



WICHE NewsCap

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education



- ▶ WICHE wins grant for work focused on diversifying the biomedical sciences workforce
- ▶ NANSLO: "A game changer for online science education"
- ▶ New cost-saving options for purchasing hardware, software, and property insurance
- ▶ Nine WICHE commissioners embark on new terms
- ▶ Upcoming WCET webcasts on accessibility issues

▶ New WICHE grant focuses on building a diverse workforce in the biomedical sciences.

The National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) has awarded a two-year, \$499,719 grant to WICHE and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to support the work of the Compact for Faculty Diversity Research Mentoring Institute, led by WICHE's Ken Pepion and SREB's Ansley Abraham. A newly created consortium funded by the National Institutes of Health, the NRMN is designed to enhance the training and professional development of individuals from diverse backgrounds who aspire to careers in biomedical research. The primary focus of the WICHE-SREB initiative will be mentor training as well as mobilizing the extensive cross-disciplinary network of mentors and mentees developed over the 22-year history of the Compact for Faculty Diversity. [Click here](#) for information about the WICHE-SREB initiative and 11 other programs recently awarded NRMN grants.



▶ Video shows why NANSLO is being called "a game changer for online science education."

A 2.43-minute video recently posted on YouTube offers a useful overview of the North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO), which provides remote access to sophisticated scientific equipment for a growing number of students at 18 colleges in five states. Take a look inside the NANSLO host labs in Colorado, Montana, and British Columbia, and hear what students, faculty, and administrators have to say about the benefits of the network.



NANSLO laboratories' flexible operating schedules and online delivery are keys in expanding access to STEM fields for students in the military, working full time, or living in locations distant from a campus. Through NANSLO, students can now enroll in courses lab activities at a time that is convenient for them, including courses with associated lab requirements that may not have been available to them online in the past.

To date, NANSLO has designed and delivered 25 openly licensed lab activities for introductory biology, chemistry, physics and allied health courses with more on the way. Faculty can use these activities, as developed, or can customize them for their curriculum. Over the Internet, students participate in conversations with their lab partners in other locations as they conduct activities in real time and collect real data for their lab reports. For additional information, contact Sue Schmidt at sschmidt@wiche.edu.

▶ **Six WICHE commissioners appointed, three others reappointed.** Commissioners who have recently been newly appointed or reappointed are *Dianne Harrison*, president of California State University, Northridge, reappointed by Gov. Jerry Brown; *David Lassner*, president, University of Hawai'i System, appointed by Gov. David Ige; *Matt Freeman*, executive director of the Idaho State Board of Education, appointed by Gov. Butch Otter; *Vance Farrow*, health-care specialist in the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development, reappointed by Gov. Brian



Dianne Harrison



David Lassner

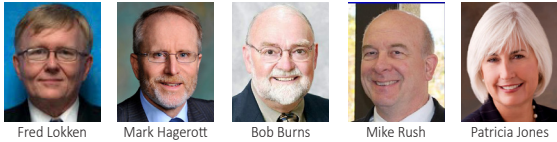


Matt Freeman



Vance Farrow

Sandoval, and *Fred Lokken*, professor, Truckee Meadows Community College, appointed by Gov. Sandoval; *Mark Hagerott*, chancellor of the North Dakota University System, appointed by Gov. Jack Dalrymple; *Bob Burns*, professor emeritus of political science at South Dakota State University, reappointed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard, and *Mike Rush*, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents, appointed by Gov. Daugaard; and *Patricia Jones*, a member of the Utah State Board of Regents and CEO of the Women’s Leadership Institute, appointed by Gov. Gary Herbert.



In other news, *James Johnsen*, a WICHE commissioner since 2012, assumed the presidency of the University of Alaska System on Sept. 1. Johnsen previously was senior vice president of Alaska Communications.



► **Register now for WCET’s 2015 Annual Meeting in Denver.**

“Connected Devices, Connected Colleagues” is the theme of WCET’s 27th Annual Meeting, to be held Nov. 11-13 at the Westin Denver Downtown in the heart of the city’s arts and entertainment district. Among the key items on this year’s agenda are the Internet of Things, adaptive and competency-based learning, the transition from high school to college, and the quality of adjunct teaching faculty. The last time WCET held its annual meeting in Denver, it sold out by October, so reserve your spot by [registering now](#). (The meeting is capped at 450 participants.) Detailed information about sessions, speakers, and activities will be posted on the [annual meeting website](#) as it becomes available.



► **Cost-saving property insurance program available to postsecondary institutions in the WICHE region.**

Participation in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact’s Master Property Program (MPP) offers colleges and universities in the West the benefits of comprehensive property insurance coverage tailored to their specific needs while improving their risk management and asset protection strategies. The program is available to two- and four-year public and private higher education institutions, subject to approval by the MPP Leadership Committee. Current membership includes 150 campuses with total insured values of more than \$106 billion.



MPP has generated \$94.7 million in savings for participating institutions since its inception in 1994 – \$12 million in FY 2014 alone. Costs continue to remain below industry averages due to the program’s volume, asset protection strategies, and customized insurance coverages and related services. The program is currently underwritten by Lexington (AIG) and Zurich, with administration led by Marsh USA Inc. For more information about the program, contact Jere Mock, WICHE

vice president of programs and services, at 303-541-0222, or see the [MPP brochure](#) on our website.

► WCET will offer three webcasts on accessibility issues and best practices during September. Register now for WCET webcasts on “[Video Captioning](#),” on Sept. 10; “[Promoting a Culture of Accessibility for Online Students](#),” on Sept. 24; and “[Accessibility for Edtech Across the Campus](#),” on Sept. 29. The webcasts are free and open to all, but space is limited.



► **Postsecondary institutions’ participation in W-SARA continues to grow.**

The number of postsecondary institutions participating in the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA) has grown to 133, in 11 states – Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. Two other states, Hawai’i and Utah, have passed legislation laying the groundwork to sign the agreement.



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](#).

► **Six additional states will join Interstate Passport Initiative.**

The scope of the WICHE-based Interstate Passport Initiative, the second phase of which is underway in seven Western states, is about to widen. Six new states – two each in the New England, Southern, and Midwestern regions – will be selected later this year to serve as testing grounds for various elements of the Passport that have been designed over the past two years.



The Passport initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, is aimed at developing a new framework for the interstate transfer of lower-division courses that is based on learning outcomes and proficiency criteria, rather than credits and courses. The goal is to improve graduation rates, shorten time to degree, and save students money by eliminating unnecessary repetition of academic work after students transfer.

In the six new states, teams of faculty, registrars, institutional researchers, and academic advisors at 12 two- and four-year institutions will focus on nuts-and-bolts implementation issues, such as the process for notating the Passport on student records; tracking Passport students’ academic progress; and building awareness of the Passport among students, parents, and staff. The teams will document their efforts in case studies to be submitted to the Passport initiative’s leadership. For more information about the Passport, [click here](#).

► **Legislative Advisory Committee to convene this month in Portland, Ore.** The annual meeting of WICHE’s Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) will be held Sept. 15-16 at the Portland Marriott City Center. The agenda includes sessions on accreditation, affordability, higher education financing trends, the needs of students who are veterans or serving in the military, combating sexual assault on college campuses, and reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Additional information is available on the [LAC website](#).

► **Expanded hardware and software offerings available through MHECtech.** WICHE partners with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact on its MHECtech program, which enables colleges and universities, K-12 districts and schools, and state and local governments in the Midwest, South, and West to contain or reduce their costs by taking advantage of MHECtech’s purchasing power.

One new option for eligible entities is Ciena’s wavelength division multiplexing equipment, software, and related services, for which Walker and Associates is the national distributor. Ciena’s 6500 Packet-Optical Platform converges three comprehensive networking layers into a single platform to provide customizable services from the access edge, along the backbone core, and across regional networks. The recently negotiated Walker-MHECtech Master Price Agreement also features value-added services such as custom cable assemblies, kitting, material management, integration, and installation. For additional information on the agreement, visit [MHECtech.org](#).

Institutions in the WICHE region are eligible to purchase computers, software, printers, and peripherals at discounted rates under MHECtech’s contracts with Dell and HP. Other contracts provide preferred pricing on: VMware for virtualization licenses and support, consulting, and training through Arrow Electronics; advisory services for IT challenges through Info Tech Research Group; creative software for design, print, media, and web from Corel Corp.; and CampusCloud services from Campus EAI Consortium, including storage, virtual and machine hosting, and web hosting; and nearly all Oracle products and services, as well as software offered by Novell.

MHECtech contracts also include eIQ Networks, which offers SecureVue®, the industry’s first and only situational awareness platform that provides security and compliance professionals with solutions across all enterprise security information; statistical and analytical software from the SAS Institute; and Parchment, an industry leader in education credentials technology, including electronic transcripts and other student credentials.

The agreements aggregate volume purchases to lower product costs and reduce the time institutions must spend developing and conducting bids. MHEC undertakes the time and expense of the RFP process, and institutions can purchase the goods or services knowing that due diligence in selecting the vendor has already been done. The [MHECtech website](#) and [WICHE’s website](#) provide details on vendors, contracts, and eligibility.