



WICHE

Partnering for Over Six Decades

WICHE  ACCESS • COLLABORATION • INNOVATION

The **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education** (WICHE) is a 16-member commission working to boost access to higher education for students in the West and, as importantly, to ensure their success. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among its members and their institutions, **WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.** Our staff is working to find answers to some of the most critical questions facing higher education today. WICHE is the only organization in the West that **focuses exclusively on higher education issues**, from finance, innovation, workforce issues, and accountability to access and success.

The WICHE Commission's 16 members include 15 Western states – listed below – and the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states (of which the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam are currently participating). Members pay annual dues – \$149,000 for FY 2018 – which cover about a third of WICHE's budget, supporting our core programs. Grants from foundations and corporations, federal support, and other **external funding leverage state investments by more than a two-to-one ratio**, maximizing the return on taxpayer dollars.

WICHE's Student Access & Related Programs

Our **Student Access Programs** provide students with access to a broad range of out-of-state higher education options, along with significant tuition savings. More than 42,000 students are currently enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs outside their home states through SEP in 2017-18. States benefit as well: their institutions can avoid the unnecessary duplication of programs and devote their resources to improving their educational offerings to meet critical workforce needs. In WICHE's **Western Undergraduate Exchange** (WUE), students pay 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, substantially less than standard nonresident tuition. More than 40,000 students enrolled in 2017-18, saving more than \$365.4 million in tuition. Through our **Professional Student Exchange Program** (PSEP), some 15,800 professionals, most in healthcare, have received home state support when enrolled in programs in another Western

state. The majority of PSEP students return to their home states to practice their careers. In 2017-18, 612 students enrolled in the program, which offers 10 fields of professional education. In addition, more than 1,530 students enrolled in 435 distinctive graduate programs at 60 institutions through our **Western Regional Graduate Program** (WRGP); these students paid in-state tuition, saving more than \$24 million in 2017-18.

WICHE's **Interstate Passport** is a program that facilitates block transfer of lower-division general education based on learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It includes learning outcomes for nine knowledge and skill areas developed by faculty at institutions in multiple states as well as an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students designed by registrars and institutional researchers. The goal of the Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students' unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved.

Policy & Information Resources

The **Policy Analysis and Research** unit offers a variety of policy and information resources to support better informed decision making, principally at the state level. The unit is involved in a number of research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on college completion, postsecondary attainment gaps and equity, adult learners, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development. WICHE staff serves as a useful resource on many higher education issues, including state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, common academic standards, and various college completion initiatives. The unit's publication series, including *WICHE Insights* and *Western Policy Exchanges*, explore a wide range of significant policy issues. In-depth works such as *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, and the *Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West* are also key resources for constituents. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide relevant and up-to-date information for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The *Regional Fact Book*, in the form of downloadable data tables are updated periodically throughout the year, as new data becomes available, presents

regional and state-by-state data and analyses on 33 policy indicators across a range of topics. The annually updated *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* provides the latest regional analysis of key higher education metrics and provides information about the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. This year's series of data tables and graphics serves as a tool to monitor the region's change over time and inform discussion in policy and education communities. The Policy Publications Clearinghouse is WICHE's online searchable database of publications, reports, and briefs related to higher education. It provides state and national policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and education consumers with a resource on key issue areas related to access and success in higher education and includes an electronic alert distribution list to keep subscribers current on important updates. 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.

In FY 2017, the [Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange \(MLDE\)](#) continued its expansion from its pilot phase. This effort creates linkages between state education and employment data systems to provide more-complete information to policymakers, students and their families, and other key education and economic development stakeholders. Currently, the MLDE is expanding from the four states that participated in the pilot project to include at least 10 states from across the country. The MLDE stands as one of the most ambitious efforts currently underway to provide a sustainable tool for states and institutions to gather relevant information about how education and economic and workforce development are linked. It has ensured that WICHE staff is deeply engaged in national conversations about the data infrastructure for postsecondary education and workforce development. The WICHE Commissioners created the [Legislative Advisory Committee \(LAC\)](#) in 1995 to inform the Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education; provide input on WICHE initiatives; and advise staff on program considerations related to WICHE's policy workshops. Today, the LAC serves these purposes and also works to strengthen state policymaking in higher education in the West by engaging legislators who are appointed by the WICHE Commission in the discussion of relevant higher education issues and by seeking their input on strategies for interstate collaboration.

What other resources does WICHE provide?

The [WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies](#) (WCET) is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET is widely recognized as an informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organization regarding the role of technology and innovation in higher education, and includes more than 350 institutions, state and systemwide higher education agencies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in nearly all U.S. states and many Canadian

provinces. WCET members have access to trusted information on emerging trends, policies, and exemplars of successful learning technology innovation in practice. Key WCET activities include an annual meeting, leadership summits, national webcasts, the popular *Frontiers* blog, issue briefs, and email list-based discussions among members. Major topics of interest to the WCET membership include student and faculty success, the Internet of Things, managing e-learning, emerging technologies, broadband and learning innovation, and evolving policy issues.

A nucleus for researching mental health policy and a provider of technical assistance in such areas as service innovation, system reform, workforce development, program evaluation, and other areas, WICHE's [Mental Health Program](#) is another well-used resource. The program works with the public mental health systems of the West, higher education, mental health practitioners and administrators, and consumers and family members to improve training in mental health, expand public mental health resources, and provide research and information.

[State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement](#) (SARA). SARA is a voluntary, nationwide initiative of states that makes distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and makes it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The initiative is administered by the country's four regional higher education compacts: the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) – and overseen by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states, and better resolution of student complaints.

[Regional Academic Leadership Initiatives](#). The members of the [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) (the Forum), whose official representatives are the chief academic leaders of the four-year institutions and their related system and state agencies, address regional higher education issues and engage in resource-sharing, while the [Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders](#) (the Alliance) brings academic leaders of community colleges and technical schools and systems together with state governing and coordinating boards associated with two-year institutions to exchange ideas and information, share resources, and collaborate on regional initiatives.

The [Master Property Program \(MPP\)](#), with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), helps institutions reduce insurance premiums and improve coverage. The MPP includes more than 160 campuses with total insured values of over \$93.4 billion. WICHE is also partnering with MHEC to offer

MHECare, providing vetted, competitively priced health insurance for students. In a third collaboration with MHEC, WICHE extends the benefits of **MHECtech**, a cost-saving technology purchasing program, to institutions in the West.

WICHE Commission & Staff

The WICHE Commission includes three gubernatorial selected representatives from each member: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, the U.S. Pacific territories and freely associated states, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Members work collaboratively to provide educational access and excellence for all citizens.

WICHE and its staff are headquartered in Boulder, Colo., and operate out of the State Higher Education Policy Center, which WICHE owns with the State Higher Education Executive Officers association and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. Staff leadership includes:

- David Longanecker**, president
- Michael Abbiatti**, vice president for educational technologies and executive director, WCET
- John Lopez**, special assistant to the president and chief administrative officer, and director, W-SARA
- Demarée Michelau**, vice president, policy analysis and research
- Jere Mock**, vice president, programs and services
- Dennis Mohatt**, vice president, behavioral health
- Jeremy Simon**, director of strategic communications

How can I find out more about WICHE?

Visit our website at wiche.edu or contact 303.541.0200.

July 2018

The Commission as of July 2018

Alaska

Susan Anderson, president/CEO,
The CIRI Foundation, Anchorage
Stephanie Butler, executive director,
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary
Education, Juneau
James Johnsen, president, University of
Alaska System, Fairbanks

Arizona

Chris Bustamante, president, Rio Salado
College, Tempe
Eileen Klein, Arizona state treasurer,
Phoenix
Appointment pending

California

Christopher Cabaldon, president, Linked
Learning Alliance, and mayor, West
Sacramento
Dianne Harrison, president, California
State University, Northridge
Francisco Rodriguez, chancellor, Los
Angeles Community College District,
Los Angeles

Colorado

Antwan Jefferson, clinical assistant
professor, University of Colorado Denver
Two appointments are pending.

Hawai'i

David Lassner, president, University of
Hawai'i System, and interim chancellor,
University of Hawai'i at Manoa,
Honolulu
Carol Mon Lee, attorney, retired associate
dean, University of Hawai'i, Richardson
School of Law, Honolulu
Colleen Sathre, vice president emeritus,
University of Hawai'i, Honolulu

Idaho

Rick Aman, inaugural president,
College of Eastern Idaho, Idaho Falls
Matt Freeman, executive director, Office
of the State Board of Education, Boise
Julie VanOrden, state representative,
Pingree

Montana

Clayton Christian (WICHE chair),
commissioner of higher education,
Helena
Pat Williams, former U.S. congressman,
Missoula
Franke Wilmer, professor, Montana State
University

Nevada

Gillian Barclay, Nevada Governor's Office
of Economic Development, Las Vegas
Chester Burton, chief financial officer,
Nevada System of Higher Education,
Reno
Fred Lokken, professor, Truckee Meadows
Community College, Reno

New Mexico

Barbara Damron, cabinet secretary, New
Mexico Higher Education Department,
Santa Fe
Mark Moores, state senator, Albuquerque
Patricia Sullivan (WICHE chair 2017),
associate dean, engineering, New
Mexico State University, Las Cruces

North Dakota

Nick Hacker, president, North Dakota
Guaranty and Title Co, Bismarck
Mark Hagerott, chancellor, North Dakota
University System, Bismarck
Ray Holmberg (WICHE vice chair), state
senator, Grand Forks

Oregon

Ben Cannon, executive director, Oregon
Higher Education Coordinating
Commission, Salem
Camille Preus, president, Blue Mountain
Community College, Pendleton
Hilda Rosselli, director of college and
career readiness, Chief Education Office,
Salem

South Dakota

Robert Burns, distinguished professor
emeritus and dean emeritus, South
Dakota State University, Brookings
James Hansen, former regent, South
Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre
Michael Rush, former executive director,
South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States

Carmen Fernandez, president, Northern
Marianas College, Saipan, CNMI
Jude Hofschneider, senator, Tinian, CNMI
Vincent Leon Guerrero, special assistant,
climate change and education, Office of
the Governor of Guam, Hagatña, Guam

Utah

David Buhler, commissioner, Utah System
of Higher Education, Salt Lake City
Patricia Jones, CEO, Women's Leadership
Institute and member, Utah Board of
Regents, Salt Lake City
Peter Knudson, state senator, Brigham
City

Washington

Don Bennett, deputy director, Washington
Student Achievement Council, Olympia
Gerry Pollet, state representative, Seattle
Thomas L. (Les) Purce, former president,
The Evergreen State College, Olympia

Wyoming

Fred Baldwin, senator, Wyoming State
Senate, Kemmerer
Karla Leach, president, Western Wyoming
Community College, Rock Springs
Laurie Nichols, president, University of
Wyoming, Laramie



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