






Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

Commission Meeting

May 18, 2021
by videoconference


*WICHE Commission Meeting – May 18, 2021
Videoconference*


Agenda

Tuesday, May 18, 2021		
Noon - 1:00 p.m. MDT [Tab 1]	<p>Executive Committee Meeting (Open and Closed Sessions)</p> <p>Agenda (Open)</p> <p> Approval of the April 8, 2021, Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes 1-3</p> <p>Discussion Item:</p> <p>Overview of the May 2021 WICHE Commission Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Other Business</p> <p>Agenda (Closed)</p> <p> Review of the WICHE President’s Performance and Adoption of FY 2022 Performance Objectives 1-8</p>	
1:00 - 1:15 p.m. MDT	<p>Break</p>	
1:15 - 1:45 p.m. MDT [Tab 2]	<p>Committee of the Whole – Call to Order</p> <p>Agenda</p> <p>Call to Order: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair</p> <p>Introduction of New Commissioners 2-3</p> <p> Approval of the November 12, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes 2-5</p> <p>Report of the Chair: Susan Anderson</p> <p>Report of the President: Demarée Michelau</p> <p>Recess until May 18, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. MDT</p>	

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT [Tab 3]

Programs and Services Committee Meeting

 Approval of the November 12, 2020, Programs and Services Committee Meeting Minutes 3-3

 Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan Section Pertaining to the Programs and Services Unit 3-12

Discussion Items:

Emerging from the Pandemic: A Closer Look at Our Student Access Programs

Supporting American Indian and Alaska Native Students' Educational Success

Fostering Collaborations to Improve Student Transfer and Institutional Resource Sharing

Information Items:

Student Access Program Highlights 3-6

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative Update 3-7

Academic Leadership Initiatives Updates 3-8

Collaborative Cost-Savings Initiatives Updates 3-10


Other Business


Adjournment

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT [Tab 4]

Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

 Approval of the of November 12, 2020, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes 4-3

 Approval of a Project Titled, "A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Higher Education," Focused on Improving State Collaboration With and Accountability of Nontraditional Credential Providers 4-8

 Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan Section Pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Unit 4-11

Information Item:

Report on Unit Activities:

WICHE Data Management Plan

Recognition of Learning and Prior Learning Assessment

Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARC)

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT [Tab 5]

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT [Tab 6]

3:15 - 3:30 p.m. MDT

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. MDT [Tab 7]

Discussion Items:

WICHE Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy 4-18

Legislative Advisory Committee Update 4-20

Other Business

Adjournment

Behavioral Health Special Committee Meeting

Information Items:

Update on Current Behavioral Health Program Projects 5-3

Unit Financial Performance and Outlook

Review of the FY 2022 Workplan Pertaining to the Behavioral Health Program 5-10

Program Focus: Rural Community Opioid Response Program (RCORP)

Other Business

Adjournment

Technology-Enhanced Education (EdTech) Special Committee Meeting

Discussion Items:

Review of the FY 2022 Workplan Activities Pertaining to WCET 6-3

Scaling and Sustaining OER

Other Business

Adjournment

Break

Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Agenda

Reconvene Committee of the Whole: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Report and Recommended Action of the Executive Committee

Information Items:





Review of Action Items of the Executive Committee between November 2020 and May 2021 7-3

Report and Recommended Action of the Programs and Services Committee: Les Purce, Committee Chair [Tab 3]

Report and Recommended Action of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee: Christopher Cabaldon, Committee Chair [Tab 4]

Report of the Investment Committee: Camille Preus, Immediate Past WICHE Chair

Committee of the Whole – Action and Discussion Items

	Approval of the FY 2022 Salary and Benefit Recommendations	7-12
	Approval of the FY 2022 Annual Operating Budget – General and Non-General Fund Budgets	7-13
	Approval of Dedicated Reserve Levels for Non-General Fund Activities	7-21
	Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan	7-24

Other Business

Adjourn Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Meeting Evaluation: surveymonkey.com/r/WICHEMay2021

4:30 p.m. MDT

Closing Remarks by Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

4:30 p.m. MDT

Adjournment

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Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
Noon - 1:00 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

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Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Noon - 1:00 p.m. MDT

Executive Committee Meeting (Open and Closed Sessions)

Executive Committee

Susan Anderson (AK), Chair
David Lassner (HI), Vice Chair
Camille Preus (OR), Immediate Past Chair

Rita H. Cheng (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Rick Aman (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Agenda (Open)



Approval of the April 8, 2021, Executive Committee
Videoconference Meeting Minutes

1-3

Discussion Item:

Overview of the May 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule

Other Business

Agenda (Closed)



Review of the WICHE President's Performance and
Adoption of FY 2022 Performance Objectives

1-8

ACTION ITEM
WICHE Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 8, 2021
3:00 p.m. MDT

Commissioners Present

Susan Anderson (AK), Chair
David Lassner (HI), Vice Chair
Camille Preus (OR), Immediate Past Chair

Rita Cheng (AZ)
Bob Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Matt Freeman (ID), serving as proxy
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Larry Tidemann (SD)

Additional Commissioners on the Call

Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)

WICHE Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and the
Commission
Shelley Plutto, Project Coordinator, W-SARA, Policy Analysis
and Research
Demarée Michelau, President
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State
Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Chair Susan Anderson welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. She began by acknowledging the recent tragedies and loss of life in our country and in Boulder, Colo., and asked for a moment of silence.

Laura Ewing called roll, and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the February 10, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the February 10, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting minutes. Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the motion and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED. Zoom poll voting was used and the motion passed.

ACTION ITEM
**Approval of Compact for Faculty Diversity – A Partnership with Other Regional Compacts
to Reinitiate the Effort**

Chair Anderson asked President Demarée Michelau to present the action item. President Michelau said WICHE proposes to partner with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to seek \$260,000 in planning grant funds over a nine-month period to assess the feasibility of reinitiating the Compact for Faculty Diversity. The Compact, created in the early 1990s, was an interregional initiative focused on increasing commitment to, investment in, and achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in faculty and staff at postsecondary institutions throughout the U.S. The planning grant funds will be used to gather data, convene regional and national leaders, and develop strategic plans for a multi-faceted, long-term collaborative effort to develop a more diverse faculty. The funder that the Compacts are presenting the grant proposal to is the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Commissioner Ann Millner MOVED TO APPROVE a Compact partnership with WICHE, MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB to seek planning grant funds to assess the feasibility of reinitiating the Compact for Faculty Diversity. Commissioner Camille Preus SECONDED the motion. There were no questions or discussion. Zoom poll voting was used and the motion passed with one abstention from Idaho.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of New Mexico's SARA State Renewal Application

Chair Anderson asked President Michelau to present the action item. President Michelau began with a reminder that state membership in SARA is renewed on a biennial basis from the time of the state's initial membership. Staff complete the initial evaluation and gather renewal materials. The W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC) reviews the application materials and then votes to approve or not approve a recommendation for renewal to the WICHE Commission (the Commission). New Mexico and Wyoming are the two states that are up for renewal. The question before the Executive Committee is if the states meet all of the requirements set forth in criteria 1-16 of the SARA state application and have affirmed that they can and will operate under the SARA criteria for membership over the course of the renewal period. President Michelau asked Christina Sedney to present and explain New Mexico's application for renewal.

Sedney presented the New Mexico state renewal application. She said the role of the State Portal Entity (SPE) in New Mexico is served by the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) and is led by its Secretary of Higher Education, which is a cabinet-level position in New Mexico. Currently, New Mexico has 23 SARA institutions, 16 of which are public, 4 are private nonprofits, 2 are private for-profits, and 1 is a tribal institution (the only tribal institution in the Western region that is participating in SARA). In 2019, which is the most recent year of data that is available for SARA enrollments, New Mexico institutions enrolled 4,524 distance education students through SARA. There were 10,086 students in New Mexico enrolled in distance education from out-of-state institutions through SARA.

There was one qualifying SARA complaint during the two-year renewal period. The complaint was against a graduate program at the New Mexico State University and the complaint has been resolved in favor of the institution by NMHED. In addition, a qualifying SARA complaint was received in the period between when the renewal application was submitted and when it was considered by the RSC. Sedney said the complaint, against San Juan College, is currently under review by NMHED. New Mexico does have one public institution that is on Heightened Cash Monitoring (HCM) status for a late or missing audit. There are no other institutions on provisional status and no institutions that have undergone change of ownership during the renewal period. She said New Mexico has implemented an institution appeals process as required by SARA policy. The policy can be found in the New Mexico Administrative Code section 5.99.1.18.

Chair Anderson opened the floor for questions and discussion.

Commissioner Bob Shireman thanked Sedney for the presentation. He noted that Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM) in Las Cruces was approved as a SARA institution. He wrote about this institution about a year ago out of concern that as a new institution, it would not have a U.S. Department of Education (ED) Financial Responsibility Composite Score (FRCS). He asked about the state financial stability analysis of the institution. Sedney noted that New Mexico does have a letter from ED confirming its calculation of the institution's FRCS that she has reviewed. Commissioner Barbara Damron stated that the institution has graduated its first class and has been in operation for several years, and New Mexico has been monitoring the school to ensure it is eligible for SARA participation.

Commissioner Damron said that she was the person who set up the SARA program in New Mexico when she was the Cabinet Secretary. She feels that a very good SPE has been established with NMHED and it is functioning well. She extended her appreciation for the assistance of Sedney and President Michelau to set up SARA's work with public and private institutions in New Mexico.

Commissioner Damron MOVED TO APPROVE renewal of New Mexico's participation in SARA for an additional two years. Commissioner Rita Cheng SECONDED the motion. Chair Anderson opened the floor for additional questions or comments. Zoom poll voting was used and the motion passed.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of Wyoming's SARA State Renewal Application

President Michelau asked Christina Sedney to present the details of the Wyoming state renewal application. Sedney said the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) serves as the State Portal Entity (SPE). Wyoming has eight SARA institutions, all of which are public. The institutions include the University of Wyoming and seven state community colleges. According to the most recent data available for SARA enrollments, Wyoming institutions enrolled 462 distance education students through SARA. In Wyoming, there were 4,586 students enrolled in distance education from out-of-state institutions through SARA. Sedney said Wyoming did not receive any qualifying SARA complaints during the two-year renewal period. Wyoming does not have any institutions on the HCM list. It has no institutions on provisional status and no institutions that have undergone change of ownership during the renewal period. Wyoming has implemented an institution appeals process as required by SARA policy, which can be found in the WCCC agency rules in chapter five, section 11. She explained that the rules are currently in emergency form, but it is anticipated that the rules will become permanent soon.

Chair Anderson opened the floor for questions and discussion.

Commissioner Shireman said that, in general, having the state that is up for renewal making the motion for approval might not look good from an external perspective as it could be perceived as a conflict of interest. Chair Anderson commented that the state that is up for renewal should recuse itself from the vote. Commissioner Damron commented that the commissioner of the state up for renewal knows a lot about the state's situation and allowing them to vote should be considered, although she does see Commissioner Shireman's point of view. She further stated in some ways the commissioner is the expert witness to the Commission of the state's SARA activity. She does not see it as a conflict of interest and noted that the commissioner for each state would also potentially be bringing problems with SARA to the Commission. Commissioner Shireman said he thinks it is appropriate for commissioners representing the states up for SARA renewal to be part of the discussion, to be resources and to comment, but they should not participate in the actual vote and they should not call for a motion. Commissioner Damron said she thinks that each state should be able to vote on its SARA renewal, and she would like time to consider Commissioner Shireman's perspective regarding who should be allowed to make motions and vote for the renewal. President Michelau commented that introducing the motion was a precedent that had been set in the early days, when states were joining SARA; the commissioner representing the state joining SARA made the motion for approval and this has followed with the renewals. She said during the December 2020 Executive Committee meeting, the commissioners of the states that were up for renewal were asked to recuse themselves from the vote.

Commissioner Shireman MOVED TO APPROVE renewal of Wyoming's participation in SARA for an additional two years. Commissioner Lassner SECONDED the motion. Chair Anderson opened the floor for additional discussion. Commissioner Baldwin noted that the Wyoming Legislature, which adjourned today, has approved one additional community college, located in Gillette. Zoom poll voting was used and the motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEM
WICHE Draft Commission Meeting Agenda

President Michelau reviewed the agenda for the May 2021 Commission Meeting, highlighting the following items:

- The Executive Committee will review and discuss President Michelau's job performance.
- Committees will review and discuss the FY 2022 workplan. The committee agendas have a lot of discussion time built in to discuss current and potential initiatives.
- The Committee of the Whole will review and vote on the workplan and operating budget, general and non-general fund budgets, dedicated reserve levels for the non-general fund, and the staff salary and benefit recommendation.

The November 2021 meeting was mentioned and Laura Ewing reminded the committee members that the meeting date is November 4-5.

DISCUSSION ITEM
WICHE Proposed FY 2022 Workplan

President Michelau said that the development of the FY 2022 workplan that will be presented to the Commission for approval in May directly reflects and incorporates discussion and feedback to staff during the November 2020 Commission Meeting. She said the workplan also includes new areas of work such as:

- The expansion of Interstate Passport
- The Native-Serving Institutions Initiative's focus on new providers and the commitment to equity and inclusion.

She reminded the committee that the workplan is an internal-facing document to guide WICHE's direction and priorities and to provide the Commission with opportunities to give feedback and suggestions to keep WICHE on task to serve the region to the best of its abilities.

Chair Anderson asked about document content and layout and how to incorporate strategic directions and their connection to funding opportunities. President Michelau said that past attempts to have an outward-facing workplan were challenging, and the work and mission were lost in translation. She has found the best strategy is to keep the workplan as an internal tool to help convey and communicate WICHE priorities as they relate and support the Commission-approved five focus areas in supplemental schemed, and thoroughly planned support documents. Emphasizing attention to the focus areas throughout outward-facing messaging and the strategic communication plan has been effective but admittedly has room for further development under the direction of the new director of communications, Melanie Sidwell.

INFORMATION ITEM
Update on Work of the Investment Committee

Chair Anderson called on Commissioner Preus, chair of the Investment Committee, to provide an update on the committee's work. Commissioner Preus noted that the committee was established in February 2020 to evaluate WICHE's investment procedures, to review current investments, and make recommendations. The statement of procedures had not been reviewed by the full Commission or a Commission committee since 1992, she said. The committee's goal was to present a recommendation in May 2021, but it will not be able to do so until the November 2021 meeting at the earliest, she said.

Commissioner Preus said during their most recent meeting, committee members reviewed the evolution of the policy and procedures and had a robust discussion about the necessary steps for revision. The committee decided to consult legal counsel to assess whether WICHE would have to abide by all the laws of the WICHE region, or just Colorado laws, in the context of its investment procedures. After that, the committee will consider working with an investment professional to determine the most appropriate recommendation, which may include some dedicated monies for more aggressive investment purposes.

President Michelau has been working with legal counsel for several months and has received some preliminary information, but the committee is waiting for a final legal opinion and assessment before moving to next steps. She said the committee wants to ensure that the Commission has complete information before making a recommendation.

The committee members include:

- Camille Preus (OR), Chair
- Susan Anderson (AK)
- John Arnold (AZ)
- Jim Chavez (CO)
- Rodney Jacob (Guam)

INFORMATION ITEM
Budget Update and Salary Adjustments for Staff

President Michelau reported that overall, the FY 2021 budget is projected to come in under budget, and an accurate forecast in the final months is on target, although she does expect to see some additional spending.

- All dues have been collected, with the exception of one state, but that payment is expected to arrive any day. FY 2022 dues notices will go out in May.

- Indirects are lower than budgeted, but the difference could be made up over the course of 2021.
- The big underspend is the Commission Meeting budget, which is expected to bounce back in FY 2022.
- There are no concerns at this point with the non-general fund budgets.
- The Executive Committee voted to hold the dues flat in FY 2022 (\$159,000).

President Michelau said she hopes that the Commission will be in a position to approve staff salary increases with the FY 2022 budget. She understands and appreciates the difficulties faced by the states and territories, but is also mindful of not falling too far behind with increases. She acknowledged the continued good work of staff, as did several commissioners who commented that staff salary increases should be positively supported in May 2021, when the action item goes before the full Commission, and noted that many states are recovering well financially from the pandemic, and better than expected.

INFORMATION ITEM Other WICHE Updates

- WICHE was not selected by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to run the Quality Access Program, but is still committed to working with the organization that was selected to ensure its success.
- Interstate Passport was granted a 12-month, \$300,000 award from the National Science Foundation that will support a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges to address issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. WICHE will conduct a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within engineering disciplines, to articulate a theory of change, and to recruit leaders of national organizations and two- and four-year institutions representing at least four states to analyze and refine NMSU's proof of concept and assess the feasibility of scaling NMSU's work to additional institutions.
- The Behavioral Health Program (BHP) was awarded \$2,867,999 for the period 4/1/21 – 3/31/22 for its Together With Veterans (TWV) work, which is an increase of approximately \$540,000 over what was originally anticipated for that contract. This is because the Veterans Administration requested that the program recruit an additional 12 communities, which means that over that next 6-12 months, the program will have over 30 communities participating in the TWV program. TWV is currently working in 12 states/territories (including five WICHE states/territories): Guam, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, Texas, and Virginia. TWV is close to establishing a site in New Mexico and had been in the process of engaging communities in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho just as the pandemic hit. They have not expressed an interest in re-engaging to date. BHP has made multiple attempts to recruit in Wyoming with limited success. It is obligated to recruit 15 more sites in 2021.
- On March 30, 2021, WICHE submitted a proposal for a U.S. Department of Interior grant to support the membership of all of the Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States for CNMI, Guam, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). If awarded, the grant will cover the dues for the territory. President Michelau commented that the RMI has already paid its dues for FY 2022 and if the grant is awarded, the dues payment will be refunded. This is a TAP (Technical Assistance Program) grant, and the awards are usually announced at the end of April or the first part of May. Onboarding of the RMI will take place beginning July 1, 2021. WICHE staff are already meeting to discuss the steps and processes for student access logistics and a communication dissemination plan.
- President Michelau reported that the outlook for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) joining the WICHE region is promising. She, Patrick Lane, and Commissioner Frankie Eliptico had a meeting with the College of Micronesia on April 5, and Commissioner Eliptico said the presentation was well received. After the presentation, he did receive communication from the Board of Regents and their government and it is indeed looking like a great opportunity for the Pacific Island students.

Other Business

Chair Anderson asked for any other business to be brought before the committee. There was none.

Adjournment

Commissioner Lokken MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Shireman SECONDED. The motion passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. MDT.

ACTION ITEM

Review of the WICHE President's Performance and Adoption of FY 2022 Performance Objectives

Background

The WICHE Commission (the Commission) has three primary responsibilities: fiduciary responsibility for the organization, providing strategic direction, and hiring and firing the WICHE President. As part of the third responsibility, the WICHE Executive Committee, led by the WICHE Chair, is expected on an annual basis to evaluate the performance of the WICHE President. The purposes of the annual evaluation are threefold: to determine the extent to which the President has fulfilled the responsibilities of their position over the previous year and whether they should be retained; to assist the President in understanding what portions of the job have been accomplished well and what needs to be improved upon; and to help the Commission consider the President's remuneration for the coming year.

Evaluation of the WICHE President's Performance

According to the Commission policy established in November 2012, the annual performance review of the President is informed by surveys of staff and commissioners, which are to be secured and reported to the Commission by WICHE's human resources officer (except in the year in which such information is reported by the external evaluator).

The following pages reflect four items:

- The WICHE President's self-evaluation summary statement
- The FY 2021 performance objectives for the WICHE President that were approved by the WICHE Executive Committee on May 18, 2020, and the status that briefly describes the extent to which those goals have been met
- The summary results of the staff engagement survey, and
- The proposed FY 2022 performance goals and objectives for the WICHE President.

A separate evaluation of the President's performance by WICHE Chair Susan Anderson was provided prior to the Commission Meeting.

Action Requested

The following actions are requested:

- Determine the extent to which the President has fulfilled the responsibilities of their position over the previous year
- Assist the President in understanding what portions of the job have been accomplished well and what needs to be improved upon
- Determine the President's remuneration for the coming year, and
- Approve the FY 2022 performance goals and objectives for the WICHE President.

WICHE President Demarée Michelau FY 2021 Self-Evaluation

The following pages outline my FY 2021 performance goals and objectives and the status of whether those goals have been met. While I hope that this provides a solid description of my key activities and accomplishments over the past year, this statement provides additional reflections and context.

For FY 2021, the Commission approved my annual goals and objectives that exist within five key responsibility areas; they are to successfully administer the day-to-day WICHE operations; develop and maintain WICHE member relations; ensure relevant and innovative programs and services; provide high-quality policy guidance, research, and technical assistance to constituents; and strategically develop the organization. Overall, I met the goals and objectives that were approved, but how I did so was often different than how I had originally envisioned. I have long viewed that success at WICHE requires meaningful engagement with partners in the region. Limits on travel have most certainly created a barrier for me to be present in the states and territories, which is a key component of meaningful engagement. While not desirable as the sole tool for connecting with partners over the long term, I realized that technology can be effectively used to develop and maintain key relationships that are so important in ensuring my success in this role.

Successfully administering the day-to-day operations of WICHE this past year required flexibility, anticipation of what was to come, and a different type of leadership. In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and on March 13, 2020, WICHE staff began working remotely, following state and local health orders. Some WICHE staff are remote staff, and many WICHE staff travel, but the organization had never before been fully remote. Staff continued their exceptional productivity throughout FY 2021. Unfortunately, due to the uncertainty around the financial outlooks for our region, I was not able to provide salary increases for staff. Despite the fact that staff have performed extremely well, the conditions in which we all live and work have taken a toll on morale. The staff engagement survey shows that 80 percent of staff indicated that the morale of staff was either very good or good. That is deceiving, as shown by the comments that they shared. The added pressure of working remotely for those who do not typically do so, caring for children who are not in school or daycare, and the blurring of lines between our professional and personal lives has pushed everyone to their limits. Our staff is talented, smart, and committed to the work of this organization, and I am committed in FY 2022 to providing staff with the support they need to feel a sense of normalcy, and that includes bringing them back to the office as soon as it is safe to do so. As of April 2021, WICHE staff is allowed to work in the office at up to 50 percent capacity.

On a more positive note, despite the fact that many WICHE states and territories experienced financial hardships, WICHE once again is in a solid financial position and received a clean audit for FY 2020. In addition, when we have hired new staff over the past year, I have been focused on attracting high-quality, diverse candidate pools. We have seen some success with changing where we are posting our positions and adjusting language that we use, but I am personally engaged in professional development to explore more effective strategies.

Developing and maintaining strong relationships in the region is a top priority. This past year, I adjusted from primarily relying on in-person visits to virtual strategies. I worked to continue a high level of regional engagement through peer-to-peer videoconferences for state higher education executive officers and academic leaders, legislative testimony, meeting facilitation, one-on-one interaction, etc., but virtual engagement is not the same as being personally out in the region. Despite the challenges, I have been successful in building and maintaining strong relationships with my peers across the country, especially among the presidents of the other regional higher education compacts.

There were also lessons learned and areas for improvement that I will focus on in FY 2022. During this past year, a great deal of my time was spent on managing the pandemic. I tended to devote more time to internal operations than I generally prefer to do. In any year, this job requires a delicate balance between ensuring that WICHE is responsive and of service to the region while also making sure the internal operation is running smoothly. Perhaps because we were in uncharted territory, the internal needs (e.g., Salesforce, personnel, etc.) seemed to require more attention. At the same time, when I transitioned into this position, I realized quickly that the nature of my work changed, often with me not having the opportunity to dig as deep into the issues as I had grown accustomed to. This year, I had the opportunity to work alongside staff on some key projects - most notably, the needs assessment in Wyoming - where I could keep my policy skills tuned, while hopefully appropriately staying in my lane. I intend to strike a better balance in this coming year - one in

which I do not lean too heavily in one direction or another, while making time to engage in the meaningful work that makes my job rewarding. Overall, while WICHE was successful in identifying new areas of work and sources of funding, I can do more to lead and support those efforts.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as WICHE's President. FY 2021 continued to be challenging given the impacts of COVID-19, but the WICHE staff adapted well. I expect to see that same flexibility and ability to anticipate challenges and opportunities that lie ahead as we enter this next fiscal year. It is my privilege to work closely with the Commission, staff, and partners to advance WICHE's mission of increasing access to high-quality higher education for all citizens of the West.

WICHE President Demarée Michelau FY 2021 Performance Review

The following FY 2021 performance objectives for the WICHE President were approved by the WICHE Executive Committee on May 18, 2020; the third column highlights whether the goal was accomplished as of April 12, 2021.

Key Responsibility Areas	Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
<p>Successfully administer the day-to-day WICHE operations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a balanced budget for FY 2021 and find a way within a balanced budget to provide modest merit-based salary increases to staff. 2. Increase the proportion of underrepresented or minority staff. 3. Maintain the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity and assess the level of morale during the annual evaluation process. 4. Examine accounting and IT processes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of a complex organization and implement necessary changes. 5. Prepare for and complete financial audit resulting in “no material” findings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partially. The FY 2021 revenues exceeded expenditures, but due to uncertainty around COVID-19 and the state and territory budget outlooks, I was not able to provide merit-based salary increases to staff. 2. Yes, but can do more. Between July 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021, the percentage of underrepresented or minority staff increased from 21 percent to 24 percent. The overall number of staff decreased from 75 to 71 in that same time period. 3. Partially. Engaged in numerous virtual staff events throughout the year, and completed a staff engagement survey to assess the level of morale. Findings are summarized in subsequent pages, but they show that morale is respectable, and that staff were pleased overall with how the organization handled the COVID-19 pandemic. 4. Partially. In both accounting and IT, staff are continually looking for ways to improve and implement changes that will modernize the systems and improve security. IT replaced an aging phone system, and implemented additional system security features. The accounting team implemented an invoicing system through Salesforce and other system improvements. 5. Yes. Audit completed with “no material” findings; the Commission approved on November 12, 2020.

Key Responsibility Areas	Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
Develop and maintain WICHE member relations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage meaningfully with the WICHE Commissioners and other key stakeholders to ensure a solid understanding of current challenges facing the region and to better anticipate what the West may face in years to come. 2. Participate, either on official visits or for WICHE-relevant occasions, in events for all the WICHE members. 3. Participate in and contribute to national conversations in higher education by serving on at least two relevant boards and/or commissions as appropriate (e.g., CONAHEC, NC-SARA). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes. Maintained strong relationships with states and territories in the region. In partnership with leaders in Guam, the CNMI, and WICHE staff, I worked to secure the membership of the Republic of the Marshall Islands in WICHE; See regional engagement summary. 2. No. While I engaged with partners in all states and territories, I did not participate in official visits or events in all states and territories. 3. Yes. Serves on CONAHEC and NC-SARA boards (Finance Committee).
Ensure relevant and innovative programs and services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In collaboration with staff, examine the current suite of programs and services to identify new strategies for serving the region and recruitment in membership organizations (e.g., The Forum, The Alliance, WCET, State Authorization Network). 2. Conduct at least three visits with philanthropic partners to ensure stability in external financial support. 3. Ensure rapid response services for our regional partners (i.e., assistance with COVID-19, economic challenges, federal policy changes). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partially. This examination is ongoing and changed considerably during the pandemic. I have engaged in informal reviews of recruitment approaches with staff and have been actively involved in recruitment for Interstate Passport. 2. Yes. Visited with Lumina Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Laura and John Arnold Foundation. 3. Yes. This was a major focus of the entire WICHE team and was operationalized through peer-to-peer meetings, web resources, publications, webinars, etc.
Provide high-quality policy guidance, research, and technical assistance to constituents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the successful development, implementation, management, and oversight of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for the WICHE region. 2. Further develop and sustain technical assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes. W-SARA director worked with the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) to effectively implement SARA. 2. Yes. Behavioral Health continues to demonstrate technical assistance expertise, and the Policy Analysis and Research team successfully completed a higher education needs assessment in Wyoming.

Key Responsibility Areas	Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
<p>Strategically develop the organization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively engage the Commission to set strategic priorities in the context of the WICHE Workplan. 2. Secure external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical assistance projects, consistent with WICHE's mission and priorities. 3. Continue successful implementation of the Strategic Communications Plan. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes. Implemented the redesigned the Commission agenda to solicit meaningful contributions from the Commission through committees and Committee of the Whole. 2. Yes. Secured funding from a variety of sources across the organization, including Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, ECMC Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, federal funding to support Together with Veterans, and various state contracts. 3. Partially. The Communications unit continued to experience turnover, but a permanent director was hired in March 2021. She has hit the ground running, while simultaneously learning about WICHE and the region.

**President's Regional Engagement
FY 2021**

2020

July

22	WICHE Peer-to-Peer Western SHEEO Meeting	Virtual
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August

5	WICHE Peer-to-Peer Western SHEEO Meeting	Virtual
27	Wyoming Community College Sustainable Funding Workgroup Meeting	Casper, Wyo.

September

2	Higher Learning Commission Students' Right to Know Initiative	Virtual
23	W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and State Portal Entity Meeting	Virtual

October

7	Wyoming Community College Sustainable Funding Workgroup Meeting	Virtual
16	Wyoming Legislature's Select Committee on Community College Funding and Governance	Virtual
28-29	NC-SARA Board Meeting	Virtual

November

3	WCET Annual Meeting	Virtual
12	WICHE Commission Meeting	Virtual
16-17	Dual Mission Summit	Virtual
18	W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and State Portal Entity Meeting	Virtual
20	Wyoming Community College Commission's Special Meeting (Needs Assessment)	Virtual

December

1	North Dakota Legislative Organizational Session	Virtual
16	W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and State Portal Entity Meeting	Virtual

2021

January

25	South Dakota Legislature Joint Committee on Appropriations	Virtual
27	W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and State Portal Entity Meeting	Virtual
28	WICHE Officers' Retreat	Virtual

February

5	Meeting with U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs	Virtual
17	WICHE Peer-to-Peer Western SHEEO Meeting	Virtual
24	W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and State Portal Entity Meeting	Virtual

March

2-3	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education Staff Retreat (Facilitator)	Virtual
4-5	Higher Learning Commission Students' Right to Know Initiative	Virtual

April

5	College of Micronesia - FSM Board of Regents Meeting	Virtual
21	WICHE Peer-to-Peer Western SHEEO Meeting	Virtual

May

4-5	NC-SARA Board Meeting	Virtual
18	WICHE Commission Meeting	Virtual

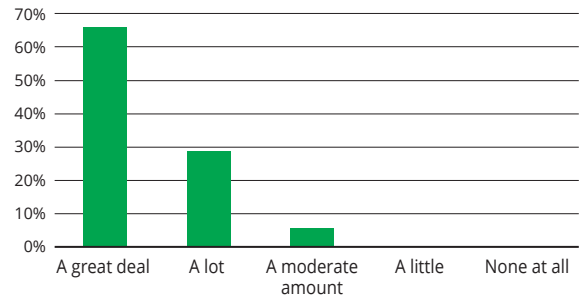
WICHE Staff Engagement Survey Summary

On February 24, 2021, with the assistance of Deirdre Coulter, WICHE’s Director of Human Resources, I administered a staff engagement survey with 12 questions (including an option to include contact information). The purpose of the survey was to assess the level of staff engagement and the morale of the organization as well as to inform the evaluation of the WICHE President. The initial deadline for completion was March 5, 2021, but that deadline was extended until March 10, 2021. The survey garnered a 55 percent response rate. Below is a brief summary of the results.

The first question focused on staff perceptions of the respect demonstrated toward staff. About 94 percent of staff indicated that WICHE’s management, at all levels, demonstrates either a great deal or a lot of respect for them or their colleagues - up from 87.5 percent. This was an important question, as we believe that a healthy organization can only function when there is mutual respect among colleagues.

We also asked a series of questions related to WICHE management to gauge perceptions around ethics, transparency, and professional development. A summary of staff answers are below.

To what extent does WICHE’s management, at all levels, demonstrate respect for you and your colleagues?

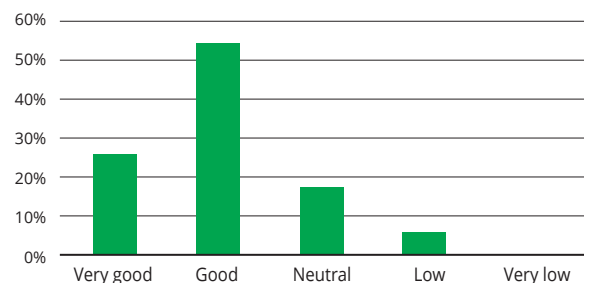


Please indicate to the extent you agree with the following statements



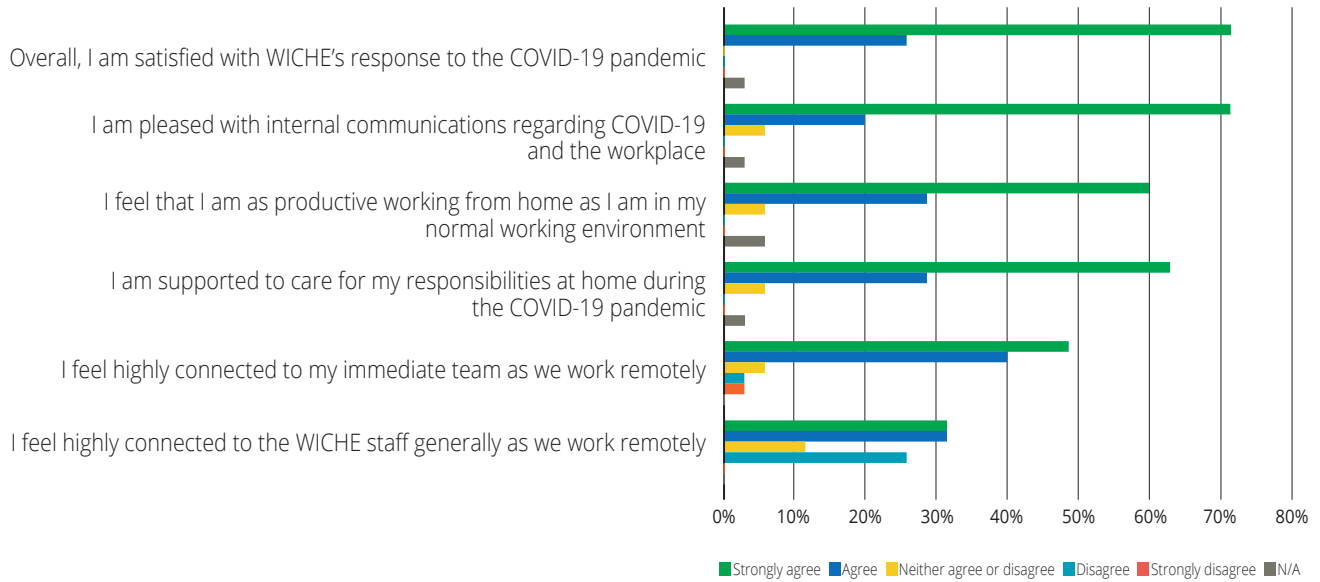
One of the primary reasons that we administered the survey was to gauge morale of the staff, so we asked staff how they perceive the morale of the organization. About 80 percent of staff indicated that the morale of staff was either very good or good. This is down about four percent from last year, with several more staff indicating that they were neutral. The comments, however, reflect perhaps a more realistic look at what is really happening. Words like “fatigue, taken a toll, exhaustion, hit a wall,” and the like are telling.

How do you perceive the morale of staff in the organization?



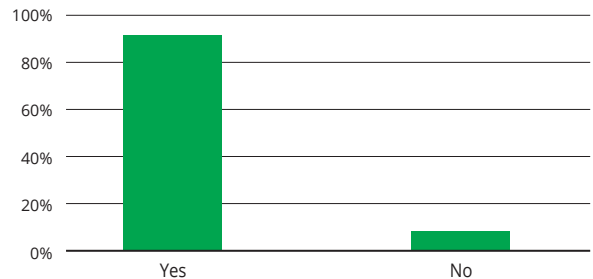
The next question pertained directly to WICHE’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, staff seemed satisfied with the response but, not surprisingly, many felt a real sense of disconnect to other staff outside their immediate team.

Please indicate to the extent you agree with the following statements that are specifically related to working during the COVID-19 pandemic

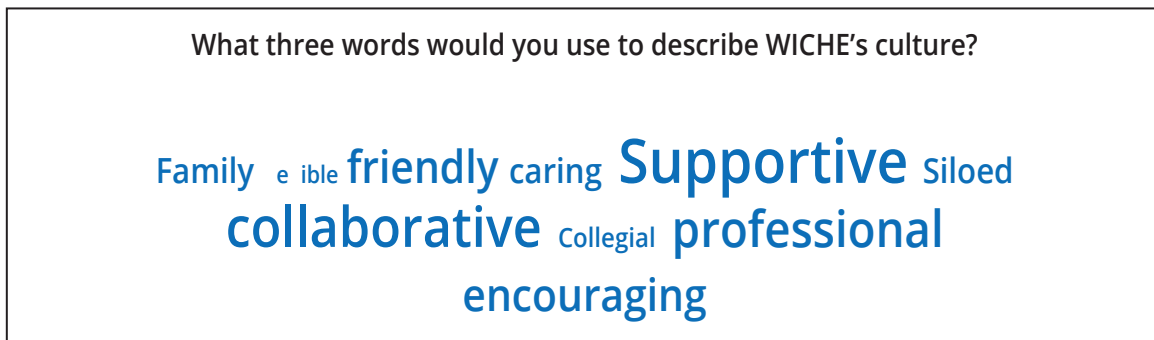


We then asked whether staff have a clear sense of how their work advances WICHE’s mission, and 91 percent indicated that they do. When compared to last year’s comments, it is still apparent that there can be a disconnect to the broader mission and work but, generally speaking, staff have a clear sense of why they are doing what they do.

Do you have a clear sense of how your work advances WICHE's mission? For WCET and Behavioral Health staff do you have a sense of how your work complements WICHE's mission?



Finally, we asked an open-ended question: “What three words would you use to describe WICHE’s culture?” The results are presented below in a word cloud.



The results to this question are why I enjoy coming to work everyday. Once again, the WICHE staff are what makes this organization successful. It is my privilege to be able to lead this engaged and talented group of people.

WICHE President Demi Michelau FY 2022 Goals and Objectives

The following performance objectives for the WICHE President are proposed for FY 2022. They are intended to build upon the foundation of the president's goals, objectives, and performance from FY 2021.

Key Responsibility Areas	Annual Goals and Objectives
<p>Successfully administer the day-to-day WICHE operations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a balanced budget for FY 2022 and find a way within a balanced budget to provide modest merit-based salary increases to staff. 2. Develop effective strategies to recruit and attract a more diverse applicant pool for position vacancies. 3. Advance a workplace culture that supports and values diversity. 4. Maintain the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity and assess the level of morale during the annual evaluation process. 5. Implement continuous improvement principles for budgeting and IT processes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of a complex organization and implement necessary changes. 6. Prepare for and complete the annual financial audit resulting in "no material" findings.
<p>Develop and maintain WICHE member relations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage meaningfully with the WICHE Commissioners and other key stakeholders to ensure a solid understanding of current challenges facing the region and to better anticipate what the West may face in years to come. 2. Participate, either on official visits or for WICHE-relevant occasions, in events in all the WICHE members. 3. Participate in and contribute to national conversations in higher education by serving on at least two relevant boards and/or commissions as appropriate (e.g., CONAHEC, NC-SARA).
<p>Ensure relevant and innovative programs and services</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In collaboration with staff, examine the current suite of programs and services to identify new strategies for serving the region and recruitment in membership organizations (e.g., The Forum, The Alliance, WCET, State Authorization Network). 2. Conduct at least three visits with philanthropic partners to ensure stability in external financial support. 3. Position WICHE to work collaboratively with our regional partners to best position the region for COVID-19 recovery.
<p>Provide high-quality policy guidance, research, and technical assistance to constituents</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the successful development, implementation, management, and oversight of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for the WICHE region. 2. Further develop and sustain technical assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues.
<p>Strategically develop the organization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively engage the WICHE Commission to set strategic priorities in the context of the WICHE Workplan. 2. Secure external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical assistance projects, consistent with WICHE's mission and priorities. 3. Continue successful implementation of the Strategic Communications Plan



Committee of the Whole Call to Order

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

1:15 – 1:45 p.m. MDT

Videoconference

Join the virtual **Committee of the Whole / Call to Order** by accessing the Zoom Meeting link in your registration confirmation. You do not need to leave the Zoom Meeting after each session. You may stay in the Zoom Meeting throughout the entire virtual meeting, including Committee breakout sessions and breaks.

If you have difficulties joining the Zoom Meeting or need other technical assistance, please call the help desk at 303.541.0204 or 303.541.0201.

Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

1:15 - 1:45 p.m. MDT

Committee of the Whole – Call to Order

Agenda

Call to Order: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Introduction of New Commissioners 2-3



Approval of the November 12, 2020,
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes 2-5

Report of the Chair: Susan Anderson

Report of the President: Demarée Michelau

Recess until May 18, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. MDT

New Commissioners



Catherine (Cathy) Dinauer is the executive director of the Nevada State Board of Nursing. In her role, she has overall responsibility for the regulatory agency's daily operations, which licenses/certifies approximately 65,000 RNs, LPNs, CNAs, and APRNs in Nevada. Before her role as executive director, Dinauer was the chief nursing officer at a 200-bed facility in Nevada. She has over 40 years of experience as a registered nurse in education, emergency nursing, and leadership. She is a Fellow of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Institute of Regulatory Excellence, a graduate of the Advisory Board Academy Fellowship, and was the 2017 recipient of the Northern Nevada Nurse of Achievement in Nursing Leadership.



Melody Rose is the chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education. During a 25-year career in higher education, Rose has been a leader as an academic faculty member and administrator, with a focus on improving student access and success in higher education in Oregon. Her leadership roles have included serving as the chancellor of the Oregon University System, Portland State University's vice provost for academic programs and instruction and dean of undergraduate studies, and chair of Portland State's Division of Political Science. Prior to creating and running the consulting firm Rose Strategies, LLC, Rose most recently served as president of Marylhurst University from 2014 to 2019.

ACTION ITEM

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes—Call to Order November 12, 2020

Commissioners Present

Camille Preus (OR), Chair
Susan Anderson (AK), Vice Chair
Ray Holmberg (ND), Immediate Past chair

James Johnsen (AK)
Donn Liston (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Rita Cheng (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Ellen Junn (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Angie Paccione (CO)
David Lassner (HI)
John Morton (HI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Matt Freeman (ID)
Dave Lent (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Gillian Barclay (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Jill Louters (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/CNMI)
Jude Hofschneider (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/CNMI)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/Guam)
Ann Millner (UT)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Les Purce (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kim Dale (WY)
David Jones (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Thom Reilly (NV)
Mark Moores (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)
Patricia Jones (UT)

Guests

Louise Lynch, Arizona Certifying Officer
Jennifer Ouellette, Director of Programs, Governor's Office
of the Western Regional Education Compact for Nevada
Michael Shepard, President, Board of Directors, Veterans
Coalition of Northwest Montana
Cassidy Stortz, Utah Certifying Officer
Craig Vaske, Wyoming Certifying Officer

WICHE Staff

Candy Allen, Senior Graphic Designer
Suzanne Benally, Director, Native-Serving Institutions
Initiative
James Berg, Interim Director of Communications
Genevieve Berry, Project Manager, MHTTC
Peace Bransberger, Senior Research Analyst
Gina Brimner, Director, Veterans Initiatives
Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services
Margo Colalancia, Director, Student Access Programs
Cherie Curtin, Administrative Assistant III, Programs and
Services
Van Davis, Policy and Planning Consultant, WCET
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and
to the Commission
Liliana Diaz, Policy Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research
Anna Galas, Director, Academic Leadership initiatives
Rebecca Helfand, Director of Evaluation and Analytics,
Behavioral Health Program
Kay Hulstrom, Manager, Institution Services, Programs and
Services
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Sarah Leibrandt, Senior Research Analyst, Policy Analysis
and Research
Mollie McGill, Deputy Director, WCET
Demarée Michelau, WICHE President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-
Director, MHTTC

Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator,
President's Office
Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President
for Technology-Enhanced Education
Megan Raymond, Senior Director of Membership and
Programs, WCET
Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III, Policy Analysis
and Research
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State
Authorization

Tanya Spilovoy, Director, Open Policy
Kate Springsteen, Coordinator of Student Access Programs,
and Member Services Coordinator of Interstate Passport,
Programs and Services
Emma Tilson, Administrative Coordinator, Communications
and Programs and Service
Liza Tupa, Director of Education and Research, Behavioral
Health Program
Darlene Williams, Administrative Assistant III, Behavioral
Health Program

Chair Camille Preus called the meeting to order and welcomed commissioners, guests, and staff. She asked Laura Ewing to call roll of the WICHE Commission (the Commission). A quorum was established.

Chair Preus introduced new Commissioners:

- Donn Liston, Commissioner, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (AK)
- Ellen Junn, President, California State University, Stanislaus (CA)
- Robert Shireman, Director of Higher Education Excellence and Senior Fellow, The Century Foundation (CA)
- John Morton, Vice President Emeritus for Community Colleges, University of Hawai'i (HI)

After introductions, there was a tribute honoring Rose Pangelinan Camacho, an administrator of the CNMI Scholarship Office since 2012. Camacho was a longtime colleague and friend of WICHE and a strong advocate for students throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. She passed away in October 2020.

Action Item

Approval of the May 18, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Chair Preus requested a motion from the floor to approve the May 18, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Susan Anderson MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED the motion. The motion was carried unanimously by Zoom poll voting.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Immediate past chair, Commissioner Ray Holmberg, thanked the Commission for their outstanding nominations, on behalf of the 2020 Nominating Committee, which he chairs. Members of the Committee include Commissioners Antwan Jefferson (CO), Colleen Sathre (HI), Clayton Christian (MT), and Patricia Sullivan (NM).

The Committee met via teleconference on October 20, 2020, to consider the submitted nominations for 2021 Vice Chair. After deliberation, the Committee recommended Hawai'i Commissioner David Lassner as the incoming 2021 Vice Chair. Commissioner Lassner was vetted prior to the nomination as to his availability to serve if selected.

Commissioner Holmberg further reported that the Nominating Committee recommends the following Commissioners for consideration and approval during the business session on November 12, 2020:

- Susan Anderson (AK), 2021 Chair
- David Lassner (HI), 2021 Vice Chair
- Camille Preus (OR), 2021 Immediate Past Chair

Report of the Chair

Chair Preus referred to her written report as seen on pages 2-16 in the November 2020 agenda book, and highlighted a few of her accomplishments.

- Stability during a time of leadership transition.
- Chaired the first (ever) and second virtual Commission Meetings.
- Guided adjustments to the President's annual evaluation process.
- Led the establishment of three special committees – Behavioral Health, EdTech, and the Investment Committee.
- Chaired the Commission during a pandemic.

Report of the President

President Demarée Michelau began her report by thanking Chair Preus for her fine service as Chair of the Commission and for partnering with her over the past 12 months. She said that COVID-19 has changed many things in the past year, including the content of WICHE's work, and has presented various opportunities to support the region during uncertain times. President Michelau thanked WICHE's senior leadership team and WICHE staff for their dedication and hard work. Referring to her written report, on pages 2-17 in the November 2020 agenda book, she highlighted the following WICHE accomplishments under her direction:

- New and updated WICHE website. Analytics show there is more traffic on the website since its launch.
- Continued, successful external philanthropic support for initiatives.
- State and territory engagement via videoconferences and a trip to Casper, Wyo., during the pandemic.
- Building and developing a Commission board portal for easy access to materials and resources. Work with a consultant to build the portal on SharePoint is underway.
- Workplace culture and staff engagement to ensure an inclusive workplace that supports diversity. Diversity training is on hold per legal counsel due to the Trump Administration executive order. WICHE does have federal funding and diversity training during the executive order could risk that funding.

President Michelau recognized staff member Suzanne Benally, who is departing WICHE to take a role as executive director of the Swift Foundation, an organization that supports Indigenous leadership in agroecology and community sustainability both in the U.S. and abroad.

On behalf of the Commission, Chair Preus thanked President Michelau and the entire WICHE staff for their dedicated and determined work amid various challenges presented by the pandemic.

Delegation Selection of 2021 Committee Members

Chair Preus reminded the states and territories to caucus and then contact Laura Ewing to inform her of delegation committee assignments for 2021 service on the Executive Committee, Policy Analysis and Research Committee, and Programs and Services Committee.

Adjournment

Commissioner Barbara Damron made a MOTION TO ADJOURN until 3:30 p.m. MST, on November 12, 2020, and Commissioner Ann Millner SECONDED. The motion carried unanimously by Zoom poll voting. The Committee of the Whole adjourned at 1:40 p.m. MST.

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes – Business Session November 12, 2020

Commissioners Present

Camille Preus (OR), Chair
Susan Anderson (AK), Vice Chair
Ray Holmberg (ND), Immediate Past Chair

James Johnsen (AK)
Donn Liston (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Ellen Junn (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Angie Paccione (CO)
David Lassner (HI)
John Morton (HI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Matt Freeman (ID)
Dave Lent (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Gillian Barclay (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Jill Louters (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/CNMI)
Jude Hofschneider (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/CNMI)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/Guam)
Ann Millner (UT)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Les Purce (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kim Dale (WY)
David Jones (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Rita Cheng (AZ)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Thom Reilly (NV)
Mark Moores (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Brian Maher (SD)
Patricia Jones (UT)

Guests

Bennett Boggs, Chief of Staff, Colorado Department of
Higher Education
Louise Lynch, Arizona Certifying Officer
Jennifer Ouellette, Director of Programs, Governor's Office
of the Western Regional Education Compact for Nevada
Cassidy Stortz, Utah Certifying Officer

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Sarah Leibrandt, Senior Research Analyst, Policy Analysis
and Research
Mollie McGill, Deputy Director, WCET
Demarée Michelau, WICHE President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-
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Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator,
President's Office
Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President
for Technology-Enhanced Education
Megan Raymond, Senior Director of Membership and
Programs, WCET

Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III, Policy Analysis and Research
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization
Kate Springsteen, Coordinator of Student Access Programs, and Member

Services Coordinator of Interstate Passport, Programs and Services
Emma Tilson, Administrative Coordinator, Communications and Programs and Service
Liza Tupa, Director of Education and Research, Behavioral Health Program

Chair Camille Preus called the Committee of the Whole Business Session to order. The session began with a short activity for all attendees, with trivia questions about the WICHE region. The meeting then moved to a full agenda of Committee reports, action items and information items.

Committee of the Whole Committee Reports

Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Preus reported that the Executive Committee approved an amendment to previous minutes and approved the September meeting minutes. President Demarée Michelau reviewed the Commission Meeting agenda, and then the committee had a discussion about priority issues that should be considered for the FY 2022 workplan.

Chair Preus summarized details of the Executive Committee's August and September 2020 meetings, noting that in August, the Executive Committee approved holding dues for the FY 2022 and FY 2023 biennium at the current level of \$159,000, was briefed on the Legislative Advisory Committee, and received staff updates on key initiatives. During the September meeting, the Executive Committee was updated on external support, reviewed the upcoming November 2020 Commission Meeting, and discussed and provided feedback on the W-SARA regional appeals process. During both meetings, President Michelau provided budget updates.

Report of the Audit Committee

Commissioner and Audit Committee Chair Ray Holmberg presented a report of the Audit Committee. Members of the 2020 WICHE Audit Committee, including John Arnold (AZ), Clayton Christian (MT), Barbara Damron (NM), Ray Holmberg (ND), and Don Bennett (WA) met via videoconference on October 13, 2020. Also in attendance were President Michelau, Craig Milburn, and Laura Ewing, as well as Matthew Marino from RubinBrown, WICHE's auditing firm. Marino walked the committee through the FY 2020 financial statement, and the auditor's opinion was discussed by the committee. The RubinBrown audit team spent several weeks on the WICHE audit and worked with staff remotely to conduct the audit. Typically, the auditors conduct their work on-site but this year, they modified their approach due to COVID-19 restrictions. Their investigation resulted in an unmodified opinion that the financial statements represent fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of WICHE as of June 30, 2020. RubinBrown stressed that this is a "clean audit" with no findings or adverse opinions, and it had no disagreements with financial reports provided by staff.

Commissioner Holmberg said one area of the audit to note involves the State Higher Education Policy Center (SHEPC) – an entity formed by WICHE, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) for the purposes of owning the shared facility that houses their offices. WICHE is the majority partner (57 percent) of SHEPC so it is required to include the SHEPC activities in its financial statements. From 2005 to 2018, SHEPC was reported as a blended component unit. The past two years' financial statements change the reporting to a discrete component unit. SHEPC is audited separately by Middlemist Crouch & Co., and the 2020 audit revealed a finding. In August 2019, SHEPC's property management company, Colorado Property Group, changed its financial management software, but neglected to inform the SHEPC partners. As SHEPC is their only client that does not function on a calendar year, they apparently made a mistake when they moved over to new software and did not recognize that they switched the numbers over to the calendar year from a fiscal year. This property management oversight went unnoticed until the books were audited. Fortunately, there was no financial impact, and Colorado Property Group has corrected the error. The organizations now receive more detailed reports and have clarified responsibilities to prevent errors in the future.

Commissioner Holmberg reported that after RubinBrown's presentation, the committee met privately with the auditors for discussion and the committee members then met with staff. In conclusion, the committee recommends that the Commission approve the FY 2020 audited financial statement. Commissioner Holmberg MOVED TO APPROVE the FY 2020 audit and financial statements and Commissioner Clayton Christian SECONDED. Chair Preus asked for discussion on the motion and there was none.

The motion carried unanimously by Zoom poll voting.

Report of Programs and Services Committee

Commissioner Thomas (Les) Purce, chair of the Programs and Services Committee, was called to report on the November 12, 2020, committee meeting. He began his report by saying the committee had a productive and comprehensive meeting, including presentations on four Programs and Services initiatives.

Interstate Passport®

Anna Galas, director of Academic Leadership Initiatives, provided an update on the Interstate Passport® Network's expansion. She noted that 18 additional institutions have joined, increasing the Network's membership to 59 institutions in 17 states. Four states – Alaska, Hawai'i, South Dakota, and Utah – have full public system participation and 25 of the Network member institutions are Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Galas said that Passport staff worked with a national task force to release a call to action on July 8, 2020, urging higher education to help facilitate transfer for students nationwide. The call garnered over 200 signatures of support from WICHE Commissioners, leaders of Passport Network institutions, several Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges member institutions, and six national postsecondary organizations. The increased awareness raised by their efforts led to publicity in the Hechinger Report and the Washington Post.

In addition, the use of the Passport Learning Outcomes was finalized in an agreement with the American Council on Education for use with its ACE College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT). Most recently, a two-year, \$500,000 grant was secured from the ECMC Foundation to support additional staffing and to expand the Network by adding 20 institutions, 10 of which must have MSI status and they will receive a two-year membership fee waiver.

Student Access Programs

Margo Colalancia, director of Student Access Programs, reported on the status of fall 2020 enrollments in WICHE's regional access programs. She reported that COVID-19 is having an impact, but it's surprisingly less than staff initially anticipated. Colalancia said that Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) enrollment of 41,866 students is down by 1.5 percent compared with 2019, with 16 of 162 participating institutions unreported at the time of the committee meeting. Colalancia said that WUE enrollment has fared slightly better than national undergraduate enrollment, as the National Student Clearinghouse data reported a 4.4 percent drop in undergraduate enrollment overall.

Colalancia also reported that in WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), enrollment declined during academic year 2019-20, with 36 fewer students being funded, representing almost a 6 percent decrease from last year; 568 students were funded with a collective state and territory investment of \$13.9 million. Severe state budget crises triggered by COVID-19 prompted Colorado and Nevada to fund no new students for the entering class of fall 2020. Hawai'i cut back on its new positions and most of the other states funded fewer students as well. However, CNMI, Montana, and North Dakota showed modest increases. Fortunately, all states funding students through PSEP are committed to supporting their continuation through graduation.

Colalancia also reported to the committee that although state funding for healthcare students is down, applicant interest in the healthcare professions is robust. As an indicator, veterinary medicine saw a 20 percent increase in the number of applications for the 2021 entering class. The vet med's national application deadline closes earlier than all the other healthcare professions, but so far, medical school applications are up by about 20 percent as well.

Colalancia reported the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) graduate enrollments are up 23 percent, from 1,907 students in 2019 to 2,345 in 2020. Nationally, graduate enrollments are up by 3.9 percent.

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative

Suzanne Benally, director of the Native-Serving Institutions initiative, noted in her report to the committee that the WICHE initiative "Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice," launched in December 2017, is in the final phase of its Lumina Foundation grant. There are now 37 Native American-Serving Nontribal colleges and universities that receive Title III funding and have at least 10 percent Native students in their student populations. When WICHE initiated the project, there were 24 NASNTIs.

Benally also reported that WICHE awarded small grants to 11 of the NASNTIs to support their efforts to narrow attainment gaps, implement high-impact practices leading to student academic success, and advance sustainability.

Workplan

Jere Mock, vice president of Programs and Services, gave a preview of planning taking shape for the group's fiscal year 2022 workplan. She said staff will focus on sustaining and expanding WICHE's foundational Student Access Programs; growing the Interstate Passport Network to streamline student transfer, particularly for underrepresented students of color, low-income and first-generation students; and continuing programs that aim to reduce attainment gaps and increase educational equity for marginalized student populations. Several cost-saving programs, offered in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, will also be continued.

Chair Preus allowed time for commissioners to ask questions; there were none.

Report and Recommended Action of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee

Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon, chair of the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee, was asked to report on the November 12, 2020, committee meeting.

Action Item to Approve the W-SARA Regional Appeals Process

Commissioner Cabaldon reported on the extensive review and discussion regarding the action item to approve the required W-SARA regional appeals process for state/territory renewals. The action item pertains to the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) requirement that each of the Regional Compacts create a means to hear and resolve appeals from states/territories for which the Compact denies membership or renewal of membership in SARA. The PAR committee recommended that the Commission approve the overall W-SARA appeals process with a modification to the review panel process. This recommended amendment applies to the section of the process when an applicant up for renewal requests a review panel convening if there is a negative recommendation by the Regional Committee. The PAR committee made the following recommendations to amend the action item:

- The panel should be called the Review Panel (instead of Joint Review Panel).
- The Review Panel should be composed solely of WICHE Commissioners.
- The Regional Committee is invited to attend the meeting and provide expertise to the Review Panel at the convening as needed, as the Review Panel reviews the negative recommendation with the applicant.

Commissioner Cabaldon reported the regional appeals process has not seen a case yet. Developing this process has been prompted by NC-SARA in the event that the process is needed. Developing the process has required a tremendous amount of work and has been underway for many months under the direction of Chair Preus, several WICHE commissioners, and staff. On behalf of the PAR Committee, Commissioner Cabaldon MOVED TO APPROVE the W-SARA Regional Appeals Process and Commissioner Hilda Rosselli SECONDED. Chair Preus called for discussion and there was none. The motion passed unanimously by Zoom poll vote.

Research on Accelerating Recovery: Credential Completion in Uncertain Times

Commissioner Cabaldon said this action item expands on an existing project in the FY 2021 Workplan, and will include examining the impacts of COVID 19 on community college students and the response to those impacts by community colleges and the states involved. He directed commissioners to page 4-11 of the agenda book for a full description of the project and expansion details. This research will help institutions and states ensure that opportunity gaps in higher education do not widen due to COVID-19. The committee requested that the expansion begin soon, and passed this action item unanimously.

Report of the Legislative Advisory Committee

Commissioner Cabaldon said the committee was given an update on WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee virtual meeting in September 2020. Staff will be working closely with commissioners who are legislators to craft the agenda for the next meeting.

Report on *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*

Staff gave a preview of the forthcoming *Knocking at the College Door* data release, which includes WICHE's projections of high school graduates through the year 2037. The data will be released December 15, 2020, and commissioners will receive a pre-publication copy for review.

National Consortium for Open Educational Resources

The Policy Analysis and Research Unit, in conjunction with WCET, has received funding from the Hewlett Foundation to develop a network focused on equitably scaling up Open Educational Resources in the West in partnership with the other regional compacts.

Workplan

Commissioner Cabaldon said the committee had a brief discussion about the FY 2022 workplan. There was consensus among commissioners around the need for flexibility to quickly respond to needs that may emerge from the states' quick action and response to COVID-19 – including governance management and policy challenges that the states and territories are facing.

Chair Preus allowed for time for commissioners to ask questions; there were none.

Report of the Investment Committee

Chair Preus, who also chairs the Investment Committee, said in May 2020, the Commission established the Investment Committee, a special committee to examine investment policy and make a recommendation to the full Commission as to whether any adjustments should be made. Members of the committee also include John Arnold (AZ), Susan Anderson (AK), Jim Chavez (CO), and Rodney Jacob (Guam). The committee met via videoconference on October 21, 2020. Also in attendance were President Michelau; Craig Milburn, chief financial officer; Laura Ewing, executive assistant to the president and to the Commission; Bob Krug, marketing advisor from C-SAFE; and Glenn Scott, financial advisor and portfolio manager from C-SAFE. The committee heard a presentation from C-SAFE about WICHE's current investments and the organization's ability to join Colorado's local government investment pool, and reviewed its performance. During the meeting, the committee agreed that continued thought and research on options for WICHE investments was needed before any investment strategy decisions could be made. The committee will continue its work and come back to the Commission with a recommendation in May.

Chair Preus allowed for time for commissioners to ask questions; there were none.

Report of the Legislative Advisory Committee

Commissioner Fred Baldwin reported that the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) met virtually in September 2020. Among the attendees were 27 legislators representing 16 states and territories. Commissioner Baldwin said the meeting included reviewing the work of the LAC, which focuses on strengthening state-level policymaking in higher education in the West by engaging legislators in the discussion of key issues and by seeking their input on strategies for interstate collaboration. The Commission appoints members of the LAC; specifically, the executive team member, in consultation with the other commissioners from each state or territory, appoints up to four legislators. Commissioners who are also state legislators are automatically appointed to the LAC, and the remaining spots on the LAC are filled by the appointment process.

Commissioner Baldwin said the virtual meeting theme was *Responding Together: Recovery & Resilience in Uncertain Times*, and attendees met over a three-day period. The meeting focused on the pandemic's impacts on higher education and each day had a subtheme: finance, innovation, and data.

The meeting evaluations (33 percent response rate) indicated that the in-person meeting format was greatly missed and some of the evaluation feedback said the content focused too heavily on institutional issues and failed to represent a clear link to legislative policy. Commissioner Baldwin said WICHE staff are committed to incorporating the feedback from the evaluations when planning future meetings of the LAC. Staff are working on soliciting topics of interest for a potential LAC virtual convening in December 2020.

Commissioner Baldwin commented that legislative attendance at LAC meetings is a challenging issue. There has been a significant increase in legislative meetings since meeting virtually is so much easier and more affordable than face-to-face meetings during the pandemic. But these meetings can conflict with the LAC meeting schedule and a work-around is being considered by staff. He also noted that Commissioner Gerry Pollet has given good feedback for staff to consider for future LAC convenings.

Committee of the Whole Action, and Information Items

Update on WICHE Budget: General Fund and Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary for FY 2020

Chair Preus called on Craig Milburn, WICHE chief financial officer, who began his report by pointing out key information on the General Fund Budget (as seen on page 7-11 of the agenda book). The left side of the report contains the financial details of WICHE's last fiscal year and the right side shows the current year, FY 2021. Milburn presented information on how the budget ended in June 2020, the close of the fiscal year. He noted that the revenue section of the report shows that WICHE budgeted to receive \$3,470,000 and actually received \$3,757,498 in overall revenue. He said the primary

reason for the increase was due to indirect costs reimbursements received from a Veterans Administration grant for the Behavioral Health Program and a Gates Foundation grant for the WCET program; this resulted in \$286,000 more than anticipated. In program area expenditures, he said, there was \$28,000 less spent than budgeted. Between the under-budget expenditures and the over-budget revenue, \$352,000 in excess revenue went into the reserve budget.

Milburn continued his overview for FY 2021 (current fiscal year passed by the Commission in May 2020) and reported that as of the end of October 2020, the budget is on track to stay on budget. He noted that the budget includes \$11,000 excess revenue and he believes that will be met by fiscal year end.

Milburn presented information about the reserves section of the budget. He said at the beginning of the fiscal year there was \$3,516,000 in the reserves. The Commission has instructed that a portion of those reserve dollars are to be saved and not spent. He noted the only portion of the reserves budget that is available for dedicated expenditures amounts to \$1.9 million – \$425,000 of which has been allocated for several expenditures (not yet completed), including: website completion (\$50,000), strategic communications plan (\$50,000), data privacy plan (\$225,000), and staff professional development (\$100,000).

Milburn explained a correction to be made to the budget. He referred to a process initiated by past president, David Longnecker, for reporting reserve ceiling amounts reported to the Commission; excess reserves above the ceiling would be surrendered and allocations at the Commission discretion for expenditure. The report in the agenda book reflects \$91,000 surrendered by Programs and Services for Commission discretion. This amount is an error on Milburn's part and should be \$0. He continued to explain that in April 2020, Jere Mock had anticipated that the Interstate Passport program would have a reserve dedication in September 2020 for that amount (\$91,000). A provision in the budget was not made at the 2020 fiscal year end for this accrual for FY 2021 allocation. With this adjustment, there is no reserve amount for Commission discretion. Milburn reported the FY 2020 year ended with a reserve of \$3,443,000.

Milburn spoke about a line item new to the FY 2021 budget that the Commission approved for President Michelau to use for strategic objectives in the amount of \$150,000. The Commission approval allows her to determine how to dedicate allocations from this budget item; there have been no dedications yet made.

Milburn continued to present information about the WICHE unit budget numbers. These units are fully funded by the general fund. He said the units had excess revenue and their budgets came in lower than budgeted. There were no questions about the general fund budget or the program area revenue and expense summary.

Non-General Fund Reserves for FY 2021 Report

Chair Preus asked Milburn to present information on the non-general fund. Milburn said that the Behavioral Health unit has an actual reserve of \$962,000. Per a requirement implemented by the Commission, the self-funded units must keep 15 percent of each budget to go to reserves for unanticipated expenses and 10 percent is allocated for program development. The self-funded reserve budgets are allowed to accumulate year after year until a ceiling amount is exceeded. There is a ceiling set for \$2,704,000 for the accumulated reserve budget; anything over that amount is surrendered back to the WICHE general fund.

Milburn reported that the Programs and Services unit has an actual reserve budget of \$673,686, of which President Michelau allowed the unit \$311,000 to be used as bridge funding for the Interstate Passport program while further funding is in progress. The Policy Analysis and Research unit has an actual reserve balance of \$421,480, of which \$227,000 is reserved for W-SARA. Self-funded unit WCET has an actual reserve balance of \$1,253,775. Milburn concluded his presentation by stating that all WICHE units are financially sound.

Chair Preus asked for questions, one of which was whether the 12 percent minimum reserve requirement for the budget (a year 2000 requirement set by the Commission) will continue to be adequate given the onset of the COVID-19. Milburn said that the effects of COVID-19 on the WICHE budget are hard to determine. He said historically, when there is an economic downturn, it affects the states in the year the downturn occurs, but in subsequent years when the states and territories are recovering, WICHE can see some budget challenges. He said that the reserves are adequate at this time, with \$1.9 million available for dedication, but dedication of that reserve budget is not required. President Michelau commented that increasing the 12 percent requirement may be something the Commission will want to discuss, in order to accommodate the potential unforeseen financial side-effects of the pandemic over the long term. Milburn responded by saying that when the 12 percent requirement was made in 2000, WICHE had nearly no reserves in the budget, and it was quite challenging to get to 12 percent that year. Milburn said that a 25-35 percent reserves requirement can be seen in

other organizations. Commissioner Rodney Jacob requested that a possible action item to raise the reserves requirement temporarily or permanently be explored for discussion at the May 2021 Commission Meeting.

Action Item: Election of Chair and Vice Chair as Officers of the WICHE Commission for 2021

Commissioner Clayton Christian MOVED TO APPROVE Commissioner Susan Anderson as chair, Commissioner David Lassner as vice chair, and Commissioner Camille Preus as immediate past chair. Commissioner Antwan Jefferson SECONDED the motion. The motion done by Zoom poll voting passed unanimously.

Remarks by Camille Preus, outgoing Chair

Chair Preus thanked the Commission for the opportunity and honor to serve during 2020. She said COVID-19 presented unexpected challenges, but she appreciated the opportunity to work even more closely with the WICHE staff, the officers, the Executive Committee and President Michelau throughout many virtual chats. She said she has confidence that Commissioners Anderson and Lassner will continue their exemplary leadership into 2021 despite the demands of the pandemic, and that WICHE will continue to shine with its great work throughout the region.

Remarks by Susan Anderson, incoming Chair

Commissioner Anderson thanked Chair Preus and the Commission, and said that WICHE is an amazing organization due to its member states and territories and its staff. She noted that higher education had issues prior to the pandemic, but the pandemic has made it clear we need to do things differently. WICHE has an opportunity to quickly pivot as needed and make changes for the benefit of the region; she said, for example, what was done with switching coursework to remote instruction. Commissioner Anderson thanked Chair Preus and Immediate Past Chair Holmberg for their partnership and said she is looking forward to partnering with Commissioner Lassner in 2021.

Outgoing Commissioners

Chair Preus recognized outgoing Commissioners Francisco Rodriguez (CA), Dianne Harrison (CA), Carol Mon Lee (HI), and James Hansen (SD), and thanked them for their dedication and service to their states and the entire region.

President Michelau thanked Preus for her service and welcomed Chair Anderson and Vice Chair Lassner as the newly appointed officers of the Commission. She also thanked the staff that contributed to the virtual meeting under the direction of Laura Ewing. They include Genevieve Berry, Cherie Curtin, Becky Helfand, Kay Hulstrom, Sarah Liebrandt, Jeanette Porter, Megan Raymond, Melissa Sanders, Emma Tilson, and Gary Toon.

Adjournment

Commissioner Baldwin made a MOTION TO ADJOURN and Commissioner Jefferson SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the business meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m. MST.



Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
1:45 – 3:15 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

Join the virtual Commission Meeting by accessing the Zoom Meeting link in your registration confirmation. You do not need to leave the Zoom Meeting after each session. You may stay in the Zoom Meeting throughout the entire virtual meeting, including Committee breakout sessions and breaks.

Additional Programs and Services Committee

Meeting details: The Host will transfer you to your Breakout Room from the main session at 1:45 p.m. No additional action on your part is required for accessing the Committee Meeting location. You will be transferred back to the main Zoom Meeting room at the end of the Programs and Services Committee Meeting.

If you have difficulties joining the Zoom Meeting or need other technical assistance, please call the help desk at 303.541.0204 or 303.541.0201.

Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT

Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Committee Members

Les Purce (WA), Committee Chair
 Angie Paccione (CO), Vice Chair

Donn Liston (AK)
 Kathleen Goepfing (AZ)
 Ellen Junn (CA)
 John Morton (HI)
 Dave Lent (ID)
 Laurie Bishop (MT)
 Melody Rose (NV)
 Patricia Sullivan (NM)
 Jill Louters (ND)
 Hilda Rosselli (OR)
 Diana VanderWoude (SD)
 Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
 Dave Woolstenhulme (UT)
 Kimberly Dale (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Les Purce, Committee Chair

Staff: Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
 Suzanne Benally, Director, Native-Serving Institutions Initiative
 Margo Colalancia, Director, Student Access Programs
 Sarah Leibbrandt, Director, Academic Leadership Initiatives
 Kate Springsteen, Coordinator, Student Access Programs,
 and Member Services Coordinator, Interstate Passport®

 Approval of the November 12, 2020, Programs and Services Committee Meeting Minutes 3-3

 Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan Sections Pertaining to the Program and Services Unit 3-12

Discussion Items:

Emerging from the Pandemic: A Closer Look at Our Student Access Programs: *Margo Colalancia*

Supporting American Indian and Alaska Native Students' Educational Success: *Suzanne Benally*

Fostering Collaborations to Improve Student Transfer and Institutional Resource Sharing: *Sarah Leibbrandt*

Information Items:

Student Access Program Highlights 3-6

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative Update 3-7

Academic Leadership Initiatives Updates 3-8

Collaborative Cost-Savings Initiatives Updates 3-10

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Programs and Services Committee Minutes November 12, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Les Purce (WA), Chair
Angie Paccione (CO), Vice Chair

Donn Liston (AK)
Ellen Junn (CA)
John Morton (HI)
Dave Lent (ID)
Gillian Barclay (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Jill Louters (OR)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Dave Woolstenhulme (UT)
David Jones (WY)

Committee Members Absent:

Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
Sheila Stearns (MT)

Staff Present:

Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Suzanne Benally, Director, Native-Serving Institutions
Initiative
Margo Colalancia, Director, Student Access Programs
Anna Galas, Director, Academic Leadership Initiatives
Kay Hulstrom, Manager, Institution Services
Kate Springsteen, Coordinator, Student Access Programs,
and Member Services Coordinator, Interstate Passport®

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Programs and Services Committee Minutes of May 18, 2020

Committee Chair Les Purce called the meeting to order. He referred committee members to the first and only action item, which requests approval of the Programs and Services Committee Minutes of the May 18, 2020, meeting. There were no comments or questions. Commissioner Hilda Rosselli MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes and Commissioner Patricia Sullivan SECONDED the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Programs and Services Updates

Anna Galas, director of Academic Leadership Initiatives, gave an update on the Interstate Passport® program. Since the WICHE Commission (the Commission) last met, the Interstate Passport Network has welcomed 18 more institutions, bringing total membership to 59 institutions spanning 17 states. Of the 59 member institutions, 25 are designated as a Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). In May 2020, a task force of nationally recognized leaders was formed to advise on issuing a Call to Action for higher education leaders to help fix transfer for students nationwide. The Call to Action was issued on July 8 and received over 200 signatures of support, led to an increase in inquiries coming out of the southern region of the U.S., and directed media attention to the Interstate Passport program. The Call to Action task force members agreed to stay involved in an advisory capacity by forming the Colleagues for Interstate Passport's Future advisory group. Interstate Passport is also working on several collaborative opportunities. In June, the use of the Passport Learning Outcomes was finalized in an agreement with the American Council of Education (ACE) for use in its ACE College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT). Staff have been actively seeking funding to further scale the Network. In August, a proposal was submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and if a grant is awarded, staff would work with New Mexico State University administrators and faculty members to identify learning outcomes for engineering courses and examine the transfer pathway from two-year to four-year institutions' engineering programs. These efforts would lay the initial work toward creating a STEM Passport.

Interstate Passport was awarded a \$500,000 ECMC Foundation grant to support staffing and Network expansion, including 20 institutions, 10 of which will be institutions with MSI status. Over the next year, staff will focus on onboarding new Network member institutions and assisting existing Network member institutions, scaling membership with support of the ECMC Foundation funding, building new and expanding on existing collaborations through the Colleagues for Interstate Passport's Future advisory group, and working to secure additional funding partners to maintain and grow staffing in order to continue Network expansion to sustainability.

Suzanne Benally, director of the Native-Serving Institutions Initiative, reported on the project, “Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice.” The project is in its third year of a Lumina Foundation grant after receiving a no-cost extension through April 30, 2021. WICHE awarded small grants to 11 of the Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) to support planning for achieving quantifiable goals to narrow attainment gaps, implement high-impact practices and other practices leading to academic success, and to develop accountability and sustainability in their work. The 11 institutions that received two-year planning grants were near completion of their campus-based planning and implementation strategies by May 31, 2020; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campus grantee final reporting deadline was extended to November 30, 2020. Through October and November 2020, staff hosted a webinar series to highlight initiatives of the 11 campuses that received the planning grants. The webinars were in lieu of the presentations that would have occurred at the July 2020 National Summit. The project is now focusing on developing a retrospective case study of five public NASNTI institutions that received NASNTI Title III grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education in the past decade, a policy brief to highlight data challenges in IPEDS and the Census related to American Indian and Alaska Native populations, a NASNTI Title III grant analysis, final reports for technology and planning grants from campuses, and a summation report for grantee partners. Finally, staff are exploring future options for WICHE’s work with NASNTIs, including pursuing a new round of grants, exploring an initiative focused on Native students and online learning, sustaining and strengthening NASNTI networking, hosting convenings such as national and regional summits, developing and facilitating a national association of NASNTIs, providing data to support policy efforts, and supporting NASNTI presidents in organizing collective leadership.

Margo Colalancia, director of Student Access Programs, gave an update on how the Student Access Programs have fared during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) experienced its sharpest drop in recent years: 36 fewer students were funded than the previous year. This represents an almost 6 percent decrease in enrollment. The severe state budget crises triggered by COVID-19 prompted Colorado and Nevada not to fund any new students for the entering class of fall 2020. Hawai’i cut back on its number of new positions, and several other states funded fewer students as well. CNMI, Montana, and North Dakota had very modest increases. Fortunately, all PSEP funding states are committed to supporting their continuing students through graduation, holding them harmless. The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) enrollment will be down slightly this year. Sixteen institutions still need to report their enrollment numbers, and if those institutions report around 400 more students, WUE may end with only a .5 percent drop in enrollment. It looks as though the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) will see an estimated 23 percent increase in enrollment this year. The increase in graduate enrollments can be partially explained by the fact that several institutions added more programs because they can now charge up to 150 percent of resident tuition. Colalancia also gave a quick update on the “test-optional” movement, prompted by COVID-19. Over the summer, an increasing number of universities went “test-optional,” no longer requiring an ACT/SAT score for the next year or two. However, because WUE tuition is considered a merit-based award, some of the WUE institutions were still grappling with how to evaluate WUE applicants without using test scores. Most have since removed the requirement, but 13 still appear to require test scores. On a recent certifying officers’ call, staff learned that WICHE states that offer in-state, merit-based scholarships to their residents for in-state studies are dealing with this as well. They are searching for alternative predictors of success and more-equitable alternatives to ACT/SAT scores.

Priority Issues for the Programs and Services Unit Workplan – FY 2022

Jere Mock, vice president, presented a preview of the draft FY 2022 workplan that will be considered by the committee for approval at the May 2021 Commission Meeting. The major areas of focus for Programs and Services staff will be sustaining and strengthening the existing initiatives of Student Access Programs, Academic Leadership Initiatives, and Cost Savings Programs. Programs and Services will also explore the feasibility of developing additional initiatives focused on reducing attainment gaps for students of color and low-income and first-generation students.

Student Access Programs: Staff will continue to promote these programs in an effort to grow enrollments in the next fiscal year, with the recognition that it is hard to predict the impact of the pandemic on student enrollment patterns and associated impacts on states’ abilities to provide funding to support students in the Professional Student Exchange Program.

Interstate Passport®: In the next fiscal year, staff will continue to focus on growing the Network to include more colleges and universities, particularly those serving previously underrepresented students such as students of color and low-income and first-generation students. Staff plan to market the program more broadly to better acquaint advisors/registrars at institutions and their students who can benefit from obtaining an Interstate Passport on their transcript prior to transferring to another Passport Network institution. Staff also want to work with other organizations and entities that are focused on reforming transfer on an intrasystem, intrastate, and interstate basis.

Academic Leadership Initiatives: Staff will continue efforts to expand participation in Academic Leadership Initiatives, which in addition to Interstate Passport, include WICHE's Online Course Exchange, the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders and the Western Academic Leadership Forum. These initiatives span the four- and two-year sectors and are self-funded initiatives based at WICHE. The Alliance and Forum enable provosts, vice presidents of academic affairs, and chief academic officers throughout the West to network and collaborate on initiatives supporting key higher education issues. Sixty-one four-year institutions and systems are members of the Forum, and 83 two-year campuses and systems are members of the Alliance. The 2020 annual meetings of both groups had to be cancelled this past spring, but staff shifted to providing a series of webinars that addressed many of the topics planned for the annual meetings. Two consortia of institutions currently participate in WICHE's Online Course Exchange: NEXus is a consortium of 16 institutions across the nation sharing doctoral courses in nursing. SUN Online is a consortium of five community colleges sharing courses within New Mexico.

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative: Staff plan to seek additional foundation funding to sustain and strengthen the inter-institutional networking that has developed as a result of our efforts, particularly among the campuses that were awarded planning grants as well as subsequent grants through a supplemental grant from Lumina to provide technology support for American Indian and Alaska Native students during the pandemic. The participating institutions are very interested in continued engagement in activities that may include convening additional national summits, a series of regional summits (post-pandemic), collaborations with other organizations serving this population of students, and facilitating the development of a national association or network of NASNTIs. Since the launch of the initiative in December 2017, the number of institutions with the NASNTI designation has increased from 24 to 37 institutions in nine states.

Cost Savings Programs: Staff will continue collaborating with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), as well as with New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), to offer four cost savings programs. The risk management and property insurance consortium called the Master Property Program is the longest running of the four. It has become the largest higher-education property insurance consortium in the U.S. with \$83 billion in total insured values. Twenty-seven institutions and academic centers in the WICHE region participate. The partnerships also offer institutions in the West the opportunity to participate in a student health insurance consortium, and another program offers cyber insurance to campuses in the West. The MHECtech purchasing collaborative for hardware, software, and technology-related services benefits postsecondary institutions, K-12 districts, education-related nonprofits, and state, county, and municipal governments throughout our region. During the last fiscal year, some 1,600 entities in the WICHE region benefitted from volume purchasing discounts on an array of hardware and software offerings.

Explore Reinvigorating the Compact for Faculty Diversity and the Doctoral Scholars Program: Over the years, WICHE has been involved in two programs with the other regional compacts that focused on increasing the number of students of color enrolled and completing doctoral-level education to address the lack of diversity in college faculties. Largely due to shifting foundation and federal funding priorities, staff changes at WICHE, and leadership changes at the other compacts, WICHE has not been engaged in these programs for the past few years. Only the Southern Regional Education Board has sustained the annual symposium for doctoral scholars within its region. Preliminary conversations about how these programs might be reinvigorated, collectively, are ongoing between WICHE and the other regional compacts. The significant imbalance in terms of racial and ethnic composition of faculties continues nationwide. While more than one-third of America's college students are people of color, racial and ethnic minorities make up only small fractions of college faculty. Nationwide, about 5 percent of faculty are African American, about 3 percent are Hispanic and about 1 percent are Native American. Staff are in the early stages of discussing the feasibility of a shored-up collaboration, and exploring funding prospects, and would need to seek the Programs and Services Committee's and the Commission's endorsement before seeking external funding.

Adjournment

As there was no other business, Chair Purce concluded the session at 3:10 p.m.

Information Items

Student Access Program Highlights

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), celebrating its 33rd year, is the nation's largest regional tuition-savings program. Students from a WICHE state or territory can choose from 160+ two- or four-year public colleges or universities and pay no more than 150 percent of that institution's resident tuition.

In academic year 2020-21, 42,481 WUE students and their families saved \$411.7 million in tuition. Despite the unprecedented challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented to higher education, WUE enrollment dropped only slightly in 2020-21 – just 0.1 percent. In the five years prior to COVID, WUE enrollments grew an average of 4.4 percent per year (from 2015 to 2019). Most WUE institutions went “test optional” for undergraduate admissions in 2020-21 and it appears this trend is continuing into the 2021-22 admissions cycle. No new institutions have joined the network since last fall.

Final enrollment and savings numbers for WUE, WRGP, and PSEP were published in March 2021 in *WICHE Student Access Programs: By the Numbers 2020-21*. Because of the continued strong trend to work remotely, this year's edition will be available exclusively online.

Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) allows students to affordably enroll in more than 1,350 graduate programs (graduate certificate, master's, and Ph.D. levels) at 63 public universities in the West, paying no more than 150 percent of resident tuition. More than 80 percent of WRGP institutions continue to charge resident tuition though they may now charge more. In academic year 2020-21, 2,441 students saved \$34.6 million in tuition through WRGP. This marks a WRGP enrollment increase of 28 percent from the prior academic year and the second consecutive year of notable enrollment growth.

During a time of significant budget cuts triggered by the pandemic (when some universities are forced to eliminate under-enrolled, niche graduate programs), WRGP and regional sharing of limited higher education resources is crucial. COVID-19 has underscored the need for professionals in high-demand fields including instructional design, supply chain management, cybersecurity, and nearly all healthcare fields. WRGP is an important option for students pursuing advanced degrees in high-need fields – particularly for healthcare-related degrees not offered through WICHE's PSEP.

Institutional interest in joining WRGP is growing. Dixie State University, Northern State University, and the University of Alaska Southeast plan to join the WRGP network, and several other institutions have shown a strong interest in exploring the benefits of WRGP membership. They include: Adams State University, Central Washington University, Minot State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology.

Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)

The global pandemic has exacerbated the need for health professionals. Underserved urban and rural communities alike are facing shortages of practitioners. The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) has been a critically important tool for Western states to increase the supply of physicians, dentists, optometrists, veterinarians, and other healthcare professionals since the early 1950s.

Through PSEP, students from Western states and territories can pursue careers in 10 health fields and may enroll in participating programs across state lines, receiving substantial tuition support from their home state or territory. More than 130 accredited programs are offered through PSEP at 62 institutions. PSEP students save between \$33,000 and \$130,000+ on tuition over the lifespan of a professional health degree program depending on the field of study. This reduced fiscal strain enables students to afford to work in rural areas that typically offer lower salaries compared to urban areas, or to pursue professional options that are less lucrative, but sorely needed.

In 2020-21, 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands invested nearly \$14 million to grow their healthcare workforce by reducing the educational costs of 567 students. Due to a significant drop in state revenues triggered by COVID, the number of students dropped substantially compared to the 611 students supported pre-pandemic. Arizona and Nevada plan to fund an additional 13 students yet this year, bringing the total number supported

to ~580. WICHE is hopeful that as state budgets recover, the number of students supported will return to prior levels and possibly grow. Guam is exploring participation in PSEP in the near future. Both Guam and CNMI are in dire need of nurses and while nursing has not been a PSEP field for many years, WICHE could reactivate the field or facilitate a modified program if one or both of the territories have funding to support RN and BSN student enrollment in nursing schools in the mainland West.

WICHE May 2020 Certifying Officers Meeting

Certifying officers play an important role in their states' participation in WICHE's Student Access Programs. Typically, they are staff members of state higher education agencies or institutional systems in states/territories that do not have a state-level higher education agency. In states that fund students through PSEP, certifying officers review the prospective students' applications for "certification" to determine whether or not the individual meets the home state's/territory's residency criteria and is eligible to be considered for support. They administer all aspects of PSEP for their home-state/territory residents and also serve as state liaisons for the WUE and WRGP programs. In normal years, certifying officers meet just prior to the May WICHE Commission Meeting. Certifying officers have participated in several virtual meetings over the pandemic period, in lieu of in-person meetings.

WICHE's Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council and its 2021 and 2022 Meetings

The purpose of the council is to provide a forum for communication and liaison between WICHE staff, member states, and the region's schools of veterinary medicine so that the workforce needs of the region can be met. Each WICHE member state may appoint two members to the council. Candidates are nominated by the respective state's WICHE Commission Executive Committee member in consultation with the state higher education agencies and the state veterinary association. Members of the council may include legislators with expertise in the profession, state veterinarians, and practicing veterinarians who are members of state veterinary associations. Deans of the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine, the vice president of Programs and Services, and the director of WICHE's Student Access Program are ex officio, nonvoting members.

The council was scheduled to meet in Sedona, Ariz., in June 2021, but the in-person meeting will be postponed until 2022 as pandemic-related travel concerns persist. Instead, WICHE will host a shortened virtual meeting for members in spring 2021. One of the topics of interest is how COVID has changed the admissions process in veterinary medicine -- and for other professional healthcare fields -- and whether or not those changes are likely to continue. Applicants were not required to travel for admission interviews, making the application process much more affordable for students with limited resources. Surprisingly, despite the significant challenges students faced beginning a program in a pandemic year when face-to-face interaction and opportunities to build interpersonal relationships were severely hampered, most programs saw an increase in applications.

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative Update

"Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice," a WICHE initiative funded by a \$990,000 Lumina Foundation grant and launched in December 2017, is a collaboration of two- and four-year institutions designated as Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by the U.S. Department of Education. The initiative aims to address the higher education attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations. The current 36 NASNTI colleges and universities have received competitive Title III federal grant funding based on an eligibility criterion of an undergraduate enrollment population that is at least 10 percent AI/AN students. These institutions are typically situated near American Indian tribal communities and Alaska Native villages. Over the past three years, WICHE staff has worked directly with these institutions by convening NASNTIs administrators and faculty in person at two national summits and in virtual settings through a webinar series, and by engaging in research on institutional practices at NASNTIs.

At the outset, WICHE awarded small grants to 11 of the Native-Serving Institutions to support planning for achieving quantifiable goals to narrow attainment gaps, implement high-impact practices and other efforts leading to academic success, and to foster sustainability of their programs. Last spring, WICHE staff secured an additional \$100,000 grant from Lumina Foundation and redeployed some project resources initially intended to support convening regional summits during 2020 and 2021 (the summits were cancelled due to the pandemic) to provide technology grants to the grantee campuses to support AI/AN students' access to online courses and provide virtual student support services. Several virtual meetings of NASNTI presidents were coordinated to discuss the status of delivering instruction during the pandemic and the impact of campus aid from the federal CARES Act. Webinars provided NASNTI campus grantees the opportunity to share their best practices developed over the grant period and address new issues that have emerged during the COVID pandemic that are impacting Native student attainment.

Lumina Foundation granted WICHE a no-cost extension for this grant through May 31, 2021. The project was originally slated to end on November 30, 2020, but due to the impact on campuses and delays caused by the pandemic, project staff requested additional time to complete final analysis and research activities. All 11 institutions participating in the project submitted their final project and technology grant reports as of March 1, 2021. A policy brief, *Better Data for Supporting American Indian/Alaska Native Students*, was released on March 4. A case study report, *Supporting the Attainment of Native American Students in Higher Education: Approaches taken by Five Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions*, was also released in March. A report analyzing Title III funding, which demonstrates how implementing targeted financial resources to support American Indian and Alaska Native students enhances postsecondary institutions' ability to create and implement sustainable student support systems, was completed in April. A final executive summary of campus strategies and findings spanning the 11 NASNTI grant-funded projects was completed in April and provides a platform for considering next steps and future directions for the initiative.

Staff continues its efforts to obtain additional funding to continue the important work of strengthening American Indian and Alaska Native student attainment. Another major objective going forward is to continue to strengthen the NASNTI presence and impact in state and federal higher education policy arenas and to create a collaborative network of institutions serving large numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Academic Leadership Initiatives Update

Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

Members of the Alliance are the chief academic leaders of two-year institutions and associated system and state agencies in the WICHE region. With the cancellation of its 2020 annual meeting due to COVID, the Alliance hosted three webinars during May and June focused on issues related to higher education's response to COVID. As the pandemic continues to impact campuses and states, the Alliance, along with the Western Academic Leadership Forum, decided to jointly offer a virtual meeting series in lieu of hosting a joint annual meeting face-to-face in New Mexico. With the theme of "The New World of Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities of COVID-19," the seven-part series included:

- Campus and Community Collaborating on COVID-19 (October 2, 2020)
- Keeping an Eye on the Prize: Equity and Inclusion during COVID (November 6, 2020)
- Focusing on Racial Justice to Close Equity Gaps in Oregon (November 13, 2020)
- Weathering the COVID-19 Economic Superstorm (December 4, 2020)
- Preserving Campus Wellness in the COVID Era (February 5, 2021)
- Supporting Rural Colleges through Collaborations (March 5, 2021)
- Smoothing the Bumps in the Road: How to Better Articulate Articulation (April 9, 2021)

Several of the webinars included breakout sessions for members to convene and share effective practices related to the identified topics. More information can be found at wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-alliance-of-community-college-academic-leaders/meetings/.

Select Alliance work groups are reviewing its vision, mission, and strategic goals, as well as assessing feasibility of a professional development program for prospective chief academic leaders in the two-year sector. Unfortunately, there has been a slight decline in campus membership renewals this year due to budgetary strains that many of our campuses are facing. To learn more about the Alliance and its 81 members, see wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-alliance-of-community-college-academic-leaders/.

Western Academic Leadership Forum

Members of the Forum are the provosts and vice presidents of academic affairs of four-year institutions and chief academic leaders of associated system and state agencies in the WICHE region. As noted above, the Forum collaborated with the Alliance to offer a virtual meeting series in lieu of convening a joint annual meeting. Forum committees continue to work to address common areas of interest: dual credit, library journal subscription fees, student wellness, and faculty diversity. Unfortunately, there has been a decline in membership renewals this year due to budgetary strains that many of our campuses are facing. For more information about the Forum and its 58 members, see wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-academic-leadership-forum/.

Western Academic Leadership Academy

Sponsored by the Western Academic Leadership Forum, the Academy is a professional development program designed to develop a pipeline of future academic leaders. The Academy's faculty – sitting or retired provosts among the Forum's membership – finalized the 2021 cohort with 14 participants hailing from 10 WICHE states: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho,

Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington. Several participants are rolling over from the 2020 cohort due to the cancellation resulting from the pandemic. The Academy's summer intensive will be held during virtual sessions on July 21-23, 2021, and faculty will mentor the cohort through April 2022, when they will attend the culminating seminar at the Forum's annual meeting. For more information, see wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-academic-leadership-forum/western-academic-leadership-academy

Interstate Passport®

Interstate Passport is a program that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education attainment based on learning outcomes, rather than specific courses and credits. Having concluded its fourth year of operation, the Interstate Passport Network experienced significant growth in spring 2020 with 28 institutions signing Memorandums of Agreement, increasing the membership to 59 institutions spanning 17 states. In addition, the Interstate Passport Task Force launched a successful Call to Action to help fix transfer for students nationwide by securing over 200 signatures of support including seven national postsecondary organizations. Based on the response, the task force members have agreed to remain involved by helping staff create and serve on the Colleagues for Interstate Passports Future advisory group. Staff are mentoring new member institutions in the development of their Passport Blocks and other steps necessary for successful implementation. They also are exploring potential collaborations with other organizations. One of those collaborations that has been formalized is WICHE's agreement with the American Council on Education (ACE) that enables ACE to use the Passport Learning Outcomes for its College Credit Recommendation Service CREDIT® program.

In November 2020, WICHE was awarded a \$500,000 two-year grant from ECMC Foundation to further expand the Network. This grant allows WICHE staff to offer 20 institutions (10 of which will be minority-serving institutions) a two-year membership fee waiver and personalized onboarding support to join the Network. To date, nine institutions have submitted signed letters of intent for this opportunity: Dallas College (TX), Fort Lewis College (CO), Greenville Technical College (SC), Miami Dade College (FL), North Carolina A&T State University, San Juan College (NM), Stillman College (AL), Texas A&M University-Central Texas, and Western Wyoming Community College.

WICHE also was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the National Science Foundation in March 2021, that will support a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges. This effort will focus on addressing issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. This contrasts with most institutions' practice of accepting transfer credit based on specific courses completed. Project partners hope to demonstrate that students who transfer should be able to complete an engineering degree without excessively extending their time to graduation or jeopardizing their degree completion. WICHE will conduct a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within STEM and engineering disciplines, articulate a theory of change, and recruit leaders of national organizations and two- and four-year institutions representing at least four states to analyze and refine NMSU's proof of concept and assess the feasibility of scaling NMSU's work to additional institutions.

Staff continue to seek additional external funding to further scale Interstate Passport toward sustainability. For more information, see interstatepassport.wiche.edu

WICHE Online Course Exchange

The WICHE Online Course Exchange (OCE) enables students to seamlessly enroll, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in a consortium. Consortia contract with WICHE for use of its robust OCE that is designed to support the exchange of online courses, provide more online course options for students, and optimize the use of institutional resources. Currently, there are two multi-institution consortia, SUN Online and NEXus, utilizing the online platform. SUN Online shares general education courses among community colleges within the state of New Mexico and NEXus shares doctoral courses in nursing across its nationwide membership. For more information, see wiche.edu/tuition-savings/online-course-exchange/.

FlexPATH Alliance

Earlier this year, WICHE was invited to participate in developing a proposal for a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant supporting a three-state alliance to create the Flexible Pathways for Access through the Transfer Hub, or (FlexPATH Alliance). The WICHE Executive Committee approved an action item at its February 10, 2021, meeting that will enable WICHE to accept a subaward to serve as the backbone organization for the FlexPATH Alliance if a five-year NSF grant award is provided. The NSF proposal review process is lengthy but if a grant is approved, the FlexPATH Alliance partners will include three regional hub universities (the University of Nevada Reno, New Mexico State University, and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and seven community colleges (Truckee Meadows Community College, Western Nevada

College, Great Basin College, Doña Ana Community College, New Mexico State University-Alamogordo, New Mexico State University-Carlsbad, and New Mexico State University-Grants). The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign will recruit community colleges in year three.

The FlexPATH Alliance will seek to better understand and address the systemic barriers to educational access and success in pre-engineering education for community college students from underserved communities including students of color, low-income and women students, and first-generation college-bound students. Broadening the participation of these groups that have disproportionately low enrollment and graduation rates in university engineering programs is crucial to meeting the West's and the nation's workforce needs. The FlexPATH Alliance will identify freshman and sophomore engineering courses that are missing at the participating community colleges and then create online and accelerated in-person laboratory alternatives. If the grant is awarded, the University of Nevada Reno will serve as the fiscal agent. WICHE staff will facilitate efforts to develop the alliance and FlexPATH will utilize OCE for course sharing among its members.

Collaborative Cost-Sharing Initiatives Update

MHECtech

WICHE partners with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to leverage the potential volume of the WICHE region's purchasing power, while saving institutions and other eligible entities time and money by simplifying the procurement process. Competitively bid and negotiated contracts provide competitive solutions established in accordance with public procurement laws, which negate an institution's or other entity's need to conduct a sourcing process. The contracts offer higher education institutions (publics and nonprofit privates), K-12 districts and schools, state agencies, county and municipal governments, and education-related nonprofits turnkey solutions to acquire computers, software, printing equipment, document-management services, and related training and consulting services. MHEC's Technologies Committee and staff conduct extensive competitive procurement processes and negotiate favorable agreements with several vendors, reducing the duplication of procurement processes and helping eligible campuses and other entities save money and increase their range of purchasing options. Last fiscal year, more than 1,600 institutions and other entities spanning 13 WICHE member states reaped benefits of aggregated volume purchases that lowered product cost, with savings exceeding \$6.5 million. The mhectech.org website provides details on vendors and eligible entities and links to vendor contracts.

Master Property Program

The Master Property Program (MPP), a property insurance and risk-management collaborative initiative developed by MHEC, has 180 participating campuses across the U.S. representing total insured values of more than \$83 billion. The program was developed in 1994 to broaden property insurance coverage, reduce program costs, and encourage improved asset-protection strategies for Midwestern two- and four-year nonprofit colleges and universities. WICHE-region institutions became eligible to participate in the program in 2004, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) joined the program in 2009, and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in 2013. Institutions and systems in the West taking part include: Pima County Community College District (Arizona), Colorado College, Colorado School of Mines, University of Northern Colorado, The College of Idaho, Nevada System of Higher Education's seven campuses and Desert Research Institute Centers, Lewis & Clark College (Oregon), Reed College (Oregon), Willamette University (Oregon), Westminster College (Utah), Seattle Pacific University (Washington), Whitman College (Washington), and the University of Wyoming.

In early March, several representatives from WICHE-region institutions attended the virtual MPP's all-insureds annual meeting and also took part in a virtual loss-control workshop, exchanging best practices and lessons learned and benefitting from the knowledge of experts in asset protection, facilities management, campus security, COVID-19 precautions and ramifications, and environmental health. The MPP is governed by a committee consisting of leaders from member institutions. WICHE-region member institutions are represented on the committee by two institutional/system members: Craig Kispert, vice president for business and finance, Seattle Pacific University, who is the vice chair of the committee, and Lisa Schaller, director of insurance and loss control, Nevada System of Higher Education. WICHE Vice President of Programs and Services Jere Mock also serves on the committee.

Cyber Insurance

MHEC has also invited WICHE to partner on offering MHEC's Cyber Insurance program to public and nonprofit private institutions in the West. NEBHE and SREB also participate. MHEC contracted with Marsh USA Inc. to serve as the program administrator for the MHEC Cyber Insurance program following a competitive bid process.

Colleges and universities have unique cyber risks because of their business operations, assets, and environments. An institution's use of technology within its operations and any handling, collection, or storage of confidential information

contribute to the ongoing challenge of keeping its assets safe. The MHEC Cyber Insurance approach analyzes the institution's threat environment, assesses the significance of the vulnerabilities in security controls, and determines how much financial exposure the institution faces. MHEC's approach also provides benchmarking on how much cyber coverage institutions of similar risk are buying. Over time, MHEC staff hope to assemble a critical mass of participating institutions to provide an option of collaborative risk-sharing in an excess layer of insurance coverage. This shared excess layer could provide additional coverage at a reduced cost, relative to an institution's securing coverage on a stand-alone basis.

MHECare

Another MHEC/WICHE partnership offers institutions and college and university systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR). MHEC utilized a competitive bid process to select UHCSR as the plan's carrier – enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process while being served by a carrier that is Affordable Care Act-compliant and fully equipped to respond rapidly to changes in regulations. For more information on MHECare or any of the other MHEC initiatives described above, contact Jere Mock, WICHE vice president of Programs and Services, at jmock@wiche.edu or 303.541.0222.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan Sections Pertaining to the Program and Services Unit's Activities

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	TBD	Forum and Alliance members and TBD
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
Master Property Program	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.10	MHEC/Marsh carriers, 8 states (AZ, CO, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY), 27 campuses
MHEC Cyber Insurance	F/A; A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.05	All WICHE members are eligible
MHECare	F/A; A/S	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE states	.05	MHEC/United HealthCare Student Resources, 1 state (AK), 2 institutions
MHECtech	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.15	All WICHE members
Online Course Exchange	A/S; T/I	National	.10	2 consortia serving 21 institutions
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) *	A/S; W/S	Western	1.65	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam; 130+ programs at 62 participating institutions
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; A	Western	.10 and consultants	Forum members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) • Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; A	Western	.45	All WICHE members; 49 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) • Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; A	Western	.35	All WICHE members; 72 institutions, 9 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)*	A/S; W/S	Western	.50	All WICHE members; 1,350 programs at 63 institutions

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/S; W/S	Western	1.00	All WICHE members; 162 participating institutions

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

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

The **Master Property Program**, a **Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)** partnership available to WICHE institutions, has saved institutions more than \$100 million on comprehensive property insurance coverage over the years. The insurance program now serves 180 two- and four-year campuses nationwide with total insured values of \$83 billion, including 27 campuses and centers in eight WICHE-member states. It enables public and nonprofit private institutions to receive coverage at rates below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection.

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

MHECare, another MHEC partnership available in WICHE member states, offers institutions and systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process.

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

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

The **Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)** provides affordable access for students to 130+ health care professional programs at 62 institutions and in 10 health care fields. In 2020-21, 567 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received \$13.9 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped more than 15,446 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key health care positions.

The **Western Academic Leadership Academy** is a yearlong professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for four-year institutions in the West. Academy activities focus on understanding the context of academic leadership, setting academic goals and priorities, and developing specific skill sets required of chief academic officers. Its sixth cohort, nominated by members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum, will commence in July 2021. The Academy is funded by registration fees, sponsorships, and Forum support.

The **Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum)** brings together WICHE-region chief academic leaders from four-year institutions and associated systems and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum is funded primarily by membership dues, with additional funding provided by annual meeting sponsors.

The **Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance)** brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and annual meeting sponsors.

The **Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)** allows WICHE-region residents to cross state lines yet pay resident tuition rates for approximately 1,350 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 63 participating public universities. In 2020-21, 2,441 students saved an estimated \$34.6 million in tuition through WRGP. The WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement has been lifted and Western public universities may make any graduate program eligible at the WRGP tuition rate at their discretion, which has significantly increased the number of students who can benefit. As of the 2020-21 academic year, participating programs now have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150 percent of resident tuition, but the vast majority continue to charge students resident tuition.

The **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)** is WICHE's signature undergraduate discount-tuition program and the nation's largest of its kind, saving 42,481 students an estimated \$411.7 million in tuition in 2020-21. Currently, 162 public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150 percent of resident tuition – instead of full nonresident tuition, which can exceed 300 percent of resident tuition. The Programs and Services unit will continue to expand the marketing of WUE and WRGP to benefit more students and institutions through targeted, state-specific publicity and activities as well as increased outreach to high school counselors and admissions advisers.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I	National	ECMC Foundation \$500,000 grant	3.25 and consultants (11/20-10/22)	55 institutions in 13 WICHE states and 4 institutions in 4 other states are members; 9 additional institutions have signed a letter of intent to join the Network by June 30, 2021. Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploration stage
			General Fund support (approved at Nov. 2020 Commission Meeting from Programs and Services reserves)		
			National Science Foundation \$300,000 grant	1.25 and consultants (3/21-2/22)	NMSU and its 4 community colleges

Interstate Passport® is a national initiative that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It is the only nationwide network of institutionally accredited, nonprofit, public, and private two- and four-year institutions dedicated to the block transfer of general education attainment. It also provides institutions in the network with an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students designed by registrars and institutional researchers in conjunction with the National Student Clearinghouse. The goal of Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students' unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved. WICHE staff provide overall direction and support for this innovative program. A two-year grant from ECMC Foundation is enabling WICHE to further expand the Passport Network by providing 20 institutions (10 of which are minority-serving institutions) a two-year membership fee waiver and personalized onboarding support.

The award from NSF is supporting a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges to address issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning

outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. WICHE is conducting a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within engineering disciplines; articulate a theory of change, and recruit leaders of national organizations and two-year and four-year institutions representing at least four states to analyze and refine NMSU's proof of concept and assess the feasibility of scaling NMSU's work to additional institutions.

NEW DIRECTIONS

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

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:


Relevance
(mission-critical)







Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I		National	Seeking grant funding from other foundations	TBD	Interstate Passport Network members and potential members
Online Course Exchange - FlexPATH Alliance	A/S; T/I		National	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation subaward (5 years)	1.90	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and their respective community colleges
Compact for Faculty Diversity	A/S; W/S		National	TBD	TBD	Midwestern Higher Education Compact, New England Board of Higher Education, Southern Regional Education Board
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice (seeking additional external funding to further assist NASNTIs and sustain an institutional network)	A/S		National	TBD	2.30 TBD	Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions, Tribal colleges, Tribal education departments, higher education organizations

Interstate Passport® is a national initiative that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria.

The Online Course Exchange (OCE) enables students to seamlessly enroll, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in a consortium. Consortia contract with WICHE for use of its OCE platform, designed to support the exchange of online course enrollments among multiple institutions to provide more options for students and optimize use of institutional resources. In February 2021, university, community college, and organizational partners from three states submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation to create the **Flexible Pathways for Access through the Transfer Hub**, or (**FlexPATH Alliance**). The partners propose to collaborate to better understand and address the systemic barriers to educational access and success in pre-engineering education for community college students from underserved communities including students of color, low-income, women, and first-generation college-bound students. Broadening the participation of these groups that have disproportionately low enrollment and graduation rates in university engineering programs is crucial to meet the West's and the nation's workforce needs. If funding is received, WICHE will serve as the backbone partner for the FlexPATH Alliance as it identifies freshman and sophomore engineering courses that are missing at the participating community colleges and then creates online courses to be offered by each participating institution, using the OCE to facilitate the online course enrollments.

The Compact for Faculty Diversity: Staff are collaborating with the other three higher education regional compacts to seek funding to reinvigorate the Compact for Faculty Diversity and its associated Doctoral Scholars Program. The programs would address the significant imbalance that continues nationwide in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of faculties. Goals of the initiative are to increase faculty diversity in all ranks and across all institution types to equal or exceed the diversity of the nation by engaging postsecondary systems, institutions, and leaders in concrete commitments to increase the hiring of faculty of color, supported by specific action plans.

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, an initiative first begun in late 2017 with funding from Lumina Foundation, continues to have strong relevance in light of the persistent postsecondary attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations. Staff will seek funding to continue efforts to reduce or eliminate these gaps at Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by supporting the use of culturally relevant high-impact practices and fostering institutional and tribal collaborations to share and expand sustainable student support systems on campuses. Another major objective going forward is to continue to strengthen the NASNTI presence and impact in state and federal higher education policy arenas and to create a collaborative network of institutions serving large numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

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

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

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

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

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation and launched in December 2017, was a collaboration of two-year and four-year institutions designated as Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by the U.S. Department of Education. The initiative addressed the higher education attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations at these institutions and identified strategies to reduce the gaps. During the initiative, NASNTI administrators and faculty were convened at two national summits and in virtual settings through a webinar series. At the outset, WICHE awarded small grants to 11 of the institutions to support planning for achieving quantifiable goals to narrow attainment gaps, implement high impact practices and other efforts leading to students' academic success, and to foster sustainability in their programs. Additional Lumina funding was provided to assist the grantee campuses in meeting AI/AN students' access to online courses and provide virtual student support services during the pandemic. Several reports and case studies were produced that focused on effective practices to enhance the educational attainment of American Indian and Alaska Native students and provide a platform for considering options for future related initiatives.



Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
1:45 – 3:15 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

Join the virtual Commission Meeting by accessing the Zoom Meeting link in your registration confirmation. You do not need to leave the Zoom Meeting after each session. You may stay in the Zoom Meeting throughout the entire virtual meeting, including Committee breakout sessions and breaks.

Additional Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting details: The Host will transfer you to your Breakout Room from the main session at 1:45 p.m. No additional action on your part is required for accessing the Committee Meeting location. You will be transferred back to the main Zoom Meeting room at the end of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting.

If you have difficulties joining the Zoom Meeting or need other technical assistance, please call the help desk at 303.541.0204 or 303.541.0201.

Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT

Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Committee Members




Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair
 Matt Freeman (ID), Committee Vice Chair

James Johnsen (AK)
 John Arnold (AZ)
 Jim Chavez (CO)
 Colleen Sathre (HI)
 Sheila Stearns (MT)
 Cathy Dinauer (NV)
 Barbara Damron (NM)
 Mark Hagerott (ND)
 Ben Cannon (OR)
 Brian Maher (SD)
 Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
 Patricia Jones (UT)
 Gerry Pollet (WA)
 David Jones (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Christopher Cabaldon, Committee Chair

Staff: Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
 Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research
 Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III, Policy Analysis and Research

- 
Approval of the November 12, 2020, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes
4-3
- 
Approval of a Project Titled "A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Higher Education," Focused on Improving State Collaboration With and Accountability of Nontraditional Credential Providers
4-8
- 
Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan Section Pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Unit
4-11

Information Item:

Report on Unit Activities:

- WICHE Data Management Plan
- Recognition of Learning and Prior Learning Assessment
- Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARD)



Discussion Items:

WICHE Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy 4-18

Legislative Advisory Committee Update 4-20

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Policy and Research Committee Minutes November 12, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair
Matt Freeman (ID), Committee Vice Chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories
and Freely Associated States/Guam)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

Committee Members Absent:

Thom Reilly (NV)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Marr (SD)
Patricia Jones (UT)

Staff Present:

Demarée Michelau, WICHE President
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Peace Bransberger, Senior Research Analyst, Policy
Analysis and Research
Liliana Diaz-Solodukhin, Research Analyst, Policy Analysis
and Research
Sarah Leibrandt, Senior Research Analyst, Policy Analysis
and Research
Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III, Policy Analysis
and Research
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State
Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research

Vice Chair Matt Freeman convened the Policy Analysis and Research Committee on November 12, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. Patrick Lane called roll, and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of May 18, 2020, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Minutes

After Committee Chair Christopher Cabaldon asked committee members to review the minutes from the May 18, 2020, meeting, Commissioner Jim Chavez MOVED TO APPROVE, and Commissioner Freeman SECONDED. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Approve the W-SARA Regional Appeals Process

Patrick Lane provided background information about the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, known as W-SARA, that facilitates state membership in the agreement. The work is led at WICHE by Christina Sedney. The Policy Analysis and Research Committee was asked by staff to provide a recommendation about the W-SARA Regional Appeals Process to the Committee of the Whole.

After Lane's introduction, Christina Sedney explained that WICHE's primary role in W-SARA is to ensure that states comply with policies set by the board of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, known as NC-SARA. She said that NC-SARA enacted a new policy recently requiring that each region develop an appeals process for states that are denied initial membership or renewal of an existing membership, which is required every two years. WICHE staff, working with the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC), which is made up of experts in state authorization from W-SARA member states, submitted a proposed policy to the WICHE Commission (the Commission) for review and approval. Sedney noted that the process has been extensively reviewed and revised through multiple iterations by the RSC and a subset of commissioners as well as the legal counsel WICHE has retained to advise the organization and WICHE's

Executive Committee. The proposed process, she said, meets WICHE's legal obligations and reflects months of work by subject-matter experts, legal counsel, and WICHE Commissioners to create a process that works for everyone.

Sedney then walked through a flow chart summarizing the process for a state (or territory) to join SARA or seek a renewal, noting that the process begins when a state contacts WICHE staff, which works with it to prepare an initial application. When WICHE staff are confident that the state meets the requirements for participation, they bring the application to a meeting of the RSC, where the state presents its application and members have the opportunity to question the applicant. Sedney said at that point, the RSC can then either forward the application to the Commission with its recommendation for approval or request that the state correct deficiencies in its application and resubmit. In summary, she said, this is the process that exists today: the application goes to the RSC and, assuming it is approved, it comes to the Commission. She emphasized that the Commission issues the final decision then on whether the state is allowed to participate in SARA.

On the advice of its legal counsel, Sedney said, the NC-SARA board has asked the regional compacts to develop an appeals process for cases where a state was denied participation. She noted that this is somewhat difficult as there is not a traditional appellate body for decisions made by the Commission. She said that on the advice of WICHE's legal counsel, the process amounts to an appeal through a rehearing process.

Sedney said that staff have tried to keep the process as simple as possible so that the applicant that is denied membership has the opportunity to request a rehearing from the WICHE. The Commission will have 90 days to reconvene, and the appellant will have the opportunity to present a response. The Commission will then take a second vote on the application. This represents the process for when a state has been formally denied membership, but there is also a process for when a state applicant may receive an unfavorable recommendation from the RSC, Sedney added. In such cases, states will have the opportunity to request a review at the point of a recommendation by the RSC that the Commission deny membership. Staff are proposing a joint panel of the Commission chair and two other commissioners appointed by the chair, plus the RSC chair and vice chair, to hear the applicant's response to the RSC recommendation. This panel would then have the opportunity to either recommend approval to the full Commission or uphold the RSC's recommendation of denial. In either case, a state could request a vote by the full Commission. She said applicants always have the opportunity to restart the process from the beginning to correct any deficiencies identified in the denial, and to re-apply. The overall goals, Sedney said, are to create a process that satisfies WICHE's obligation to implement SARA policy, protect the decision-making authority of the Commission, leverage the expertise of the W-SARA RSC, and treat all W-SARA members and potential members fairly.

Commissioner Gerry Pollet commented that he was hoping for a better understanding of reasons that a state may be denied membership, such as incomplete applications or non-conforming state programs. Sedney replied that it is highly unlikely that a state would not be fully compliant after working through what is a very thorough and iterative application process but, generally speaking, not being in conformance with established policies would lead to a negative finding and could trigger the appeals process.

Commissioner Barbara Damron agreed with Sedney, based on her experience with SARA in New Mexico. Nevertheless, she said, an appeals process should be in place should a state feel they have met requirements when the reviewers feel that they did not.

Commissioner Laurie Bishop commented that the review panel seems to hold the power to issue a recommendation to the full Commission, but that there is also flexibility in that states can pursue a Commission vote without the panel's approval. Sedney clarified that applicants still have the option to move past the review panel and onto the Commission no matter what the review panel finds.

Chair Cabaldon brought up concern with sections 7(a) and 7(b) of the flow chart because commissioners on the review panel will essentially hear and decide on the same issues multiple times, while the process is meant to give the appearance of an appeal in front of new decisionmakers. But he noted that getting to this step in the process indicates significant high-level issues and in a typical legal appeals process, lower-court judges are not involved in the appellate process. Lower-court judges must put their rationale into the written record and appellate courts then review that record to make decisions, he said, noting that there is not a requirement for this joint rehearing step, and it complicates the initial hearing and the trustworthiness of the overall process. Commissioner Rodney Jacob further compared this step to the federal appeals court process, noting that a smaller panel of judges may review a case, and then there can be a full review in which those judges would vote again. But Jacob echoed Chair Cabaldon's concerns and asked about what this step is designed to do. Cabaldon clarified that his concern is having the "lower court" participate in that process.

Patrick Lane responded that this issue has been discussed with WICHE's legal team. WICHE staff viewed a negative recommendation from the RSC as a negative outcome for the state that merited an opportunity to appeal. He said that under this proposal, even with a negative result, a state or territory can still proceed to a full Commission vote, but would not likely prevail without some sort of positive recommendation. Staff tried to craft some type of appeals function that gives the process a true appellate form rather than just a rehearing, Lane said. In staff discussions with stakeholders, it made sense to bring the Commission into the process at this stage and have a panel weighted in favor of the Commission. He noted that it is not a perfect process and that staff are open to suggestions or amendments.

Christina Sedney followed up with a reminder that this process is not a legal proceeding, because WICHE lacks an appellate body and is not trying to create one, but rather to make sure that states are treated fairly at each step of the process due to the complex nature of the issues involved. Staff included RSC members on the panel because of their expertise, but also wanted to include commissioners due to the important nature of the vote.

Chair Cabaldon suggested that having the review panel include two members who previously voted against the state could defeat the purpose of giving states a fair review process, and that commissioners likely do not need RSC members to vote at this stage. Their insight and analysis could be included in the record and communicated by WICHE staff to commissioners on the panel, he said.

President Michelau responded that the RSC has a lot of expertise because of its work on the ground, while WICHE commissioners typically don't get into the weeds of this policy issue. Cabaldon then recommended bringing in RSC members to advise the panel, but not vote.

Commissioner Bishop requested clarification about whether (after a negative recommendation but before the review panel, or after a negative finding by the review panel, but before a final Commission vote), the applicant has the opportunity to bring in new information. Sedney confirmed that this is the case, noting that the applicant will receive in writing the justification for the denial and have the opportunity to respond to in the next step of the process.

Echoing Cabaldon's suggestion, Commissioner Pollet commented via chat that the RSC could be invited to present information to a review panel of commissioners but not vote. Commissioner Jacob supported this proposal, noting that it would give commissioners access to the expertise of the RSC and address the fairness concerns raised by commissioners. Pollet agreed and asked if the committee could move to approve an amended process in which the RSC presents recommendations to the review panel but it does not have representatives on the review panel itself. Lane confirmed that such an amended process would satisfy WICHE's obligations.

Commissioner Colleen Sathre asked for clarification on what that amendment would look like.

Lane said that the review panel in steps 7a and 7b of the flowchart would change and would consist of three commissioners: the Chair, and two additional Commissioners appointed by the Chair with recommendations provided by the RSC, but no voting by RSC members.

Cabaldon commented that it might be appropriate for the RSC to be in attendance and invited to participate in the hearing. Commissioner Sathre clarified that the panel now becomes a three-member panel made up of the WICHE Chair and two other Commissioners.

Commissioner Jacob said he favored this suggested resolution of the internal conflict, and added that he would like to see discretion weigh in favor of joining W-SARA – including by correcting issues and resubmitting applications.

Cabaldon stated that there many opportunities for states to correct deficiencies and reapply and because it is in the interest of the community of states, there are many chances for states to become members.

Commissioner Pollet MOVED TO RECOMMEND to the Committee of the Whole that the Commission adopt the appeals process as amended, and the motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Rodney Jacob.

Commissioner John Arnold asked for clarification of whether, if the review panel approves the appeal, the matter is then forwarded to the full Commission, or whether the review panel can take final action. Christina Sedney clarified that only the commission can take final action; specifically, the review panel does not have the authority to approve or deny an application, only to issue a recommendation to the full commission.

The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of Research on Accelerating Recovery: Credential Completion in Uncertain Times

Patrick Lane provided background information, stating that this project expands the scope of one previously approved as part of the workplan, "Accelerated Credential Completion in Uncertain Times." The proposed project would add a qualitative and quantitative research component to examine the impacts on students. The research would be conducted in partnership with Rutgers' Education and Employment Research Center.

Commissioner Damron asked for clarification, noting that in the rush to get students to remain until completion, people are reducing hours in physical clinical training, which is worrisome. There is a belief that it will help under-sourced students, but data shows that this affects the safety of patients, she said. Patrick Lane confirmed that this is the type of data that WICHE would like to dive into and explore.

Commissioner Kimberly Dale asked whether there would be a wide range of ages associated with this study, and Lane confirmed that there would be since adults are a key component of higher education. Dale asked when the study would be completed, and Lane responded that it should take a year. Lastly, Dale asked if the study would cover issues such as how prepared students and high school graduates are in a COVID-19 world, and what the impact might be on developmental education. Lane said those points are not currently envisioned as a part of the study, but could be included in the FY 2022 WICHE workplan.

Commissioner Chavez asked what it would take to get this research done sooner. Lane said that is a possibility, but a major barrier would be obtaining data that typically moves at a slow pace. WICHE would most likely obtain findings quickly but would not be ready to report the findings right away, he said.

Chair Cabaldon asked Lane to clarify the connection between this project and "Accelerated Credential Completion in Uncertain Times." Lane replied that the intention is for this project to feed the broader effort and help expand existing knowledge of students in uncertain times.

Chavez asked if the committee has considered a bigger budget to work more quickly with Rutgers so the findings could be released sooner. Chair Cabaldon responded that if the committee moves forward with a motion, it adds it to the workplan, but without an allocation of dollars. Commissioner Susan Anderson agreed that time is of the essence.

Vice Chair Freeman MOVED TO APPROVE the request and Commissioner Sathre SECONDED the motion. The item was approved unanimously.

Information Item

Legislative Advisory Committee

Christina Sedney provided an update on the Legislative Advisory Committee and its recent annual meeting, which was held in a virtual format over the course of three days with the subthemes: Finance, Innovation, and Data. Commissioner Gerry Pollet recommended that, in the future, staff work with LAC members to develop the agenda prior to the meeting. He said the agenda of the most recent meeting seemed to have an emphasis on institutional concerns and participation rather than legislative response. Commissioner Bishop agreed, saying that while the meeting provided good information, the portions that addressed legislative topics did not leave enough time for discussion. Chair Cabaldon mentioned that he received similar feedback from the California State Legislature.

Information Item

Knocking at the College Door

Peace Bransberger updated the committee on the latest edition of *Knocking at the College Door*, which will be released on December 15, 2020, and which shows a continuing trend of increases in the size of high school graduating classes through the middle of the decade followed by a period of declines. Data for Western states are mixed, with a small number projected to see increases in total graduates, a similar number holding steady, and the rest projected to see declines. Additionally, the composition of future graduating classes will be increasingly diverse.

Information Item
Open Educational Resources

Liliana Diaz-Solodukhin provided an update on Open Educational Resources, which focuses on increasing access, affordability, and equity over the next 18 months using funding provided by the Hewlett Foundation. This project, "Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity using OER: A National Consortium," was previously approved by the WICHE Commission as part of the FY21 Workplan, and is being conducted in collaboration with other regional compacts.

Discussion Item
Workplan

Patrick Lane began the discussion by requesting feedback on key issues – what are most important to each Commissioner's state, and what their priorities are in the current workplan. Vice Chair Freeman mentioned that he will provide feedback offline. Commissioner Sathre said that she is impressed with the current plan and activities. Commissioner Anderson reminded the committee of the need for flexibility in uncertain times. Lane noted that WICHE has done a lot of work to adapt to the pandemic and will continue to provide flexible services. Chair Cabaldon reiterated that openness to new opportunities is important and finding ways to support higher education institutions is crucial, adding that the workplan is always a work in progress. Commissioner Bishop said that states need technical assistance that is specific to COVID-19.

Members discussed how circumstances seem to be continuously evolving, and how adapting rapidly is difficult but necessary. Chair Cabaldon said that there may be opportunities for cross-sector funding from federal CARES Act dollars, and that WICHE may be able to facilitate conversations in states. Lane said that there have been some examples of this through WICHE's biweekly calls with chief academic officers. States are sharing different approaches, and there have been difficulties in interpreting unclear and/or conflicting federal guidance, but everyone is doing the best they can in these uncertain times, he said.

Adjournment

As there was no other business, Chair Cabaldon concluded the session at 3:07 p.m.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of a Project Titled “A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Higher Education”

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, education and workforce training had seen substantial growth in providers operating outside of traditional regulatory, accountability, and transparency frameworks. These providers include a range of education and training opportunities, from “bootcamps” focused on developing coding and information technology skills to new “micro-credentials” and “nano-degrees.” They claim to provide new ways of teaching skills and recognizing learning that provide benefits to students more rapidly than traditional education and training programs.

In some cases, these claims are sound and the programs offer strong benefits to students, but in others, students can be left having spent tens of thousands of dollars with – at best – a value-less certificate of completion, or at worst, with nothing but debts as providers can close down without notice. Because these providers operate in a gray area within postsecondary education and workforce training policy, there are not strong frameworks in place to provide assurances to students about the quality, value, and stability of such programs.

A recent report shows that nonacademic providers offered almost 550,000 different types of credentials, compared to about 350,000 from traditional postsecondary institutions.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to exacerbate this gray area in policy and regulation. By one estimate, the economy has only recovered about 12 million of the 22 million jobs lost during the initial economic downturn.² This means there are a huge number of dislocated workers who will be looking to quickly re-skill or upskill to rejoin the workforce. These potential workers could fall victim to misaligned and shoddy programs, underfinanced providers, or unethical operators. At the same time, there could be high-value programs and providers that states and workforce boards would be wise to recognize and/or enlist as partners, but there is no framework to identify them and develop suitable relationships.

Even as the recovery progresses, this is a policy area that needs substantial attention as states and others involved in overseeing postsecondary education and training will have to regularly grapple with how to approach constantly innovating and adapting providers.

WICHE staff propose a project to address these shortcomings in policy by working with 3-5 states to develop policy and regulatory frameworks that can be replicated in other states. This effort will help ensure states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

Relationship to WICHE Mission

This project closely aligns with WICHE’s mission in multiple different ways. First, the work will improve access to postsecondary opportunities by identifying opportunities for states to leverage new or innovative providers and create new opportunities for students. Second, this project will promote excellence in postsecondary education by developing needed accountability frameworks that can protect students and ensure that there is some form of quality assurance for programs that to date have largely escaped regulatory oversight.

Background

Postsecondary education in the United States has long been dominated by traditional colleges and universities. Whether these institutions are public, private nonprofit, or for-profit institutions, traditional institutions are subject to state laws, accrediting agencies, and (if they disburse federal financial aid) federal regulations. The bulk of their offerings have focused on enrolling students in credit-bearing courses and issuing certificates or degrees. Traditionally, noncredit offerings of these institutions emerged from “continuing education” units, but this distinction has lessened in recent years.

Alternative providers are often newer entrants into postsecondary education. Almost all of them began by offering noncredit courses and are rarely recognized by accrediting agencies. Those that started as MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) providers offered courses that were free or low-cost and most courses came from traditional colleges and

universities, although they were offered outside of traditional academic programs. That is usually no longer the case. To sustain operations, MOOC providers charge fees and have begun offering credentials (“nano-degrees” and “micro-credentials”) that are beginning to look suspiciously close to the certificates and degrees offered by traditional institutions. Sometimes these credentials are in partnership with accredited institutions, while others create and offer all of their own courses.

Similarly, IT-focused bootcamps have gained prominence by promising to help students gain highly marketable skills in a short period of time. Recent years have seen multiple high-profile coding bootcamps, sometimes backed by established for-profit education companies, close their doors.³

Alternative providers are subject to very little oversight. Because they don’t offer for-credit courses or degrees, they have not joined any accrediting agency that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Each state is responsible for deciding which entities may offer degrees. Because these new providers do not offer traditional degrees or certificates, they have declared themselves as not subject to state regulation. This assertion is quickly coming into question and flies in the face of some state laws. At least one state has pushed back against this by pushing some alternative providers to register with state offices overseeing distance education.⁴

Some alternative providers have sought to skirt state laws or impose conditions favorable to the provider in the terms of agreement to which their students must agree. For example, students may be held responsible for assuring compliance with laws or regulations in their state (which they will probably not know), held to the laws of the state where the provider is headquartered and not where the student is located, subjected to binding arbitration, or barred from class-action suits against the provider.

Students attending accredited institutions have some protections in the event the institutions close, primarily through accreditor-mandated teach-out provisions. Meanwhile, many states provide additional protections through their policies, such as student complaint processes, tuition recovery funds, surety bonds, and procedures for archiving and housing student records. But when alternative providers close, students are left with little, if any, recourse.

Finally, there are growing issues of equity surrounding these providers. Low-income students are not eligible for the federal or state aid that advantages them when attending accredited institutions. For providers offering demonstrably valuable and timely workforce training, states need a way to open a financial pathway for those least able to afford participation in the program.

Project Description

To assist states and postsecondary systems increase postsecondary attainment and meet workforce demand, WICHE will work with 3-5 states to develop policy and regulatory frameworks that can be replicated in other states. The goal of this effort is to ensure that states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

The activities will include:

- **Conduct exploratory research.** WICHE will carry out research on the few state efforts that are under way to address these issues, as well as gathering evidence, where available, about the effectiveness of such programs.
- **Establish an advisory board.** Given the range of stakeholders involved in this sector, WICHE believes that guidance and counsel from a diverse range of experts will be critical to the development of useful research products and thoughtful policy frameworks.
- **Convene state and system meetings.** WICHE will convene interested participants in selected states through a series of meetings to obtain their ideas and input on options for addressing these issues. By using a joint approach, states will save time in duplicating work in their own settings, and providers could have a regulatory environment that is more alike than different across states.
- **Propose new frameworks.** Working collaboratively with state partners, WICHE will facilitate the development of new regulatory and consumer protection frameworks that respect each state context, but also have components that can be adapted to other states.

Action Requested

Staff request that the Policy Analysis and Research Committee approve this project and allow WICHE to seek and expend external funding to support this work, which would be added to the FY 2022 workplan

Staff and Fiscal Impact

WICHE proposes to seek funding for a three-year project at the cost of \$975,000, which would support 2.5 FTE and provide subgrants to participating states.

¹ Credential Engine, *Counting U.S. Postsecondary and Secondary Credentials*, (Washington, DC: Credential Engine, 2021).

² Eduardo Porter, "Reinventing Workers for the Post-COVID Economy," *New York Times*, December 4, 2020, accessed December 21, 2020, at [nytimes.com/2020/12/01/business/economy/workers-jobs-training.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/01/business/economy/workers-jobs-training.html).

³ Lindsay McKenzie, "California Boot Camp Shuts Down," *Inside Higher Ed*, June 27, 2018, accessed December 21, 2020, at insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/06/27/california-boot-camp-shuts-down. Paul Fain, "Kaplan-Owned Coding Boot Camp Will Close," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 14, 2017, accessed December 21, 2020, at insidehighered.com/news/2017/07/14/dev-bootcamp-which-kaplan-bought-three-years-ago-closing.

⁴ Jeffrey R. Young, "Minnesota Higher Ed Office Says Udacity's Nanodegrees Might Violate State Law," *EdSurge*, December 14, 2016, accessed December 21, 2020, at edsurge.com/news/2016-12-14-minnesota-higher-ed-office-says-udacity-s-nanodegrees-might-violate-state-law.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan Sections Pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Unit's Activities

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	A	Western	.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	.20	N/A
Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West	F/A	Western	.025	All WICHE members
Western Policy Exchanges	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.05	N/A
WICHE Insights	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	A/S; T/I; A	Western	2.25	NC-SARA; Western SARA signatories; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories. The Policy Analysis and Research Unit will continue to convene biweekly calls with state/system chief academic officers, which attendees have found extremely beneficial for the resource and information sharing that takes place. The unit is also undertaking work to make select Resources and Projects responsive to new information regarding COVID-19's education impacts.

The annual *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* report analyzes key higher education metrics and information about the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. This resource helps stakeholders monitor regional changes over time and informs discussion in policy and education communities. Utilizing WICHE's Policy Analysis Research Database (PARD), the Benchmarks data dashboard now includes state information as well as regional metrics.

The **Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)** informs the WICHE Commission (the Commission) and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West and relevant policy research. LAC members are appointed by the Commission and meet annually.

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

throughout the year. WICHE will release several enhanced tables in FY 2022, providing increased detail and interactivity, and adding new analysis. WICHE will supplement the core data sources, as possible, to keep this resource contemporary to COVID-19 impacts.

WICHE will continue building out *State Policy and Data Profiles* that capture state postsecondary contexts. The development of the *Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARD)* will enable the Policy Unit to provide more detailed and relevant information specific to each WICHE member.

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

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

The *WICHE Insights* publication series consists of periodic briefs (usually published several times a year) that illuminate a higher education policy or research topic, or that supplement a regular WICHE activity or release (such as our annual *Tuition and Fees* or our quadrennial *Knocking at the College Door* report).

The WICHE *Policy Webinar* series features WICHE staff, partners, and/or higher education stakeholders periodically hosting digital forums for registrants on selected higher education topics of interest. Anticipated topics for FY 2022 will largely focus on COVID-19 recovery, potentially including reengagement of students who dropped out or never started due to the pandemic, behavioral health on campus, and others.

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

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	F/A; A/S	Western/ National	\$1.2 million	2.25 FY21-22	Hewlett Foundation, WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Data for the American Dream	A/S; W/S; A	National	NCHEMS contract; \$150,000	.40 2/19-9/21	NCHEMS, Schmidt Futures
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	T/I	Western	DHS	.10 7/17-TBD	WCET, DHS, FEMA, SHEEO offices of participant states
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	A/S	National	\$75,000	.625 in FY22 5/19-5/22	College Board, others

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	F/A; A/S; T/I	National	American Indian Higher Education Consortium; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$59,000	TBD	NCHEMS, Programs & Services

Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium: The policy unit and WCET received funding to create a national consortium with the three other regional higher education compacts – the Midwest Higher Education Compact, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the New England Board of Higher Education – focused on scaling the successful adoption of high-quality open educational resources to improve student outcomes, increase equity, and improve affordability. There is significant collaboration and coordination across regions with WCET serving as the “backbone” of the effort.

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

Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders: As an additional component of the cybersecurity initiative, WICHE is continuing to develop partnerships with cyber experts and conducting outreach to WICHE states to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates: The Policy Analysis and Research unit released the 10th edition of state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates in December 2020. During FY 2022, staff will continue dissemination activities and produce tools that can help users understand the potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and developing analysis related to socio-economic status.

Intermediaries for Scale Partnership: Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE is pursuing multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE has recently been chosen by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate its efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. This will in turn aid in AIHEC’s work to support Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and provide leadership on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues. WICHE staff will continue to review other opportunities to partner with Intermediaries for Scale where the work fits with WICHE’s mission and staff expertise.

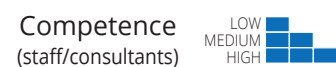
NEW DIRECTIONS

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

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	F/A; A/S; W/S		Western	\$1.2 million	3.0 3 years	TBD
Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners	A/S; W/S		National	\$1.5 - 2 million	1.75 4 years	TBD


Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance
(mission-critical) 

Opportunity
(funding) 

Competence
(staff/consultants) 

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	A/S; A		Western	Dependent upon size and scale of effort	.05 Ongoing	Western states
Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho	A/S; A		Western	\$385,313	.0825 2 years	Idaho State Board of Education
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	F/A; A/S		Western	\$500,000	1.50 2 years	TBD
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	A/S; W/S		Western	\$1 million	1.5 3 years	WCET
Western Postsecondary Data Users Network	A/S; W/S; A		Western	\$50,000	.50 6 months	Western states
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S		Western	\$100,000	.25 Single convening	Behavioral Health Program
Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network	F/A; A/S		Western	\$400,000	2.0 2 years	TBD
Data with a Purpose	W/S; A		National	\$497,475	.05 2 years	Strada Education Network
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD
Recognizing Learning: Further Study of Prior Learning Assessment	A/S; W/S		Western/ National	\$200,000	1.5 2 years	CAEL
A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs	A/S; W/S		Western	\$2.5 million	2.0 3 years	TBD
Improving Credential Information in the West	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$50,000	0.1 2 years	MHEC, National Science Foundation, Credential Engine
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	A/S; W/S		Western	\$1 million	1.35 3 years	Behavioral Health Program

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

Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners: Building on WICHE's Adult College Completion Network (which concluded in 2016) and other work related to adult learners, WICHE proposes to leverage its existing membership and activities to pursue new approaches to achieve four objectives: 1) build the evidence base for effectively serving adult learners, 2) facilitate collaboration among network members, 3) share scalable solutions across the field, and 4) link adult college completion work with the broader equity agenda. WICHE will also seek to partner with states to increase the number of

adults with a postsecondary credential of value. To accomplish that goal, the project will identify high-impact supports for adult learners that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for serving adult learners in concert with states, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed to increase adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

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

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

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

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

Western Postsecondary Data Users Network: State education and workforce development agencies continue to improve data systems that have the potential to provide critical information to students and their families, policymakers, and institutional leaders. To take full advantage of these systems, states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, state researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to states taking advantage of these data systems include limited opportunities for state postsecondary researchers to engage in professional development; heavy workloads managing existing reporting duties, leaving little time for exploratory analyses; and few chances to network with colleagues in other states to address common problems. WICHE hopes to address these issues by exploring the need for and, if appropriate, establishing a Western Postsecondary Data Users Network, which would convene key state, system, and institutional education and workforce researchers to address common questions, provide technical assistance, and assist in professional development. This network would aim to ensure that Western policymakers have access to high-quality evidence to develop, assess, and improve education and training policies and programs.

Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus: Behavioral health issues have a significant impact on the health and well-being of many traditional-aged students. Additionally, they can be a significant barrier to postsecondary success. There are not currently well-accepted policies and practices for providing support systems on campuses. WICHE is

well-positioned to begin addressing the issue through its policy and behavioral health units. The initial project will be to host a convening of state policymakers and institutional leaders and practitioners to identify policy and practice gaps, as well as potential solutions.

Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network: WICHE will work with state partners to develop common metrics with which to evaluate dual credit programs that include analyses of cost to students and their families, states, school districts, and institutions of higher education. Further, WICHE and its network partners will carry out rigorous quantitative and qualitative research to better understand how these programs operate, where they are successful, and develop actionable recommendations to improve student outcomes.

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

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education: In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work with WCET and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale: Through this work, WICHE will leverage and disseminate research related to competency-based education (CBE) and prior learning assessment (PLA) so that policymakers can make evidence-based decisions. Additionally, staff would develop targeted information campaigns to build understanding of and support for CBE and PLA based on new and extant research. WICHE has substantial expertise in prior learning assessment research and policy through its work on previous Lumina Foundation-funded efforts.

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

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

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

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Implementation of WICHE Data Management Plan: WICHE, working with experts from Cooley LLP law firm, developed a strong data management plan that improves policies and practices to increase security and compliance across WICHE's operational and support units. In FY 2022, staff will continue implementing the new plan.

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

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

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

Wyoming Postsecondary Needs Analysis: WICHE was contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) to help fulfill the organization's statutory obligations to analyze the need for and impact of a new proposed community college district. The funding for this project fell below the threshold required for Commission approval and was approved by the WICHE president. WICHE partnered with NCHEMS and produced a detailed analysis and report showing that if voters in Campbell County approved a new community college district, and the related increase in property tax, there was strong evidence that the new district would be sustainable and have limited negative impacts on the other districts in the state.

Discussion Item

WICHE Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy

Summary

WICHE is widely viewed as an organization with significant expertise on policy issues affecting postsecondary education. Given the intertwined nature of state and federal roles in postsecondary education, WICHE has traditionally taken the view that effective federal policy is a crucial component that assists states in promoting positive student outcomes. WICHE staff are regularly consulted by federal policymakers as well as organizations that focus on improving federal policy. While staff can easily provide information on WICHE-led research or the findings of our initiatives, staff generally do not take official positions on legislation or policy proposals without endorsement by the full WICHE Commission (the Commission). Given the diversity of states, WICHE leadership has traditionally worked to identify a small number of general areas in which there is agreement across states and sought approval by the full Commission to advocate for those positions.

The Commission previously approved a set of principles and positions in 2018 in anticipation of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (which still has not happened). With the possibility of further federal efforts to reexamine key higher education policy in the coming legislative session, staff are beginning the process to discuss and adopt a series of positions focused on states' needs and WICHE's mission.

WICHE staff plan to use feedback from this discussion to inform positions that will be presented to the Executive Committee this August, followed by formal presentation as an action item at the November 2021 Commission Meeting.

Description of Potential Principles and Positions

WICHE develops its proposed federal positions based on general principles. The principles below are similar to those adopted by the Commission in 2018:

- **Principle 1.** States and territories, including the postsecondary systems and institutions within them, are significant partners in ensuring access to high-quality higher education for all students, and in ensuring accountability of our nation's postsecondary enterprise; as such, they have a unique and critical role to play in the higher education policymaking process.
- **Principle 2.** Solutions to our nation's higher education challenges and problems should focus on how to support positive outcomes for all students – particularly those that have been poorly served by postsecondary education in the past and those groups that are facing significant barriers in the future – and protecting students and taxpayers from fraud.
- **Principle 3.** Higher education policy decisions should be informed by data, rigorous research, and evidence.

These principles will inform the development of WICHE's positions on federal postsecondary policy issues. In summary, staff are considering the following positions:

1. **Actionable data and information are key to better outcomes for students and any data system(s) must be developed carefully.** Staff propose that WICHE remain neutral on the creation of a federal student unit record system, consistent with the previously approved WICHE position. However, given the significant existing expertise within WICHE and the lack of state-focused voices involved in previous discussions around the development of such systems, WICHE fills a crucial void and has helped to improve previous legislation.
2. **A state-federal partnership can enhance affordability and be part of the solution for improving access and success.** Affordability of postsecondary education is a key topic throughout the West. Given the historical roles of both federal and state funding of postsecondary education, a re-invigorated federal-state partnership is crucial to assessing and improving affordability. WICHE has a history of developing financial aid models that would serve the development of a federal-state partnership well.
3. **Higher education innovations to improve student outcomes should be supported but must ensure robust student protections.** WICHE has played a significant role in fostering innovation in postsecondary education, but recognizes that any federal efforts to promote new policies and practices through flexibility must protect students from bad-faith actors. Finding the appropriate balance is crucial, and WICHE staff's expertise in policy and technology can play a crucial role.

4. **Digital learning is critical for higher education and economic development in the 21st century.** Even prior to the recent pandemic and the wide scale reliance on digital learning that it created at every institution, the importance of digital learning was abundantly clear. The effectiveness of digital learning is, however, impacted by both student and institutional technology accessibility. The recent pandemic and its disruption of face-to-face instruction has demonstrated the impact of these “broadband deserts” on students and institutions. WICHE supports the development and use of digital learning as a means of improving student access and success, especially for those students who are not well-served by more traditional face-to-face instruction.

5. **Federal policy should ensure veterans receive full GI Bill housing allowance regardless of education modality.** Veterans who take all of their courses in a term by distance education are currently eligible for only half of the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) that other veterans receive who enroll in their courses on-campus or through a mix of face-to-face and online courses. WICHE, in support of Veterans, favors a change in policy regulation to remove the 50 percent reduction in Monthly Housing Allowance to students utilizing GI Bill benefits enrolled in courses solely through distance education by an institution that meets all other eligibility criteria.

Discussion Item

Legislative Advisory Committee Fall 2021 Meeting

Note: Based on commissioner feedback, the Policy Analysis and Research Unit is seeking feedback on topics and themes for the Fall 2021 meeting. Presented below are potential ideas to begin the discussion, but staff have not fully developed the agenda at this point.

Further, the logistics for the 2021 meeting are in flux. WICHE is planning on hosting the meeting in-person in Sacramento, California. WICHE is currently holding meeting dates of September 22-23 and November 17-18.

Potential Themes:

1. The state of state postsecondary education after COVID-19
2. Key legislative lessons from the pandemic
 - a. Preparation for "next time"
 - b. For improving regular operations
3. Interactions between federal and state policy
4. State policy approaches to reskilling dislocated workers
5. State policy approaches to reengaging students who stopped out or never started because of COVID-19
6. Alternative providers and state policy
7. Utilization of COVID-19 relief funds
8. Student Support strategies.



Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

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Behavioral Health Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
1:45 – 3:15 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

Join the virtual Commission Meeting by accessing the Zoom Meeting link in your registration confirmation. You do not need to leave the Zoom Meeting after each session. You may stay in the Zoom Meeting throughout the entire virtual meeting, including Committee breakout sessions and breaks.

Additional Behavioral Health Committee Meeting

details: The Host will transfer you to your Breakout Room from the main session at 1:45 p.m. No additional action on your part is required for accessing the Committee Meeting location. You will be transferred back to the main Zoom Meeting room at the end of the Behavioral Health Committee Meeting.

If you have difficulties joining the Zoom Meeting or need other technical assistance, please call the help desk at 303.541.0204 or 303.541.0201.

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT

Behavioral Health Special Committee Meeting

Committee Members

Antwan Jefferson (CO)
 Clayton Christian (MT)
 Ray Holmberg (ND), Member, WICHE Behavioral Health Oversight Committee
 Jude Hofschneider (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI),
 Chair, WICHE Behavioral Health Oversight Committee
 Fred Baldwin (WY)

Agenda

Facilitating: Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health Program

Staff: Janell Daly, Administrative Assistant III
 John Gomez, Director of Operations
 Deb Kupfer, Senior Consultant

Information Items:

- Update on Current Behavioral Health Program Projects 5-3
- Unit Financial Performance and Outlook
- Review of the FY 2022 Workplan Pertaining to the Behavioral Health Program 5-10
- Program Focus: Rural Community Opioid Response Program (RCORP)
Bill Hogan, Debra Kupfer

Other Business

Adjournment

Biographical information on the presenters

William H. "Bill" Hogan is the principal of the health and social service consulting organization, Answer Creek Consulting, LLC. Current consulting contracts include: The Children's Place (a child advocacy center), Wasilla, AK.; REACH 907 (a faith-based organization working with children in the foster care system), Wasilla, AK.; Appriss Health/Open Beds, Louisville, KY.; Leavitt Partners, Salt Lake City, UT.; and with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Boulder, CO. He is currently working on the HRSA RCORP (Rural Opioid Program) and the Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Project for WICHE. He is also a field instructor/supervisor with the West Virginia School of Social Work.

For eight years, Hogan served as a board member of Comagine Health a quality improvement, care management company with offices in Seattle, WA. and Salt Lake City, UT. In 2019, he spent five months as the interim CEO of Alaska Family Services in Palmer, AK. He was previously the dean of the College of Health at

the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and senior fellow with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, where he helped create and implement Recover Alaska, a substance-use disorder prevention and intervention initiative. Additionally Hogan held several positions with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, including commissioner, deputy commissioner, and as the first director of the Division of Behavioral Health.

Hogan has worked as a clinician, supervisor, and administrator with several community mental health, substance-use disorder and developmental disabilities programs and agencies in Alaska, Mississippi, Virginia, West Virginia, and New York. In addition, he has presented at various local, state, national, and international meetings and conferences on suicide prevention, community based health, and social service program development, as well as behavioral health workforce development. In Alaska, Hogan volunteered as a board member and vice chair of the Mat Su Health Foundation and chair of the Mat Su Regional Medical Center Board of Directors in Wasilla, AK. He currently resides with his wife in Florida.

Debra Kupfer has more than 40 years of public behavioral health experience as both a clinician and an administrator, including 15 years with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program as a senior consultant. Kupfer spent 25 years with the Colorado Department of Human Services, serving as the mental health commissioner; manager; director of policy and planning of hospital services for the Colorado Office/Division of Behavioral Health; and as clinical therapist and adult division deputy administrator for the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan.

In recent years, Kupfer has served as the lead and/or supported projects with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program. Additionally, Kupfer is a technical expert lead on the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) – Technical Assistance Project. These efforts have involved providing technical assistance, facilitating stakeholder groups, developing data collection instruments, leading focus groups, conducting key informant interviews, reporting findings, and developing recommendations for the enhancement of behavioral health systems.

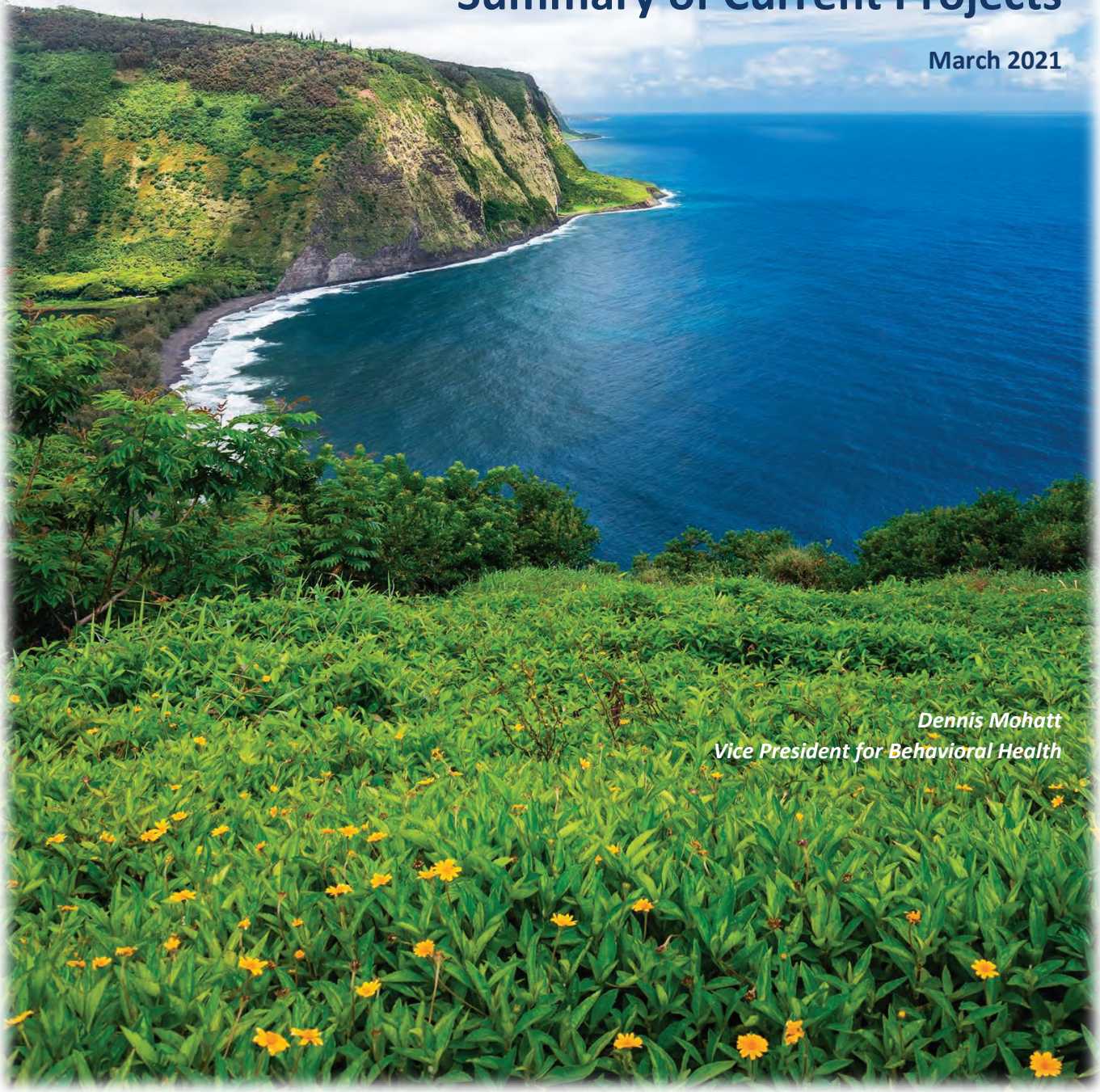
Currently, Kupfer is an executive board member for Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners in Colorado and serves on the executive committee of National Dialogues on Behavioral Health. Kupfer also served as a reviewer, monitor, and consultant for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Mental Health Block Grant for more than 15 years and as a national facilitator for Advocates for Human Potential's Olmstead Community of Practice Initiative funded by SAMHSA. Since 2007, Kupfer has worked with the U.S. Pacific Jurisdictions and the U.S. Virgin Islands on many consulting projects concerning behavioral health, rural workforce development, and crisis planning, among others.



Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education
Behavioral Health Program

Summary of Current Projects

March 2021



*Dennis Mohatt
Vice President for Behavioral Health*



The WICHE Behavioral Health Program, founded in 1955, improves behavioral health systems of care for mental health consumers and their families in the West and beyond. We work to advance the preparation of a qualified mental health workforce in the West. Collaborating with states and territories, we meet the challenges of changing environments through regional research and evaluation, policy analysis, program development, technical assistance, and information sharing.

Front page photo: Waipio Valley Lookout, Big Island, Hawai'i



ALASKA

Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium (Deb Kupfer)

The WICHE BHP contracts with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Behavioral Health and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, to support the [Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium \(AK-PIC\)](#) to complete the training of students enrolled at the University of Alaska's Ph.D. program in Clinical-Community Psychology, as well as other psychology doctoral students who wish to train and work in Alaska.

Alaska Psychiatric Institute Technical Assistance (Deb Kupfer)

The WICHE BHP contracts with the Alaska DHSS, Division of Behavioral Health, to provide technical assistance and consultation to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute.

ARIZONA

Arizona Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring (Rebecca Helfand)

The WICHE BHP partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to support fidelity reviews of four evidence-based practices in the Maricopa County public behavioral health system. In addition, two evidence-based practices are being reviewed in the Northern and Southern regions of the state. The WICHE BHP employs and supports the Project Lead and two fidelity reviewers.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Evidence-Based Practices (Deb Kupfer)

The WICHE BHP collaborates with Mercy Care Arizona to provide training, education, and guidance concerning evidence-based practices (EBPs) and fidelity tools to ensure provider staff are offering high quality EBPs and are ensuring fidelity to identified EBPs protocols.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Training (Deb Kupfer)

The WICHE BHP collaborates with Mercy Care Arizona to develop and conduct a training academy to increase workforce expertise by implementing training strategies for three evidence-based practices: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Transition to Independence Model; Infant-Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona 0-5 Training and, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders, including Opioids.

HAWAI'I

Hawai'i Department of Education: Supplement Recruitment of Clinical Psychologists Project (Erin Briley)

The Hawai'i Department of Education has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide recruitment and contracting of Clinical Psychologists to ensure all program requirements for supervision and support of staff, students, and program fidelity are maintained for West Hawaii's School Based Behavioral Health (WH-SBBH) program. The WH-SBBH program has historically faced significant challenges recruiting and retaining professionals for service provision because of the rural and workforce challenges that leave WH-SBBH without the needed professional credentials to supervise and train new SBBH personnel.

Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium (Erin Briley)

The WICHE BHP continues to assist the State of Hawai'i in the operation and continuous accreditation of its psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship is to increase the number of psychologists in Hawai'i and build the state's behavioral health workforce. Three Hawai'i state agencies- the Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Public Safety- provide funding to support the WICHE BHP's ongoing development and operations of the [Hawai'i Internship Program \(HI-PIC\)](#).



IDAHO

Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium (Dennis Mohatt)

The WICHE BHP is working with partner agencies to develop a broad and culturally relevant training program to support the preparation and retention of doctoral-level psychologists in Idaho through the [Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium \(ID-PIC\)](#). The WICHE BHP facilitates program development, ensures the program meets American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation standards, and assists in the accreditation process. As the program has successfully recruited the minimum required number of interns for the 2020-21 training year, ID-PIC will be moving forward with the accreditation process, including preparing and submitting a comprehensive self-study and scheduling an accreditation site visit.

MONTANA

Montana Zero Suicide (Dennis Mohatt)

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

Montana PACT Fidelity Reviews (Rebecca Helfand)

The WICHE BHP is providing consultation and technical assistance to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Addictive and Mental Disorders Division regarding the implementation of their Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This work will begin with fidelity assessments of each PACT program in Montana using the SAMHSA Assertive Community Treatment Fidelity Review Toolkit. Based on areas of need established by the fidelity reviews, WICHE will design and implement improvement activities including education, training, and consultation.

NEVADA

Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium (Erin Briley)

The WICHE BHP continues to provide support to the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health for the ongoing operations and accreditation of the [Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium \(NV-PIC\)](#), which aims to increase the number of psychologists in Nevada and build the state's behavioral health workforce.

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium (Dennis Mohatt)

The State of New Mexico contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to develop and implement a Doctoral Psychology Internship Consortium. The Consortium will help build quality behavioral health resources in rural areas of the state. The focus of this work is facilitating the development of the program, ensuring that the internship program meets the accreditation requirements of the American Psychological Association (APA), and supporting and assisting the internship program from initial planning through the accreditation process.

OREGON

State Psychology Internship Program (Dennis Mohatt)

The WICHE BHP continues to assist the Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Training Program by providing support for the internship website.



SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota IMPACT Fidelity Reviews and Training (Rebecca Helfand)

The WICHE BHP is providing consultation and technical assistance to the South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health regarding the implementation of their Individualized Mobile Programs of Assertive Community Treatment (IMPACT). The focus of this work includes conducting quality assurance reviews, based upon the SD-specific IMPACT Quality Assurance Scale, and the design and implementation of activities based on areas of need, established by the quality assurance scale findings and previous SAMHSA fidelity reviews, along with providing education, training, and consultation.

UTAH

Utah Psychology Internship Consortium (Dennis Mohatt)

With support from the Utah Medical Education Council, the WICHE BHP worked with partner agencies to develop a broad and culturally relevant training program to support the preparation and retention of doctoral-level psychologists in Utah. Currently, the WICHE BHP is providing consulting services to the [Utah Psychology Internship Program](#), including updating and migrating the website, attending monthly training committee meetings, and advising on operational issues relating to intern performance.

MULTI-STATE PROJECTS

Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC) (Dennis Mohatt)

The WICHE BHP, in partnership, with the University of North Dakota College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines was selected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to co-administer a newly created MP-MHTTC. The [MP-MHTTC](#) provides comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to mental health providers and other practitioners in the SAMHSA Region 8, resulting in a stronger, more robust mental health workforce, in historically underserved areas. The MP-MHTTC team identifies existing resources and develops new resources that are shared across Region 8, and the larger TTC network. Region 8 is comprised of the following states; Colorado, Utah, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming.

An additional grant was awarded to the MP-MHTTC to provide school-based mental health training and technical assistance. As part of this supplemental grant, the WICHE BHP targets outreach to schools through technical assistance to school leadership, including superintendents, principals, and administrators. The schools receive evidence-based practices for mental health promotion, prevention, and identification of at-risk youth. In general, the technical assistance provides training on suicide prevention and awareness.

National Institutes of Health (Dennis Mohatt)

The WICHE BHP was selected by the NIH to prepare an electronic book and annotated bibliography, Mental Health in Rural America- 2006-2020, summarizing research findings on mental health and substance use in rural America, incorporating stakeholder input regarding exemplary research, less well known but impactful research, and the research gaps and priorities in this area. This book/monograph will provide researchers, policymakers, educators and health care providers with the latest information and results from research from the past decade concerning mental illness, mental health, and substance use in rural areas, as well as with information about gaps in current research and priorities for future research needs. The Principal Investigator for this 18-month project, Dennis Mohatt, was involved with the development of previous versions of the monograph.



Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) (Deb Kupfer, Ivory Tubbs)

JBS International received a Cooperative Agreement from the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) to support the RCORP - Technical Assistance Project. The WICHE BHP is working as the Technical Assistance Lead for 26 rural implementation sites funded for three (3) years by HRSA and continuing to support four (4) rural planning grantees with non-cost extensions. Current planning and implementation grantee sites supported by WICHE BHP are in the following WICHE States: California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. This project supports grantees in reducing morbidity and mortality associated with opioid use in their communities, using evidence-based and sustainable interventions.

Rural Veterans Suicide Prevention – Together With Veterans (Gina Brimmer)

[Together With Veterans \(TWV\)](#) is funded by the US Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health, with support from the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. The TWV program is a partnership of the VA Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC), the WICHE BHP, and local organizations that are run by or serve veterans. The WICHE BHP engages rural communities via local veterans and their community partners, including health care, behavioral health, law enforcement, gun shops, faith community, and others as identified locally to implement evidence-informed suicide prevention strategies.

The WICHE BHP provides training and technical assistance to rural sites interested in pursuing this veteran-driven, collaborative, evidence-informed approach to assessing community needs and creating a community-centered action plan grounded in the public health model for suicide prevention. TWV practices are in alignment with the VA National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, and the SAMHSA/VA partnership implemented via the Governor's Challenge and Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans and their Families.

States and U.S. Territories with TWV community sites include: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Guam, Illinois, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. New recruitment is currently underway in additional states.

Suicide Prevention Toolkit (Dennis Mohatt)

The WICHE BHP continues to provide training and support in the use of the Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Providers. Originally developed in 2009 with a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the toolkit was revised and updated in 2017 to reflect current epidemiological information and align with Zero Suicide, a national best practice framework for suicide prevention. The WICHE BHP continues to provide training through webinars and on-site visits on how to use and implement the Toolkit.

Western States Decision Support Group – Annual Membership Program (Rebecca Helfand)

The Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG) is an information-sharing network for state government behavioral health data and evaluation staff and managers from the WICHE states and territories. Since 1985, the WICHE BHP has managed initiatives including information sharing platforms and support to stay apprised of developments and best practices in the field of behavioral health data and evaluation.

West Virginia University (Dennis Mohatt)

The WICHE BHP is providing consultation services to the West Virginia University (WVU) Office of Health Affairs for the CMS Substance Use Disorder Prevention that Promote Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act. The purpose of the project is to expand availability of quality, evidence-based treatment, and provider capacity for Medicaid recipients with mental or substance use disorders. The WICHE BHP will focus its work with the WVU Office of Health Affairs on the subpopulation of those living in rural West Virginia, and will help develop strategies to improve retention of a highly skilled workforce, and to expand the infrastructure and SUD treatment and recovery support capabilities.



Behavioral Health Program

our team



Dennis Mohatt
Vice President for Behavioral Health,
Co-Director, MHTTC



Thomas Barrett
Senior Consultant



Genevieve Berry
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Rebecca Helfand
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Annette Robertson
Fidelity Reviewer



Gretchen Stage
Program Manager,
Together With
Veterans



Ivory Tubbs
Technical Expert
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Karen Voyer-Caravona
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Administrative
Assistant III



Stefanie Winfield
School Mental Health
Coordinator - MHTTC



FY 2022 Workplan Sections Pertaining to the Behavioral Health Program's Activities

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	TBD	TBD	TBD
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	W/S	Western	\$800,000	.25 7/13-6/20	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	W/S	Western	\$179,500	.05 10/16-6/20	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Arizona: Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S; A	Western	\$3,097,101	2.75 6/14-6/20	State of Arizona
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	W/S	Western	\$2,995,630	.30 7/13-6/20	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School-Based Clinical Psychologists*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$200,000	.25 Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S; A	Western	\$125,000	.5 2.5 years	State of Idaho
Montana Fidelity Reviews	W/S; A	Western	\$105,000	.30 2 years	State of Montana
Montana Zero Suicide	A/S	Western	\$119,945	.25 5/19-9/21	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$1,368,730	1.75 5 years	University of North Dakota
National Institutes of Health - Online Publication Update	A/S; W/S	National	\$189,130	.40 9/20-3/22	National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$1,120,537	.50 7/14-8/19	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$175,000	.50 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico
Oregon Psychology Internship Program	W/S	Western	\$196,958	None 4/14-12/19	State of Oregon & APA
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$974,767	1.75 4 years	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention	W/S	National	\$6,117,720	2.75 2/15-3/22	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews	W/S	Western	\$197,000	.25 6/15-6/21	South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$150,000	.50 2/18-6/20	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	W/S	Western	Varies annually	.20 Ongoing	WICHE member states and territories
* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2022.					

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

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

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

Arizona Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) Fidelity Monitoring: WICHE partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to support the implementation and fidelity reviews of four EBPs in the Maricopa County public behavioral health system. WICHE supports the Project Lead and two fidelity reviewers. The project was expanded in FY 2019 to include fidelity reviews of two EBPs in Northern and Southern Arizona.

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

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

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

Montana Fidelity Reviews: The Montana Addictive and Mental Disorders Division has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Addictive and Mental Disorders Division regarding the implementation of their Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for the eight PACT programs operating in October 2020, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation on outcomes and dashboard development.

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

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

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Online Publication Update: The NIH has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide an update to its publication Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography. The revision will expand the publication's focus to include substance use and addiction, with special emphasis on opioid addiction in rural and frontier areas of the U.S.

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

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

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

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): WICHE has partnered with JBS international to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 39 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. In FY 2019, the program included four sites: two in CO, one in MT, and one in NC. In FY 2020, the program expanded by four new sites: NH, TX, and an additional site in MT and NC. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country.

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

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

Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program: Since 1985, WICHE has been managing the WSDSG, an information-sharing membership-based network for behavioral-health data and evaluation staff and managers from WICHE states and territories. WICHE manages quarterly conference calls to discuss emerging issues in behavioral health data and system evaluation and provides ongoing support to WSDSG members. WICHE also organizes an annual meeting with training and presentations for WSDSG members to stay apprised of developments and best practices in the field of behavioral health data and evaluation. Funding is based on an annual membership fee of \$6,000.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:




Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance (mission-critical) **Opportunity (funding)** **Competence (staff/consultants)**

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S		Western & Pacific Territories	\$250,000	.50 2.5 years	The U.S. Territory of Guam
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention (seeking additional resources to develop a Community Coach training curriculum and to recruit and support 12 additional communities)	A/S; W/S		National	\$566,000	1 year	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Screening & Diagnostic Telehealth Feasibility Study	A/S; W/S		Western	\$101,100	6 months	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program Evaluation	W/S; A		Western	\$883,557	1.05 4 years	National Institutes of Health; Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) (seeking additional staff to support additional communities)	A/S; W/S		Western	\$214,868	1.5 1 year	JBS International

Guam Psychology Internship Consortium: The WICHE BHP will partner with the U.S. Territory of Guam to develop an accreditable psychology internship consortium to serve Guam and CNMI and build the behavioral health workforces there. As has been accomplished in Alaska, Hawai'i, Nevada, and Colorado, WICHE will guide all phases of the development of a psychology internship consortium to both attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country. WICHE has proposed additional funding from the VA to recruit and support an additional 12 sites in FY 2021-22. Additionally, WICHE proposes developing a TWV Coaches training curriculum for use by the VA.

Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Screening & Diagnostic Telehealth Feasibility Study: The WICHE BHP is seeking to partner with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to conduct a business case/feasibility analysis to identify an optimal and sustainable telehealth/telemedicine model of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) screening and diagnosis in Alaska.

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

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 39 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years. WICHE has submitted a funding request to support assistance for another 18-20 sites.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

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

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

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

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

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Privatization Feasibility Study: The State of Alaska contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comprehensive study of the feasibility of privatizing the API, examining both quantitative and qualitative data from API, and reviewing psychiatric hospitals from across the country that have been privatized to develop potential operational models. The WICHE BHP is partnering with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute (NRI) to provide a comprehensive project team.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs). WICHE provided training, education, and guidance concerning EBPs and fidelity tools to ensure Mercy Maricopa provider staff was offering high-quality EBPs and ensuring fidelity to identified EBPs protocols. WICHE supported training and technical assistance related to the implementation of the identified EBPs, and evaluation/quality improvement monitoring of the practices.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Training. WICHE collaborated with Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care (MMIC) to develop a training academy to increase workforce expertise by implementing training strategies for three evidence-based practices: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Transition to Independence (TIP) Model, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Abuse (CBT-SA).

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

Hawai'i Department of Education: Recruitment, Employment, and Facilitation for School-Based Behavioral Health Professionals: For several years, WICHE's BHP assisted the Hawai'i Department of Education with marketing, recruitment, screening, and referral services for behavioral health professionals to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands.

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

State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai'i Department of Health contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comparative review of early childhood services rates and related professional salaries such as occupational and physical therapies. The study compared Hawai'i rates to those in other analogous states to ensure competitive pay and thus sufficient workforce.

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



EdTech Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
1:45 – 3:15 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

Join the virtual Commission Meeting by accessing the Zoom Meeting link in your registration confirmation. You do not need to leave the Zoom Meeting after each session. You may stay in the Zoom Meeting throughout the entire virtual meeting, including Committee breakout sessions and breaks.

Additional EdTech Committee Meeting details: The Host will transfer you to your Breakout Room from the main session at 1:45 p.m. No additional action on your part is required for accessing the Committee Meeting location. You will be transferred back to the main Zoom Meeting room at the end of the EdTech Committee Meeting.

If you have difficulties joining the Zoom Meeting or need other technical assistance, please call the help desk at 303.541.0204 or 303.541.0201.

Western Interstate
Commission
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Tuesday, May 18, 2021

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. MDT

Technology-Enhanced Education (EdTech) Special Committee Meeting

Committee Members

Rita H. Cheng (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
David Lassner (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Camille Preus (OR)
Ann Millner (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)

Agenda

Facilitating: Don Bennett, WICHE Commission Executive Committee Member

Staff and Consultants:

Van Davis, Policy and Planning Consultant, WCET, and Principal,
Fogham Consulting
Liliana Diaz, Policy Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research, WICHE
Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, Policy Innovations
Sherri Artz Gilbert, Senior Director, Operations and Membership
Administration
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and WICHE Vice President for
Technology-Enhanced Education
Megan Raymond, Senior Director of Membership and Programs, WCET
Tanya Spilovoy, Director of Open Policy, WCET

Guests:

TJ Bliss, Chief Academic Officer, Idaho Board of Education
James Glapa-Grossklag, Dean, Educational Technology, Learning Resources,
and Distance Learning, College of the Canyons
Johnathan Lashley, Associate Chief Academic Officer, Idaho Board of
Education

Information Items:

Review of the FY 2022 Workplan Activities Pertaining to WCET

6-3

- Dues-funded operations (WCET membership and the State Authorization Network)
- Grant-funded operations (Every Learner Everywhere and the National Consortium of Open Educational Resources), and
- Proposed future activities.

Scaling and Sustaining OER

Open Educational Resources became popular as a means to lower textbook costs for students; provide additional freedom for faculty

to reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute content created by themselves or others; and to increase instructional quality. While there is enthusiasm in getting started on OER usage, the scaling and sustaining of these efforts across an institution or system is more challenging. Guests will provide updates on challenges and successes. Time will be left for committee members to ask questions and share their experiences.

- NCOER – The National Consortium of Open Educational Resources – Tanya Spilovoy
- WICHE OER – Liliana Diaz
- Idaho Board of Education – TJ Bliss
- College of the Canyons reflecting on work of the California Community College System - James Glapa-Grossklag

Other Business

Adjournment

FY 2022 Workplan Sections Pertaining to the WCET Unit's Activities

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
WCET COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	A/S; T/I	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET members, Every Learner Everywhere, SAN
Digital Learning Practice	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting and Leadership Summit	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Corporate sponsors
WCET Member Service and Support	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Nearly 400 member institutions and organizations
WCET Research	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, Every Learner Everywhere, OLC, NCOER, SAN
WCET Webcast Series	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Adding Member-only Resources	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET and SAN, and member leadership
WCET Website Update	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members and leadership
Consortia and System Digital Learning Leaders	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	WCET staff	Higher education systems and multi-institution consortia
State Authorization Network (SAN)	A/S; A	U.S.	WCET staff	130+ members representing 800+ institutions. Partners: NC-SARA, regional compacts, NASASPS
WCET Steering Committee Annual Priorities	F/A; A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET Steering Committee and other members

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region and WCET members everywhere in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of

our states, territories, and WCET members everywhere. As a result of the pandemic, the transition to remote, hybrid, and hyflex learning has fallen to WCET members. As a result, WCET will continue to provide COVID-19 response, support, and planning to both its members and the public. With funding from Every Learner Everywhere the document “Pursuing Regulatory Compliance for Digital Instruction in Response to COVID-19: Policy Playbook” was created to alert administrators and faculty to the differences in certain federal and state policies when a course moves from a traditional face-to-face to digital mode of instruction. WCET will continue to provide compliance updates. Through its discussion forums and virtual events, members will share lessons learned in these pandemic-related digital learning environments.

As a membership organization, WCET has long focused on members sharing their experiences on what has worked or not worked in using **digital learning practice** techniques in higher education, and will continue to offer opportunities to share lessons learned. WCET continues to provide in-depth analysis of **federal and state policy, legislation, and regulations** that have an impact on faculty and students in digital learning. WCET is noted for its expertise on issues including “regular and substantive interaction” for distance education and state authorization of out-of-state activities.

wcetMIX is a digital platform to support communication, collaboration, and resource-sharing among WCET members. Members are invited to opt in to communicate through WCET’s popular WCETNews and WCETDiscuss digital forums. **wcetMIX** is being expanded to include libraries of member-only resources on select topics.

WCET is updating its **website** for the first time in several years. That work is currently under way and is anticipated to be done by early summer 2021.

The leaders of digital learning services for **state system or multi-institutional consortia** will meet monthly to share their unique challenges and solutions to using cooperation to better meet the needs of faculty and students.

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

Each year, the WCET Steering Committee selects topics on which it wishes to focus in providing insights and resources to assist members. Working groups are formed and they are narrowing down the broad topics to webinars, sessions, blog posts, and other resources that will inform the membership. For the 2021 calendar year, the selected topics are:

- *The post-COVID institution:* How higher education needs to adapt and change. Colleges are facing existential and organizational issues in both the short- and long-term.
- *The quality of digital learning:* How to maintain and increase the quality of instruction, learning, and support services with special emphasis on those courses that transitioned into remote, hybrid, or hyflex learning.
- *Diversity, equity, and inclusion:* How do we overcome inequities in serving students due to race, income, or other barriers?
- *Student return on investment (and how digital learning can help):* How can digital learning assist in controlling the price of higher education and how can we address the value and ROI of college?

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	6.0 2017-22	12 organizations identified as “Network Partners” by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Every Learner Everywhere Expert Network	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2020-21	ISTE and selected content experts

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere Student Fellowship Program	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2021	Achieving the Dream, Digital Promise, SXSW EDU, Intentional Futures
National Consortium of Open Educational Resources	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	1.0 2020-22	Four regional higher education compacts; WICHE Policy Unit

Every Learner Everywhere is a network of 12 partner organizations working collaboratively to help institutions use new technology to innovate in teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. WCET is an intermediary for the network, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and is also one of the partners participating in it. Every Learner is offering an “Expert Network” that provides free short consulting sessions for those interested in the intersection between equity and digital learning. Its new **Student Fellowship Program** will incorporate the voices of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, poverty-affected, first-generation, and other marginalized students into the work to improve student success through digital learning. The fellowship is project-based and will enable undergraduate students to work on interest- and skill-aligned projects and develop meaningful professional relationships and experiences.

WCET leads a national network to coordinate collaboration among the four regional higher education compacts aimed at increasing the adoption, scalability, and sustainability of **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. Together, these partners engage new opportunities to build capacity for policy and effective practice, enable substantial research, develop open education solutions that promote equitable learning, and support coordination across regions to scale and sustain use of OER across the country. The regional compacts are a trusted resource and share a common responsibility for assisting and promoting the adoption and scaling of open education; each has a structure in place with staff highly experienced in policy and practice. WCET serves as the intermediary coordinating among the compacts.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance
(mission-critical)



Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Quality Access Program (CourseGateway)	F/A; A/S; T/I		U.S. and beyond	\$6.8 million	4.0 Spring/ Summer 2021	Every Learner Everywhere, WebAIM, WICHE President's Office
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD

The **Quality Access Program** seeks an “owner” to conduct reviews of courseware and software products used in postsecondary digital learning and to be displayed on the website CourseGateway.org. WCET was chosen by Tyton Partners on behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as one of three finalists to assume the duties of managing the program. Parts of the work will be tightly tied to current Every Learner Everywhere work. WebAIM will partner in advising on and conducting accessibility reviews of the products under consideration.

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education: In this project, WCET will work with the Policy Analysis and Research Unit and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure that states can leverage the advantages of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE and WCET will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Orienting and Supporting Online Adjunct Faculty	A/S; T/I	U.S.	\$110,000	TBD	OLC and Every Learner Everywhere

In 2015, WCET conducted a survey of practices in **recruiting, orienting, and supporting online adjunct faculty**. In partnership with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), WCET will perform an update on select questions from the survey and expand it to examine how institutions develop contingent faculty to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Research will also be performed on professional development good practices for this underappreciated instructional community.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

WCET conducted an environmental scan and updated its strategy documents, including its mission, vision, and values statements. Input from staff and member leadership was key in updating and refining the work.

Due to the pandemic, the in-person **32nd WCET Annual Meeting** was moved from Indianapolis to a virtual environment that was divided into two sections: 1) Oct. 6-15, 2020, focused on Inclusiveness in Higher Education: From Notion to Action and 2) Nov. 2-12, 2020, focused on The Value of Higher Education and What the Future of Higher Education Could Be. The WCET Summit, held virtually on April 6 and May 4, 2021, focused on Practical Considerations for an Uncertain Future. In all of these events, members are learning and sharing the role that digital learning can play in helping address the challenges faced by postsecondary education.

Every Learner Everywhere received funding for its partners to provide multiple services to help institutions make the transition to digital learning as a result of the pandemic. Every Learner Everywhere also conducted the Equity Counts awareness campaign in fall 2020 to alert educators and students about the advances and pitfalls of digital learning in serving Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students.

The **State Authorization Network (SAN)** provides both basic and advanced workshops to educate participants on the details of state authorization regulations and strategies for ensuring that their institutions are in compliance. In addition to the basic and advanced workshops, in FY 2020, SAN provided a virtual seminar, Update on HEA & Federal Rulemaking: The Impact on Institutional Compliance, with experts providing direction to support compliance with new federal regulations. SAN developed an on-demand version of its basic workshop and an implementation handbook to comply with new federal regulations that became effective July 1, 2020. SAN also holds monthly meetings of its member coordinators and monthly “ask the expert” meetings open to the entire membership.

The Z Initiative (Z refers to “Zero Cost”) brought together open educational resources (OER) leaders, champions, legislators, state higher education system staff, and educational technologists – with the goal of developing and promoting best practices and policies on adoption, implementation, scalability, and sustainability of OER and zero-cost curricula. Funded by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, this project resulted in the National Consortium of Open Educational Resources.



Committee of the Whole Business Session

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
3:30 – 5:00 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

Join the virtual **Committee of the Whole/Business Session** by accessing the Zoom Meeting link in your registration confirmation. ***The Host will transfer attendees back to the main Zoom Meeting room after the Committee Meetings adjourn.*** You may stay in the Zoom Meeting throughout the entire virtual meeting, including breaks.

If you have difficulties joining the Zoom Meeting or need other technical assistance, please call the help desk at 303.541.0204 or 303.541.0201.

Western Interstate
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Tuesday, May 18, 2021

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. MST

Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Agenda

Reconvene Committee of the Whole: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Report and Recommended Action of the Executive Committee

Information Items:

Review of Action Items of the Executive Committee between November 2020 and May 2021 7-3


Report and Recommended Action of the Programs and Services Committee: Les Purce, Committee Chair [Tab 3]

Report and Recommended Action of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee: Christopher Cabaldon, Committee Chair [Tab 4]

Report of the Investment Committee: Camille Preus, Immediate Past WICHE Chair

Committee of the Whole – Action and Discussion Items

 Approval of the FY 2022 Salary and Benefit Recommendations 7-12

 Approval of the FY 2022 Annual Operating Budget – General and Non-General Fund Budgets 7-13

 Approval of Dedicated Reserve Levels for Non-General Fund Activities 7-21

 Approval of the FY 2022 Workplan 7-24

Other Business

Adjourn Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Meeting Evaluation: surveymonkey.com/r/WICHEMay2021

Closing Remarks by Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Adjournment

WICHE Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Commissioners Present

Susan Anderson (AK),
Chair David Lassner (HI), Vice Chair
Camille Preus (OR), Immediate Past Chair

Rita Cheng (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Rick Aman (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (US Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Executive Committee Members Absent:

Antwan Jefferson (CO)

Additional Commissioners Present

Donn Liston (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Kathleen Goepfing (AZ)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)

WICHE Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and
the Commission
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and
Co-Director, MHTTC
Shelley Pluto, Project Coordinator, W-SARA, Policy
Analysis and Research
Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and Vice
President for Technology Enhanced Education
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and
State Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research

Chair Susan Anderson called the meeting to order. She asked Laura Ewing to call roll. A quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the November 12, 2020, Executive Committee Minutes

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the November 12, 2020, Executive Committee minutes. Commissioner Camille Preus MOVED TO APPROVE the motion and Commissioner Mark Hagerott SECONDED. Chair Anderson called for discussion and hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion was approved unanimously through Zoom poll voting.

Overview of W-SARA Action Items to be Presented

President Demarée Michelau provided an overview of the W-SARA renewal process. She reported that the state membership in W-SARA is evaluated on a biennial cycle. Every two years from the time of a state's initial membership, the state submits a renewal application to its Regional Compact. This standard form developed by NC-SARA is used by all member states and territories. For a state to be renewed, W-SARA staff at WICHE complete an initial evaluation and the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC), reviews the application materials and votes on whether to recommend the state for renewal to the WICHE Commission (the Commission). This fall, three W-SARA member states are up for renewal – Arizona, Oregon, and South Dakota. The Executive Committee will decide if each state up for renewal meets the requirements set forth in Criteria 1-16 of the SARA State Membership Renewal Application and also ensures that the state has affirmed they can and will operate under the SARA criteria for membership over the course of the renewal period.

President Michelau introduced Christina Sedney, director of policy initiatives and state authorization, to provide brief summaries of the specific action items related to each of the state renewals.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of Arizona's SARA State Renewal Application

Sedney provided a summary of the state structure with the following information to consider for Arizona's renewal:

- Unique structure: Intergovernmental Agreement between the Arizona Board of Regents, Community Colleges (Maricopa Community College District on behalf of the Arizona Community College Coordinating Council), and the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education (AZPPSE).
- Arizona SARA Council includes three representatives from each of these sectors and is staffed by an executive director whose sole responsibility is SARA implementation.

Arizona SARA snapshot:

- 32 SARA Institutions (12 public, 12 private nonprofit, eight private for-profit)
- In 2018-19 academic year, the institutions enrolled 228,116 students in distance education [SARA enrollment was 181,797].
- No SARA qualifying complaints. The state works to ensure that if students have complaints, they are initially directed to the correct entity. The complaint process is as follows: complaints go first to an institution; then to the Board of Regents for public institutions, for four-year institutions; the Board for Private Postsecondary Education, for private institutions; and the governing board of the complainant's community college. If complaints are not resolved at the school level, the student complaints are directed to Arizona SARA.
- Arizona SARA has been working to approve an appeals process for institutions similar to the WICHE appeals process for states – that is an “appeal through rehearing” option.
- According to the W-SARA evaluation. Arizona SARA met all the criteria of the SARA application over the course of the past two years, and shows it is capable of doing so in the coming years. The RSC approved the application.

Sedney mentioned the University of Arizona's acquisition of Ashford, which will become the University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC). She noted UAGC is separately accredited and is based in California at this time, so it is not eligible to participate in W-SARA.

Commissioner Rita Cheng complimented Sedney for her presentation, and also Arizona SARA. She said that Northern Arizona University specifically appreciates the program. Commissioner Kathleen Goeppinger echoed the support and said on behalf of the Arizona private institutions that the SARA process plays an important role for students and institutions alike. Commissioner Cheng MOVED TO APPROVE the approval of Arizona's SARA State Renewal Application and Commissioner Robert Shireman SECONDED. Chair Anderson called for discussion.

During the discussion of the motion, Commissioner Shireman said although he supports the motion to approve Arizona, he recommends that W-SARA and NC-SARA improve and change the student complaint process to better reflect student concerns when they occur, and that there be more transparent tracking of complaints. He said that even though it may appear that complaints are resolved, they may not be due to the way the current process is handled at the institutional level. The requirement that the student complaint must go to his or her institution first may ultimately squelch a complaint from reaching the W-SARA/NC-SARA boards, he said. Additionally, the requirement of student complaints going to the institution first could undermine the ability of a regulatory agency to follow up on a complaint if the agency chooses to do so, especially if there is a pattern of complaints. He said that a report of the number of student complaints at each level would be helpful to see if there are discrepancies.

Sedney said that NC-SARA, at the national level, collects all state information on qualifying complaints, including whether they were resolved in favor of the institution or the student. The W-SARA RSC has discussed concerns about the possibility of any student complaint possibly being “trapped” at the institutional level, and the RSC is committed to determining ways to improve processes related to student complaints. W-SARA can encourage changes in practice, but an overall change to the policy has to come from the NC-SARA Board.

At the end of the discussion, Chair Anderson called for the vote and the motion passed unanimously by Zoom poll voting.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of Oregon's SARA State Renewal Application

Sedney provided a summary of the state structure with the following information to consider for Oregon's renewal:

The Oregon state portal entity is located in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's HECC) Office of Degree Authorization. The HECC is under the leadership of Commissioner Ben Cannon. In Oregon, the W-SARA state portal entity's responsibilities are primarily covered by the Office of Degree Authorization's Deputy Director. The person in this role is currently on medical leave so this role is jointly being filled by a compliance specialist and the director of the office. W-SARA has been working closely with the office to make sure they have the support needed to carry out the role and responsibility of the renewal policy requirements.

Oregon SARA snapshot:

- 31 SARA Institutions (16 public, 14 private nonprofit, one private for profit)
- In 2018-19 academic year these institutions enrolled 25,969 students in distance education [SARA enrollment was 8,821].
- There has been one qualifying complaint each year. One complaint was resolved in favor of the student and one was resolved in favor of the institution.
- One institution closure occurred during the course of their renewal period – Concordia University Portland, a private, non-profit institution. The state portal institution worked very closely with the institution's accreditor (Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities).
 - All students affected by the closure have been provided teachout options in comparable programs with other institutions.
- Oregon is developing its own appeals process with an Advisory Council made up of representatives from each sector of Oregon's SARA participating institutions.

At the conclusion of Sedney's state report, Commissioner Camille Preus MOVED TO APPROVE the approval of Oregon's SARA State Renewal Application, and Commissioner Ann Millner SECONDED. Chair Anderson called for discussion.

During the discussion of the motion, Commissioner Ben Cannon noted that Oregon being a member of W-SARA is an important responsibility and the agency takes this program very seriously. He is proud of the agency's involvement to protect Oregon based students as a result of the W-SARA agreement. There is a lot of work done by the HECC to uphold Oregon's W-SARA agreement and the cost to the state of the work required for SARA implementation exceeds the amount of institutional fees the office collects to fund their SARA work, but that hard work for students across the state is worth it.

At the end of discussion, Chair Anderson called for the vote and the motion passed unanimously by Zoom poll voting.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of South Dakota's SARA State Renewal Application

Sedney provided a summary of the state structure with the following information to consider for South Dakota's renewal:

- South Dakota SARA state portal entity is located at the South Dakota Board of Regents.

Oregon SARA snapshot:

- 17 SARA Institutions (10 public, seven private nonprofit)
- In 2018-19 academic year, participating institutions enrolled 13,454 students in distance education [SARA enrollment was 6,424]. This number will likely decrease because of an institution that was removed from South Dakota SARA in 2020.
- South Dakota SARA updated its policies in 2019 including an institutional appeals process and to align with current SARA policy.
- They have not received any qualifying SARA complaints to-date.
- National American University left South Dakota SARA. The institution was on provisional status and was then removed from SARA during the course of the renewal period.

- They were on provisional status for a low financial composite score (in 1.0-1.4 range), the state required quarterly financial reports from the institution to evaluate their stability during this period.
- At renewal in 2020, the score had continued to drop (down to a 1.1), and South Dakota opted to remove them from SARA participation and are no longer a member.

At the conclusion of Sedney's state report, Commissioner Larry Tidemann MOVED TO APPROVE the approval of South Dakota's SARA State Renewal Application and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED. Chair Anderson called for discussion.

Commissioner Shireman referred to the meeting materials and asked about Sioux Falls Seminary's financial composite score that was below the requirements and has since received an updated composite score. He asked who provided the updated composite score. Sedney responded that NC-SARA policy is that the composite score is calculated by the U.S. Department of Education and that is the entity that updated the score and the calculation should be on USDE letterhead (a requirement). Sedney also said that they have now had two recalculations and the institution is now at about 1.5 and demonstrating an upward trajectory; South Dakota SARA continues to monitor the institution [further investigation has since revealed Sedney's description of South Dakota's actions to be incorrect – please refer to the Information Item in the Executive Committee meeting materials on February 10, 2021, for an update].

Commissioner Tidemann expressed his appreciation to W-SARA and South Dakota's participation to uphold the SARA standards that have a positive effect on South Dakota students and their postsecondary distance education programming. Commissioner Brian Maher echoed Commissioner Tidemann's sentiments and said that it is an invaluable partnership between SDBOR and W-SARA that tremendously benefits the public and private institutions in the state of South Dakota and he fully supports the renewal application.

At the end of discussion, Chair Anderson called for the vote and the motion passed unanimously by Zoom poll voting.

Other Business and Adjournment

Chair Anderson called for other business for the committee to address and discuss. Hearing none, Commissioner Shireman MOVED TO APPROVE a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Preus SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the committee meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m. MST.

WICHE Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Commissioners Present

Susan Anderson (AK), Chair
David Lassner (HI), Vice Chair
Camille Preus (OR), Immediate Past Chair

Rita Cheng (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Rick Aman (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Executive Committee Members Absent

Mark Hagerott (ND)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)

Additional Commissioners Present

Cathy Dinauer (NV)
John Morton (HI)

WICHE Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and
to the Commission
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and Vice
President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and
State Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research

Chair Susan Anderson called the meeting to order. Laura Ewing called roll, and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the February 10, 2021, Agenda

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting agenda. Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the motion, and Commissioner David Lassner SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the December 9, 2020, Executive Committee Minutes

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the December 9, 2020, Executive Committee meeting minutes. Commissioner Don Bennett MOVED TO APPROVE the motion, and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED. Chair Anderson called for discussion and hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion was approved with one abstention.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of FlexPATH: Flexible Pathways for Access through the Transfer Hub

Chair Anderson asked President Demarée Michelau to present an overview of the action item. She said WICHE proposes to be the backbone partner for a National Science Foundation (NSF) project and this includes an alliance consisting of university, community college, and organizational partners from three states to create the Flexible Pathways for Access through the Transfer Hub, called the FlexPATH Alliance. The FlexPATH Alliance will: 1) translate first- and second-year foundational engineering courses into flexible, accessible formats that meet the needs of underrepresented transfer students; 2) recruit and train engineering doctoral students and community college faculty in inclusive teaching practices and pedagogy; and 3) implement evidence-based initiatives that have been shown to support transfer student success.

Commissioner Antwan Jefferson asked President Michelau if the inclusive pedagogy strategies researched and developed through the proposed FlexPATH grant could be applied toward projects outside of engineering programs, and the grant itself. President Michelau asked Jere Mock to respond. Mock said WICHE's primary role will not be developing the faculty

development aspect of the initiative, but rather providing the online course exchange at the two- and four-year levels, and connections with faculty involved in the initiative will be made where appropriate. Commissioner Jefferson responded by saying his overall interest in the outcome of this type of project is the potential for improved pedagogy and content accessibility for faculty across all programs for practice and instruction. Chair Anderson clarified that information derived from the research involved with this grant can be broadly shared where appropriate, and Mock confirmed this.

Commissioner Jefferson MOVED TO APPROVE FlexPATH, and Commissioner Lokken SECONDED. The motion passed by Zoom poll voting.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Quality Access Program (QAP) Ownership

Chair Anderson asked President Michelau to present an overview of the action item. President Michelau said the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has funded Tyton Partners, an investment banking and strategy consulting firm, to build the Quality Access Program (QAP), a web-based, decision-support tool and set of information resources that faculty, department heads, instructional designers, and administrators and their institutions use for review and evaluation of high-quality courseware solutions in gateway courses. The foundation has prioritized educational outcomes for Black, LatinX, indigenous, poverty-affected, and first-generation students by ensuring availability, awareness, and adoption of high-quality courseware. Tyton Partners seeks an organization to direct, enhance, operate, and maintain the QAP. WICHE/WCET in partnership with Every Learner Everywhere has been invited to respond to a Request for Information (RFI). If selected, WCET will apply for a multiyear grant from the Gates Foundation to fund the initiative. This work would align closely with Every Learner Everywhere's work. Commissioner Bob Shireman commented that Tyton Partners is an investment advisory firm closely tied to for-profit institutions and asked if WICHE would be paying Tyton for ownership. President Michelau stated that the Gates Foundation has funded Tyton to build the tool, but WICHE would not be paying Tyton for the tool if WICHE is the recipient of the grant award. Commissioner Shireman said if WICHE is selected for the grant, we should be cautious about a long-term interaction with Tyton that could potentially undermine WICHE's freedom to proceed in a direction that is in the best interest of students.

Commissioner Jefferson asked if WICHE is selected, who would be responsible for maintaining the quality of the technology platform developed by Tyton over time. Russ Poulin replied that if the grant is awarded to WICHE and at the point of transition from Tyton, WICHE would be responsible for technical maintenance. Poulin went on to say that the platform would need to be sustainable on its own past the life of the four-year grant. Commissioner Jefferson asked about the potential for the platform to generate revenue through university subscriptions. Poulin said that revenue from subscriptions is unlikely, but revenue from professional development and procurement is quite possible.

Commissioner Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE Quality Access Program (QAP) Ownership, and Commissioner Don Bennett SECONDED. There was no discussion and the motion passed by Zoom poll voting.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of Support for Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education

At the request of Chair Anderson, President Michelau presented an overview of the action item. She said that Advance CTE, the organization representing state CTE directors, has asked WICHE to lend support for and sign on to Advance CTE's document, *Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education*. This document was approved by the Advance CTE Board of Directors and scheduled for release March 11, 2021. Support involves a series of activities that WICHE would engage in to show commitment and support for how CTE should evolve to meet the emerging and longstanding challenges that the country faces. She said it would be good for WICHE to be involved in these important conversations and be visible on CTE issues, but she is unsure whether there are any potential political pitfalls. President Michelau requested feedback from the Executive Committee to ensure the possible engagement clearly aligns with the work and mission of WICHE. Thus far, the only compact that is signing on is SREB; it was noted that NEBHE was not asked and MHEC has not yet decided. Comments and feedback from commissioners included:

- Principle 4 of the document is impressive, stating that learner skills are counted, valued, and are portable. This is a direction that higher education is moving in, and the ability to capture skills and mechanisms to have portable, credit-value competencies from year to year from a community college perspective is very good.
- The document does a good job of philosophically embracing workforce development.
- The length of the document is excessive and could accomplish its goal by reducing its length.
- The suggestion that an institution is going to accept all coursework is concerning; the wording of the document is

- potentially misleading as it relates to all coursework easily transferring.
- The document seemed to be more of a vision document vs. a literal agreement or commitment to concepts presented, and with that in mind, visualizing systems in the context of what could and should be possible was effective.
- The document does bring together CTE and higher education as a community and there does not appear to be a political risk or downside.

Commissioner Bennett MOVED TO APPROVE authorization for WICHE to sign on to and show support for the document, *Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education* and Commissioner Shireman SECONDED. The motion passed by Zoom poll voting.

ACTION ITEM

Format Change for the WICHE Commission Meeting in May 2021 Due to COVID-19

President Michelau said that due to the current status of the pandemic, she recommends the May 2021 meeting be held virtually by videoconference and cover the business needs of the Commission. The Arizona delegation, which is scheduled to host the May 2021 meeting, supports this recommendation.

Commissioner Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the format change from in-person in Arizona to a virtual meeting by videoconference. Commissioner Baldwin SECONDED. The motion passed by Zoom poll voting.

INFORMATION ITEM

Update on WICHE Officers' Retreat

Chair Anderson reported that WICHE officers met by videoconference on January 28, 2020.

- During the retreat, the officers discussed the budget and the workplace during COVID
 - The budget is on track.
 - The Boulder office is at 25 percent capacity and, overall, staff have handled their roles and responsibilities well during the pandemic. Chair Anderson conveyed her thanks to staff for their dedication to great work during the challenges the pandemic presents when navigating goals.
- Data Privacy and Security Plan Implementation
 - The importance of data privacy was discussed.
 - Implementation of the security plan has begun.
- WICHE Board Portal
 - President Michelau and Laura Ewing are working to create a user-friendly portal for the Commission so that materials are easily accessible.
 - The rollout will likely be in November 2021.
- President Michelau's evaluation will include a survey of the full Commission. Information regarding the survey will be emailed to all commissioners for important feedback.

INFORMATION ITEM

Update on W-SARA State Renewal Issue and W-SARA Staff Processes

President Michelau introduced the information item from W-SARA related to the recent South Dakota state renewal and W-SARA staff processes. South Dakota, Arizona, and Oregon were approved by the WICHE Executive Committee for SARA renewal during the committee's December 2020 meeting. After that meeting, it was determined that a misapplication of SARA policy related to the use of federal Financial Responsibility Composite Scores (FRCS) occurred in South Dakota. W-SARA staff failed to identify the policy misapplication during the review of the membership renewal in December and corrective action has been taken. Support documents for this information item fully outline the issue and the W-SARA staff processes in question.

SARA policy relies on the federal FRCS to determine the financial stability of Title IV institutions. These scores lag about two years in terms of the data used to calculate them, and in this instance the state attempted to produce a more up-to-date version of the score by completing their own calculation. However, SARA policy does require use of the published

score rather than an independent calculation for Title IV institutions. The state misunderstood the policy in question, and W-SARA staff did not effectively communicate the requirements of the policy nor adequately review relevant documentation that would have brought the policy misapplication to light. Improved practices have been implemented by W-SARA staff and clarification of the policy has been provided to all W-SARA member states. W-SARA worked closely with South Dakota to complete an updated renewal of the institution in January 2021, during which South Dakota demonstrated full compliance with SARA policy. W-SARA has been working with the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) to improve the review procedures and prevent a similar misapplication in the future.

President Michelau thanked Christina Sedney for her quick response upon learning of the situation and Sedney's work with the state and the RSC to determine the best way to move forward.

Commissioner Shireman noted that he had raised questions about this issue during the state renewal presentation for South Dakota at the Executive Committee's December meeting, and said he appreciated the quick work of WICHE and W-SARA to address the situation. He raised concerns that the information item indicates a failure at the WICHE/W-SARA level when he believes it is a failure at the state level. He also underscored that this issue had been raised by consumer groups several months prior to the state renewal. Shireman commented that he finds this situation to be a confirmation of the concerns that he and others have raised about inadequate capacity at the state level to undertake the requirements of NC-SARA. He said this situation is an example of the need for greater transparency about processes related to the approval of institutions that appear not to be qualified to participate in SARA based on publicly available indicators and indicative of systemic issues in SARA processes that he hopes will be resolved.

President Michelau said that there was lack of clarity surrounding what was expected of the state. The state was attempting to do the right thing, but that path was not clear. The fortunate outcome is that South Dakota, as well as the other W-SARA member states, now better understand the policy. It has been clarified with the states that a letter from the U.S. Department of Education is required in place of the published FRCS and that independent calculation of the score is not acceptable for Title IV institutions. W-SARA will also provide support to states in evaluating the financial stability of non-Title IV institutions (which lack an FRCS), by providing member states with access to an independent certified public accountant to assist in such calculations if necessary.

Sedney agreed with President Michelau's description of the events, adding that SARA policy does allow schools with an FRCS of 1.0 to 1.5 to participate and noting that the school in question did have a published score of 1.0 and was therefore eligible for participation. She reiterated that the state was attempting to accurately monitor the school's financial stability with their calculation and that W-SARA should have provided more guidance on the specifics of the policy at that time; therefore, the information item is focused on where W-SARA processes in particular could be improved.

Commissioner Tidemann commented that he was unaware of the issue before reading the information item. Michelau apologized for the oversight and stated that if there is a similar situation in the future, she will ensure that the relevant state's commissioners are informed before the Executive Committee materials are sent.

Commissioner Bennett noted that while the Executive Committee had not considered the issue as part of the renewal in December, WICHE staff have worked with the state behind the scenes to find a satisfactory resolution. He also discussed the broader issue of determining institutional financial stability and the challenges associated with doing so, in particular where there are layered corporate entities. He added that SHEEO is leading a project to explore adding shared capacity and financial expertise to states for such reviews. No state has enough staff with the needed level of expertise on standby. He is hopeful that with changes at the federal level, there will be improvement in this area in the next few years.

Commissioner Shireman agreed that it is a difficult issue. He said concerns have been raised relative to the FRCS as it can be inaccurate in both directions – an institution could appear to be less financially viable than it is or it could seem to be more financially viable than it is. He suggested a more nuanced financial indicator should be used, but as the FRCS is the financial indicator required by SARA, it should be used in the way laid out in SARA policy.

Chair Anderson concluded the discussion by noting that while it is not a perfect system, the process continues to be refined and that comments that were provided were well-taken. She suggested additional comments could be emailed to Michelau.

INFORMATION ITEM
Budget Update and Salary Adjustments for Staff

Chair Anderson asked President Michelau to provide a budget update and information about salary adjustments for staff. The following information was reported:

- The FY 2021 budget is projected to come in under budget. It is still early in the budgeting process and by the April 2021 Executive Committee meeting, the budget will be much more developed.
- Most of the state/territory dues have been paid and President Michelau is following up with a few dues that remain to be paid by several states and one territory. The next dues notices will be sent in late May to early June. She noted that the Executive Committee voted to hold the dues flat in FY 2022.
- Indirects are coming in lower than budgeted, but with several months left in the fiscal year this budget item should adjust positively.
- The non-general fund budgets are on budget and there are no concerns at this point in the fiscal year. There are a few new non-general funding opportunities for Behavioral Health and WCET and also on the general fund side with Programs and Services and Policy Analysis and Research that look promising.
- President Michelau reminded the committee that the Commission will have an action item during its May meeting to approve salary increases with the FY 2022 budget. She expressed her hopes that the state and territory budgets will be improving and that the WICHE budget will reflect tolerance for accommodating the increase. She said there is a need to stay mindful of not falling too far behind with WICHE staff increases if there is not a salary increase for the second year in a row. She acknowledged the great work and perseverance that the staff continues to produce.

During discussion, several commissioners supported the action item for staff salary increases to be included in the May 2021 business session.

Other Business

There was no other business raised or discussed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jefferson MOVED TO APPROVE, and Commissioner Lokken SECONDED. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m. MST.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 Salary and Benefit Recommendations

Salary

All standard salary increases at WICHE are provided on the basis of performance; WICHE does not provide across-the-board raises, step increases, or cost-of-living adjustments. Occasional exceptions to the “merit-only” policy are made if salary surveys indicate a position is out of alignment with other positions within the organization or, within reason, to retain a valued individual who has been offered a more lucrative position elsewhere.

As reflected in the proposed budget agenda item, President Demarée Michelau is pleased to recommend 3.0 percent for FY 2022 performance-based increases to staff who have performed at exceptionally high levels over the past year. Due to fiscal constraints and uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission voted to withhold salary adjustments in FY 2021. While uneven the overall fiscal outlook in the states has improved.

Benefits

The proposed budget also includes a 3.0 percent increase in benefits for staff, all of which are related either to benefits directly associated with salary (i.e., WICHE contributions to the retirement plan, life insurance, workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, and Social Security) or to projected changes in the costs of general benefits (i.e., health/dental insurance premiums, Social Security, and workers' compensation).

Major benefits to staff include the following:

- Participation in WICHE's retirement plan, which provides two-to-one matching for contributions up to a combined 15 percent (5 percent from staff, 10 percent from WICHE), in TIAA-managed accounts.
- Health and dental insurance, which includes participation in a health savings account (HSA) plan through insurer UnitedHealthcare. WICHE provides a set portion of the payment for the health and dental insurance, with the staff members paying the remainder, which varies depending upon the plan they select. WICHE also contributes an amount annually to each staff member's health savings account.
- An optional flexible spending account for eligible medical expenses and dependent care.
- Life, accidental death and disability, short-term disability, and long-term disability insurance.
- Generous vacation, sick leave, paid holidays, and personal business leave.
- Conversion of up to 900 hours of accumulated sick leave for most individuals retiring from WICHE (requires at least five years of service and combined age and tenure at WICHE of at least 70 years).
- Voluntary vision plan and voluntary supplemental life insurance.

Action Requested

Approval of a 3.0 percent average salary increase for WICHE staff. The full amount of a 3.0 percent average salary increase is approximately \$155,381, of which the General Fund portion is \$41,221 and is included in the proposed FY 2022 budget.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 Annual Operating Budget – General Fund and Non-General Fund Budgets

Background

The general fund budget proposed by staff for FY 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) is for a suite of WICHE programs that provide service to member states and territories and support a wide range of highly significant projects. General fund revenue not only supports basic WICHE program activities, such as the work of the Student Access Programs, the Policy Analysis and Research unit, and Communications, it also provides an organizational structure that allows WICHE to become involved in other regional resource-sharing and collaborative activities in higher education, many of which are supported by non-state dollars. The proposed FY 2022 budget shows a slight budget surplus and reflects WICHE annual dues being held flat at \$159,000. As a result, WICHE will pause some of the organizational infrastructure investments that would otherwise have been implemented. Should revenue estimates change, WICHE will revisit priorities accordingly.

The four budgets following the general fund budget reflect the projected non-general fund budgets for each of the four primary programmatic units within WICHE. Non-general fund activities include all projects supported by external sources, such as fees, grants, memberships, or contracts. Of these four non-general fund budgets, the WCET unit and the Behavioral Health unit are self-funded.

Action Requested

Approval of the FY 2022 general fund budget and the FY 2022 non-general fund budgets.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

General Fund Budget

Comparing FY 2020 with FY 2021

Revenue and Expenditures

April 2021

	FY 2021				FY 2022				
	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2021 Projection	Projection Higher or (Lower) than Budget		FY 2022 Budget	FY 2022 Budget Higher or (Lower) than FY 2021 Budget		FY 2022 Budget Higher or (Lower) than FY 2021 Projection	
Revenue									
4102 Indirect Cost Reimbursements	\$1,200,000	\$936,672	(\$263,328)	-21.9%	\$1,200,000	\$0	0.0%	\$263,328	28.1%
4104 Indirect Cost Sharing-WICHE	(\$360,000)	(\$336,779)	\$23,221	-6.5%	(\$360,000)	\$0	0.0%	(\$23,221)	6.9%
4201 Members/Fees States/Institutions a	\$2,544,000	\$2,544,000	\$0	0.0%	\$2,544,000	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
4300 Interest	\$30,000	\$25,783	(\$4,218)	-14.1%	\$30,000	\$0	0.0%	\$4,218	16.4%
4550 W-SARA excess revenue	\$40,000	\$0	(\$40,000)	-100.0%	\$0	(\$40,000)	-100.0%	\$0	
4560 SHEPC excess rents	\$115,000	\$114,800	(\$200)	-0.2%	\$155,000	\$40,000	34.8%	\$40,200	35.0%
4600 Other Income	\$1,000	(\$683)	(\$1,683)	-168.3%	\$1,000	\$0	0.0%	\$1,683	-246.5%
4850 Credit Card Transaction Rev. / Units	\$120	(\$23)	(\$143)	-118.8%	\$120	\$0	0.0%	\$143	-633.3%
Total Revenue	\$3,570,120	\$3,283,770	(\$286,350)	-8.0%	\$3,570,120	\$0	0.0%	\$286,350	8.7%
Expenditures									
0102 Student Access Program	\$417,147	\$405,986	(\$11,162)	-2.7%	\$433,786	\$16,638	4.0%	\$27,800	6.8%
0104 Policy Analysis & Research	\$466,677	\$436,203	(\$30,474)	-6.5%	\$466,677	\$0	0.0%	\$30,474	7.0%
0105 Communications & Public Affairs	\$488,814	\$393,518	(\$95,296)	-19.5%	\$488,814	\$1	0.0%	\$95,296	24.2%
0106 Programs & Services	\$110,452	\$99,099	(\$11,352)	-10.3%	\$110,452	\$0	0.0%	\$11,353	11.5%
0110 President's Office	\$597,798	\$509,217	(\$88,582)	-14.8%	\$587,798	(\$10,001)	-1.7%	\$78,581	15.4%
0111 Commission Meeting Expense	\$228,024	\$41,577	(\$186,446)	-81.8%	\$228,024	\$1	0.0%	\$186,447	448.4%
0112 Administrative Services	\$892,343	\$814,512	(\$77,831)	-8.7%	\$892,343	\$0	0.0%	\$77,831	9.6%
0115 Miscellaneous Gen. Fund	\$275,281	\$219,990	(\$55,291)	-20.1%	\$275,281	\$0	0.0%	\$55,291	25.1%
0116 Program Development	\$25,750	\$18,629	(\$7,121)	-27.7%	\$25,750	\$0	0.0%	\$7,121	38.2%
0131 LAC Meeting	\$56,671	\$226	(\$56,445)	-99.6%	\$56,671	\$0	0.0%	\$56,445	#####
Total Expenditures	\$3,558,957	\$2,938,956	(\$620,001)	-17.4%	\$3,565,596	\$6,639	0.2%	\$626,640	21.3%
Surplus (Deficit) for the Fiscal Year	\$11,163	\$344,814	\$333,651		\$4,524	(\$6,639)			
Reserves at Beginning of Year									
1 Minimum Reserve b	\$427,075	\$427,075	\$0	0.0%	\$427,872	\$797	0.2%	\$797	0.2%
2 Reserve for Unexpected Shortfall c	\$355,896	\$355,896	\$0	0.0%	\$356,560	\$664	0.2%	\$664	0.2%
3 Reserve to Operate Accounts Receivable d	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$0	0.0%	\$850,000	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
4 President's Strategic Objectives e	\$150,000	\$0	(\$150,000)	-100.0%	\$150,000	\$0	0.0%	\$150,000	
5 Reserve Available for Dedication	\$1,733,493	\$1,883,493	\$150,000	8.7%	\$2,076,846	\$343,353	19.8%	\$193,353	10.3%
Reserves at Beginning of Year	\$3,516,464	\$3,516,464	\$0	-91.3%	\$3,861,278	\$344,814		\$344,814	
Reserves Dedicated during Year									
6 Deficit (Surplus) for the Fiscal Year above	(\$11,163)	(\$344,814)	\$333,651		(\$4,524)	(\$6,639)	59.5%	(\$340,290)	98.7%
Reserves Dedicated during the Fiscal Year	(\$11,163)	(\$344,814)	\$333,651		(\$4,524)	(\$6,639)		(\$340,290)	
Reserves at End of Year	\$3,527,627	\$3,861,278	\$333,651		\$3,865,802	\$338,175			

- (a) At the May 2018 meeting the Commission set the FY 2020 dues to \$156K and the FY 2021 dues to \$159K. At the August 2020 Executive Committee meeting the Commission decided to keep WICHE dues at the current \$159K level for FY 2022 and FY 2023.
- (b) Minimum reserve set by the commission is 12% of Budgeted Expenses. Set May 2000.
- (c) Unexpected Shortfall reserve set by commission at 10% of Budgeted Expenses. To be used only if anticipated funding does not materialize. Set May 2007.
- (d) Reserve amount needed float accounts receivable until payments are received for contracted work. Approved by Executive Committee February 2016.
- (e) Authorization given to the President to dedicate up to \$150K each year for the President's Strategic Objectives.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Two-Year Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021

Programs and Services

April 2021

9 months elapsed 3 months remaining Object / Description	FY 2021 <i>Total</i>	FY 2021 <i>Budget</i>	FY 2022 <i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Actual ></i> 01-Jul-20 -- 31-Mar-21 <i>Forecast ></i> 01-Apr-21 -- 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-20	01-Jul-20	01-Jul-21	FY 2022 budget higher or (lower) than FY 21	
01-Jul-20 -- 31-Mar-21	30-Jun-21	30-Jun-21	30-Jun-22		
11-20 MHEC Master Property Program	\$24,840	\$24,840	\$24,840	\$0	0.0%
11-21 MHECtech	\$154,806	\$117,873	\$150,000	\$32,127	27.3%
11-22 MHECare	\$4,548	\$18,500	\$2,274	(\$16,226)	-87.7%
11-61 Passport Phase III - ED	\$134,835	\$96,668		(\$96,668)	-100.0%
12-01 Interstate Passport	\$0	\$340,363		(\$340,363)	-100.0%
12-02 Interstate Passport ECMC	\$233,201	\$233,429	\$267,193	\$33,764	14.5%
12-49 Anticipated Projects	\$0		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	
14-03 NSI Initiative Y3	\$177,151	\$441,292		(\$441,292)	-100.0%
14-71 NSF - Building Capacity	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	100.0%
15-01 Western Academic Leader Forum	\$101,003	\$112,167	\$118,365	\$6,198	5.5%
15-15 Online Course Exchange	\$46,917	\$49,667	\$15,250	(\$34,417)	-69.3%
15-20 Western Alliance Comm Colleges	\$74,369	\$99,075	\$100,247	\$1,172	1.2%
15-30 Forum Academy	\$0	\$37,300	\$31,800	(\$5,500)	-14.7%
Revenue	\$1,026,671	\$1,671,174	\$1,909,969	\$238,795	14.3%
Total Revenue	\$1,026,671	\$1,671,174	\$1,909,969	\$238,795	14.3%
11-20 MHEC Master Property Program	\$880	\$21,284	\$24,840	\$3,556	16.7%
11-21 MHECtech	\$105,919	\$109,090	\$149,998	\$40,908	37.5%
11-22 MHECare	\$0	\$3,255	\$2,070	(\$1,185)	-36.4%
11-61 Passport Phase III - ED	\$134,697	\$96,668		(\$96,668)	-100.0%
12-01 Interstate Passport	\$5,148	\$340,233		(\$340,233)	-100.0%
12-02 Interstate Passport ECMC	\$117,534	\$122,252	\$139,646	\$17,394	14.2%
12-49 Anticipated Projects	\$0		\$999,939	\$999,939	
14-03 NSI Initiative Y3	\$179,349	\$184,443		(\$184,443)	-100.0%
14-71 NSF - Building Capacity	\$63,717	\$114,771	\$178,576	\$63,805	55.6%
15-01 Western Academic Leader Forum	\$65,117	\$112,166	\$117,770	\$5,604	5.0%
15-15 Online Course Exchange	\$28,548	\$49,667	\$4,175	(\$45,492)	-91.6%
15-20 Western Alliance Comm Colleges	\$90,642	\$99,074	\$99,516	\$441	0.4%
15-30 Forum Academy	\$18,249	\$31,852	\$30,218	(\$1,634)	-5.1%
Expense	\$809,799	\$1,284,755	\$1,746,747	\$461,992	36.0%
Total Expense	\$809,799	\$1,284,755	\$1,746,747	\$461,992	36.0%
Revenue over (under) Expense	\$216,873	\$386,419	\$163,222	(\$223,197)	

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Two-Year Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021

Policy Analysis and Research

April 2021

<i>Object / Description</i>	FY 2021	FY 2021	FY 2022	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>		
	<i>Actual > 01-Jul-20 -- 31-Mar-21</i> <i>Forecast > 01-Apr-21 -- 30-Jun-21</i>	01-Jul-20 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-21 30-Jun-22		
17-05 W-SARA	\$464,000	\$462,000	\$471,656	\$9,656	2.1%
50-01 Policy Core Account	\$250			\$0	
50-18 HSG Methods Review & Expansi	\$0	\$367,990		(\$367,990)	-100.0%
51-04 AIHEC IFS Consulting	\$21,418	\$21,418	\$37,082	\$15,663	73.1%
51-32 Multistate Data Exchange 2	\$82,308			\$0	
53-14 Data for the American Dream	\$25,061	\$105,620	\$86,701	(\$18,919)	-17.9%
53-15 Campbell Cty Needs Assessment	\$50,000	\$50,000		(\$50,000)	-100.0%
53-35 OER - Hewlett (Policy Unit)	\$82,784	\$138,137	\$167,216	\$29,079	21.1%
54-13 WICHE Task Force on Att Gaps	\$96,775	\$80,000		(\$80,000)	-100.0%
54-14 WCCC Strategic Planning	\$7,000	\$7,000		(\$7,000)	-100.0%
54-20 Recog. of Learning -- Lumina	\$28,314	\$24,000		(\$24,000)	-100.0%
54-21 Recog. of Learning -- Strada	\$41,212	\$25,700		(\$25,700)	-100.0%
Revenue	\$899,123	\$1,281,865	\$762,654	(\$519,211)	-40.5%
Total Revenue	\$899,123	\$1,281,865	\$762,654	(\$519,211)	-40.5%
17-05 W-SARA	\$457,517	\$421,282	\$471,656	\$50,374	12.0%
50-18 HSG Methods Review & Expansi	\$10,852	\$367,990		(\$367,990)	-100.0%
51-04 AIHEC IFS Consulting	\$21,418	\$21,418	\$37,082	\$15,663	73.1%
51-32 Multistate Data Exchange 2	\$102,138			\$0	
53-14 Data for the American Dream	\$25,060	\$103,387	\$86,701	(\$16,686)	-16.1%
53-15 Campbell Cty Needs Assessment	\$45,416	\$50,000		(\$50,000)	-100.0%
53-35 OER - Hewlett (Policy Unit)	\$64,807	\$98,433	\$165,372	\$66,939	68.0%
54-13 WICHE Task Force on Att Gaps	\$108,864	\$79,832		(\$79,832)	-100.0%
54-14 WCCC Strategic Planning	\$3,581	\$7,000		(\$7,000)	-100.0%
54-20 Recog. of Learning -- Lumina	\$30,719	\$24,000		(\$24,000)	-100.0%
54-21 Recog. of Learning -- Strada	\$41,555	\$25,700		(\$25,700)	-100.0%
Expense	\$911,927	\$1,199,043	\$760,811	(\$438,232)	-36.5%
Total Expense	\$911,927	\$1,199,043	\$760,811	(\$438,232)	-36.5%
Revenue over (under) Expense	(\$12,804)	\$82,822	\$1,843	(\$80,979)	

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Two-Year Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021

Behavioral Health

April 2021

9 months elapsed 3 months remaining Object / Description	FY 2021 <i>Total</i>	FY 2021 <i>Budget</i>	FY 2022 <i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Actual ></i> 01-Jul-20 – 31-Mar-21 <i>Forecast ></i> 01-Apr-21 – 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-20 – 31-Mar-21	01-Jul-20 – 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-21 – 30-Jun-22	FY 2022 budget higher or (lower) than FY 21	
40-01 MH - State Affiliation Fees	\$312,684	\$398,000	\$446,146	\$48,146	12.1%
40-10 MH - Decision Support Group	\$0	\$72,000	\$42,000	(\$30,000)	-41.7%
40-21 MH - Suicide Prevention Toolkits	\$265	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	0.0%
41-01 MH - Consulting Main Account	\$104,250		\$211,000	\$211,000	
41-20 AZ Evidence Based FY14--FY15	\$338,636	\$404,111	\$358,111	(\$46,000)	-11.4%
41-30 AZ Mercy Maricopa EBP FY15-16	\$128,904	\$130,075		(\$130,075)	-100.0%
41-39 AZ MMIC Training 2017	\$80,962	\$125,000		(\$125,000)	-100.0%
41-40 AK FASD Telehealth Feasibility	\$100,000	\$0		\$0	#Num!
41-45 SD DBH Annual Fidelity Review	\$51,000	\$49,000	\$49,000	\$0	0.0%
41-80 VA Rural Suici FY 15, 16 and 17	\$2,135,257	\$2,178,037	\$2,868,000	\$689,962	31.7%
43-53 Montana Zero Suicide	\$61,112	\$8,032	\$0	(\$8,032)	-100.0%
43-54 Montana PACT Fidelity Reviews	\$105,000	\$0	\$105,000	\$105,000	#Div/0!
43-70 SAMHSA MHTTC Grant	\$245,062	\$283,953	\$280,230	(\$3,723)	-1.3%
43-73 SAMHSA MHTTC Supplemental	\$237,111	\$275,877	\$273,632	(\$2,245)	-0.8%
43-74 HRSA Rural Opioid Response TA	\$531,000	\$522,111	\$695,115	\$173,004	33.1%
43-75 SAMHSA Supplement Well-Being	\$33,525	\$0	\$6,704	\$6,704	#Div/0!
44-40 MH - AK API FY 15/16	\$20,833	\$70,833	\$25,000	(\$45,833)	-64.7%
44-77 NIMH Book Project	\$70,920	\$70,920	\$94,565	\$23,645	33.3%
45-40 AK Trust PIC FY17/18	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	0.0%
45-43 MH - AK PIC Interns FY11-FY19	\$87,250	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	0.0%
46-01 HI - DOH	\$24,150	\$24,150	\$24,150	\$0	0.0%
46-02 HI - DPS	\$24,150	\$24,150	\$24,150	\$0	0.0%
46-03 HI - DOE	\$24,150	\$24,150	\$24,150	\$0	0.0%
46-06 HI - DOE Interns	\$296,628	\$473,390	\$491,013	\$17,623	3.7%
46-07 HI - DPS Interns	\$22,203	\$92,954	\$141,558	\$48,604	52.3%
46-08 HI - DOH Interns	\$224,831	\$194,888	\$292,451	\$97,563	50.1%
46-15 HI DOE Recruitment	\$31,500	\$108,000		(\$108,000)	-100.0%
46-17 HI Recruitment of Clinical Psy	\$73,214	\$25,000	\$75,000	\$50,000	200.0%
46-24 NM Psychology Internship	\$76,920	\$75,000	\$70,101	(\$4,899)	-6.5%
46-32 Idaho Psychology Internship	\$85,012	\$62,500	\$62,500	\$0	0.0%
46-36 UT Psychology Internship	\$6,720	\$60,000	\$6,720	(\$53,280)	-88.8%
46-40 NV Intern Stipends FY 15-16-17	\$105,804	\$143,706	\$143,706	\$0	0.0%
46-51 NV Psych Internship FY 15	\$45,653	\$62,774	\$48,629	(\$14,145)	-22.5%
Revenue	\$5,704,705	\$6,081,111	\$6,981,131	\$900,019	14.8%
Total Revenue	\$5,704,705	\$6,081,111	\$6,981,131	\$900,019	14.8%
40-01 MH - State Affiliation Fees	\$522,949	\$634,256	\$650,000	\$15,744	2.5%
40-10 MH - Decision Support Group	\$7	\$73,209	\$40,000	(\$33,209)	-45.4%
40-21 MH - Suicide Prevention Toolkits	\$3,341	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	0.0%
41-01 MH - Consulting Main Account	\$100,001		\$165,000	\$165,000	
41-20 AZ Evidence Based FY14--FY15	\$335,636	\$402,537	\$355,000	(\$47,537)	-11.8%
41-30 AZ Mercy Maricopa EBP FY15-16	\$124,124	\$118,450		(\$118,450)	-100.0%
41-39 AZ MMIC Training 2017	\$79,592	\$125,000		(\$125,000)	-100.0%
41-40 AK FASD Telehealth Feasibility	\$39,836	\$39,836		(\$39,836)	-100.0%
41-45 SD DBH Annual Fidelity Review	\$50,240	\$38,343	\$35,000	(\$3,343)	-8.7%
41-80 VA Rural Suici FY 15, 16 and 17	\$1,842,245	\$1,825,533	\$2,600,000	\$774,467	42.4%

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Two-Year Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021

Behavioral Health (continued)

April 2021

9 months elapsed 3 months remaining	FY 2021 <i>Total</i>	FY 2021 <i>Budget</i>	FY 2022 <i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Object / Description</i>	<i>Actual > 01-Jul-20 -- 31-Mar-21 Forecast > 01-Apr-21 -- 30-Jun-21</i>	01-Jul-20 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-21 30-Jun-22	FY 2022 budget higher or (lower) than	FY 21
43-53 Montana Zero Suicide	\$24,797	\$11,774	\$0	(\$11,774)	-100.0%
43-54 Montana PACT Fidelity Reviews	\$99,936	\$99,820	\$75,000	(\$24,820)	-24.9%
43-70 SAMHSA MHTTC Grant	\$248,404	\$286,010	\$270,000	(\$16,010)	-5.6%
43-73 SAMHSA MHTTC Supplemental	\$245,228	\$292,581	\$265,000	(\$27,581)	-9.4%
43-74 HRSA Rural Opioid Response TA	\$500,507	\$428,035	\$645,000	\$216,965	50.7%
43-75 SAMHSA Supplement Well-Being	\$31,401	\$33,525	\$6,704	(\$26,821)	-80.0%
44-40 MH - AK API FY 15/16	\$21,011	\$48,300	\$20,000	(\$28,300)	-58.6%
44-77 NIMH Book Project	\$45,187	\$46,032	\$90,000	\$43,968	95.5%
45-40 AK Trust PIC FY17/18	\$17,250	\$19,550	\$20,000	\$450	2.3%
45-43 MH - AK PIC Interns FY11-FY19	\$93,271	\$101,132	\$95,000	(\$6,132)	-6.1%
46-01 HI - DOH	\$24,150	\$24,919	\$24,150	(\$769)	-3.1%
46-02 HI - DPS	\$24,151	\$26,212	\$24,150	(\$2,062)	-7.9%
46-03 HI - DOE	\$24,150	\$26,098	\$24,150	(\$1,948)	-7.5%
46-06 HI - DOE Interns	\$265,912	\$432,121	\$460,000	\$27,879	6.5%
46-07 HI - DPS Interns	\$19,728	\$79,809	\$125,000	\$45,191	56.6%
46-08 HI - DOH Interns	\$190,552	\$184,030	\$275,000	\$90,970	49.4%
46-15 HI DOE Recruitment	\$2,843	\$101,708		(\$101,708)	-100.0%
46-17 HI Recruitment of Clinical Psy	\$58,837	\$24,949	\$70,000	\$45,051	180.6%
46-24 NM Psychology Internship	\$58,902	\$75,152	\$68,000	(\$7,152)	-9.5%
46-31 OR Psych Internship FY 15-18	\$91	\$76	\$0	(\$76)	-100.0%
46-32 Idaho Psychology Internship	\$64,012	\$11,779	\$57,500	\$45,721	388.2%
46-36 UT Psychology Internship	\$7,924	\$59,832	\$6,500	(\$53,332)	-89.1%
46-40 NV Intern Stipends FY 15-16-17	\$91,375	\$141,705	\$140,000	(\$1,705)	-1.2%
46-51 NV Psych Internship FY 15	\$51,478	\$62,550	\$45,000	(\$17,550)	-28.1%
Expense	\$5,309,068	\$5,877,362	\$6,653,654	\$776,292	13.2%
Total Expense	\$5,309,068	\$5,877,362	\$6,653,654	\$776,292	13.2%
Revenue over (under) Expense	\$395,637	\$203,749	\$327,477	\$123,728	

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Two-Year Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021

WCET

April 2021

<i>Object / Description</i>	FY 2021	FY 2021	FY 2022	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>		
	Actual > 01-Jul-20 -- 31-Mar-21 Forecast > 01-Apr-21 -- 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-20 30-Jun-21	01-Jul-21 30-Jun-22		
9 months elapsed					
3 months remaining					
				FY 2022 budget higher or (lower) than	FY 21
20-01 WCET Core Revenue	\$10,806			\$0	
20-02 WCET Indirect Cost Share	\$158,107	\$140,854	\$105,000	(\$35,854)	-25.5%
20-03 WCET Membership Dues	\$0	\$0	\$850,000	\$850,000	#Div/0!
20-04 WCET Sponsorships	\$83,501	\$25,000	\$75,000	\$50,000	200.0%
20-05 WCET Dues Alt	\$998,859	\$800,000		(\$800,000)	-100.0%
20-21 WCET - Annual Meeting 2021	\$16,895	\$24,839	\$43,100	\$18,261	73.5%
20-40 WCET Summit April 2020	(\$288)			\$0	
20-41 WCET Summit Spring 2021	\$7,464			\$0	
21-05 State Auth Wkshp June2020 Bldr	\$7,095			\$0	
21-06 State Authorization Net Yr 10	\$596,807	\$551,026		(\$551,026)	-100.0%
21-07 State Auth Workshop March 202	\$3,214			\$0	
21-08 State Authorization Net Yr 11	\$0		\$610,000	\$610,000	
21-09 State Auth Workshop June 2021	\$6,000			\$0	
22-41 WCET Hewlett Z Initiative	\$10,477			\$0	
22-43 WCET OER General	\$1,296	\$5,804		(\$5,804)	-100.0%
22-45 WCET OER Planning	\$32,834	\$32,969		(\$32,969)	-100.0%
23-35 OER - Hewlett NCOER (WCET)	\$100,426	\$105,176	\$123,562	\$18,386	17.5%
24-02 WCET ELE RPA Strategies for S	\$12,002			\$0	
24-20 Gates Backbone	\$1,611,227	\$2,079,286	\$1,400,000	(\$679,286)	-32.7%
24-40 Gates - ELE Network Investment	\$2,462,764	\$5,069,758	\$2,600,000	(\$2,469,758)	-48.7%
24-43 RPA Frontier Set Coordination	\$38,186	\$38,186		(\$38,186)	-100.0%
24-44 WCET - ELE COVID Supplement	\$1,193,909	\$1,288,022		(\$1,288,022)	-100.0%
24-45 WCET Policy Playbook BMGF Su	\$48,539	\$0		\$0	#Num!
24-46 WCET DETA Res Toolkit BMGF	\$45,837	\$0		\$0	#Num!
24-47 WCET Innovations Working Grou	\$13,000			\$0	
Revenue	\$7,458,958	\$10,160,920	\$5,806,662	(\$4,354,258)	-42.9%
Total Revenue	\$7,458,958	\$10,160,920	\$5,806,662	(\$4,354,258)	-42.9%
20-05 WCET Dues Alt	\$1			\$0	
20-10 WCET - Administration	\$1,122,681	\$929,871	\$1,004,557	\$74,686	8.0%
20-21 WCET - Annual Meeting 2021	\$16,895	\$24,839	\$67,454	\$42,615	171.6%
20-41 WCET Summit Spring 2021	\$7,751			\$0	
21-05 State Auth Wkshp June2020 Bldr	\$7,095			\$0	
21-06 State Authorization Net Yr 10	\$403,668	\$551,026		(\$551,026)	-100.0%
21-07 State Auth Workshop March 202	\$3,214			\$0	
21-08 State Authorization Net Yr 11	\$0		\$504,815	\$504,815	
21-09 State Auth Workshop June 2021	\$6,001			\$0	
22-41 WCET Hewlett Z Initiative	\$10,477			\$0	
22-43 WCET OER General	\$1,301	\$5,804		(\$5,804)	-100.0%
22-45 WCET OER Planning	\$32,834	\$32,969		(\$32,969)	-100.0%
23-35 OER - Hewlett NCOER (WCET)	\$100,426	\$105,176	\$123,562	\$18,386	17.5%
24-02 WCET ELE RPA Strategies for S	\$12,002			\$0	
24-20 Gates Backbone	\$1,611,227	\$2,079,286	\$1,399,999	(\$679,286)	-32.7%
24-40 Gates - ELE Network Investment	\$2,462,764	\$5,069,758	\$2,600,000	(\$2,469,758)	-48.7%
24-43 RPA Frontier Set Coordination	\$38,186	\$38,186		(\$38,186)	-100.0%
24-44 WCET - ELE COVID Supplement	\$1,193,909	\$1,288,022		(\$1,288,022)	-100.0%

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Two-Year Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021

WCET (continued)

April 2021

	FY 2021	FY 2021	FY 2022		
9 months elapsed					
3 months remaining					
<i>Object / Description</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>Actual > 01-Jul-20 – 31-Mar-21</i>	<i>01-Jul-20</i>	<i>01-Jul-21</i>	<i>FY 2022 budget higher</i>	
	<i>Forecast > 01-Apr-21 – 30-Jun-21</i>	<i>30-Jun-21</i>	<i>30-Jun-22</i>	<i>or (lower) than FY 21</i>	
24-45 WCET Policy Playbook BMGF Su	\$48,539			\$0	
24-46 WCET DETA Res Toolkit BMGF	\$45,837	\$0		\$0	#Num!
24-47 WCET Innovations Working Grou	\$13,000			\$0	
Expense	\$7,137,808	\$10,124,936	\$5,700,388	(\$4,424,548)	-43.7%
Total Expense	\$7,137,808	\$10,124,936	\$5,700,388	(\$4,424,548)	-43.7%
Revenue over (under) Expense	\$321,149	\$35,984	\$106,274	\$70,290	

ACTION ITEM

Approval of Dedicated Reserve Levels for Non-General Fund Activities

Background

WICHE policy states that dedicated reserves for non-general fund activities, categorized into minimum reserve, reserve for unexpected shortfall, and program development, shall be approved by the WICHE Commission (the Commission) for the upcoming fiscal year as part of the WICHE annual budget at the spring meeting.

Just as the general fund requires and accumulates reserves, non-general fund accounts require and accumulate reserves as well. The Commission in the past has recognized this in establishing policy that the self-funded units strive to achieve reserves of at least 25 percent of their annual operating funds. Like the general fund, these reserves serve to cover three categories of unbudgeted expenditures:

1. Minimum reserves to cover the cost of closing the operation, if circumstances require that;
2. Unanticipated shortfalls, such as contract or grant overruns, bridge funding between contracts or grants, unanticipated salary or service cost adjustments, etc.; and
3. A reasonable amount for one-time unbudgeted program development activities, such as proposal writing, unique software requirements, unique meeting opportunities, etc.

Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for the WICHE Behavioral Health Program:

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$6,653,654
20% Minimum Reserve	\$1,330,731
20% Unanticipated Expenses	\$1,330,731
10% Program Development	\$665,365
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$3,326,827

Justification: The minimum reserve requirement, though higher than the percentage required in the general fund, is the amount that would be required to meet financial obligations of the Behavioral Health unit, should it be terminated. The reserve for unanticipated expenses is slightly higher than the percentage included in the general fund account because of the reliance on grants and contracts as revenue in which risk of unanticipated expenses is higher. The modest amount for program development would suffice for that purpose in the Behavioral Health unit. Should the Behavioral Health unit exceed its target reserve, after closing out contracts and grants, WICHE would transfer those funds to the General Fund reserve.

Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies):

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$5,700,388
20% Minimum Reserve	\$1,140,078
20% Unanticipated Expenses	\$1,140,078
10% Program Development	\$570,039
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$2,850,194

Justification: The minimum reserve requirement, though higher than the percentage required in the general fund, is the amount that would be required to meet financial obligations of WCET, should it be terminated. The comparatively high required unanticipated expenses reflect the unique nature of WCET as a large membership organization, with substantially greater risk in the unanticipated event of an economic downturn or forced cancellation of a large meeting venue. Should WCET exceed its target reserve, after closing out contracts, grants, other revenues, and expenses, WICHE would transfer those funds to the general fund reserve.

Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for the WICHE State Authorization Network (SAN):

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$504,815
20% Minimum Reserve	\$100,963
50% Unanticipated Expenses	\$252,408
30% Program Development	\$151,445
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$504,815

Justification: The minimum reserve requirement, though higher than the percentage required in the general fund, is the amount that would be required to meet financial obligations of the State Authorization Network (SAN), should it be terminated. The more substantial amount for the reserve for unanticipated expenses is requested to provide enough coverage in the unexpected but possible liabilities incurred if one or more meetings or other planned event has to be canceled. The more substantial amount for the program development reserve reflects the membership nature of SAN, because most of the initiative’s revenues come directly from its members through dues and conference fees, and not from contracts and grants. If the resources available from SAN exceed its reserve requirements, it is proposed that the excess funds transfer to the WCET reserve.

Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for Policy Analysis and Research unit:

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$760,811
0% Minimum Reserve	\$0
N/A Unanticipated Expenses	\$100,000
25% Program Development	\$190,203
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$290,203

Justification: Because Policy Analysis and Research has only one program that annually generates revenues, its only source of revenues in excess of expenses (reserves) are funds remaining in grants and contracts, if WICHE is allowed by the funding source to retain those funds. As a result, there is no need for a minimum reserve fund, given that the WICHE general fund covers this potential liability. The unit, however, does need funds to cover unanticipated expenditures, such as possible grant or contract overruns, or bridge funding to sustain a project between funding cycles. The \$100,000 request does not represent a percentage of the unit’s annual appropriation, but rather simply an amount deemed reasonable for FY 2022 to cover such unanticipated expenditures. The unit can also benefit from a modest amount of funding to pursue program development activities, such as grant writing, seed funding for prospective projects, etc. Annual general fund financing of 25 percent would adequately cover this type of expenditure. Should the Policy Analysis and Research unit exceed its target reserve, after closing out contracts and grants, WICHE would transfer those funds to the general fund reserve.

Request for Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA):

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$471,656
100% Minimum Reserve	\$471,656
0% Unanticipated Expenses	\$0
0% Program Development	\$0
FY 2022 Target Reserve (Required NC-SARA Reserve)	\$471,656

Justification: NC-SARA has a reserve requirement of 100 percent of annual revenues. If the resources available from W-SARA exceed its reserve requirements, it is proposed that the excess funds transfer to the Policy Analysis and Research unit reserve.

Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for the Programs and Services unit:

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$1,746,747
0% Minimum Reserve	\$0
N/A Unanticipated Expenses	\$100,000
25% Program Development	\$436,687
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$536,687

Justification: In addition to its general fund support and revenues garnered from non-general fund programs that generate annual revenues, the Programs and Services unit, like the Policy Analysis and Research unit, receives support from various grants and contracts. As a result, there is no need for a minimum reserve fund, given that the WICHE general fund covers this potential liability. This unit also needs some reserves to support unanticipated expenses and to fund modest amounts of program development funds to cover unanticipated expenditures. The \$100,000 recommended for FY 2022, commensurate with the request for Policy Analysis and Research, is not reflected as a percent of the unit's operating budget, but rather as a reasonable reserve to cover unanticipated but possible expenditures, such as possible grant or contract overruns, or bridge funding to sustain a project between funding cycles. The unit can also benefit from a modest amount of funding (25 percent) to pursue program development activities, such as grant writing, seed funding for prospective projects, etc. If the resources available in the Academic Leadership Initiatives or the joint-purchasing collaboratives exceed their reserve requirements, it is once again proposed as the Commission approved last year that the excess funds transfer to the Programs and Services reserve. Should the Programs and Services unit exceed its target reserve, after closing out contracts and grants, WICHE would transfer those funds to the general fund reserve.

**Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for the Joint Purchasing Collaboratives
(within the Programs and Services unit)**

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$176,908
20% Minimum Reserve	\$35,382
50% Unanticipated Expenses	\$88,454
30% Program Development	\$53,072
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$176,908

Justification: The minimum reserve requirement, though higher than the percentage in the general fund, is the amount that would be required to meet financial obligations of the four-program collaboration, should they be terminated. The quite substantial program development reserve is necessary at this time because these joint purchasing collaborations continue to be developed and thus have more needs for funds to pursue new ventures and secure existing ones. If the resources available from the Joint Purchasing Collaboratives exceed its reserve requirements, it is proposed that the excess funds transfer to a Programs and Services unit reserve

**Approval of Non-General Fund Reserve Amounts for the Academic Leadership Initiatives
(within the Programs and Services unit)**

FY 2022 Budget to be Approved May 2021	\$251,679
20% Minimum Reserve	\$50,336
50% Unanticipated Expenses	\$125,840
30% Program Development	\$75,504
FY 2022 Target Reserve	\$251,679

Justification: The minimum reserve requirement, though higher than the percentage required in the general fund, is the amount that would be required to meet financial obligations of the Academic Leadership Initiatives, should one or more be terminated. The more substantial amount for the reserve for unanticipated expenses is requested to provide enough coverage in the unexpected but possible liabilities incurred if an annual meeting or other planned event has to be canceled. The more substantial amount for the program development reserve reflects the membership nature of the Academic Leadership Initiatives, particularly the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders and Western Academic Leadership Forum, because most of these initiatives' revenues come directly from their members through dues and conference fees, and not from contracts and grants. The Alliance and Forum have intentionally set their dues at rates higher than annual expenditures in order to garner enough resources to explore unique academic issues that arise over time and that are not being addressed by WICHE, per se. If the resources available from the Academic Leadership Initiatives exceed their reserve requirements, it is proposed that the excess funds transfer to a Programs and Services unit reserve.

Action Requested

Approval of the categories and amounts reflected above.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 WICHE Workplan

WICHE Workplan FY 2022



FOCUS AREAS

Access & Success

Accountability

Finance &
Affordability

Technology &
Innovation

Workforce & Society

DRAFT

WICHE FY 2022 Workplan

WICHE's Mission

WICHE and its 15 states and two territories work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.

Each May, WICHE's 48-member commission develops and approves the organization's annual Workplan. This Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the WICHE Commission (the Commission) has prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

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

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

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

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

major long-term grant-funded projects, collaborates with other regional and national organizations, and provides short-term technical assistance to members.

- **Behavioral Health:** The WICHE Behavioral Health Program seeks to enhance the public systems of care and the workforce that serve people with behavioral health issues and their families. The program supports this mission through partnerships with state behavioral health agencies, federal agencies, advocacy and consumer groups, and higher education institutions. WICHE Behavioral Health activities focus on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state behavioral health agency data analysis, and higher education liaison activities to enhance workforce development.
- **WCET:** The WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) was established in 1989 to promote collaboration and information sharing related to educational technologies in higher education. WCET's mission is to accelerate the adoption of effective practices and policies, advancing excellence in digital teaching and learning in higher education. Today, WCET supports nearly 400 member colleges, universities, state higher education agencies, nonprofits and for-profit companies across the U.S. and Canada, with over 6,000 active users of WCET resources. Dues paid by these members help enable WCET to be effectively a self-supporting unit. WCET's strategic action plan focuses on practice, policy, and advocacy, and fulfills these core functions by leveraging the expertise within the WCET community, supporting action agendas based on member priorities, facilitating information dissemination and professional networking, and delivering responsive excellence to its higher education members.

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

Finally, each of the following sections is organized according to these categories:

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

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

Programs and Services

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	TBD	Forum and Alliance members and TBD
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
Master Property Program	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.10	MHEC/Marsh carriers, 8 states (AZ, CO, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY), 27 campuses
MHEC Cyber Insurance	F/A; A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.05	All WICHE members are eligible
MHECare	F/A; A/S	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE states	.05	MHEC/United HealthCare Student Resources, 1 state (AK), 2 institutions
MHECtech	F/A	WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE/SREB states	.15	All WICHE members
Online Course Exchange	A/S; T/I	National	.10	2 consortia serving 21 institutions
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) *	A/S; W/S	Western	1.65	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam; 130+ programs at 62 participating institutions
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; A	Western	.10 and consultants	Forum members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting Collaborative projects 	A/S; A	Western	.45	All WICHE members; 49 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development: 2022 Annual Meeting Collaborative projects 	A/S; A	Western	.35	All WICHE members; 72 institutions, 9 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)*	A/S; W/S	Western	.50	All WICHE members; 1,350 programs at 63 institutions

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/S; W/S	Western	1.00	All WICHE members; 162 participating institutions

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented **COVID-19** crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

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

The **Master Property Program**, a **Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)** partnership available to WICHE institutions, has saved institutions more than \$100 million on comprehensive property insurance coverage over the years. The insurance program now serves 180 two- and four-year campuses nationwide with total insured values of \$83 billion, including 27 campuses and centers in eight WICHE-member states. It enables public and nonprofit private institutions to receive coverage at rates below industry averages, while improving their risk management and asset protection.

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

MHECare, another MHEC partnership available in WICHE member states, offers institutions and systems a student health insurance plan underwritten by UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process.

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

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

The **Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)** provides affordable access for students to 130+ health care professional programs at 62 institutions and in 10 health care fields. In 2020-21, 567 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received \$13.9 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped more than 15,446 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key health care positions.

The **Western Academic Leadership Academy** is a yearlong professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for four-year institutions in the West. Academy activities focus on understanding the context of academic leadership, setting academic goals and priorities, and developing specific skill sets required of chief academic officers. Its sixth cohort, nominated by members of the Western Academic Leadership Forum, will commence in July 2021. The Academy is funded by registration fees, sponsorships, and Forum support.

The **Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum)** brings together WICHE-region chief academic leaders from four-year institutions and associated systems and state coordinating and governing boards to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives. The Forum is funded primarily by membership dues, with additional funding provided by annual meeting sponsors.

The **Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance)** brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and annual meeting sponsors.

The **Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)** allows WICHE-region residents to cross state lines yet pay resident tuition rates for approximately 1,350 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 63 participating public universities. In 2020-21, 2,441 students saved an estimated \$34.6 million in tuition through WRGP. The WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement has been lifted and Western public universities may make any graduate program eligible at the WRGP tuition rate at their discretion, which has significantly increased the number of students who can benefit. As of the 2020-21 academic year, participating programs now have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150 percent of resident tuition, but the vast majority continue to charge students resident tuition.

The **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)** is WICHE's signature undergraduate discount-tuition program and the nation's largest of its kind, saving 42,481 students an estimated \$411.7 million in tuition in 2020-21. Currently, 162 public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150 percent of resident tuition – instead of full nonresident tuition, which can exceed 300 percent of resident tuition. The Programs and Services unit will continue to expand the marketing of WUE and WRGP to benefit more students and institutions through targeted, state-specific publicity and activities as well as increased outreach to high school counselors and admissions advisers.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I	National	ECMC Foundation \$500,000 grant	3.25 and consultants (11/20-10/22)	55 institutions in 13 WICHE states and 4 institutions in 4 other states are members; 9 additional institutions have signed a letter of intent to join the Network by June 30, 2021. Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploration stage
			General Fund support (approved at Nov. 2020 Commission Meeting from Programs and Services reserves)		

Interstate Passport® is a national initiative that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria. It is the only nationwide network of institutionally accredited, nonprofit, public, and private two- and four-year institutions dedicated to the block transfer of general education attainment. It also provides institutions in the network with an academic progress tracking system for Passport transfer students designed by registrars and institutional researchers in conjunction with the National Student Clearinghouse. The goal of Interstate Passport is to eliminate transfer students' unnecessary repetition of learning previously achieved. WICHE staff provide overall direction and support for this innovative program. A two-year grant from ECMC Foundation is enabling WICHE to further expand the Passport Network by providing 20 institutions (10 of which are minority-serving institutions) a two-year membership fee waiver and personalized onboarding support.

The award from NSF is supporting a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges to address issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning

outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. WICHE is conducting a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within engineering disciplines; articulate a theory of change, and recruit leaders of national organizations and two-year and four-year institutions representing at least four states to analyze and refine NMSU's proof of concept and assess the feasibility of scaling NMSU's work to additional institutions.

NEW DIRECTIONS

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

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance
(mission-critical)



Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Interstate Passport®	A/S; T/I		National	Seeking grant funding from other foundations	TBD	Interstate Passport Network members and potential members
Online Course Exchange - FlexPATH Alliance	A/S; T/I		National	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation subaward (5 years)	1.90	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and their respective community colleges
Compact for Faculty Diversity	A/S; W/S		National	TBD	TBD	Midwestern Higher Education Compact, New England Board of Higher Education, Southern Regional Education Board
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice (seeking additional external funding to further assist NASNTIs and sustain an institutional network)	A/S		National	TBD	2.30 TBD	Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions, Tribal colleges, Tribal education departments, higher education organizations

Interstate Passport® is a national initiative that facilitates the block transfer of lower-division general education based on multistate, faculty-developed learning outcomes and proficiency criteria.

The **Online Course Exchange (OCE)** enables students to seamlessly enroll, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions participating in a consortium. Consortia contract with WICHE for use of its OCE platform, designed to support the exchange of online course enrollments among multiple institutions to provide more options for students and optimize use of institutional resources. In February 2021, university, community college, and organizational partners from three states submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation to create the **Flexible Pathways for Access through the Transfer Hub, or (FlexPATH Alliance)**. The partners propose to collaborate to better understand and address the systemic barriers to educational access and success in pre-engineering education for community college students from underserved communities including students of color, low-income, women, and first-generation college-bound students. Broadening the participation of these groups that have disproportionately low enrollment and graduation rates in university engineering programs is crucial to meet the West's and the nation's workforce needs. If funding is received, WICHE will serve as the backbone partner for the FlexPATH Alliance as it identifies freshman and sophomore engineering courses that are missing at the participating community colleges and then creates online courses to be offered by each participating institution, using the OCE to facilitate the online course enrollments.

The Compact for Faculty Diversity: Staff are collaborating with the other three higher education regional compacts to seek funding to reinvigorate the Compact for Faculty Diversity and its associated Doctoral Scholars Program. The programs would address the significant imbalance that continues nationwide in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of faculties. Goals of the initiative are to increase faculty diversity in all ranks and across all institution types to equal or exceed the diversity of the nation by engaging postsecondary systems, institutions, and leaders in concrete commitments to increase the hiring of faculty of color, supported by specific action plans.

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, an initiative first begun in late 2017 with funding from Lumina Foundation, continues to have strong relevance in light of the persistent postsecondary attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations. Staff will seek funding to continue efforts to reduce or eliminate these gaps at Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by supporting the use of culturally relevant high-impact practices and fostering institutional and tribal collaborations to share and expand sustainable student support systems on campuses. Another major objective going forward is to continue to strengthen the NASNTI presence and impact in state and federal higher education policy arenas and to create a collaborative network of institutions serving large numbers of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

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

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

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

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

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice, funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation and launched in December 2017, was a collaboration of two-year and four-year institutions designated as Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) by the U.S. Department of Education. The initiative addressed the higher education attainment gap of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) compared to other student populations at these institutions and identified strategies to reduce the gaps. During the initiative, NASNTI administrators and faculty were convened at two national summits and in virtual settings through a webinar series. At the outset, WICHE awarded small grants to 11 of the institutions to support planning for achieving quantifiable goals to narrow attainment gaps, implement high impact practices and other efforts leading to students' academic success, and to foster sustainability in their programs. Additional Lumina funding was provided to assist the grantee campuses in meeting AI/AN students' access to online courses and provide virtual student support services during the pandemic. Several reports and case studies were produced that focused on effective practices to enhance the educational attainment of American Indian and Alaska Native students and provide a platform for considering options for future related initiatives.

Policy Analysis and Research

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	A	Western	.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	.20	N/A
Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West	F/A	Western	.025	All WICHE members
Western Policy Exchanges	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.05	N/A
WICHE Insights	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Western	.10	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	A/S; T/I; A	Western	2.25	NC-SARA; Western SARA signatories; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc. but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories. The Policy Analysis and Research Unit will continue to convene biweekly calls with state/system chief academic officers, which attendees have found extremely beneficial for the resource and information sharing that takes place. The unit is also undertaking work to make select Resources and Projects responsive to new information regarding COVID-19's education impacts.

The annual *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* report analyzes key higher education metrics and information about the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education. This resource helps stakeholders monitor regional changes over time and informs discussion in policy and education communities. Utilizing WICHE's Policy Analysis Research Database (PAR), the Benchmarks data dashboard now includes state information as well as regional metrics.

The **Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)** informs the WICHE Commission (the Commission) and staff about significant legislative issues related to higher education, and WICHE staff serves the LAC by informing members about emerging policy issues in the West and relevant policy research. LAC members are appointed by the Commission and meet annually.

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

throughout the year. WICHE will release several enhanced tables in FY 2022, providing increased detail and interactivity, and adding new analysis. WICHE will supplement the core data sources, as possible, to keep this resource contemporary to COVID-19 impacts.

WICHE will continue building out *State Policy and Data Profiles* that capture state postsecondary contexts. The development of the *Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARC)* will enable the Policy Unit to provide more detailed and relevant information specific to each WICHE member.

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

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

The *WICHE Insights* publication series consists of periodic briefs (usually published several times a year) that illuminate a higher education policy or research topic, or that supplement a regular WICHE activity or release (such as our annual *Tuition and Fees* or our quadrennial *Knocking at the College Door* report).

The WICHE *Policy Webinar* series features WICHE staff, partners, and/or higher education stakeholders periodically hosting digital forums for registrants on selected higher education topics of interest. Anticipated topics for FY 2022 will largely focus on COVID-19 recovery, potentially including reengagement of students who dropped out or never started due to the pandemic, behavioral health on campus, and others.

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

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	F/A; A/S	Western/ National	\$1.2 million	2.25 FY21-22	Hewlett Foundation, WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Data for the American Dream	A/S; W/S; A	National	NCHEMS contract; \$150,000	.40 2/19-9/21	NCHEMS, Schmidt Futures
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	T/I	Western	DHS	.10 7/17-TBD	WCET, DHS, FEMA, SHEEO offices of participant states
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	A/S	National	\$75,000	.625 in FY22 5/19-5/22	College Board, others

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	F/A; A/S; T/I	National	American Indian Higher Education Consortium; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$59,000	TBD	NCHEMS, Programs & Services

Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium: The policy unit and WCET received funding to create a national consortium with the three other regional higher education compacts – the Midwest Higher Education Compact, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the New England Board of Higher Education – focused on scaling the successful adoption of high-quality open educational resources to improve student outcomes, increase equity, and improve affordability. There is significant collaboration and coordination across regions with WCET serving as the “backbone” of the effort.

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

Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders: As an additional component of the cybersecurity initiative, WICHE is continuing to develop partnerships with cyber experts and conducting outreach to WICHE states to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection.

Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates: The Policy Analysis and Research unit released the 10th edition of state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates in December 2020. During FY 2022, staff will continue dissemination activities and produce tools that can help users understand the potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and developing analysis related to socio-economic status.

Intermediaries for Scale Partnership: Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE is pursuing multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE has recently been chosen by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate its efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. This will in turn aid in AIHEC’s work to support Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and provide leadership on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues. WICHE staff will continue to review other opportunities to partner with Intermediaries for Scale where the work fits with WICHE’s mission and staff expertise.

NEW DIRECTIONS

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

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance (mission-critical)

Opportunity (funding)

Competence (staff/consultants)

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	F/A; A/S; W/S		Western	\$1.2 million	3.0 3 years	TBD
Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners	A/S; W/S		National	\$1.5 - 2 million	1.75 4 years	TBD

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance
(mission-critical)



Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	A/S; A		Western	Dependent upon size and scale of effort	.05 Ongoing	Western states
Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho	A/S; A		Western	\$385,313	.0825 2 years	Idaho State Board of Education
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	F/A; A/S		Western	\$500,000	1.50 2 years	TBD
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	A/S; W/S		Western	\$1 million	1.5 3 years	WCET
Western Postsecondary Data Users Network	A/S; W/S; A		Western	\$50,000	.50 6 months	Western states
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S		Western	\$100,000	.25 Single convening	Behavioral Health Program
Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network	F/A; A/S		Western	\$400,000	2.0 2 years	TBD
Data with a Purpose	W/S; A		National	\$497,475	.05 2 years	Strada Education Network
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD
Recognizing Learning: Further Study of Prior Learning Assessment	A/S; W/S		Western/ National	\$200,000	1.5 2 years	CAEL
A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs	A/S; W/S		Western	\$2.5 million	2.0 3 years	TBD
Improving Credential Information in the West	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$50,000	0.1 2 years	MHEC, National Science Foundation, Credential Engine
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	A/S; W/S		Western	\$1 million	1.35 3 years	Behavioral Health Program

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

Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners: Building on WICHE's Adult College Completion Network (which concluded in 2016) and other work related to adult learners, WICHE proposes to leverage its existing membership and activities to pursue new approaches to achieve four objectives: 1) build the evidence base for effectively serving adult learners, 2) facilitate collaboration among network members, 3) share scalable solutions across the field, and 4) link adult college completion work with the broader equity agenda. WICHE will also seek to partner with states to increase the number of

adults with a postsecondary credential of value. To accomplish that goal, the project will identify high-impact supports for adult learners that correlate with increased credential completion; develop effective and aligned policy and practice for serving adult learners in concert with states, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed to increase adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

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

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

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

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

Western Postsecondary Data Users Network: State education and workforce development agencies continue to improve data systems that have the potential to provide critical information to students and their families, policymakers, and institutional leaders. To take full advantage of these systems, states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, state researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to states taking advantage of these data systems include limited opportunities for state postsecondary researchers to engage in professional development; heavy workloads managing existing reporting duties, leaving little time for exploratory analyses; and few chances to network with colleagues in other states to address common problems. WICHE hopes to address these issues by exploring the need for and, if appropriate, establishing a Western Postsecondary Data Users Network, which would convene key state, system, and institutional education and workforce researchers to address common questions, provide technical assistance, and assist in professional development. This network would aim to ensure that Western policymakers have access to high-quality evidence to develop, assess, and improve education and training policies and programs.

Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus: Behavioral health issues have a significant impact on the health and well-being of many traditional-aged students. Additionally, they can be a significant barrier to postsecondary success. There are not currently well-accepted policies and practices for providing support systems on campuses. WICHE is

well-positioned to begin addressing the issue through its policy and behavioral health units. The initial project will be to host a convening of state policymakers and institutional leaders and practitioners to identify policy and practice gaps, as well as potential solutions.

Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network: WICHE will work with state partners to develop common metrics with which to evaluate dual credit programs that include analyses of cost to students and their families, states, school districts, and institutions of higher education. Further, WICHE and its network partners will carry out rigorous quantitative and qualitative research to better understand how these programs operate, where they are successful, and develop actionable recommendations to improve student outcomes.

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

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education: In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work with WCET and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale: Through this work, WICHE will leverage and disseminate research related to competency-based education (CBE) and prior learning assessment (PLA) so that policymakers can make evidence-based decisions. Additionally, staff would develop targeted information campaigns to build understanding of and support for CBE and PLA based on new and extant research. WICHE has substantial expertise in prior learning assessment research and policy through its work on previous Lumina Foundation-funded efforts.

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

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

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

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Implementation of WICHE Data Management Plan: WICHE, working with experts from Cooley LLP law firm, developed a strong data management plan that improves policies and practices to increase security and compliance across WICHE's operational and support units. In FY 2022, staff will continue implementing the new plan.

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

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

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

Wyoming Postsecondary Needs Analysis: WICHE was contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) to help fulfill the organization's statutory obligations to analyze the need for and impact of a new proposed community college district. The funding for this project fell below the threshold required for Commission approval and was approved by the WICHE president. WICHE partnered with NCHEMS and produced a detailed analysis and report showing that if voters in Campbell County approved a new community college district, and the related increase in property tax, there was strong evidence that the new district would be sustainable and have limited negative impacts on the other districts in the state.

Behavioral Health

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	National	TBD	TBD	TBD
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	W/S	Western	\$800,000	.25 7/13-6/20	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	W/S	Western	\$179,500	.05 10/16-6/20	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Arizona: Evidence-Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S; A	Western	\$3,097,101	2.75 6/14-6/20	State of Arizona
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	W/S	Western	\$2,995,630	.30 7/13-6/20	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School-Based Clinical Psychologists*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$200,000	.25 Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S; A	Western	\$125,000	.5 2.5 years	State of Idaho
Montana Fidelity Reviews	W/S; A	Western	\$105,000	.30 2 years	State of Montana
Montana Zero Suicide	A/S	Western	\$119,945	.25 5/19-9/21	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP-MHTTC)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$1,368,730	1.75 5 years	University of North Dakota
National Institutes of Health - Online Publication Update	A/S; W/S	National	\$189,130	.40 9/20-3/22	National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$1,120,537	.50 7/14-8/19	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$175,000	.50 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico
Oregon Psychology Internship Program	W/S	Western	\$196,958	None 4/14-12/19	State of Oregon & APA
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$974,767	1.75 4 years	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention	W/S	National	\$6,117,720	2.75 2/15-3/22	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews	W/S	Western	\$197,000	.25 6/15-6/21	South Dakota Division of Behavioral Health

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium	W/S	Western	\$150,000	.50 2/18-6/20	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	W/S	Western	Varies annually	.20 Ongoing	WICHE member states and territories
* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2022.					

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.

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

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

Arizona Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) Fidelity Monitoring: WICHE partners with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System to support the implementation and fidelity reviews of four EBPs in the Maricopa County public behavioral health system. WICHE supports the Project Lead and two fidelity reviewers. The project was expanded in FY 2019 to include fidelity reviews of two EBPs in Northern and Southern Arizona.

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

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

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

Montana Fidelity Reviews: The Montana Addictive and Mental Disorders Division has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Addictive and Mental Disorders Division regarding the implementation of their Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for the eight PACT programs operating in October 2020, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation on outcomes and dashboard development.

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

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

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Online Publication Update: The NIH has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide an update to its publication Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography. The revision will expand the publication's focus to include substance use and addiction, with special emphasis on opioid addiction in rural and frontier areas of the U.S.

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

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

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

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): WICHE has partnered with JBS international to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 39 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. In FY 2019, the program included four sites: two in CO, one in MT, and one in NC. In FY 2020, the program expanded by four new sites: NH, TX, and an additional site in MT and NC. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country.

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

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

Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program: Since 1985, WICHE has been managing the WSDSG, an information-sharing membership-based network for behavioral-health data and evaluation staff and managers from WICHE states and territories. WICHE manages quarterly conference calls to discuss emerging issues in behavioral health data and system evaluation and provides ongoing support to WSDSG members. WICHE also organizes an annual meeting with training and presentations for WSDSG members to stay apprised of developments and best practices in the field of behavioral health data and evaluation. Funding is based on an annual membership fee of \$6,000.

NEW DIRECTIONS



Projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance (mission-critical)  **Opportunity (funding)**  **Competence (staff/consultants)** 

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S		Western & Pacific Territories	\$250,000	.50 2.5 years	The U.S. Territory of Guam
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention (seeking additional resources to develop a Community Coach training curriculum and to recruit and support 12 additional communities)	A/S; W/S		National	\$566,000	1 year	Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention

Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Screening & Diagnostic Telehealth Feasibility Study	A/S; W/S		Western	\$101,100	6 months	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program Evaluation	W/S; A		Western	\$883,557	1.05 4 years	National Institutes of Health; Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) (seeking additional staff to support additional communities)	A/S; W/S		Western	\$214,868	1.5 1 year	JBS International

Guam Psychology Internship Consortium: The WICHE BHP will partner with the U.S. Territory of Guam to develop an accreditable psychology internship consortium to serve Guam and CNMI and build the behavioral health workforces there. As has been accomplished in Alaska, Hawai'i, Nevada, and Colorado, WICHE will guide all phases of the development of a psychology internship consortium to both attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories.

Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and pilot-test a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. When fully implemented, the program anticipates 22 sites located throughout the country. WICHE has proposed additional funding from the VA to recruit and support an additional 12 sites in FY 2021-22. Additionally, WICHE proposes developing a TWV Coaches training curriculum for use by the VA.

Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Screening & Diagnostic Telehealth Feasibility Study: The WICHE BHP is seeking to partner with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to conduct a business case/feasibility analysis to identify an optimal and sustainable telehealth/telemedicine model of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) screening and diagnosis in Alaska.

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

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP): As a partner in this project, WICHE provides monthly technical assistance to 39 sites aiding in the planning for more intensive efforts in upcoming years. WICHE has submitted a funding request to support assistance for another 18-20 sites.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

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

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

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

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

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Privatization Feasibility Study: The State of Alaska contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comprehensive study of the feasibility of privatizing the API, examining both quantitative and qualitative data from API, and reviewing psychiatric hospitals from across the country that have been privatized to develop potential operational models. The WICHE BHP is partnering with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute (NRI) to provide a comprehensive project team.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs). WICHE provided training, education, and guidance concerning EBPs and fidelity tools to ensure Mercy Maricopa provider staff was offering high-quality EBPs and ensuring fidelity to identified EBPs protocols. WICHE supported training and technical assistance related to the implementation of the identified EBPs, and evaluation/quality improvement monitoring of the practices.

Arizona Mercy Maricopa Training. WICHE collaborated with Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care (MMIC) to develop a training academy to increase workforce expertise by implementing training strategies for three evidence-based practices: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Transition to Independence (TIP) Model, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Abuse (CBT-SA).

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

Hawai'i Department of Education: Recruitment, Employment, and Facilitation for School-Based Behavioral Health Professionals: For several years, WICHE's BHP assisted the Hawai'i Department of Education with marketing, recruitment, screening, and referral services for behavioral health professionals to fill public school vacancies across the Hawaiian Islands.

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

State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai'i Department of Health contracted with the WICHE BHP to conduct a comparative review of early childhood services rates and related professional salaries such as occupational and physical therapies. The study compared Hawai'i rates to those in other analogous states to ensure competitive pay and thus sufficient workforce.

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

WCET

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Services and Resources

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Staff FTE	Partners
WCET COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	A/S; T/I	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET members, Every Learner Everywhere, SAN
Digital Learning Practice	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	Members, UPCEA, OLC, Quality Matters, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting and Leadership Summit	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Corporate sponsors
WCET Member Service and Support	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Nearly 400 member institutions and organizations
WCET Research	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Members, Every Learner Everywhere, OLC, NCOER, SAN
WCET Webcast Series	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Adding Member-only Resources	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET and SAN, and member leadership
WCET Website Update	A/S; T/I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members and leadership
Consortia and System Digital Learning Leaders	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	WCET staff	Higher education systems and multi-institution consortia
State Authorization Network (SAN)	A/S; A	U.S.	WCET staff	130+ members representing 800+ institutions. Partners: NC-SARA, regional compacts, NASASPS
WCET Steering Committee Annual Priorities	F/A; A/S; T/I; A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET Steering Committee and other members

The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis continue to be far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units are continuing to work to support the region and WCET members everywhere in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of

our states, territories, and WCET members everywhere. As a result of the pandemic, the transition to remote, hybrid, and hyflex learning has fallen to WCET members. As a result, WCET will continue to provide COVID-19 response, support, and planning to both its members and the public. With funding from Every Learner Everywhere the document “Pursuing Regulatory Compliance for Digital Instruction in Response to COVID-19: Policy Playbook” was created to alert administrators and faculty to the differences in certain federal and state policies when a course moves from a traditional face-to-face to digital mode of instruction. WCET will continue to provide compliance updates. Through its discussion forums and virtual events, members will share lessons learned in these pandemic-related digital learning environments.

As a membership organization, WCET has long focused on members sharing their experiences on what has worked or not worked in using **digital learning practice** techniques in higher education, and will continue to offer opportunities to share lessons learned. WCET continues to provide in-depth analysis of **federal and state policy, legislation, and regulations** that have an impact on faculty and students in digital learning. WCET is noted for its expertise on issues including “regular and substantive interaction” for distance education and state authorization of out-of-state activities.

wcetMIX is a digital platform to support communication, collaboration, and resource-sharing among WCET members. Members are invited to opt in to communicate through WCET’s popular WCETNews and WCETDiscuss digital forums. **wcetMIX** is being expanded to include libraries of member-only resources on select topics.

WCET is updating its **website** for the first time in several years. That work is currently under way and is anticipated to be done by early summer 2021.

The leaders of digital learning services for **state system or multi-institutional consortia** will meet monthly to share their unique challenges and solutions to using cooperation to better meet the needs of faculty and students.

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

Each year, the WCET Steering Committee selects topics on which it wishes to focus in providing insights and resources to assist members. Working groups are formed and they are narrowing down the broad topics to webinars, sessions, blog posts, and other resources that will inform the membership. For the 2021 calendar year, the selected topics are:

- *The post-COVID institution*: How higher education needs to adapt and change. Colleges are facing existential and organizational issues in both the short- and long-term.
- *The quality of digital learning*: How to maintain and increase the quality of instruction, learning, and support services with special emphasis on those courses that transitioned into remote, hybrid, or hyflex learning.
- *Diversity, equity, and inclusion*: How do we overcome inequities in serving students due to race, income, or other barriers?
- *Student return on investment (and how digital learning can help)*: How can digital learning assist in controlling the price of higher education and how can we address the value and ROI of college?

CURRENT ACTIVITIES Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	6.0 2017-22	12 organizations identified as “Network Partners” by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Every Learner Everywhere Expert Network	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2020-21	ISTE and selected content experts

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Every Learner Everywhere Student Fellowship Program	A/S; T/I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE staff 2021	Achieving the Dream, Digital Promise, SXSW EDU, Intentional Futures
National Consortium of Open Educational Resources	F/A; A/S; T/I	U.S.	William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	1.0 2020-22	Four regional higher education compacts; WICHE Policy Unit

Every Learner Everywhere is a network of 12 partner organizations working collaboratively to help institutions use new technology to innovate in teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. WCET is an intermediary for the network, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and is also one of the partners participating in it. Every Learner is offering an “Expert Network” that provides free short consulting sessions for those interested in the intersection between equity and digital learning. Its new **Student Fellowship Program** will incorporate the voices of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, poverty-affected, first-generation, and other marginalized students into the work to improve student success through digital learning. The fellowship is project-based and will enable undergraduate students to work on interest- and skill-aligned projects and develop meaningful professional relationships and experiences.

WCET leads a national network to coordinate collaboration among the four regional higher education compacts aimed at increasing the adoption, scalability, and sustainability of **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. Together, these partners engage new opportunities to build capacity for policy and effective practice, enable substantial research, develop open education solutions that promote equitable learning, and support coordination across regions to scale and sustain use of OER across the country. The regional compacts are a trusted resource and share a common responsibility for assisting and promoting the adoption and scaling of open education; each has a structure in place with staff highly experienced in policy and practice. WCET serves as the intermediary coordinating among the compacts.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Projects for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows:

Focus:

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

Project prioritization:

Relevance
(mission-critical)



Opportunity
(funding)



Competence
(staff/consultants)



Project Title	Focus	Priority	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Quality Access Program (CourseGateway)	F/A; A/S; T/I		U.S. and beyond	\$6.8 million	4.0 Spring/ Summer 2021	Every Learner Everywhere, WebAIM, WICHE President's Office
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A		Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD

The **Quality Access Program** seeks an “owner” to conduct reviews of courseware and software products used in postsecondary digital learning and to be displayed on the website CourseGateway.org. WCET was chosen by Tyton Partners on behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as one of three finalists to assume the duties of managing the program. Parts of the work will be tightly tied to current Every Learner Everywhere work. WebAIM will partner in advising on and conducting accessibility reviews of the products under consideration.

A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education: In this project, WCET will work with the Policy Analysis and Research Unit and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure that states can leverage the advantages of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE and WCET will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work that staff is considering pursuing

Focus:

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

Project	Focus	Geo Scope	Funding	Staff FTE/ Timeline	Partners
Orienting and Supporting Online Adjunct Faculty	A/S; T/I	U.S.	\$110,000	TBD	OLC and Every Learner Everywhere

In 2015, WCET conducted a survey of practices in **recruiting, orienting, and supporting online adjunct faculty**. In partnership with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), WCET will perform an update on select questions from the survey and expand it to examine how institutions develop contingent faculty to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Research will also be performed on professional development good practices for this underappreciated instructional community.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2021

WCET conducted an environmental scan and updated its strategy documents, including its mission, vision, and values statements. Input from staff and member leadership was key in updating and refining the work.

Due to the pandemic, the in-person **32nd WCET Annual Meeting** was moved from Indianapolis to a virtual environment that was divided into two sections: 1) Oct. 6-15, 2020, focused on Inclusion in Higher Education: From Notion to Action and 2) Nov. 2-12, 2020, focused on The Value of Higher Education and What the Future of Higher Education Could Be. The WCET Summit, held virtually on April 6 and May 4, 2021, focused on Practical Considerations for an Uncertain Future. In all of these events, members are learning and sharing the role that digital learning can play in helping address the challenges faced by postsecondary education.

Every Learner Everywhere received funding for its partners to provide multiple services to help institutions make the transition to digital learning as a result of the pandemic. Every Learner Everywhere also conducted the Equity Counts awareness campaign in fall 2020 to alert educators and students about the advances and pitfalls of digital learning in serving Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students.

The **State Authorization Network (SAN)** provides both basic and advanced workshops to educate participants on the details of state authorization regulations and strategies for ensuring that their institutions are in compliance. In addition to the basic and advanced workshops, in FY 2020, SAN provided a virtual seminar, Update on HEA & Federal Rulemaking: The Impact on Institutional Compliance, with experts providing direction to support compliance with new federal regulations. SAN developed an on-demand version of its basic workshop and an implementation handbook to comply with new federal regulations that became effective July 1, 2020. SAN also holds monthly meetings of its member coordinators and monthly “ask the expert” meetings open to the entire membership.

The **Z Initiative** (Z refers to “Zero Cost”) brought together open educational resources (OER) leaders, champions, legislators, state higher education system staff, and educational technologists – with the goal of developing and promoting best practices and policies on adoption, implementation, scalability, and sustainability of OER and zero-cost curricula. Funded by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, this project resulted in the National Consortium of Open Educational Resources.

Collaborations Across WICHE Units

Focus:

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

Shaded rows indicate project is currently funded.

Project	Focus	Units (BOLD = committee jurisdiction)	Activity Category	Details of Collaboration
COVID-19 Response, Support, and Planning	F/A; A/S; W/S; T/I; A	All	TBD	The short- and long-term impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are far-reaching and uncertain. WICHE staff at all levels and in all units have been working diligently to support the region in whatever ways they can, and they will continue to do so in FY 2022. For example, staff have hosted webinars; created a variety of useful resources; convened regular peer-to-peer calls for SHEEOs, academic leaders, and communications professionals; provided guidance for higher education leaders, etc., but the needs continue. Given the changing nature of the situation, it is impossible to identify the specific ways that WICHE will provide support other than to commit to being collaborative and proactive in meeting the needs of our states and territories.
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER	F/A; A/S	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (received funding)	This national consortium supports adoption of open educational resources, adding WICHE Policy Analysis and Research acumen to existing WCET OER efforts under WCET auspices.
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	T/I	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	Projects and Initiatives (DHS-funded)	The work entails interplay between WICHE's cyber fellow (under WCET auspices) and Policy Analysis and Research staff.
Evolving Higher Education Policy Issues	A/S; T/I	WCET, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (variously funded)	Through WCET's Frontiers blog and other avenues, these units contribute to the field by engaging on emerging issues on which WICHE has policy and research insights and context. This often leads to collaboration or co-publication in areas that recently have ranged from state authorization of distance learning, to changes in IPEDS outcome measures data with implications for attainment metrics.
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health Program	New Directions (seeking funding)	This prospective convening of state policymakers, institutions, and other stakeholders would take advantage of WICHE Policy Unit and Behavioral Health Program expertise alike to identify policy and practice gaps related to campus behavioral health services and systems.
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; T/I; A	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	New Directions (seeking funding)	In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work with WCET and key state partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure states can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of sub-standard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states with policymakers across the country.

Project	Focus	Units (BOLD = committee jurisdiction)	Activity Category	Details of Collaboration
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	F/A; A/S; T/I	Policy Analysis and Research, Programs & Services	Current Activities	Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE is pursuing multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE has recently been selected by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate their efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. This will in turn aid in AIHEC's work to support Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and provide leadership on American Indian and Alaska Native higher education issues. WICHE staff will continue to review other opportunities to partner with Intermediaries for Scale where the opportunities fit with WICHE's mission and staff expertise.
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill-Building in Rural Areas	A/S; W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, WCET	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed project would leverage technology (and WCET expertise) to scale work-based learning to serve communities of need.
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	A/S; W/S	Policy Analysis and Research, Behavioral Health Program	New Directions (seeking funding)	This proposed project would increase higher education access and success for members of the military and their families, incorporating distinctive behavioral health attributes of these populations.



References

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Western Interstate
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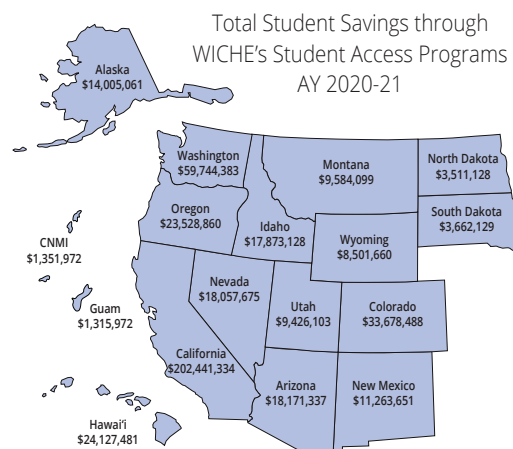
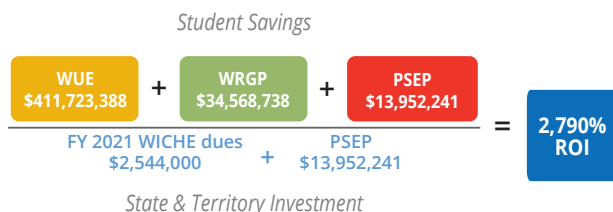
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

A trusted partner in regional collaboration, resource-sharing, sound public policy, and innovation since 1953

WICHE ...

Provides strong return on investment

- More than 45,450 Western students saved \$460 million in AY 2020-21 through the **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)**, **Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)**, and **Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)**. These WICHE programs provide significant student tuition savings at about 200 Western U.S. public colleges and universities and select private professional healthcare programs.
- WICHE's **Student Access Programs** collectively provide the region:



Bolsters the Western healthcare workforce

- Through **PSEP**, students from Western states and territories pursuing careers in 10 health fields – ranging from optometry to dentistry to veterinary medicine – can enroll in participating programs in another state while receiving substantial tuition support from their home state or territory. PSEP can save a student between \$32,600 and \$130,600 on tuition over the lifespan of a program, depending on the field of study at 62 different institutions. By participating in PSEP, Western states and territories benefit by inspiring, and in some states requiring, professionals to return home to practice and bolster their communities' professional health care.
- WICHE's **Behavioral Health Program (BHP)** partners with states to develop psychology internship programs and currently supports those in Alaska, Hawai'i, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, New Mexico, and Utah. These internships provide an avenue for states to build their behavioral health workforce – providing training for advanced graduate students and recruiting them to remain in the state. On average, 60 percent of graduates from the internships continue their professional work in the states in which they completed their training.
- WICHE **BHP**, partnering with the **University of North Dakota**, administers the **Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)**. The Mountain Plains MHTTC serves the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming by establishing a collaborative network that strengthens the capacity of different systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services.
- To address the growing issue of veteran suicide, especially in rural areas, **Together With Veterans (TWV)** was created. Following well-researched models shown to effectively reduce suicide, TWV works with community partners to provide a unique suicide prevention action plan. The veteran-driven program is a collaboration between WICHE and the Rocky Mountain Mental Illness, Research, Education and Clinical Center for Suicide Prevention, and is funded by the Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health.

Increases higher education access and affordability

- Currently, with 59 institutions in 17 different states, the **Interstate Passport Network®** enables block transfer of lower-division general education which reduces frustrating barriers that students may encounter when transferring across state lines.
- WICHE supports an alliance of **Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs)** to improve postsecondary attainment. By convening an annual summit that includes Native American students, developing policy studies, and creating a formal network of NASNTIs, the initiative is strengthening and sustaining campus efforts to support Native students in order to improve their college and career success.

About WICHE

Since 1953, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has been strengthening higher education, workforce development, and behavioral health throughout the region. As an interstate compact, WICHE partners with states, territories, and postsecondary institutions to share knowledge, create resources, and develop innovative solutions that address some of our society's most pressing needs. From promoting high-quality, affordable postsecondary education to helping states get the most from their technology investments and addressing behavioral health challenges, WICHE improves lives across the West through innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy.



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WICHE Commission
April 2021

ALASKA

Susan Anderson (Chair)
James Johnsen
Donn Liston

ARIZONA

John Arnold
Rita Cheng
Kathleen Goeppinger

CALIFORNIA

Christopher Cabaldon
Ellen Junn
Robert Shireman

COLORADO

Jim Chavez
Antwan Jefferson
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HAWAII

David Lassner (Vice Chair)
John Morton
Colleen Sathre

IDAHO

Rick Aman
Matt Freeman
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MONTANA

Laurie Bishop
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NEVADA

Catherine (Cathy) Dinauer
Fred Lokken
Melody Rose

NEW MEXICO

Barbara Damron
Mark Moores
Patricia Sullivan

NORTH DAKOTA

Mark Hagerott
Ray Holmberg
Jill Louters

OREGON

Ben Cannon
Camille Preus (Immediate
Past Chair)
Hilda Rosselli

SOUTH DAKOTA

Brian Maher
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U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES &
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Frankie Eliptico (CNMI)
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WASHINGTON

Don Bennett
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Thomas L. (Les) Purce

WYOMING

Fred Baldwin
Kimberly Dale
David Jones

Fosters idea sharing

- The **Legislative Advisory Committee** improves state-level policymaking in the West by providing a forum for legislative leaders to share valuable insights on trends and promising practices and build partnerships throughout the region.
- WICHE's **Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance)** and **Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum)** are active peer networks of academic leaders at two- and four-year institutions and systems, providing a venue for chief academic officers to connect and explore ways to better serve students and stakeholders.
- **WCET — the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies**, is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Its growing membership includes institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in all U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. WCET is widely recognized as one of the most informative, reliable, and forward-thinking organizations focused on the role of technology and innovation in higher education.
- WCET's **State Authorization Network (SAN)** helps guide institutions to manage state and federal regulatory compliance for the institution's out-of-state activities. SAN provides members access to experts, networking among others seeking to comply, and collaborative resources that ensure institutions are properly managing compliance requirements.
- WCET houses **Every Learner Everywhere**, a network centered on the transformation of digital learning in postsecondary institutions to advance equity in higher education and improve student outcomes for Black, Latinx, Indigenous students, low-income students, and first-generation students. Every Learner's network is made up of 12 partners actively engaged in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring products and services in the digital learning space.
- WCET is focused on reducing the cost of higher education and improving student outcomes through the implementation of open educational resources (OER). WCET works with the regional compacts (WICHE, NEBHE, MHEC, SREB), state agencies and higher education systems to conduct research, design grant programs and initiatives, and provide guidance on regional and statewide OER policy and project implementation. This OER Initiative brings together OER leaders, champions, legislators, state higher education systems, and educational technologists with the goal of sharing, developing, and promoting promising practices and policies on the adoption, implementation, scalability, and sustainability of OER and zero-cost curricula.
- The **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA)** is a voluntary initiative designed to establish comparable standards for U.S. states and territories regulating postsecondary distance education. SARA expands access to postsecondary educational opportunities, while ensuring meaningful consumer protections for students and reducing regulatory red tape for institutions. WICHE is responsible for coordinating the membership of SARA states in the West through the **WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA)**. Through W-SARA, WICHE provides a platform for Western states to collaboratively address issues and to develop promising practices related to the state oversight of distance education.

Helps states and territories allocate resources efficiently

- WICHE offers data and policy resources to support better-informed decision-making. WICHE's research projects and collaborations cover postsecondary completion, closing attainment gaps, adult learners, and multistate data-sharing to support educational planning and workforce development.
- WICHE staff serve as experts and provide technical assistance on finance, financial aid, articulation and transfer, strategic planning, student demographics, and more. Our website features **Benchmarks**, an interactive dashboard featuring the most recent data available on the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and the financing of higher education.
- WICHE's quadrennial **Knocking at the College Door** report provides a profile and datasets of the projected number of high school graduates out 15+ years from public and private schools and by race and ethnicity of public school graduates. Visit knocking.wiche.edu for the full report, data and charts for the nation, regions and each state, as well as other useful information for understanding the trends.

Responds to urgent priorities

- WICHE is collaborating with our states, institutions, and partners to respond and be proactive during the COVID-19 pandemic. WICHE is facilitating peer-to-peer videoconferences for higher education leaders to connect and identify solutions to common challenges; following legislation passed in response to the crisis; and identifying how emergency funding for students and higher education institutions, as well as block grants to states, can be best used to support education in the West. The **Behavioral Health Program** is hosting webinars that offer guidance to support the mental wellbeing of their students, and **WCET** is providing updates and resources to help institutions address issues that arise due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

April 2021

About the WICHE Commission

The WICHE Commission oversees the development of WICHE programs and assures that the Western Regional Compact is carried out for the benefit of the citizens of the West. WICHE's 48 commissioners, who are appointed by the governors of the 15 Western states and the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States, are leaders in higher education; they include state higher education executive officers, college and university presidents, legislators, business and community leaders, and other key partners. Susan Anderson from Alaska is the 2021 Chair of the Commission.

WICHE COMMISSION

The WICHE Commission oversees the development of WICHE programs and ensures that the Western Regional Compact is carried out for the benefit of the citizens of the West. WICHE's 48 commissioners, who are appointed by the governors of the 15 Western states and the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States, are leaders in higher education; they include state higher education executive officers, college and university presidents, legislators, business and community leaders, and other key partners. Susan Anderson from Alaska is the 2021 chair of the Commission.

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April 2021

Future Commission Meeting Dates

2021

November 4-5, 2021 - Portland, Oregon

2022

May 16-17, 2022 - South Dakota
November 10-11, 2022 - Colorado

2023

May 2023 - Nevada
November 9-10, 2023 - California

2020 COMMISSION COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Susan Anderson (AK), Chair
David Lassner (HI), Vice Chair
Camille Preus (OR), Immediate Past Chair

Rita H. Cheng (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Rick Aman (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair
Matt Freeman (ID), Committee Vice Chair

James Johnsen (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/Guam)
Patricia Jones (UT)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
David Jones (WY)

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Les Purce (WA), Committee Chair
Angie Paccione (CO), Committee Vice Chair

Donn Liston (AK)
Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
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John Morton (HI)
Dave Lent (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Melody Rose (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Jill Louters (ND)

(Programs and Services, cont.)

Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
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Dave Woolstenhulme (UT)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Camille Preus (OR), Committee Chair
John Arnold (AZ)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Barbara Damron (NM)
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NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Camille Preus (OR), Committee Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)

Special Committees

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Ray Holmberg, (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Jude Hofschneider (U.S. Pacific Territories and
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Rick Aman (ID)
Fred Lokken (NV)
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INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Camille Preus (OR), Committee Chair
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Jim Chavez (CO)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and
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April 2021

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee works to strengthen state policymaking in higher education in the West by engaging legislators who are appointed by the WICHE Commission in the discussion of higher education issues and by seeking their input on strategies for interstate collaboration.

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UTAH

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VACANCY

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Representative Mark Kinner (appointed 2021)
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April 2021

Changes to this list should be directed to:

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WICHE STAFF

Names in **bold** type indicate new WICHE staff or staff roles.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Demarée Michelau, President
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the Commission
Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator

ACCOUNTING SERVICES

Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Drew Elkshouder, Accounting Specialist
Diane Haslett, Accountant I

COMMUNICATIONS

Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications
Candy Allen, Senior Graphic Designer
*Emma Tilson, Administrative Coordinator

HUMAN RESOURCES

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Georgia Frazer, Human Resources Assistant

IT SERVICES

Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services
Gary Toon, Desktop and Windows Administrator

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Jere Mock, Vice President
Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access Programs
Cherie Curtin, Project Coordinator, Interstate Passport®
Diane Dorgan, Project Manager, Student Transfer Initiative
Julie Esterline, Administrative Assistant III
Kay Hulstrom, Manager, Institution Services
Sarah Leibrandt, Director of Academic Leadership Initiatives
Angela Rochat, Data, Policy, and Evaluation Coordinator
Kate Springsteen, Coordinator of Student Access Programs, and Member Services Coordinator of Interstate Passport
*Emma Tilson, Administrative Coordinator

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Patrick Lane, Vice President
Peace Bransberger, Senior Research Analyst
Liliana Diaz Solodukhin, Policy Analyst
Colleen Falkenstern, Senior Research Analyst
Shelley Plutto, Project Coordinator, W-SARA
Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-Director, Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)
Genevieve Berry, Project Manager, MHTTC
Erin Briley, Research and Technical Assistance Associate
Gina Brimmer, Director of Veterans Initiatives
Janell Daly, Administrative Assistant III
Jasmine Davis, Research Assistant
John Gomez, Director of Operations
Vanessa Gonzalez, Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Coordinator
Andie Hancock, Budget Coordinator
Rebecca Helfand, Director of Research and Evaluation
Annette Robertson, Fidelity Reviewer
Gretchen Stage, Together With Veterans Program Manager
Ivory Tubbs, Technical Expert Lead, Rural Communities Opioid Response Project
Vacancy, Director for Education and Research
Karen Voyer-Caravona, Fidelity Reviewer
Darlene Williams, Administrative Assistant III
Stefanie Winfield, MHTTC Research and Technical Assistance Coordinator

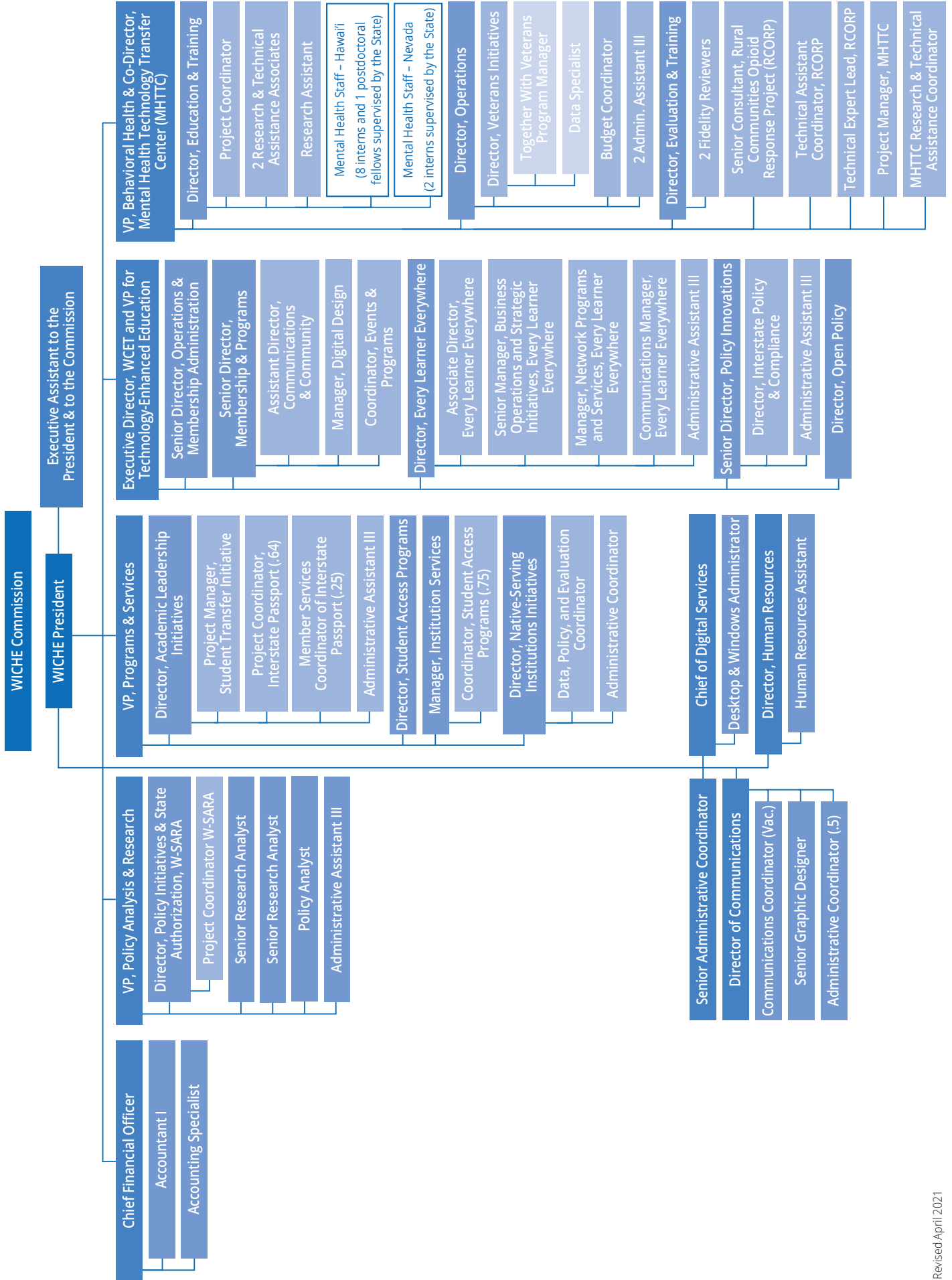
WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES (WCET)

Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Rosa Calabrese, Manager, Digital Design
Emilie Cook, Every Learner Everywhere Manager, Communications
Laura DaVinci, Associate Director, Every Learner Everywhere
Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, Policy Innovations
Lindsey Downs, Assistant Director, Communications and Community
Leigha Fletcher, Administrative Assistant III
Sherri Artz Gilbert, Senior Director of Operations and Membership Administration
Norma Hollebeke, Manager of Network Programs and Services, Every Learner Everywhere
Joyce Holliday, Administrative Assistant III
Kim Nawrocki, Events and Programs Coordinator
Robert Perez, Senior Manager of Business Operations and Strategic Initiatives, Every Learner Everywhere
Megan Raymond, Senior Director of Membership and Programs
Tanya Spilovoy, Director, Open Policy
Jessica Rowland Williams, Director, Every Learner Everywhere Network

*Splits accountabilities across two units

April 2021

WICHE Organization



U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES



HIGHER EDUCATION ACRONYMS

Higher education is addicted to acronyms, so much so that the actual names of organizations are sometimes almost lost to memory. Below, a list of acronyms and the organizations they refer to (plus a few others).

AACC	American Association of Community Colleges	aacc.nche.edu
AACRAO	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers	aacrao.org
AACTE	American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education	aacte.org
AAC&U	Association of American Colleges and Universities	aacu.org
AANAPISI	Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions	aanapisi.net
AASCU	American Association of State Colleges and Universities	aascu.org
AASHE	Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education	aashe.org
AAU	Association of American Universities	aau.edu
ACA	American Counseling Association	counseling.org
ACCN	Adult College Completion Network	adultcollegecompletion.org
ACCT	Association of Community College Trustees	acct.org
ACE	American Council on Education	acenet.edu
ACSFA	Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance	ed.gov/ACSFA
ACT	College admission testing program	act.org
ACTA	American Council of Trustees and Alumni	goacta.org
ACUTA	Association of College & University Telecommunications Administrators	acuta.org
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	ada.gov
AED	Academy for Educational Development	aed.org
AEI	American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research	aei.org
AERA	American Educational Research Association	aera.net
AGB	Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges	agb.org
AHRQ	Agency for Health Research and Quality	ahrq.gov
AIHEC	American Indian Higher Education Consortium	aihec.org
AIHEPS	Alliance for International Higher Education Policy Studies	nyu.edu/steinhardt/iesp/aiheps/
AIR	American Institutes of Research	air.org
AIR	Association for Institutional Research	airweb.org
APA	American Psychological Association	apa.org
APLU	Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (formerly NASULGC)	aplu.org
ASPIRA	An association to empower Latino youth	aspira.org
ASHE	Association for the Study of Higher Education	ashe.ws
ATD	Achieving the Dream	achievingthedream.org
BHOC	WICHE 's Behavioral Health Oversight Council	
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	gatesfoundation.org
CAE	Council for Aid to Education	cae.org
CAEL	Council for Adult and Experiential Learning	cael.org
CASE	Council for Advancement and Support of Education	case.org
CBEN	Competency Based Education Network	cbenetwork.org
CBO	Congressional Budget Office	cbo.gov
CCA	Complete College America	completecollege.org

CCME	Council of College and Military Educators	ccmeonline.org
CCTC	Council of Chairs of Training Councils (APA, Internships)	cctcpsychology.org
CGS	Council of Graduate Schools	cgsnet.org
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation	chea.org
CHEO	Consortium for Health Education Online	www.wiche.edu/NANSLO/CHEO
CHEPS	Center for Higher Education Policy Studies	utwente.nl/mb/cheps
CIC	Council of Independent Colleges	cic.org
CLA	Collegiate Learning Assessment	cae.org/content/pro_collegiate.htm
CLASP	Center for Law and Social Policy	clasphome.org
CMHC	Community Mental Health Center	cms.gov
CMS	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services	cms.gov
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	doi.gov/oia/islands/cnmi
COA	APA Council on Accreditation	apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/coa
COE	Council for Opportunity in Education	coenet.us
CONAHEC	Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration	conahec.org
CONASEP	CONAHEC's Student Exchange Program	conahecstudentexchange.org
CSG-WEST	Council of State Governments - West	csgwest.org
CSHE	Center for the Study of Higher Education	ed.psu.edu/cshe
CSPN	College Savings Plan Network	collegesavings.org
CUE	Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California	cue.usc.edu
DEAC	Distance Education Accrediting Commission	deac.org
DQC	Data Quality Campaign	dataqualitycampaign.org
ECS	Education Commission of the States	ecs.org
ED - U.S. Dept. of Education links:		
ED-ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act	ed.gov/essa
ED-FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	familypolicy.ed.gov
ED-FSA	Federal Student Aid	ed.gov/about/offices/list/fsa
ED-IES	Institute of Education Sciences	ed.gov/about/offices/list/ies
ED-NCES	National Center for Education Statistics	nces.ed.gov
ED-OCTAE	Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education	ed.gov/octae
ED-OESE	Office of Elementary & Secondary Education	ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese
ED-OPE	Office of Postsecondary Education	ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope
ED-OSERS	Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services	ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers
ED-FIPSE	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education	ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse
EdREF	EdRef College Search Reference	EdRef.com
EC	Electronic Campus Initiatives	ecinitiatives.org
EDUCAUSE	An association for higher ed change via technology and info resources	educase.edu
ELE	Every Learner Everywhere	everylearnereverywhere.org
EPI	Educational Policy Institute	educationalpolicy.org
ETS	Educational Testing Service	ets.org
Excelencia	Excelencia in Education	edexcelencia.org
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	
FORHP	Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (HRSA)	hrsa.gov/rural-health
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center	hrsa.gov/opa/eligibility-and-registration/healthcenters/fqhc/index.html
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations	eugdpr.org

GHEE	Global Higher Education Exchange	ghee.org
GME	Graduate Medical Education	aamc.org/advocacy/gme
HACU	Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities	hacu.net
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities	hbculifestyle.com
HBLI	Hispanic Border Leadership Institute	asu.edu/educ/hbli
HEA	Higher Education Act	acenet.edu/advocacy/Pages/Higher-Education-Act.aspx
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	hhs.gov
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996	hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html
HLC	Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association	ncahlc.org
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration	hrsa.gov
IES	Institute for Education Statistics	ies.ed.gov/
IHELP	Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, California State University Sacramento	csus.edu/ihelp
IHEP	Institute for Higher Education Policy	ihep.org
IIE	Institute of International Education	iie.org
iNACOL	Aurora Institute	aurora-institute.org
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System	nces.ed.gov/ipeds
JFF	Jobs for the Future	jff.org
M-SARA	Midwestern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	mhec.org/sara
McREL	Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning	mcrel.org
MHA	Mental Health America	mentalhealthamerica.net
MHEC	Midwestern Higher Education Compact	mhec.org
MHTTC	Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers	mhttcnetwork.org
MIRECC	Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center	mirecc.va.gov
MLDE	Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange	wiche.edu/longitudinaldataexchange
MPP	Master Property Program (MHEC/NEBHE/SREB/WICHE)	mhec.org/programs/master-property-program
MSA/CHE	Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education	middlestates.org
N-SARA	New England State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	nebhe.org/programs-overview/sara/overview/
NAAL	National Assessment of Adult Literacy	nces.ed.gov/naal
NACAC	National Association of College Admissions Counselors	nacacnet.org
NACIQI	National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity	sites.ed.gov/naciqi
NACOL	North American Council for Online Learning	nacol.org
NACUBO	National Association of College and University Business Officers	nacubo.org
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress	nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard
NAFEO	National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education	nafeo.org
NAFSA	An association of international educators	nafsa.org
NAICU	National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities	naicu.edu
NALEO	National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials	naleo.org
NANSLO	North American Network of Science Labs Online	http://wiche.edu/nanslo
NARMH	National Association for Rural Mental Health	narmh.org
NASASPS	National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools	nasasps.org
NASDTEC	National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification	nasdtec.net
NASFAA	National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators	nasfaa.org
NASH	National Association of System Heads	nashonline.org

NASMHPD	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors	nasmhpd.org
NASNTI	Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions Program	www2.ed.gov/programs/nasnti
NASPA	National Association of Student Personnel Administrators	naspa.org
NASSGAP	National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs	nassgap.org
NASW	National Association of Social Workers	socialworkers.org
NC-SARA	National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements	nc-sara.org
NCA-CASI	North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement	ncacihe.org
NCA	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools	northcentralassociation.org
NCAN	National College Access Network	collegeaccess.org
NCAT	The National Center for Academic Transformation	thencat.org
NCCC	National Consortium for College Completion	n/a
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics	nces.ed.gov
NCHEMS	National Center for Higher Education Management Systems	nchems.org
NCPPHE	National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education	www.highereducation.org
NCPR	National Center for Postsecondary Research	postsecondaryresearch.org
NCSL	National Conference of State Legislatures	ncsl.org
NEASC-CIHE	New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education	neasc.org
NEBHE	New England Board of Higher Education	nebhe.org
NGA	National Governors Association	nga.org
NIH	National Institutes of Health (HHS)	nih.gov
NILOA	National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment	learningoutcomeassessment.org
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health (HHS-NIH)	nimh.nih.gov
NLA/SLA	New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability	newleadershipalliance.org
NPEC	National Postsecondary Education Cooperative	nces.ed.gov/npec
NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rule Making	fcc.gov/general/rulemaking-fcc
NPSAS	National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey	nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas
NRHA	National Rural Health Association	ruralhealthweb.org
NSC	National Student Clearinghouse	studentclearinghouse.org
NSSE	National Survey on Student Engagement	nsse.indiana.edu
NWCCU	Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities	www.nwccu.org
OCE	Online Course Exchange (WICHE)	wiche.edu/oce
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	www.oecd.org
OER	Open Educational Resources	wikipedia.org/wiki/open_educational_resources
OLC	Online Learning Consortium	onlinelearningconsortium.org
PARCC	Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers	www.parcconline.com
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment	www.pisa.oecd.org
PESC	Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council	pesc.org
PPIC	Public Policy Institute of California	ppic.org
PSEP	Professional Student Exchange Program	wiche.edu/psep
RMAIR	Rocky Mountain Association for Institutional Research	rmair.org
S-SARA	Southern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	sreb.org/page/1740/state_authorization.html
SACSCOC	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges	sacscoc.org
SAN	State Authorization Network	wcetsan.wiche.edu
SBAC	Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium	www.smarterbalanced.org

SCUP	Society for College and University Planning	scup.org
SFARN	Student Financial Aid Research Network	pellinstitute.org/conference_SFARN.html
SHEEO	State Higher Education Executive Officers Association	sheeo.org

SHEEO Offices in the West:

ABOR	Arizona Board of Regents	abor.asu.edu
ACPE	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education	state.ak.us/acpe/acpe.html
CCHE	Colorado Commission on Higher Education	highered.colorado.gov/cche.html
CDHE	Colorado Department of Higher Education	highered.colorado.gov
ISBE	Idaho State Board of Education	www.boardofed.idaho.gov
MUS	Montana University System	mus.edu
NDUS	North Dakota University System	ndus.nodak.edu
NMC	Northern Marianas College	marianas.edu
NMHED	New Mexico Higher Education Department	hed.state.nm.us
NSHE	Nevada System of Higher Education	nevada.edu
OEIB	Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission	education.oregon.gov
SDBOR	South Dakota Board of Regents	ris.sdbor.edu
USBR	Utah State Board of Regents	utahsbr.edu
WASC	Washington Student Achievement Council	wsac.wa.gov
WCCC	Wyoming Community College Commission	commission.wcc.edu
UAS	University of Alaska System	alaska.edu
UH	University of Hawai'i System	hawaii.edu
UW	University of Wyoming	uwyo.edu

SHEPC	State Higher Education Policy Center	n/a
SHEPD	State Higher Education Policy Database	higheredpolicies.wiche.edu
SLDS	State Longitudinal Data System	nces.ed.gov/programs/slids/
SMHA	State Mental Health Authority	samhsa.gov
SONA	Student Organization of North America	conahec.org/conahec/sona
SPRC	Suicide Prevention Resource Center	sprc.org
SREB	Southern Regional Education Board	sreb.org
SREC	Southern Regional Electronic Campus	electroniccampus.org
SSA	Single State Agency for Substance Abuse	samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ssadirectory.pdf
SURA	Southeastern Universities Research Association	sura.org
SVA	Student Veterans of America	studentveterans.org
TCUs	Tribal Colleges and Universities	sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-colleges-and-universities
TBD	Transparency by Design	wcet.wiche.edu/advance/transparency-by-design
UCEA	University Professional & Continuing Education Association (formerly NUCEA)	ucea.org
UNCF	United Negro College Fund	uncf.org
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization	unesco.org
UPCEA	University Professional Continuing Education Association	upcea.edu
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	va.gov
VSA	Voluntary System of Accountability	voluntarysystem.org
W-SARA	Western State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	wiche.edu/sara
WACCAL	Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders	wiche.edu/alliance

WAGS	Western Association of Graduate Schools	wagsonline.org
WALF	Western Academic Leadership Forum	wiche.edu/forum
WASC-ACCJC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges	accjc.org
WASC-Sr	Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities	wascsenior.org/wasc
WCET	WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies	wcet.wiche.edu
WDQC	Workforce Data Quality Campaign	workforcedqc.org
WDQI	Workforce Data Quality Initiative	doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm
WGA	Western Governors' Association	westgov.org
WICHE	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education	wiche.edu
WIN	Western Institute of Nursing	ohsu.edu/son.win
WIOA	Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act	doleta.gov/wioa
WPSHA	Western Psychiatric State Hospital Association	wpsa.org
WRGP	Western Regional Graduate Program	wiche.edu/wrgp
WSDSG	Western States Decision Support Group (WICHE BH Data Analysis Group)	wiche.edu/mentalhealth/wsdsg
WUE	Western Undergraduate Exchange	wiche.edu/wue
YI	Young Invincibles	younginvincibles.org



Thank you for attending the May 2021 Commission meeting. As this is the third time in WICHE's history that we are meeting as a commission virtually, I would like to thank each of you for your continued participation. As we emerge on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am proud to say that WICHE has remained a reliable and trusted resource for our partners in higher education as we navigate challenges big and small. We will continue to do great things to promote student success, and we look forward to meeting again in person on November 4-5, 2021, in Portland, Oregon.

Stay healthy, be safe, and we will continue to move forward together with hope and perseverance.

-Demi Michelau

Working for the **West**

