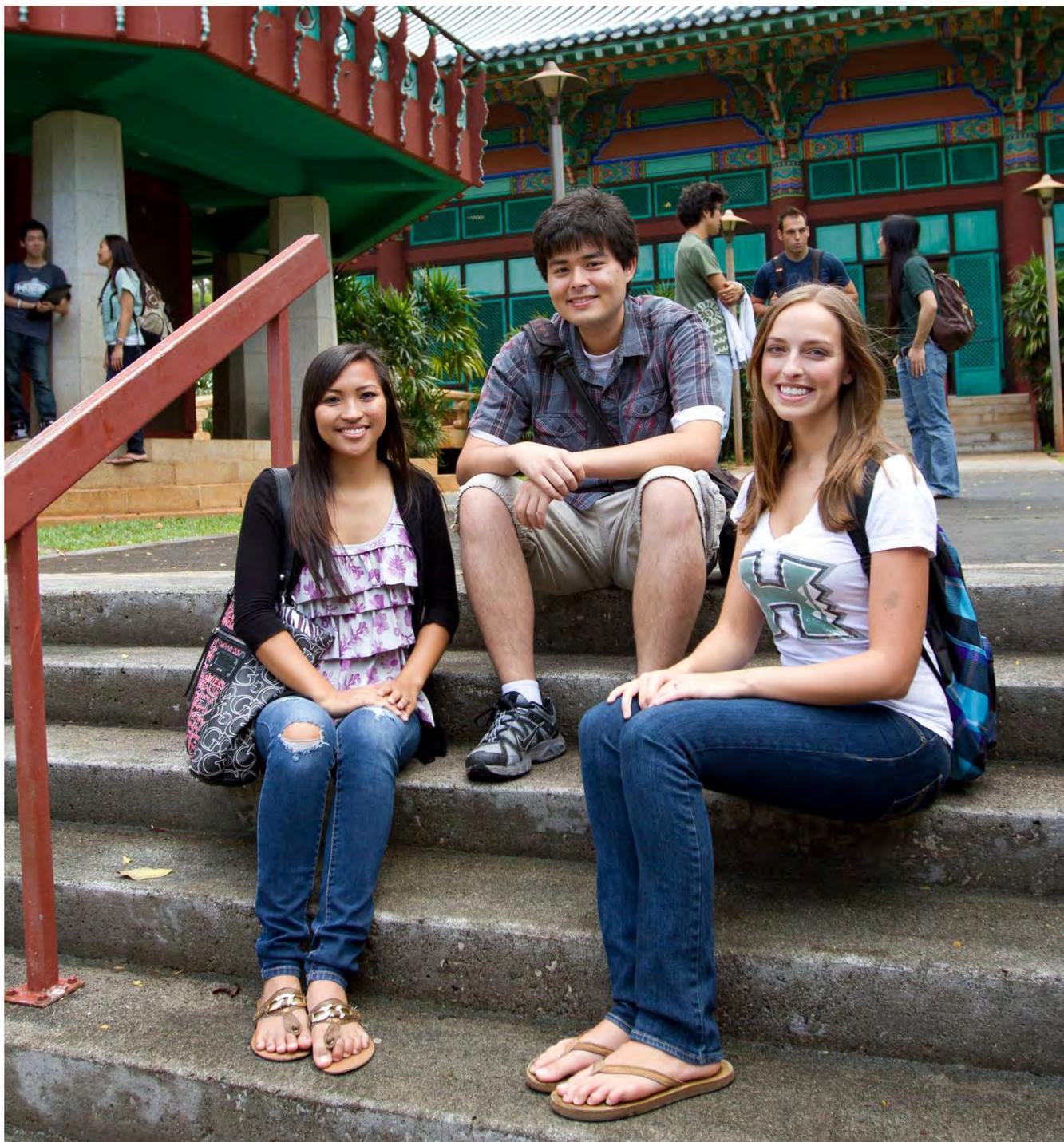


Photo: University of Hawai'i Mānoa, Center for Korean Studies



WICHE MEMBERS and FUNDERS

The following states/territories were members of WICHE during 2016:

Alaska	Montana	U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States
Arizona	Nevada	Utah
California	New Mexico	Washington
Colorado	North Dakota	Wyoming
Hawai'i	Oregon	
Idaho	South Dakota	

These foundations, agencies, institutions, organizations, and corporations provided grants and/or contracts:

ACT	Colorado Department of Higher Education	Mat-Su Health Foundation
Alaska Division of Behavioral Health	Colorado Office of Behavioral Health	Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority	Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council	Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Alaska Pacific University	Hawai'i Department of Education	Oregon Health Authority
American Psychological Association	Hawai'i Department of Health	South Dakota Board of Regents
Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers	Hawai'i Department of Public Safety	South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health
Arizona Department of Health Services	Health Resources Services Administration	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Helmsley Charitable Trusts	U.S. Department of Education
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Idaho Division of Behavioral Health	University of Texas El Paso
The College Board	Lumina Foundation	University System of Hawai'i
		Washington Student Achievement Council
		Wyoming Division of Behavioral Health

Our sponsors and partners who supported various WICHE meetings and initiatives included:

Academic Search	Elsevier	Schoology
Blackboard	ilos	Smart Sparrow
Brainfuse	MaxKnowledge	Soomo Learning
Carolina Distance Learning	MediaSite	StraighterLine
Civitas Learning	Pearson	TIAA
The College Board	Ranku	Wiley
Burning Glass	Realizeit	
Ed Map	Samsung	

WICHE COMMISSIONERS

WICHE is governed by three gubernatorially-appointed Commissioners from each state and territory. The WICHE Commission molds the organization's mission and sets its priorities. Commissioners as of June 30, 2016.

Alaska

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

Arizona

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

California

Christopher Cabaldon, president, Linked Learning Assiance, and mayor, West Sacramento City, Sacramento
Dianne Harrison, president, California State University, Northridge, Northridge
(Appointment pending)

Colorado

Loretta Martinez, general counsel and secretary to the board, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Denver
Dene Kay Thomas, president, Fort Lewis College, Durango
(Appointment pending)

Hawai'i

David Lassner, president, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu
Carol Mon Lee, attorney and retired associate dean, University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law, Honolulu
Colleen Sathre, vice president emeritus, policy and planning, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu

Idaho

J. Anthony Fernandez, president, Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston
Matt Freeman, executive director, Idaho State Board of Education, Boise
Wendy Horman, 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, professor, Montana State University, Bozeman

Nevada

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

New Mexico

Barbara Damron, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Sante Fe
Mark Moores, senator, New Mexico State Senate, Albuquerque
Patricia Anaya Sullivan (WICHE vice chair), associate dean, College of Engineering, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

North Dakota

Mark Hagerott, chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck
Ray Holmberg, senator, North Dakota State Senate, 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, Chief Education Office, Salem

South Dakota

Robert Burns, dean emeritus, SDSU Honors College,
and distinguished professor emeritus, Political
Science Department, South Dakota State University,
Brookings

James O. Hansen, former regent, South Dakota Board
of Regents, Pierre

Mike Rush (immediate past WICHE chair), executive
director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States

Sharon Hart, president Northern Marianas College

Jude Hofschneider, senator, Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature, Saipan

Joshua Sasamoto, president, Pacific Development LLC,
Saipan

Utah

Dave Buhler, commissioner, Utah System of Higher
Education, Salt Lake City

Patricia Jones, CEO, Women's Leadership Institute, and
member, Utah State Board of Regents, Salt Lake City

Peter C. Knudson, senator, Utah State Senate, Brigham
City

Washington

Don Bennett, deputy director, Washington Student
Achievement Council, Olympia

Jeanne Kohl-Welles (WICHE chair), councilmember,
King County Council, District 4, Seattle

Gerry Pollet, representative, Washington House of
Representatives, Seattle

Wyoming

Frank Galey, dean, College of Agriculture and Natural
Resources, University of Wyoming, Laramie

Sam Krone, representative, Wyoming House of
Representatives, Cody

Karla Leach, president, Western Wyoming Community
College, Rock Springs



NCHEMS
National Council for Higher Education Management Systems
SHEEO
State Higher Education Executive Officers
WICHE
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
3035 Center Green Drive Plaza 2
Columbia, MO 65211

WICHE STAFF

The WICHE website, www.wiche.edu, includes a staff directory with phone numbers and e-mail contact information. Staff as of June 2016.

President's Office

Joe Garcia, 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

Willie Dumaine, senior software developer
Derek Englehorn, junior software developer
Kiawa Lewis, junior network administrator

Mental Health Program

Dennis Mohatt, vice president, behavioral health
Jenny Allen, administrative assistant
Ken Cole, director of operations
Brittany Copithorn, project coordinator
Nathan Demers, behavioral health and
technical assistance associate
Alyssa Gilden, behavioral health and
technical assistance associate
Andie Hancock, budget coordinator
Debra Kupfer, consultant
Nate Mohatt, research scientist
Mimi Windemuller, project manager

Policy Analysis and Research

Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis
Peace Bransberger, 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

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, Compact for
Faculty Development Research Mentoring Institute
Angela Rochat, data coordinator, Compact for Faculty
Development Research Mentoring Institute
Pat Shea, director, Academic Leadership Initiatives
Kate Springsteen, administrative assistant
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 Artz Gilbert, manager, operations
Cali Morrison, manager, communications
Megan Raymond, manager, events and programs

WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA)

John Lopez, director, W-SARA
Holly Martinez, administrative assistant



“After completing my undergraduate degree at Boise State University, I was really looking forward to attending a graduate school where I could expand upon my knowledge and gain more credibility. The greatest potential roadblock I faced was paying for

tuition. Fortunately, the Western Regional Graduate Program significantly reduced the cost and I was able to enroll in Utah State’s management information systems program for my master’s. USU’s program is a perfect fit for me, and I am very grateful for WICHE’s WRGP!”

– Promise, Idaho resident, Class of 2016,
Utah State University, Management Information Systems

“Before I heard about the Western Undergraduate Exchange, I was a full-time waitress working hard to survive in Irvine, California. I’d already given up my dreams of becoming an engineer. I would never have been able to attend or afford college if it weren’t for WUE. And studying at NMSU has opened up tremendous opportunities for me. I am serving on the elected body of the university’s student government as a representative of the College of Engineering and I was able to meet and interview with many of the alumni that are now working at major companies. Within just my first year, I have already built a large network that will help pave the way to my future success.”



– Diane, California resident, Class of 2018,
New Mexico State University, Chemical Engineering

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