



Western Interstate Commission  
for Higher Education  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2017





*Traditional Hawai'ian welcome ceremony for WICHE Commissioner and University of Hawai'i President David Lassner at the Hawai'inuikeā School of Hawai'ian Knowledge; University of Hawai'i News*





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The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and its 16 members work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource-sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education’s contributions to the region’s social, economic, and civic life.

This report recaps WICHE’s work during fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).

*About the cover photo (Sea pebble arch; (c) styf22):  
The “keystone” is a final stone placed at the apex of a self-supporting arch, locking all stones into position and allowing the arch to bear weight. Though it experiences less stress than any other stones, without it the structure would collapse. WICHE seeks to provide this sort of connectivity and support for the states and institutions it serves.*

## MESSAGE FROM WICHE'S PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIR OF WICHE'S COMMISSION

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*Patricia Sullivan and Joe Garcia; Photo: Candy Allen*

**S**unny spells and scattered showers: This weather forecast could stand in for the state of higher education in the American West today.

On the sunny side, Western colleges and universities are graduating more students than ever, and delivering academic programs and promoting student success in new and diverse ways. The lifelong economic value of a postsecondary degree remains robust, and that's before adding in the intangible value gained by millions of students who find true inspiration, passion, and purpose along the way.

Yet a paradigm shift—within higher education, and throughout the larger landscape—threatens higher education's future. Some threats are plainly evident on campus quads and in news headlines, while others lurk deeper within spreadsheets and networks. We need to graduate more students in key industries to fill gaps left by retiring Baby Boomers, but stagnating high school graduate numbers and diversifying populations require institutions to explore new ways to recruit and retain students. Innovation is clearly called for—but which innovations, exactly? And how should institutions and states balance this risk-taking with a tightening bottom line?

At the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), we are working hard to address issues on all these fronts.

For over 64 years, WICHE programs have helped students throughout our 16 member states and territories overcome barriers to affordable, high-quality education, accessible to all regardless of background or circumstance. These programs include the Western Undergraduate Exchange and other student exchange programs that reduce tuition for more than 40,000 students by over \$370 million.

Beyond the western states, WICHE is a highly recognized leader in groundbreaking collaboratives. One such example entails the launch of a national interstate data-sharing program that helps policymakers more accurately link education, population migration and career development, and through direct services that bolster behavioral health systems and workforces.

On the policy front, WICHE continues to lead the way in the development and dissemination of authoritative, well-grounded research to better inform policy and practice in important niches. Key WICHE reports released this past year include *Knocking at the College Door*, a preeminent quadrennial study of high school graduate demographics, and *The Price and Cost of Distance Education*.

Lastly, WICHE also helps colleges and universities adapt to change with programs such as the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), and by convening groups of legislators, chief academic officers, and others for high-level dialogue on pressing issues affecting higher education.

As we have grown into our new leadership roles at WICHE this past year, we have been nourished by the expertise and passion we've seen among the Commission and among WICHE staff. While we can't predict precisely what higher education in the West will look like in the years ahead, we are confident it will evolve, and that WICHE will remain—as it has for 64 years—an essential leader, influencer, and connector that helps institutions, states, and students across the higher education spectrum.

We are eager to support this work in the year to come.



Joseph A. Garcia, President  
Western Interstate Commission  
for Higher Education



Patricia Sullivan, Chair  
Western Interstate Commission  
for Higher Education

# Programs and Services



“Hawai‘i does not offer an industrial design program. But thanks to WICHE’s Western Undergraduate Exchange, I can pursue my dream of becoming an industrial designer.”

– Curren Gaspar '20  
Hawai‘i resident attending  
Metropolitan State University  
of Denver

WICHE’s Programs and Services unit expands access to higher education through three multistate Student Exchange Programs (the Western Undergraduate Exchange, the Professional Student Exchange Program, and the Western Regional Graduate Program) and the WICHE Internet Course Exchange. Staff also foster collaboration and resource-sharing in higher education by developing and coordinating regional initiatives, convening and partnering with Western academic leaders, and collaborating on innovative ventures to help institutions and states reduce operating costs.

## ACCESS & SUCCESS

The **Western Undergraduate Exchange** (WUE), WICHE’s signature undergraduate tuition-reciprocity program and the nation’s largest of its kind, saved 38,300 students an estimated \$341.5 million in tuition in 2016-17 by allowing them to pay no more than 150 percent of resident tuition—instead of full nonresident tuition which can exceed 300 percent of resident-tuition cost—at 160 public two- and four-year institutions in WICHE’s 16 states and territories. Most WUE institutions offer this reduced rate to incoming transfer students and to new college students. Schools may tailor participation parameters, including admission requirements and available programs of study, to individual campus needs.

The **Professional Student Exchange Program** (PSEP) provides affordable access to 10 professional healthcare fields for students in 10 WICHE states. In 2016-17, 640 students received tuition benefits (for which the students’ home states invested \$14.7 million) through PSEP. Since its inception in 1953, PSEP has helped more than 15,000 students, many of whom populate key health care positions in their home states.

The **Western Regional Graduate Program** (WRGP) allows WICHE region residents to cross state lines yet pay resident tuition rates at 450 master’s, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 61 participating institutions. In fall 2016, 1,570 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated \$23.3 million in tuition. WICHE solicits nominations for new WRGP programs each fall. Programs approved in 2017 cover disciplines including occupational hygiene and environmental toxicology, bioinformatics, mechanical engineering/biomechanics, veteran and military healthcare, gerontological nursing, business analytics, and cybersecurity.

**WICHE Internet Course Exchange** (ICE) enables students, through their home institutions, to seamlessly access online courses and programs offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in an ICE consortium. This robust online platform supports higher education consortia and systems that seek to increase online course options for students and use institutional resources more effectively. A major current user of ICE is the Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus), a consortium of 18 universities that are mutually optimizing capacity in doctoral nursing courses. The Montana University System also used the ICE platform this year to allow course exchange among its two-year institutions.

The **Western Academic Leadership Academy** is a yearlong professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for four-year institutions in the West. Academy activities focus on understanding the context of academic leadership, setting academic goals and priorities, and developing specific skill sets required of chief academic officers. Its third cohort of 12, nominated by members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum, was formed in spring 2017.





“What I value most about the Western Academic Leadership Forum, administered with help from WICHE, is the opportunity to network with colleagues and engage with them about difficulty issues I face in my own work. Knowing there is support from peers is invaluable.”

– Karen Carey, Provost,  
University of Alaska Southeast

The Academy’s faculty consists of WICHE region sitting campus provosts and system chief academic officers who are active in the Forum. It is funded by registration fees, sponsorships, and Forum support.

The **Western Academic Leadership Forum** (Forum) brings together WICHE region chief academic leaders for institutions, systems, and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum’s annual meeting, themed “Designing for Quality in Higher Education Facet by Facet,” occurred in April in Salt Lake City. The Forum is funded primarily by membership dues, with additional funding provided by meeting sponsors.

The **Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders** (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 for the two-year higher education sector. The Alliance’s annual meeting, themed “The Future of Community Colleges: Thriving in a World in Flux,” was held in March in Long Beach, Calif. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and meeting sponsors.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

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**Interstate Passport**, a nationwide program that facilitates block transfer of students’ lower-division general education attainment based on learning outcomes, was collaboratively developed by WICHE region faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, and advisors. Regionally accredited institutions may join the Interstate Passport Network, which launched in July 2016 with 24 member institutions in eight states. Some 30,000 Passports were issued this past year.

Students who earn a Passport and transfer to another Network-member institution do not have to repeat or take additional courses to meet the receiving institution’s requirements in the Passport’s nine knowledge and skill areas. Taking fewer unnecessary or duplicated courses enables students to complete degrees more quickly and at higher rates, with lower cost and debt: factors that also improve institutions’ performance metrics. And because it’s based on learning outcomes instead of course-by-course articulation, the Passport transfer system increases curricular flexibility and reduces time spent negotiating equivalencies.

The academic progress of Passport students at Network-member institutions is tracked through the National Student Clearinghouse and reported to the students’ sending institutions for use in continuous improvement efforts. Interstate Passport is supported by federal government and private foundation grants.

The **Academic Leaders Toolkit**, jointly funded by the Alliance and Forum, is a searchable online repository of decision-making tools contributed by academic leaders. Tools in a broad range of categories—such as program evaluation, creation and elimination; faculty recruitment and retention; and learning outcomes assessment—help academic leaders address a variety of responsibilities. Desk Manuals (submitted by Portland State University) and the Sector Mapping Tool (submitted by University of Hawai’i Community Colleges) were honored as Academic Leaders 2016 Tools of the Year.



“Students at our Southern California College of Optometry (SCCO) have benefited from PSEP support for more than 35 years. WICHE’s PSEP has brought our program a rich diversity of students from other states and backgrounds. In the latest graduating class, PSEP students graduated with 54 percent less debt than their classmates.”

– Tami Sato  
Sr. Director of Enrollment  
Management and Financial Aid,  
Marshall B. Ketchum University

## FINANCE

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The **Master Property Program**, developed by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and available to WICHE institutions, has saved institutions \$114.5 million since inception on comprehensive property insurance coverage. The insurance program now serves 160 two- and four-year campuses nationwide, including 30 campuses and centers in the WICHE region. It enables public and nonprofit private institutions to receive coverage at rates below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection.

**MHECare**, another WICHE partnership, offers institutions and systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR); 16 WICHE institutions in four states now participate. UHCSR was selected through a MHEC competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process.

A third partnership with the **MHECtech** program enables institutions to purchase off competitively bid master purchasing agreements for hardware, software, and technology services. Several of the agreements are also available to K-12 districts; state, county, and local governments; and education-related nonprofits. More than 1,300 institutions and other entities in 13 WICHE states reaped benefits of aggregated volume purchases that lowered product cost and saved institutional time and expense. Another available MHECtech feature is the e-Transcript Initiative (ETI), which facilitates transfer of student transcript information in a consistent format among WICHE region high schools and its colleges and universities.

## WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

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The **North American Network of Science Labs Online** (NANSLO), an alliance of postsecondary science laboratories that use software and robotics, allows students to conduct high-quality, openly licensed online lab activities in introductory biology, chemistry, and physics subjects. Participating laboratories this year were housed at Great Falls College—Montana State University and North Island College in British Columbia. NANSLO’s master scheduler, based at WICHE, allows institutions to reserve time in the labs on a fee basis and enables students to schedule their lab activities at convenient times.

The **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement** (SARA) is a national initiative that increases student access to distance education courses across state lines and makes it easier for states to regulate and for institutions to participate in interstate distance education. In 14 WICHE states, 190 postsecondary institutions now participate in **W-SARA**. Funded initially by grants from Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the initiative now relies entirely on fee revenue from member institutions.





University of Alaska Anchorage 2017 Commencement. Photo: Philip Hall, UAA



“Without the Western Regional Graduate Program, I would have had to start over with a different career. There is no graduate program in audiology in my home state of Wyoming, and one can’t practice audiology without a doctoral degree. WRGP gave me the opportunity to obtain the necessary education to become an audiologist.”

– Devin Christensen '18  
Wyoming resident attending University of Utah





# Policy Analysis and Research

WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit offers various resources to support better-informed decision-making, principally at the state level. Topics for its numerous research projects and collaborations include college completion, equity, adult learners, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development. Unit staff members are expert resources on higher education issues including finance, state and federal financial aid, articulation and transfer, common academic standards, and college completion. Unit publications, including the *Policy Insights* and *Western Policy Exchanges* series, explore a range of significant policy issues. Staff members also undertake long-term grant-funded projects, collaborate with regional and national partners, and provide short-term technical assistance to members.

## ACCESS AND SUCCESS

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For almost 40 years, WICHE's widely known *Knocking at the College Door* publication series has provided comprehensive data about high school graduate trends for policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, schools and school districts, researchers, and the media. With support from ACT Inc. and the College Board, WICHE released the 9th edition of *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates* in December 2016 at the National Press Club.

Demographic and enrollment-demand trends suggested by *Knocking at the College Door* include: a decade of stabilization in the number of U.S. high school graduates (driven by reductions in white high school graduates and increases in nonwhite populations), followed after 2025 by a decline in high school graduates for the nation and most states due to a recent "baby bust." The report has been covered in media outlets including the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Politico*, *C-SPAN*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Hechinger Report*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *Community College Daily*, and many more.

Staff have also presented at various forums, webinars, and meetings. View the publication and supplemental reports, the projections data, state profiles and interactive data dashboards, and webinars and presentations at [knocking.wiche.edu](http://knocking.wiche.edu).

WICHE's [Legislative Advisory Committee](#) (LAC) informs the WICHE Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and WICHE staff serve the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West. LAC members are appointed by the Commission and meet annually. The LAC annual meeting, titled "Better Data, Better Decisions: Using Data to Inform State Policy," was held Sept. 20-21, 2016 in Albuquerque, N.M. The meeting featured national experts, WICHE staff, and LAC members on legislative trends in the West, outcomes-based funding, dual and concurrent enrollment, state strategies for student success, the cost and price of distance education, the postsecondary attainment gap, and more. Seventeen legislators from nine states participated, including eight WICHE Commissioners and several new members.

Lumina Foundation and WICHE partnered to form the [Adult College Completion Network](#) (ACCN) in 2011 to bring together higher education institutions, external organizations, and state agencies working to increase college completion by adults with prior college credits but no degree. The ACCN has provided a forum for connection and information exchange through workshops, webinars, a listserv, and technical assistance, and it has helped keep WICHE members up-to-date on relevant





“WICHE has been an important resource for many of our initiatives. Not only do we use the studies and data that they produce, but as founding members of WICHE’s Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange initiative (MLDE), we are actively engaged in developing an information source not available anywhere. Our involvement in this project helped us establish our own state longitudinal data system in 2011. In particular, the interaction with other states helped convince Hawai‘i’s Department of Labor and Industrial Relations of the importance of longitudinal data systems.

– Pearl Imada Iboshi  
Director of Institutional  
Research and Analysis,  
University of  
Hawai‘i System

research and policy developments. While ACCN external funding ended in 2016, WICHE maintains the listserv and website for the ACCN community (of more than 800 members from 49 states) and continues to work with states engaged in returning-adult-learner initiatives.

WICHE has worked closely with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) as a thought-partner and consultant on its Close the Gap initiative, whose goal is to close the attainment gap by at least half by 2025. As part of this collaboration, WICHE staff led a comprehensive planning and execution process for the initiative, supported planning infrastructure, worked with CDHE senior leadership to refocus efforts in key areas, and provided leadership and guidance on outreach. This work ended in mid-2017.

Finally, this unit released the *Policy Insights* brief [Translating Research into Policy to Increase Equity in Higher Education: Lessons Learned from the ASHE-WICHE Collaborative](#), one component of a partnership between the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and WICHE focusing on how to better connect higher education research with state-level policy. The brief examines why research is not more influential in policymaking; how scholars can develop a cross-sector, state-level research agenda more likely to influence policy; which policy areas are well-suited for cross-collaboration; and what actions scholars and policymakers can take to improve links between the two fields.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

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In partnership with the Education Commission of the States (ECS), WICHE staff teamed up with National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to author [Creating an Ideal State-Federal Data Partnership to Improve Policymaking Related to College Affordability](#). This brief explores how federal data policies are intertwined with state policies, and argues that a more effective partnership could equip states to more precisely target barriers to postsecondary access and success.

The annual [Benchmarks: WICHE Region](#) report analyzes key higher education metrics and information about the West’s progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. The report helps monitor regional changes over time and informs discussion in policy and education communities.

WICHE’s [Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West](#) presents regional and state-by-state data and analyses on 33 policy indicators across a range of topics. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide up-to-date information for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The downloadable data tables are updated periodically throughout the year.

The Policy team also manages a suite of online higher education policy resources including a publications clearinghouse, a policy database, and a subscription listserv.

## FINANCE

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The annual update of [Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West](#) outlines 2016-17 tuition and fees (and recent rates of change) for all WICHE region public institutions. A related *Policy Insights* brief, [Tuition and Fees in the West 2016-17: Trends and Implications](#), summarizes the report’s findings and discusses state



“Recently, I have had the pleasure of working with WICHE staff on two education needs-assessment projects. In both cases, they engaged diverse stakeholder groups and provided relevant and actionable analysis and recommendations. I have relied on WICHE reports and other outstanding resources for many years, and I have been thrilled with the quality of the work.”

– Randy Spaulding, Ph.D.  
Director of Academic Affairs and Policy,  
Washington Student Achievement Council

budget levels, higher education appropriations, state financial aid programs, college affordability, and related college finance topics.

A *Policy Insights* brief, *A Tale of Two Economies: 2016 Higher Education Legislative Activity in the West*, summarizes key policy themes over the past year and highlights issues likely to emerge in future legislative sessions. In 2016, most WICHE region states benefited from an ongoing economic recovery, but those reliant on energy sector tax revenues were hit hard by the global decline in oil prices. This resulted in varying budget situations in Western legislatures, with some states making significant cuts to higher education while others were positioned to make new investments. Still, common themes did emerge: a focus on affordability and accelerated learning options, continued support of military-affiliated students, investment in evidence-based student success initiatives, and proposed solutions for addressing teacher shortages.

WICHE also assisted states with issues related to financial aid. For example, in South Dakota, WICHE examined how the state might develop a strategy to redesign state-funded financial aid programs.

## WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

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In FY 2017, the *Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange* (MLDE) continued its expansion from its four-state pilot phase. The exchange enables linkages among state education and employment data systems to provide more-complete information to policymakers, students, families, and other education and economic development stakeholders. The MLDE, now expanding to include at least 10 U.S. states, is one of the most ambitious current efforts to provide a sustainable tool for states and institutions to gather relevant information linking education and economic and workforce development. It keeps WICHE staff deeply engaged in national conversations on data infrastructure for postsecondary education and workforce development.

In FY 2017 and into FY 2018, WICHE has conducted an analysis of University of Hawai'i graduates who work in other states, and an analysis of Hawai'i high school students who go to universities in other states along with their work patterns.

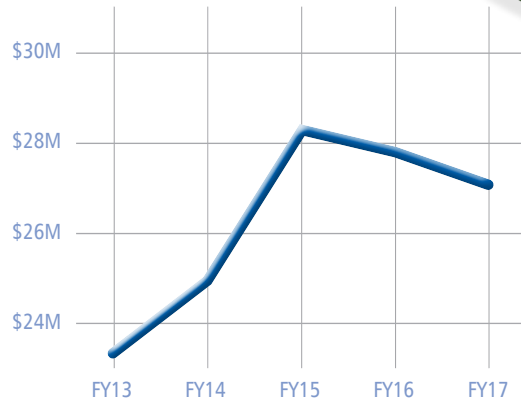
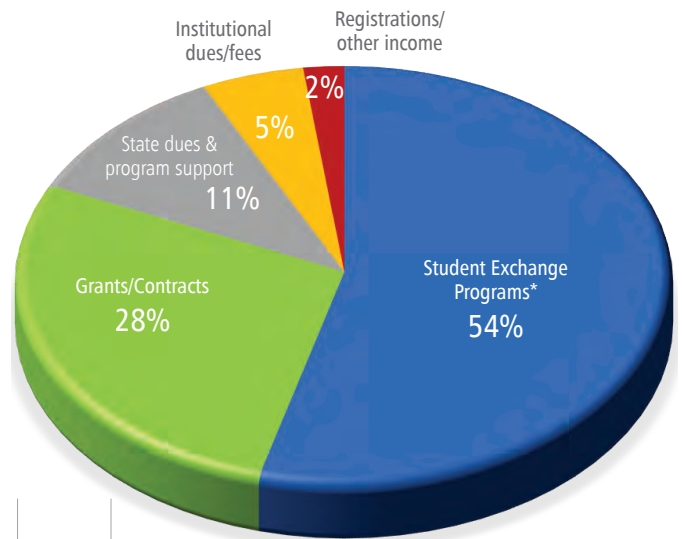
Also in FY 2017, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) received funding from the Washington legislature to conduct a higher education needs assessment for southeast King County. WICHE partnered with NCHEMS to conduct the assessment and provide key findings and recommendations, as well as a cost estimate, for WSAC and the legislature.

A set of 11 papers focused on improving the nation's postsecondary data infrastructure, published recently by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), includes a brief co-authored by WICHE and NCHEMS staff. *Fostering State-to-State Data Exchanges* draws on lessons learned from the MLDE to identify how a broader state-to-state exchange might help answer key questions about postsecondary education. Among the key findings: The very real barriers to establishing such exchanges are surmountable, and they can produce vital information for policymakers as well as students and parents.

# WICHE By The Numbers

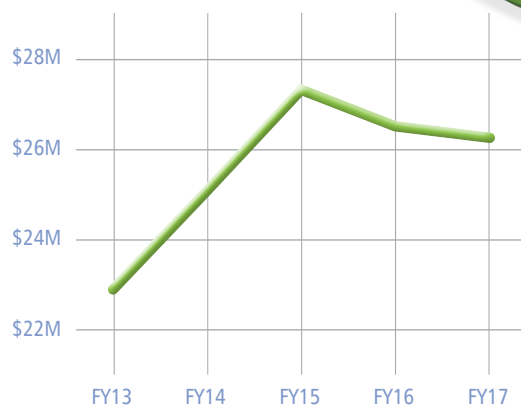
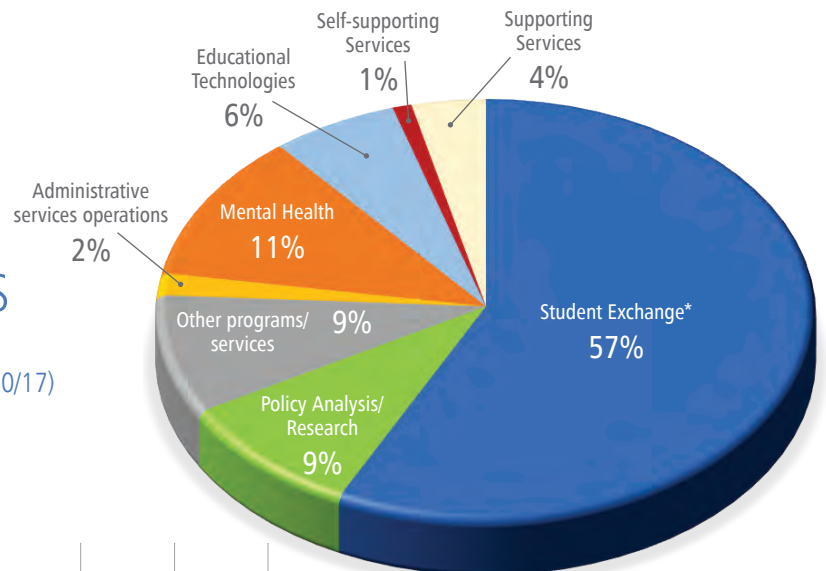
## REVENUE

\$27,051,318  
(for FY ending 6/30/17)



## EXPENSES

\$26,284,078  
(for FY ending 6/30/17)

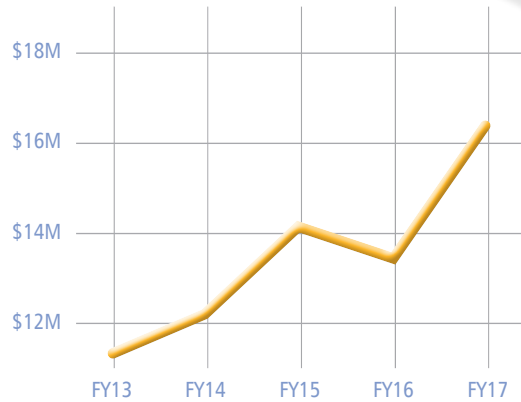
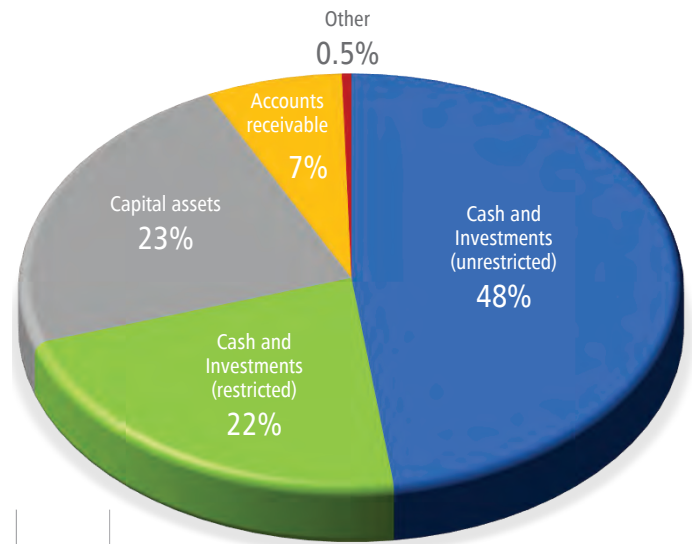


\* Student Exchange revenue and expense figures represent pass-through fees paid first by WICHE states to WICHE, then on to institutions that enroll students through the Professional Student Exchange Program.



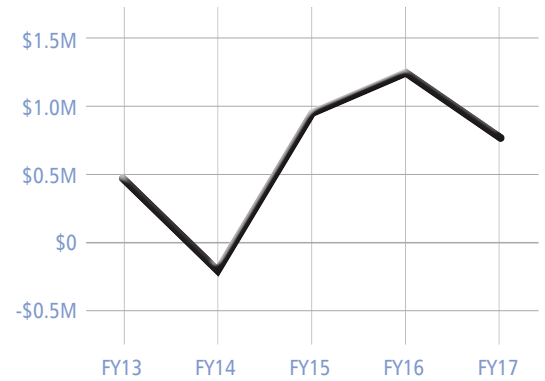
## ASSETS

\$16,373,521  
(for FY ending 6/30/17)

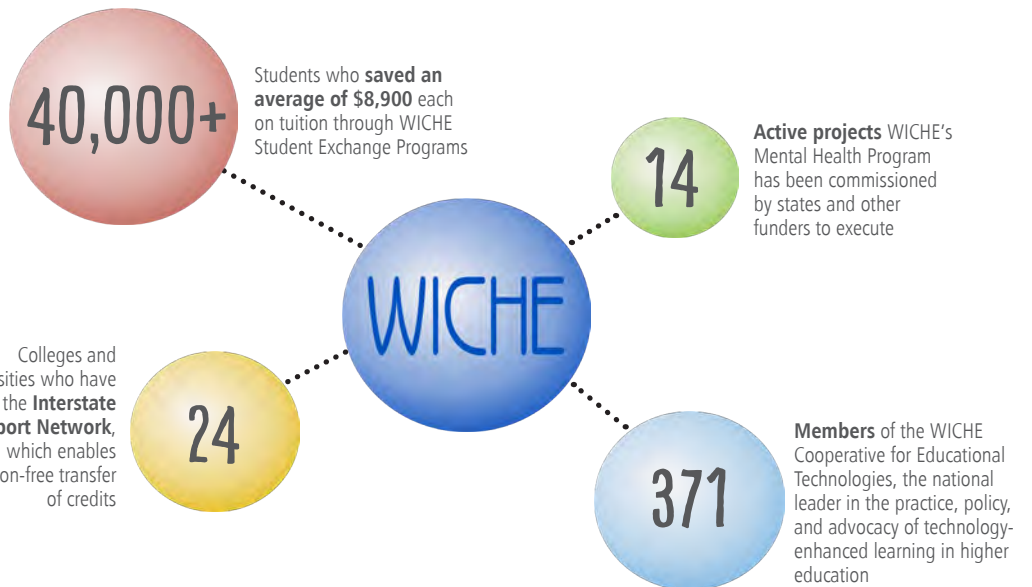


## OPERATING INCOME

\$767,240  
(for FY ending 6/30/17)



## Highlights





# Mental Health Program



“I called on WICHE’s Mental Health team members to engage them in considering working together on behavioral health initiatives, whether with American Indian/Alaska Native or non-native provider groups. WICHE has offered a wealth of experience, research, and resources, understanding the national behavioral health challenges as well as on-the-ground practical approaches. The WICHE team has helped us work on sustainability in this changing behavioral health environment. The end-of-project deliverables are outstanding, well-researched and useful to the clients we serve in our consulting work.”

– Dan Aune, MSW  
Executive Director,  
MHA of Montana

The Mental Health Program provides behavioral health technical assistance, education, consulting, and research services for WICHE’s member states, local governments, health care providers, funders, and universities. Staff members provide program evaluation and technical assistance services, prevention and recovery program development and dissemination, and training and workforce development. The program’s training efforts include professional continuing education and pre-professional training, as well as community trainings to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. The program works to improve the capacity of the behavioral health workforce and the effectiveness of the public behavioral health system.

## ACCESS AND SUCCESS

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The Mental Health Program continues to collaborate with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) for Veteran Suicide Prevention-VISN 19 to develop and pilot-test a veterans suicide-prevention program for rural communities in Colorado’s San Luis Valley. The project is designed to decrease suicide among veterans by improving access to both VA and community-based care, resources, and support services that are tailored to the specific needs of rural communities.

The *Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Rural Primary Care Practices* provides information and resources for implementing suicide prevention in rural primary care settings across the region. Each year, the Mental Health Program engages in several suicide-prevention planning and education efforts with partners across the country. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment this past year provided funding to update the toolkit and to localize it for efficient use in Colorado. In addition, the Mental Health Program is collaborating with Mental Health Colorado to create a toolkit to help advocates improve school-based behavioral health services for students.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

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The Arizona Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) Project manages the evaluation and implementation of four EBPs in Arizona’s Maricopa County. Mental Health Program staff members conduct reviews of provider fidelity in Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Supported Employment, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Consumer-Operated Services to facilitate behavioral health system and service improvements. The Mental Health Program also provides training and similar evaluations of ACT programs for the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

The Mental Health Program completed an analysis of Colorado’s behavioral health funding systems for the Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budget. The study focused on service utilization and funding levels for Medicaid and indigent (non-Medicaid) individuals and the impact of the Affordable Care Act on accessibility to behavioral health services. The study provided recommendations to help Colorado strengthen funding for indigent clients and align behavioral health system funding to best support identified Colorado’s behavioral healthcare needs and capacity. Findings from the study were presented at the Academy Health 2017 Annual Research Meeting.





“Health professional education in Alaska is limited, as we lack our own medical, dental, and pharmacy schools. WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program not only increased my chances of getting accepted to my top dental schools, it also lightened the financial burden that can drag a student down over four years of dental school. WICHE is a great motivation to do well in school, and to practice in my home state after graduation.”

– Alice Choi ’20  
*Alaska resident, Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health*

The Mental Health Program completed an analysis of the Circle Program, a 90-day, 20-bed inpatient program operated by the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo (CMHIP) that treats individuals with both a mental illness and a substance-use disorder. The study also examined operational and regulatory/licensure options for the program to be autonomous from the federal Institutions for Mental Diseases requirement that restricts Medicaid payments to certain inpatient programs, CMHIP, and the state.

The Hawai’i Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division, retained the Mental Health Program to provide an external independent evaluation and review of the Hawai’i State Hospital’s budgeting process and to make recommendations to improve its budget and expenditure system.

The Utah Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, retained the Mental Health Program to provide technical assistance to reduce the average length of stay at the Utah State Hospital for forensic patients being restored to competency to stand trial. The project also includes funding for a Lean Rapid Improvement Event to assist the Utah State Hospital in reducing forensic length of stay.

## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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The Western States Decision Support Group provides a platform for collaboration and learning on improving the capacity of WICHE member states to measure behavioral health system performance and outcomes and to use data as a planning and policy development tool. The group has focused on staying up to date on national and federal initiatives, and on developing a data dictionary to be a resource on data collection and outcome measurement for Western states.

## WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

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The Mental Health Program continues to provide administrative support, technical assistance, and data collection for the Hawai’i Psychology Internship Consortium, with the goal of obtaining and maintaining accreditation by the American Psychological Association (APA). The Mental Health Program and the Hawai’i Department of Education have also continued a partnership to recruit a range of behavioral health professionals to fill vacant positions in Hawai’i’s K-12 schools.

The Mental Health Program also continues to provide consultation and technical assistance to the Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium related to securing APA accreditation and implementing internship policies and procedures.

The Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium allows students enrolled in the University of Alaska’s Ph.D. Program in Clinical-Community Psychology (and other psychology doctoral students who wish to train and work in Alaska) to complete internships throughout the state. WICHE facilitates intern and faculty travel for training and program activities, supports distance technology activities, provides technical assistance toward the maintenance of accreditation through the APA, provides quarterly reports to the state Department of Health and Social Services, and supports program evaluation activities.

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Addictive and Mental Disorders Division, retained the Mental Health Program to obtain, review, and analyze data on Montana State Hospital (MSH) staffing, length of stay, and hospital beds, as well as registered nursing staff duties and supervision models for direct care staff; and to compare MSH to peer hospitals on these indicators.

The Mental Health Program provided consultation and technical assistance to Texas' Harris County Children's Assessment Center in its pursuit of APA accreditation for the Children's Assessment Center Doctoral Internship Program. The Mental Health Program also continues to provide consultation and technical assistance to the El Paso Psychology Internship Consortium.



*Washington State University Tri-Cities 2017 Commencement*

# WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies

The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Its growing membership includes more than 380 institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in nearly all U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. WCET is widely recognized as one of the most informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organizations regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education.

## ACCESS AND SUCCESS

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In May 2017, WCET was awarded a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to serve as the backbone organization for the new Digital Learning Solution Network. Digital learning is one of the foundation's investment priorities for improving student success, particularly among first-generation, low-income students of color. The WCET grant will support collaboration focused on digital learning and digital courseware, with the expectation that the network will evolve into a sustainable entity.

WCET develops and maintains online resources—ranging from webcasts, blogs, and videos to issue briefs and Q&As—in four focus areas:

- **Emerging Technologies:** badges, mobile learning, Internet of Things
- **Institutional Success:** 21st century faculty, open educational resources, price and cost of distance education
- **Policy and Regulations:** accessibility, state authorization
- **Student Success:** academic integrity, adaptive learning, competency-based education, credentials, learning analytics, prior learning assessment, student authentication

In June 2017, WCET and GlobalMindED co-awarded the inaugural **2017 Digital Inclusion Award** to Dr. Nader Vadiee, professor at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M. Vadiee leads an immersive robotics program that sparks interest in technical fields among Native American and Hispanic students now underrepresented in such professions. The award was created to recognize those who spearhead increasing involvement in digital leadership among first-generation student populations.

The widely held perception that online education courses save students money on tuition doesn't hold up to scrutiny, according to WCET's *Price and Cost of Distance Education 2017* report, based on a survey of administrators at nearly 200 colleges and universities. The survey showed that most institutions charge students the same or more for online courses compared with face-to-face instruction—and when additional fees are included, roughly half of online students pay more for courses than those in regular classrooms. The report points out that colleges and universities have long focused on digital instruction primarily as a means of increasing access to education, and paid scant attention to issues of cost and price. Distance education can and should be more affordable, the report concludes, but that will require rethinking existing structures, policies, and practices.





“The WICHE Collaborative for Educational Technology (WCET) is one of the best places for an honest discussion of what we in higher education are discovering about the intersection of innovation and quality in American higher education. If you are interested in the emerging data-driven, career-oriented, evidence-based learning environment, the role technology plays in higher education, and the changing regulatory practices, this is where you ought to be.”

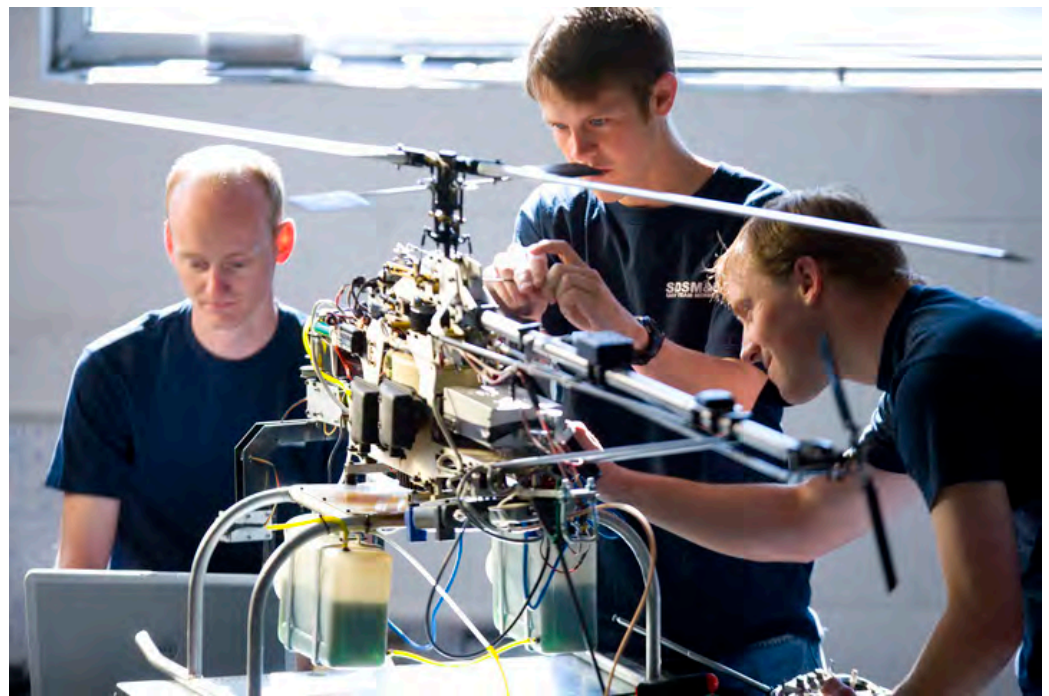
– Peter Smith,  
Santa Fe, N.M., Professor  
of Innovative Practices  
in Higher Education,  
University of Maryland  
University College

## ACCOUNTABILITY

WCET tracks and serves as a source of information on state and federal policies that affect distance and technology-enhanced education providers, including Title IV financial aid policies, state authorization of distance education, teacher preparation requirements, the Higher Education Act reauthorization, and financial aid fraud. WCET also collects and shares information about institution-level policies including academic integrity, accessibility to educational technologies, and use of adjunct faculty in online education.

WCET, e-Literate, and the 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, [WCET Distance Education Enrollment Report 2017](#), shows that while campus enrollments declined 3.2 percent between 2012 and 2015, distance education enrollments rose 11 percent. Private nonprofit institutions saw the biggest jump in online enrollments—40 percent—during that time period. The report notes that private nonprofits posted the largest percentage gains because in 2012, they had enrolled fewer online students than did public and for-profit institutions.

The [State Authorization Network \(SAN\)](#) is a membership service for individuals (in WCET member institutions, systems and consortia) charged with ensuring that their institutions’ out-of-state activities comply with state and federal regulations governing online learning, field experiences, recruiting, and marketing. SAN offers training on how to meet state and federal requirements, provides access to experts, and maintains a community of practitioners who share effective practices.



South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, robotics project

## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

WCET's annual meeting continues to be one of the top conferences on eLearning in higher education, offering facilitated discussions, panel presentations, and in-depth sessions on trending topics. **WCET's 29th annual meeting** will be held Oct. 25-27, 2017, in Denver. Among the highlights will be the presentation of WCET's annual **Richard Jonsen Award**, the **Sally Johnstone Award**, and the **WCET Outstanding Work Awards (WOW)**, which honor individuals and organizations for leadership, commitment, and problem-solving in improving postsecondary education through innovative uses of technology.

**WCET Leadership Summits** offer single-issue-focused discussions among higher education administrators considering adoption of an emergent technology-related initiative. The summits are designed to provide leaders with a checklist of challenges, opportunities, and options for advancing such initiatives. The June 2017 Leadership Summit, "Essential Institutional Capacities to Lead Innovation," engaged leaders in a strategic discussion of how to best align an institution's human capital, technology investments, and content strategy to sustain innovation in teaching and learning.

**WCET Membership Services** offer benefits including registration discounts on WCET meetings, members-only news feeds and email discussion lists, and access to webcasts, blogs, issue briefs, job postings, and other resources. WCET's Academic Leadership Forum provides provosts, deans, and senior academic leaders with peer-to-peer networking on topics ranging from data analytics to the engagement of adjunct faculty.

WCET's **Webcast series** brings together experts on a variety of online learning issues. This past year, webcast topics have ranged from distance-education enrollment trends to financial aid fraud to strategic portfolio development.



*UCLA E8 Album HQR Initiative: Transhumanism; Visual intersections of spirituality, science, art, and sustainability; University of California at Los Angeles*

# WICHE States and Commissioners

The following states/territories were members of WICHE this past year: 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.

WICHE is governed by three gubernatorially appointed Commissioners from each member. The WICHE Commission shapes the organization's mission and sets its priorities. Commissioners as of June 30, 2017 were:

## Alaska

**Susan Anderson**, president/CEO,  
The CIRI Foundation, Anchorage

**Stephanie Butler**, executive director,  
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary  
Education, Juneau

**James Johnsen**, president,  
University of Alaska System, Fairbanks

## Arizona

**Chris Bustamante**, president,  
Rio Salado College, Tempe

**Eileen Klein**, president,  
Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix  
(Appointment pending)

## California

**Christopher Cabaldon**, president,  
Capitol Impact LLC; mayor, city of  
West Sacramento

**Dianne Harrison**, president,  
California State University, Northridge

**Francisco Rodriguez**, chancellor,  
Los Angeles Community College District,  
Los Angeles

## Colorado

**Loretta Martinez**, general counsel and  
secretary to the board, Metropolitan State  
University of Denver

**Kim Hunter Reed**, executive director,  
Colorado Department of Higher Education,  
Denver

**Dene Kay Thomas**, president,  
Fort Lewis College, Durango

## Hawai'i

**David Lassner**, president,  
University of Hawai'i, Honolulu

**Carol Mon Lee**, attorney; retired associate  
dean, University of Hawai'i Richardson  
School of Law; former member,  
Hawai'i Board of Regents, Honolulu

**Colleen Sathre**, vice president emeritus,  
University of Hawai'i, Honolulu

## Idaho

**J. Anthony Fernandez**, president,  
Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston

**Matt Freeman**, executive director,  
Idaho State Board of Education, Boise

**Julie VanOrden**, member,  
Idaho House of Representatives, Pingree

## Montana

**Clayton Christian** (WICHE vice chair  
2017), commissioner of higher education,  
Montana University System, Helena

**Pat Williams**, former U.S. Congressman,  
Missoula

**Franke Wilmer**, professor,  
Montana State University, Bozeman

## Nevada

**Fred Lokken**, professor,  
Truckee Meadows Community College,  
Reno

(Two appointments pending)



# WICHE Commissioners (continued)

## New Mexico

**Barbara Damron**, cabinet secretary,  
New Mexico Higher Education  
Department, Santa Fe

**Mark Moores**, member, New Mexico  
State Senate, Albuquerque

**Patricia Anaya Sullivan** (WICHE chair  
2017), associate dean, College of  
Engineering, New Mexico State University,  
Las Cruces

## North Dakota

**Nick Hacker**, member, North Dakota  
State Board of Higher Education;  
president, North Dakota Guaranty & Title  
Co., Bismarck

**Mark Hagerott**, chancellor,  
North Dakota University System, Bismarck

**Ray Holmberg**, member,  
North Dakota State Senate, Grand Forks

## Oregon

**Ryan Deckert**, president,  
Oregon Business Association, Portland

**Camille Preus**, president,  
Blue Mountain Community College,  
Pendleton

**Hilda Rosselli**, college and career  
readiness director, Chief Education Office,  
Salem

## South Dakota

**Robert Burns**, dean emeritus of Honors  
College and distinguished professor  
emeritus of political science,  
South Dakota State University, Brookings

**James O. Hansen**, former member,  
South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

**Mike Rush**, executive director,  
South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

## U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States

**Carmen Fernandez**, president,  
Northern Marianas College, Saipan

**Jude Hofschneider**, senator,  
Northern Marianas Commonwealth  
Legislature, Saipan

**Vincent Leon Guerrero**, special assistant  
to the governor on climate change and  
education, Guam

## Utah

**Dave Buhler**, commissioner,  
Utah System of Higher Education,  
Salt Lake City

**Patricia Jones**, CEO, Women's Leadership  
Institute; member, Utah State Board  
of Regents, Salt Lake City

**Peter C. Knudson**, member,  
Utah State Senate, Brigham City

## Washington

**Don Bennett**, deputy director,  
Washington Student Achievement Council,  
Olympia

**Jeanne Kohl-Welles**, councilmember,  
King County Council, District 4, Seattle

**Gerry Pollet**, member,  
Washington House of Representatives,  
Seattle

## Wyoming

**Fred Baldwin**, member,  
Wyoming State Senate, Kemmerer

**Karla Leach**, president,  
Western Wyoming Community College,  
Rock Springs

**Laurie Nichols**, president,  
University of Wyoming, Laramie

# WICHE Staff

## President's Office

Joe Garcia, president

Elizabeth Golder, executive assistant to the president and to the commission

## Accounting and Administrative Services

John Lopez, special assistant to the president, chief administrative officer, and director of W-SARA

Somer Aly, administrative assistant

Robin Berlin, senior accounting specialist

Craig Milburn, chief financial officer

Ana Sosa, accounting specialist

## Communications

Jeremy Simon, director of strategic communications

Candy Allen, senior graphic designer

John Fellers, web manager

## Human Resources

Tara Torline, director of human resources

Georgia Frazer, HR assistant

## IT Services

Dave Clark, chief of digital services

Andy Mills, systems administrator

## Mental Health Program

Dennis Mohatt, vice president, behavioral health

Ken Cole, director of operations

Brittany Copithorn, project coordinator

Andie Hancock, budget analyst

Georgia Harris, fidelity reviewer

April Hendrickson, program evaluation and research associate

Hannah Koch, research assistant

Jeni Serrano, fidelity reviewer

Liza Tupa, director, education and research

Karen Voyer-Caravona, fidelity reviewer

Mimi Windemuller, project manager

## Policy Analysis and Research

Demarée Michelau, vice president, policy analysis and research

Peace Bransberger, senior research analyst

Laura Ewing, administrative manager

Colleen Falkenstern, research coordinator

Patrick Lane, director, data initiatives

Sarah Leibrandt, research analyst

Christina Sedney, policy analyst

## Programs and Services

Jere Mock, vice president, programs and services

Margo Colalancia, director, student exchange programs

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Kim Nawrocki, administrative assistant

Ken Pepion, senior project director, Doctoral Scholars Project

Angela Rochat, data coordinator

Pat Shea, director, academic leadership initiatives

Katherine Springsteen, project coordinator, Interstate Passport

Cathy Walker, project manager, Interstate Passport

## WCET

Mike Abbiatti, vice president, educational technologies, and executive director, WCET

Rosa Calabrese, coordinator, digital and project services

Lindsey Downs, manager, communications

Cheryl Dowd, director, State Authorization Network

Sherri Artz Gilbert, assistant director of operations and member services

Mollie McGill, director, programs and membership

Russell Poulin, director, policy and analysis

Megan Raymond, assistant director, programs and sponsorship

Tanya Spilovoy, director, open policy

Terri Straut, senior research analyst

# WICHE Funders and Supporters

The following agencies, institutions, organizations, and corporations provided grants and/or contracts this past year:

- ACT
- Alaska Division of Behavioral Health
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Psychiatric Institute
- American Psychological Association
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Boston College/National Institutes of Health
- College Board
- Colorado Adult Learning Symposium
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Colorado Office of Behavioral Health
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting
- Community College League of California
- Harris County, Texas, Children's Assessment Center
- Education Commission of the States
- Hawai'i Department of Education
- Hawai'i Department of Health
- Hawai'i Department of Public Safety
- Helmsley Charitable Trusts
- Hewlett Foundation
- Lumina Foundation
- Mental Health Colorado
- Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care
- Montana Addictive and Mental Disorders Division
- Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health
- Oregon Health Authority
- South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- University of Hawai'i System
- University of Texas El Paso
- Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- Washington Student Achievement Council
- Wyoming Division of Behavioral Health

The following sponsors and partners supported various WICHE meetings and initiatives this past year:

- Above the Data
- Academic Search
- Annapolis Coalition on the Behavioral Health Workforce
- Barnes & Noble Education LoudCloud
- Beck Institute
- Blackboard
- Brainfuse
- Carolina Distance Learning
- College Board
- Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
- Drexel University
- ED Map
- iLos Videos
- JBS International
- Learning Objects/A Cengage Company
- MaxKnowledge
- Mediasite
- Milliman
- MindWires
- National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute (NRI)
- National Student Clearinghouse
- Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Pearson
- Realizeit
- Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center
- Samsung
- Schoology
- Soomo Learning
- Stars Training Academy
- TIAA
- University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
- VitalSource
- Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine
- Wiley Education Services

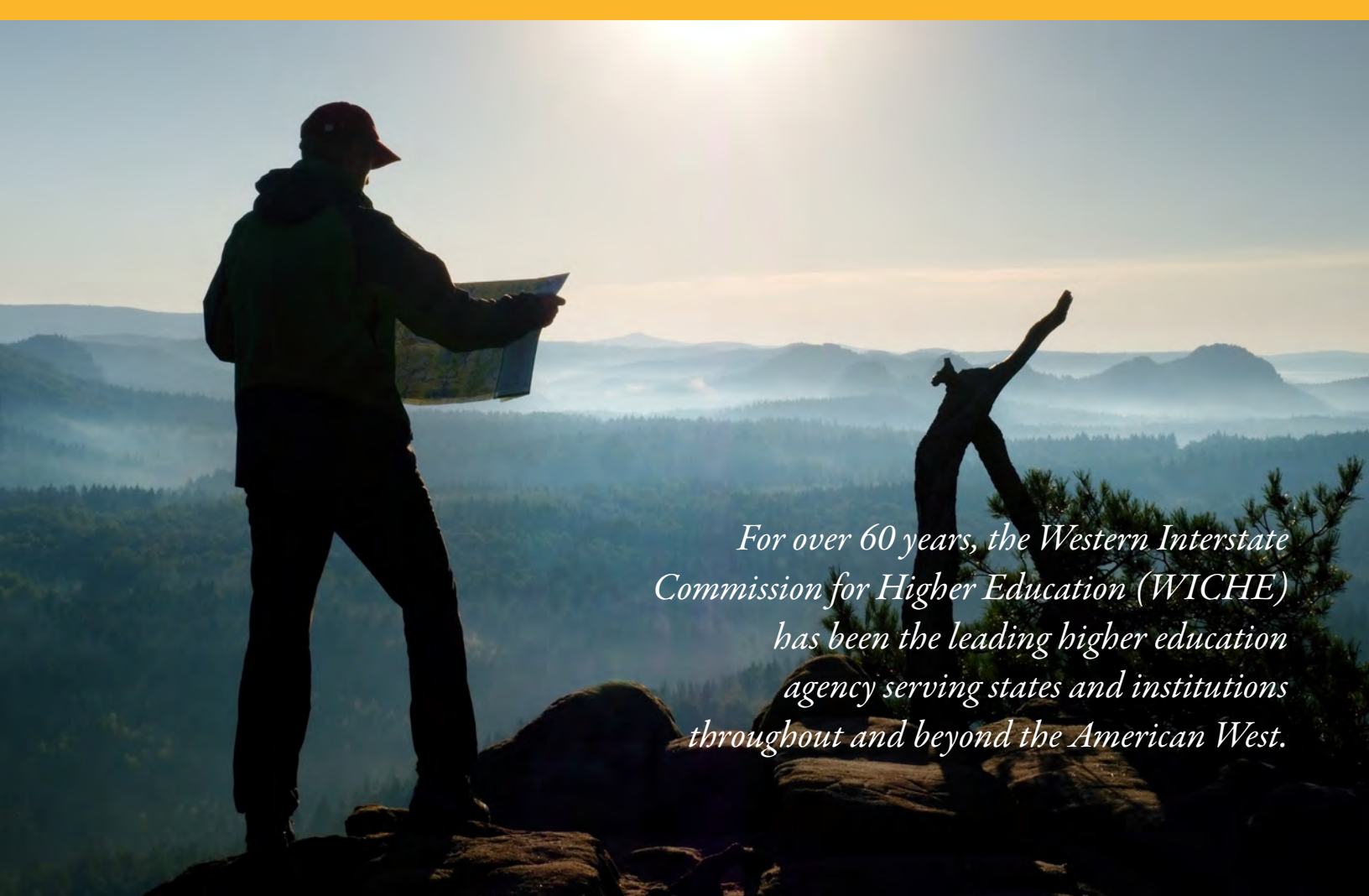








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*For over 60 years, the Western Interstate  
Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)  
has been the leading higher education  
agency serving states and institutions  
throughout and beyond the American West.*