



NewsCap

A bimonthly newsletter from the leading regional agency serving higher education throughout and beyond the American West

\$403 million saved: WICHE tuition-discount programs break impact, enrollment records

More than 42,000 college students are realizing an estimated \$403 million in tuition savings this year through WICHE's three interstate tuition-discount programs, as [detailed in this Feb. 8 news announcement](#).



WICHE's most popular program, the [Western Undergraduate Exchange \(WUE\)](#), saw 40,094 students save \$365.4 million in 2017-18 on associate's or bachelor's degree programs in the U.S. West. It allows students to enroll in one of 160 participating colleges or universities outside their home state and pay no more than 150 percent of that institution's resident-tuition rate.

WICHE's two other tuition-discount programs served over 2,100 students in 2017-18. The [Western Regional Graduate Program \(WRGP\)](#) enabled 1,534 students to pay resident tuition at out-of-state graduate programs, with numbers likely to grow next year due to expanded program-eligibility rules. The [Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\)](#)—in which Western states subsidize tuition for residents pursuing veterinary

medicine, dentistry, and numerous other high-demand health degrees in other states—helped 612 students affordably pursue those degrees and (as 67 percent of students do) return home to fill provider gaps.

The diverse benefits of WICHE's student exchange programs were recognized in recent news features in the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) and by the [Western Oregon University news](#) unit, and in a commentary by Arizona Board of Regents president and WICHE commissioner Eileen Klein. Read the [SEP by the Numbers report here](#), with detailed data and state dashboards on these programs.



"I can't believe how much more affordable the cost to attend WSU has become thanks to WRGP! I've actually been able to pay for my entire first year of school without going into debt. My future seems so much brighter knowing that I won't have to spend the next 10 years of my life after I graduate, paying off student loans. This is how education was meant to be: affordable and accessible."

— Kyrk ('19), Idaho resident, Health and Policy Administration, Washington State U.

WICHE partners with DHS on cybersecurity pilot for N.D. leaders



At the conclusion of cybersecurity preparedness exercises Mike Abbiatti has attended in the past, he got used to hearing a similar refrain from attendees: “This exercise was so important, so wonderful. We’re a bunch of chief information officers and chief technology officers. But my boss doesn’t know about this, doesn’t care about this, won’t support this.”

“My response was, ‘Well, let’s get the bosses together!’” says Abbiatti, WICHE vice president of educational technologies. “And they’d say, ‘We can’t do that.’”

February 7 in Bismarck, N.D., it happened. Presidents and senior leadership from 11 North Dakota colleges and universities gathered for a first-of-its-kind cybersecurity exercise, facilitated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in partnership with the North Dakota University System, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and WICHE.

Nearly 100 senior-level attendees received an up-close view of cyber threats, vulnerabilities, and strategies related to higher education. Attendees worked through detailed scenarios that tested each institution’s preparedness, response impulses, and collaborative leadership.

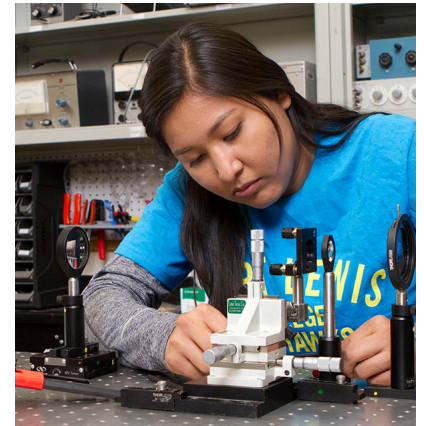
The Leadership Tabletop Exercise for Institutions of Higher Education (LTTX), as it is called, is distinctive because it reflects deep engagement at the highest administrative (rather than solely technical) levels of the implications of cybersecurity preparedness. The event encourages colleges and universities to build partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders to address risks to physical infrastructure, communications, nearby communities, and campus safety.

The LTTX is part of the DHS Office of Academic Engagement’s Campus Resilience Program Tabletop Exercise Series, a collection of tailored DHS events that help colleges and universities test and strengthen their preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

As cybersecurity increases in importance, the exercise will likely be replicated in other states for higher education senior-leadership groups. “There are two types of campuses,” Abbiatti advised cybersecurity exercise attendees: “Those that have been hacked and know about it, and those who have been hacked and *don’t* yet know about it.”

New WICHE initiative to unite, strengthen underserved Native-Serving Institutions

With the support of a \$990,000 Lumina Foundation grant, WICHE is launching a multistate consortium for 26 U.S. nontribal colleges and universities that enroll more than 10 percent American Indians and Alaska Natives. The three-year grant will help Native-Serving Institutions (or NSIs) build networks, tailor strategies to this cohort’s distinctive needs, and speak with a strong and common voice on legislative and policy matters.



Though NSIs collectively serve 14,000 American Indian or Alaska Native students, they “remain invisible in the national dialogue regarding postsecondary attainment—conspicuously absent in policy forums, journal articles and state and federal initiatives,” said Lumina’s Susan Johnson in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. The broader goal of the three-year WICHE initiative, she said, is to improve access to and success in higher education for the 5.2 million Americans who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

“This initiative will give voice and power to a population that is tragically underserved, and to the colleges and universities on the front lines of student-achievement challenges,” said WICHE President Joe Garcia.

WICHE seeks state partners to help close postsecondary attainment gaps

Three Western states will be chosen to participate in a task force, supported by a \$400,000 two-year grant from Lumina Foundation, aimed at increasing higher education credential attainment for underserved populations. Participants will be selected through a [now-active RFP process \(deadline Feb. 28\)](#), with priority given to states in early stages of examining their attainment gaps, and that would most benefit from technical assistance in advancing their efforts.



WICHE will work with selected states to conduct policy and data gap analyses, and then design action plans to close postsecondary attainment gaps tailored to each state's unique context. Common threads from this work will form the basis for recommendations applicable throughout and beyond the WICHE region.

The WICHE task force goals are aligned with Lumina Foundation's Goal 2025, which aims to increase the proportion of American adults with postsecondary credentials to 60 percent by 2025. White and Asian populations nationally now meet this goal: 61 percent of such Americans ages 25 to 64 have an associate's degree or higher. But college education lags considerably for other races/ethnicities, with just 29 percent of blacks, 24 percent of American Indians/Native Alaskans, and 21 percent of Hispanic adults holding such credentials.

What's in store for ed tech in 2018?

Explosive growth in mobile learning, changing dynamics in the online program management industry, and continued regulatory instability: those are among top ed tech trends to watch in 2018, said panelists on a Jan. 18 webcast by the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) that drew 300 registrants. The panel also reviewed the 2017 ed tech landscape and fielded questions on topics from learning analytics to closed captioning.



WICHE welcomes new commissioner from Wash. state

WICHE welcomes Thomas L. "Les" Purce as a member of its governing commission, representing the state of Washington. Purce is president emeritus of The Evergreen State College, from which he retired in 2015 after 17 years in that position. He previously had served in senior administrative positions at Idaho State University and at Washington State University.



WICHE Reading Room

- Colorado is better positioned than most states to advance Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives aimed at reducing the cost of textbooks for college students, according to a December report for legislators by the Colorado OER Council, on which WCET staff are deeply engaged. Surveys show strong public support and growing interest among postsecondary institutions in the adoption of open online teaching and learning materials, noted the report by the OER Council, which is leading efforts to identify policy and budget options. [Read the report](#), and find out more about WCET's OER-focused [Z Initiative](#).
- Aided by WICHE's policy and mental health units, Washington State policymakers have a decidedly clearer picture of unmet and emerging K-16 educational needs, both statewide and for nine intrastate regional segments. As part of a [needs assessment](#), WICHE conducted focus groups, interviews, and an online employer survey to glean perspectives more nuanced than numbers alone can provide.
- The latest [Benchmarks: WICHE Region](#), released in December, presents data on how the West is faring across the board on key higher education metrics including enrollment, attainment, costs, grant aid, and more.
- A recent [WICHE Insights](#) drills down on private high school graduates as a subset of projections from the 9th edition (released Dec. 2016) of the [Knocking at the College Door](#) demographic report.

On the road: Selected recent or upcoming WICHE-led presentations

Interstate Passport staff at the [National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students](#) annual meeting, Feb. 7-9 in Atlanta; the [League for Innovation in the Community College](#) 2018 Innovations Conference, March 18-21 in National Harbor, Md.; and the [American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers](#) annual meeting, March 25-28 in Orlando

Policy & Research staff on WICHE's [Knocking at the College Door](#) report at a meeting of the [Gamma Phi Beta International Council](#), Jan. 26 in Denver; in a webinar for [Kappa Kappa Gamma](#) leaders and volunteers, on Jan. 31; in a podcast for the [Enrollment Management Association](#) for independent K-12 schools; and at four [College Board regional forums](#) in February and March

Save the date!

- Feb. 15, for WCET webcast "[The Promise and Peril of Artificial Intelligence for Teaching and Learning](#)"
- Feb. 28, for WCET webcast "[Postsecondary Institution Data Security/Overview and Requirements](#)"
- April 18-20, for the [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders](#) annual meeting in Seattle
- April 25-27, for the [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) annual meeting in Vancouver, Wash.
- May 7-8, for the spring WICHE Commission meeting in Missoula, Mont.
- June 5-6, for the [WCET Leadership Summit](#) in Newport Beach, Calif.
- Oct. 22-24, for the [WCET 30th Annual Meeting](#) in Portland, Ore.

You heard it from WICHE

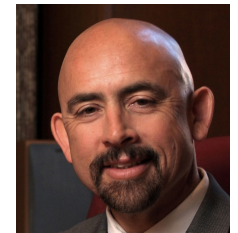
"Through (WICHE's) undergraduate exchange program alone, Arizona's public universities receive \$90 million a year in tuition revenue from students choosing Arizona for their college education. And the state's private institutions benefit, too.



But the real benefits are realized by students themselves—thousands of students from Arizona have attended undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in other Western states through WICHE, saving \$53.1 million in the past five years alone, yielding a 78-fold return on the state's investment."

– WICHE Commissioner Eileen Klein, president of the Arizona Board of Regents, in a recent blog post.

"A solution for one state is not necessarily a solution for all states. But by drilling down on the specifics and nuances of one state's challenges, we can better identify actionable solutions, and work directly across a state's full spectrum of higher education stakeholders to ensure these action plans truly move the needle on college attainment."



– WICHE President Joe Garcia, announcing the [launch of WICHE's new Task Force on Closing Postsecondary Education Attainment Gaps](#)

"Imagine if 5 to 10 percent of students were dropping out due to another health crisis, such as vision? They would immediately get going with vision screenings and assistance for treatment and glasses and you name it. But [about mental health] it's not happening. It's not being talked about at this level."



– Liza Tupa, director of education and research in WICHE's Mental Health unit, about statistics showing 11 to 20 percent of students are diagnosed with mental illness, 64 percent of whom withdraw from school.