



WICHE NewsCap

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education



- ▶ Message from WICHE President David Longanecker
- ▶ Upcoming summit, webinars focused on connecting credentials
- ▶ 2015 WCET awards for eLearning leadership and innovation
- ▶ Impact of high school mentoring programs in Alaska, Idaho
- ▶ New WICHE Commission appointees

Message from WICHE President David Longanecker

Thinking internationalization? Why not think North America?

Gaining greater global awareness through international programs and foci has become an important thrust for many institutions of higher education as world events become more and more important in both our personal lives and collective economic activities. For institutions with limited resources or serving place-bound students and faculty (or both), it is often difficult to find reasonable and affordable international experiences.

For those of you facing these constraints, and for all others for that matter, I urge you to consider the international experience possibilities close at hand with our neighbors in North America. WICHE has been a partner for the past 25 years with the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), which brings together member institutions, organizations, and governments from Canada, Mexico, and the United States to foster multinational relationships and expand knowledge of North America and higher education within its bounds.

Through WICHE's close association with CONAHEC, I have had the great pleasure of learning much more about higher education in our neighboring countries. From the Francophile opportunities in Montreal and Quebec, to "global" Vancouver, to the great inland empire cities of Alberta and Calgary, to the unique northern treasure of Athabasca in Saskatchewan, to the great metropolis of Toronto, and to the Maritime Provinces – Canada provides a wide variety of unique, safe, close, and affordable international experiences.

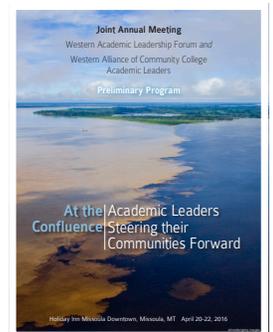


▶ **New WICHE commissioners from Hawai'i and Washington.**

Hawai'i Gov. David Ige has appointed Colleen Sathre, vice president emeritus, planning and policy, University of Hawai'i, to serve on the WICHE Commission, replacing Francisco Hernandez, former vice chancellor for students, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. In Washington, Gov. Jay Inslee selected State Rep. Gerry Pollet to serve as a commissioner, replacing Larry Seaquist, former state representative.

▶ **Chief academic officers in the WICHE region will convene in April in Missoula.**

The Western Academic Leadership Forum (the Forum) and the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (the Alliance) will hold a joint annual meeting at the Holiday Inn in downtown Missoula, MT, April 20-22. The theme of this year's meeting is "[At the Confluence: Academic Leaders Steering Their Communities Forward.](#)"



The program will feature nationally known speakers including keynoter Kevin Reilly,

(continued on back page)

president emeritus and regent professor, University of Wisconsin System; Jean McLaughlin, American Council on Education; Nancy Abersold, Higher Education Recruitment Consortium; Gail Mellow, LaGuardia Community College; Amy Getz, Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin; and Dave Attis, Education Advisory Board. A strong lineup of panel discussions will allow Alliance and Forum members to share promising practices on faculty recruitment and retention, equity and inclusivity, higher education's role in economic development, new structured pathways for students, and more.

Pre-meeting sessions on accreditation will provide ample opportunity to ask questions about accrediting practices across the nation and by agency. Speakers will include Barbara Beno, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC-WASC); Sandra Elman, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU); and Mary Ellen Petrisko, WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

[The Forum's members](#) are the chief academic officers of the four-year institutions and their related system offices and state governing and coordinating boards in the WICHE region. [The Alliance's members](#) are the chief academic officers of two-year institutions in the WICHE states and their related system offices and state governing and coordinating boards.

► **Number of states and institutions participating in W-SARA continues to grow.**

Hawai'i has submitted its application to become the 12th state to sign the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA), joining Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. One other state, Utah, has passed legislation laying the groundwork to sign the agreement. To date, more than 150 postsecondary institutions in the WICHE states are participating in W-SARA.



SARA is a nationwide effort of states committed to making distance-education courses more accessible to students across state lines, and easier for states to regulate – and institutions to participate in – interstate distance education. The initiative is funded by \$3 million in grants from Lumina Foundation, \$200,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and fees from member institutions. Find out more about [W-SARA](#).

► **Save the date: WCET Leadership Summit in June will focus on building a learning-based credentialing system.** “[21st Century Credentials: Learners-Institutions-Workforce](#),”

a WCET-sponsored summit bringing together higher education leaders, technology innovators, and workforce partners, will be held June 8-9 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The goals of the summit are to raise awareness of game-changing ideas for creating a connected-credential ecosystem and to share strategies about how to advance the connected-credential concepts within institutions and their employer partners. The summit will also provide a look at some of the emerging technologies related to



portfolios, transcripts, and other means to capture and share student credentials and evidence of learning.

Preliminary topics for the summit include: an overview of important national initiatives on credentials; examples from innovative institutions that are working to make the traditional transcript more meaningful for students and employers; the convergence of ePortfolios, digital credentials, and new work on extended transcripts; and creative institutional and workforce partnerships.

► **WICHE's Interstate Passport Initiative moving ahead on several fronts.**



With the recent award of a \$2.99 million U.S. Department of Education grant and continued funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, the Passport project has several interrelated activities underway, including:

- **Passport Framework:** Faculty teams from Passport institutions in seven states met in Boulder recently to develop learning outcomes and transfer-level proficiency criteria in the final four knowledge and skill areas: creative expression, critical thinking, human society and the individual, and teamwork and value systems. After soliciting feedback from colleagues on their home campuses, the teams will finalize the learning outcomes and proficiency criteria, and deliver the complete Passport Framework of nine knowledge and skill areas in lower-division general education in early spring 2016.
- **Passport Blocks:** Faculty teams at the Passport institutions will begin work on constructing their Passport Blocks – the list of courses and experiences through which the learning outcomes are achieved. The Passport Blocks will include courses for all nine Passport content areas. Learning outcomes may be achieved via one course, two courses, or a combination of courses. Each institution's Block is unique. The first Blocks are expected to be completed by early March.
- **Pilot project with the National Student Clearinghouse:** As a first step to fully automate the student-tracking component of the Passport, WICHE has undertaken a pilot project with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to create a “Passport Verify” service, like NSC's Degree Verify service. Institutions participating in the pilot will upload data to NSC three times a year, following the conclusion of the fall, winter, and spring terms. NSC will produce reports for the institutions on the number of Passports awarded, by term, and the GPA and number of credits earned by Passport students. Institutions will be able to query NSC to verify if incoming transfer students have earned a Passport. The opportunity to transmit Passport student data electronically will significantly reduce reporting tasks for registrars and institutional research staff at participating Passport institutions, particularly smaller schools with fewer staff members, increasing the potential of Passport adoption by institutions across the country.
- **Workshop for registrars and institutional researchers:** Critical to developing a fully automated Passport data collection and academic tracking system will be the input

of registrars and institutional researchers at the Passport institutions. They will convene Feb. 18-19 in Boulder for a workshop on plans for scaling up the data collection and tracking components. Sessions will offer the opportunity to weigh in on the specifics of collecting and uploading data and on the reports to be provided by NSC.

- ▶ **Train-the-trainer workshop for academic advisors and marketing representatives:** Each Passport institution has been invited to send an academic advisor and marketing/communications representative to Boulder in May 2016 to learn more about the Passport and share the information with colleagues back home. A six-member planning committee of academic advisors and public relations/marketing staff has developed program sessions that will help attendees ensure that information about the Passport is consistent and delivered to multiple audiences. Workshop participants will also hear about trends in student transfer nationally and regionally, and about opportunities for institutions to participate in the project evaluation.

Click here to learn more about the [Passport](#).

▶ **New ideas and strategies spotlighted at annual workshop on adult college completion.** WICHE's Adult College Completion Network (ACCN) convened more than 80 practitioners and policymakers focused on serving adult learners Nov. 10-11 in Denver. 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. This year's workshop marked a shift from past gatherings, moving 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.

The ACCN was launched in 2010 to unite a diverse group of people working to increase credential completion among adults with some postsecondary credit but no degree. Funded by Lumina Foundation and facilitated by WICHE, the ACCN works to identify and share promising practices at the institutional, system, and state levels for serving adult learners and helping them complete degrees and certificates of value.

▶ **New WICHE policy brief sheds light on mentoring programs for high school students.** "[Stories from the Front Lines of Student Success](#)" offers a concise review of the development and impact of near-peer and college guide programs in Alaska and Idaho over the past several years. In addition to summarizing recent research and data, it provides brief testimonials from young people who have been involved in the programs – college students, recent college graduates, and the high school students they have mentored. The paper concludes with a look at promising strategies and practices that have helped to foster a college-going culture in high schools that serve a predominantly low-income student body.

▶ **Linda Thor receives WCET's top award for eLearning leadership.** Linda Thor, chancellor emeritus of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, was honored with the [2015 Richard Jonsen Award](#) at WCET's annual meeting in November. The award – named for the former WICHE executive director who nurtured the idea of a technology cooperative and founded WCET in 1989 – is given each year to a WCET member who has made outstanding contributions to improving postsecondary education programs and services through innovative uses of technology.

Thor, who served as Foothill-De Anza's chancellor from 2010 until her retirement in 2015, is recognized as a forward thinker, particularly in the areas of online learning, partnerships, and recognition of prior learning for working adults. She served for nearly 20 years as president of Rio Salado College in Tempe, Ariz., building the nation's largest "college without walls" by serving working adults through distance learning, creating customized degree and certificate programs for corporations and government, and offering accelerated learning programs such as dual enrollment for ambitious high school students.

▶ **New publication summarizes 2015 higher education-related legislative activity in Western states.** WICHE recently published "[Targeted Recovery: Recapping 2015 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West](#)," which offers a useful summary of key policy themes over the past year and emerging issues to watch in future legislative sessions. Affordability was the dominant theme in 2015, with legislators in the WICHE region passing bills that freeze or limit tuition increases, expand need-based aid, and even offer low-cost degrees. Many Western states also increasingly looked to higher education as the 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 assaults, military and veterans education, and the ongoing implementation of common academic standards that prepare students for college and careers.

▶ **WCET honors seven universities and a national nonprofit organization for innovative policies, practices.** For the past 11 years, the annual WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) awards have given recognition to exceptionally creative, technology-based solutions to contemporary challenges in higher education. The recently announced [2015 WOW award winners](#) are:

Boise State University, for a virtual-reality nursing simulation that allows students to practice sterile procedures in a digital gaming environment; *The NROC Project*, for a college math readiness system that helps avoid the time and costs associated with remediation; *University of Central Florida*, for a career and academic support tool designed to work closely with students as they prepare to transfer to UCF; and *University of Maryland University College*, for an initiative that maximizes the use of Open Educational Resources across more than 700 undergraduate courses.

The WCET State Authorization Network (SAN) also recently announced its [inaugural SANSational awards](#) recognizing outstanding efforts by SAN member institutions and organizations to develop a high-quality, comprehensive solution to a challenging state authorization issue. The 2015 award winners are:

Drexel University, for its handling of notifications and disclosures for institutional state authorizations and compliance status; *University of Minnesota*, for development of a website that provides current and prospective students with information about professional licensing requirements in all 50 states; and *New York University* and *University of Louisville*, for innovative processes to identify the location of and to track prospective and enrolled online students.

► **WICHE's high school graduate projections featured at national conference.** Peace Bransberger, WICHE's senior research analyst, spoke at the kickoff plenary session of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Strategic Enrollment Management conference in November in Hollywood, FL. She presented WICHE's latest [Knocking at the College Door](#) projections of high school graduates, which depict the challenges that college enrollment managers face due to lower numbers of high school graduates and more culturally and financially diverse student populations. Co-presenter at the plenary session was Luke Schultheis of Virginia Commonwealth University, who discussed enrollment management responses to these challenging trends.

► **Mark your calendar for upcoming webinars on connecting credentials.** WICHE's Adult College Completion Network (ACCN) hosts a [free webinar series](#) focused on issues crucial to increasing degree completion by adults with prior postsecondary credit. The next three webinar topics are: innovations in credit for prior learning (Jan. 22 at 1 p.m. ET), flexible credentialing pathways leading to family-sustaining jobs (Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. ET), and developing a common language for connecting credentials (Feb. 19 at 1 p.m. ET).

Interested in joining the [Adult College Completion Network](#)? Let us sign you up for the network's email discussion list and keep you informed of new ideas and practices for better serving adults with some college credit.

Longanecker (continued from first page)

In Mexico, not only do major metropolises like Mexico City and Guadalajara, the high-tech hubs of Monterrey and Baja California, culturally rich San Luis Potosi, or my favorite, the historic city of Pueblo with its rich array of universities, provide wonderful – and yes, safe – intercultural and international opportunities, they also provide a heritage opportunity for the largest minority population in the United States. And membership in CONAHEC provides a great way to take advantage of North American higher education opportunities. For the modest \$1,800 USD annual membership fee, member institutions and organizations receive:

- Access to student exchange opportunities (through a unique student exchange bank), faculty exchanges, and administrator exchanges.
- Access to business/education partnerships for internships, post-docs, and institutional alliances.
- Wonderful networking opportunities that abound at the annual convention and throughout the year, thanks to the connections that CONAHEC staff facilitate.
- Increased understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing North America and higher education in this region of the world.

If this sounds interesting, I encourage you to join CONAHEC, either as a member or guest, at the upcoming annual meeting on March 16-18 in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. At the meeting you will join about 400 other North Americans or North American scholars, most of whom are associated with one of the nearly 200 members of CONAHEC. The conference includes a rich array of presentations and sessions that focus on issues and solutions to internationalism in North America, with unique reflections from each of the three nations involved, and also provides a wonderful opportunity to meet new colleagues with whom you or your colleagues might collaborate in the future. You will also learn about and help shape the future of CONAHEC's already robust student, administrator, and faculty exchange programs. For more information on the conference and institutional membership, visit CONAHEC's website.

I hope to see you in San Luis Potosi. Hasta luego.

David Longanecker, president, WICHE
dlonganecker@wiche.edu

Happy New Year!