



The bimonthly newsletter from WICHE serving  
Western states, students, and institutions for 65 years

## Michelau appointed new president of WICHE

Dr. Demarée Michelau has been appointed president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, a role she began Dec. 10. Michelau leads WICHE's 65-member staff from WICHE's Boulder, Colo. office and manages WICHE's \$27+ million annual budget.



Dr. Demarée Michelau  
WICHE president

A 16-year WICHE veteran, Michelau brings outstanding higher education and leadership acumen to this role, most recently in her role as WICHE's vice president of policy analysis and research in which she led thought-leadership and production of numerous

higher education initiatives on behalf of state and institutional partners throughout the Western U.S. She has overseen and authored numerous research reports and data analyses—on topics ranging from equity and attainment, to articulation and transfer, to adult learning and workforce development—that provide context and analysis for diverse stakeholders.

Michelau becomes the 8th president in WICHE's 65-year history, and its first woman president. "WICHE is an exceptional organization, and I am honored and thrilled to be named its next president," she says. "Since 1953, WICHE has been a leading voice in higher education, and I look forward to working with the commission, staff, and partners across the country to build on its history of success to create a forward-thinking vision for improving educational opportunities for all residents of the West."

## WICHE Commission elects officers for 2018-19, welcomes five new commissioners

North Dakota State Sen. Ray Holmberg was elected chair of the WICHE Commission at its meeting Nov. 9 in Broomfield, Colo., while Oregon Community College Association Executive Director Camille Preus was elected vice chair.

In this role, Sen. Holmberg will lead WICHE's gubernatorially appointed 48-member commission

of higher education leaders through November 2019—at which time WICHE's vice chair traditionally steps up to serve as chair for the subsequent year. Holmberg succeeds 2017-18 WICHE Commission Chair Clayton Christian, who continues as commissioner and for 2018-19 will serve as one of the WICHE Commission's three principal officers, along with Holmberg and Preus.



Sen. Ray Holmberg  
WICHE Commission chair

Also this fall, WICHE welcomes five new commissioners representing three WICHE states:

- Arizona: Rita H. Cheng, president of Northern Arizona University, and Kathleen H. Goepfing, president and CEO of Midwestern University
- Montana: Laurie Bishop, member of the Montana House of Representatives, and Sheila M. Stearns, former Montana commissioner of higher education
- South Dakota: Paul B. Beran, executive director and CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents

## WICHE to play key technical assistance role on opioid grant

# HRSA

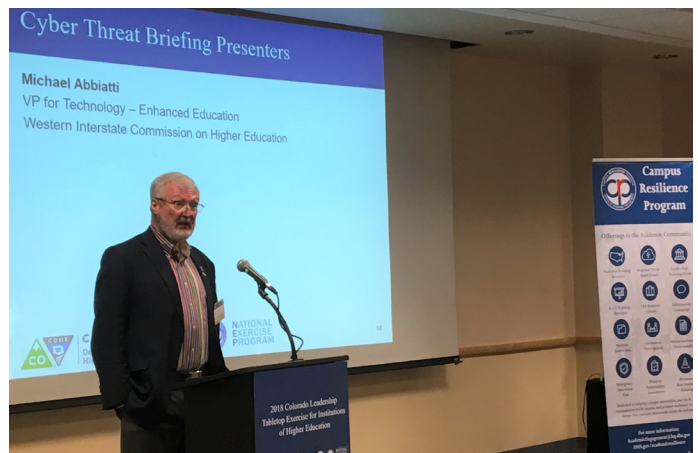
## Health Resources & Services Administration

A four-year, \$19 million grant awarded recently by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration designates the [WICHE Behavioral Health Program](#) as the technical assistance lead for developing opioid-related prevention, treatment, and recovery services in rural areas of Colorado, Indiana, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington.

WICHE will help 16 hospitals, rural organizations, and academic institutions in those states to build cross-sector community partnerships, recruit and train staff, and develop integrated and innovative models of care, including telehealth services. Rural populations have been disproportionately impacted by the opioid epidemic (which claims 116 lives a day nationwide) and face a variety of challenges, including limited access to substance abuse treatment and recovery services.

## Over 100 leaders from 34 Colorado schools take part in 2nd cyberprep exercise

WICHE partnered with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Campus Resilience Program to convene a leadership tabletop cyber-exercise Nov. 30 in Denver to help higher education institutions prepare for cyber threats. Participants worked through a moderated

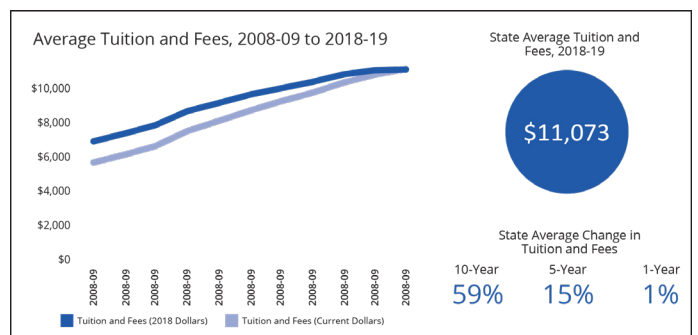


Mike Abbiatti, WICHE vice president for technology-enhanced education

exercise scenario and discussed actionable approaches to directing and bolstering the resilience of their campus communities.

Colorado is only the second state to participate in this state-specific series of exercises, which inaugurated in February in North Dakota and will expand to other states in the coming years. As Mike Abbiatti, WICHE vice president for technology-enhanced education, puts it, "Cyber threats in higher education are based on the fact that all institutions are now digital institutions. Technology development moves much faster than our ability to protect our personal data."

## WICHE Reading Room



- The newly published *Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West 2018-19*, which assembles data from 350-plus WICHE-region institutions, shows a continuing trend of modest annual increases over the past five years. Tuition and fees for resident undergraduates at four-year WICHE-region institutions average \$9,518 in 2018-19 (up 1.6 percent increase from 2017-18), while for in-district students at two-year WICHE-region institutions (excluding California) the average is \$3,870 (up 3.1 percent).

- The [Regional Factbook for Higher Education in the West](#), updated regularly by WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit, features the latest regional and state-specific data reflecting key policy indicators in areas such as demographics, affordability, and finance, as well as student preparation, enrollment, and completion.

## Ed-tech leadership, innovation honored at WCET's annual meeting



Thomas Cavanagh  
University of Central Florida



Heather Nash  
University of Alaska

One of the nation's preeminent postsecondary education-technology gatherings took place Oct. 23-25 as the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) hosted its 30th annual meeting in Portland, Ore. Sessions for the 439 attendees spanned over 40 topics ranging from software procurement, to support for military-affiliated students, to multi-campus course-sharing, to the rapid growth of non-accredited providers serving students in online, blended, and face-to-face modes. See our meeting recap on the WCET Frontiers blog.

At the meeting, Thomas Cavanagh, vice president for digital learning at the University of Central Florida, and Heather Nash, associate director of academic innovations and eLearning at the University of Alaska Anchorage, were honored with two of WCET's primary annual awards: the Richard Jonsen Award and the Sally M. Johnstone Award, named after, respectively, a former WICHE executive director and WCET's founder.

## Western Academic Leadership Academy invites nominations for 2019 cohort

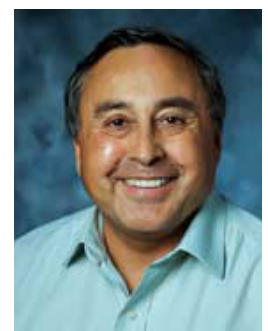


Feb. 15, 2019 is the deadline to nominate candidates for the next cohort of participants in the [Western Academic Leadership Academy](#), a yearlong professional development program for WICHE-region aspiring chief academic officers.

The Academy consists of a three-day seminar in Boulder, Colo., followed by webinars, mentoring, and other activities over the year with guidance from Academy faculty (all sitting or recently retired provosts) and guest experts on fundraising, budgeting, diversity, legislative relations, and other topics. The Academy was launched in 2014 to help expand the pipeline of deans and other leaders prepared to advance to a chief academic officer position. Candidates must hold a position of dean or higher at a Western Academic Leadership Forum member institution. Submit nomination materials to [Pat Shea](#), director of academic leadership initiatives.

## Ken Pepion retires, has championed higher education access

Ken Pepion's leadership at WICHE over 25 years was bookended by two key initiatives. In the mid-1990s, as director of the Compact for Faculty Diversity and Minority Doctoral Scholars programs, he partnered with Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) staff to build what has



Ken Pepion



become the largest national network of minority doctoral candidates aspiring to faculty careers: a network that continues to grow as hundreds of scholars convene each fall at the [Institute for Teaching and Mentoring](#).

In 2000, Pepion, a member of the Blackfeet tribe, left WICHE to serve as executive director of Harvard University's Native American Program, and then served in posts at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and Fort Lewis College. Pepion returned to WICHE in 2017 to lead a [Lumina Foundation-funded initiative](#) aimed at improving postsecondary attainment for American Indian and Alaska Native students. In a [blog post on the ACT Equity in Learning website](#), written shortly before his WICHE retirement in November, he described this work as the capstone of his career. In retirement, Pepion and his wife, Leslyn, plan to enjoy spending time at home in Durango and traveling throughout the West.

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## Midwestern higher-ed compact MHEC welcomes new president

[Susan Heegaard](#), former commissioner/director of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and a senior consultant for Lumina Foundation Strategy Labs, has assumed leadership of the [Midwestern Higher Education Compact \(MHEC\)](#), which serves 12 states in the nation's heartland. She succeeds Larry Isaak, who as MHEC president since 2003 developed several cost-saving initiatives that benefit both MHEC and WICHE member states, including the [Master Property Program](#), [MHECtech](#), [MHECare](#), and a new [cyber insurance program](#).



Susan Heegaard  
new MHEC president

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## On the road: Selected recent and upcoming WICHE-led presentations

- Incoming WICHE President Demi Michelau at the organizational session for [North Dakota's 66th Legislative Assembly](#), Dec. 3 in Bismarck, N.D., and at the [Association of Community College Trustees \(ACCT\) Governance Institute for Student Success](#), Dec. 7 in Chandler, Ariz

- [Interstate Passport](#) staff at the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges](#), Dec. 8-11 in New Orleans, and the annual conference of [Student Veterans of America](#), Jan 3-5 in Orlando

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## Save the date!

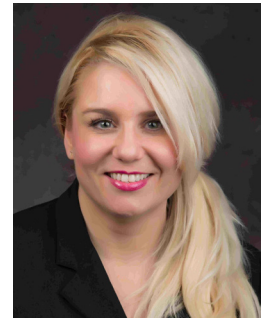
- Jan. 31-Feb. 1, 2019: [Interstate Passport Review Board](#) annual meeting, Boulder, Colo.
- March 6-7: State Authorization Network (SAN) [2019 Back to Basics](#) Workshop, Arlington, Va.
- April 3-5: [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders](#) annual meeting, Salt Lake City
- April 24-26: [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) annual meeting, Boulder, Colo.
- May 20-21: [WICHE Commission](#) biannual meeting, Bismarck, N.D.

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## You heard it from WICHE

*"My big takeaway is that even with a modest state investment, OER can yield really high student cost savings, if it's a good plan and if it's implemented well."*

—Tanya Spilovoy, WCET director of open policy, on a [state auditor's report](#) that showed North Dakota students saved over \$1 million on textbooks after the state spent \$110,000 to help instructors use open educational resources.



*"This is the perfect balance for me. I was able to get distance from home, but be close enough where a drive back home was doable, and save a ton of money."*

—University of Nevada Reno senior Arezo Amerzada, who saves thousands annually on tuition through the Western Undergraduate Exchange, as detailed in this [EdSource feature](#) on WUE in California. Unlike "almost all her friends who stayed in California," Amerzada is set to graduate this spring on time, four years after she started.

