



WICHE NewsCap

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education



- ▶ Update on Phase II of Interstate Passport Initiative
- ▶ Montana's Pat Williams, New Mexico's Barbara Damron appointed to WICHE Commission
- ▶ New data on distance education enrollment patterns
- ▶ Growing number of states, institutions participating in W-SARA
- ▶ Focus of WCET Leadership Summit in June in Santa Fe: adaptive learning

Phase II of the Interstate Passport Initiative is in full swing in seven states

(Editor's note: This is one in a series of updates on the Interstate Passport Initiative, the second phase of which is underway in seven WICHE states – California, Hawai'i, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Click [here](#) for more information about the Passport initiative.)

**INTERSTATE
PASSPORT**
A WICHE Region Initiative

The Interstate Passport Initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, is aimed at developing a new learning-outcomes-based framework for transfer with the goal of improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree, and saving students money.

When the project is completed in spring 2016, Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and transfer-level proficiency criteria will have been developed in nine knowledge and skill areas: human cultures (history, anthropology, languages); natural sciences (biology, physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy); human society and the individual (sociology, psychology, economics, political science); creative expression (music, visual arts, performing arts, media, literature, architecture); critical thinking; oral communication; written communication; quantitative literacy; and teamwork and value systems.

The PLOs and proficiency criteria are being developed, vetted, and agreed upon by teams of faculty from two- and four-year institutions, working at both the intrastate and interstate levels. In some states, all institutions are participating in the project; and in others, one or two pairs of institutions are taking part.

Phase I of the project, which concluded in fall 2014, focused on three foundational skills: oral communication, written communication, and quantitative literacy. In Phase II, the remaining six content areas are being dealt with two at a time.

(continued on page 2)

▶ Participation in W-SARA continues to grow.

The number of postsecondary institutions participating in the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA) has grown to 80, in nine states – Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington. Four other states – Hawai'i, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming – have passed legislation laying the groundwork to sign the agreement, and a similar bill is pending in California this session.

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](#).

▶ Newest WICHE Commissioners are Pat Williams and Barbara Damron.

Montana Governor Steve Bullock has appointed former U.S. Congressman Pat Williams to a four-year



Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education –
State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreement

term on the WICHE Commission. An educator by profession, Williams served nine terms (1979-1997) in the U.S. House of Representatives before returning to the University of Montana in Missoula, where he teaches courses in environmental studies, history, and political science. He was a member of the Board of Regents of the Montana University System in 2012-13.

In New Mexico, Governor Susana Martinez has appointed Barbara Damron, cabinet secretary of the higher education department, to serve on the WICHE Commission through December 2016. Damron has been an associate professor at the University of New Mexico's College of Nursing since 2009. Over her career, she has served as a clinical nurse specialist, administrator, educator, and researcher, and was founding director of the first statewide comprehensive cancer nursing education program in the nation.

► **Check out this useful infographic on distance education enrollment.** WCET's Russ Poulin and Terri Taylor Straut recently put together an [infographic](#) that provides a quick overview of distance education enrollment patterns, based on IPEDS Fall 2013 survey data, that might challenge popular opinion. Poulin and Straut also wrote a series of blogs: the [first](#) focusing on the 2013 survey statistics; the [second](#) comparing growth in distance education enrollment between 2012 and 2013; and the [third](#) examining the statistics on enrolled students from other states or other countries, especially in relation to state authorization regulations.

► **Upcoming WCET Leadership Summit will focus on adaptive learning in higher education.** On June 10-11 in Santa Fe, NM, WCET will convene institutional leaders and corporate innovators to explore the challenges of choosing and applying an adaptive learning approach for remedial, undergraduate, and graduate education. The program will cover research findings on course grades and completion; ways that institutions have defined requirements for adaptive learning products; faculty roles and student feedback; and whether adaptive learning is a fad or a potential game-changer for addressing competencies, completion, and student costs in postsecondary education. Click [here](#) to register and to browse the preliminary program.



► **WICHE Mental Health Program announces three new projects.** The WICHE Mental Health Program (MHP) has been chosen by the South Dakota Office of Judicial Services to conduct an analysis of the state's drug court system and make recommendations for improvement. MHP has also been awarded a contract by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Rural Health, to develop a compendium of effective suicide prevention practices and tools for use in rural communities. In addition, MHP is providing assistance to the Hawai'i Department of Education in recruiting school psychologists, counselors, and behavioral health specialists to fill nearly 50 vacant positions across the state.

► **WCET's Russ Poulin to address Connect 2015 online learning conference.** WCET Deputy Director Russ Poulin will be a featured speaker at LearningHouse's [Connect 2015 conference](#) July 9-10 in Louisville, KY. In a session titled "Linking Federal Regulations and Academic Practices," Poulin will outline the regulations that are in play for distance education and technology-mediated instruction as the Higher Education Act is set to be reauthorized later this year.



► **Nationally recognized experts to speak at CHEO faculty workshop.** A professional development workshop will be held May 14-15 in Boulder, CO, for faculty participating in the Consortium for Healthcare Education Online (CHEO). Featured speakers will be Paul Stacey, associate director of global learning for Creative Commons; Sam Johnston, a research scientist for the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST); and Gerry Hanley, executive director of California State University's Merlot (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching). For information about the workshop and other faculty professional development opportunities delivered through WICHE for CHEO participants, click [here](#).

► **Be part of transforming higher education – join WCET!** Since 1989, the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) has been the leader in the practice and policy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. As a self-supporting unit of WICHE, WCET relies on memberships and corporate underwriting to bring key intelligence on technology-enhanced learning to higher education institutions, systems, and organizations. Membership provides access to WCET's growing community of innovators, leaders, and practitioners as well as the information you need to make critical decisions affecting student success. To learn more about the benefits of WCET membership, click [here](#).



Passport Phase II *(continued from first page)*

In February, faculty teams from participating states gathered in Boulder, each team bringing their own state's learning outcomes as a starting point for development of PLOs in two lower-division general education knowledge areas: natural sciences and human cultures. The product of this interstate negotiation was a set of draft PLOs that the faculty teams took back to their states for vetting.

In mid-April, the faculty teams will return to Boulder to develop the transfer-level proficiency criteria for those two content areas, using a similar negotiation process. Also in mid-April in Boulder, faculty with expertise in critical thinking and creative expression will convene to develop draft PLOs in those two areas. The drafting, vetting, and negotiation processes for these two content areas will continue through late August.

In addition to this work, facilitators in each state are building awareness of and support for the Passport initiative by engaging

a variety of stakeholders. Following is an update on what is happening in each of the participating states:

California – Debra David, senior advisor for Liberal Learning Partnerships, California State University Office of the Chancellor, is Passport State Facilitator. The grant partners are the statewide Academic Senates for the California Community Colleges (CCC) and California State University (CSU).

Six faculty members (three CCC and three CSU) participated on the intrastate team to develop a state set of learning outcomes in natural sciences. Representatives at the interstate meeting in Boulder included Farah Firtha, Chemistry Department, Mt. San Jacinto College, and Tom Krabacher, Geography Department, CSU Sacramento. Five faculty members (three CCC and two CSU) participated on the intrastate human cultures team, which was represented at the interstate meeting by Dolores Davison, professor of history and women's studies at Foothill College, and Stefan Frazier, associate professor of linguistics and language development at San José State University. The intrastate meeting for the critical thinking and creative expression content areas will be held at San José State University; the date and the full slate of participants have not been finalized.

A poster session on the Passport project will be presented at the Academic Resource Conference hosted by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, April 22-24 in Oakland. The project will also be discussed at a workshop, titled "Re-envisioning General Education: Threshold Concepts and Wicked Problems," hosted by the CCC Success Network on May 8 at San José City College.

Hawai'i – Richard Dubanoski, dean emeritus of the University of Hawai'i, serves as the Passport State Facilitator. The two grant partners are the University of Hawai'i at West Oahu (UHWO) and Leeward Community College (LCC). Several faculty members from each institution attended the interstate negotiation meeting in Boulder, including the faculty leads for natural sciences – Fenny Cox, Biology Department, UHWO, and Michael Reese, Chemistry and Science Department, LCC – and the leads for human cultures – Suzanne Falgout, Anthropology Department, UHWO, and Paul Lococo, History Department, LCC. These faculty members are vetting the draft PLOs with their colleagues on the two campuses. The human cultures PLOs have also been presented to the UHWO General Education Committee and the LCC Faculty Senate.

For the next round of Passport learning outcomes – critical thinking and creative expression – faculty leads include Olivia George, Humanities Department, UHWO; Jim West, Arts and Humanities Department, LCC; Wojciech Lorenc, Creative Media Department, UHWO; and Susan Lum, English Department, LCC. The leads are meeting with faculty and administrators in several departments to develop the state sets of learning outcomes in critical thinking and creative expression.

North Dakota – As Passport State Facilitator, Thomas B. Steen, director of essential studies and professor of kinesiology and public health at the University of North Dakota, oversees Passport work at four institutions: Lake Region State College (two-year),

North Dakota State University (four-year, research-intensive), North Dakota State College of Science (two-year), and Valley City State University (four-year). The North Dakota Passport work has been championed and followed closely by the North Dakota General Education Council, the state's organization for faculty and staff discussion of issues and programs in general education. The council includes all 11 North Dakota University System public institutions, all five of the state's tribal colleges, and three private colleges/universities.

Faculty teams have been assembled in four Passport content areas: natural sciences, human cultures, critical thinking, and creative expression. Intrastate meetings on natural sciences and human cultures were held in preparation for the February negotiation meeting, which was attended by Steen and by Larry Peterson, director of accreditation, assessment and academic advising at North Dakota State University. An intrastate meeting on critical thinking and creative expression also was held in preparation for April negotiation meeting, which will be attended by Alan Church of Dickinson State University and William "Bill" Shay of the North Dakota College of Science.

The Passport will be on the agenda at the annual North Dakota General Education Summit on April 24 in Fargo. The Summit will include a session on the proposed revised state transfer agreement – GERTA Plus – including transition and implementation plans (if approved). North Dakota's Passport work will inform plans for GERTA Plus.

Oregon – Two Oregon institutions are participating in the Passport project: Western Oregon University (WOU) and Blue Mountain Community College. Sean Pollack, academic policy specialist at the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, serves as the Passport State Facilitator.

Like the other Passport states, Oregon has assembled intrastate faculty teams for each Passport content area. Representatives include Patricia Flatt, Chemistry Department, WOU – who attended the February meeting on natural sciences and human cultures – and Isidore Lobnibe, Anthropology Department, WOU. In preparation for the next two content areas – critical thinking and creative expression – an intrastate meeting was held in March with all participating WOU Passport faculty. Faculty representatives include Paul Disney, Business/ Economics Department, WOU; Jackie Ray, Library and Media Services, Blue Mountain CC; and Diane Tarter, Art, WOU.

Information about the Passport project will be presented at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Student Success Committee on May 13; the Joint Boards Articulation Commission meeting in early May; and the Oregon Registrars' Annual Meeting on May 19.

South Dakota – Paul Turman, vice president for academic affairs for the South Dakota Board of Regents, serves as the Passport State Facilitator. The Board of Regents provides oversight for the six public four-year institutions (Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, South Dakota School

of Mines & Technology, South Dakota State University, and the University of South Dakota) that are participating in Phase II of the Passport initiative.

Twelve faculty from these six institutions were involved in the formation of the state-level learning outcomes in natural sciences, and 10 faculty assisted in developing learning outcomes for human cultures. Laura Vidler, chair of Modern Languages at the University of South Dakota, was chosen to chair the human cultures faculty team, which will solidify the PLOs for that content area once feedback is received from faculty in participating states. Madhav Nepal, assistant professor of biology and microbiology at South Dakota State University, also attended the February meeting in Boulder. Currently, faculty representatives are being identified to facilitate the development of PLOs for both the critical thinking and creative expression content areas.

An update on South Dakota's participation in the Passport initiative was provided at the Regents' March/April meeting in Vermillion.

Utah – Phyllis “Teddi” Safman, the Utah State Board of Regents' assistant commissioner for academic affairs, serves as the Passport State Facilitator. The Utah System of Higher Education includes eight public colleges and universities. The state was represented at the February interstate meeting on natural sciences and human cultures by Adam Dastrup, Geosciences Department at Salt Lake Community College; Daniel McInerney, History Department, Utah State University; and Larry Smith, Physics Department, Snow College. The PSF is working to set a date for the intrastate meeting, which will include those two content areas plus critical thinking and creative expression. Some faculty members who are working on the Passport want to see more integration across disciplines.

The representatives for critical thinking are Ryan Thomas, associate provost at Weber State University, and Kati Lewis, coordinator, General Education and ePortfolio, Salt Lake Community College. For creative expression, Miguel Chuaqui, professor and dean, College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah, is on board. A faculty representative in the arts has yet to be named.

With effective transfer policies and strong infrastructure, the Utah system is able to include all of its institutions in the Passport initiative. The Regents' General Education Task Force (GETF), which represents all eight institutions, has reviewed the PLOs. Utah has worked for years to identify learning outcomes and assessments that indicate students' level of learning. The GETF is interested and will remain involved in the Passport project at the state level. In addition, the PLOs and the proficiency criteria will be discussed in faculty discipline meetings that focus on learning, assessment, and teaching in Utah's general education program. In March, Safman addressed chief academic officers on the Passport and its benefits to their institutions.

Wyoming – Kari Brown-Herbst, director of the Center for Teaching & Learning at Laramie County Community College (LCCC) in Cheyenne, serves as Passport State Facilitator. LCCC is currently the only institution in Wyoming participating in the Passport. Teams of faculty members collaborated on the Wyoming contributions to the PLOs for human cultures and natural sciences. The teams were led by Melissa McAllister, English as a Second Language, and Meredith Roehrs, zoology/biology, respectively. Faculty teams also met in March to develop contributions for the April negotiation conversations focused on critical thinking and creative expression.