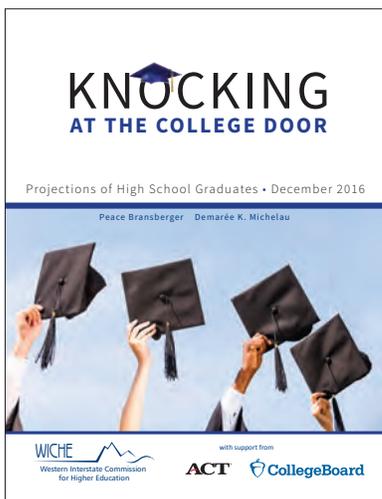




# WICHE NewsCap

WICHE  
Western Interstate Commission  
for Higher Education



- ▶ 9<sup>th</sup> edition of *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates* released on December 6
- ▶ WICHE Commission elects new officers
- ▶ Record Western Undergraduate Exchange enrollments reported
- ▶ New tuition and fees and 2016 legislative actions reports available
- ▶ WCET webcast explores 2016 election results

**New WICHE report: *Knocking at the College Door* shows the number of high school graduates across America is leveling off, and nearly half of all graduates soon will be students of color.**

The steady growth in high school graduates that led to significant expansion of higher education in the U.S. in recent decades is coming to an abrupt halt. While the number of graduates grew 30 percent from 1995 to 2013, the number of high school graduates is expected to show virtually no growth for the next seven years, and will likely decline this school year, even as the percentage of high school students earning diplomas rises, according to a report released by WICHE on Dec. 6 at the National Press Club in Washington.

The report, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, reveals that the boom in high school students is leveling out, and white students are increasingly being replaced with larger numbers of minority students.

“We are moving toward a time when nearly half of all high school graduates will be students of color, with the largest increases among Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders,” said Joe Garcia, president of WICHE. “Meanwhile, as our population continues to shift geographically, the states that will gain the most population will educate the highest percentage of students of color.”

The data in the report and accompanying materials on the WICHE website are designed to help states target resources effectively to meet the education and workforce needs of current and future populations and industries. The report, the 9<sup>th</sup> in a series that has been released by WICHE every four years for nearly four decades, is one of the most widely cited sources of comprehensive and reliable data on the future size and composition of the nation’s high school graduating classes. It remains the only national series that includes state-level projections for students attending private schools, and the most comprehensive report analyzing public high school graduates by race/ethnicity at the state and regional levels. ACT, Inc. and the College Board provided generous financial support for the development and production of *Knocking at the College Door*.

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▶ **Patricia Sullivan, Clayton Christian, Jeanne Kohl-Welles will lead WICHE Commission in 2017.**

At its Nov. 10 semi-annual meeting, the WICHE Commission elected three veteran members as officers for 2017. The new chair is Patricia Sullivan, associate dean of the College of Engineering at New Mexico State University. Clayton Christian, Montana’s commissioner of higher education, is the new vice chair. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, a longtime Washington state legislator who is now a member of the King County Council, transitioned from her role as 2016 WICHE Commission chair to immediate past chair. Sullivan has served on the commission since 2003, Christian since 2010, and Kohl-Welles since 2006.



Patricia Sullivan



Clayton Christian



Jeanne Kohl-Welles

▶ **Three WICHE Commission appointments announced.**

The two newest members of the WICHE Commission are Stephanie Butler, executive director of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, who will serve a term ending June 25, 2019, and Diane Duffy, interim executive director



Stephanie Butler

of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, who will serve until March 28, 2018. Recently reappointed to a four-year term as a WICHE Commissioner was Carol Mon Lee, an attorney and retired associate dean of the University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law.



Carol Mon Lee

► **WICHE's Joe Garcia challenges community college leaders to focus on "serving – not just enrolling – students."** The nation's community colleges have a unique and vital role to play in preparing an increasingly diverse student population for work, citizenship, and lifelong learning in a changing world. That was the key message of WICHE President Joe Garcia's address at the opening session of the American Association of Community College Trustees' 2016 Leadership Congress, held Oct. 5 in New Orleans.

Minority and first-generation students are enrolling in community colleges in record numbers, but far too many leave without earning a credential, Garcia said. "These students come to us with hopes and dreams and plans, and it is our obligation to steward, protect, and advance" their aspirations, he said. Garcia spoke of his own journey – from taking night classes at a community college in Virginia, to earning a law degree at Harvard, and going on to be a community college and university president and Colorado's lieutenant governor before taking the helm at WICHE in 2016. [To watch his address, click here.](#)

► **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation boosts support for the Interstate Passport initiative.**

The Interstate Passport<sup>SM</sup>, a groundbreaking effort to help students transfer across state lines without losing credit for what they learn in lower-division courses, has received a supplemental grant of \$750,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for implementation and expansion activities over the next two years.



The Passport is aimed at improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree, and saving students money. It is undergirded by a framework of learning outcomes and proficiency criteria – in nine knowledge and skill areas – developed collaboratively by a network of two- and four-year institutions in seven Western states, led by WICHE and supported by Lumina Foundation and the Gates Foundation. Also supporting the scaling-up and enhancement of the Passport is a \$2.99 million First in the World grant, awarded to WICHE by the U.S. Department of Education 15 months ago.

The Interstate Passport website offers a wide array of information on the history, development, and key components of the initiative, in formats ranging from

FAQs to policy briefs to webinars. And check out the new Passport Blog, featuring weekly posts on research, opinion pieces, and ideas for improving student transfer in higher education.

► **More than 38,000 students benefiting from WICHE's tuition-reciprocity agreement in 2016-17.**

The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) gives students from WICHE states the opportunity to enroll in participating two- and four-year public institutions and pay 150 percent of resident tuition instead of full nonresident tuition. In the current academic year, 38,300 students enrolled at 159 participating WUE institutions, saving an estimated \$341.5 million in tuition costs. California and Washington are the biggest users of the program, sending some 17,500 and 3,470 students, respectively, to participating WUE institutions across the West. Arizona and Nevada institutions enrolled the most WUE students this year.



WUE, which was established in 1988, is the largest program of its kind in the nation. Students and parents are grateful for the savings it provides, and institutions benefit by filling under-enrolled programs, diversifying their student body, and attracting the best and brightest to their campus. [Click here for a full list of institutions that participate in WUE.](#)

► **Check out WCET's webcast on the impact of the 2016 election results on higher education.**

A new webcast, "[What the Election Results Mean for Higher Education](#)," features panelists Jarret Cummings, director of policy and external relations for Educause; Van Davis, Blackboard's associate vice president, higher education policy; Leah Matthews, executive director of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission; and Russ Poulin, WCET's director of policy and analysis.

► **Two new WICHE reports focus on higher-education affordability, access, and financing in Western states.**

WICHE's 2016 update of "Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West" is now available as a report and detailed data tables. The update shows modest increases in published tuition and mandatory fees for in-state/in-district undergraduates in the West between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years – 1.6 percent at public four-year institutions and 2.9 percent at public two-year institutions. The WICHE states' average published tuition and fees was 7 percent less than the national average for public four-year institutions, and 1 percent less than the national average for public two-year institutions.



WICHE also recently released "[A Tale of Two Economies: 2016 Higher Education Activity in the West](#)," a six-page policy brief recapping legislative actions in 2016 on a number of fronts. The brief discusses how varying state economic conditions affected higher education spending as well as common themes, including a focus on affordability and accelerated learning options, continued support of military-connected students, investment in evidence-based student success initiatives, proposed solutions for addressing teacher shortages, and issues to watch in the region.



► **WICHE’s annual report for FY 2016 now available.** [WICHE’s 2016 Annual Report](#) recaps the organization’s work during fiscal year 2016 to expand access to higher education, foster student success, create and sustain institutional and state collaborations and innovations, and promote sound public policy. It includes a message from new WICHE President Joe Garcia on the organization’s commitment to working collaboratively to develop regional solutions to regional challenges, and elevating public higher education as a state investment priority



► **WICHE-ASHE report sheds light on improving communication between researchers and higher education policymakers.** [A new policy brief from WICHE and the Association for the Study of Higher Education](#) is a must-read for those interested in closing the gap between findings from academic research and effective policymaking. The brief examines why research is not currently more influential in policymaking; how those in the academy can develop a cross-sector, state-level research agenda that is more likely to affect policy change; and what policy areas are well suited for collaboration between policymakers and researchers to increase equity and inclusion within postsecondary education. It concludes with four action steps can be taken to improve the links between educational research and policy.



► **Check out photos, awards, and highlights from WCET’s 28th Annual Meeting.** The [WCET Frontiers](#) blog features a useful roundup of activities at the annual meeting, held in October in Minneapolis. The meeting featured a keynote address from Jaime Casap, chief education evangelist at Google, and sessions on a variety of topics, including emerging technology, accessibility, alternative credentials, and more. Several awards were given out at the meeting, including the Sally M. Johnstone, Richard Jonsen, and WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) awards.



► **Save the date for the 2017 WCET Leadership Summit.** Planning is underway for the 2017 WCET Leadership Summit, slated for June 14-15 in Salt Lake City, UT. The summits bring together education leaders and practitioners from forward-thinking institutions and enterprises that are actively pursuing answers to the big questions in higher education. [Click here to join the interest list.](#)



► **New WCET award to honor leadership in creating digitally inclusive communities.** Nominations will be accepted through April 30 for the [Digital Inclusion Award](#), created by WCET and GlobalMindED to recognize individuals, organizations, or programs working to promote access, equity, and opportunity in the digital realm, particularly among underserved populations. WICHE President Joe Garcia participated in a panel discussion on digital inclusion at WCET’s 28th Annual Meeting. [Watch the recorded session.](#)

► **In Colorado, a statewide symposium showcases new ideas and promising practices for serving adult learners.** “Mining the Value in Adult Education” was the theme of a recent daylong symposium in Denver that was attended by more than 200 individuals from across the state who are involved in serving adult learners. The program, which you can view by Googling the Colorado Adult Learning Symposium, included a keynote presentation from Lumina Foundation’s Haley Glover and a variety of sessions highlighting local projects and services. WICHE served on the leadership committee for the symposium.

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Key findings of the report include:

▶ **Fewer high school graduates:** The nation is projected to produce fewer high school graduates in all of the 10 graduating classes between 2013 and 2023, compared to the highest recorded number of graduates in 2013. The year of greatest decline is projected to be 2017, with about 81,000 fewer graduates (2.3 percent). While the nation is projected to see three years of growth between 2024 and 2026, this will be a short-term increase as the average size of graduating classes between 2027 and 2032 is expected to be smaller than those in 2013.

▶ **Dramatic increases in graduates who are Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander.** The racial/ethnic mix of high school graduates in the U.S. will continue to shift significantly toward a more diverse population of graduates, fueled primarily by large increases in the number of Hispanic (50 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander (30 percent) public high school graduates through about 2025. The pending national plateau is largely fueled by a decline in the white student population and counterbalanced by growth in the number of non-white public school graduates—Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders in particular. Overall, there will be consistent declines in the number of white public high school graduates and robust growth in the number of public high school graduates of color in the coming years.

▶ **Marked regional differences will continue.** There is significant regional variation, with the Northeast and the Midwest experiencing continuing declines in the number of high school graduates while the West will see slight increases, and the South will see significant and steady increases. Most notably, the South is the engine of growth for high school graduates. It is the only region that is projected to experience an increase in the number of high school graduates for every year of the projections, even though that number is expected to contract after 2025.

▶ **Sharp declines in private school graduates.** The number of students graduating from private high schools will decline more sharply than the decreases in the overall numbers of graduates. The number of high school graduates from private religious and nonsectarian schools is projected to decline at an even greater rate than the overall trend, from 302,000 in 2011 to about 220,000 by the early 2030s—a decrease of 80,000 graduates, or 26 percent.

“The projections in this report are more than a data set for academic discussion; they are a window into our future,” Garcia said. “As graduations level out and even decline in many states, and as minority students increase across the board, states and their K-12 and higher education leaders have an important opportunity to ensure that they close achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color. Equally important, our higher education systems must establish policies and practices that will lead to greater attainment of degrees and certificates for students of color.”

*Felicitations to you all from WICHE!*

*Wishing you a joyous holiday season and a  
happy and healthy new year!!!*