



NewsCap

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



Legislative Advisory Committee spotlights key issues on state higher-ed agendas

"Demographic Change in the West: Choices, Challenges, and Opportunities" was the theme of the annual meeting of [WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee \(LAC\)](#), Sept. 19-20 in Park City, Utah. The program included presentations on high-school graduation projections, financing higher education, affordability, distance education, open educational resources, strategies for serving underserved students, and new and emergent trends of legislative interest (including Promise Programs, Students' Rights, Privacy, Free Speech, Credit Accumulation, Governance, and Cost & Value of Higher Education). You can download the [agenda](#) and [presentations](#).



WICHE welcomes new Colorado commissioner Antwan Jefferson

The newest member of the WICHE Commission is [Antwan Jefferson](#), a clinical assistant professor in the University of Colorado Denver's School of Education and Human Development. A former high school English teacher, Jefferson holds degrees from Morehouse College and Brown University and earned a doctorate in educational leadership and innovation at CU Denver. [Learn more](#) about WICHE's commission.



Projections of High School Graduates • December 2016

New webinars project, assess college-age demographic trends region-by-region

[Hear three recent recordings](#) of webinars that highlighted institutional approach to regional H.S. graduate trends from WICHE's December [2016 Knocking at the College Door](#) report. In webinars co-hosted by WICHE and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, leaders from Northern Arizona

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University and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley described [student success initiatives for growing, diverse populations](#), and the presidents of Northern Michigan University and University of Southern Maine discussed [recruitment challenges and solutions amidst regional population loss](#). The third, co-hosted by the State University of New York's SAIL Institute, highlighted [SUNY's initiative to increase student success](#) as New York and other northeastern states face population decline and diversification.



Learning-technologies maven joins WCET

At Austin Community College (ACC) in Texas, Stacey VanderHeiden Güney led the transformation of a former J.C. Penney mall-store space into a technology-rich environment for learning, training, and community engagement.

"First-generation college students going to a traditional campus might feel intimidated or out of place," she said then about the ACCelerator, the high-tech learning center that was honored with the 2015 Campus Technology Innovators Award for IT Infrastructure & Systems. "Nobody has that feeling about going to the mall, even if you don't have money to spend."

Now at WICHE, she takes on a new challenge: leading an initiative to create a more robust and innovative marketplace for digital learning and courseware in U.S. postsecondary education.

Güney recently joined the [WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies \(WCET\)](#) to direct the Digital Learning Solution Network, which aims to increase demand for tools and practices that demonstrate improved outcomes for underserved students. Last May, WCET was awarded a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to serve as the "backbone" organization for the new network, which Güney will lead while overseeing grantee collaborations, fiduciary management, and other backbone services.

Güney comes to WICHE from Aims Community College in Greeley, Colo., where she was assistant vice president of academic affairs following her role at ACC as director of the ACCelerator.



Maricopa Fidelity Review Team

Helping states upgrade mental health services

With the opening of a new training center in Anchorage, the [Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium](#)—which provides healthcare for 158,000 individuals—is expanding to staff its 170 village clinics with [behavioral health aides](#) certified in the prevention of domestic violence, suicide, and substance abuse. [WICHE's Mental Health Program](#) has partnered with this consortium to develop the [BHA Checklist](#), a state-of-the-art tool for assessing the knowledge, skills, and performance of behavioral health aides.

WICHE's Mental Health Program also recently signed a two-year contract extension under which WICHE will assist Arizona's Maricopa County in evaluating Phoenix-area service providers of Assertive Community Treatment, Supported Employment, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Consumer-Operated Services.

Finally, the Mental Health Program was awarded a \$66,786 contract to serve as a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) data consultant to the Washington Health Care Authority. WICHE program staff will conduct research and provide technical assistance to advise the Health Care Authority on how to meet SAMHSA reporting requirements while maximizing use of existing data and minimizing the burden on behavioral health partners.

Impact and Implications: Projections of Male & Female High School Graduates

According to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's 9th edition of its quadrennial *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, released in December 2016, the overall number of U.S. high school graduates will plateau, then begin to decline, within the next decade. Further, the high school graduate population will continue to diversify, fueled primarily by decreases in the White student population combined with large increases in the number of Hispanic and Asian-Pacific Islander public high school graduates (50 percent more and 30 percent more, respectively) through about 2025. This demographic shift suggests that non-White student populations will be the key source of growth in the number of high school graduates for the foreseeable future; that growth potential is suppressed, however, by their lower-than-average graduation rates.

This brief, a supplement to WICHE's December 2016 report, aims to advance the conversation on these demographic changes and offer additional detail about trends that influence higher education decisionmaking. In this brief, the previously published national, regional, and state race/ethnicity projections are now also disaggregated by student sex. These more-detailed projections further expose the pervasiveness of gaps in graduation rates for minority males. As the nation and many states enter a period of declining numbers of youth, improving high school graduation rates among minority males is critical to increasing overall educational attainment.

Key Takeaways

- Though there are more males than females under age 19, fewer males graduate high school and pursue postsecondary education.
- The lag in male educational attainment is more pronounced among Black and Hispanic students than the other large racial/ethnic groups. Since the Hispanic population is growing faster than the majority White population, this lag has implications for colleges, workforce, income prosperity, and families, especially in the South and West where Hispanic populations are prevalent.
- After decades of constant increases, the numbers of high school graduates—male and female—are projected to begin declining (in the mid-2020s). Policymakers and educators must work to increase graduation rates and overall educational attainment, particularly for males and minorities, and address occupational and pay disparities that many working females encounter despite higher educational attainment.

Reading room

A new WICHE Insights report, *Impact and Implications: Projections of Male and Female High School Graduates*, finds that though there are more males than females under age 19, fewer males earn a diploma and pursue postsecondary education—a gap that is greatest among black and Hispanic students. The report also suggests that more attention must be given to occupational and pay disparities that many working females encounter despite higher educational attainment.

The WICHE-based *Interstate Passport* was referenced in a recent [Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) report](#) on how widely varying credit-transfer policies make earning a college degree more laborious and expensive. Roughly one-third of students transfer to another institution during their college career—in the process losing, on average, 43 percent of their course credits. The report cited the *Passport*, which facilitates block transfer of lower-division general education, as a promising new pathway for students transferring across state lines.

WICHE on the road

- WICHE President Joe Garcia speaks at the 2017 [Accelerating Latino Student Success \(ALASS\) Institute](#), Oct. 5-6 in Washington, D.C. and the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities \(HACU\)](#) annual conference, Oct. 28-30 in San Diego.
- Policy staffers Demi Michelau and Peace Bransberger will present on WICHE's *Knocking at the College Door* report at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' annual meeting Oct. 21-25 in San Diego., and at the College Board Forum on Oct. 25-27 in New York City. They have recently presented at the National Association for College Admission Counseling's (NACAC) 2017 convention, the Montana Postsecondary Educational Opportunities Council's summer conference, and the SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference.
- WICHE's Pat Shea, director of academic leadership initiatives, will present on the *Interstate Passport* at the National Academic Advising Association's annual conference, Oct. 11-14 in St. Louis.; at a Southern Regional Education Board meeting, Oct. 23-24 in Atlanta; and at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Dec. 2-5 in Dallas. In September, *Passport* presentations were made at the annual conferences of NACAC and the Association for General and Liberal Studies.
- Policy staffers Patrick Lane and Sarah Leibrandt presented on WICHE's [Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange \(MLDE\)](#) at the National Center for Education Statistics' annual conference.

Save these dates!

- Oct. 25-27 for [WCET's 29th Annual Meeting](#), at the Westin Downtown Denver. Keynote speaker will be Mike Hess, executive director of the Blind Institute of Technology.
- Nov. 9-10 for the fall WICHE Commission meeting, at the SpringHill Suites Denver Downtown. Speakers include Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper; wvcivil rights attorney Thomas Saenz; Francisco Rodriguez, chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District; and CU Boulder history professor Patty Limerick, chair of the Center of the American West.
- April 18-20, 2018, for the annual meeting of the [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders](#), at the Motif in downtown Seattle.
- April 25-27, 2018, for the annual meeting of the [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#), at the Hilton Vancouver, Wash.
- May 7-8, 2018, for the spring WICHE Commission meeting, in Bozeman, Mont.

You heard it from WICHE



“My greatest hope is that we restate and refine our mission in higher education to be much more focused on student outcomes and less focused on where we’re going to find the next dollar. Failure to do so will mean that the big campuses get bigger, the small campuses get smaller, and diversity at every level will be less instead of more.” – WCET Executive Director Mike Abbiatti in “*Future Forward: The Next Twenty Years of Higher Education*,” a white paper by educational technology firm Blackboard.

“Accreditation is slow and innovation is fast; we are starting to see political and business pressure to find alternatives.” – Russ Poulin, WCET’s director of policy and analysis, in this *Inside Higher Ed* feature on the struggles of online-only institutions to earn accreditation.



WICHE’s leadership

Joseph A. Garcia, president
Michael Abbiatti, vice president for educational technologies and executive director, WCET
John Lopez, special assistant to the president and chief administrative officer, and director, W-SARA

Demarée Michelau, vice president, Policy Analysis and Research
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, vice president, Behavioral Health
Jeremy Simon, director of strategic communications