

WICHE



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IDAHO

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U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES  
& FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

Western Interstate Commission  
for Higher Education

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WESTERN  
INTERSTATE  
COMMISSION  
FOR  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
2013  
Annual Report

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## A Message from WICHE Chair Leah Bornstein

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**WICHE was formally founded 60 years ago**, in 1953, by Congressional compact. But it was an informal discussion between a university president from Wyoming and the dean of Colorado's medical school a few years earlier that got the ball rolling. Like many states in the West, Wyoming was short on educational resources: for one thing, it had no medical school. Would Colorado be willing to hold a few slots in its med school for Wyoming residents? Colorado would. It reserved five slots for Wyoming residents, and another five for students from New Mexico, for the class of 1949. That act of regional resource-sharing was followed, in the same year, by a declaration by the Western Governors' Conference at its meeting in Salt Lake City: "The Western Governors' Conference believes that a cooperative plan among the western states is necessary and desirable and should be developed to provide more extensive facilities and training for the students of this region."

Neither those Western governors nor the Wyoming university president or Colorado med school dean could envision how far the organization that grew out of their early efforts – WICHE – would take the idea of **resource-sharing**. In 2013 Western students, institutions and states have benefited from a slew of WICHE programs. Our Student Exchange Program enrolled a record number of students this year in hundreds of professional, graduate, and undergraduate programs. Initiatives like the North American Network of Science Labs Online, Consortium for Health Education Online, and Internet Course Exchange are further breaking down geographic barriers by helping students learn at a distance. And a major new initiative, the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement,

will assist in certifying the quality of at-a-distance programs.

WICHE also pushed forward with **significant research projects**. We produced the eighth edition of our widely used projections of high school graduates, *Knocking at the College Door*. Our efforts on the Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework are working toward improving student retention, while the Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange project is laying the ground for a better and more regional understanding of how students participate in higher education and the workforce. Our Mental Health Program, one of our original initiatives, is doing research and providing training in states across the West. And programs like the Master Property Program are saving institutions millions of dollars. These are just some of WICHE's many programs, detailed in this annual report for fiscal 2013.

Another thing those Western governors couldn't have foreseen: **the extent of WICHE's reach**. This year the WICHE Commission welcomed a new member, the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states, a group of U.S. territories and island states, including American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau. They join as a single member, with each territory and state electing individually to participate actively in the commission when it sees fit (the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is the first to participate). Their membership shows how far, in our connected world, the notion of resource-sharing can extend.

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## A Message from WICHE President David A. Longanecker

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**WICHE's celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary** in November. Six decades into our history, we're living through an era unlike any other in the history of higher education: an era in which our country, region, states, and institutions are facing major challenges on a number of critical fronts.

WICHE's original goal was to improve access – specifically, access to professional programs for students in states that had no medical, dental or vet schools. Today, boosting access broadly, especially for students of color and low-income students, remains critical. But we have to improve **access and success**: simply getting students into institutions isn't enough. The U.S. ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the attainment of associate and bachelor's degrees, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. What's more, the percentage of 25- to 34-year-old Americans with at least an associate's degree is, at 42.3 percent, a full percentage point lower than that of 34- to 45-year-olds, as well as far lower than that of the same cohort in Korea, Japan, and other economic competitors. The U.S. is attacking the problem from a number of angles: offering postsecondary coursework in high school and creating early college high schools; improving student preparation (Common Core) and reinventing remediation, using high schools as partners; improving college completion for adults; and rethinking the GED.

**Productivity** is also a major issue. The notion of "evidence-based practice" is slowly catching on in higher education, where learning analytics and demonstrated competence are increasingly important. But equally significant is the notion that institutions don't have to "do it all." More and more are using prior-learning assessments

and other methods of evaluating what students already know.

Hand in hand with productivity is the issue of **finance**. The "new normal" here relates to two key ideas and two constituencies: performance funding, for institutions; and affordability, for students. Rising college costs are a huge barrier for low-income students. According to Thomas Mortenson for the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education in Washington, D.C., the percent of degree-holding students from low-income families has stayed flat for decades.

**Innovation** is the fourth change higher education is witnessing. Online courses, a rarity even 10 years ago, are now so commonplace that a new initiative, the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (created by WICHE and its partners), has been set up to ease regulatory headaches and assure better quality control. Fully online institutions like Western Governors University enroll tens of thousands of students each year. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) from major institutions and other vendors are evolving from one-off offerings to degree programs. And for-profit institutions continue to draw students, many of whom have not been served well by traditional institutions in the past.

None of these four major trends could've been envisioned when WICHE set up shop 60 years ago. But new challenges – and we face many – require new thinking. We're happy to be in the thick of it.



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WICHE and its 16 members work to improve access to higher education and ensure student success. Our student exchange programs, regional initiatives, and research and policy work allow us to assist constituents throughout the West and beyond. The WICHE Commission's 16 members include representatives from 15 Western states – Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming – and the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states (the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is the first to participate).

In fiscal 2013 WICHE's four units – Programs and Services, Policy Analysis and Research, Mental Health Program, and the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) – worked to assist the West's institutions and students in five mission areas: finance; access and success; workforce and society; technology and innovation; and accountability. In this annual report, we've organized our work according to these five themes. However, many of our projects touch on more than one area – and some touch on all five.

## Finance

**Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West 2012-13.** The latest update of WICHE's annual "[Tuition and Fees](#)" report, focusing on public institutions in WICHE's 15-state U.S. region, 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. The report presents published tuition and fees amounts as averages, both unweighted and weighted, by full-time-equivalent enrollments (enrollment-weighted averages provide a truer estimate of the published price a typical student faces,

## Programs and Services

WICHE's **Programs and Services** unit expands access to higher education through its three Student Exchange Programs and WICHE ICE (Internet Course Exchange). The staff also fosters collaboration and resource sharing in higher education through several regional initiatives; convenes and partners with academic leaders throughout the West; and works to help institutions and states reduce their operating costs through several innovative programs. The unit also develops and disseminates WICHE electronic and print publications, including NewsCap, factsheets, 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. Its programs and initiatives for FY 2013 include:

- ◆ State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement
- ◆ Western Undergraduate Exchange
- ◆ Western Regional Graduate Program
- ◆ Professional Student Exchange Program
- ◆ WICHE ICE (Internet Course Exchange)
- ◆ North American Network of Science Labs Online
- ◆ Consortium for Health Education Online
- ◆ Western Academic Leadership Forum
- ◆ Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders
- ◆ Western rural healthcare initiatives
- ◆ Healthcare workforce brief series
- ◆ Academic Leaders Toolkit
- ◆ Interstate Passport Initiative
- ◆ Master Property Program
- ◆ MHECare
- ◆ MHECtech
- ◆ Bridges to the Professoriate

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based on enrollment patterns). A related *Policy Insights* publication, "[Tuition and Fees in the West 2012-13](#)," summarizes the report's findings and discusses state budget levels, higher education appropriations, state financial aid programs, and other state finance policy innovations.

**Master Property Program.** WICHE offers participation in the [Master Property Program \(MPP\)](#) to colleges and universities in the West that want to benefit from comprehensive property insurance coverage at rates that are typically below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection strategies. Available to two- and four-year public and private institutions of higher education, the program currently has 58 member institutions (145 campuses) with total insured values of \$86.4 billion; it has generated some \$65.4 million in savings for the participating institutions while expanding their coverage. Nine institutions and two systems (with 16 campuses) in the WICHE region are members of the program, originally created by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC).

**MHECare.** WICHE is also partnering with MHEC to offer [MHECare](#), a student health insurance program providing vetted, competitively priced medical benefits for students. Underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR), MHECare offers a variety of plans and provides colleges and universities with health insurance for their students at significant cost savings (achievable by working collaboratively across institutions). UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR), a division of national healthcare carrier UnitedHealthcare that specializes in student health insurance plans, is known for its large, national network of providers, excellent web-based enrollment and support tools,

and affordable rates. Mercer was selected as the program administrator, again through a competitive bid process.

**MHECtech.** Through an agreement between WICHE and MHEC, substantial cost savings on computers, software, printers, and other products are available via [MHECtech](#) to

### Policy Analysis and Research

The **Policy Analysis and Research** unit furnishes accurate and timely information and expertise that advance WICHE's mission of expanding educational access and excellence. It does so by providing analysis of relevant data related to K-12 and postsecondary education, demography, labor market information, and higher education finances; by supplying assistance with policy design and implementation, including technical assistance; and by developing and managing projects that serve the needs of policymakers in the West and throughout the nation. Among its projects in FY 2013 are:

- ◆ College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network
- ◆ Adult College Completion Network
- ◆ Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange
- ◆ Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity
- ◆ Equity in Excellence
- ◆ State Higher Education Policy Database Online
- ◆ Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West
- ◆ Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts
- ◆ Policy Insights
- ◆ Policy Publications Clearinghouse
- ◆ Benchmarks
- ◆ Legislative Advisory Committee
- ◆ Western Policy Exchanges



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colleges and universities; K-12 districts and entities; city, county, and state governments; and some nonprofits.

**New Approaches to the New Normal: Recapping 2012 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West.**

While tax revenues in many Western states have improved since FY 2011, the 2012 legislative sessions still experienced what has become the familiar round of funding cuts to higher education, coupled with tuition increases for students. The good news, reported in "[New Approaches to the New Normal: Recapping 2012 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West](#)," is that the cuts and increases weren't as severe as those in previous years, despite continued aversion to spending by most state legislatures. The bad news is that the loss of stimulus funds and the rising cost of health care, K-12 education, and other public services mean that states still face a tremendous amount of economic pressure. This Policy Insights brief summarizes key themes from the 2012 legislative sessions and highlights some emerging issues to watch in the West.

**Access & Success**

**Knocking at the College Door.** WICHE has been producing high school graduate forecasts for over 30 years, for use by a wide and diverse audience of policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, schools and school districts, researchers, and the media. In December 2012 WICHE released the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of [Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates](#). The projections – organized by state and race/ethnicity through the class of 2028 – were the subject of numerous presentations and resulted in an invitation for staff to serve on the National Association of College Admission Counseling Board of Directors to provide

a policy perspective to the association's governance. A related *Policy Insights* brief, "[Demography as Destiny](#)," summarizes *Knocking's* main findings and places changes in the size and racial/ethnic composition of our nation's graduating classes in the context of the college completion agenda and the need for greater educational attainment. It also addresses how demographic shifts, coupled with fiscal stress, are impacting the practice of enrollment management. It concludes by offering reflections on how policymakers and institutional leaders can respond to these challenges with policies and practices that align with society's rising needs and expectations for higher education.

**Western Undergraduate Exchange.** [WUE](#), WICHE's signature undergraduate tuition reciprocity program, enables more than 31,000 students to enroll in more than 150 public two- and four-year institutions in 15 states and save an estimated \$235.8 million by paying 150 percent of resident tuition instead of full nonresident tuition. Colleges and universities can tailor their participation, including admission requirements and available programs of study, to individual campus needs.

**Professional Student Exchange Program.** [PSEP](#) provides affordable access to 10 professional healthcare fields for students in 11 WICHE states. In 2012-13 states invested \$14.4 million in their future healthcare providers' education; almost 700 students enrolled through PSEP.

**Western Regional Graduate Program.** [WRGP](#) allows master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral students who are WICHE-region residents to enroll in some 320 programs at 56 participating institutions on a resident tuition basis. In fall 2012 more than 1,000

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## Mental Health Program

The **Mental Health Program (MHP)** seeks to enhance the public systems of care and the workforce that serves persons with mental health issues and their families. The program approaches this mission through partnerships with state mental health authorities, federal agencies, advocacy and consumer groups, and higher education institutions. Activities focus on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state mental health agency data analysis, and liaison activities with higher education to enhance workforce development. In FY 2013 projects included the following.

- ◆ State Psychiatric Hospital Consultation
- ◆ Behavioral Health Crisis Services
- ◆ South Dakota Tribal Engagement
- ◆ Suicide Prevention Toolkit and Training in Primary Care
- ◆ Department of Defense Research Study
- ◆ Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium
- ◆ Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers
- ◆ Hawai'i Internship Program
- ◆ Texas Psychology Internship Programs
- ◆ Alaska Competencies Training
- ◆ Guam Technical Assistance
- ◆ Colorado-Supported Employment Program
- ◆ Mental Health First Aid Training
- ◆ South Dakota Co-Occurring Project
- ◆ South Dakota State Prevention Enhancement
- ◆ Western States Decision Support Group
- ◆ Alaska Psychiatric Institute
- ◆ Alaska Outcomes and System Performance Project
- ◆ South Dakota Survey

students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated \$15.2 million in tuition.

**Legislative Advisory Committee.** The [LAC](#) informs the WICHE Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education; at the same time, 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. The 2012 annual meeting, held in September in Sacramento and themed, "A New Day in Higher Education: Access, Alignment, and Achievement," featured national experts and LAC members speaking on legislative trends in the West, state authorization, Common Core State Standards, outcomes-based funding, remedial education, career technical education, financial aid, and more.

**Adult College Completion Network.** WICHE manages the [ACC Network](#), 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. WICHE held four ACC webinars, gave several presentations, and published a Policy Exchanges brief, "[Strategies for Success: Promising Ideas in Adult College Completion](#)," which addressed data availability particular to the returning adult population; partnerships between employers and higher education institutions; communications and marketing campaigns to reengage adults with prior college credits; transfer credits; and prior-learning assessment.

**College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network.** [CACG](#) is a federally funded formula grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. States participate through the

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CACG Consortium (Alaska and Idaho), with WICHE administering the state program, or through the CACG Network (Alaska, Idaho, Texas, Utah, Washington, and North Dakota), a collaborative council composed of designated staff from each of the states. CACG, which held a meeting in Austin in December 2012, is entering a phase of uncertainty regarding future funding. The brief "[After the Funding Is Through: CACG Program Sustainability](#)" discusses four strategies that state programs can employ to increase the likelihood that their programs will continue, should funding end as expected in 2015 or sooner.

**Equity in Excellence.** With a focus on the Denver metro area, WICHE is partnering with the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California to support the implementation of Colorado's higher education reform agenda by aligning the state's higher education policy measures with concrete, equity-focused actions within community colleges and four-year institutions. CUE is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation (not funded directly – it's a partnership).

**Western Academic Leadership Forum.** The [Forum](#) brings together academic leaders at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral institutions and chief executives and chief academic officers for systems and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum held its annual meeting, themed "Academic Leaders on the Race Track: Taking Advantage of the Turns," in San Diego in April.

**Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders.** The [Alliance](#) 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. The Alliance held its annual meeting in San Francisco in April in conjunction with a meeting of the California Community College Chief Instructional Officers. The theme of the meeting was "Community College Completion, Readiness and Success: On Whose Terms?"

**Connecting Communities of Broadband and Learning Innovation.** Through WCET opportunities exist to bridge the expertise of e-learning and distance leaders with the technology innovators of broadband to bring more authentic and resource-rich learning into the physical classroom and the virtual classroom. [WCET membership](#) includes many leading universities that are active in the deployment of broadband networks. In addition, WCET serves as WICHE's representative to the [Northwest Academic Computing Consortium](#).

**State Psychiatric Hospital Consultation.** The Mental Health Program was actively engaged in supporting state hospital improvement processes in Alaska, Arizona, and South Dakota.

**Behavioral Health Crisis Services.** WICHE received a contract with the Colorado State Office of Behavioral Health to conduct research on behavioral health crisis services available in the state; to facilitate stakeholder meetings to identify priorities for the crisis system; and to write the request for proposals in which entities will bid to build and conduct crisis services across the state. The funding to support the development of the crisis system in Colorado was allocated by Governor Hickenlooper in the legislative session this year.

**South Dakota Tribal Engagement.** WICHE staff is facilitating discussions between the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health and



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## WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies

WCET is a national, nonprofit, membership-based cooperative of colleges and universities, higher education agencies and companies that share a commitment to improving the quality and the reach of online, hybrid and distributed education. WCET coordinates and enables the cooperative exchange of information, resources and services among our members. WCET's mission is to accelerate the adoption of effective practices and policies, advancing excellence in technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education. WCET is nationally recognized as one of the reliable and forward-thinking organizations regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education. Its website, webcasts, and publications keep members informed about current issues and those on the horizon. Sponsors for WCET's conference and other initiatives include: Badgestack, Blackboard, Cengage Learning, CourseSmart, Desire2Learn, Mediasite by Sonic Foundry, Pearson, SmarterServices, and Starfish. Projects for FY 2013 include:

- ◆ Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework
- ◆ State Authorization Network
- ◆ WCET Badge Initiative
- ◆ Managing Online Education
- ◆ WCET Annual Meeting
- ◆ WCET Leadership Forum
- ◆ Transparency by Design

Tribal Behavioral Health programs to provide Medicaid-funded rehabilitation services.

**Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study.** [GOALS](#) develops web accessibility tools that institutions can use in the continuous improvement process for reaffirmation by regional accrediting agencies. GOALS is now

testing its materials with 45 institutions across the country. WICHE serves as an advisor to the three-year project, supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and set to conclude in December of this year.

## Workforce & Society

**North American Network of Science Labs Online.** [NANSLO](#), provides a consortium approach to the development and deployment of high-quality, modular, openly licensed courseware, integrating learner-centered and immersive online learning lab environments for the study of biology, chemistry, and physics. WICHE served as the managing partner.

**Consortium for Health Education Online.** [CHEO](#) brings eight community colleges in five WICHE states together in an initiative to create or transform existing allied health courses for delivery in an online or hybrid format, incorporating new, web-based lab experiments provided by partners in the NANSLO project (see above). WICHE conducted a professional development workshop in June for CHEO faculty to kick off the four-year U.S. Department of Labor project.

**Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange.** WICHE completed the initial exchange of longitudinal data for the [Multistate Data Exchange](#) project, which demonstrated the extent to which data spanning state lines is important in understanding the mobility of human capital. It continued to push forward on a governance model and architecture for a state-owned/managed data resource to answer policy-relevant questions on human capital development and mobility and their linkage to state workforce needs.

**Bridges to the Professoriate.** This initiative provides the National Institute of General Medical Sciences-Minority Access to Research

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## WICHE's Funders

- ◆ ACT
- ◆ Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- ◆ Carnegie Corporation of New York
- ◆ College Board
- ◆ Lumina Foundation
- ◆ National Institute of General Medical Sciences
- ◆ Next Generation Learning Challenges/EDUCAUSE
- ◆ State of Alaska
- ◆ State of Colorado
- ◆ State of South Dakota
- ◆ Territory of Guam
- ◆ U.S. Department of Defense

and Careers' predoctoral fellows with opportunities to participate in the annual [Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring](#), helping them to gain skills needed in doctoral programs and academic careers.

**Suicide Prevention Toolkit and Training in Primary Care.** WICHE, which earlier developed a [suicide prevention toolkit](#), partnered with other experts in the suicide prevention field to conduct a preconference workshop at the national conference on suicidology, hosted by the American Association for Suicidology. It also conducted trainings in medical/health settings across the region on implementing suicide prevention in primary care settings. In addition, WICHE was asked to participate in a statewide summit in Colorado to map current suicide prevention efforts to the national strategic plan for suicide prevention released this year.

**Department of Defense Research Study.** WICHE is testing the military Mental Health First Aid program in a Department of Defense-funded study with the Kansas Army National Guard, to study the effects of reducing stigma and increasing help-giving behavior to troops in psychological distress.

**Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium.** WICHE continued to support the [Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium](#), which it developed three years ago, expanding the available training slots and building the workforce in Alaska.

**Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers.** This is a two-year collaboration between WICHE and APPIC to conduct a nationwide evaluation of doctoral psychology internship programs that are currently not accredited by the American Psychological Association, in order to determine the barriers to accreditation and develop a tool to assess accreditation readiness.

**Hawai'i Internship Program.** WICHE continued to work on the development a [doctoral psychology internship consortium in Hawai'i](#) within the state's Health, Education, and Public Safety departments. This consortium successfully launched this year and has secured five interns for the 2013 academic year.

**Texas Psychology Internship Programs.** WICHE staff continued to provide consultation to five different educational institutions in

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developing or strengthening their doctoral psychology internship programs.

**Alaska Competencies Training.** WICHE created and conducted a train-the-trainer event based on the work we conducted in a multiyear project to build core competencies and curriculum to enhance the direct care workforce across human service settings. WICHE provided technical assistance to the Trust Training Cooperative, the entity in Alaska responsible for coordinating the activities of the cohort of trainers throughout the past year.

**Guam Technical Assistance.** WICHE provided a range of training and technical assistance to support system improvement in the public behavioral health system serving Guam.

**Colorado-Supported Employment Program.** WICHE provided training and technical assistance to programs in Colorado that employ individuals with serious mental illness, to help them succeed in the workplace.

**Mental Health First Aid Training.** Mental Health Program staff conducted several trainings in rural communities in Eastern Colorado based on a rural adaptation of [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\)](#) training that WICHE assisted in developing. Several staff participated in the instructor training for a recently released youth MHFA version. Two MHFA instructors on staff participated in a large MHFA training effort for the Colorado Sheriff's Department and for staff at the Children's Hospital of Colorado. The program successfully developed an adaptation for military populations, which was piloted successfully in Arizona.

**South Dakota Co-Occurring Project.** WICHE staff provided technical assistance to South Dakota on a variety of system improvement projects for persons with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues.

**South Dakota State Prevention Enhancement.** WICHE staff facilitated the integration of community prevention coalitions across the state.

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## Technology & Innovation

**State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement.** WICHE and its partners – the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, the New England Board of Higher Education, and the Southern Regional Education Board – were awarded a \$2.3 million grant from Lumina Foundation to launch [SARA](#), a national initiative that will make 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. SARA will create interstate reciprocity in the regulation of postsecondary distance education by providing a straightforward framework for authorization that institutions and states can trust.

**Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework.** The [PAR Framework](#) is a collaborative, multi-institutional effort that brings together two-year, four-year, public, proprietary, traditional, and progressive institutions to collaborate on identifying points of student loss. PAR is focused on using predictive analytics to improve student success. Current efforts focus on online and blended programs. Deliverables include flexible predictive models, openly published common data definitions, and a student success matrix that links predictions with interventions and student supports, making predictions actionable. With 16 WCET member institutions, over 1.8 million anonymized student records, and 13.1 million institutionally de-identified course-level records, the PAR Framework offers educational stakeholders a unique multi-institutional lens for examining dimensions of student success.

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**WICHE Internet Course Exchange.** [ICE](#) enables students, through their home institutions, to seamlessly access high-quality online courses and programs offered by other four-year and two-year ICE member institutions. The seven institutions in the Oregon University System joined the ranks of the ICE members in January, adding quarter-based course options to the catalog.

**State Authorization Network.** [SAN](#), now in its third year, is a membership service for those seeking to comply with authorization regulations related to the provision of online and distance courses to students in other states. WCET provides training on the state regulations, access to experts, and strategies on meeting state requirements. It maintains a community of practitioners to share effective practices and the latest developments. Participation in SAN is an additional fee-for-service opportunity for WCET member institutions, systems, and consortia. SAN provided input and support in the development of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement. A special SAN meeting, held in conjunction with the state regulators' national conference, promoted dialogue between institutional compliance personnel and officials from many states.

**WCET Membership Services.** WCET offers members a number of services. It produced short briefs in the *Talking Points*, *Lessons Learned*, and *Q&A* series, available on the [WCET website](#), including "A Simple Guide to Navigating the MOOC Muddle," "State and Federal Regulations on 'State Authorization' of Distance Education," and "FERPA Requirements for Non-Faculty Employees." In addition, through member-only email discussions, WCET's popular *Frontiers* blog, and regular Twitter updates, educators from institutions with large as well as small online and distance

education programs can readily tap into WCET's network of e-learning experts. The number of member subscribers to the email discussion list exceeds 2,000 in North America. 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, mobile learning, and other topics.

**WCET Annual Meeting and Awards.** Last year's annual meeting, held from October 31-November 3 in San Antonio, drew 350 attendees. The [WCET Outstanding Work \(WOW\)](#) award, established to recognize innovative solutions to key problems, honored three organizations: the Monterey Institute of Technology for Developmental Math: An Open Program, a free program designed to help financially disadvantaged students to pass developmental math as a bridge to a college education; the New Jersey Research and Education Network for NJVID, a digital video repository service for streaming and preservation of academic and research videos for higher education; and the Tennessee Board of Regents for the TBR Mobile App Education and Workforce Resource Center, a growing, publicly accessible repository of mobile apps for learning that have undergone peer review. In addition, Rhonda Epper, assistant provost at the Colorado Community College System, received the [Richard Jonsen Award](#), WCET's top honor, given annually to a WCET member whose career has been committed to improving postsecondary educational programs and services through innovative uses of technology.

**WCET Leadership Summit.** WCET Leadership Summits are single-issue focused, deep-dive discussions among higher education administrators who are considering adoption of an emergent technology-related initiative.

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The summits are designed to provide these leaders with a checklist of the challenges, opportunities, and options for advancing such initiatives. The [2013 Leadership Summit, “Living Under the Sword of Data,”](#) explored the impact that big data is having on a broad range of issues, from online quality to student success, across the higher education ecosystem. The summit featured leaders who are changing the learning analytics landscape and offered opportunities for engaging in efforts that are already having direct positive effects on keeping college students in school.

**Western States Decision Support Group.**

The WICHE Mental Health Program, in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the WICHE states, provides a platform for collaboration and learning relating to improving the capacity of member states to measure performance and system outcomes and to use data as an effective tool in planning and public policy development.

**Alaska Psychiatric Institute.** WICHE staff is providing technical assistance in the areas of leadership development, strategic planning, performance improvement, and the provision of distance services through the use of technology.

**WCET Badge Initiative.** Game-based learning, gamification, and badges are gaining momentum as forms of student engagement and alternative credentialing. WCET created a demonstration project on game-based learning and badges titled “Who’s Got Class” as a way for the higher education community to get a fun, light-hearted, and hands-on introduction to badges for learning. The project attracted 182 players from 87 institutions, who participated in an authentic experience of badges and game-based learning.

**Managing Online Education.** The [Managing Online Education](#) survey, conducted by WCET in partnership with eCampusAlberta and BCcampus, obtains data on the instructional, operational, and technology infrastructure of online operations in higher education. Using a series of focused surveys, the project seeks to learn about trends, issues, opportunities, and barriers to success related to the in the management and operation of online, distributed, and distance learning programs in U.S. and Canadian postsecondary education.

**State Higher Education Policy Database.** The nation’s only [online searchable database of higher education policies](#) provides state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers with an inventory of state-level policies and resources in key policy issue areas related to access and success in higher education.

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

## Accountability

**Interstate Passport Initiative.** The [Interstate Passport Initiative](#) is creating a new interstate block transfer framework for lower-division general education, one based on student-learning outcomes rather than seat time in courses or credits. Passport Learning Outcomes and proficiency criteria for transfer have been identified in the three academic areas making up the Passport’s Phase I Block: written communication, oral communication, and quantitative literacy. Seventeen of the 23 pilot institutions are in the process of signing the Phase I Passport Agreement. Applications for additional institutions and WICHE states are now available.

**Benchmarks: WICHE Region 2012.** The [Benchmarks report](#) presents information



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on the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and the 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.

**Academic Leaders Toolkit.** A joint project of the Alliance and the Forum, the [toolkit](#) is a searchable, web-based depository of useful decision-making tools, contributed by academic leaders. The first annual Academic Leaders Tool of the Year award was given in April to the Arizona's Academic Programs Articulation Steering Committee for its course equivalency guide and tracking system.

**Alaska Outcomes and System Performance Project.** The Alaska Outcomes and System Performance Project provides the statistical research necessary for the refinement of the performance management system of the Division of Behavioral Health, which is used to monitor the performance of the behavioral health treatment system.

**South Dakota Survey.** This annual mail survey of clients of the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health is used to monitor access to care, quality of care, outcomes, and satisfaction with treatment services.

**Transparency by Design.** A WCET-managed project, [Transparency by Design](#), was funded by Lumina Foundation through July 2012. The project's data set, developed collaboratively with a diverse set of institutions, was the initiative's largest accomplishment. Gaining consensus on metrics for measuring data such as student satisfaction, engagement, and learner progress was a laudable achievement. Last July the Transparency by Design Executive Committee decided to close its product site,

College Choices for Adults, and redirect traffic to a page on the WCET website, which includes the history and accomplishments of the initiative.

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## WICHE's Commissioners

### Alaska

Susan Anderson, president/CEO, The CIRI Foundation, Anchorage  
Diane M. Barrans, executive director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Juneau  
James Johnsen, senior vice president, Alaska Communications, Anchorage

### Arizona

Leah Bornstein (WICHE chair), president, Coconino Community College, Flagstaff  
Chris Bustamante, president, Rio Salado College, Tempe  
Eileen Klein, president, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix

### California

Christopher Cabaldon, principal, Capitol Impact, and mayor, West Sacramento City, Sacramento  
Dianne Harrison (WICHE vice chair), president, California State University, Northridge, Northridge

### Colorado

Joseph Garcia, lieutenant governor, State of Colorado, and executive director, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Denver  
Loretta Martinez, general counsel and secretary to the board, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Denver  
Dene Kay Thomas, president, Fort Lewis College, Durango

### Hawai'i

Francisco Hernandez, vice chancellor for students, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu  
Carol Mon Lee, attorney and retired associate dean, University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law, Honolulu  
Steven Wheelwright, president, Brigham Young University Hawai'i, Laie

### Idaho

Michael Rush, executive director, Idaho State Board of Education, Boise

### Montana

Clayton Christian, commissioner of higher education, Montana University System, Helena  
Kim Gillan, former state senator, Billings  
Sheila Stearns, commissioner of higher education emerita, Montana University System, Missoula

### Nevada

Vance Farrow, industry specialist-healthcare, Governor's Office of Economic Development, Las Vegas  
Joseph Hardy, state senator, Boulder City  
Vic Redding, vice chancellor of finance, Nevada System of Higher Education, Reno

### New Mexico

José Garcia, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department, Santa Fe  
Mark Moores, state senator, Albuquerque  
Patricia Anaya Sullivan, assistant dean, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

### North Dakota

Duaine Espegard, president, North Dakota Board of Higher Education, Grand Forks  
Ray Holmberg, state senator, Grand Forks  
Ham Shirvani, former chancellor, North Dakota University System

### Oregon

Ryan Deckert, president, Oregon Business Association, Tigard  
Camille Preus, president, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton  
Hilda Rosselli, postsecondary policy advisor, Oregon Education Investment Board, Salem

### South Dakota

Robert Burns, dean emeritus, SDSU Honors College, and distinguished professor emeritus, South Dakota State University, Brookings  
James O. Hansen, former regent, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre  
Jack Warner, executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

### Utah

Bonnie J. Beesley (immediate past WICHE chair), chair, Utah Board of Regents, Salt Lake City  
Dave Buhler, commissioner, Utah System of Higher Education, Salt Lake City  
Peter C. Knudson, state senator, Brigham City

### Washington

Don Bennett, deputy director, Washington Student Achievement Council, Olympia  
Jeanne Kohl-Welles, state senator, Seattle  
Larry Seaquist, state representative, Olympia

### Wyoming

Sam Krone, state representative, Cody  
Karla Leach, president, Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs

### Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Sharon Hart, president, Northern Marianas College, Saipan  
Jude Hofschneider, lieutenant governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Saipan  
Joshua Sasamoto, president, Pacific Development, and Marianas Home, Saipan

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## WICHE Staff

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David Longanecker, president  
Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program  
Mimi McFaul, director, Mental Health Program  
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis  
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services  
Dennis Mohatt, vice president, behavioral health  
Brian Prescott, director of policy research  
Pat Shea, director, WICHE ICE, Western Academic Leadership  
Forum, and Western Alliance of Community College Academic  
Leaders  
Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET