

MEDIA RELEASE

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Colorado's Lt. Gov. Garcia Selected by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education as its New President

Boulder, CO — The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) today announced that Colorado Lt. Gov. Joseph A. Garcia will become the seventh executive to lead the organization in its 62 years. Garcia will succeed WICHE President David A. Longanecker who plans to retire in July 2016. Garcia currently also serves in the dual role as executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and as the second in command to Gov. John Hickenlooper.



WICHE Chair Michael Rush, executive director and CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents, chaired the organization's search and said Garcia is ideally suited to advance WICHE's mission of ensuring access to education and student success. "Joe is an engaging, thoughtful, and visionary leader who will build on David Longanecker's success in helping Western states tackle some of higher education's most pressing problems. Throughout his career Joe has worked to improve remedial education, enhance the transfer process between two- and four-year campuses, increase underrepresented ethnic minority students' educational success, and create a seamless public education system for Colorado children of all ages." Rush said WICHE will work with Gov. Hickenlooper and CDHE staff to ensure an effective transition as Garcia leaves his elected office.

Before he was elected lieutenant governor, Garcia was president of Colorado State University - Pueblo. During his four-year tenure there he helped overcome financial difficulties and stagnant enrollment and he enhanced the institution's reputation through aggressive marketing and non-traditional solutions. Lt. Gov. Garcia earlier served as president of the second-largest community college in Colorado, Pikes Peak Community College. He also has served as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary's Representative for the Rocky Mountain States; Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies; and was named the first Hispanic partner in the 100-year history of the law firm, Holme Roberts & Owen.

Lt. Gov. Garcia has been actively involved throughout his career as a board member for many non-profit agencies such as the YMCAs of Pueblo, Colorado Springs and Denver; Pikes Peak Legal Aid; the Colorado Springs and Pueblo Economic Development Agencies; The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (where he served as board president); the Pikes Peak Child Nursery Centers Inc.; the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; and numerous other civil rights, educational, and cultural organizations. He earned a business degree from the University of Colorado and a juris doctorate from Harvard Law School.

About WICHE

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education 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 among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life. Its programs – Student Exchange, the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies, Policy Analysis and Research, and Mental Health and several other interstate collaborations – are working to find answers to some of the most critical questions facing higher education today. WICHE's 16 members include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states (the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is the first of the group to participate).