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2012 WICHE WORKPLAN



IT'S ALL ABOUT
OUTCOMES





“When will they ever learn?” is the refrain of a Pete Seeger song from the ‘60s. It could also stand as one of the primary questions in higher education today. It’s a question that the educators who teach in our institutions, and the businesspeople who hire those institutions’ graduates, are asking about students: When will they learn what they need to know to pass that class, earn that degree and become contributing members of society? It’s a question that legislators and policymakers are asking about our colleges and universities: When will they learn how to educate our students – effectively and economically – so that they can succeed at school and life? And it’s a question that higher education consumers – college students and their families – are asking about the whole postsecondary setup: When will those who run the system learn how to ensure that students’ investment of money and time truly pays off, in the form of learning?

For many policymakers the focus is on boosting the percentage of students earning degrees: in today’s global economy, it’s thought that higher degree completion rates will make the U.S. more competitive. But as educational consultant Arthur Hauptman recently pointed out, focusing too narrowly on raising degree completion rates may undercut the real purpose of higher education: *learning*. In addition, honing in on graduation rates could discourage institutions from accepting and educating at-risk students: those who face the biggest challenges in earning a degree and are most likely to drop out – and whose educational success is key to our future as a nation.

Ensuring that all students – including those we have not served well traditionally – learn what they need to know so that they can be successful members of their communities is a major priority for WICHE and its units: Policy Analysis and Research, Programs and Services, Mental Health Program, WCET, and the Technology and Innovation initiative. In fiscal 2012 we’ll strive to assist the West’s institutions to find ways to help students not only to graduate but also to hit their marks when it comes to learning. Our work will focus on five areas: finance, access and success, workforce and society, technology and innovation, and accountability.

Finance

Providing students with affordable access to education and helping them to meet their postsecondary goals in a timely manner, along with assisting institutions

to keep their costs down, are at the core of WICHE’s mission: many of our initiatives focus on these areas.

The growing demand for higher education amidst continuing state fiscal constraints makes WICHE’s *Student Exchange Programs* increasingly essential for students, institutions, and states. As institutions continue to tighten their budgets, they are determining if they can continue to offer a full array of programs or if they must scale back. Students’ access to certain programs may decline in the coming years unless institutional leaders and educational policymakers work together on innovative solutions. WICHE has demonstrated over the past half-century that regional collaboration enables institutions to maximize their available capacity, broaden student access, and reduce unnecessary duplication of programs.

Our current mix of programs helps college students gain access to a wide array of postsecondary offerings at a reduced tuition rate. Our largest exchange program, the *Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)* – now in its 22nd year and the biggest program of its kind in the nation – enables students from WICHE states to enroll in participating community colleges and universities at substantial tuition savings. Students also save on tuition expenses by enrolling through our graduate and professional programs, the *Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)* and the *Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)*. WICHE’s newest exchange, the *Internet Course Exchange (ICE)*, is an alliance of member institutions and systems that broadens student access to online courses and programs. For full details on the *Student Exchange Programs* and its plans for fiscal 2012, see the *Access & Success* section.

Keeping track of trends in college pricing is another piece of WICHE’s work in the finance area. The Policy unit’s *Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West* report is updated and released every fall. Staff recently streamlined the report and added calculations for state averages weighted by enrollment, which will allow users to know the published price a typical student would face.

In FY 2012 WICHE will provide several options for institutions to reduce administrative costs. We will continue our collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to offer the *Master Property Program (MPP)* to institutions and higher education systems in the West, helping them save money and obtain comprehensive property insurance



coverage tailored to higher education needs. Two-year, four-year, public, and private institutions in the MHEC, WICHE, and New England Board of Higher Education regions are eligible to join. Forty-eight institutional members, encompassing more than 100 campuses, are members of the MPP, and their combined property values, exceeding \$73 billion, provide significant market leverage. This group saved an estimated \$9.9 million in 2010-11; the cumulative savings since the program began (premium and dividends) are approximately \$69 million. Institutions can also receive yearly dividends if the group does not have significant property claims and losses. Members, whose property values range from \$98 million to \$9.9 billion, must carry a minimum deductible of \$25,000.

The MPP also provides engineering and loss control strategies that help institutions protect their assets. Administrators and facilities managers attend an annual loss control workshop to gain additional expertise on a variety of issues, including evaluating property exposures; insurance coverage issues; campus security and safety; and construction and remodeling approaches that lead to operating efficiencies and energy conservation. Staff will continue to market the program to institutions in the WICHE region and work with current members: Colorado College, the Nevada System of Higher Education (seven public colleges and universities and the desert research institute), Lewis & Clark College, Pima Community College District, Reed College, Seattle Pacific University, Westminster College, and Willamette University. The MPP is governed by a leadership committee; WICHE currently has two risk managers from its member institutions on the committee.

During 2012 WICHE will continue its partnership with MHEC to provide discounted purchasing options to higher education institutions, state agencies, county and municipal governments, and other nonprofit organizations that want to buy computers, software, printers and peripherals, and data and voice networking through the MHECtech program. MHECtech staff undertakes the time and expense of extensive competitive procurement processes; participating institutions and organizations can purchase a variety of products and services knowing that the due diligence in selecting the vendor has already been done and can benefit from volume discounts. The program reduces the duplication of procurement processes, helps campuses save money, and increases the range of purchasing options from which institutions can choose. Participating vendors

include: Dell, Fujitsu, Oracle (Sun), and Systemax (also known as Global, GovED, CompUSA) computers; Dell and Xerox printers and peripherals; and data networking offered by Juniper Networks. General information on the program is available on the WICHE website; the MHEC website (www.mhectech.org) provides details on vendors and eligible entities.

Access & Success

Expanding access to higher education in the West has been WICHE's focus since its creation in the early 1950s. Our *Student Exchange Programs* are central to this mission and provide a range of benefits to students, institutions, and states. Prospective students receive preferential admission to specialized professional programs for which they would not otherwise be considered. And they pay less, reducing their debt load after graduation, which makes it feasible for more of them to "serve the underserved" in both rural and urban areas. In addition, WICHE's exchange programs strengthen institutions' recruiting efforts, help them to diversify their enrollments, and allow them to build robust programs.

More than 26,700 students enrolled in public two- and four-year institutions in the West through the *Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)* in 2010-11, saving \$210 million. Out-of-state WUE students pay 150 percent of the enrolling institution's resident tuition. Since WUE's inception in 1988, students have saved on 300,118 annual tuition bills; in the last 10 years alone, their savings amounted to \$1.2 billion. Over 145 campuses have opened their doors to WUE students. Colleges and universities can tailor their participation (including admission requirements and available programs of study) to individual campus needs. Last year WUE welcomed Arizona State University's Downtown Campus and California State University Monterey Bay into the network. WICHE staff will continue to encourage more institutions to join WUE, including more in California, and also increase our outreach efforts by connecting with high school counselors through their regional associations.

The *Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)* provides access to 10 professional healthcare fields for students in 12 WICHE states. In 2010-11 some 700 students enrolled through PSEP to become allopathic or osteopathic doctors, dentists, veterinarians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, optometrists, podiatrists, physician assistants, and pharmacists. Participating states annually determine the fields and the numbers of students they will support.



Students pay reduced tuition at some 50 participating public and private institutions. Since the program's inception in the early 1950s, more than 14,500 professionals have received their education through PSEP. In addition to providing affordable professional education to students, the program has helped Western states with limited resources or declining populations avoid the cost of creating new and expensive programs. Programs and Services staff will explore member states' interest in adding additional fields to PSEP or creating new dimensions of this important regional resource.

The *Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)* is another important educational resource for the West, allowing master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral students who are residents of the 15 participating states to enroll in some 255 high-quality programs at 47 participating institutions on a resident tuition basis. WRGP is a tuition-reciprocity arrangement similar to WUE; students enroll directly in the participating programs and pay resident tuition. This represents a tremendous opportunity for WICHE states to share distinctive programs and to build their workforce in a variety of disciplines, particularly healthcare. In fall 2010 some 700 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated \$7.2 million dollars in tuition (based on full-time enrollment).

WRGP enrollments continue to increase, and a growing number of programs are now offered fully or partially online – an ideal solution for place-bound working adults who need to further their education for a change in career or professional advancement. WRGP now includes 72 healthcare-related programs: graduate nursing degrees, public health, mental health and psychology, audiology and speech pathology, biomedical informatics, and more. WRGP also offers post-professional doctorates in physical therapy and occupational therapy, as well as a master's in dental hygiene to train future faculty members. Some of the 39 new WRGP offerings that will begin to enroll students in fall 2011 include Dakota State University's master's in health informatics, Northern Arizona University's professional science master's in climate science and solutions, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology's master's in robotics and intelligent autonomous systems, University of Arizona's master's in Native American languages and linguistics, and Washington State University's professional science master's in molecular biosciences.

Programs and Services

WICHE's Programs and Services unit expands access to higher education through its three Student Exchange Programs and WICHE ICE (Internet Course Exchange). The staff also fosters collaboration and resource sharing in higher education through several regional initiatives; convenes and partners with academic leaders throughout the West; and works to help institutions and states reduce their operating costs through several innovative programs. The unit also develops and disseminates WICHE electronic and print publications, as well as managing the WICHE website and media relations. Its programs and initiatives include:

- ◆ Western Undergraduate Exchange
- ◆ Western Regional Graduate Program
- ◆ Professional Student Exchange Program
- ◆ WICHE ICE (Internet Course Exchange)
- ◆ Western Academic Leadership Forum
- ◆ Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders
- ◆ Western rural healthcare initiatives
- ◆ *A Closer Look at Healthcare Workforce Needs in the West* workforce-brief series
- ◆ North American Network of Science Labs Online
- ◆ Academic Leaders Toolkit
- ◆ Interstate Passport Initiative
- ◆ Master Property Program
- ◆ MHECtech collaborative purchasing
- ◆ Bridges to the Professoriate
- ◆ Coordinating WICHE participation in the U.S. Department's ED-SAT and the General Service Administration's MOBIS program
- ◆ Electronic and print communications: *NewsCap*, factsheets, website, annual reports, state briefings, commission agenda books, annual workplan, electronic networking

Staff will disseminate the next call for nominations for new WRGP programs in fall 2012. Graduate deans and provosts at all public institutions in the WICHE region will be notified of the deadline and the process for nominating new programs. To be eligible for WRGP, programs that aren't related to health must be "distinctive," meaning they must be offered at no more than four institutions in the WICHE region (exclusive of California). Given the tremendous need in the healthcare workforce, healthcare-related programs



are not subject to the distinctiveness criteria but must be of high quality.

The *WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE)* offers students of its member institutions increased access to online courses and programs while they are enrolled at their home institution. Currently, WICHE ICE has 10 institutional members and four consortia members, totaling some 28 institutions. In fiscal 2012 ICE will focus on expanding membership and enrollments by building awareness about ICE as a cost-effective tool for addressing institutional budget shortages and reducing course and program duplication. For example, through ICE institutions can reduce the number of low-enrollment courses and make the remaining ones more financially viable by aggregating student demand across institutions: institutions can collaborate to offer these programs and take turns teaching the courses. If an institution opts to eliminate a program, it can partner with other ICE institutions and import seats in courses from other them so that it fulfills its obligations to its students.

In addition, ICE will increase its visibility for its work in developing and supporting discipline-specific collaborative initiatives in areas of faculty interest and workforce needs. ICE currently supports collaborative initiatives in frontier social work, graduate-level nursing, and math and science education, and this work will be ongoing in the coming year. In the area of science, two ICE institutions will be participating in a North American Network for Science Labs Online project (see full description below), to provide students with access to online science labs in biology, chemistry, and physics. This project will expand the opportunity for those students who cannot come to campus for lab courses to pursue STEM majors.

The *Western Academic Leadership Forum (the Forum)* gives academic leaders in the WICHE states – provosts, academic vice presidents at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral-level institutions, and chief executives and chief academic officers for related system and state governing boards – a forum for sharing information, resources, and expertise as they address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions. The 2012 annual meeting will be held in April in Arizona.

Discussions at the 2011 Forum meeting touched on or laid the groundwork for several new regional initiatives. The *Academic Leaders Toolkit*, presented at the meeting, provides a web-based depository of descriptions about processes and links to tools and

other resources used by academic leaders in decision making. The peer-reviewed collection addresses a wide range of issues, such as retention, program elimination, and faculty workload. Academic leaders from both the two-year and four-year sectors across the nation may contribute profiles about approaches and tools they have used to address specific issues, with information about the goals, outcomes, lessons learned, and costs. As other academic leaders use the tools, they will add reviews and ratings, creating a stronger knowledge pool. During 2012 the Academic Leaders Toolkit Committee will focus on building awareness about the toolkit and soliciting submissions.

Two other initiatives were discussed at the Forum meeting, and plans are underway to develop them in 2012. The first is a professional development service for members: a subset of the Forum's membership will select books on higher education topics of common interest to read and then share perspectives among the group and with the authors. The *Interstate Passport Initiative* is the other proposed collaboration. On a voluntary basis, some Forum members are participating with representatives from the Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders (see description below) and others to develop a new "regional passport" for transfer and articulation. WICHE is serving as the coordinating partner. This initiative will focus initially on a passport students can use to block-transfer their completed general education core to other participating institutions in the region. Over the longer term, the initiative hopes to transition the current transfer and articulation processes in the region to ones based on stronger relationships to student learning outcomes. External funding will be sought to develop this initiative.

A related effort, the now-completed *Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems* – a Lumina Foundation-funded joint project of WICHE's Policy unit, WCET, and Hezel Associates – worked to develop a deeper understanding of how states coordinate their articulation and transfer programs for students who move from two-year to four-year institutions. A key component of this project was an examination of how state colleges and universities use web portals in the articulation and transfer process to determine the characteristics that make them effective, as well as whether similar models can be used in other states. WICHE will build on this work by being integrally involved in articulation and transfer issues in the Western states as they work to more effectively



evaluate and improve their articulation and transfer mechanisms.

The *Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders (the Alliance)* was established in 2011 for chief academic leaders from community colleges and technical schools along with academic leaders of systems and state agencies for the two-year sector. Modeled after the Forum, the Alliance provides members with a way to share information, resources, and expertise as they address issues of common concern across the region and work on innovative solutions. Fifteen academic leaders – one from each WICHE state – serve on the executive committee.

During 2012 one major Alliance project will involve the development of the North American Network for Science Labs Online (NANSLO). In this 15-month project, funded by a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant and concluding June 30, 2012, the Colorado Community College System will pilot the replication of an existing web-based laboratory at BCcampus (originating in British Columbia) for use in teaching gateway online courses in biology, chemistry, and physics. Faculty members from community colleges in Wyoming and Montana will assist in the review of open educational resources to be used in the pilot and advise on the development of a template for expansion of NANSLO to include institutions in other states and provinces. WICHE will serve as the coordinating partner and fiscal agent for the NANSLO project.

Other Alliance projects for 2012 are the Interstate Passport Initiative and the Academic Leaders Toolkit (both described on the previous page). In addition, the Alliance will create an action plan for building awareness about its services and activities, promoting membership, and hosting its first annual meeting.

WICHE is a partner in WebAIM's new *GOALS II (Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study)* project, supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. This three-year project, which began in January 2011, will develop blueprints on web accessibility for institutions to use as they go through the continuous improvement process for reaffirmation by a regional accreditor. By making these blueprints available, the GOALS II project will help ensure systemwide web accessibility across institutions, so that all students and staff have full access to the content and services they offer.

The Policy Analysis and Research unit oversees several projects related to access and success. It has formalized a partnership with the Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California, funded by the Ford Foundation. CUE researchers have been involved in groundbreaking work addressing educational equity. Our partnership continues through a two-year project called *Education Equity and Postsecondary Student Success: A CUE and WICHE Partnership for Policy Research and Analysis*, which is exploring how students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds progress differently through college. During FY 2011 WICHE and CUE worked with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to identify models of student progression, including bachelor's degree completion for students who began at the state's public four-year campuses; completion of an associate's degree, certificate, or successful transfer to a four-year institution for students who began at the state's public two-year colleges; and completion of a nursing degree. Policy obtained unit-level data from NSHE and conducted analyses for each model; these models are now being shared with Nevada state and institutional officials. In fiscal 2012 WICHE and CUE will build on these efforts to help policymakers better attend to concerns related to equity and will also continue working on state-level data analysis.

Another Policy project, *Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners*, is a comprehensive effort to stimulate and guide policy and practice changes to create a more navigable path to degree attainment for "ready adults" – those who are just shy of having enough credits to obtain a degree but have not yet returned to college. Funded by Lumina Foundation, *Non-traditional No More* focuses on removing barriers related to data, academic affairs, financial aid and financing, student support services, and communications. Having met the obligations of the grant with some project funds remaining, WICHE will continue to work in this area (thanks to a no-cost extension by Lumina Foundation) through a partnership with the North Dakota University System (NDUS), whose goals are to identify and target potential returning adult students, improve the capabilities of the state's longitudinal database to provide necessary data; identify institutional barriers and policies that hinder adults from completing degrees; develop and implement best policies and practices; develop a coordinated marketing strategy for promoting adult reentry; and implement an



Policy Analysis and Research

The Policy Analysis and Research unit furnishes accurate and timely information and expertise that advance WICHE's mission of expanding educational access and excellence. It does so by providing analysis of relevant data related to K-12 and postsecondary education, demography, labor market information, and higher education finances; by supplying assistance with policy design and implementation; and by developing and managing projects that serve the needs of policymakers in the West and throughout the nation. Among its externally funded activities are:

- ◆ College Access Challenge Grant Consortium and Network
- ◆ Adult College Completion Network
- ◆ Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners
- ◆ State and regional longitudinal data systems development

Additional ongoing activities and services include:

- ◆ *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity*
- ◆ SPIDO (State Policy Inventory Database Online)
- ◆ *Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West*
- ◆ *Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts*
- ◆ *Policy Insights*, a series of brief papers addressing issues in higher education
- ◆ Policy Publications Clearinghouse
- ◆ *Benchmarks and a Web-based Fact Book of Policy Indicators for Higher Education in the West*
- ◆ Legislative Advisory Committee
- ◆ State-specific technical assistance on a variety of topics, including financial aid
- ◆ *Western Policy Exchanges*

action plan led by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education and coordinated through the Adult Learner's Council with the institutions of the NDUS.

As part of a new nationwide effort, Lumina Foundation awarded WICHE a four-year grant to develop a learning network to support Lumina's Adult College Completion strategy. The *Adult College Completion Network* is made up of regional organizations, state agencies, city programs, nonprofit organizations, and others working to help those

adults who have earned prior college credits return to complete their degrees. Launched in October 2010, the network serves as a mechanism for effective networking, communication, and dissemination of information about successful adult degree completion strategies. One of its main features is an interactive website (www.adultcollegecompletion.org), where visitors can read about the latest evidence-based strategies for reaching this population of adults, find news about how institutions are successfully serving adult students, and share information about their own efforts. Other network activities include annual meetings; webinars to highlight effective strategies for serving adults; briefs and reports on lessons learned; a repository of higher education policies related to adult learners; a listserv to expedite network communications; presentations at regional and national meetings; and the use of social and communications media to engage grantees and other stakeholders in relevant discussions.

In addition, the Policy unit collaborates with the *Pathways to College Network*, an alliance of private and corporate foundations, nonprofits, educational institutions, and the U.S. Department of Education. Pathways – which is managed by the Institute for Higher Education Policy and includes researchers, policy analysts, educators, K-12 administrators, and representatives from government, business, foundations, and community organizations – uses research-based knowledge to improve postsecondary education access and success for the nation's underserved students. These include underrepresented minorities, low-income students, those who are the first in their families to go to college, and students with disabilities. WICHE staff helps determine Pathways' overall focus and policy components related to student-learning outcomes through representation on its Standards and Assessment Working Group.

The Policy unit manages the *College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Consortium and Network* to assist the Western states with program implementation and administration related to CACG, a federal program that fosters partnerships among national, state, and local governments and philanthropic organizations through matching grants aimed at increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Through the CACG Consortium, WICHE is working closely with state leaders in Alaska, Idaho, and Wyoming to implement their CACG programs. Simultaneously, the CACG Network, composed of the three consortium states plus Nevada, Texas, Utah, and



Washington, provides a forum in which staff involved in developing, implementing, and maintaining state CACG efforts can discuss issues related to the administration of their programs. Through this vibrant network, state leaders and policymakers share promising practices, lessons learned, common challenges, and the latest research.

In FY 2011 WICHE partnered with the American Council on Education and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) to host a meeting titled "What the Common Core State Standards Mean to Higher Education in the West" at the State Higher Education Policy Center. Funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the goal of this meeting was to broaden awareness about Common Core State Standards and engage postsecondary leaders in a productive discussion about their implications for higher education in the Western region. WICHE also hosted a special workshop on this topic in conjunction with the Western Academic Leadership Forum. In FY 2012 WICHE will continue these important discussions with higher education leaders and engage in strategies for effective implementation.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity (7th edition), released in 2008, is widely used by politicians, policymakers, librarians, researchers, the media, businesses, state agencies (including SHEEO offices and education departments), postsecondary institutions, school districts, and individual public and private schools. With support from our traditional partners on the project, ACT and the College Board, Policy has begun planning for the next edition of the publication. That effort includes a review of the methodology behind the projections, which has changed little since WICHE published the first edition in 1979, and an investigation into ways to incorporate additional analyses sought by our constituents, such as income-based projections and projections related to urban areas. It also includes an examination of how WICHE's projections may be able to capitalize on new data sources, including state longitudinal data systems and census products, and how to integrate the new racial/ethnic categories being collected by the Department of Education.

Currently, there are at least eight major initiatives at play within the WICHE region that promote the college completion agenda: the President's Initiative, Complete to Compete, Complete College America, Completion by Design, the College Completion Agenda, Roadmap for Assuring America's Future, the National College Access Network/Kresge Foundation,

and Lumina Foundation's Big Goal. WICHE staff are involved in these assorted initiatives in a variety of capacities and will continue to be an important voice in these efforts in FY 2012.

In 2012 Policy will continue to update *SPIDO* (*State Policy Inventory Database Online*, at <http://wiche.edu/SPIDO>), the nation's only online searchable database of higher education policies. Staff will conduct presentations about SPIDO at national meetings to highlight how the database can be used to support college access and success and other higher education efforts in the states.

WICHE will also continue working closely with its *Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)*, a group of state legislators from the West who inform the WICHE Commission and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education and provide input on WICHE initiatives. Staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West. As in years past, the focus of the annual LAC meeting will be on important higher education issues facing the Western states and their legislatures.

Finally, WICHE will explore data, policies, and issues related to undocumented students. Staff are developing a strategy to address this challenging issue in the WICHE region and will implement this strategy in FY 2012.

Technology and Innovation

The membership organization WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies) and the Technology and Innovation initiative focus exclusively on higher education, technology, and innovation. Their work for FY 2012 is outlined below, along with a major project by the Policy unit that fits in this area.

WCET has launched an advisement service established to help institutions respond to new regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Education. The *State Authorization Network (SAN)* responds to the U.S. Department of Education's new "program integrity" regulations. The 90-page set of regulations on program integrity and student aid programs covers a wide range of issues, including gainful employment, incentive compensation, and credit-hour definition. Institutions will be required to demonstrate that they are in compliance with state requirements applicable to distance learning in any state in which they enroll students. These regulations have the potential to touch thousands of institutions who offer online and instructional programs at a distance and in multiple states. Systems and consortia that are not yet WCET members will need to join WCET to become



WCET

WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies) accelerates the adoption of effective practices and policies, advancing excellence in technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education. A cooperative association of like-minded institutions, vendors, and stakeholders who support excellence in technology-enabled, distributed, distance, and e-learning initiatives, it provides a level playing field, where all members can collaborate and share ideas, information, and solutions for improving teaching and learning with technology. It supports communities of interest that promote the accelerated adoption of learning technologies innovations.

WCET informs stakeholders about emerging learning technology innovations; offers techniques for predicting relevance and value; and shares tactics for accelerating the adoption of learning technology innovation at institutions. Some of WCET's projects and areas of interest include the following.

- ◆ State Authorization Network for distance ed regulatory compliance
- ◆ Updates on federal regulations regarding distance education
- ◆ Data analytics to improve student progression and completion
- ◆ National survey on online education management
- ◆ National higher ed technology conference
- ◆ Transparency by Design/College Choices for Adults
- ◆ CatalystCAMP professional development
- ◆ News and analysis on academics, students, technology, and policy
- ◆ Interventions to promote student retention in online learning
- ◆ E-learning consortia strategies
- ◆ Academic integrity and student authentication good practices
- ◆ Evaluation and ownership of learning management systems
- ◆ Recruitment and retention of quality online faculty
- ◆ EduTools 2.0
- ◆ Webcast series on e-learning practices and policies

part of the SAN (there is a fee to join the SAN). The SAN officially commenced with a two-day member seminar in Boulder, CO, on April 6-7, 2011. For more information please refer to the SAN website (<http://wcet.wiche.edu/advance/state-authorization-network>).

Pending final approval, WCET will be the third-party manager of a proposed project that creates federated data sets to which exploratory descriptive, inferential, and predictive statistical tests will be applied to

look for predictive patterns of risk and achievement. Partners on this project include the University of Phoenix, American Public University, the University of Hawaii System, Colorado Community College System, Rio Salado College, and the University of Illinois-Springfield. In March WCET submitted a proposal for an initial proof of concept of the *Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework*: models and middleware needed to conduct large-scale analyses of federated data sets within postsecondary institutions to better inform loss prevention and identify drivers related to progression and completion. Particular attention is paid to analyzing data sets coming from institutions with significant online learning presence. Gates' approval of the six-month pilot is expected before the end of the fiscal year.

The project will feature the efforts of the six participating postsecondary institutions to federate their institutional student records and apply large-scale descriptive and inferential statistical methods to look for patterns that help identify variables, conditions, and interactions that impede and enable improvements in student progression and completion, with a critical focus on loss. Our intention is to use intelligence from these exploratory analyses to better inform student retention, progression, and completion strategies and practices. By aggregating data sets from multiple institutions and using advanced statistical modeling to identify patterns that predict performance, we can help practitioners spot barriers to student success before they become problems. We can also focus attention on enablers that predictably and reliably improve student achievement, particularly in traditionally underserved populations. Our intention is to develop rubrics and codified heuristics to guide the analysis of aggregated collections of federated student records and to help compile results of these analyses in customizable reports.

Transparency by Design (www.transparencybydesign.org), funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation and annual dues from member institutions, calls for regionally accredited, adult-serving institutions which offer some or all programs at a distance or online to commit to increasing the number of adult learners who find success in higher education by providing an unprecedented level of data to inform college choice. A major priority for this project in FY12 is the recruitment of additional institutional members to enhance the experience for students, broaden the project's reach within the higher education community, and support the sustainability of the project beyond Lumina funding. As the third-party project manager, WCET is responsible for Transparency



by Design's College Choices for Adults website (www.collegechoicesforadults.org), an information-rich online resource that helps adult learners make informed choices about distance education options. In FY 2012 WCET will continue our work with this project.

WCET and the Campus Computing Project will undertake the *Managing Online Education 2011 Survey* in FY 2012. This continues the successful establishment of the annual Managing Online Education research project, which provides data on the instructional, operational, and technology infrastructure of online programs in higher education. Survey data are based on the responses from campus officials at two- and four-year public and private U.S. colleges and universities. Survey respondents are typically the senior campus official responsible for the management of online and distance education programs at their institutions. The survey data document the continuing growth in online education (for the executive summary and slides summarizing the research findings, go to <http://wcet.wiche.edu/docs/moe/ManagingOnlineEd2010-ExecSummaryGraphics.pdf>). WCET has been invited to develop *Managing Online Education: A Handbook for Practitioners*, to be published by Wiley Publishers. Chapters will be written by WCET members noted for their expertise on topics developed from our Managing Online Education Survey.

WCET's membership base is critical to sustaining the organization's programmatic priorities and community-driven special projects, and it is a critical source of revenue for the organization. Building on the momentum of WCET's growing national presence through its advocacy, policy, and research agendas, WCET will be driving a focused membership campaign into the next fiscal year. The campaign will target public and private institutions, e-learning consortia (a unique niche for WCET), and private-sector technology companies. In addition, WCET has conducted the initial research into transitioning to a new customer relationship management software application called Salesforce. WICHE IT and WCET are partnering in the initial deployment of Salesforce, which will support improved client communications and more streamlined business processes for billing and reporting.

WCET's successful webcast series on e-learning policy and management issues will continue in FY12, with a blend of programs open to the general public and others limited to WCET members. The webcast programming calendar for FY12 includes sessions on

Technology and Innovation

Access to research and education (R&E) networks for all higher education institutions in the West and e-science are the twin foci of the Technology and Innovation initiative, whose projects and interests include the following.

- ◆ Programs helping underserved and unserved institutions connect to R&E networks and participate in e-science
- ◆ HealthNet, LibraryNet, JusticeNet, and K20Net concepts and proposals
- ◆ An e-science institute for WICHE commissioners, higher education leaders, and other public policy leaders
- ◆ Health sciences education, telehealth, and telemedicine
- ◆ Open educational resources
- ◆ Global education and IT
- ◆ Science, technology, engineering, and math education (STEM)

federal regulations updates, institutional practices with data analytics to improve student retention, academic integrity and student authentication, federal funding opportunities, and more. WCET negotiated the WICHE-wide license for use of the web-conferencing service, Elluminate.

During FY 2012 WICHE will host summits on two topics of interest for our member institutions: mobility (which includes mobile learning, e-books, apps, online learning, learning games, and performance support tools for distributed students) and data-driven decision making (including using large-scale predictive analytics for educational improvement, student analytics, institutional evaluations, and transparency). The summits will be small, invitational, sponsored events that convene thought leaders from industry and academe to identify action agendas related to these issues.

WCET's common interest groups (CIGs) are led by members of the WCET community and focus on topics such as issues as student retention, ownership of learning management systems, academic integrity, and the management of e-learning consortia. Institutional representatives identify promising practices and develop resources on these topics. The CIGs strengthen the engagement of WCET's diverse membership and produce resources that benefit all.

The *EduTools* website has been redesigned and will be launched in spring 2011 with product information in two categories of technologies: learning management systems and authentication technologies. The higher education community will be able to comment on



products and discuss implementation issues from a user perspective. WCET will continue to oversee EduTools.

The WCET Annual Conference continues to enjoy a strong reputation as one of the most valuable events in the e-learning field. The 2011 conference will be held in Denver on October 26-29. The estimated 350-400 conference attendees typically include institution administrators, deans, faculty, instructional designers, and IT administrators from nearly all 50 states.

The primary focus of the Technology and Innovation initiative is access to research and education (R&E) networks – including regional optical networks, Internet2, National Lambda Rail, Department of Energy's ESNet, and international networks – and e-science. Aside from research universities in the WICHE West, very few other institutions have adequate access to advanced R&E networks in the Asia Pacific and beyond. These networks are the foundation for much of contemporary science, or e-science.

For centuries, there were only two modes of scientific discovery: theory and experiment. In the past several decades, a third mode has risen to equal status: simulation. Like simulation, e-science relies on the power of the digital computer, but in e-science, the focus is on data rather than computation. The data comes from real-time sensors that can be located virtually anywhere and on anything we want to learn about: from the sea floor to buildings and roadways, telescopes, gene sequencers, and living organisms. The volume of data is overwhelming, and the challenge is to store, organize, mine, visualize, and interpret it in order to extract knowledge. This data explosion, layered with the fundamental challenge of understanding massively complex systems in general, lies at the heart of 21st century discovery and education. At present our research universities have access to the R&E networks and necessary applications to support e-science. Our goal is to ensure that all WICHE institutions have similar access and opportunities.

Our ability to offer rich forms of education has the potential to increase through the adoption of various new technologies and to provide access to expertise, tools, experiences, and communities in ways that have, to date, not been possible. There are now some 70,000 institutions in 40 states that are connected to regional optical networks (and national networks like Internet2 and National Lambda Rail), but educational applications lag behind research applications. WICHE, in partnership the technology organizations like Internet2, could have a significant impact here.

In fiscal 2012 Technology and Innovation will continue to partner with Department of Congress NTIA program staff (and Secretary Locke), Internet2, and the Pacific Northwest Gigapop to develop workshops and programs to support underserved and unserved institutions, with a particular focus on minority-serving institutions, connectivity to R&E networks, and participation in e-science. Where possible, we'll help shape grant programs and RFPs with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the National Science Foundation, and others.

The initiative will also pursue its ongoing work on HealthNet, LibraryNet, JusticeNet, and K20Net concepts and proposals. Workshops for the library, health, and courts/justice system have been held across Washington – and they are potential models for what can be done in other WICHE states. We will continue to work with states to help develop these networks, in partnership with Internet2 and regional networks.

Technology and Innovation will plan an e-science institute for WICHE commissioners, higher education leaders, and other public policy leaders.

Technology and Innovation will continue its work on health sciences education, telehealth, and telemedicine. Partnering with the Mental Health Program, we have begun leveraging our expertise in mental health and IT-supported clinical services and education, beginning with a modest project in California and now working with the State of Alaska. Opportunities abound in the health information technology arena, and WICHE is uniquely positioned to bring value to this area of work.

Other areas of prospective work, depending upon time and resources, may include the following: open educational resources, which have the potential to have numerous impacts on teaching and learning; global education and IT, with a focus on "internationalizing" education for all students, regardless of whether they have the resources or time to travel; and changing the educational model to one where learning is the constant and time is the variable, and where we can tailor the education to the student.

Other technology and innovation work includes a project entitled *Facilitating Development of a Multi-State Longitudinal Data Exchange*. Undertaken by the Policy unit and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the project has as its principal objective the piloting of a data exchange among several states (initially, four Western states – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Hawaii – have been invited to

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Mental Health

The **WICHE Mental Health Program** seeks to enhance the public systems of care and the workforce that serves persons with mental health issues and their families. The program approaches this mission through partnerships with state mental health authorities, federal agencies, advocacy and consumer groups, and higher education institutions. Activities focus on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state mental health agency data analysis, and liaison activities with higher education to enhance workforce development. Current projects include the following.

WICHE Center for Mental Health Research

The WICHE research center focuses upon a range of studies to expand the science in the area of behavioral health services and policy. Originally established through a cooperative agreement with the Health Resources and Services Administration, the center is now supported through a range of competitive research grants. Current studies are supported by the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) and the Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. The NIMH study focuses on campus mental health and the utility of mental health first aid, a community mental health intervention program, to reduce some of the barriers that keep college students from seeking mental health services. The first multicampus, randomized study of a college mental health intervention, it includes 32 campuses across the United States and many from the WICHE West. The TATRC study focuses on adapting mental health first aid to military populations and studying its positive benefits; this pilot study is being conducted with the Kansas Army National Guard.

Center for Integrated Health Solutions

WICHE is a co-lead contractor in the workforce development component of the newly funded Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Center for Integrated Health Solutions (CIHS). This national technical assistance center is jointly funded by two agencies of the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The CIHS focuses upon supporting the integration of behavioral health and primary health care. While the initial technical assistance is centered upon HHS grantees who are embarking upon this integration effort in community mental health centers and community health centers around the nation, additional assistance is being offered to the field in general. WICHE is leading and collaborating on an array of activities to support the efforts of the center. The primary contractor for this effort is the National Council of Community Behavioral

Health Organizations, in partnership with a cadre of other organizations and expert consultants.

Western States Decision Support Group

The WICHE Mental Health Program will continue its facilitation of the Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG) with support from both WICHE member states and the federal Center for Mental Health Services. This group seeks to build and support regional expertise in the area of data management and performance measurement in the public mental health system. Seven WICHE states have contributed \$6,000 each from their federal decision support grants to fund this regional activity.

WICHE Citizen Soldier Support Program

Military personnel, including those from the Reserve and National Guard, have experienced a documented increase in behavioral health challenges as they've responded to our nation's efforts to reduce the threat of terrorism in the wake of the attacks on 9/11. The Reserve and National Guard experience increased health risks in post-deployment after returning to home communities that are often distant from military or veteran's health care resources; this is especially true for personnel from rural areas. In addition, many personnel do not seek care due to real and perceived stigmatization. The Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) was developed originally at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with support from the Department of Defense. The WICHE Mental Health Program and CSSP formed a strategic partnership to expand the program nationally in 2009. The program seeks to grow and enhance the capacity of community-based providers to meet the behavioral health needs of veterans and their families, who routinely seek services in community-based systems of care that are not connected to either the military or Veterans Administration. CSSP resources include community-based training events, web-based training resources, and maintenance of a database of community providers who have participated in training and are prepared to serve this population.

Mental Health First Aid Training

The Mental Health Program continues to offer mental health first aid training opportunities in the Western states. The 12-hour mental health first aid training course is designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. This program is used to reduce the stigma around mental health issues and expand the capacity of persons trained to intervene with those experiencing psychological distress.

Rural Suicide Prevention Toolkit

The Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Rural Primary Care



Mental Health (continued)

Providers and associated training and technical assistance offer important techniques and information, to be used in primary care practices to enable identification of patients at risk for suicide, assure appropriate planning to establish safety for these patients, and strengthen integration with behavioral health. In FY 2012 the WICHE staff who developed the toolkit will be completing up to six on-site trainings with rural primary care clinics around improving suicide prevention efforts in their practices.

Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

Staff members will continue to work with states across the region in areas of needs assessment and gap analysis. An epidemiologist has updated the model estimating the prevalence of serious disorders. New estimates, based on the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Study, include individuals with serious emotional disturbances, serious mental illness, and substance use disorders. Eight Western states have contracted with WICHE for state-specific synthetic estimates of serious disorders at the county level. The program recently engaged in a task order agreement with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and the National Technical Assistance Center to provide just-in-time, brief, and targeted consulting to states that have a specific request.

State-specific Consultation

The Mental Health Program regularly consults with WICHE states. For FY 2012 its projects include the following.

Alaska. The program has provided a considerable amount of technical support for the State of Alaska, working primarily with the Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and the University of Alaska System. Current projects include the development of an accredited clinical psychology internship consortium; support of and consultation to the Outcomes Identification and System Performance Project; facilitating a project that identifies core competencies for direct care workers in behavioral health, performance assessment tools, and curriculum; and consultation to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute. The program has worked extensively to support the development and implementation of the statewide plan for behavioral health workforce development.

Arizona. The WICHE MHP is conducting a study for the Arizona State Hospital in Phoenix to assist the administration in improving the functioning of the clinical and security departments and making recommendations to increase the recovery focus of the hospital campus.

California. Through the work of the CIHS, several California-based organizations are participating in a learning community that WICHE is facilitating to improve information

sharing on primary care integration implementation efforts between SAMHSA/HRSA grantee sites.

Colorado. Multiple partnership and program development opportunities are currently being planned for FY 2012 in Colorado. The program is exploring options with Mental Health America of Colorado to expand mental health first aid efforts across higher education institutions in Colorado. As follow-up to the behavioral health workforce study and recommendations funded by the Colorado Health Foundation released early this year, the program will help facilitate an action-oriented behavioral health workforce initiative with multiple stakeholders throughout the state. The program plans to replicate the Citizen Soldier Support Program training that was conducted in February 2011 in Grand Junction.

Montana. The program is working with the Area Health Education Center to hold training as part of its Citizen Soldier Support Program.

New Mexico. The program recently received a new contract with Doña Ana County in southern New Mexico to provide technical assistance and training to support improved community crisis intervention resources.

Oregon. The program is conducting a cost-benefit analysis for the State of Oregon, of an early-intervention program designed for persons with early-onset serious psychiatric disorders.

South Dakota. WICHE will continue to work with South Dakota on several major initiatives to support improvements in the public behavioral health system focused on children's systems of care, co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, suicide prevention, and the MHSIP Consumer Survey.

Wyoming. The program has been working with the state on adapting evidence-based practices to rural settings.

Future Opportunities

As states struggle to meet the challenges of the emerging fiscally limited environment, WICHE offers a platform to establish multistate, shared operational activities. The program plans to work with its state partners to explore where multistate efforts might provide efficiencies to help contain cost and ensure operational capacity. It will also seek funding to follow-up and expand its current research activities and the integration of behavioral health and primary care activities.



participate). The project's goal is to allow for more comprehensive analyses of the production, stock, and flows of human capital through a regional, multistate approach. During this three-year, \$1.5 million project, Policy is coordinating efforts to develop the necessary architecture for the exchange of data, effectively govern the exchange, produce standard reports, and ensure the protection of privacy.

Rooted in the idea that ensuring the effective use of expanded data systems is as vitally important as developing them, this project will create meaningful reporting frameworks for tracking human capital development regionally rather than on a much more limited state-by-state basis. In coordinating this effort, WICHE is committed to helping to improve the accuracy and utility of longitudinally linked data so that they may better inform the policymaking process and provide improved information for researchers, planners, and practitioners. Lessons learned will be passed along to WICHE's other member states and beyond. As the project moves forward, we will look at the possibility of folding additional states into the exchange.

This project complements the work of many efforts that are already underway – stimulated by the infusion of \$400 million in federal grants over the last several years and many more millions in philanthropic support – to develop statewide longitudinal data systems. Specifically, it will focus on answering two principal policy questions with evidence drawn from the participating states:

1. How are former high school students from participating states performing in postsecondary education and the workforce in participating states?
2. How are former postsecondary students from participating states performing in the workforce in participating states?

The multistate data exchange will provide rich information about the stock and flow of skills and abilities (represented by education and training) of various populations within a given state; gaps in attainment and employment between population groups based on demography and socioeconomic status; and the mobility of the U.S. population across state borders.

Workforce & Society

WICHE was founded in the early 1950s to help the region's states affordably educate healthcare practitioners. More than 14,500 professionals

have graduated through the Professional Student Exchange Program, most of them in the healthcare professions. Despite these efforts persistent workforce shortages across the West continue to affect rural and underserved areas. Programs and Services staff will continue to explore partnerships with federal and state agencies and private funders (such as foundations, PSEP graduates, and professional state associations), seeking support for regional strategies to alleviate healthcare workforce shortages and to prepare more professionals to practice in rural and underserved areas of the West. Staff will explore the development of a PSEP alumni scholarship program to enable more students to enter the healthcare workforce. Staff also continues to work with member states to promote rural track programs among PSEP's cooperating schools of medicine and will encourage cooperating schools of dentistry to develop similar programs. WICHE staff continues to monitor the development of state loan repayment programs, which have generally proven very successful in attracting graduates to underserved rural areas.

Staff has been successful in adding more healthcare-related programs to WRGP: 72 now participate. The majority are in graduate nursing, public health, mental health and psychology, and audiology and speech pathology. In FY 2012 staff will continue to publicize the availability of these programs.

The Programs and Services unit's workforce brief series, *A Closer Look at Healthcare Workforce Needs in the West*, informs policymakers and higher education decision makers in the Western states about education and employment trends. The series currently covers oral healthcare, the primary care physician workforce, health information technology, and pharmacy. Our upcoming brief will address the education of physician assistants and nurse practitioners and their increasingly critical role as primary care providers, particularly to underserved populations in the rural areas. In addition to providing much needed information, these workforce briefs will help WICHE determine if other fields with significant workforce shortages should be added to PSEP, WRGP, or ICE.

Accountability

WCET is coordinating the Transparency by Design project, which helps prospective adult learners become better consumers of higher education offered at a distance. See details in the Technology and Innovation section.



Information Resources

Part of WICHE's mission is to provide state higher education executive officers, legislators, and other decision makers with the data and information they need. In 2012 WICHE will provide the following resources on our website (www.wiche.edu), in print, and via email.

Policy Alerts and **Stat Alerts** offer periodic e-mail notices of new policy and data-related reports.

Policy Insights, our short report series, covers numerous important higher education topics.

Policy Publications Clearinghouse (<http://www.wiche.edu/policy/Clearinghouse>), maintained by the Policy Analysis and Research unit, is a database of policy publications, offered in a continuing effort to provide those in the West with access to the latest studies, reports, surveys, and policy briefs published by various research and public policy organizations.

Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West, updated annually by the Policy Analysis and Research unit, provides a wealth of data on access, affordability, finance, faculty, technology, and workforce issues. Additionally, WICHE has been collaborating with the State Higher Education Executive Officers and National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to see if it is possible for the three organizations to develop a uniform and consistent online data resource for their combined constituencies.

Western Policy Exchanges are reports on WICHE-sponsored meetings and discussions among the West's key leaders in higher education policy.

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West is an annual survey produced by the Policy Analysis and Research unit, with

detailed data on tuition and fees at all public institutions in the West. While the data collected for this publication go back in some cases to the mid-1980s, in recent years the unit has sought to improve the reliability of the data through additional accuracy checks and improved survey instructions and definitions. This past year the unit made significant changes to the content and presentation of the report.

Workforce reports make the connection between education and work clear. The Programs and Services unit's workforce-brief series **A Closer Look at Healthcare Workforce Needs in the West**, informs policymakers and higher education decision makers in the Western states about education and employment trends. In fiscal 2012 we will analyze the regional workforce needs for physician assistants and nurse practitioners. In addition to providing much needed information, these briefs will help WICHE determine if other fields with significant workforce shortages should be added to PSEP, WRGP, or ICE.

WCET Frontiers (<http://wcetblog.wordpress.com>) is a blog providing regular updates and news on technology in higher education.

WCET News Digests are electronic biweekly digests of recent news on academic, policy, and technology developments related to technology in higher education (for WCET members).

Other publications and services: Our website (www.wiche.edu) posts a range of reports and newsletters (such as **NewsCap**), as well as hosting the WCET online community and archiving a slew of resources, including the Mental Health Grand Rounds Webcasts.

Follow us on Twitter:
www.twitter.com/wicheEDU.



WICHE WORKPLAN 2012 EXISTING ACTIVITIES

Finance

- Annual *Tuition and Fees* report (general fund: GF)
- Performance measurement improvement in the Western states public mental health programs (WSDSG dues)
- MHEC/WICHE/NEBHE Master Property Program (self-funding)
- Collaborative purchasing via MHECtech (self-funding)
- Legislative Advisory Committee (GF)

Access & Success

- Student Exchange Programs: Professional Student Exchange Program, Western Regional Graduate Program, Western Undergraduate Exchange (state-funded and GF)
- WICHE ICE – Internet Course Exchange (member dues and GF)
- Bridges to the Professoriate (National Institute of General Medical Sciences)
- Adult College Completion Network (Lumina)
- *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity*, including a methodology review and expansion (ACT, College Board, and GF)
- Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners (Lumina)
- SPIDO – State Policy Inventory Database Online (GF, Lumina)
- Children's mental health improvement project in South Dakota (South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health)
- College Access Challenge Grant Program Consortium and Network (state subcontracts, U.S. Department of Education)
- Ongoing work on articulation and transfer systems (GF)
- Education Equity and Postsecondary Student Success, a CUE and WICHE Partnership for Policy Research and Analysis (Ford)
- Ongoing work on the implications of the Common Core State Standards on higher education in the West (GF)
- National Institute of Mental Health challenge grant to improve identification of persons with behavioral health issues on college campuses (NIMH)
- Participation and leadership in the college completion agenda
- Explore data, policies, and issues related to undocumented students

Technology & Innovation

- Facilitating Development of a Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange (Gates Foundation)
- The Forum: Western Academic Leadership Forum (member dues and TIAA-CREF and Pearson Education grants)
- The Alliance: Western Alliance for Community College Academic Leaders (member dues)
- Facilitation of Internet2 connectivity throughout the West (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- State Authorization Network (SAN), an advisement service to help institutions respond to new federal regulations (subscription fees)
- National survey of the instructional, operational, and technological infrastructure of distance education through the Managing Online Education project, in partnership with the Campus Computing Project (Campus Computing Project)
- Ongoing work on HealthNet, LibraryNet, JusticeNet, and K20Net concepts and proposals (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Publishing an electronic series on innovative practices, technology trends, and policy on developments related to technology-enhanced teaching and learning in higher education (WCET dues)
- Expanding WCET's knowledge base and member resources to help institutions and organizations evaluate their own policies and practices in: student retention in online learning; recruitment and retention of quality



adjunct faculty; strategies for learning management systems' transitions; and management of e-learning consortia (WCET dues)

- Transitioning EduTools to a new model focused on community contributions and user experiences, initially in the areas of identity authentication technologies and learning management systems (Hewlett grant, sponsors)
- Providing professional development in e-learning for the higher education community through WCET's annual conference event, Catalyst Camp, and invitational summits (fees and sponsors)
- Serving as a knowledgeable resource for higher education on promising practices and policies that address academic integrity and student verification in online learning (WCET dues)
- Webinar series of national education technology debates: retention strategies, authentication, completion strategies (WCET dues and sponsor)
- Extend the reach of WICHE's policy and research work by leveraging WCET's national network and technical assistance with new media communications (WCET dues)
- Build out WCET's capacity as a third-party provider of grants management and oversight for complex technology-related projects among WCET member institutions and other partners (Lumina, Gates)
- Partnership to establish the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Health Resources and Services Administration Center for Integrated Care, a national technical assistance center to support federal efforts to promote the adoption of integrated primary care and behavioral health delivery systems (SAMHSA/HRSA)
- Working with Doña Ana County (Las Cruces), New Mexico, to improve crisis intervention services (Doña Ana County)

Workforce & Society

- Development of Student Exchange Program responses to critical workforce shortages, especially in rural and underserved areas (GF)
- Mental health first aid (self-sustaining)
- Convening and supporting the Regional Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council (GF)
- Building partnerships for competency: public behavioral health workforce development (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority)
- Behavioral health training initiatives to expand the rural workforce capacity (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority)
- Increasing community capacity to serve returning National Guard members and their families (Department of Defense)
- Suicide prevention toolkit for rural primary care providers (self-sustaining)
- Increasing health and behavioral health provider knowledge of returning veterans' service needs (Citizen Soldier Support Program)
- Workforce briefs: *A Closer Look at Healthcare Workforce Needs in the West* (GF)

Accountability

- *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* (GF)
- *Electronic Regional Fact Book: Policy Indicators for Higher Education* (GF)
- *Policy Insights* on a range of higher education issues (GF)
- *Western Policy Exchanges* on WICHE-sponsored meetings and discussions among the West's higher education leaders (various sources)
- Facilitation of the Western States Decision Support Group for Public Mental Health (state-funded)
- *Electronic Policy Alerts* and *Stat Alerts* (GF)
- Policy Publications Clearinghouse (GF)
- Work on Transparency by Design's College Choices for Adults website, to help adult students become better-informed consumers of online education (Lumina)
- Assessing the landscape for state policy on student-learning outcomes



NEW DIRECTIONS

(approved by the commission)

Finance

- Technical assistance with state financial aid program design and funding (single-state support, as requested)

Access & Success

- Interstate Passport, a grassroots initiative to develop consensus on essential learning outcomes supporting seamless student transfer in the WICHE region
- Expanding access to cyberinfrastructure, research and education networks, and applications for geographically remote or underserved institutions, including minority-serving institutions in the West (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Expanding the opportunities for rural rotations for healthcare students participating in PSEP (GF)
- GOALS II: Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study, a collaborative project to develop blueprints on web accessibility for institutions to use during the continuous improvement process for reaffirmation by regional accreditors (FIPSE)
- Expanding access to predictive analytics and pattern strategy services to improve decision making related to retention and completion (Gates, pending funding)
- Serving Student Soldiers of the West: Policy and Practice Solutions

Technology & Innovation

- North American Network of Science Labs Online, a collaborative project to use open educational resources and remote web-based labs in introductory online courses in biology, chemistry, and physics courses (Next Generation Learning Challenges grant)
- Expansion of WICHE ICE (ICE member dues)
- Launching Predictive Analytics Reporting project to build models and middleware to examine predictive patterns of student achievement (Bill & Melinda Gates, pending funding)
- Developing action and information agendas to assist higher education institutions with issues of mobility (mobility of learners, mobile technologies, mobile services), digital content ownership and use (copyright, e-textbooks, virtual labs), and e-learning programs and services for adult learners (WCET dues)
- Academic Leaders Toolkit, a Web-based repository of strategic-planning and decision-making tools for academic leaders (Forum membership dues)
- Managing production of publication *Managing Online Education – A Handbook for Practitioners* (Wiley Publishers, WCET dues)
- Working with Internet2 and National Lambda Rail on the Unified Community Anchor Network project (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, pending funding)
- Creation of an “eScience Institute” for WICHE states’ commissioners, higher education leaders, and other public policy leaders (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Project to broaden the use of open educational resources in teaching, learning, and other areas of higher education (grants/foundations, pending funding)
- Technology and Innovation and Mental Health partnership on mental health and IT-supported clinical services and education in a project with the State of Alaska (pending funding)
- Developing a regional learning center for State Higher Education Policy Center (pending funding)
- Expansion of WCET (membership base dues)

Workforce & Society

- Surveying Professional Student Exchange Program medical, dental, and veterinary medicine schools’ rural track and pipeline programs to identify best practices (GF)
- Expanding a behavioral health training program for military communities (Department of Defense)



- Expansion of WICHE ICE to develop and support new multi-institution collaborations to exchange online courses and programs in high-need and niche disciplines (ICE member dues)
- Advising Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training partnership with enterprises and community colleges (WCET dues)

Accountability

- Continuing development of Transparency by Design's College Choices for Adults website, to improve the institutional and program data offered, recruit more institutions to participate, amplify marketing to attract more users, and expand resources for adult learners (pending funding)

ON THE HORIZON

(not yet submitted to the commission)

Finance

- Research and analysis of outcome-based funding approaches
- Campus safety and security

Access & Success

- Improving access and outcomes for people with co-occurring behavioral health disorders (State of Alaska)
- Exploring strategies for improving the delivery of remedial and developmental education
- Identifying the most effective college persistence and success projects and working to bring them to scale
- Expanding the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce

Technology & Innovation

- Establishing a data-driven decision-support center for proactively deploying student retention, authentication, and management solutions at demonstrated points of need
- Developing more effective Web portals
- Broadening access to innovative new academic programs on energy research and development in the West through WICHE's Student Exchange Program
- Academic Leaders Reading Program, an initiative to support members reading books on higher education topics of common interest and sharing perspectives (Forum member dues)

Workforce & Society

- Policy and Mental Health collaboration on recidivism reduction in the prison population
- Assisting states in identifying academic program development needs or collaboration options when existing programs are eliminated
- Health and allied health workforce development and policy
- Workforce credentialing systems
- Forging collaborations between Western higher education agencies and institutions and state departments of labor and workforce development
- Expanding the Rocky Mountain Collaborative to Transform the Health Professions Workforce
- Campus safety and security
- Workforce issues within higher education

Accountability

- Research and analysis of outcomes-based funding approaches



WICHE COMMISSION

WICHE's 45 commissioners are appointed by their governors from among State Higher Education Executive Officers, college and university presidents, legislators, and business leaders from the 15 Western states. This regional commission provides governance and guidance to WICHE's staff in Boulder, CO. Joseph Garcia, Colorado lieutenant governor and executive director, Colorado Department of Higher Education, is the 2011 chair of the WICHE Commission; Bonnie Jean Beesley, vice chair of the Utah Board of Regents, is vice chair.

ALASKA

Susan Anderson, president and CEO, The CIRI Foundation
*Diane Barrans (WICHE chair, 2005), executive director,
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
James Johnsen, senior vice president of administration, Doyon, Ltd.

ARIZONA

Thomas Anderes, president, Arizona Board of Regents
*Leah Bornstein, president, Coconino Community College
David Lorenz, retired vice president of administration and finance,
Northern Arizona University

CALIFORNIA

Roy Ashburn, board member, California Unemployment Insurance
Appeals Board

COLORADO

*Joseph Garcia (WICHE chair), Colorado lieutenant governor and
executive director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
Kaye Howe, executive director, National Science Digital Library
*D. Rico Munn, partner, Baker & Hostetler

HAWAII

*Roy Ogawa (WICHE chair, 2008), attorney,
Ogawa, Lau, Nakamura & Jew
Roberta Richards, principal, Pauoa Elementary School
Steven Wheelwright, president, Brigham Young University Hawaii

IDAHO

Robert Kustra, president, Boise State University
M. Duane Nellis, president, University of Idaho
*Michael Rush, executive director, Idaho State Board of Education

MONTANA

Clayton Christian, chair, Montana Board of Regents and CEO, Stewart
Title of Missoula
Kim Gillan, state senator
*Sheila Stearns, commissioner of higher education, Montana
University System

NEVADA

Joseph Hardy, state senator
*Jane Nichols (WICHE chair, 2009), vice chancellor for academic
and student affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education
*Carl Shaff, educational consultant

NEWMEXICO

José Garcia, cabinet secretary, New Mexico Higher Education
Department, Santa Fe
Susanna Murphy, lecturer, Department of Educational Leadership and
Organizational Learning, College of Education, University of New
Mexico
*Patricia Anaya Sullivan, assistant dean, College of Engineering, New
Mexico State University

NORTHDAKOTA

Duaine Espégard, member, State Board of Higher Education
William Goetz, chancellor, North Dakota University System
*David Nething (WICHE chair, 2006), state senator

OREGON

Ryan Deckert, president, Oregon Business Association
Tim Nesbitt, former deputy chief of staff, Office of the Governor
*Camille Preus, commissioner, Oregon Department of Community
Colleges and Workforce Development

SOUTHDAKOTA

Robert Burns, distinguished professor emeritus, Political Science
Department, South Dakota State University, and Dean Emeritus,
SDSU Honors College
*James Hansen, regent, South Dakota Board of Regents
Jack Warner, executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents

UTAH

Bonnie Jean Beesley (WICHE vice chair), vice chair, Utah Board of
Regents
Peter Knudson, state senator
*William Sederburg, commissioner, Utah System of Higher Education

WASHINGTON

*Don Bennett, executive director, Higher Education Coordinating Board
Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney, state representative
Jeanne Kohl-Welles, state senator

WYOMING

*Thomas Buchanan (immediate past WICHE chair), president, University
of Wyoming
Debbie Hammons, former state representative and producer, Cloud
Peak Productions
*Position vacant

*Executive Committee member

WICHE Staff and Contact Information

David Longanecker, president
Louis Fox, senior associate, Technology and Innovation
Demarée Michelau, director of policy analysis, Policy Analysis and Research
Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, vice president for behavioral health and director,
Mental Health Program

Brian Prescott, director of policy research, Policy Analysis and Research
Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program
Pat Shea, director, WICHE ICE, Western Academic Leadership Forum, and
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders
Ellen Wagner, executive director, WCET

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