



# WICHE NewsCap

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The bimonthly newsletter from WICHE serving Western states, students, and institutions for 66 years

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## Notes from the President

WICHE can serve as a resource for understanding final federal regulations on accreditation, state authorization

Many of us in higher education are quite familiar with the postsecondary oversight structure known as the “triad”: the system composed of states, accrediting agencies, and the federal government that oversees and holds postsecondary institutions accountable to federal and state requirements, as well as peer-developed standards of quality. Integral to this arrangement is the notion that all three entities of the triad depend on each other for their mutual success, and each must always be sure to hold up their end of the bargain.

On Nov. 1, 2019, the U.S. Department of Education released final regulations covering accreditation and the state authorization of online education providers. And soon after, Diane Auer Jones, principal deputy under secretary at the U.S. Department of Education, spoke at the November WICHE Commission meeting, providing additional context and a summary of the regulations. The session highlighted some significant changes coming our



*Demarée Michelau*

way that we need to be following as states, institutions, and accreditors work to implement the new rules.

For instance, the elimination of the concept of regional accreditation is garnering a lot of attention, and rightfully so. This leads to many questions, but from WICHE’s perspective, one of the biggest questions of all is what does this change mean for states, including how it impacts their role in the triad and what statutory or other policy changes should states be considering in response to this new approach to accreditation? We’re in the early stages, but WICHE is prepared to assist states in sorting out the implications and to assist in implementation when possible.

Through its [Frontiers Blog](#), WCET is a great resource for information about how the final regulations will impact state authorization, and [W-SARA](#) staff are available to assist the state portal entities with any questions.

At WICHE, we are keenly aware that students (knowingly or not) rely on states to protect them. And through an effective triad states ensure quality and accountability of our postsecondary institutions, so WICHE stands ready to ensure that the state continues to be a strong and active partner. There is more information to come from the Department through webinars and sessions at the Federal Student Aid Conference, and we’ll continue to serve as a resource for the West in the coming months.

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# WICHE Commission elects new officers for 2019-20, welcomes new commissioners

Camille Preus, executive director of the Oregon Community College Association, will be the next chair of the [WICHE Commission](#). Preus was elected at the WICHE Commission meeting held Nov. 7-8 at The Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. Susan Anderson, president/CEO of The CIRI Foundation and a WICHE commissioner representing the state of Alaska, was elected vice chair. Preus succeeds outgoing chair Ray Holmberg, a North Dakota state senator. Holmberg will serve as immediate past WICHE chair.

The Commission welcomed two new commissioners from Wyoming: Kimberly Kuster Dale, president of Western Wyoming Community College, and David L. Jones, dean of the College of Health Sciences at University of Wyoming. Another new commissioner, David Woolstenhulme, who is the interim commissioner of higher education for the Utah Board of Regents, will attend the May 2020 commission meeting.

Meeting participants attended sessions on the federal perspective on higher education and student success, WICHE's strategic communications plan, strategic priorities for the next year, and workforce projections through 2027.



*Camille Preus  
WICHE Chair*



*Susan Anderson  
WICHE Vice Chair*



*Ray Holmberg  
Immediate Past  
WICHE Chair*



*Kimberly Dale*



*David Jones*



*David Woolstenhulme*



*WICHE Commissioners and WICHE President Demi Michelau, at the Nov. 7-8, 2019, WICHE Commission Meeting at The Brown Palace Hotel, Denver*

## WCET's 2019 WOW Awards honor ed-tech innovations, leadership in Arizona, Colorado, and New Hampshire

One of the nation's preeminent postsecondary education technology gatherings took place Nov. 5-7, 2019, as the WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies) hosted its 31st annual meeting in Denver.

Keynote speakers included Michael Ellison, founder and CEO of [CodePath.org](#), and Diane Auer Jones, principal deputy undersecretary for the U.S. Department of Education.

Among the annual meeting's highlights was a ceremony honoring this year's WCET Award winners, including the WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Awards, which recognize institutions that develop exceptionally creative, technology-based solutions to contemporary challenges in higher education. The 2019 WOW Award winners are:

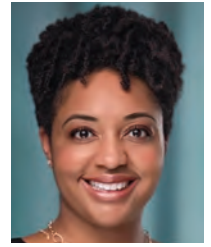
- The [Colorado Department of Higher Education OER Council](#), for its leadership in fostering the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) policies and practices at postsecondary institutions across the state.
- [Granite State College](#), in Concord, N.H., for development of a distance-based teacher certification program aimed at easing a critical shortage of educators in rural areas of New Hampshire.
- [Rio Salado College](#), in Tempe, Ariz., for creation of the Dynamic Assessment Data Dashboard (DADD), which enables more-effective assessment of soft skills, quicker identification of trends and gaps, and an integrated approach to curricular redesign across the college.



2019 WOW Award Winners

## Comings and goings at WICHE

- **Jessica Rowland Williams** has been named [director of Every Learner Everywhere](#), a network of 12 partners committed to accelerating the use of digital and adaptive learning technologies to improve collegiate outcomes for underserved students. WCET serves as the intermediary for Every Learner, one of three solution networks funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) to drive innovation in digital learning, developmental education, and technology-enabled advising. Williams joins Every Learner from Georgia State University, where she led initiatives in areas including enrollment management, student success, and personalized learning. Previously, she was a fellow at Princeton University's Office of Academic Affairs and Diversity and program coordinator for the Princeton Summer Undergraduate Research Experience. She holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in molecular biology from Princeton and a bachelor's degree in biology from Spelman College



Jessica Williams

- **Laura Ewing**, who was the administrative manager in the Policy Analysis and Research Unit, has been named WICHE's executive assistant to the president and to the Commission. Ewing has been with WICHE since 2007 and started in her new role on Oct. 1, 2019. Before joining WICHE, Ewing was the director of events for the St. Vrain Historical Society, an ancillary product project manager for AT&T Wireless Services, and executive assistant to the president of New West Presentations.
- The newest members of WICHE's Behavioral Health Program are **Gretchen Stage**, program manager for the Together With Veterans initiative, and **Erin Briley**, who will be working on several projects, including the Rural Psychology Internship Program.



Laura Ewing

## Behavioral Health Program offers state-of-the-art training, resources for rural mental-health care workforce

This fall, the WICHE Behavioral Health Program (BHP) hosted two multi-day academies aimed at bolstering the knowledge and skills of individuals working on the

front lines of suicide prevention and other mental health initiatives in rural areas.

One of the gatherings, held Oct. 2-4 in Golden, Colo., brought together 20 individuals from New Hampshire, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia to help prepare them for the launch of federally funded [Together With Veterans](#) (TWW) programs in their rural communities. They were provided with training on evidence-based suicide prevention strategies, a five-phase assessment and planning process, and methods for facilitating community partnerships. WICHE will host two additional academies over the next year, with the goal of increasing the number of TWW implementation sites to 22 by the end of next year.

The other event, the inaugural Mountain Plains Leadership Academy, was held Sept. 9-10 in Boulder, Colo. Attendees included emerging rural leaders from six states -- Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming -- as well as representatives from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Alaska's Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Hogg Foundation at the University of Texas, and The University of Newcastle in Australia.

The academy focused on introducing mental-health workforce resources and strategies specifically designed for rural communities, and included presentations on leadership, peer workforce models, the WICHE Psychology Internship Program, and the [Orange Declaration](#), put forth by a national collaboration of eminent researchers and service providers in Australia to address inadequate mental health delivery systems

in rural and remote communities. In upcoming months, academy attendees will participate in several Echo-like calls and a private Facebook group to continue sharing ideas and solutions while developing an ongoing leadership cohort

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## Western Academic Leadership Academy invites nominations for 2020 cohort

Feb. 15, 2020, is the deadline to nominate candidates for the next cohort of participants in the [Western Academic Leadership Academy](#), a yearlong professional development program for aspiring chief academic officers in the Western region. The Academy consists of a three-day seminar in Boulder, Colo., followed by webinars, mentoring, and other activities over the year with guidance from Academy faculty (all sitting or recently retired provosts) and guest experts on fundraising, budgeting, diversity, legislative relations, and other topics.

The Academy was launched in 2014 to help expand the pipeline of deans and other leaders prepared to advance to a chief academic officer position. Candidates must hold a position of dean or higher at a [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) member institution.

Submit nomination materials to [Anna Galas](#), WICHE'S director of academic leadership initiatives.

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## WICHE's Russ Poulin recognized for contributions to the field of online, blended, and digital learning

Congratulations to Russ Poulin on his recent selection as a 2019 fellow of the [Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\)](#). Poulin, WICHE vice president for technology-enhanced learning and executive director of WCET, was cited for his "engagement and advocacy for rational and student-focused higher education policy on behalf of the national online learning community."



Russ Poulin

The new class of six fellows will be recognized during a ceremony at [OLC Accelerate 2019](#), Nov. 19-22, in Orlando, Fla. Since 2010, 57 individuals have been honored as OLC fellows for exceptional contributions to advancing the quality, scale, and breadth of digital, blended, and online learning.

*Wishing you a joyous holiday season and a new year filled with peace and happiness.*

## Save the date!

- **March 25-27, 2020:** [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders Annual Meeting](#), Albuquerque, N.M. Registration now open.
- **April 15-16, 2020:** [WCET + University of Maryland Global Campus Summit](#), Largo, Md.
- **April 22-24, 2020:** [Western Academic Leadership Forum Annual Meeting](#), Juneau, Alaska. Registration now open.
- **July 8-10, 2020:** [Western Academic Leadership Academy](#), Boulder, Colo.

## On the road: selected recent and upcoming WICHE-led presentations

- WICHE President Demi Michelau and Vice President for Policy Analysis and Research Patrick Lane, at a meeting of the [Nevada System of Higher Education's Task Force on Performance Pay Administration and Support](#), Oct. 23, in Las Vegas.
- WICHE Policy Analysis and Research staff, at a meeting hosted by the [American Institutes for Research](#) on best practices for tracking postsecondary and workforce outcomes, Oct. 1-2, in Washington, D.C.
- [Interstate Passport](#) staff at the [Upper Midwest Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers 2019 Annual Conference](#), Nov. 6-8, in Sioux Falls, S.D.; the [Wyoming Community Colleges Chief Academic Officers Council](#) meeting, Nov. 13, in Cheyenne, Wyo.; the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' annual meeting](#), Dec. 7-10, in Houston; and the [National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students annual conference](#), Feb. 5-7, 2020, in Atlanta.