



# WICHE NewsCap

WICHE  
Western Interstate Commission  
for Higher Education



Photo: CU Boulder

- ▶ **Five WICHE Commissioners appointed, two reappointed**
- ▶ **WRGP adds 50 graduate programs**
- ▶ **Reports released on tuition and fees in Western states, distance education enrollment**
- ▶ **Interstate Passport Network announces new members**

## WICHE Commission welcomes five new members.

Two college presidents, two state legislators, and the first-ever representative from Guam are the newest members of the WICHE Commission.

Joining the Commission from Wyoming are **Laurie Nichols**, president of the University of Wyoming, and State Sen. **Fred Baldwin**, both recently appointed by Gov. Matt Mead. Nichols, who was selected last year to lead UW and is its first woman president, previously served 20 years as an administrator at South Dakota State University, most recently as provost. Baldwin, a physician assistant who practices in family and emergency medicine at a clinic in Kemmerer, was elected last year to the Wyoming Senate after serving one term in the House.

**Julie VanOrden**, a member of the Idaho Legislature since 2013 and currently chair of the House Education



Laurie Nichols



Fred Baldwin



Julie VanOrden

Committee, was appointed to the Commission by Gov. Butch Otter. VanOrden previously served 10 years as a trustee of the Snake River School District in Blackfoot and was state president of the Idaho PTA.

The other new members are **Vincent Leon Guerrero**, representing Guam, and **Carmen Fernandez**, representing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Leon Guerrero is Guam Gov. Eddie Baza Calvo's special assistant for climate change and education. Fernandez, appointed by CNMI Gov. Ralph Torres, is president of Northern Marianas College in Saipan. Previously, she held administrative positions at the University of Guam and, from 2002 to 2004, was a member of the Guam Legislature.



Vincent Leon Guerrero



Carmen Fernandez

**Clayton Christian**, commissioner of higher education of the Montana University System, was recently reappointed to the Commission by Montana Gov. Steve Bullock. Christian was first appointed to the Commission in 2010 and currently serves as its vice chair. **Carol Mon Lee**, attorney and retired associate dean of the

University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law and a WICHE Commissioner since 2012, also has been reappointed. Her appointment was recently reconfirmed by the Hawai'i State Senate.



Clayton Christian



Carol Mon Lee

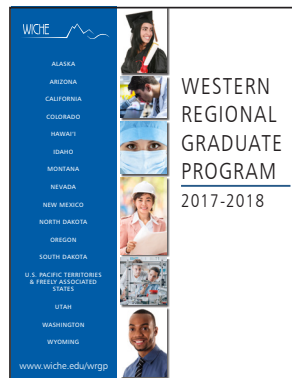
► **More than 50 new graduate programs available to students in the WICHE region.**

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) allows master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral students who are residents of 15 participating WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam to enroll in high-quality programs on a resident tuition basis. In fall 2016, some 1,567 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated \$23.3 million in tuition – an average of \$14,900 per student annually. Enrollments continue to increase, and a growing number of programs are now offered fully or partially online.

Some 50 new programs were added to WRGP this spring, bringing the total to more than 450, offered by 61 participating institutions. Among the new offerings are:

- WRGP's first master's degree program in information systems with an option to specialize in cybersecurity and information assurance, offered by the University of Colorado Denver
- Several nursing programs at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, including veteran and military healthcare, acute-care pediatric nurse practitioner, adult gerontology, and palliative care
- A care-management specialty track in the University of Utah's master's program in nursing.

Participating programs have found WRGP to be an invaluable recruitment tool and an effective resource in diversifying their student pool. To nominate a program, graduate deans and provosts at public institutions in the WICHE region should contact



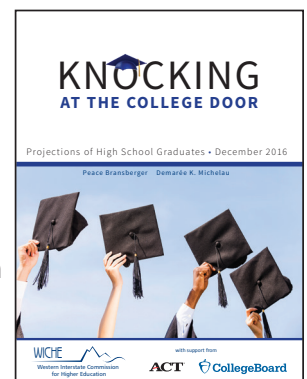
Margo Colancia, Student Exchange Program director, at [mcolancia@wiche.edu](mailto:mcolancia@wiche.edu). A full list of participating institutions and programs is available in the [WRGP 2017-2018 Handout](#).

► **New WICHE policy brief sheds light on higher-education affordability, access, and financing in Western states.** "[Tuition and Fees in the West 2016-17: Trends and Implications](#)" summarizes the results of WICHE's latest annual survey of published tuition and fees at public institutions in the West. Among the key findings:

- Increases in tuition and fees in the WICHE region from the prior academic year were modest – 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.
- Statewide average tuition and fees vary widely within the WICHE region – ranging from \$5,055 (Wyoming) to \$11,060 (Arizona) at four-year institutions, and from \$1,380 (California) to \$6,775 (South Dakota) at two-year institutions.
- The WICHE regional average change in state appropriations to higher education from FY 16 to FY 17 was 2.8 percent – varying from three states with increases exceeding 9 percent to three states with funding declines.
- Over the past decade, tuition and fees for resident undergraduates at four-year institutions have increased more than 50 percent, while state appropriations per FTE decreased by 7 percent. The largest increases in tuition and fees occurred in years with the greatest decreases in state appropriations, during the Great Recession. Because the average median household income in the WICHE region has remained relatively flat over the past 10 years, the portion of tuition and fees as a percent of median income has increased substantially.

► **Delve into WICHE's latest projections of the supply of U.S. high school graduates, by state and race/ethnicity, through the Class of 2032.**

A new web page puts at your fingertips a wide variety of information on the 9th edition of WICHE's quadrennial report, [Knocking at the College Door: Projections](#)



[of High School Graduates](#). The one-of-a-kind report is widely used by state policymakers, postsecondary and K-12 leaders, researchers, and others involved in targeting resources to the education and workforce needs of current and future populations.

WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit has been busy meeting the demand for information about the report. In April and May, staff gave presentations at the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) national conference, the College Board Western Enrollment Leaders Academy, the SHEEO-IPEDS Coordinator Workshop & State Data Conference, and the Western Academic Leadership Forum. In June, staff will share information with admission counselors from New York's private colleges and universities and with WICHE's veterinary medicine advisory council.

Later this year WICHE will release three companion pieces to the report: a brief focused on high school graduate trends in the Western states, an analysis of declines in private high school graduates, and projections of the number of high school graduates, by gender, over the next 15 years.

► **WCET-supported research partnership kicks off with new data on distance education.**

WCET, e-Literate, and Babson Survey Research Group have joined forces to create the Digital Learning Compass, designed to be the definitive source of information on the patterns and trends of U.S. postsecondary distance learning. The partnership's first publication, the [2017 Distance Ed Enrollment Report](#), shows that while campus enrollments declined 3.2 percent from fall 2012 to fall 2015, distance education enrollments rose 11 percent. Private nonprofit institutions saw the biggest jump in online enrollments – 40 percent – during that time period. Russ Poulin, director of policy and analysis at WCET, noted that private nonprofits posted the largest percentage gains because in 2012 they enrolled smaller numbers of online students than public and for-profit institutions did.

► **Formal rollout of Interstate Passport® has begun in eight states.**

Twenty-four colleges and universities have begun, or are set to begin, awarding the new Passport: Lower Division General Education – culminating more than five years of work focused on helping students transfer across state lines without losing credit for what they learn in lower-division courses.



Interstate Passport is undergirded by a framework of learning outcomes and proficiency criteria – in nine knowledge and skill areas – developed collaboratively by faculty at two- and four-year institutions in Western states, facilitated by WICHE and supported by Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The effort is aimed at improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree, and saving students money.

"Time and again we hear about students whose academic progress is slowed or halted because of transfer barriers and their associated costs," WICHE President Joe Garcia said. "The Interstate Passport program streamlines the transfer process for students and enables participating institutions to focus on student learning outcomes rather than a tally of courses and credits. This shift in emphasis is especially important for first-generation and low-income students, and members of the military and their dependents who are in need of seamless transfer solutions."

Over the past year, the number of institutions joining the Interstate Passport Network (Network) has grown to 24, in eight states – in Arkansas, California, Hawai'i, Oregon, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The most recent additions are:

- Cerritos College in Norwalk, CA, the first institution in California to join
- University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville, the first institution outside the WICHE region to become a Network member
- North Dakota State College of Science, the third institution in the state to join.

Visit the [Interstate Passport](#) home page for a link to its new monthly newsletter, which provides information on recent and upcoming meetings and webinars, along with brief status reports on various components of the program.

► **WICHE joins national effort to promote the idea of bringing college into high school.** WICHE is among 35 organizations that have banded together to advance policies that increase student access to high-quality college options in high school, including dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early-college programs. The [College in High School Alliance](#), launched in March, will focus on raising awareness of and support for college pathway options that ensure students are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to complete a postsecondary degree or credential program.

► **Western Academic Leadership Forum wraps up annual meeting with selection of new chair and award for policy innovation.** Renny Christopher, vice chancellor for academic affairs at Washington State University Vancouver, was chosen as 2017-18 chair of the [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) at the group's annual meeting, held in April in Salt Lake City. She succeeds Phyllis (Teddi) Safman, the Utah System of Higher Education's assistant commissioner for academic affairs.

A highlight of the annual meeting was the presentation of the [2017 Academic Leaders Tool of the Year Award](#) to Portland State University for developing a "desk manuals tool" that streamlines the performance of intermittent project-related tasks and functions, such as the honorary doctorate process, that are repeated from year to year. The manuals are kept on a shared drive to make them readily accessible to staff.



Portland State University receives 2017 Academic Leaders Tool of the Year Award at the Western Academic Leadership Forum Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. Pictured: Joe Cline, University of Nevada; Sona Andrews, Portland State University.

The Forum provides a venue for academic leaders at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral institutions and chief executives and chief academic officers for related systems and state governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives.

► **Save the date for WCET's annual meeting this fall.** WCET's 29th Annual Meeting is slated for Oct. 25-27 in Denver at the downtown Westin Hotel. Go here for [information about meeting registration](#), which begins in June. Among the meeting's highlights will be the presentation of the 2017 Sally M. Johnstone Award, recognizing a professional who has made an outstanding contribution to the technology-enhanced teaching and learning community. Nominations for the award can be made by contacting Lindsey Downs at [l downs@wiche.edu](mailto:l downs@wiche.edu) by July 7.

► **WICHE to assist the state of Washington in assessing region-by-region educational needs.** The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is working with WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research and Mental Health units to assess current and emerging needs in each of the state's nine Educational Service Districts. Focus groups, key informant interviews, and an online survey of employers will

be used to develop regional profiles that offer more nuanced perspectives than quantitative data alone can provide. A final report will be submitted to WSAC members and staff, the governor, state legislators, and other policymakers.

► **WICHE's new director of strategic communications now on board.** Jeremy Simon joined WICHE on June 5 as director of strategic communications, with responsibility for strategic planning, branding, media relations, outreach, and social media. Simon brings to WICHE 20 years of communications experience, most recently as executive director of marketing and communications for the University of Colorado System's Advancement Office, which raises more than \$300 million a year and manages endowments of more than \$1 billion.



Jeremy Simon

Prior to CU, Simon served key communications roles for the Colorado Rocky Mountain School, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and the National Arts Journalism Program. He began his career as a newspaper journalist, reporting on the arts, features, and business desks for the Colorado Springs Gazette. His essays, reportage, features, and humor writing have been published in a wide variety of magazines, journals, and books. Originally from Scotch Plains, NJ, Simon received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and a master's degree in creative nonfiction writing from Columbia University.

#### WICHE's leadership

Joseph A. Garcia, president  
Michael Abbiatti, vice president for educational technologies and executive director, WCET  
John Lopez, special assistant to the president and chief administrative officer, and director, W-SARA  
Demarée Michelau, vice president, Policy Analysis and Research  
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services  
Dennis Mohatt, vice president, Behavioral Health  
Jeremy Simon, director of strategic communications