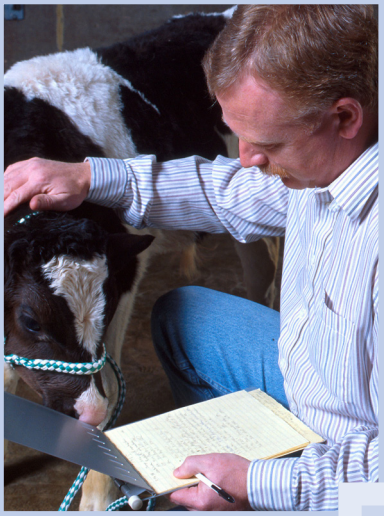

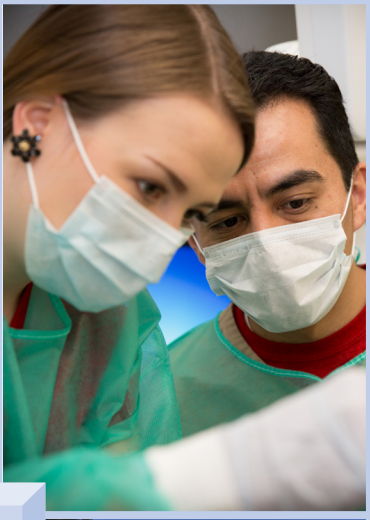
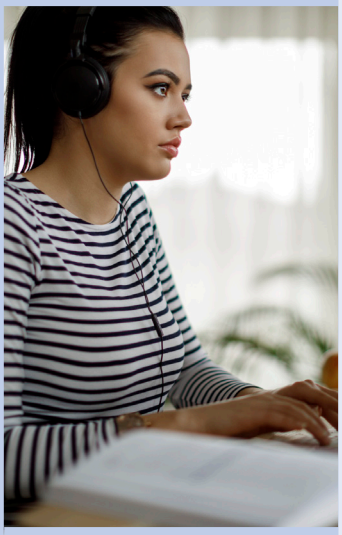

FOCUS AREAS

Access & Success

Accountability

Finance & Affordability

Technology & Innovation

Workforce & Society

WICHE Workplan FY 2021

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

WICHE FY 2021 Workplan

WICHE's Mission

WICHE and its 16 member states and territories work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.

Each May, WICHE's 48-member commission develops and approves the organization's annual Workplan. This Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the WICHE Commission has prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

The WICHE Commission has identified five key focus areas to guide the work of the organization:

- **Finance & Affordability (F/A)**: examining appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels
- **Access & Success (A/S)**: improving students' access to and success in higher education, especially those who are traditionally underserved
- **Workforce & Society (W/S)**: working to ensure the region's postsecondary institutions meet workforce and societal needs
- **Technology & Innovation (T/I)**: developing and supporting innovations in technology and beyond that improve the quality of higher education and reduce costs
- **Accountability (A):** striving to ensure that students receive an education that is valuable to them and that government is receiving a strong return on its investment

WICHE has four operational units—Programs and Services, Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health, and the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)—that implement the Workplan by conceptualizing and managing a vast array of programs, projects, and initiatives, and by developing valuable resources that address the needs of member states and territories. When appropriate, some initiatives also extend beyond the WICHE region. This Workplan is organized by operational unit, which are described below.

- **Programs and Services:** The primary goals of the Programs and Services unit are to broaden student access and success and to foster higher education collaborations that increase institutional effectiveness. Programs and Services manages WICHE's four Student Access Programs and other initiatives that help institutions and students—undergraduate, graduate, and health professional—save money and make good use of available resources. The unit also oversees initiatives that bring together the West's higher education leaders to address common goals and issues, streamline the student transfer process through a new nationwide network of Interstate Passport® institutions, and develop a new cadre of academic administrative leaders. In addition, it helps institutions achieve cost savings through four programs in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the compact that created and administers the programs.
- **Policy Analysis and Research:** The Policy Analysis and Research unit supports better-informed decision-making, principally at the state level, by providing a variety of policy analysis and data resources. The unit leads research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on closing postsecondary attainment gaps, college completion, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development. WICHE staff are useful resources on higher education issues including demographic change, equity in higher education, adult learners,

state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, federal policy, and college completion initiatives. The unit's two publication series, WICHE Insights and Western Policy Exchanges, explore a wide range of significant policy issues. The unit also undertakes major long-term grant-funded projects, collaborates with other regional and national organizations, and provides short-term technical assistance to members.

- **Behavioral Health:** The WICHE Behavioral Health Program seeks to enhance the public systems of care and the workforce that serves people with behavioral health issues and their families. The program supports this mission through partnerships with state behavioral health agencies, federal agencies, advocacy and consumer groups, and higher education institutions. WICHE Behavioral Health activities focus on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state behavioral health agency data analysis, and higher education liaison activities to enhance workforce development.
- **WCET:** The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) was established in 1989 to promote collaboration and information sharing related to educational technologies in higher education. WCET's mission is to accelerate the adoption of effective practices and policies, advancing excellence in technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education. Today, WCET supports over 380 member colleges, universities, state higher education agencies, nonprofits and for-profit companies across the U.S. and Canada, with over 6,000 active users of WCET resources. Dues paid by these members help enable WCET to be effectively a self-supporting unit. WCET's strategic action plan focuses on practice, policy, and advocacy, and fulfills these core functions by leveraging the expertise within the WCET community, supporting action agendas based on member priorities, facilitating information dissemination and professional networking, and delivering responsive excellence to its higher education members.

Importantly, WICHE, an organization founded on the idea of collaboration, prides itself on working in partnership across units to better serve the region. The final section of this Workplan highlights collaborations across WICHE units.

Finally, each section is organized according to the following categories:

- **Current Activities:** WICHE's current work, segmented into:
  - Ongoing Services and Resources: Continuing work supported by the general fund or fees
  - Projects & Initiatives: Continuing (or new) work supported by grants, contracts, or fees
- **New Directions:** Commission-approved projects for which staff is seeking funding
- **Potential Future Projects:** Work that staff is considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for approval); also listed are projects that staff previously considered pursuing but now proposes to remove from the Workplan
- **Completed Projects:** Work that staff finished in FY 2020

To guide commission consideration, projects in the New Directions category are prioritized by relevance to WICHE mission, opportunity, and staff competence. Existing Activities are not given prioritization rankings, since they are initiatives WICHE staff already has committed to undertaking. Potential Future Projects also are not given prioritization rankings, because they are not approved and remain under consideration by the commission.

Programs and Services

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Services and Resources

Continuing work that supports WICHE's mission, supported by the general fund or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Crisis Support	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	TBD	TBD
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
Master Property Program	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB states	.10	MHEC/Marsh carriers, 8 states (AZ, CO, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY), 27 campuses
MHEC Cyber Insurance	F/A; A	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB states	.05	All WICHE members are eligible
MHECare	F/A; A/S	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE states	.05	MHEC/United HealthCare Student Resources, 2 states (AK, CA), 4 institutions
MHECtech	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB states	.15	All WICHE members
Online Course Exchange	A/S; T/I	National	.10	2 consortia serving 25 institutions
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) *	A/S; W/S	Western	1.05	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam; 130+ programs at 60 participating institutions
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; A	Western	.10 and consultants	Forum members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) • Professional Development: 2021 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; A	Western	.45	All WICHE members; 52 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) • Professional Development: 2021 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; A	Western	.45	All WICHE members; 76 institutions, 9 systems

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)*	**A/S**; **W/S**	Western	1.05	All WICHE members; 900+ programs at 60 institutions
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	**A/S**; **W/S**	Western	1.05	All WICHE members; 160 participating institutions
* *Note:* During 2020-21, the Programs and Services unit will expand the marketing of WUE and WRGP to benefit more students and institutions through targeted, state-specific publicity and activities as well as increased outreach to high school counselors and admissions advisers. With the lifting of the WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement (previously there had to be no more than five similar programs in the region excluding health care programs), there has been a significant increase in the number of graduate offerings available as well as some new participating institutions. As of Summer/Fall 2020, WRGP institutions may charge graduate students up to 150% of resident tuition; WRGP institutions must charge one rate for all their WRGP-eligible graduate programs. Our new PSEP database continues to improve administrative functions and enrollment reporting for participating states, institutions, WICHE stakeholders, and staff, along with new public WUE and WRGP Savings Finder interfaces.				

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2021. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

The Academic Leaders Toolkit, jointly funded by the Alliance and Forum, is a peer-reviewed, searchable online repository of decision-making tools contributed by college and university and system-level academic leaders. Tools in a range of categories—such as program evaluation, creation and elimination; faculty recruitment and retention; and learning-outcomes assessment—help academic leaders address a variety of challenges.

The Master Property Program, another MHEC partnership available to WICHE institutions, has saved institutions more than $100 million on comprehensive property insurance coverage over the years. The insurance program now serves 165 two- and four-year campuses nationwide with total insured values of $82 billion, including 27 campuses and centers in eight WICHE-member states. It enables public and nonprofit private institutions to receive coverage at rates below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection.

The MHEC Cyber Insurance Program, in conjunction with Marsh USA Inc., offers institutions access to services including analysis of the cyber threat environment, the significance of vulnerabilities in security controls, and potential financial exposure should breaches occur. It can also help institutions benchmark how much cyber coverage similar institutions and systems are buying.

MHECare, developed by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and available to WICHE institutions, offers institutions and systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process.

A third MHEC partnership, MHECtech, enables institutions to purchase off competitively bid master purchasing agreements for an array of hardware, software, and technology services. Several of the agreements are also available to K-12 districts; state, county, and local governments; and education-related nonprofits. More than 1,600 institutions and other entities in 13 WICHE states benefit from aggregated volume purchases that lowered product cost and saved institutions $6.5 million as well as institutional time.

The Online Course Exchange (OCE) enables students to seamlessly enroll, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in a consortium. Consortia contract with WICHE for use of its robust OCE platform, designed to support the exchange of online course enrollments among multiple institutions to provide more options for students and optimize use of institutional resources.

The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides affordable access for students to 130+ health care professional programs at 60 institutions and in 10 health care fields. In 2019-20, 611 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received $14.6 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefit through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped more than 15,280 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key health care positions.

WICHE's **Student Access Programs** have been upgrading their **administrative databases** (integrating with WICHE's Salesforce customer relationship management system) and public digital interfaces during the past two fiscal years, thanks to reserve funding allocated at the May 2018 Commission meeting. WUE and WRGP databases and Savings Finder public portals launched in August 2018. The PSEP database and interface became operational in fall 2019.

The **Western Academic Leadership Academy** is a yearlong professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for four-year institutions in the West. Academy activities focus on understanding the context of academic leadership, setting academic goals and priorities, and developing specific skill sets required of chief academic officers. Its fifth cohort, nominated by members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum, completed the program in spring 2020. The Academy is funded by registration fees, sponsorships, and Forum support.

The **Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum)** brings together WICHE-region chief academic leaders from four-year institutions and associated systems and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum's annual meeting, themed "Who Really Matters in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education?" was held in April in Juneau, AK. The Forum is funded primarily by membership dues, with additional funding provided by meeting sponsors.

The **Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance)** brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. The Alliance's annual meeting, themed "Redefining College: Becoming the Partner of Choice for Students, Business, and Your Community," was held in March in Albuquerque, NM. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and meeting sponsors.

The **Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)** allows WICHE-region residents to cross state lines yet pay resident tuition rates for more than 900 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 59 participating public universities. In 2019-20, 1,907 students saved an estimated $27.9 million in tuition through WRGP. Until recently, WRGP was available only for a limited number of programs in certain fields, but Western public universities may now make any graduate program eligible at the WRGP tuition rate, increasing the number of students who can benefit from WRGP in the years ahead. Beginning in summer/fall 2020, participating programs will have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150 percent of resident tuition.

The **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)** is WICHE's signature undergraduate discount-tuition program and the nation's largest of its kind, saving 42,515 students an estimated $408.6 million in tuition in 2019-20. One hundred sixty four public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150 percent of resident tuition—instead of full nonresident tuition, which can exceed 300 percent of resident tuition.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	**A/S**; **T/I**	National	Dept. of Education First in the World $2,999,482	2.64 through 9/20 & consultants. General fund support required following end of FITW funding.	32 institutions in 12 WICHE states plus 3 institutions in 3 other states are members; institutions in these and several other states are in the exploration stage
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice	**A/S**	National	Lumina Foundation, $990,000	2.10* (includes .25 of a Policy Analysis and Research staff member) 12/17-11/20 (No cost extension through 3/21)	24 institutions in 7 WICHE states (AK, AZ, CO, MT, NM, UT, WA); 3 other states (MN, OK, NC)

Programs and Services

Interstate Passport® is a national program that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It is the only nationwide network of regionally accredited, nonprofit, public, and private two- and four-year institutions dedicated to the block transfer of general education attainment. It also provides institutions in the network with an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students designed by registrars and institutional researchers in conjunction with the National Student Clearinghouse. The goal of Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students' unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved. WICHE staff provide overall direction and support for this innovative program.

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, an initiative now in its third year, is continuing its focus on identifying and supporting the implementation of culturally relevant high-impact practices among Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) to improve American Indian and Alaska Native students' postsecondary attainment. In addition to the National Summit held in July, three Regional Summits will be convened with the goal of focusing on Native students' postsecondary attainment by identifying and addressing unique regional needs and fostering institutional and tribal collaborations. Efforts continue to assist NASNTIs in understanding strategies campuses have utilized to effectively influence state and federal higher education policy to help this population of students and institutions. A longer-range objective is the creation of a network of Native American-Serving Institutions to mobilize them to enhance their visibility in higher education and public policy arenas.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Commissioner-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization: Relevance (mission-critical) LOW MEDIUM HIGH Opportunity (funding) LOW MEDIUM HIGH Competence (staff/consultants) LOW MEDIUM HIGH

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Seeking additional external funding for the Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice initiative to further assist NASNTIs and sustain an institutional network	**A/S**		National	$750,000	1.75 TBD	Native American-serving nontribal institutions. Tribal colleges, tribal education departments, higher education organizations
Interstate Passport®	**A/S**; **T/I**		National	TBD	TBD TBD	Interstate Passport Network members

Previously considered pursuing but that staff now proposes to remove from the Workplan. **None**

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing and bringing to the commission for approval, along with ideas generated by a survey of commissioners:

The **Alliance Academic Leadership Academy** would identify, develop, and prepare aspiring academic leaders for career advancement and success in progressively more complex administrative roles at community, junior, and technical colleges across the West.

Policy Analysis and Research

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Services and Resources

Continuing work that supports WICHE's mission, supported by the general fund or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:
F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Crisis Support	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	TBD	TBD
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	A	Western	.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles*	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	.20	N/A
Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West	F/A	Western	.025	All WICHE members
Western Policy Exchanges	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.05	N/A
WICHE Insights	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	A/S; T/I; A	Western	.50	NC-SARA; Western SARA signatories; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB
* *Note:* During FY 2020, the Policy Analysis and Research unit will begin using its new database (developed through a dedication of reserves approved by the Commission in FY19) to improve perennial data products including *Tuition and Fees*, *Benchmarks*, and the *Regional Fact Book*. A key focus will be improving their utility for key WICHE constituencies and making them available online in a more contemporary format. These profiles may include on-demand data downloads and visualization to integrate them more directly with written resources such as WICHE Insights, Western Policy Exchanges, and webinars.				

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2021. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

The annual ***Benchmarks: WICHE Region*** report analyzes key higher education metrics and information about the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. This resource helps stakeholders monitor regional changes over time and informs discussion in policy and education communities.

The Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) informs the WICHE Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West. LAC members are appointed by the commission and meet annually. The 2019 LAC Annual Meeting will take place Sept. 12-13, 2019, in Portland, Ore. The 2018 LAC annual meeting, titled "Demographic Change in the West: Choices, Challenges, and Opportunities," was held Sept. 25-26, 2018, in Boise, Idaho.

WICHE's ***Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West*** presents regional and state-by-state data and analysis on policy indicators across a range of topics. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide up-to-date information

for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The Fact Book's downloadable data tables are updated periodically throughout the year.

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West annually provides comprehensive data about the tuition and fee rates published by public higher education institutions in the WICHE region, including changes in tuition and fee rates over the past one-, five- and 10-year periods. In addition to total tuition and fees, the report displays the average mandatory fees for each institution, state, and the region over the past one, five, and 10 years, as well as what proportion of total tuition and fees they represent. The 2018-19 survey was released in November 2018.

The ***WICHE Insights*** publication series consists of periodic briefs (usually published several times a year) that illuminate a higher education policy or research topic, or that supplement a regular WICHE activity or release (such as our annual *Tuition and Fees* or our quadrennial *Knocking at the College Door* report). Planned topics for FY 2021 include: Implications of changes to regional accreditation; Data issues around nondegree credentials; and Policies and Practices to support food and housing security.

Western Policy Exchanges publications are of similar form to *WICHE Insights* briefs, yet cover other topics including legislative activity in the West.

The WICHE Policy Webinar series features WICHE staff, partners, and/or higher education stakeholders periodically hosting digital forums for registrants on selected higher education topics of interest. Anticipated topics for FY 2021 include: Efforts to reengage adults with some college, no degree; State approaches to defining and achieving affordability; Food and housing security.

The WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA) provides a platform for Western states to—upon application and demonstration of specified criteria—enter into reciprocity for the purpose of authorizing individual colleges and universities to provide postsecondary education courses and programs through distance modalities to students living in other states. Four regional SARAs—functioning within the four existing higher education regional interstate compacts—facilitate reciprocity among participating states within their respective regions. The four regional SARAs are connected through an inter-regional agreement to create a nationwide reciprocity framework, known as the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA).

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
WICHE Task Force on Closing Postsecondary Attainment Gaps	**A/S**; **W/S**; **A**	Western	Lumina Foundation, $400,000	1.0 12/17-11/19	Lumina Foundation; AZ, UT, WY
Development of WICHE Data Management Plan	**T/I**; **A**	Western	WICHE Reserves, $40,000	.025 11/19-6/20	WCET
Data for the American Dream	**A/S**; **W/S**; **A**	National	NCHEMS contract; $150,000	.40 2/19-12/20	NCHEMS, Schmidt Futures
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	**T/I**	Western	DHS	.10 7/17-TBD	WCET, DHS, FEMA, SHEEO offices of participant states
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	**A/S**	National	$450,000	.625 in FY21 5/19-5/22	College Board

WICHE Task Force on Closing Postsecondary Attainment Gaps: The goal of this effort is to catalyze state efforts to close attainment gaps so that all students in the West have the credentials they need to contribute to the regional economy. The Task Force is composed of teams from three Western states, each including representatives from higher education, K-12, state government, business and workforce, and local communities. WICHE will work with state teams to conduct state-level policy and practice gap analyses and state-level data gap analyses; host three in-state meetings for each team; and convene three Task Force meetings to facilitate interstate collaboration. The work will result in a set of regional recommendations for closing attainment gaps applicable across a variety of contexts; state-specific action plans tailored to each participating state's context;

and early-stage implementation support for the state action plans.

Development of WICHE Data Management Plan: A component of WICHE's cybersecurity initiative, this work entails assessing WICHE's current policies and practices and development of consistent data practices moving forward to minimize breach vulnerability and ensure compliance by WICHE operational and support units.

Data for the American Dream: WICHE has been contracted by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to consult on a project that seeks to improve the information available on education and training opportunities for low-income, unemployed, and under-employed individuals. This effort draws heavily on WICHE expertise developed through the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange.

Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders: An additional component of the cybersecurity initiative, WICHE is developing partnerships with cyber experts and conducting outreach to WICHE states to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection. This effort also helps fund the work of the WICHE Cyber Fellow.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates: The Policy Analysis and Research unit has produced state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates for almost 40 years and is planning for a new release (WICHE's 10th edition) in 2020, which involves securing financial support and identifying new directions and extensions to the core product.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Commissioner-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization: Relevance (mission-critical)

Opportunity (funding)

Competence (staff/consultants)

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	F/A; A/S		Western/ National	$1 million	1.25 2 years	WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners	A/S; W/S		National	$1.5-2 million	1.75 4 years	TBD
Data with a Purpose	W/S; A		National	$497,475	.50 2 years	Strada Education Network
Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale	A/S; W/S; T/I		Western	$150,000	1.25 1 year	TBD
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	F/A; A/S		Western	$500,000	1.50 2 years	TBD
Western Postsecondary Data Users Network	A/S; W/S; A		Western	$50,000	.50 6 months	Western states
Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho	A/S; A		Western	$385,313	.0825 2 years	Idaho State Board of Education
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	A/S; A		Western	Dependent upon size and scale of effort	.05 Ongoing	Western states
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	A/S; W/S		Western	$1 million	1.5 3 years	WCET
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	F/A; A/S; W/S		Western	$1.2 million	3.0 3 years	TBD

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization: Relevance (mission-critical)

Opportunity (funding)

Competence (staff/consultants)

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network	F/A; A/S		Western	$400,000	2.0 2 years	TBD
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S		Western	$100,000	.25 Single convening	Behavioral Health
A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs	A/S; W/S		Western	$2.5 million	2 3 years	TBD
Improving Credential Information in the West.	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	$50,000	0.1 2 years	MHEC, National Science Foundation, Credential Engine
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	A/S; W/S		Western	$1 million	1.35 3 years	Behavioral Health Program

Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium: The policy unit has worked with WCET and the other three regional compact organizations to develop a proposed project to fund work in each region that would build networks to support the adoption of open educational resources (OER). This project has a national scope by virtue of participation of all regional compacts and would further efforts already undertaken by WCET through its Z Initiative.

Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners: Building on WICHE's Adult College Completion Network (which concluded in 2016) and other work related to adult learners, WICHE proposes to leverage its existing membership and activities to pursue new approaches to achieve four objectives: 1) build the evidence base for effectively serving adult learners, 2) facilitate collaboration among network members, 3) share scalable solutions across the field, and 4) link adult college completion work with the broader equity agenda. WICHE will also seek to partner with states to increase the number of adults with a postsecondary credential of value. To accomplish that goal, the project will identify high-impact supports for adult learners that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for serving adult learners in concert with states, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed to increase adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

Data with a Purpose: Building on WICHE's Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE), Data with a Purpose would seek to build a bridge between data available through the MLDE and decisionmakers to ensure that the data are effectively used to guide policy and improve practice. Specifically, Data with a Purpose would seek to accomplish two tasks: 1) facilitate state research using multistate data to analyze crucial issues related to postsecondary education and employment and 2) translate this research and analysis into actionable information that can be used to improve state and institutional policies.

Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale: WICHE will implement a coordinated awareness-raising effort among state- and system-level postsecondary policymakers focused on recognizing learning through non-traditional forms — such as competency-based education (CBE) and prior learning assessment (PLA). The target audiences for this effort include state policymakers, including state higher education executive officers and agency staff; system-level leaders; state legislators and legislative staff; business and community partners; and other policy influencers.

Policy Paper Series on Affordability: The Policy Analysis and Research Unit will commission a series of papers focused on policy and practice actions to improve postsecondary affordability. The papers (which will include WICHE as a key author) will aim to provide rigorous, actionable research that is accessible to policymakers.

Western Postsecondary Data Users Network: State education and workforce development agencies continue to improve data systems that have the potential to provide critical information to students and their families, policymakers, and institutional leaders. To take full advantage of these systems, states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information that can be used to improve programs and policies. Additionally, state researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to states taking advantage of these data systems include limited opportunities for state postsecondary researchers to engage in professional development; heavy workloads managing existing reporting duties, leaving little time for exploratory analyses; and few chances to network with

colleagues in other states to address common problems. WICHE hopes to address these issues by exploring the need for and, if appropriate, establishing a Western Postsecondary Data Users Network, which would convene key state, system, and institutional education and workforce researchers to address common questions, provide technical assistance, and assist in professional development. This network would aim to ensure that Western policymakers have access to high-quality evidence to develop, assess, and improve education and training policies and programs.

Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho: Western states are implementing many innovative policies and programs to increase access to postsecondary education and improve success rates for those who enroll. Recent examples include expansion of dual and concurrent enrollment offerings, changes to state financial aid programs, and reforms in developmental education requirements. Legislators, governors, and institutional leaders (not to mention students and their families) all want assurances that these programs are both effective and a wise use of limited financial and human resources. The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) offers grants for state agencies to partner with research organizations like WICHE to carry out exploratory research leading to rigorous evaluations. WICHE staff, working with the Idaho State Board of Education, have submitted a proposal to IES to begin this work. The project would have direct and tangible benefits for Idaho but would also benefit other WICHE states. Information about the efficacy of innovative programs is valuable not only to the state or institution that enacts the policy or program, but to others in the West (and across the country) who are looking to improve student outcomes. WICHE will carry out (if funded by IES) an evaluation of Idaho's Advanced Opportunities project or (if not funded) seek other funding opportunities.

Evaluation and Research Partnerships: Western states are implementing many new innovative policies and programs aimed at improving student outcomes. Examples include developmental courses, summer bridge programs, dual and concurrent enrollment, and efforts to decrease "summer melt." The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) and other funders offer grants to support partnerships between education agencies and research entities that produce usable information for states and help advance overall knowledge in the field. WICHE is interested in bolstering state efforts to improve access and success by engaging in partnerships wherever it is useful to those states and where it fits within WICHE's mission. One immediate opportunity is an IES grant program that supports low-cost, short-duration evaluations of education interventions. Partnering with a state agency (or agencies) to carry out such an evaluation would help address state capacity issues, provide actionable information to the participating state, provide evidence for other states to consider in designing education interventions, and potentially provide opportunities to secure additional funding. WICHE will solicit partner agencies to jointly submit proposals to IES and identify other research and evaluation needs for which WICHE can be of assistance.

Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill Building in Rural and Other Areas of Need: This project, which would be a joint effort of the Policy Analysis and Research unit and WCET, would leverage technology to scale work-based learning to rural and other communities of need by providing underserved students with the training they need to succeed in their local economy's high-demand fields and the ability to adapt should demand for certain careers change. Specifically, after conducting a landscape analysis of innovative program models of technology-assisted work-based learning opportunities, WICHE would deploy its robust network of state and postsecondary institutional partners across the region to identify pilot sites for project implementation that involves expanding these models. Rural, low-income areas with identified high-demand industry sectors would be priorities for pilot site selection. The project would convene pilot and mentor sites to share lessons learned and craft implementation plans for the pilot sites. The project would incorporate seed funding for small-scale testing of technology-assisted training opportunities with potential for scale, and would rigorously evaluate the process using longitudinal data to inform larger-scale state policy decisions over time.

COVID-19 Reengagement Network: WICHE will partner with states and postsecondary institutions to develop and implement targeted plans to reengage students who have stopped out (or are considering doing so) because of COVID-19 and its related impacts on school, the economy, and students' lives. The project will identify high-impact supports for returning students that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for reaching and reengaging these students in concert with states, postsecondary systems, postsecondary institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of these efforts.

Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus: Behavioral health issues have a significant impact on the health and well-being of many traditional-aged students. Additionally, they can be a significant barrier to postsecondary success. There are not currently well-accepted policies and practices for providing support systems on campuses. WICHE is well-positioned to begin addressing the issue through its policy and behavioral health units. The initial project will be to host a convening of state policymakers and institutional leaders and practitioners to identify policy and practice gaps, as well as potential solutions.

Policy Paper Series on Affordability: The Policy Analysis and Research Unit will commission a series of papers focused on policy and practice actions to improve postsecondary affordability. The papers (which will include WICHE as a key author) will aim to provide rigorous, actionable research that is accessible to policymakers.

A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs: The goal of this project is to reduce the fiscal and social impact of recidivism on states by helping former inmates, upon release from the correctional system, to be successful individually and to be productive members of society through effective, comprehensive prison education and re-entry programs.

Improving Credential Information in the West: WICHE will partner with MHEC and Credential Engine to share information with Western states and territories about efforts to improve information about the different types of credentials offered. The overall aim would be to work with states and territories – where there is demonstrated need and interest – to evaluate the utility of existing credential information platforms and, if appropriate, identify cost and resource savings through collaboration.

Serving Student Soldiers of the West: Policy and Practice Solutions is a project whose goal is to increase access to and success in higher education for members of the military and their families in the Western region.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for review or approval).

Western Policy Forum: An annual convening designed to advance WICHE's mission by bringing together key postsecondary state, system, and institutional leaders in the Western region to learn about successful strategies around access and success, accountability, finance, workforce, and innovation.

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Higher Education would be a WCET/Policy Analysis and Research partnership that would explore states' role in the oversight of alternative providers in higher education. Activities might include conducting research on the few state efforts that are underway, convening interested key stakeholders to gather input on ways to address issues, identifying ways to avoid duplication of efforts in establishing a regulatory environment, proposing new frameworks, and creating a model or options to help states address challenges.

Exploring Strategies for Improving the Delivery of Remedial and Developmental Education Policies and Practices: A project that would build on emerging practices in the field to help states more effectively and efficiently target remedial education to students, particularly adult learners.

Impact of Federal Policy on State Budgets and Policy: Several pieces of recent or proposed federal legislation, ranging from tax reform to the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, are likely to have an impact on state budgets and higher education policy. WICHE proposes to engage in work that will keep constituents informed and help policymakers align their policy and practice to better serve students in the West.

Hitting the Ground Running: Leveraging Work-Based Learning to Improve Educational Outcomes and Meet Workforce Demands: The goal of this work would be to help states (and perhaps metropolitan areas) facilitate the development of partnerships among institutions and businesses to ensure effective linkages between the workplace and the classroom through co-op/internship programs.

Safer Spaces: Aligning Policy and Practice to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses in the West: WICHE hopes to conduct research examining how contemporary policy approaches to sexual-violence prevention at postsecondary institutions are being executed, with the goal of identifying those that research suggests can best reduce the prevalence of sexual violence.

State Policies to Support Housing and Food Security on Campus: Housing and food security are crucial issues for students across the West (and the United States as a whole). While campus-level supports such as food banks and emergency grants and loans can help, this effort would examine state-level policies that can improve outcomes for students, including better alignment of social services and education programs, improved access to benefit programs, and other approaches.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2020.

Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE): The MLDE project, a follow-up to a successful WICHE pilot project, was aimed at stitching together state longitudinal data systems in order to better track the development of human capital through K-12 and postsecondary education and that capital's deployment in the workforce, while accounting for individual mobility.

University of Hawai'i Analysis of Mobility and Work Patterns: WICHE conducted an analysis of University of Hawai'i graduates who work in other states, and an analysis of Hawai'i high school students who attend universities in other states and their work patterns using data from the MLDE.

Utah Strategic Planning Subcontract: As a partner to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) WICHE staff assisted with regional meetings across Utah. These meetings were in support of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission and its work to develop a strategic plan for Utah Higher Education. WICHE staff helped facilitate meetings and provided feedback to NCHEMS on drafts of the plan.

Recognition of Learning: WICHE was granted funding to partner with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to conduct an environmental scan of policies and practices related to the recognition of prior learning and to evaluate outcomes of students who receive credit for prior learning. This project was jointly funded by Lumina Foundation and Strada Education Network.

Behavioral Health

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:
F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Crisis Support	**F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A**	National	TBD	TBD	TBD
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	**W/S**	Western	$800,000	.25 7/13-6/20	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	**W/S**	Western	$179,500	.05 10/16-6/20*	Alaska Trust
Arizona: Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring	**W/S**	Western	$3,097,101	2.75 6/14-6/20*	State of Arizona
Arizona Mercy Maricopa Training	**W/S**	Western	$826,291	Consultants 1/17-6/20	State of Arizona
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention*	**W/S**	National	$3,787,720	2.75 2/15-2/20	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Program*	**W/S**	Western	$2,995,630	.30 7/13-6/20	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Department of Education Recruitment	**W/S**	Western	$87,295	.75 Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Program	**W/S; A**	Western	$125,000	.5 2.5 Years	State of Idaho
Nevada Psychology Internship Program	**W/S**	Western	$1,120,537	.50 7/14-8/19	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Program	**W/S**	Western	$175,000	.50 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico
Oregon Psychology Internship Program	**W/S**	Western	$196,958	None 4/14-12/19	State of Oregon & APA
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews	**W/S**	Western	$197,000	.25 6/15-6/19	South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium	**W/S**	Western	$150,000	.50 2/18-6/20	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	**W/S**	Western	Varies annually	.20 Ongoing	WICHE member states and territories
Wyoming Needs Assessment	**A/S; W/S; A**	Western	$150,000	.5 6 Months	State of Wyoming

* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2019-20.

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2021. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium (AK-PIC): Interns: WICHE supports the ongoing operations of the AK-PIC for interns and faculty.

Alaska Internship Consortium (AK-PIC): Technical Assistance: WICHE contracted with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to provide technical assistance to the AK-PIC and prepare it to successfully become reaccredited by the American Psychological Association (APA), in the wake of newly revised accreditation standards.

Arizona Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) Fidelity Monitoring: WICHE partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to assist with staffing to support the implementation and fidelity reviews of four EBPs in the Maricopa County public behavioral health system. WICHE supports the Project Lead and two fidelity reviewers. The project was expanded in FY 19 to include fidelity reviews of two EBPs in Northern and Southern Arizona.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a rural veterans suicide-prevention program for rural communities. In FY19, the program included four sites: two in CO, one in MT, and one in NC. In FY 20, the program expanded by four new sites: NH, TX, and an additional site in MT and NC. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country.

Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium (HI-PIC): WICHE assists the state of Hawai'i in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is the establishment of a pipeline to build Hawai'i's behavioral health workforce. Three Hawai'i state agencies—the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the Department of Public Safety—provide funding to support HI-PIC.

Hawai'i Department of Education: Recruitment, Employment, and Facilitation for School-Based Behavioral Health Professionals: The Hawai'i Department of Education continues to contract with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program to provide marketing, recruitment, screening, and referral services for behavioral health professionals to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands.

Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium (ID-PIC): WICHE is in the initial phases of assisting the state of Idaho in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Idaho's behavioral health workforce, especially in rural and underserved areas. The Idaho State Board of Education received funding from the Idaho Legislature in 2018 to support WICHE's assistance in restructuring and expanding an existing unaccredited internship program and pursuing American Psychological Association accreditation. ID-PIC expects to welcome its first cohort of interns in the summer of 2019.

Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium (NV-PIC): WICHE assists the state of Nevada in the development and operation of an ultimately accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Nevada's behavioral health workforce. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health and WICHE provide support and funding for WICHE's ongoing development and operations of the Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium.

New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium (NM-PIC): WICHE is working with partner agencies to develop a doctoral psychology internship consortium for the state of New Mexico. A primary goal of the internship program is to help develop New Mexico's behavioral health workforce in rural and underserved areas. Through funding from the New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division, the WICHE BHP will facilitate program development, and help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards.

Oregon Psychology Internship Program: WICHE will continue to assist the Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Training Program by providing support for the internship website and technical assistance to help the program comply with accreditation standards.

South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews: WICHE is continuing to assist the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health to evaluate the fidelity of the evidence-based practice Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) at community behavioral health clinics in three locations in South Dakota.

Utah Psychology Internship Consortium: WICHE is working with partner agencies to develop a doctoral psychology internship consortium. WICHE will facilitate program development, help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards and assist with the accreditation process.

Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program: Since 1985, WICHE has been managing the WSDSG, an information-sharing network for behavioral-health data and evaluation staff and managers from WICHE states and territories. WICHE manages quarterly conference calls to discuss emerging issues in behavioral health data and system evaluation

and provides ongoing support to WSDSG members. WICHE also organizes an annual meeting with training and presentations for WSDSG members to stay apprised of developments and best practices in the field of behavioral health data and evaluation. Funding is based on an annual membership fee of $6,000.

Wyoming Needs Assessment: Wyoming's Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division, contracted with WICHE to assess the state's behavioral health care system. The assessment included analyzing the state's publicly funded behavioral health service delivery system and data collection, assessing existing gaps in service delivery, and exploring options for a new data system.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Commissioner-approved projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project prioritization: Relevance (mission-critical)

Opportunity (funding)

Competence (staff/consultants)

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC)	A/S; W/S		Western	$1,368,730	1.75 5 years	University of North Dakota
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	A/S; W/S		Western	$974,767	1.75 4 years	JBS International
Montana Zero Suicide	A/S		Western	$69,835	.25 5/19-9/20	State of Montana
Hawai'i Recruitment of Clinical Psychologists	A/S; W/S		Western	$100,000	.25 1 year	State of Hawai'i
Alaska Psychiatric Institute – Privatization Feasibility Study	A/S; W/S		Western	$183,810	.50 2 months	State of Alaska
Building Hope – Summit County Treatment Capacity	A/S; W/S		Western	$29,500	.1 7/19-3/20	Summit County, Colo.

Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC): The MP-MHTTC is a five-year partnership between WICHE and the University of North Dakota to provide comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to mental health providers and other practitioners across a six-state area. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) the newly formed center will specialize in rural and frontier mental health in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): WICHE has partnered with JBS international to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 15 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years.

Montana Zero Suicide. The rate of loss of life caused by suicide in Native American communities in Montana is the highest in the nation. The State of Montana has retained WICHE to assist urban and reservation-based Native American primary care clinics in developing protocols and skills to help prevent suicides in Native American communities. WICHE is assisting in assessing the training needs of up to six primary care clinics and their respective communities and is delivering training on the Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Practices with a focus on societal and clinical issues specific to Native Americans.

Hawai'i Department of Education: Recruitment and Contracting of School-Based Clinical Psychologists: The Hawai'i Department of Education recently contracted with WICHE BHP to recruit and contract with Clinical Psychologists to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands.

Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Privatization Feasibility Study: The State of Alaska contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comprehensive study of the feasibility of privatizing the API, examining both quantitative and qualitative data from API, and

reviewing psychiatric hospitals from across the country that have been privatized to develop potential operational models. The WICHE BHP is partnering with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute (NRI) to provide a comprehensive project team.

Building Hope Summit County Treatment Capacity Project: Through a competitive Request for Proposal process, WICHE was awarded a contract with Building Hope Summit County, a non-profit community initiative creating solutions to Summit County Colorado's mental health care system challenges. WICHE is performing a study of behavioral health treatment capacity in Summit County and developing recommendations to improve both the numbers of providers in the area as well as improve their expertise to best serve its residents.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for review or approval).

Student Wellness and Mental Health: WICHE continues to seek opportunities and funding to partner with the WICHE Policy Analysis and Research office to support and improve college student wellness and mental health, with the goal of improving college completion and degree attainment for all student regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or mental health status.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ): In collaboration with JBS International, WICHE was an awardee for the IDIQ-Domain III-Policy Analysis and Related Projects. Also, in collaboration with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), WICHE was an awardee for the IDIQ-Domain V-Technical Assistance and Training Projects. This will allow WICHE, in collaboration with JBS International and NASMHPD, to respond to Task Order requests under these domains over a five-year period.

Campus Sexual Assault Prevention: Following an exhaustive review of current best practices in programming and policy, WICHE has developed a program to assess all facets of campus sexual violence prevention efforts and provide campus leaders feedback about best practices in campus sexual violence prevention to support Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) in the prevention of sexual assault. WICHE piloted this program at the Northern Marianas College in 2018. WICHE continues to seek additional funding to make these services available to additional IHEs.

State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai'i Department of Health has reached out to WICHE to request another comparative review of early childhood services rates and related professional salaries such as occupational and physical therapies. The EIS wishes to compare Hawai'i rates to those in other, analogous states to ensure competitive pay and thus sufficient workforce.

National Institutes of Health (NIH): WICHE MHP has been approached to provide an update (pending NIH funding decision) to its publication *Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography*. The revision would expand the publication's focus to include substance use and addiction, with special emphasis on opioid addiction in rural and frontier areas of the U.S.

Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; WICHE Rural Psychology Internship Initiative: At the territories' request, WICHE is partnering with Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to explore the feasibility of developing an accreditable psychology internship consortium to serve Guam and CNMI and build the behavioral health workforces there. As has been accomplished in Alaska, Hawai'i, Nevada, and Colorado, WICHE would guide all phases of the development of a psychology internship consortium to both attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals to the territories.

Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC): Development of an NIMH R01 Research Proposal in collaboration with the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). This project will evaluate the behavioral health aid program focusing on efficacy, implementation, and best practices. As behavioral health workforce issues continue to grow in tribal areas, this research has the potential to significantly influence the development of new programs across the west.

Previously considered projects that we propose to remove from the workplan: None at this time.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2019-20.

Alaska Psychiatric Institute Technical Assistance: WICHE provided technical assistance and consultation focused on strategic planning, staffing, and the provision of effective and efficient services.

Beacon Health Rural Consultation: Beacon Health Options is a leading managed behavioral health company, serving 44 million individuals across all 50 states. On behalf of employers, health plans, and government agencies, it manages behavioral health insurance and EAP benefits to ensure robust individual access to behavioral health and addiction services. The WICHE Behavioral Health Program provided technical assistance to Beacon Health to help enhance its effectiveness in providing behavioral healthcare for rural and frontier residents of the Western U.S.

Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Technical Assistance: The WICHE BHP provided an operational review and service needs analysis for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's Wassaja Family Services Agency. The scope of assessment included surveying community needs, assessing department policies, procedures and ongoing operations, and assessing readiness for CARF Accreditation.

Hawai'i State Hospital Review: The Hawai'i Department of Health retained WICHE to provide an external and independent review of the Hawai'I State Hospital's new staffing estimates, the methodology/metrics for estimating and funding patient growth, and a review of a phased-in timeline for moving patients into a new forensics building.

Hawai'i: The Hawai'i Department of Health, Early Interventions Section (EIS) retained the WICHE MHP to analyze differences in reimbursement rates paid by other state EIS agencies across the country for various disciplines (including occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.). The study included a comparative analysis of salaries for various positions involved in EIS services and adjusted the rates and salaries based on regional cost of living differences.

Montana State Hospital (MSH) Staffing Study: WICHE reviewed and analyzed MSH staffing, length of stay, and hospital-bed data as well as registered nursing staff duties and supervision models for direct-care staff, and a comparison of MSH to five similar hospitals on these indicators.

South Dakota Legislative Interim Study: The South Dakota Legislature selected "mental health services in South Dakota" for its 2018 summer study session. To help focus the summer study session, the WICHE BHP worked with the group to provide related background data, answered the committee's ad hoc questions, and provided guidance as it selected mental health issues to focus on supporting and improving in the coming years.

WCET

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Services and Resources

Continuing work that supports WICHE's mission, supported by the general fund or fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Crisis Support	**F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A**	Western	TBD	TBD
Education Technology Policy	**A/S; T/I; A**	U.S.	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting and Leadership Summit	**A/S; T/I**	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Corporate sponsors
WCET Member Service and Support	**A/S; T/I**	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Over 400 member institutions and organizations
WCET Research	**F/A; A/S; T/I**	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, other organizations
WCET Webcast Series	**A/S; T/I**	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic

CURRENT ACTIVITIES
Projects and Initiatives

Continuing (or new) work supported by grants and contracts. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange)	**A/S; T/I**	U.S. and Canada	Membership dues	WCET staff 1/19-	Members
WCET Z Initiative (becoming regional compact OER collaborative)	**A/S; T/I**	U.S.	WIlliam and Flora Hewlett Foundation	1.0 2017-20	Organizations active in OER; WICHE Policy unit. Other regional higher education compacts
Evolving Higher Education Policy Issues	**F/A; A/S; T/I; A**	U.S.	Membership dues	WCET staff 7/20-6/21	Members, WICHE Policy unit
Deployment of Steering Committee Priorities	**F/A; A/S; T/I; A**	U.S.	Membership dues	WCET staff 7/20-6/21	WCET Steering Committee, members
State Authorization Network (SAN)	**A/S; A**	U.S.	SAN member fees	2.25 2011-2021	NC-SARA, 130+ members representing 700+ institutions

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere	**F/A; A/S; T/I**	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	5.0 2017-22	12 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grantees

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2021. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

wcetMIX: In January 2019, WCET launched a new digital platform, wcetMIX, to support communication, collaboration, and resource-sharing among WCET members. Members are invited to opt in to communicate through WCET's popular wcetnews and wcetdiscuss digital forums. Future plans for wcetMIX include connecting members of like interests via communities of practice and the buildout of a library of resources such as institutional policies, ed-tech product RFPs, and other shared assets germane to technology-enhanced learning.

The Z Initiative (Z refers to "Zero Cost") brings together open educational resources (OER) leaders, champions, legislators, state higher education system staff, and educational technologists—with the goal of developing and promoting best practices and policies on adoption, implementation, scalability, and sustainability of OER and zero-cost curricula. The initiative is now partnering with the WICHE Policy unit and the other three regional higher education compacts to promote regional sharing and collaboration on ways to implement, scale, and sustain OER activities through state/system policy, legislation, structures, and fiscal support systems. This work is being funding by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation.

WCET keeps its members informed of evolving federal policy and regulatory developments that may have an impact on higher education and its use of instructional technologies to enhance learning and extend access. WCET has been active in federal issues (including definition of distance education and of "regular and substantive interaction," as well as state authorization) related to federal aid. WCET has also been active in state issues such as oversight of education providers and the cost vs. price of distance education offerings.

WCET's on-going "focus areas" are emerging technologies, institutional success, policy and regulation, and student success. WCET works with its members to produce a variety of deliverables related to each focus area, including guest blogs, interactive webinars, digital content, summits, member discussions, research, recognition of excellence and innovation through its WOW (WCET Outstanding Work) Award, and annual meetings. For 2020, the WCET Steering Committee has selected four topics on which to focus its work in support of member needs. These include:

Accessibility: With the use of educational technologies on- and off-campus, some students require additional assistance to overcome disabilities. Such accommodations also have major benefits for all faculty and students using the technologies. The Steering Committee is exploring the federal accessibility requirements and sharing stories of successful strategies for implementing accessibility solutions.

Contract Cheating: Cheating on exams and assessments has moved beyond a few students helping each other out to an underground industry that preys on unsuspecting students. Some companies have been known to make students believe that the company is endorsed by the institution as a ploy to gain access to exams and to trick students into purchasing their services. The Steering Committee is developing advice for institutions to combat these activities.

Student Services: For online students, support services that can meet their needs at a time when they are needed are essential. There are only pockets of work on behavioral health support for online students and the faculty who serve them. The Steering Committee is gathering lessons learned in serving these students.

Futures of Higher Education: There are many emerging pressures facing higher education and the Steering Committee is helping members understand additional context and how they can be part of the solution for three different issues facing colleges and universities: 1) the coming "enrollment plateau" for traditional-age students, 2) the emergence of new credentials and the resulting competition, and 3) changing elearning technologies and support systems.

The State Authorization Network (SAN) is a service (whose dues and membership are separate of WCET's) for those seeking to comply with state authorization regulations for distance and out-of-state courses and programs. SAN develops resources, provides training on state regulations (especially those not covered by the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement), federal regulations, access to experts, strategies on meeting state requirements, and support for a community of professionals sharing effective practices and latest developments.

Every Learner Everywhere is a network of 12 partner organizations working collaboratively to provide advice, training, and community-vetted resources that support the adoption and implementation of adaptive courseware in gateway or foundational

courses. WCET is an intermediary for this network, which helps higher education institutions use adaptive learning technology to improve teaching and learning with a focus on increasing the success of first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color. Formerly known as the Digital Learning Solution Network, this reconstituted network is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for review or approval).

Focus:

F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER	**F/A**; **A/S**; **T/I**	U.S.	$2.5 million	1.5 2019-2022	MHEC, SREB, NEBHE, Policy Analysis and Research Unit
Licensure Projects that Cross State Lines	**A/S**; **A**	U.S.	TBD	SAN staff TBD	Other regional compacts

Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: WCET proposes to establish a national consortium with the four regional higher education compacts (MHEC, SREB, NEBHE, and WICHE) to identify, share, and support the development of promising practices and policies in state-level OER adoption and implementation. The project will leverage the unique assets of the four compacts, uniting their longstanding networks of policymakers and higher education leaders. The goal is to move OER beyond being solely a promising idea to becoming a widely used and sustainable student-success practice with a robust evidence base. WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit is partnering with WCET on this effort. The proposed timeline is 36 months, and prospective funding partners would be approached including the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Hewlett Foundation is currently funding a planning grant for this work.

Licensure programs that cross state lines: The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) addresses degree programs that cross state lines, but not additional authorizations required of postsecondary programs that lead to professional licensure, such as teacher and nursing licensure. WCET is exploring opportunities for partners and funders to better inform students and to develop such requirements for licensure professions across state lines.

WCET will work with its Steering Committee and Executive Council to implement plans resulting from its nine-month strategy process. WCET has a 31-year successful history of helping colleges and universities to adopt and implement technology-enhanced teaching and learning. Given technology changes, demographic changes, and funding changes, WCET is being proactive in steering possible new directions and member services into the next five to eight years.

WCET is initiating a redesign of its website with a focus on providing resources and services for members-only. The new website will offer more functionality and an improved user experience.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2019.

Annual Meeting, Denver, Colo.

WCET Leadership Summit: The 2020 View of Federal Regulations and the Potential Impact on Higher Education Practice, April 15-16, 2020, Largo, Maryland (a joint summit by WCET and the University of Maryland Global Campus)

SAN Workshops and Conferences: In addition to many virtual events and communications SAN provides to its members, SAN convened several in-person workshops.

Collaborations Across WICHE Units

Focus:
F/A Finance and Affordability **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **T/I** Technology & Innovation **A** Accountability

Project	Focus	Units (**BOLD** = committee jurisdiction)	Activity Category	Details of Collaboration
COVID-19 Crisis Support	**F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A**	**All**	TBD	The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2021. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice	**A/S**	**Programs & Services**, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (grant-funded)	This initiative, under auspices of WICHE's Programs & Services unit, benefits from a .25 FTE Policy Analysis and Research staff member conducting data analysis and research support.
Recognition of Learning	**A/S; W/S; A**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (grant-funded)	WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit is conducting an environmental scan of policies and practices related to recognition of prior learning, an area of high interest and application in WCET technology-enhanced learning cohorts.
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	**T/I**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (DHS-funded)	The work entails interplay between WICHE's cyber fellow (under WCET auspices) and Policy Analysis and Research staff.
Development of WICHE Data Management Plan	**T/I; A**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (reserves-funded)	The work entails interplay between WICHE's cyber fellow (under WCET auspices) and Policy Analysis and Research staff, notably in relation to the latter unit's Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange efforts.
Evolving Higher Education Policy Issues	**A/S; T/I**	WCET, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (variously funded)	Through WCET's Frontiers blog and other avenues, this unit contributes to public discourse on emerging issues on which WICHE has policy and research insights and context. This often leads to collaboration or co-publication in areas that recently have ranged from state authorization of distance learning, to changes in IPEDS outcome measures data with implications for attainment metrics.
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER	**F/A; A/S**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, WCET	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed national consortium would build networks to support adoption of open educational resources, adding WICHE Policy Analysis and Research acumen to existing Z Initiative (OER) efforts under WCET auspices.

Project	Focus	Units (**BOLD** = committee jurisdiction)	Activity Category	Details of Collaboration
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	**A/S**; **W/S**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, Behavioral Health Program	New Directions (seeking funding)	This prospective convening of state policymakers, institutions, and other stakeholders would take advantage of WICHE policy and Behavioral Health Program expertise alike to identify policy and practice gaps related to campus behavioral health services and systems.
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	**A/S**; **W/S**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, WCET	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed project would leverage technology (and WCET expertise) to scale work-based learning to serve communities of need.
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	**A/S**; **W/S**	**Policy Analysis and Research**, Behavioral Health Program	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed project would increase higher education access and success for members of the military and their families, incorporating distinctive behavioral health attributes of these populations.
Shaded rows indicate project is currently funded				

Working for the West