WICHE INSIGHTS

May 2018

Colleen Falkenstern, Research Coordinator

wiche.edu

Tuition & Fees in the West 2017-18: Trends and Implications

Introduction

This issue of *WICHE Insights* reviews the results of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's (WICHE) annual survey of tuition and fees at public postsecondary institutions in the WICHE region in the context of state higher education finance policy. In light of steady increases in tuition and fees rates, modest growth in state appropriations, and varied state financial aid availability, rising postsecondary costs for students and families remain a top concern. All aspects of state higher education finance policy are impacted by fiscal changes at the federal and state levels. How those changes will affect tuition and fees, appropriations, and financial aid in the future is unclear, but recent trends have direct implications for postsecondary affordability and access.

Tuition and Fees in the West

WICHE administered its tuition and fees survey in the summer and fall of 2017 to state higher education executive offices, system offices, or institutions in its 16 member states and territories—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.[1] Complete data from the survey are available at wiche.edu/pub/tf. Unless otherwise indicated, tuition and fees rates are in current dollars and averages are weighted by full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. Data tables on the website provide both weighted and unweighted averages.[2]

Key Takeaways

- Western tuition and fees increases out-paced the national average, averaging 4 percent, at public four-year and two-year institutions.
- Per-student appropriations in the WICHE region increased 1 percent in FY 2017 but remain 6 percent below FY 2008 levels.
- In the West, state aid per student lagged national averages by 1 percent, though structures and strategies for student-aid distribution varied greatly across the states.
- Appropriations, tuition, and financial aid must be aligned for states to meet strategic priorities such as increased attainment and affordability.

Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions

Average tuition and fees for resident undergraduates at public four-year institutions in the WICHE region were $9,328 in 2017-18—a 4.0 percent increase over 2016-17 and 12.7 percent more than in 2012-13—increases of $358 and $1,049, respectively. Adjusted for inflation, the average resident tuition and fees in the WICHE region increased 1.7 percent ($158 in 2017 dollars) from 2016-17 and 2.5 percent ($224 in 2017 dollars) from five years earlier in 2012-13.[3] By comparison, the national average of four-year tuition and fees increased 1.3 percent from 2016-17 to $9,970 (in 2017 dollars).[4]

Figure 1. Resident Undergraduate Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions, 2017-18

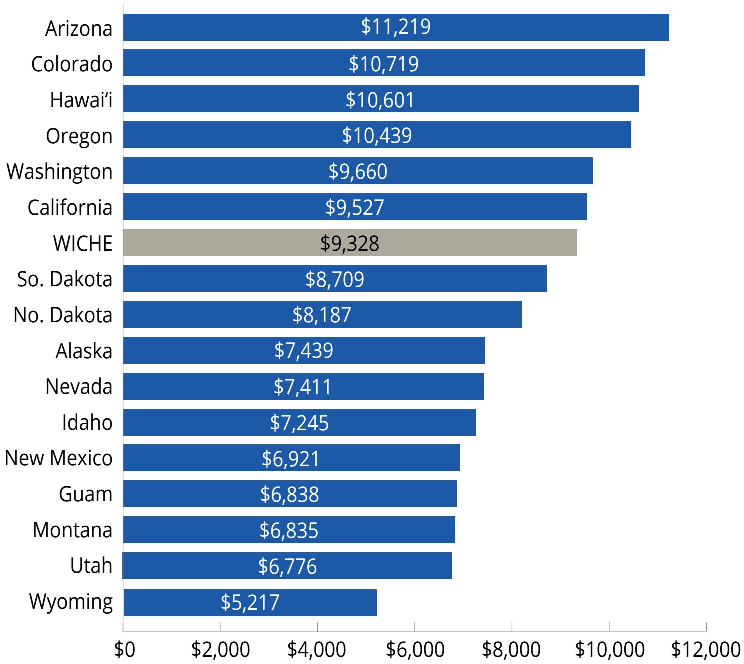
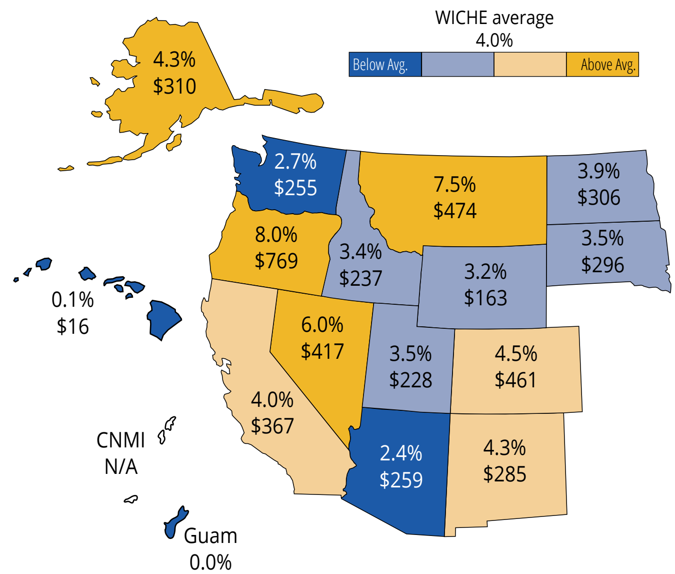


Figure 2. Change in Resident Undergraduate Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions, 2016-17 to 2017-18



There was significant variation in average tuition and fees rates for four-year undergraduates across the WICHE region. As Figure 1 shows, the lowest statewide average was in Wyoming ($5,217), and the highest was in Arizona ($11,219); these two states had the lowest and highest rates the prior year as well. There was even greater variation in rates among institutions; for example, 2017-18 prices ranged from $4,765 at Northern New Mexico College to $18,386 at the Colorado School of Mines, followed by the nine University of California undergraduate campuses at $13,000 or more.

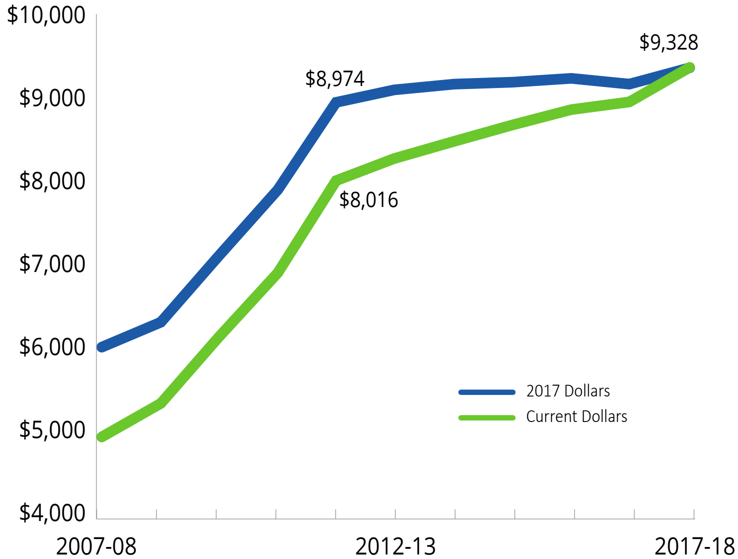
In terms of percentage change between 2016-17 and 2017-18, the greatest increase for resident undergraduates at public four-year institutions was in Oregon at 8.0 percent ($769), followed by Montana at 7.5 percent ($474), as shown in Figure 2.[5] Five other states had annual increases greater than or equal to the WICHE-region average: Nevada (6.0 percent), Colorado (4.5 percent), New Mexico (4.3 percent), Alaska (4.3 percent), and California (4.0 percent). On the other hand, there was no change in tuition and fees for resident undergraduates at the University of Guam in 2017-18, and Hawai'i resident undergraduates at four-year institutions saw virtually no increase in tuition and fees from 2016-17 ($16).

Average tuition and fees for non-resident undergraduates in the WICHE region were $25,858 in 2017-18—almost three times the resident rate. The average one-year tuition and fees increase for non-residents in 2017-18 was similar to the increase for residents, 4.1 percent ($1,015). Minot State University in North Dakota charged non-residents the lowest tuition and fees—$6,809, the same rate charged to residents. The University of California campuses charged non-resident undergraduates the highest rates (on average, $41,969) among four-year institutions in the WICHE region—an average one-year increase of 4.3 percent.

Ten-Year Trend

In the decade between 2007-08 and 2017-18, average tuition and fees for resident undergraduates at public four-year institutions in the WICHE region increased 54.3 percent ($3,284 in 2017 dollars), with the greatest year-over-year increases occurring between 2009-10 and 2011-12, between 11 and 13 percent each year (Figure 3). Since 2012-13, however, the WICHE-region annual increase has been a modest 1.0 percent on average, and there was even a decline in 2016-17 in inflation-adjusted terms. While minimal compared to the earlier increases for resident undergraduates, this year's 1.7 percent increase might signal a trend change from the recent stabilization.

Figure 3. Resident Undergraduate Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions, WICHE Averages, 2007-08 to 2017-18



Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions

Average tuition and fees for resident, in-district students at public two-year institutions in the WICHE region were $3,739 in 2017-18, excluding Alaska and California (Figure 4).[6] This was a $155 (4.3 percent) increase compared to 2016-17 rates, and an increase of $541 (16.9 percent) from five years earlier in 2012-13. In inflation-adjusted terms, the WICHE average in-district tuition and fees increased $75 (2.0 percent) from 2016-17 and $222 (6.3 percent) from five years prior. When including California, average tuition and fees for resident, in-district students were $2,180, which is below the national average of $3,570. Nationally in 2017-18, tuition and fees at public two-year institutions increased 1.1 percent ($40 in 2017 dollars) from 2016-17.[7]

Resident, in-district undergraduates attending California two-year institutions were charged the lowest rates in 2017-18 ($1,380), followed by New Mexico ($1,748), as shown in Figure 4. South Dakota's public technical colleges charged the highest rates for resident, in-district students ($7,168), almost double the regional average.

As shown in Figure 5, Nevada students faced the highest one-year rate of increase (10.2 percent, or $298), followed by Montana (7.6 percent, or $268) and Wyoming (7.4 percent, or $220). Resident, in-district students in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Hawai'i saw virtually no increase in tuition and fees. Most other states in the region had percentage increases below the WICHE average increase of 4.3 percent.

Figure 4. Resident In-District/County Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions, 2017-18

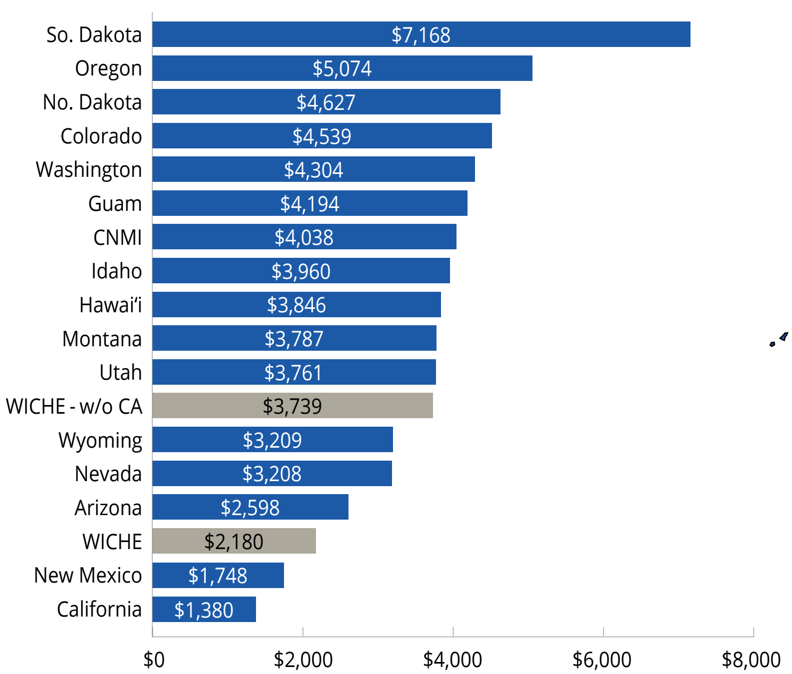
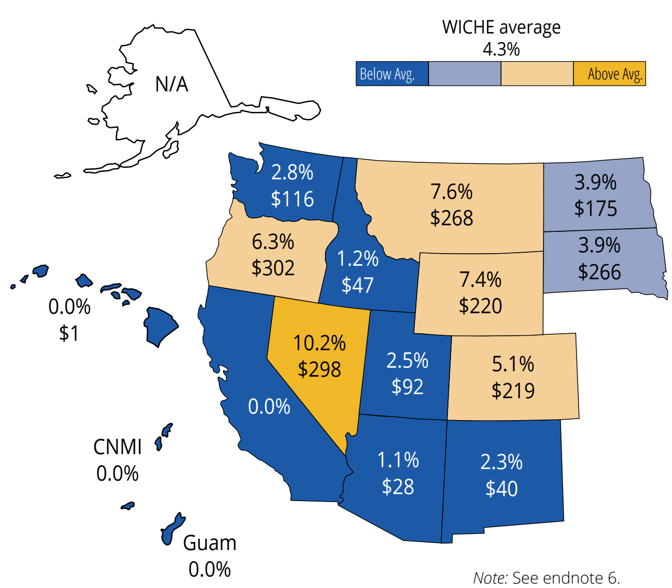


Figure 5. Change in Resident In-District/County Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions, 2016-17 to 2017-18



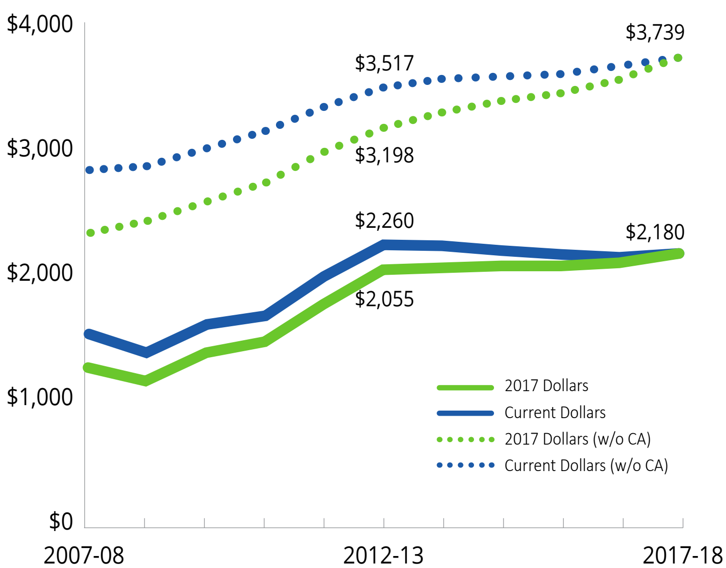
Note: See endnote 6.

Detailed tuition and fees and state finance data available from wiche.edu/pub/tf

Ten-Year Trends

In the decade between 2007-08 and 2017-18, average tuition and fees at public two-year institutions in the WICHE region (excluding Alaska and California) increased 31.2 percent, or $890 in 2017 dollars (Figure 6). Similar to four-year institutions, the largest year-over-year increases occurred early in this period, between 2007-08 and 2012-13, when the WICHE average annual increases were between 4 and 5 percent. Annual increases between 2013-14 and 2016-17 were modest, on average about 1.0 percent, so the 2.0 percent increase between 2016-17 and 2017-18 appears notable compared to the recent trends.

Figure 6. Resident In-District/County Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions, WICHE Averages, 2007-08 to 2017-18



Mandatory Student Fees in the West

WICHE collects data on estimated mandatory undergraduate fee rates as part of its annual survey but has not previously calculated region and state averages in student fees separately (from total tuition and fees).[8] While these estimates cannot describe what any given student might pay, they provide a good sense of the typical fees a lower-division undergraduate faces (not including costs for books and supplies).

Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions

The average mandatory fees for resident undergraduates at public four-year institutions in the WICHE region were $1,418 in 2017-18. In inflation-adjusted terms, regional average fees have decreased $884 (2017 dollars) since 2007-08, when they were 38.1 percent of regional average tuition and fees. Almost all institutions charge non-residents the same fees, but due to the higher overall rates for non-resident students these fees represent only 5.5 percent of the WICHE average total for non-resident undergraduates.

The average regional decrease in mandatory four-year undergraduate student fees over the past decade masks significant state variation. The regional average trend is heavily influenced by California and South Dakota, where average mandatory fees accounted for more than half of total undergraduate tuition and fees at four-year institutions in each state in 2007-08 ($3,722 and $3,626, respectively, in 2017 dollars). And these fee rates decreased in both dollar terms and as a percent of the total over the past 10 years, to 15.0 percent and 16.8 percent of the total in 2017-18, respectively. In inflation-adjusted terms, Oregon also had a decrease in mandatory fees between 2007-08 and 2017-18, but at a significantly lower rate than California and South Dakota. However, the fee decreases in California and South Dakota indicate a reclassification of student charges rather than savings for students, as total tuition and fees have increased over the past 10 years in both states.[9] Meanwhile, in all other WICHE states, average resident undergraduate fees increased over the 10 years between 2007-08 and 2017-18—ranging from $90 more in Idaho to $852 more in Arizona—and their percent of total tuition and fees varied in relation to how tuition rates have changed since 2007-08.

Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions

Average fees for resident, in-district students at public two-year institutions in the WICHE region were $404 in 2017-18 (excluding California and Alaska) and represented 10.8 percent of total tuition and fees (a minor increase since 2007-08, when they were 9.4 percent of the total). California community colleges have historically charged resident, in-district students only fees ($1,380 in 2017-18), which is what shows as total tuition and fees in WICHE reports.[10] Student fees as a percent of total tuition and fees at two-year institutions varied across the region, ranging from 48.4 percent of the total in South Dakota ($3,472) to below $100 and less than 2 percent of the total in Arizona and Hawai'i.

State Fiscal Support

State appropriations represent the largest state financial investment in higher education and can be viewed as a representation of state commitment to postsecondary education. However, state revenue, demand for higher education, federal action, and other state financial commitments (e.g., K-12 education, corrections, healthcare) can influence the extent to which states are able to provide a steady fiscal investment in higher education.[11] In the past decade, state support for higher education across the nation and in the WICHE region has been impacted by both the economic recession and enrollment increases, which has resulted in many states being unable to fund postsecondary education at pre-recession levels. There are two key data sources that provide reliable information about the levels of state support for higher education—the State Higher Education Executive Officers' annual *State Higher Education Finance (SHEF)* report and the annual *Grapevine* survey of state support to higher education. Taken together, these data sources provide a clear picture of state support for higher education, but it is important to recognize the differences. Specifically, *SHEF* provides state appropriations data for the most recently completed fiscal year (FY 2017), including calculations by full-time equivalent (FTE) student. *Grapevine* provides a more recent view of trends in state support because it captures the current fiscal year (FY 2018), but data are not calculated per FTE.

State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) Survey Results

According to *SHEF* data, total state appropriations to public higher education in the WICHE region increased 1.9 percent between FY 2016 and FY 2017, which was slightly lower than the rate of increase for the nation. (Table 1).[12] Ten WICHE states had one-year increases in total appropriations in FY 2017, including increases of 7.0 percent or more in Hawai'i (8.8 percent), South Dakota (7.8 percent), and Idaho (7.0 percent). Five states in the region had decreases in total appropriations, with the most significant cuts coming in states that rely more heavily on the energy sector, including Wyoming and Alaska, which had decreases of 11.7 and 7.8 percent, respectively.

State funding for higher education was greatly impacted by the recession, and funding levels have been slowly recovering in most states since FY 2012.[13] FY 2017 is the first fiscal year since FY 2008 that the WICHE regional total in state appropriations was greater than pre-recession levels (a 1.7 percent increase compared to FY 2008).[14] Seven WICHE states

Table 1. Percent Change in Higher Education Appropriations and FTE Enrollment

	FY 2016 to FY 2017			FY 2008 to FY 2017		
	Total Appropriations	FTE	Appropriations per FTE	Total Appropriations	FTE	Appropriations per FTE
Alaska	-7.8%	-4.0%	-3.9%	-5.9%	-1.3%	-4.6%
Arizona	1.6	2.5	-1.0	-28.1	22.8	-41.4
California	2.8	0.6	2.2	9.7	3.9	5.6
Colorado	-1.5	1.1	-2.6	-1.2	10.7	-10.7
Hawai'i	8.8	-4.1	13.5	2.9	3.8	-0.9
Idaho	7.0	0.7	6.2	-2.6	20.8	-19.4
Montana	-3.0	0.3	-3.4	5.7	7.1	-1.3
Nevada	1.2	0.2	1.0	-25.0	9.1	-31.2
New Mexico	-6.5	-4.7	-1.9	-13.1	4.5	-16.8
No. Dakota	2.0	-1.3	3.3	37.3	2.9	33.4
Oregon	1.0	-1.0	2.0	8.0	10.1	-1.9
So. Dakota	7.8	-6.8	15.7	1.1	6.1	-4.7
Utah	2.7	11.0	-7.5	-0.3	31.2	-24.0
Washington	4.6	-0.5	5.1	-5.5	8.2	-12.7
Wyoming	-11.7	-2.1	-9.8	5.0	1.1	3.9
WICHE	**1.9**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**1.7**	**8.0**	**-5.8**
U.S.	**2.4**	**-0.1**	**2.5**	**-4.7**	**7.7**	**-11.6**

Source: State Higher Education Executive Officers, *State Higher Education Finance FY 2017*. WICHE calculations.
Note: 2017 dollars. See endnote 12.

Detailed tuition and fees and state finance data available from wiche.edu/pub/tf have been able to restore state appropriations to FY 2008 levels, but two states—Arizona and Nevada—had funding levels well below FY 2008.[15]

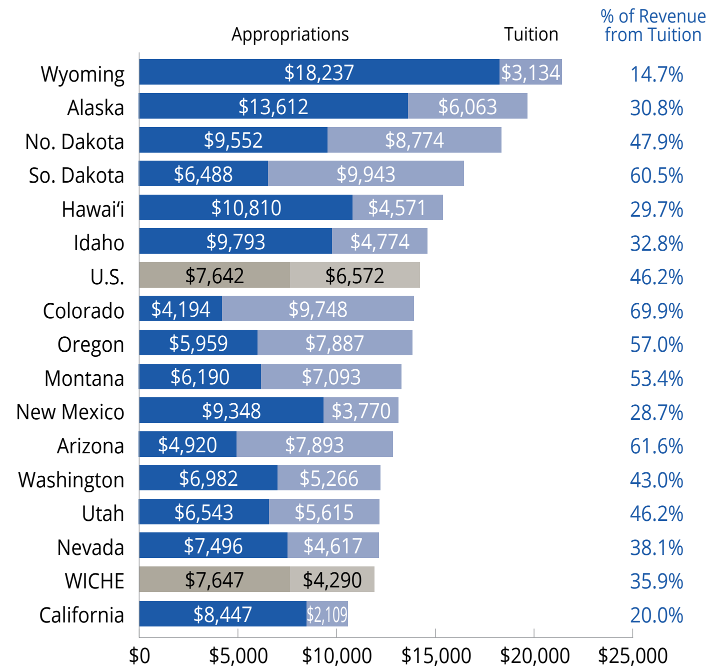
Trends in total appropriations highlight states' overall investment in higher education but provide limited explanation of how states are meeting postsecondary demand. Per-student funding data provides context for state support in relation to recent enrollment trends. According to SHEF data, per-student funding for the WICHE region increased for the fifth consecutive year, albeit at a lower rate of increase compared to the previous five fiscal years.[16] Eight WICHE states had increases in per-student funding in FY 2017 (Table 1). South Dakota and Hawai'i had the largest one-year increases in FY 2017 (15.7 and 13.5 percent, respectively), and five other WICHE states had increases at or above the WICHE average of 1.3 percent.

Enrollment patterns influence how state investment meets the demand for higher education within a state. For example, total state appropriations in Utah increased by 2.7 percent between FY 2016 and FY 2017, but due to a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment increase of 11.0 percent, per-student appropriations decreased by 7.5 percent. On the other hand, South Dakota and Hawai'i had FTE enrollment decreases of 6.8 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively—which resulted in per-student funding increases surpassing the percentage increase in total appropriations in both states.[17]

Although by FY 2017 there was an increase of 1.7 percent in total state appropriations since the start of the Great Recession, strong increases in FTE enrollment (8.0 percent) in the region resulted in per-student funding in FY 2017 remaining below FY 2008 levels (5.8 percent). Increases in FTE enrollment in 14 of the 15 states in the WICHE region have meant that, although seven states have restored total funding to FY 2008 levels, only three states had higher per-student funding in FY 2017 than in FY 2008.

Figure 7 shows the distribution of total higher education revenue, per student by state, for FY 2017 in the WICHE region. Per-student higher education appropriations ranged from $4,194 in Colorado to $18,237 in Wyoming. Figure 7 also demonstrates the variance in the distribution of revenue sources in the WICHE region—in terms of per-student revenue that comes from either state appropriations or tuition. Tuition revenue, or the "student share" of revenue, grew to represent a more substantial proportion of

Figure 7. Educational Revenues per FTE, FY 2017



Source: State Higher Education Executive Officers, *State Higher Education Finance FY 2017*.
Note: See endnote 12.

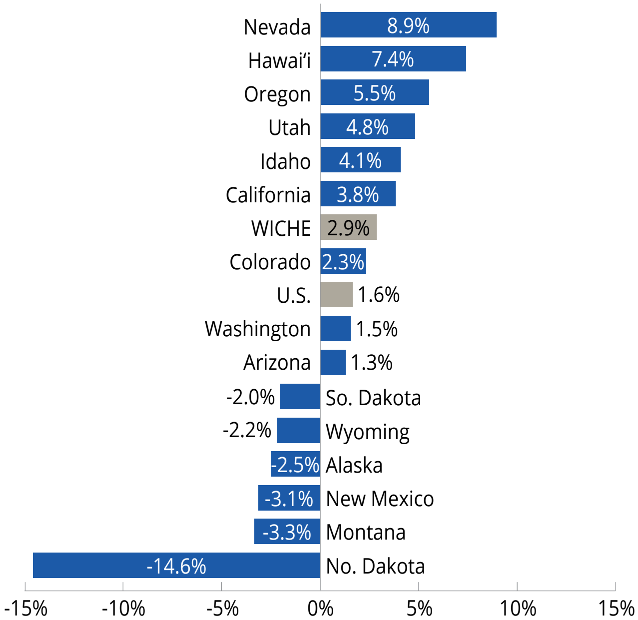
education revenues between FY 2008 and FY 2017, increasing from 35.6 percent to 46.2 percent of total revenue for the nation and from 25.1 percent to 35.9 percent of total educational revenue in the WICHE region. North Dakota and Wyoming were the only two states in the region that did not have an increase in the proportion of revenue from tuition between FY 2008 and FY 2017. In FY 2017, nine WICHE states had lower percentages of revenue from tuition compared to the national average. Across the region, the "student share" of FY 2017 revenue ranged from 14.7 percent in Wyoming to 69.9 percent in Colorado.

Grapevine Results

According to *Grapevine*, state fiscal support for higher education increased 1.6 percent between FY 2017 and FY 2018, nationally, and 31 states maintained the same level of state support or increased state support in the past year, including nine WICHE states.[18]

The WICHE regional total for fiscal support for higher education increased 2.9 percent in FY 2018 compared to FY 2017, although it is important to note that California accounts for about 60 percent of all state support in the region and when excluding California, the rate of increase is 1.6 percent, about the same as the national increase (Figure 8). Another fiscal year of growth in state support for higher education is good

Figure 8. Percent Change in State Support for Higher Education, FY 2017 to FY 2018



Source: Illinois State University Center for the Study of Education Policy and State Higher Education Executive Officers, *Grapevine*, 2018.

news for the region; however, the annual increase of 2.9 percent in FY 2018 is much lower than the previous three years, when state support increased 10.3 percent (FY 2015), 6.1 percent (FY 2016), and 4.1 percent (FY 2017).[19]

Nevada and Hawai'i had two of the highest one-year percentage increases in state support in the country, 8.9 and 7.4 percent respectively, with most other WICHE states having more modest increases between 1.0 and 5.0 percent. The most energy-dependent WICHE states had one-year decreases in state support in FY 2018, signaling that low oil and gas prices continue to impact state economies.

State Financial Aid

The third component of state finance policy discussed in this brief, financial aid, has a major impact on states' ability to provide access, promote affordability, and incentivize student behavior and success.[20] How (and whether) financial aid programs meet intended goals looks different within each state, depending on which students are targeted, the amount of aid dollars available overall and to each student, and the degree to which the financial aid programs within a state are aligned and rational.

Across the WICHE region, states' distribution of financial aid dollars varies, both in terms of eligibility and the amount of aid provided to students—and ranges from 100 percent of aid based on a need component to 4 percent of aid based on need.[21] According to data from the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP), the average state financial aid that was distributed per undergraduate in the WICHE region was $779 in 2015-16, compared to $786 for the nation. In the WICHE region, 95 percent of state aid in 2015-16 was distributed based on a component of need, which was almost 20 percentage points higher than the national average of 76 percent based on a component of need.[22] WICHE had several states above the national average in state aid per student—California, Washington, New Mexico, and Alaska. On the other hand, five of the 10 U.S. states with the lowest grant aid per FTE are in the WICHE region.[23]

Federal financial aid continues to be the most substantial source of aid, particularly for low-income students.[24] The pending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) will most likely include changes in financial aid programs, and any changes at the federal level will have implications for state financial aid programs.[25]

Discussion and Implications

Higher education finance, including appropriations, tuition, and financial aid, is a primary policy lever for addressing the most pressing policy challenges. Yet too often, these three key areas of finance policy are addressed, modified, and implemented independently with little regard for one another. And when such independent and misaligned policymaking occurs, there can be counterproductive outcomes for states and students. For example, increases in tuition coinciding with decreases in financial aid, can create economic barriers that impede student access and success.[26] Instead of being viewed as independent functions, states should aim to use an integrated framework for finance policy that aligns appropriations, tuition, and financial aid with the primary purpose of increased access and success.[27]

Affordability

Aligned higher education finance policy is necessary in order to address state strategic priorities and meet higher education goals, particularly in states with limited resources and where there has been slow and uneven recovery for state support for postsecondary education.[28] Increasing postsecondary attainment to meet future workforce needs is a central component of current state higher education agendas across the WICHE region, and providing affordable postsecondary opportunities is integral to a state's ability to meet attainment goals.

While there appears to be consensus that affordable higher education is something that states, systems, and institutions should be striving for—as evidenced by its inclusion in state strategic plans in Oregon, Colorado, and other Western states—it is difficult to define a single measure of affordability.[29] According to an affordability metric developed by the National College Access Network (NCAN), 16 percent of public four-year institutions were affordable for in-state residents living on campus in the WICHE region in 2016-17, compared to 20 percent for the nation.[30] The number of institutions that met the affordability threshold increased significantly when taking into account 40 hours of student work per-week in the summer—66 percent in the WICHE region, compared to 59 percent for the nation.[31] While the addition of summer work hours increased the number of affordable postsecondary institutions, full-time summer work for students is not always a possibility and may leave many institutions still unaffordable for students.

The disparity in individual and family financial resources means that affordability is going to look different for each student, and the relationship between financial resources and cost of attendance are integral components in determining affordability. This is particularly true for low- and middle-income students whose expected postsecondary costs represent a more sizable portion of individual or family income, causing economic barriers to postsecondary opportunities.[32] For example, according to data from the Institute for Research on Higher Education, the net price at non-doctoral four-year institutions represented as much as 71 percent of household income among those earning between $0-$30,000 across all WICHE states, limiting postsecondary options for students who come from the lowest-earning households.[33] A recent interpretation of Lumina Foundation's "Rule of 10" affordability benchmark reaffirmed that the most significant financial barriers are for low- and middle-income students.[34] The financial barriers that students face limit the individual's ability to gain the financial benefits of a postsecondary degree, and the state's ability to develop the necessary capacity to meet future workforce needs.

Variation in student and family resources adds additional difficulty in measuring and defining affordability. WICHE's Shared Responsibility Model (SRM) provides a state financial aid framework that begins to address the challenges in meeting the affordability needs of individual students.[35] Nevada's Silver State Opportunity Grant is an example of a need-based financial aid program that uses the SRM framework to target Nevada's growing low-income population in a way that provides benefits to individuals, institutions, and the state (see sidebar).[36] The guiding principles of the SRM are centered in the philosophy that state financial aid is integrated with other state finance policies and other forms of student aid—institutional and federal—to promote access and success by mediating the varying levels of student need.

Nevada's Silver State Opportunity Grant

In 2015, the Nevada Legislature created the Silver State Opportunity Grant (SSOG)—a program in which low-income students who are college-ready are awarded need-based grants to pay for a portion of their educational expenses (up to $5,500) at a community or state college within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). The goals of the SSOG include providing more low-income students with both the incentive and the financial means to attend college, to take 15 credits per semester, and to ultimately earn a degree or credential.

Built on a shared responsibility model, SSOG is grounded in a philosophy that awards grant aid based on the total cost of attendance (i.e., tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, and other living expenses) being shared by the partners—the student, the family, the federal government, and the state—who have a stake in the educational investment. Early data on student outcomes are promising, showing increased persistence and completion.

For more information, visit: https://www.nevada.edu/ir/page.php?p=ssog and https://www.nevada.edu/ir/documents/docs/SSOG_Year_One_Report.pdf.

The SRM mediates the differences in student need by placing cost of attendance at the forefront of state aid calculations. While the published tuition and fees discussed in the first section of this brief provide a reasonable baseline for postsecondary costs for students and families in the WICHE region, cost of attendance is a more realistic measure. For example, institutions with low published tuition and fees rates may appear to be affordable, but non-tuition costs like housing, food, textbooks, and transportation expenses may offset low tuition rates in such a way that institutions are unaffordable to many students.[37] Frameworks for developing financial aid policies that are aligned with tuition and appropriations should thus be reflective of costs beyond tuition and fees.[38]

How states prioritize and address affordability will look different in the unique context of each state, meaning that it is up to a given state to align appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policies in a way that makes them central to all student access and success policies, and leverages resources to maximize postsecondary opportunities and meet education and workforce goals.

Budget Impacts

States across the WICHE region and the country are facing vastly different state budget conditions. The most recent appropriations data suggest that several states in the region are still struggling financially as a result of decreases in oil and gas prices. Constrained state budgets, along with rising costs in mandatory spending on K-12 education and Medicaid, could result in continued slow growth—or further declines—in state appropriations for higher education in the upcoming fiscal year.

The trends in tuition and fees, state support, and state financial aid discussed in this brief represent the most recent academic and fiscal years and were the result of enacted policies and decisions from well before the passage of the Tax Cuts and Job Acts of 2017. The actual impact of federal tax code changes on state budgets is unclear, and it could take some time to accurately assess how higher education funding—and particularly affordability initiatives—will be affected.[39]

Conclusion

In the past decade, tuition and fees rates have steadily increased, while funding for higher education has remained relatively the same in most Western states and decreased in others. Financial aid continues to provide additional support to students, but at varying levels across the region. As states strive to meet expected workforce needs and stated goals, it is important for them to recognize the role that economic barriers play in impeding student access and success, and develop aligned finance policies that put student access and success at the center of policy discussions and developments. Looking ahead, it is imperative that states react to uncertain fiscal outlooks with the goal of using aligned finance policy to ensure that students are able to access affordable pathways to postsecondary education.

Endnotes

1 The U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States are currently represented by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam. WICHE average tuition and fees includes CNMI and Guam. Other data sources included in this brief—*Grapevine*, *SHEF*, and NASSGAP—do not cover these territories.

2 Weighted averages provide a truer estimate of the published price a typical student faces, reflecting overall enrollment levels (although this weighting does not reflect patterns for in-state and out-of-state enrollments).

3 Tuition and fees inflation adjustments used the Higher Education Cost Adjustment (HECA), calculated by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO).

4 College Board, *Trends in College Pricing* (Washington D.C.: College Board, 2017), Table 4, accessed February 27, 2018, at collegeboard.org. Weighted averages are used to be consistent with WICHE averages.

5 Undergraduate tuition increases for Montana are a reflection of 2017-18 increases in lower division rates at MSU-Northern, Montana Tech of the University of Montana, University of Montana Missoula, and University of Montana Western. Upper-division rates at all these institutions remained the same from 2016-17.

6 The average for two-year institutions excludes California and Alaska institutions. Including California with its historically high enrollment and low rates reduces the average weighted tuition and fees for in-district/county undergraduates to $2,180 for 2017-18. Since 2014-15, no two-year campuses are separately accredited and all of Alaska's community campuses are under the University of Alaska umbrella, but associate's students can be found at all campuses. In Alaska, students are charged the same rate regardless of whether they are enrolled in an associate's or baccalaureate program. For 2017-18 an unweighted average tuition rate was calculated at $5,720 based on a $185/credit rate at Prince William Sound Community College and Kodiak Community College and the $202/credit rate at all other universities and community campuses. The Northern Marianas College, the Northern Mariana Islands' one public institution, is reported as a two-year institution at the college's request.

7 Ibid, College Board.

8 WICHE asks respondents to estimate mandatory student fees that a majority of lower-division full-time students are required to pay in addition to tuition, not including costs for books and supplies. The *2017-18 Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West* report and this brief do not include fees for graduate students due to wide variability in fees across graduate programs.

9 The decrease in fees in South Dakota is the result of 2016 legislation that rolled the university support fee (USF) into the tuition rate, which accounts for the decrease in statewide fees for students beginning in AY 2016-17. Beginning in AY 2009-10 University of California institutions began reporting the Educational Fee as tuition. In prior academic years, all student charges at University of California institutions were reported as fees.

10 See Endnote 6.

11 National Conference of State Legislatures, "Higher Education Appropriations," (Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015) accessed April 1, 2018, at http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/higher-education-appropriations.aspx.

12 State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), *State Higher Education Finance FY 2017*, (Boulder, CO: State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2018) accessed April 1,2018, at http://www.sheeo.org/sites/default/files/SHEF_FY2017.pdf. Figures are adjusted for inflation using Higher Education Cost Adjustment (HECA), enrollment mix, and cost-of-living differences among states. FTE enrollment equates student credit hours to full-time, academic-year students, but excludes medical students. Total appropriations and appropriations per FTE calculated from *SHEF* results are for public higher education. *SHEF* data does not cover the Northern Mariana Islands or Guam.

13 Ibid, SHEEO.

14 This is based on 2017 dollars.

15 Ibid, SHEEO.

16 Ibid, SHEEO.

17 Ibid, SHEEO.

18 Illinois State University Center for the Study of Education Policy and State Higher Education Executive Officers, *Grapevine, An Annual Compilation of Data on State Fiscal Support for Higher Education: Fiscal Year 2017-18*, (Normal, IL: Illinois State University, 2018) accessed March 6, 2018, at https://education.illinoisstate.edu/grapevine/. Total state support from *Grapevine* is calculated as total state support for public and independent higher education less returns and multi-year appropriations. *Grapevine* data does not cover the Northern Mariana Islands or Guam.

19 Each year-over-year increase in *Grapevine* is in current dollars.

20 Brian T. Prescott and David A. Longanecker, "States in the Driver's Seat: Leveraging State Aid to Align Policies and Promote Access, Success, and Affordability," (Boulder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2014) accessed March 15, 2018, at https://www.wiche.edu/info/publications/States_in_the_Drivers_Seat.pdf.

21 National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, "47th Annual Survey Report on State-Sponsored Student Financial Aid, 2015-16" accessed on March 6, 2018, at www.nassgap.org. Note: NASSGAP survey results report aid as need-based that has any need eligibility, even if need-eligibility is used only after merit requirements have been met. For example, Wyoming's primary aid program, the Hathaway Scholarships, only provides need aid for eligible students after receiving the scholarship based on merit. For the 2015-16 year, Wyoming reported all aid dollars to NASSGAP as uncategorized and are not included in the WICHE region total aid per FTE calculation.

22 Ibid, NASSGAP.

23 Ibid, NASSGAP.

24 College Board, *Trends in Student Aid*, (Washington, D.C.: The College Board, 2017) accessed March 20, 2018, at https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-student-aid_0.pdf.

25 Thomas Harnish and Dylan Opalich, "Top 10 Higher Education State Policy Issues for 2018," *Policy Matters*, (Washington D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2018) accessed February 28, 2018, at http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/policy-matters/Top10Issues2018.pdf.

26 Dennis Jones, "Financing in Sync: Aligning Fiscal Policy with State Objectives," *Policies in Sync: Appropriations, Tuition, and Financial Aid for Higher Education* (Boulder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003) accessed on March 1, 2018, at https://www.wiche.edu/info/publications/PoliciesInSync.pdf.

[27] Demarée K. Michelau, "Sharpening the Dialogue: Engaging Policymakers in the Alignment of Appropriations, Tuition and Financial Aid Policy," *Western Policy Insights* (Boulder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2006) accessed March 20, 2018, at https://www.wiche.edu/info/publications/WPE-Leadership_Institutes_2006.pdf.

[28] Ibid, Dennis Jones.

[29] Higher Education Coordinating Commission, "Oregon Higher Education Strategic Plan," (Salem, OR: Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 2016) accessed April, 1 2018 at http://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Pages/strategic-plan.aspx. And, Colorado Department of Higher Education, "Colorado Rises Advancing Education and Talent Development," (Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2017) accessed April 1, 2018 at https://highered.colorado.gov/publications/CDHE-Master-Plan-2017.pdf.

[30] Carrie Warick, "NCAN Analysis: Dozens of States Lack Affordable Four-Year College Options" (National College Access Network, 2018) accessed on February 28, 2018, at http://www.collegeaccess.org/BlogItem?dg=def667bc-ad06-4aac-b2b3-1030a72cc0cb. The formula for affordability states that "the average Pell Grant recipient should be able to cover the cost of attendance and have $300 on hand to cover an emergency when using their combined federal grant aid, state grant aid, institutional grant aid, and federal student loans, Expected Family Contribution, and wages from reasonable work (40 hours)."

[31] Ibid, NCAN.

[32] Institute for Research on Higher Education, "2016 College Affordability Diagnosis," (Philadelphia, PA: Institute for Research on Higher Education, 2016) accessed March 27, 2018, at https://irhe.gse.upenn.edu/diagnosis.

[33] Ibid, Institute for Research on Higher Education.

[34] Alain Poutré, Jamey Rorison, and Mamie Voight, "Limited Means, Limited Options," (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2017) accessed March 27, 2018, at http://www.ihep.org/limited-means-limited-options.

[35] Ibid, Prescott and Longanecker.

[36] Nevada System of Higher Education, "A Pilot Program: The Silver State Opportunity Grant," (Reno, NV: Nevada System of Higher Education, 2017) accessed March 30, 2018, at https://www.nevada.edu/ir/documents/docs/SSOG_Year_One_Report.pdf.

[37] The Institute for College Access and Success, "Unpacking California College Affordability: Experts Weigh in on Strengths, Challenges, and Implications," (The Institute for College Access and Success: 2018) accessed March 15, 2018, at https://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/ticas_report_ca_affordability_final.pdf. And, The Institute for College Access and Success, "What College Costs for Low-Income Californians," (The Institute for College Access and Success: 2018) accessed March 15, 2018, at https://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/what_college_costs_for_low-income_californians.pdf.

[38] Ibid, Prescott and Longanecker.

[39] National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), "Federal Tax Reform and the States", (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018) accessed March 13, 2018, at http://www.ncsl.org/research/fiscal-policy/federal-tax-reform-and-the-states.aspx.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 200, Boulder, CO 80301-2204
Publication Number 2A6001B
Joseph A. Garcia, President
Tel: 303.541.0200
E-mail: policy@wiche.edu
Visit wiche.edu for our full series of *WICHE Insights* and other research publications.