



WICHE NewsCap

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education



- ▶ WICHE releases its latest annual survey of tuition and fees in Western states
- ▶ WICHE Chairman Mike Rush chosen to lead South Dakota University System
- ▶ W-SARA participation grows to 11 states and 102 institutions
- ▶ New report focuses on adult degree-completion efforts

New WICHE report provides vital data on the affordability and financing of higher education in the Western states

Tuition and Fees in the West 2014-15 summarizes the results of WICHE's latest annual survey of published tuition and fees at public institutions in the West. Among the key findings are:

- Average resident undergraduate tuition and fees for the academic year 2014-15 at public two-year institutions in the WICHE region (excluding California) increased by 2 percent (\$67) from the previous year, while published prices at public four-year institutions grew by 2.3 percent (\$180). By comparison, nationally, the one-year increase was 3.1 percent for both two-year and four-year institutions.
- Within the WICHE region, there is substantial variation in tuition at four-year institutions, with prices ranging from \$4,152 at University of Montana Western to \$16,918 at the Colorado School of Mines. The statewide average price was lowest in Wyoming, at \$4,646, and highest in Arizona, at \$10,283.
- The gap between high-price states like Arizona and Washington and low-price states like Wyoming and New Mexico has widened considerably over recent years, with the highest tuition and fees now more than double that of tuition and fees in the lowest-price states.
- The West's average tuition rate at two-year institutions, excluding those in California, continues to be virtually the same as the national average. Within the WICHE states, community colleges in California charge the lowest rates for in-district students, at \$1,380, followed by those in New Mexico, at \$1,603. The highest rate was in South Dakota, where the average was \$6,020.

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▶ WICHE Chairman Mike Rush chosen to lead South Dakota University System.

Mike Rush has been named executive director and CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents, which governs the state's six public universities and two special schools. Rush, who was elected WICHE's 2015 chairman last November, has been executive director of the Idaho State Board of Education/ Board of Regents since 2007. He will take over his new post on June 29, succeeding Jack R. Warner, who plans to retire this summer. See the [news release](#) on Rush's appointment.



▶ Number of states participating in W-SARA grows to 11.

Two new states – New Mexico and Wyoming – have signed the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA), joining Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington. Two other states, Hawai'i and Utah, have passed legislation laying the groundwork to sign the agreement. Currently, a total of 102 postsecondary institutions in the W-SARA states are participating in the initiative.



Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education –
State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreement

SARA is a nationwide effort of states committed to making distance-education courses more accessible to students across state lines, and easier for states to regulate – and institutions to participate in – interstate distance education. The initiative is funded by \$3 million in grants from Lumina Foundation, \$200,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and fees from member institutions. Find out more about [W-SARA](#).

► **New WICHE policy brief focuses on strengthening adult degree-completion efforts.** A variety of stakeholders – workforce systems, postsecondary institutions, state and local governments, employers, and community-based organizations – are working to increase college completion among adults with prior postsecondary credits but no degree. How such entities can work together more productively is the focus of an Adult College Completion Network [policy brief](#) that summarizes research on the common characteristics of successful collaborative approaches to difficult problems.

The six-page brief includes a thumbnail sketch of three noteworthy initiatives: a consortium in Georgia to increase degree attainment by adults; a citywide effort in Louisville, KY, to significantly improve adult degree-completion by 2020; and a healthcare collaborative designed to meet workforce needs in the Cincinnati area.

► **Sign up now for WCET’s next workshop on state authorization compliance.** A few spots are still open for WCET’s upcoming workshop for individuals who manage the state authorization of distance education at their institutions. The workshop, to be held July 23-24 at the Marriott City Center Hotel in Denver, CO, will provide detailed, up-to-date information on the complexities of obtaining and maintaining state authorization; interpreting state statutes, regulations, and administrative codes; and organizing and communicating essential data. Registration information and a draft agenda are available [here](#).



► **NANSLO’s work featured in international science weekly.** WICHE’s North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) was profiled recently in ISGTW, an international weekly online publication that covers distributed computing and the research it enables. The [article](#) describes NANSLO as “a forward-thinking startup” whose labs provide remote access to scientific equipment for a growing number of students at 13 community colleges in Colorado and five institutions in four other states – access they wouldn’t have had otherwise.



► **Neil Moisey, John Cech assume chairmanships of academic leadership groups.** In April, Neil Moisey, the Montana University System’s special assistant for academic affairs, became chairman of the Western Academic Leadership Forum, succeeding Laura Woodworth-Ney of Idaho State University. Moisey will serve as chair through April 2016. The Forum provides a venue for academic leaders at bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral



institutions and chief executives and chief academic officers for systems and state governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. Click [here](#) to find out more about the Forum’s history, membership, and initiatives.

The new chair of the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders is John Cech, deputy commissioner of academic and student affairs for the Montana University System. Cech, who will serve through April 2016, succeeds Michael Cartney, president of South Dakota’s Lake Area Technical College. The Alliance provides chief academic leaders of two-year institutions and related system and state agencies with opportunities to share resources and work collaboratively on issues of mutual interest. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Alliance.



► **Save the date: WCET’s 2015 Annual Meeting slated for Nov. 11-13 in Denver.** Registration opens in mid-June for WCET’s 27th Annual Meeting, which will spotlight innovative policies, practices, and ideas in technology-enhanced learning in higher education. The meeting will be held Nov. 11-13 at the Westin Denver Downtown, in the heart of the city’s arts and entertainment district. Visit the [annual meeting website](#) for details about the program, featured speakers, and activities as they become available.



► **Inside Higher Ed booklet spotlights Interstate Passport Initiative.** “Extending the Credential,” a new print-on-demand publication from *Inside Higher Ed*, features an article on the origin and progress of WICHE’s Interstate Passport Initiative. [Click here](#) to download a copy of the booklet, and go to page 29. The booklet is a compilation of articles written by Paul Fain, *Inside Higher Ed*’s news editor, on topics ranging from competency-based education to internships to the evolving role of the transcript and the degree.

The Interstate Passport Initiative is also featured in Chapter 16 of “The Transfer Handbook: Promoting Student Success,” recently published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). [Click here](#) to view the table of contents, introduction, and ordering information.

► **Members of WICHE’s Legislative Advisory Committee will convene in Portland in September.** The 2015 annual meeting of the WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee is slated for Sept. 15-16 in Portland, OR. Information about the meeting will be forthcoming on the [committee’s website](#).

Tuition and Fees *(continued from first page)*

- State appropriations for higher education were up 8.5 percent for the WICHE region as a whole this year, the same rate of increase as from FY 2013 to FY 2014.
- While state support for higher education across the WICHE region generally continued to recover in FY 2014, it still amounts to 13 percent less per student than in FY 2009 and 20 percent less per student than prior to the recession in FY 2008.

The eight-page brief also provides a concise look at policy trends in Western states involving the affordability and financing of higher education – including tuition freezes or caps, performance-based funding, expansion of dual-credit opportunities for high school students, financial aid, and institutional risk-sharing.

WICHE's annual report on tuition and mandatory fees includes a state-by-state and institution-by-institution review of tuition changes from year to year, reaching back a decade. It presents published tuition and fees as averages both unweighted and weighted by full-time equivalent enrollments. Unlike unweighted averages, which treat each institution equally no matter how big or small, enrollment-weighted averages provide a truer estimate of the published price a typical student faces based on enrollment patterns.

The detailed tuition and fee data summarized in the policy brief are available [here](#) in PDF and Excel file form.