



WICHE NewsCap



Colorado State Capitol; Colorado Visitor and Convention Bureau

- ▶ Redesigned WICHE website and latest annual report
- ▶ Interstate Passport Initiative strengthens students' transfer options
- ▶ W-SARA state membership expands
- ▶ New reports on cross-state data sharing, equity focused policies and practices, and competency-based education
- ▶ WICHE accepting nominations for new, unique graduate programs

▶ **Check out the new look and feel of WICHE's website.** WICHE has revamped its website to provide improved access to a range of informational resources. The new layout was designed with simplicity, ease of use, and accessibility in mind. WICHE.edu is now a responsive website that will display on a variety of mobile devices. We hope you enjoy it. Please feel free to give us feedback by contacting John Fellers, WICHE web design manager, at jfellers@wiche.edu.

▶ **Two foundations jointly support next phase of WICHE'S Passport Initiative.** WICHE has been awarded grants totaling \$2.8 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and from Lumina Foundation to complete development of the Interstate Passport, the new transfer framework that seeks to improve graduation rates, shorten time to degree, and save students money.



The Passport is being rolled out in phases. Phase I, which saw the development of Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and transfer-level proficiency criteria in three lower-division general education content areas (oral and written communication and quantitative literacy), concluded in April 2014. In Phase II, faculty will work together to define the PLOs and transfer-level proficiency criteria for the remaining six lower-division content areas: creative arts, intercultural knowledge (social science), natural and physical sciences, information literacy, critical thinking and teamwork/problem solving. A total of 22 two- and four-year institutions from seven states (California, Hawai'i, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming) in the WICHE region are expected to participate initially.

When Phase II is complete, it will encompass all lower-division general education content areas, simplifying the transfer process for many students, and be ripe for expansion beyond the WICHE region. Up to 12 other institutions in six new states will begin participating in year two of the project. Other work includes involving the registrars and institutional researchers from the participating institutions in

revising and expanding the Passport's student verification and academic progress tracking systems. Also, staff and consultants will author a business plan for sustainability and a data management plan to prepare the Passport for nationwide deployment at the conclusion of the two-year project.

▶ **Two new WICHE reports shed light on the potential of sharing education and employment data across states.** Cross-state, cross-sector exchange of individual-level longitudinal data can provide policymakers with a clearer picture of the mobility of students and graduates, the relationship between earnings and schooling, and how to address current and future workforce needs.

Those are among the major findings of a WICHE pilot project in which four states – Hawai'i, Idaho, Oregon and Washington – exchanged information captured by the K-12, postsecondary education and workforce sectors. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project was aimed at determining whether and how states could share such information, while protecting individual confidentiality and data security. The project yielded two reports, one of which, "Beyond Borders: Understanding the

Development and Mobility of Human Capital in an Age of Data-Driven Accountability,” focuses on the process of making data sharing politically and logistically possible. To download the report, go to www.wiche.edu/pub/17003. The other report, “A Glimpse Beyond State Lines: Student Outcomes from WICHE’s Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (MLDE) Pilot Project,” examines how data sharing provided policymakers in the four pilot states with improved information about participation in postsecondary education, degree completion, employment and geographic mobility. It is available at www.wiche.edu/pub/17002. WICHE will now focus on expanding the data exchange by bringing in additional states (including some outside of the WICHE region) and continuing to provide state policymakers with enhanced information to foster the development of human capital within their states. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently provided WICHE with a second round of funding to begin this expansion, which will improve the reach and utility of the MLDE.

► **Number of Western states participating in the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement continues to grow.**

Montana has become the sixth state to sign the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA), joining Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada and Washington. Five other states (Arizona, Hawai’i, Oregon, South Dakota and Utah) have passed legislation laying the groundwork to sign the agreement. Currently, 26 postsecondary institutions in the W-SARA states are participating in the initiative.



SARA is a nationwide effort of states committed to making distance-education courses more accessible to students across state lines, and easier for states to regulate – and institutions to participate in – interstate distance education. The initiative is funded by \$3 million in grants from Lumina Foundation. To find out more about W-SARA, go to <http://www.wiche.edu/sara>.

► **WICHE’s annual report for FY 2014 now available.** A report available at <http://www.wiche.edu/pub/western-interstate-commission-higher-education-2014-annual-report> recaps WICHE’s work during fiscal year 2014 to expand access to higher education, foster student success, create and sustain institutional and state collaborations and innovations, and promote sound public policy.

► **WCET’s Russ Poulin Receives Top Presidents’ Forum Award.** On Oct. 23 Russ Poulin, WCET’s interim co-executive director, became the second recipient ever to receive the “Champions of E-Learning Award – Heavy Lifter Award” during the Presidents’ Forum annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Initiated in 2013, the forum’s award recognizes individuals who have made substantial contributions to the advancement of technology mediated distance/online



learning that have enhanced academic integrity and access to postsecondary learning opportunities for underserved learners. The first recipient was U.S. Congressman Jared Polis for his leadership in founding the Congressional E-Learning Caucus and for advancing the recognition of online learning as a catalyst for addressing national goals for increased degree attainment. Poulin began his career as director of distance education activities for the North Dakota University System, and later was an editorial columnist and distance education planner and consultant, before joining the WCET staff at WICHE. He currently organizes information-sharing activities among WCET’s members, leads a national network (SAN – State Authorization Network) that formulates responses and compliance strategies to state and federal distance education regulations, and coordinates WCET’s efforts to research options for the management of online learning. Poulin also played a significant leadership role as a member of the original SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement) drafting team working with the staff of the Presidents’ Forum and the Council of State Governments, as well as supporting the current efforts of NC-SARA, WICHE, and the three other regional compacts, to implement SARA across the nation.

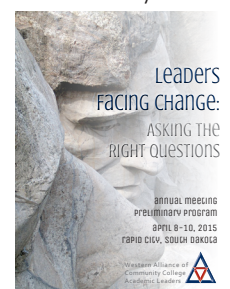
► **Mark your calendar for WCET Annual Meeting November 19-21 in Portland, OR.**

Postsecondary education leaders in eLearning will gather in Portland, OR, Nov. 19-21 for WCET’s 27th Annual Meeting. Featured speakers include Nancy Zimpher, chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY), and Anya Kamenetz, National Public Radio’s lead education blogger and author of *DIY U: Edupunks, Edupreneurs and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education*. The program includes sessions on state authorization, accessibility, student success, student identity authentication and models of statewide collaboration for eLearning. To register and to browse the program, go to <http://wctconference.wiche.edu/program>.



► **Annual meeting of community college academic leaders slated for April 2015.**

The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (the Alliance) will hold its next annual meeting April 8-10, 2015, in Rapid City, SD. Rob Johnstone, president of the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, will kick off the meeting, themed “Leaders Facing Change: Asking the Right Questions.” The program features sessions on open educational resources, competency-based education, new approaches to developmental education, prior learning assessment, and other hot topics.



A highlight of the meeting will be a dinner at Mount Rushmore on Thursday evening, with featured speaker Dr. Marni Baker Stein, chief innovation officer at the University of Texas System’s Institute for Transformational Learning. The West’s top academic leaders of the two-year sector are represented in the Alliance’s membership of 87. For more information, go to www.wiche.edu/alliance.

► **Cost-saving purchasing options available to postsecondary institutions in the WICHE region.** Through a collaborative agreement with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact's MHECtech program, colleges and universities in the WICHE region are eligible for discounts on computers from Dell, Oracle and ASI Computer Systems; printers and peripherals from Dell and Xerox; and data networking offered by Juniper Networking.

Also available is preferred pricing on products including VMware for virtualization licenses, and support, consulting and training through Arrow Enterprise Computing Solutions; advisory services offered by Info Tech Research Group; creative software for design, print, media and web from Corel Corp.; and CampusCloud services from Campus EAI Consortium, including storage, virtual and machine hosting, and web hosting. MHECtech also has contracts with eIQ, which offers SecureVue®, a situational awareness platform that provides solutions across all enterprise security information, and Parchment, an industry leader in education credentials technology, including electronic transcripts.

MHECtech facilitates aggregation of volume purchases to lower product costs and reduce the time institutions must spend developing and conducting bids themselves. Information about eligibility, vendors, contracts, price lists and discount schedules is available at www.mhectech.org and www.wiche.edu/costSavingPurchasing.

► **WICHE aims to expand Western Regional Graduate Program (WRPG).** Graduate deans and provosts at public institutions in the WICHE region have been invited to submit nominations for new, high-quality graduate programs in healthcare and other on-the-rise sectors. The deadline for nominations is Friday, Nov. 21. Of particular interest to WICHE are programs in microtechnology and nanotechnology; green building and building energy conservation; emerging media and communications; biotechnology and bioinformatics; computer and cyber security; alternative energy technology and sustainability; geospatial technology; market research, data mining, data science and analytics; homeland security and emergency and disaster management; and elder care specialists.

WRPG allows master's, graduate certificate and doctoral students who are residents of the 15 participating states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to enroll in some 350 high-quality programs at 58 participating institutions on a resident tuition basis. In fall 2013, 1,133 students enrolled through WRPG and saved an estimated \$15.9 million in tuition. Enrollments continue to increase, and a growing number of programs are now offered fully or partially online.

Participating programs have found WRPG to be an invaluable recruitment tool and an effective resource in diversifying their student pool. Nomination information and application forms are available on the WRPG website at www.wiche.edu/wrpg. To learn more, contact Margo Colalancia, Student Exchange Program director, at mcolalancia@wiche.edu.

► **College affordability, cost and quality the focus of 2014 LAC Annual Meeting.** Legislators from 13 states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands participated in the annual meeting of WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC), held Sept. 9-10 in Phoenix, AZ. The meeting featured national experts speaking on a range of topics, including legislative trends in the West, state authorization, data and student privacy, common academic standards and assessments, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, college affordability, and community colleges offering four-year degrees. Information about the LAC, its meetings and its members is available on the WICHE website at www.wiche.edu/lac.

► **New WICHE paper reviews alignment of states' higher education policies with equity-focused actions at the institutional level.** In 2013, WICHE embarked on a two-year collaborative effort to help Colorado advance the equity-related goals of its higher-education reform agenda. The first step was a policy audit and analysis aimed at identifying where equity is made explicit in the state's higher-education policies and where there is room to be more intentional. It looked at alignment, gaps, and opportunities in state, system, and institutional policies, as well as the interaction between them, with an eye toward intentional and unintentional outcomes.

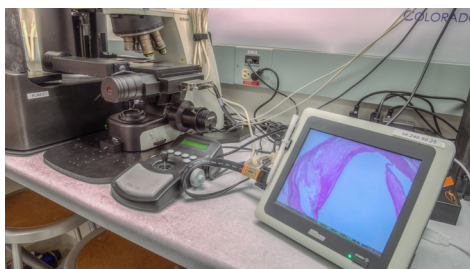
The results of this review, available at <http://www.wiche.edu/pub/17001>, provide the backdrop for implementation of Equity in Excellence for Colorado's Future – a one-year project in which teams of faculty and staff from Metropolitan State University of Denver, the University of Colorado Denver, and Community College of Aurora are conducting in-depth inquiry and planning around ways to improve equity in outcomes for Latino, African-American and American Indian students on their campuses. The project is expected to expand awareness and understanding of the deeply entrenched structural barriers that many students encounter as they pursue a college education.

The Equity in Excellence initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation, is a joint effort of WICHE and the University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education (CUE).

► **WCET Boot Camp helps postsecondary leaders build institutional readiness for data analytics.** A four-day boot camp held in Vail, CO, in June gave small teams from colleges and universities an opportunity to share ideas and develop plans for building their internal capacity for data analytics and data-based decision making. Working groups wrestled with complex questions such as how to obtain buy-in for analytics; how to break down the various campus silos that "own the data"; which "build, buy, buddy, borrow" analytics solutions options might work best for their campus; and what are the primary research questions they want the data to inform. The WCET Boot Camp website, <http://www.wcet.wiche.edu/connect/bootcamp>, is replete with useful references and tools for institutions seeking to develop a campus strategy for analytics.

► **WICHE delivers professional development workshops for CHEO discipline panel faculty and CHEO career coaches.** A tour of the NANSLO (North American Network of Science Labs Online) facility on the Red Rocks Community College campus in Arvada, CO, was the highlight of a two-day professional development workshop for Consortium for Healthcare Education Online (CHEO) discipline panel faculty in May. NANSLO provides a consortium approach to the development and deployment of high-quality, openly licensed web-based lab activities for introductory science and allied health courses. Over the Internet, students can manipulate state-of-the-art laboratory equipment via software and robotics to conduct more than 20 lab exercises.

Another two-day professional development workshop, for CHEO career coaches, was held in August at the State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC) in Boulder, CO. Linda Faucheux, associate director for counseling in the University of Colorado's Office of Career Services, shared insights on contemplative career coaching and facilitated interactive sessions with the career coaches. Workshop participants had the opportunity to explore the capabilities of the new allied health career hub being developed for CHEO. A variety of information about CHEO professional development workshops and webinars is available at www.wiche.edu/nanslo/initiatives-projects/current-initiatives/cheo/cheo-faculty-pd.



Microscope used for remote science activities in the NANSLO lab at Red Rocks Community College in Arvada, CO.

► **WCET releases “All Hands on Deck: Ten Lessons from Early Adopters of Competency-Based Education.”** A briefing paper published by WCET in May focuses on lessons learned from seven pioneering competency-based education (CBE) programs. The paper provides a snapshot of the two dominant models of CBE – direct assessment and course-based with credit equivalency – and concludes with a list of key questions for policymakers and higher education decision makers. The report can be downloaded at <http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/summit/AllHandsOnDeck-Final.pdf>. Additional resources related to CBE, credit for prior learning, badges and alternative credentials are available on WCET's May 2014 Leadership Summit page at <http://wcet.wiche.edu/connect/2014-alternative-credentials-summit>.

► **Recap: WICHE'S work with four states to improve outcomes for low-income college students.** Following is a brief review of WICHE's work with Alaska, Idaho, North Dakota and Utah in 2013-14 under the College Access Challenge Grant (CAG) program. CAG is a federal formula grant program designed to foster partnerships among state and local leaders to increase the number of low-income or first-generation students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

WICHE continued to assist **Alaska** with the expansion and maintenance of its near-peer mentoring program, the Alaska College and Career Advising Corps (ACAC). Starting in 2009 with two pilot locations in Anchorage, the ACAC has grown to serve more than 3,000 students at 19 schools across the state. WICHE conducted site visits to Anchorage, Kodiak Island and the Kenai Peninsula and provided technical support to the ACAC program manager on an ongoing basis. WICHE was also instrumental in the creation of a statewide college access and success network in Alaska over the past year. WICHE took the lead in planning and facilitating a November 2013 statewide summit, after which a steering committee was established. WICHE staff is also a member of the ACAC Sustainability Workgroup, which is developing strategies to continue the mentoring program once grant funding comes to an end in 2015-16.

In **Idaho**, WICHE worked with State Board of Education staff over the past year to help them implement and refine CAG activities, including expansion of their mentoring program, the Idaho Near Peer Mentor Program (NPMP), transition of counselor training activities, and creation of a statewide access and success network, known as Educate Idaho. WICHE also played a key role in the transition of project leadership over the past grant year and will continue to help the new CAG project director and the Board coordinate future grant initiatives.

WICHE staff also planned and convened CAG meetings in **Utah** and **North Dakota** during which member states had the opportunity to share best practices and learn from experts in the field.

► **WICHE Commissioners: two new appointments, three reappointments.** WICHE's two new Commissioners are Wendy Horman, a member of the Idaho House of Representatives, appointed by Idaho Governor Butch Otter; and Kari Reichert, vice president, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), and member, North Dakota State Board of Education, Bismarck, appointed by North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple. Three Commissioners have been reappointed for four-year terms (2014-18): Susan Anderson, president/CEO of The CIRI Foundation, reappointed by Alaska Governor Sean Parnell; J. Anthony Fernandez, president of Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston, ID, reappointed by Governor Otter; and Jack Warner, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents, reappointed by South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard.