



Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

Fall 2021
Virtual Commission Meeting

November 4, 2021

*WICHE Fall 2021 Virtual Commission Meeting
November 4, 2021*

Agenda

Thursday, November 4, 2021

11:45 a.m. - Noon MDT

Noon - 12:45 p.m. MDT [Tab 1]

12:45 - 1:00 p.m. MDT

1:00 - 1:45 p.m. MDT [Tab 2]

1:45 p.m. MDT

Executive Committee members join Zoom

Executive Committee Meeting



Approval of the September 16, 2021, Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

1-3

Discussion Items:

Overview of the November 2021 WICHE Commission Meeting Schedule

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (for consideration in May 2022)

Other Business

Break (all remaining Commissioners and staff to join Zoom meeting during this time)

Committee of the Whole – Call to Order

Call to Order: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Introduction of New Staff, and Guests



Approval of the May 18, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

2-3

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

Report of the Chair: Susan Anderson

2-12

Report of the President: Demarée Michelau

2-13

Recess until November 4, 2021, at 3:45 p.m. MDT

Committee Meeting Attendees Transferred to Breakout Rooms

1:45 - 2:00 p.m. MDT

Break (after the transfer to the breakout room, please mute your microphone and turn off your Zoom camera. Do not log out of the meeting.)

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. MDT [Tab 3]

Programs and Services Committee Meeting



Approval of the May 18, 2021, Programs and Services Committee Meeting Minutes 3-3

Introductions

Information Items:

Student Access Program Highlights 3-6

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative Outcomes 3-7

Academic Leadership Initiatives Updates 3-8

Collaborative Cost-Savings Initiatives Updates 3-9

Discussion Items:

Getting to Know WICHE and its Programs and Services Unit: A Conversation with Raymonda Burgman and the WICHE Commission

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Programs and Services Unit Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (for consideration in May 2022)

Other Business

Adjournment

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. MDT [Tab 4]

Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting



Approval of the May 18, 2021, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes 4-3



Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Adopt WICHE's Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy 4-7



Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Adopt a Resolution in Support of the State Role in State Authorization Reciprocity 4-10

Information Items:

Legislative Advisory Committee Update 4-13

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West, 2021-22

Report on Unit Activities:

Evaluation of Dual Credit

Open Educational Resources

American Indian Higher Education Consortium Knowledge Management Project

Discussion Items:

State Postsecondary Policy Priorities Post-Pandemic

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Unit Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (for consideration in May 2022)

Other Business

Adjournment

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. MDT [Tab 5]

Behavioral Health Special Committee Meeting

Information Items:

Program Spotlight – WICHE Psychology Internship Initiative 5-3

Update on Current Behavioral Health Program Projects

Annual Report Review

Budget Update

Discussion Items:

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Behavioral Health Program Unit Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (discussion only)

Other Business

Adjournment

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. MDT [Tab 6]

Technology-Enhanced Education (EdTech) Special Committee Meeting

Information Items:

Updates:

WCET Membership 6-3

New WCET website (wcet.wiche.edu)

Every Learner Everywhere

WCET State Authorization Network

Discussion Items:

Professional Licensure Notifications

WCET's State Authorization Network has worked with state agencies, professional associations, programmatic/professional accrediting agencies, and institutions to improve practice on this important consumer protection.

- Background on professional licensure notifications.
- How can WICHE Commissioners help to make the connections with regulators, state agencies, state professional associations, and others?

Cybersecurity Leadership Tabletop Exercise (LTTX): Invitation for States to Participate 6-5

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the WCET Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (discussion only)

Commissioner Sharing and Discussion

Other Business

Adjournment

3:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Break

3:45 - 5:00 p.m. MDT [Tab 7]

Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Reconvene Committee of the Whole: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Report and Recommended Action of the Executive Committee: Susan Anderson

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


 Report and Recommended Action of the Audit Committee: Cam Preus, Immediate Past WICHE Chair

Report and Recommended Action of the Programs and Services Committee: Les Purce, Committee Chair

Report and Recommended Action of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee: Christopher Cabaldon, Committee Chair

 Approval of WICHE's Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy [Tab 4]

 Adoption of a Resolution in Support of the State Role in State Authorization Reciprocity [Tab 4]

 Approval of a Location Change for the WICHE Commission Meeting, November 2022, Due to COVID-19 7-8

Report of the Legislative Advisory Committee

Discussion Item:

Update on WICHE's Budget 7-9

Information Items:

Non-General Fund Reserves for Fiscal Year 2022 7-12



Election of Chair and Vice Chair as Officers of the WICHE Commission for 2022

Remarks by Susan Anderson, Outgoing Chair

Remarks by Incoming Chair

Reminder to submit selection of 2022 committee members

Meeting Evaluation: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Nov2021CommMtg>

Other Business

Adjourn Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Closing Remarks by Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Adjournment

5:00 p.m. MDT

5:15 p.m. MDT

Reference [Tab 8]

WICHE Factsheet 8-3

WICHE FY 2022 Workplan 8-5

WICHE Commission 8-31

Future Commission Meeting Dates 8-35

Commission Committees 8-36

Legislative Advisory Committee 8-37

WICHE Staff 8-41

WICHE Organization Chart 8-43

Maps of WICHE Region 8-44

Higher Education Acronyms 8-45



Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 4, 2021
Noon - 12:45 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

Executive Committee members join the virtual **Executive Committee 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.

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

Agenda

Executive

Welcome

Programs

Policy

Behavioral Health

EdTech

Business

Reference

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Noon - 12:45 p.m. MDT

Executive Committee Meeting

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 September 16, 2021,
Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes 1-3

Discussion Items:

Overview of the November 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Workplan Activities for
FY 2023 (for consideration in May 2022)

Other Business

ACTION ITEM

WICHE Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes September 16, 2021 3:00 p.m. MDT

Commissioners Present

Susan Anderson (AK), Chair
Rita Cheng (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI), proxy
Rick Aman (ID)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND), proxy
Ben Cannon (OR), proxy
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Kimberly Dale (WY), proxy

Commissioners Absent

David Lassner (HI), Vice Chair
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Camille Preus (OR), Immediate Past Chair
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Additional Commissioners

Dave Lent (ID)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)

WICHE Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and 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
Russ Poulin, Executive Director of WCET and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education, WICHE
Shelley Plutto, Project Coordinator, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and Research
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research

Chair Susan Anderson welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. She asked Laura Ewing to call the roll of the Executive Committee and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the August 5, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the August 5, 2021, Executive Committee meeting minutes. Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the motion and Commissioner Rick Aman SECONDED. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

Approval to Offer MHEC's New META Telehealth Program to Institutions in the WICHE Region

At the request of Chair Anderson, Jere Mock presented details of the proposed collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and WICHE-region institutions joining the new META Telehealth Program.

Mock said that the program provides virtual mental health counseling services at pre-negotiated, affordable rates to students enrolled at public and private not-for-profit postsecondary institutions in the WICHE member states and territories. Through a competitive RFP process, MHEC recently awarded a sponsorship agreement to META Teletherapy that provides institutions and their students access to a nationwide network of licensed mental health providers via the META mobile app for private, secure chat, voice call, and video counseling sessions. MHEC has invited WICHE and the two other regional compacts to participate in extending the program to additional institutions.

Institutions that implement META can augment their existing mental health services or – for those institutions that do not currently offer such services – can initiate a new offering to support student health and wellness. The META Telehealth counseling offerings are available to students during the day or evening, and over weekends via a free, downloadable app. The META Teletherapy approach also enables institutions to provide additional support to remote students participating in courses online, regardless of their location, since the META network includes counselors nationwide.

Colleges and universities that subscribe to the program enable students to utilize META's services. Institutions pay an annual fee based on enrollment. Currently, 160 campuses throughout the U.S. are subscribed to META Teletherapy.

Chair Anderson called for discussion. Commissioner Antwan Jefferson asked whether there are any additional significant costs and if there are any downsides for WICHE to be in this partnership. Mock replied that there are no additional costs or downsides. She said that there are continuing reports of overwhelmed campus counseling centers, and this partnership would broaden student access to counseling services. The corporation behind the program is monitoring outcomes for one year, and if the program has a positive and worthwhile impact, it could last up to 10 years.

Commissioner Ann Millner commented that the program is consistent with WICHE's role of helping institutions, and that telehealth is a viable, accessible solution for meeting the increasing mental health needs of students.

Chair Anderson asked if there were any concerns about licensure portability. Mock said that she does not have information on specific state regulations, but to become an affiliated provider in the network, clinicians must have respective state licenses, and many have multiple state licenses.

Commissioner Lokken asked whether there are parameters to the types of mental health counseling that can be provided. Mock said she did not know of any limitations or areas of exclusion and that the program is compliant with HIPAA and other regulations. Commissioner Lokken said the program appears to be worthwhile for institutions and students.

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the new META Telehealth Program for institutions in the WICHE region. Commissioner Millner MOVED TO APPROVE the motion and Commissioner Larry Tidemann SECONDED. The motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEM **WICHE's Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy**

Chair Anderson introduced this discussion item, which President Michelau said continues to be refined and revised for consideration and potential adoption by the WICHE Commission. Staff presented proposed positions to the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee at the May 2021 meeting and have incorporated significant feedback from commissioners. Further revision will include the Executive Committee's feedback, and will be presented to the PAR Committee during the November 2021 Commission Meeting for final consideration. If the committee approves, it will recommend that the Commission adopt the policy. The action item will be voted on during the Committee of the Whole November 2021 business session.

President Michelau asked Patrick Lane to explain the details of the principles and positions. The positions that WICHE are currently operating under were last reviewed and adopted by the full Commission in 2018, and reflect WICHE's traditional approach; namely, identifying a small number of issue areas that are important to the WICHE region with the goal of making meaningful contributions to the policymaking process.

Lane said that the new proposed federal positions are based on a series of high-level general principles:

- 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 thus have a unique and critical role to play in the higher education policymaking process.
- Principle 2: Solutions to the nation's higher education challenges and problems should focus on how to support positive outcomes for all students – particularly those who have been poorly served by postsecondary education in the past and face significant barriers in the future. This principle includes protecting students and taxpayers from fraud.
- Principle 3: Higher-education policy decisions should be informed by data, rigorous research, and evidence.
- Principle 4: Higher education in the West has unique characteristics and requires intentional federal policymaking that recognizes the needs of the region.

Lane said these principles have informed 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 thoughtfully.
2. A state-federal partnership can enhance affordability and be part of the solution for improving access and success.
3. Higher education innovations to improve student outcomes should be supported but must ensure robust student protections.
4. Digital learning is critical for higher education and economic development in the 21st century.

Commissioner Ben Cannon suggested that the wording in position number two should be stronger and include a sense of urgency. The Western states need additional federal investment in postsecondary education to improve access and success as states are currently trying to meet postsecondary attainment targets without significant additional federal involvement in funding higher education.

Commissioner Bob Shireman commented that the language of position number three and the inference that innovation automatically leads to improved outcomes; that may not necessarily always be the case, he said. He cautioned to be careful with language that makes a presumption that consumer protection regulations may potentially get in the way of improving student outcomes. He did not have specific suggestions on how to change the wording but said he would be willing to work with Lane offline.

Lane said that WICHE can update the language of the positions and principles, and the document will be reviewed again by the PAR Committee before moving the action item to the Committee of the Whole in November for approval.

DISCUSSION ITEM

WICHE Commission Meeting and Agenda

President Michelau led a discussion about the upcoming in-person Commission Meeting in Portland, Ore. She said there have been some concerns about meeting in person due to the uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic. She reported the results of a survey that was sent to the Commission regarding meeting in person; 34 commissioners responded to the survey with 27 indicating that they would attend in person and five commissioners saying they would not.

Chair Anderson said she reviewed the COVID-19 stats in the WICHE states and territories, and they are concerning. As an example, the largest hospital in Alaska announced it is rationing care. Chair Anderson said that 50 percent of her staff members are dealing with some kind of COVID issue right now, and she personally tested positive for COVID-19 at the end of August. She said she was able to trace her contact to an outside work event where everyone was vaccinated, temperatures were taken at the entrance, and participants had to attest that they had no symptoms. She said she understands that many commissioners represent organizations and institutions that have in-person classes and functions (K-12, higher ed, etc.). She conveyed concerns about whether the Commission truly needed to meet face-to-face in November to accomplish its convening goals and objectives when there is so much uncertainty about the variant. She asked that the Executive Committee consider a virtual meeting instead of meeting in person in November.

The following comments and feedback were made by commissioners during the discussion:

- Idaho just activated crisis standards of care statewide.
- Several commissioners agreed that an in-person meeting would be wonderful for the collaboration and interaction, but the uncertainty of how the cases may be by November makes meeting in-person risky.
- The Commission could mandate mask-wearing and require vaccinations or negative COVID tests for attendees as well as set up the meeting space to be socially distanced. The CDC allows for people to take flights and there are no edicts in Oregon that would prevent meeting in Portland.
- From a public relations standpoint, WICHE could receive a negative response from constituents by having an in-person meeting with the current COVID-19 case rate.
- With the current and predicted caseload, Oregon's governor would not likely appear in person at the Commission Meeting at a time when the state has many ongoing COVID-related problems.
- When asked about the possibility of a hybrid meeting with both in-person and virtual attendance, President Michelau said it would cost an additional \$8,000 for a hybrid, interactive experience, and the outsourced vendor has not yet done an event the size of the Commission Meeting. The hotel's audio-visual vendor could provide a stream of the meeting for people to view, but an interactive meeting would be challenging. Several commissioners said that hybrid meetings are a frustrating and an ineffective experience for attendees.

There were questions about the hotel penalty WICHE will pay if the in-person meeting is canceled, and President Michelau said it would cost approximately \$31,000 to cancel the hotel contract.

Given the feedback from the Executive Committee, Chair Anderson requested a motion to change the November 2021 Commission Meeting to a virtual format, and noted that the Call to the Meeting would be delayed if the motion passed. President Michelau suggested including just the business section of the meeting, if virtual, and not including plenary sessions that would make the meeting longer.

Commissioner Tidemann MOVED TO CHANGE the November 2021 Commission Meeting to a virtual format and Commissioner Millner SECONDED. The motion passed.

President Michelau said she will revise the agenda to conform to a virtual Commission Meeting and the Call to the Meeting will go out as soon as possible.

INFORMATION ITEM Budget Update

President Michelau said there have not been any changes to the budget since the August 2021 Executive Committee meeting. The FY 2021 and August 2021 books are closed, and the current WICHE audit has been uneventful thus far. The Audit Committee will meet with the auditors in October to review and recommend approval of the audit for the November meeting. President Michelau added that five states have yet to pay FY 2022 dues. She said she will follow up with those states one-on-one, and she has no concerns with collecting the dues. Chair Anderson asked how long WICHE has been using this audit firm. President Michelau said the Audit Committee approved a three-year contract with RubinBrown in 2019, so presumably it will be looking for a new audit firm next year.

INFORMATION ITEM Update on the Vice President for Programs and Services Search

President Michelau recognized and thanked Jere Mock for her years of service with WICHE. The hiring process for Mock's replacement is complete and WICHE has selected Dr. Raymonda Burgman, who comes from the HERS Institute at the University of Denver, a leadership development program for women in higher education. Dr. Burgman has been an associate professor of economics at DePauw University and an associate provost at New College of Florida. She has a Ph.D. and a master's degree in economics. Dr. Burgman will start at WICHE on October 1, 2021.

Chair Anderson added that it was a large and diverse pool of applicants, which signifies that WICHE has a good reputation.

INFORMATION ITEM Brief Update on the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC)

Patrick Lane provided an update on the LAC meeting, which was scheduled for September 2021, but was pushed to November 2021 due to navigating the uncertainties of the pandemic. LAC members had been planning to meet in person, but because of the Executive Committee's action, they will most likely move to a virtual format as well. With a virtual meeting, they will plan for three afternoon sessions, with topics suggested by the Commission and LAC members. Among the topics under consideration are legislative approaches to responding to issues around race and ethnicity, freedom of speech, and critical race theory. Topics will be presented factually, followed by a facilitated discussion.

INFORMATION ITEM Update on the Status of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

Chair Anderson asked President Michelau to present the last item on the agenda, an update on the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). President Michelau began by outlining the basic structure and purpose of SARA, a voluntary agreement among states with the goal of establishing comparable standards for states and territories regulating postsecondary distance education across state lines. In 2012, the four Regional Compacts each had their own reciprocity agreements. In 2015, the compacts adopted, and NC-SARA ratified, the Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement also called the Unified Agreement (UA). States joined the agreement through participation in a Regional Compact. States that are not part of a Regional Compact are able to affiliate with one in order to join SARA. In the West, W-SARA renewals for state membership are approved by the WICHE Commission based on recommendations from the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC).

There are specific roles in SARA. Regional Compacts oversee the agreement in their region and are responsible for operating their respective RSCs. In the WICHE region, the RSC is composed of the State Portal Entity (SPE) representatives from each W-SARA participating state. The SPEs perform the day-to-day work of SARA. WICHE staff work closely with the W-SARA SPEs to ensure that SARA is functioning properly.

NC-SARA's role is to serve as the coordinating body for the agreement, ensuring inter-regional alignment. SARA's structure is designed to be a partnership among equals, with all of the partners intended to work "in concert" to ensure effective implementation of SARA. The term "in concert" was a very intentional choice when the UA was composed to describe how these five partners are to work together.

This item is on the agenda to make the Commission aware of some concerns regarding the operation of SARA, notably that NC-SARA is straying from the UA's governing principles – which is in conflict with what the states signed onto when they joined SARA. There has also been degradation of adequate representation of state voice on matters related to SARA policy.

President Michelau provided a supporting example. Current SARA policy gives the authority for RSCs to place policy proposals before the NC-SARA Board for consideration. NC-SARA has recently presented a proposal that effectively removes this authority for RSCs. WICHE has strongly opposed this change and the other three Regional Compacts have joined in expressing opposition to this proposal. Nonetheless, NC-SARA has repeatedly attempted to bring this change before the NC-SARA Board. As a voluntary agreement among states, states need to continue to have a voice. These actions are indicative of an organization that wants to be a centralized national organization leading the agreement unilaterally rather than "in concert" with the Regional Compacts.

This situation is being brought to the attention of the WICHE Executive Committee because it is not what WICHE originally believed it was joining. If the agreement's structure is to be revisited, it needs to be done out in the open and with input and consent from the states. This appears to be an execution issue on the part of NC-SARA and not a fundamental issue with the structure of SARA. In summary, President Michelau said, our perception is that NC-SARA is not abiding by the agreement in the way it was intended and there has been a gradual chipping away of the roles of states and compacts.

The Regional Compact presidents are aligned on these concerns. There have been many conversations between the Regional Compact presidents and the president of NC-SARA, some of which included an external facilitator, and the Regional Compact presidents have raised their concerns with the NC-SARA Board. The W-SARA RSC leadership has sent an email outlining these concerns to NC-SARA Board leadership and requested a meeting. This led to a productive discussion, but no specific follow-up action. More recently, a meeting was requested with the Regional Compact presidents, RSC leadership, and NC-SARA's president to focus on these concerns and to determine how they should be brought before the NC-SARA Board. However, NC-SARA staff replied that the upcoming NC-SARA Board meeting was the appropriate venue for these concerns.

Currently, RSC leadership from the four regions are collaborating on a letter requesting a meeting with the NC-SARA Board to determine next steps on how to resolve these issues. The next NC-SARA Board meeting will be held on October 28 and 29. It is anticipated that the fundamental issues will be discussed during this Board meeting.

These concerns are being brought to the attention of the WICHE Executive Committee so that it is aware of the concerns as well as to request the committee's feedback and to respond to members' questions.

Historically, the WICHE Commission has been very clear about maintaining the regional foundation for the agreement. WICHE's legal counsel believes the regional structure provides the legal basis for the agreement, by having states join through their Regional Compact. While others may have a different legal interpretation, we have not seen any alternate interpretations to date. President Michelau also asked if a centralized national agreement is needed, or whether the Commission wants to keep the governance structure as was stated in the UA. It is likely that the trend of less state input into policy will continue if changes are not made. President Michelau said that WICHE would work in the interest of what the states want.

Commissioner Barbara Damron thanked President Michelau for bringing these concerns to the attention of the WICHE Executive Committee, and noted that she was involved with the work that occurred at the state level to pass the law for New Mexico to join SARA. This was done with the assurance and understanding that they would work with WICHE. Commissioner Damron said she has grave concerns if the Regional Compacts are removed from SARA, and she does not want NC-SARA to become a stand-alone national organization. It would be detrimental for states to lose their voice, she

said, and it would require going back to legislators to tell them that SARA is no longer what they agreed to and put into law. The Regional Compacts need to stay in place, she said.

Commissioner Lokken agreed, and commented that the issues that have arisen bring focus to the fragility of the agreement. He also recognized the hard work that was put into persuading states to join SARA, which was based on the credibility that WICHE provides as the foundation. This could risk loss of the whole national structure, he said, and there would also likely be costs to the states.

Commissioner Millner noted that states will not want to lose their voice and they trust that they have their voice through WICHE. It is incredibly important to WICHE-region institutions and students to keep the structure that is currently in place, she said. If there were changes to the structure of SARA, there would be significant concern about loss of state voice.

Commissioner Colleen Sathre stated that Hawai'i would definitely support President Michelau in working to maintain the agreement as it was originally intended.

Commissioner Cannon noted in the chat box: "I 100% agree with Commissioner Damron. At its core, SARA requires states to give up some of their authority. In return, we make it easier for our institutions to provide distance education, and for our students to access it. If states lose their power to influence the SARA standards and oversight, Oregon would have to rethink our participation."

Chair Anderson concluded that President Michelau will have the support needed to continue to move forward. She is hopeful the joint letter from the Inter-regional RSC leadership will prompt the conversation needed.

President Michelau said this issue is consuming a lot of her time, but she will keep going with the knowledge that she has the support of the WICHE Executive Committee. She said that she may need to come back to the committee after the letter is sent by Inter-regional RSC leadership to the NC-SARA Board. A meeting may be needed to request support of the action of the W-SARA RSC. This may include reaffirming the UA through the Commission and possibly through the NC-SARA Board. President Michelau noted that this discussion had been very helpful. She thanked the Executive Committee and affirmed that she will continue to serve as the voice of states, and particularly for states in the West.

Other Business

Chair Anderson asked for any other business to be brought before the Committee. Commissioner Lokken mentioned the possibility of holding a special event at the Benson Hotel in Portland, Ore., to salvage the contract and money that would be lost from going to a virtual meeting in November. He suggested a one- or two-day strategic dialogue to refine some of WICHE's priorities for the 21st century.

Adjournment

Commissioner Millner MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Shireman SECONDED. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m. MDT.



Committee of the Whole Call to Order

Thursday, November 4, 2021
12:45 – 1:45 p.m. MDT
Videoconference

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Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

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Agenda

Executive

Welcome

Programs

Policy

Behavioral Health

EdTech

Business

Reference

Thursday, November 4, 2021

1:00 - 1:45 p.m. MDT

Committee of the Whole – Call to Order

Agenda

Call to Order: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Introduction of New Staff, and Guests



Approval of the May 18, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

2-3

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

Report of the Chair: Susan Anderson

2-12

Report of the President: Demarée Michelau

2-13

Recess until November 4, 2021, at 3:45 p.m. MDT

1:45 p.m. MDT

Committee Meeting Attendees Transferred to Breakout Rooms

ACTION ITEM

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes—Call to Order May 18, 2021

Commissioners Present

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

James Johnsen (AK)
Donn Liston (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Rita Cheng (AZ)
Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Angie Paccione (CO)
John Morton (HI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Matt Freeman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Melody Rose (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Jill Louters (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Ben Cannon (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)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
Don Bennett (WA)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Les Purce (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kim Dale (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Ellen Junn (CA)
Dave Lent (ID)
Mark Moores (NM)
Brian Maher (SD)
Patricia Jones (UT)
Ann Millner (UT)
David Jones (WY)

Guests

T.J. Bliss, Chief Academic Officer, Idaho State Board of
Education
Mildred Camacho, CNMI WICHE Certifying Officer
Mia Candelaria, New Mexico WICHE Certifying Officer
Jolyn Duenas-Tagabuel, Senior Legislative Assistant,
Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
James Glapa-Grossklag, Dean, Ed Tech, Learning Resources,
and Distance Learning, College of the Canyons
Bill Hogan, Principal/Consultant, Answer Creek Consulting
Louise Lynch, Arizona WICHE Certifying Officer
Jennifer Ouellette, Nevada WICHE Certifying Officer
Craig Vaske, Wyoming WICHE Certifying Officer and
Manager, Student Advising
Jonathan Lashley, Associate Chief Academic Officer, Idaho
State Board of Education

WICHE Staff

Candy Allen, Senior Graphic Designer
Suzanne Benally, Director, Native-Serving Institutions
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Genevieve Berry, Project Manager, MHTTC, Behavioral
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Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services
Margo Colancia, Director of Student Access Programs
Cherie Curtin, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Student
Access Programs, Programs and Services
Margo Colancia, Director of Student Access Programs,
Programs and Services
Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Janell Daly, Administrative Assistant III, Behavioral Health
Program
Van Davis, Policy and Planning Consultant, WCET, and
Principal, Foghlam Consulting
Liliana Diaz, Policy Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research
Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, Operations and Membership
Administration
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the
Commission
John Gomez, Director of Operations
Rebecca Helfand; Director of Research and Evaluation,
Behavioral Health Program

Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director of Operations and Leadership Initiatives, Programs and Services
Deb Kupfer, Senior Consultant, Behavioral Health Program
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Sarah Leibrandt, Director of Academic Leadership Initiatives
Sherri Artz Gilbert, Senior Director, Policy Innovations
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health Program & Co-Director, MHTTC
Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator, President's Office

Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and WICHE Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III, Policy Analysis and Research
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications
Tanya Spilovoy, Director, Open Policy, WCET
Kate Springsteen, Assistant Director of Student Access Programs
Emma Tilson, Technical Assistance Coordinator, Behavioral Health & Administrative Coordinator, Communications
Gary Toon, Desktop and Windows Administrator

Chair Susan Anderson called the meeting to order and welcomed WICHE Commissioners, guests, and staff. She asked Laura Ewing to call the roll of the WICHE Commission, and a quorum was established.

Chair Anderson introduced new Nevada WICHE Commissioners: Cathy Dinauer, Executive Director of the Nevada State Board of Nursing, and Melody Rose, Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the November 12, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Chair Anderson requested a motion from the floor to approve the November 12, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes. Commissioner Ray Holmberg MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED the motion. The motion passed..

Report of the Chair

Chair Anderson thanked the Commission for its confidence in and support for her in her current role as Chair. She said it is an honor to be part of an organization and the Commission that have effectively responded to the crisis of the pandemic and anticipated the changing needs of the WICHE region.

She recognized the collaborative efforts of the members of the Commission, partners, and staff that have all contributed to positioning WICHE well to emerge from the challenges of the pandemic better than before. She highlighted the following accomplishments during the first six months of her tenure as Chair:

- Held first-ever virtual officers' retreat, where pertinent topics were discussed that related to WICHE and the region, and how to best support President Michelau and her leadership through the challenges and opportunities ahead.
- Led the President's evaluation process to provide authentic and helpful feedback.
- Oversaw the renewal application process for SARA participants.
- Worked with the WICHE officers to support President Michelau and the WICHE staff in securing the membership of American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP). The RMI is on track to be a member of WICHE as of July 1, 2021.

Looking forward over the next six months, Chair Anderson stated that even though the pandemic continues to cause uncertainty, she is optimistic about the direction of WICHE. She looks forward to welcoming the RMI and preparing for the face-to-face meeting in November in Portland, Ore.

Report of the President

President Michelau began her report by thanking the WICHE staff for its hard work and contributions to the May 2021 meeting. She continued her staff recognition by acknowledging the great work and career of Jere Mock, Vice President of Programs and Services, who will be retiring in September 2021. Mock started at WICHE in 1988 under a three-month contract, and over her 33-year career at WICHE has made a profound and positive impact on students and their access to a quality education in the WICHE region.

The recognition of Mock's contributions to the WICHE region continued with heartfelt remarks about Mock's monumental work from Commissioners Cam Preus, Patricia Sullivan and Chair Anderson.

President Michelau went on to share milestones from November 2020 to May 2021:

- Preparation to welcome the Republic of the Marshall Islands into WICHE. This is a result of many hours of collaboration and work on the part of WICHE Commissioners, staff, and partners in the RMI. Commissioner Rodney Jacob commented on the significance of RMI's admission, and expressed his gratitude to the Commission for the efforts put forth to make this addition to the membership a reality. He said that the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and American Samoa are close to joining the membership. President Michelau gave a reminder that the Commission approved the membership of the RMI, Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau and American Samoa in November 2018, and it has been a concentrated and dedicated effort to get to the point of the RMI officially joining WICHE.
- In December 2020, WICHE released its 10th edition of *Knocking at the College Door*, a well-known and respected publication of projections of high school graduates. The latest *Knocking at the College Door* reports the number of high school graduates projected out to 2037. The full report, summary highlights, charted profiles by state and geographic area, and data are available for download on the WICHE website.
- The Interstate Passport Network®, a national program to streamline student transfer, continues to grow and recruit new members. Currently, the network has 59 two- and four-year institutions in 17 states signed on as members. ECMC Foundation recently awarded a grant to WICHE that will allow recruitment and enrollment of 20 additional institutions as members of the network. At least 10 of the new members will be Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). A portion of the grant allows for providing two-year membership fee waivers and personalized onboarding support for campuses that enroll large numbers of low-income, first-generation, and students of color who transfer enroute to a four-year degree.
- The Psychology Internship Program is expanding. WICHE is supporting programs in seven states and building one in the territory of Guam. Each program is locally directed by state behavioral health leadership, and WICHE contributes an administrative framework, APA accreditation, and other advisement and operational support for participating states, each of which has its own stand-alone website.

President Michelau reported the following priorities for regional engagement:

- Continuing to host peer videoconferences for SHEEOs and academic leaders.
- Continuing WCET's engagement of and convenings of forward-thinking interactive events for its members.
- Working with WICHE's philanthropic partners to support work that includes Interstate Passport, the Native American-Serving Nontribal institutions initiative, demographic projections, and efforts around mental health on campus.
- Building out the next phase of Every Learner Everywhere (ELE), which helps institutions implement innovative teaching and learning practices with a focus on increasing the success of first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color.

President Michelau continued to report on the following:

- The WICHE offices are open for staff to work in the office, but it is not a requirement.
- Building a portal for WICHE Commissioners to have access to Commission resources and meeting materials.
- Priorities over the next six months align with the WICHE mission and workplan that is specifically aimed at WICHE's five focus areas: finance and affordability, access and success, workforce and society, technology and innovation, and accountability. In addition, there will be a focus on regional engagement with travel and visits to advance WICHE's mission and stature in the region.

President Michelau concluded her report by extending gratitude to the Commission for its continued support to her and staff.

Adjournment

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 1:52 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. MDT on May 18, 2021.

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes – Business Session May 18, 2021

Commissioners Present

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

James Johnsen (AK)
Donn Liston (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Rita Cheng (AZ)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Angie Paccione (CO)
John Morton (HI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Matt Freeman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Melody Rose (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Jill Louters (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Ben Cannon (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)
Les Purce (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kim Dale (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Ellen Junn (CA)
Dave Lent (ID)
Mark Moores (NM)
Brian Maher (SD)
Patricia Jones (UT)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
David Jones (WY)

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James Glapa-Grossklag, Dean, Ed Tech, Learning Resources,
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Emma Tilson, Technical Assistance Coordinator, Behavioral Health, and Administrative Coordinator, Communications
Gary Toon, Desktop and Windows Administrator

Chair Susan Anderson reconvened the Committee of the Whole Business Session to order. The meeting moved to a full agenda of committee reports, action items, and information items.

Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Anderson reported that the Executive Committee approved the April 8, 2021, meeting minutes and after President Michelau gave an overview of the May 2021 Commission Meeting, the Committee went into closed session where it conducted the formal review of President Michelau's performance. This review included President Michelau's self-evaluation and an overview of her proposed FY 2022 goals.

Chair Anderson gave a summary of Executive Committee activity since November 2020. She said that the Committee approved holding the May 2021 meeting as a virtual meeting, and approved project work on FlexPath and the Quality Access Program. She noted that although the project work was approved for the Quality Access Program, funding was not made available and therefore the project was not pursued. Additional Committee actions included approving project work for the Compact for Faculty Diversity and approving SARA state renewals for New Mexico and Wyoming.

Chair Anderson spoke briefly about the performance evaluation for President Michelau, which included the President Performance Evaluation electronic survey that was disseminated to all Commissioners and gave them the opportunity to give feedback to President Michelau. Chair Anderson said that the supportive feedback was shared with President Michelau and the information was found to be helpful. Additionally, the 2022 presidential goals were discussed and approved by the Executive Committee.

Committee of the Whole Committee Reports

Programs and Services Committee Report

Commissioner Les Purce, chair of the Programs and Services Committee, reported that the committee unanimously approved an action item presented by Jere Mock, Vice President of Programs and Services, to approve the unit's FY 2022 workplan. The unit staff will focus on sustaining and expanding WICHE's foundational Student Access Programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional school levels, which collectively save students nearly a half billion dollars annually.

Chair Purce said the committee heard about the following initiatives handled by the unit:

- Interstate Passport, which has gained recognition as a national reform effort that is succeeding
- Numerous unit projects that aim to reduce attainment gaps and increase educational equity for marginalized student populations
- Fostering institutional collaborations and innovations
- Senior academic leader networking

- Several cost-saving programs offered in collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, which will be continued during the FY 2022 fiscal year.

Chair Purce reported that Margo Colancia, director of Student Access Programs, discussed the impact the pandemic has had on enrollment, including:

- Twenty-four fewer students were funded in the Professional Student Exchange Program due to states' fiscal constraints in the 2020-21 academic year – a four percent decrease over last year.
- Three states' funding levels are down (Colorado, Hawaii, and Nevada).
- Six states are sustaining support (Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming).
- Alaska and CNMI have not yet finalized their commitments.
- Overall, enrollment in the Western Undergraduate Exchange tops more than 43,000 students – dropping only 0.1 percent from the 2019-20 academic year.
- The Western Regional Graduate Program had graduate enrollments up 29 percent for academic year 2021.
- Overall, the cumulative tuition savings for these three WICHE programs during AY 2021 was \$450 million – a crucially important economic boost for students and their families during challenging economic times.

Chair Purce said that Suzanne Benally, a unit consultant, reported 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. The project has engaged 39 Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) 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.

During the grant period, WICHE provided planning grants to 11 of the participating NASNTIs to support their efforts to narrow attainment gaps, implement high-impact practices leading to greater student academic success, and program sustainability. An emergency 2020 Lumina grant enabled WICHE to provide additional funding to the campuses to support their transition to online learning and to improve online access for American Indian and Alaska Native students. Staff have also developed several research reports, webinars for participating campuses, and, more recently, evaluation and summative grant reports.

Finally, Chair Purce reported that Sarah Leibrandt, director of Academic Leadership Initiatives, provided the following updates:

- The University of Guam joined the Western Academic Leadership Forum (The Forum).
- The executive committees of the Forum and the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (The Alliance) are in the planning phases for spring 2022 face-to-face meetings.
- WICHE received \$800,000 in two grants in 2020-21 for the Interstate Passport Network, With the support of an ECMS Foundation grant, WICHE is adding 20 new institutions, including 10 Minority-Serving Institutions.
- WICHE and New Mexico State University, in collaboration with its branch campuses, recently received a one-year, \$300,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to bring more transfer student into its undergraduate engineering programs.

Before closing his report, Chair Purce gave a touching tribute to Jere Mock, who is retiring in September 2021. He recited a beautiful poem called “Hart Mountain Waltz.” Hart Mountain is the home of the National Antelope Refuge in the Warner Valley area of Oregon.

Policy Analysis and Research Committee Report

Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon, chair of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee, reported the highlights and actions of the committee's meeting, which included approving the addition of a project to the FY 2022 workplan that focuses on working with state governments to address alternative credential providers, and discussing and approving the Policy Analysis and Research unit's FY 2022 workplan.

In addition, he said, staff gave updates on the following:

- Implementing a new data management plan for WICHE
- Continued development of the unit's research database

- Significant interest in prior learning assessment throughout the WICHE region, based on the research project that WICHE concluded last December
- The development of potential positions on federal higher education policy. In the past, WICHE has identified issues that are of particular interest to states and territories in the West, and on which WICHE has substantial expertise. Additionally, WICHE continues to look for issues where there is generally broad agreement across the region. The diverse positions and principles under development will be presented to the Executive Committee in September 2021 and, following feedback from the PAR Committee, will be presented to the full Commission for approval at the November 2021 Commission Meeting.

The committee also reviewed and discussed the agenda for the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) to take place in Sacramento, Calif., on November 17-18, 2021. The agenda items discussed included COVID recovery, incorporating lessons from the pandemic in the “new normal,” and supporting students in their return to campus life. There was some concern raised that the later-than-usual dates (November 2021) will make it difficult to incorporate ideas from the meeting into legislation. Staff acknowledged this as a problem and will work to hold more virtual meetings with LAC members this summer to address such concerns.

Investment Committee Report

Commissioner Cam Preus reported on activity of the Investment Committee, beginning with a reminder that the committee was established in February 2020 to evaluate and assess WICHE’s investment procedures, review current investments, and make recommendations to the Commission.

She said the committee has reviewed the evolution of WICHE’s investment policy and procedures and discussed 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. Legal counsel feedback indicated that WICHE has a strong basis to support the position that it is not subject to regulation by each of its various members with regard to its investment decisions. However, the laws of various members reveal a clear legislative intent that public monies be invested in short-term, low-risk investment securities.

Legal counsel has provided additional context and some recommendations that could be considered by the WICHE Commission in light of their findings, and the next step is for the committee to consider those recommendations in detail. After that step, if appropriate, the committee will consider working with an investment professional to develop recommendations that may include some dedicated monies for investment purposes. Commissioner Preus said these thoughtful actions of the committee are taking longer than anticipated, but President Michelau wants to make sure that the Commission has complete information before making a recommendation.

The Investment Committee members are: Camille (Cam) Preus (OR), chair; Susan Anderson (AK); John Arnold (AZ); Jim Chavez (CO); and Rodney Jacob (Guam).

Committee of the Whole – Action and Discussion Items

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 Salary and Benefit Recommendations

President Michelau began with a reminder that staff salary increases are provided on the basis of performance, and that the Commission did not approve a salary increase for FY 2021 due to fiscal uncertainties relating to COVID-19. These uncertainties have changed for most of the WICHE region, and the economic outlook is not as bleak as it was in 2020. She reported that the WICHE budget is stable and the organization is in a position to afford the proposed modest salary increases for staff. She said that staff have performed at exceptional levels and are deserving of an increase.

Commissioner Bob Shireman MOVED TO APPROVE a salary increase for staff, and Commissioner Ray Holmberg SECONDED. During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that cost of living in Colorado supports the need for staff salary increases, and that the dedicated work of the staff is appreciated and certainly deserving of an increase. Commissioner Jim Chavez asked if any financial accommodations were made for staff in lieu of the lack of salary increases in the past fiscal year and President Michelau said the budget did allow for modest bonuses for staff. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

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

Chair Anderson asked Craig Milburn to present budget information for the action item. He walked the Commission through the budget sheets. He reported that FY 2021 will end with less revenue than budgeted for, due to less indirect funds on grants, and that is due to expenses correlated with less travel (because of the pandemic). Revenue is down by \$286,350 and expenses are down by \$344,814, giving \$620,001 toward reserves. This will increase the reserves balance to \$3.8 million for FY 2021. When discussing FY 2022, Milburn said there is no change in revenue from FY 2021. The projected excess revenue in FY 2022 is \$6,639.

Milburn further reported on the reserves budget. He pointed out that a line item that is new and different from past fiscal years is the President's Strategic Objectives, which is Commission-approved and budgeted for \$150,000. President Michelau said she will report on the President's Strategic Objectives fund at the Fall 2021 Commission Meeting.

Milburn reported that each unit is on track to finish FY 2021 in the black and that there are no concerns with the way the units will finish off the fiscal year.

Commissioner Fred Lokken asked if the budget is flexible enough to include travel in FY 2022. Milburn replied that anticipated travel is included in the budget. The primary expenditure that is not seen in the general fund is travel done by the Commission, and there was a lot of travel-related money saved in the category for Commission Meeting expenses. Milburn said that the budget does provide for the Commission to meet in person in FY 2022 as well as travel and meeting budgets for each of the programs.

Commissioner David Woolstenhulme MOVED TO APPROVE the annual operating budget and the general and non-general fund activities and Commissioner Lokken SECONDED. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of Dedicated Reserve Levels for Non-General Fund Activities

President Michelau gave an overview of the action item and reminded the Commission of the following details:

- In 2018, the WICHE Commission established policy around non-general fund reserves.
- This provides transparency and alignment for the non-general fund reserves with the general fund reserves.
- There are three buckets: minimum reserve, unanticipated expenses, and program development.

Just as the general fund requires and accumulates reserves, non-general fund accounts require and accumulate reserves as well. The WICHE 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 doing so
2. Unanticipated shortfalls, such as contract or grant overruns, bridge funding between contracts or grants, unanticipated salary or service cost adjustments, etc.
3. A reasonable amount for one-time unbudgeted program development activities, such as proposal writing, unique software requirements, unique meeting opportunities, etc.

President Michelau asked the Commissioners to refer to pages 7-21 through 7-23 of the May 2021 Commission Meeting agenda book for the dedicated reserve level dollar amounts for non-general fund activities, and she called for questions regarding the information provided. There were none.

Commissioner Fred Baldwin MOVED TO APPROVE dedicated reserve levels for non-general fund activities and Commissioner Lokken SECONDED. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the FY 2022 WICHE Workplan

Chair Anderson said that each committee reviewed and discussed each WICHE unit's workplan during their meetings held during this Commission Meeting. Commissioner Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the FY 2022 WICHE workplan and Commissioner Ray Holmberg SECONDED. The motion passed.

Other Business

Chair Anderson asked for other business. There was no additional business discussed.

Closing Remarks

Chair Anderson expressed appreciation to the entire WICHE team that played a role in the Commission Meeting. She acknowledged the time involved in attending such a lengthy virtual meeting, and added that the time invested is important to the work the Commission does on behalf of the WICHE region. She also asked for a final round of applause for Jere Mock, and participants wholeheartedly showed their appreciation.

Adjournment

Commissioner Antwan Jefferson MOVED TO ADJOURN the meeting and Commissioner Preus SECONDED. The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m. MDT.

Report of the Chair

Susan Anderson, Alaska

Wáa sá iyatee? That is “How are you?” in Tlingit. I know, for me, answering that question is not a straightforward one after this challenging time we have been through and continue to sort our way through. Even with all that has gone on, it has been my honor to serve as the chair of WICHE because we have learned so much during this time. It is my hope that as we eventually emerge from the pandemic, we are stronger, more resilient, and better prepared to make change for what comes next—to look seven generations forward. Changes in education are needed to make sure there are opportunities for everyone and that systems that encourage critical thinking and action move forward in the dynamic world we live in.

The world has changed and so has this organization. We have welcomed new members and new commissioners, while saying goodbye to others who have moved on to new adventures. The topics we are grappling with and learning from are different from those we were talking about before March 2020. What has remained the same, however, is the strength, resilience, and collegiality of this Commission. It is an honor to have partnered with you this past year in navigating COVID-19, and I'm humbled by what we have accomplished together as an organization during a very challenging time.

A few of the notable accomplishments include:

- Welcoming the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia into WICHE membership
- Producing research relevant to WICHE members, including projections of the future postsecondary pipeline and analyses of the impact of prior learning assessment on student outcomes
- Collaborating with partners to ensure the organization remains financially stable.

The important work that we are doing in the Pacific region will be felt by our communities, students, and families for generations to come. I am so pleased that we have welcomed the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia into WICHE, and I look forward to working with them and our other partners to increase access to programs and strengthen their economies and workforces to create thriving communities.

It is clear to me that our focus during this past difficult year on serving states, territories, and institutions has created new relationships and strengthened existing ones. WICHE is built upon collaboration and partnership, both of which are demonstrated through the work of the WICHE Commission. The expertise and knowledge exhibited by all of you is impressive beyond words and is the foundation for the positive impact that WICHE has had for decades and will continue to have for years to come.

As we move into this next phase of the COVID world, our students need us. I look forward to working with all of you to find new opportunities and effective ways to advance WICHE's mission and serve the students and families of the West. Gunalchéesh ax een yéi jeeneiyí. Thank you for working with me. It truly has been an honor to serve as WICHE's Chair.

Report of the President

Demarée Michelau

New WICHE Members

In July 2021, WICHE welcomed the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, both sovereign nations in free association, to WICHE as part of Pacific Islands membership.

New and Expanding Initiatives

Interstate Passport® – Interstate Passport is a national program that enables seamless block transfer of lower-division general education attainment based on an agreed upon set of learning outcomes rather than on specific courses and credits. The Interstate Passport Network has expanded to 66 institutions in 21 states.

Together with Veterans – Carried out through a collaboration between the Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) for Suicide Prevention, WICHE's Behavioral Health Program, local veterans, and other community stakeholders, Together with Veterans is a community-based suicide-prevention program for rural veterans. WICHE has received an additional \$540,000 to recruit another 12 communities, bringing the total to more than 30 communities over the next six to 12 months.

Every Learner Everywhere – Every Learner Everywhere, an initiative housed in WCET and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, continues to thrive. It aims to help postsecondary institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students; poverty-affected students; and first-generation students. Every Learner Everywhere has received supplemental funding to support COVID-19 response and is poised to begin directly building capacity in institutions through technical assistance, timely resources and toolkits, and ongoing analysis of institution practices and market trends.

Guam Behavioral Health Internship – The Behavioral Health Program has partnered with leaders in Guam to create the Guam Psychology Internship Consortium (Guam-PIC), which represents the collaborative effort of two agencies – Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC) in Tamuning and Guam's Department of Corrections (DOC) in Mangilao. These agencies share resources and faculty for the purpose of providing a diversified educational program for psychology interns, focusing on training in culturally relevant and competent services for Guam's diverse and often underserved population.

Open Educational Resources – WICHE and WCET are working with the other regional higher education compacts to increase access, affordability, and equity using Open Educational Resources (OER) by working with leaders, policymakers, higher education systems, institutions, and other organizations to scale the usage of high-quality OER resources to promote success for students. WICHE's activities focus on the Western region.

Financial Snapshot

Despite not implementing an increase in dues for FY 2022, WICHE's financial picture is positive, thanks to healthy indirect-cost recovery from our grants and contracts as well as reduced expenses, such as travel. Unfortunately, I have not been able to advance the work of the Investment Committee in the past six months. This delay is primarily due to an increased amount of my time being spent on activities related to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) as well as leading the search for WICHE's new Vice President, Programs and Services. I anticipate turning my focused attention back to this in the coming months.

Comings and Goings



Jere Mock retired from WICHE after 33 years. We thank her for her steadfast commitment and many contributions to WICHE and the region.



Raymonda Burgman, WICHE's Vice President, Programs and Services, has over 20 years of experience in a variety of public and independent higher education settings, including at two- and four-year institutions. Dr. Burgman comes to WICHE from the HERS Institute, a leadership development program for women headquartered in Denver, Colo., where she had served as director of programs and research since 2013. Prior to that role, she served as the associate provost at New College of Florida and associate professor of economics and management and special advisor to the president at DePauw University in Indiana. She has a Ph.D. and M.A. in economics from the University of Florida and a B.A. in economics from New College of Florida.



Todd Helvig, Director of Education and Training, Behavioral Health Program, earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Nova Southeastern University after completing his internship at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (UCHSC) in 2000. He began his clinical work as a psychologist at the Colorado Department of Corrections' Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center, and became the manager of behavioral health services for the Denver Women's Correctional Facility in 2004, where he supervised the work of correctional psychologists, social workers, and substance use counselors along with the UCHSC correctional-based internship program. He subsequently served as the Colorado Division of Parole's administrator of community behavioral health services and as director of business development for community behavioral health for the Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Network (ADMHN). While developing new business opportunities for ADMHN, Helvig was also building a private consulting and coaching practice. In 2018, his passion for nonprofit community behavioral health led him to CHARG Resource Center, where he served as executive director of a consumer-centric organization supporting social, emotional, and psychiatric programs and services for those managing chronic mental illness in Denver.



Van Davis, WCET's Chief Strategy Officer, leads the unit's strategy and planning work as well as coordinating its diversity, equity, and inclusion work and providing research and policy analysis assistance. In addition, as Service Design and Strategy Officer for Every Learner Everywhere, he leads the development and implementation of new services and professional learning opportunities for use at higher education institutions. Previously, he served as principal at Foghlam Consulting. Davis has spent over 20 years in higher education in a number of roles, including associate vice president at Blackboard Inc., director of innovation at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and faculty member and academic administrator at several universities. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in 20th century United States history with an emphasis on civil rights from Vanderbilt University and his B.A. in history from Southwestern University.

WICHE also welcomed nine new staff and 13 new interns to the team since May 2021.

Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

- Navigating COVID-19 and the recovery in the region
- Navigating COVID-19 in the office
- Staying connected in the region with limited travel
- Balancing my time on WICHE strategic priorities with internal demands
- Implementing advancements in Salesforce and Sharepoint with limited resources and staff capacity.



Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. MDT

Videoconference

(transfer to breakout room at 1:45 p.m.)

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

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. MDT

Programs and Services Committee Meeting

Committee Members

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

Donn Liston (AK)
 Kathleen Goepfinger (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: Raymonda Burgman, Vice President, Programs and Services
 Margo Colalancia, Director, Student Access Programs
 Sarah Leibrandt, Director, Academic Leadership Initiatives
 Demarée Michelau, President, WICHE
 Kate Springsteen, Assistant Director, Student Access Programs



Approval of the May 2021, Programs and Services Committee Meeting Minutes 3-3

Introductions: Les Purce

Information Items:

Student Access Program Highlights 3-6
 Native-Serving Institutions Initiative Outcomes 3-7
 Academic Leadership Initiatives Updates 3-8
 Collaborative Cost-Savings Initiatives Updates 3-9

Discussion Items:

Getting to Know WICHE and its Programs and Services Unit:
 A Conversation with Raymonda Burgman and the WICHE Commission



Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Programs and Services
Unit Workplan Activities for FY 2023

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Programs and Services Committee Minutes May 18, 2021

Committee Members Present:

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

Donn Liston (AK)
Kathleen Goepfing (AZ)
John Morton (HI)
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)

Committee Members Absent:

Ellen Junn (CA)
Dave Lent (ID)

Staff Present:

Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Suzanne Benally, Director, Native-Serving Nontribal
Institutions Initiative
Margo Colalancia, Director, Student Access Programs
Cherie Curtin, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Student
Access Programs
Kay Hulstrom, Manager, Institution Services
Sarah Leibrandt, Director, Academic Leadership Initiatives
Kate Springsteen, Assistant Director, Student Access
Programs

Guest Certifying Officers

Louise Lynch (AZ), State Certifying Officer and Director of
Student Exchange Programs, Arizona Board of Regents
Emma Fedorchuk (CO), Lead Finance Analyst, Colorado
Department of Higher Education
Mildred Camacho (CNMI), Certifying Officer Administrator,
CNMI Scholarship Office
Jennifer Ouellette (NV), Director of Programs, Governor's
Office of the Western Regional Education Compact for
the Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher
Education
Mia Candelaria (NM), Education Program Manager,
WICHE Certifying Officer, New Mexico Higher Education
Department
Craig Vaske (WY), Manager, Student Advising, WICHE
Certifying Officer, University of Wyoming

ACTION ITEM

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

Committee Chair Les Purce called the meeting to order. He referred the committee members to the first action item, which requests approval of the Programs and Services Committee minutes of November 12, 2020 (pages 3-3 through 3-5 of the May 2021 agenda book). There were no comments or questions. Commissioner Patricia Sullivan MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes and Commissioner Hilda Rosselli SECONDED the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2022 Workplan for the Programs and Services Unit

Jere Mock, vice president of Programs and Services, reviewed the FY 2022 Workplan components for her unit and asked the committee to approve and advance the workplan to the Committee of the Whole. Programs and Services staff will focus on sustaining and strengthening foundational initiatives, which include Student Access Programs, Academic Leadership Initiatives, and cost-savings programs.

Staff will continue to promote the Student Access Programs, including the Western Undergraduate Exchange, Western Regional Graduate Program, and Professional Student Exchange Program. More than 45,000 students currently benefit from these programs across the WICHE region. These programs save students nearly a half billion dollars annually. Staff produce an annual publication, *Student Access Programs: By the Numbers*, that details participation levels by state and the associated tuition savings for students. The WICHE website also provides tools for students to learn about the various programs offered by participating institutions and the associated tuition savings they could benefit from.

The Programs and Services Unit is currently in the final month of a three-year Lumina Foundation grant that has supported efforts to work with Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) throughout the U.S. to improve the educational attainment rates of American Indian/Alaska Native students. Staff will soon seek additional foundation funding to sustain and strengthen the institutional networking that has developed as a result of these efforts. The participating institutions want to continue their engagement in activities that may include convening future national summits. Two national summits were held during the first two years of the initiative. The July 2020 Summit was cancelled due to the pandemic. Future plans also could include convening a series of regional summits that would bring together leaders of NASNTIs and Tribal Colleges, as well as the education directors of several Tribal Nations, and leaders of other entities and organizations serving this population of students. The longer-term goal is to facilitate the development of a national association or network of these institutions.

Another important element of Programs and Services' workplan centers on Academic Leadership Initiatives. Staff continue to make strong progress in growing the Interstate Passport Network® that is based at WICHE. Interstate Passport is a national program to streamline student transfer. Currently, 58 two- and four-year institutions in 17 states are members of this expanding national network. ECMC Foundation recently awarded a grant to WICHE that will enable staff to recruit and enroll 20 additional institutions as members of the network, and at least 10 of those new members will be minority-serving institutions. In the next fiscal year, staff will continue to focus on growing the network to include more colleges and universities. Staff are also working to market the program more broadly to better acquaint advisors and registrars at colleges and universities, as well as high school counselors, on how their students can earn a Passport to expand and streamline their transfer pathways.

Academic Leadership Initiatives also encompass the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance), the Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum), and the Western Academic Leadership Academy. These initiatives span the two- and four-year sectors and are funded through annual membership dues. They enable provosts, vice presidents of academic affairs, and chief academic officers in state higher education agencies throughout the West to network and collaborate on initiatives related to key higher education issues. Fifty-eight four-year institutions and systems are members of the Forum, and 81 two-year campuses and systems are members of the Alliance.

Programs and Services will also continue its collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), as well as with the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and the Southern Regional Educational 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 \$100 billion in total insured values. Twenty-seven institutions and academic centers in the WICHE region participate. WICHE also offers 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 the WICHE region. Last fiscal year, some 1,600 entities in the WICHE region benefited from volume purchasing discounts on an array of hardware and software offerings.

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. Largely due to shifting foundation and federal funding priorities and other factors, WICHE has not been engaged in these programs for the past five years. A renewed interest by leaders of the regional compacts has staff exploring how WICHE might collaborate again on these efforts. In the past, efforts have involved seeking funding for teaching and research fellowships for Ph.D. students of color, recruiting faculty mentors for the students, creating a directory of scholars for networking and recruiting, and bringing them all together for an annual symposium to share their stories, ambitions, and challenges. The WICHE Executive Committee has approved an action item enabling staff to work with the other compacts on seeking funding for this initiative.

Commissioner Sullivan MOVED TO APPROVE the workplan. Commissioner John Morton SECONDED the motion. The motion TO APPROVE THE WORKPLAN passed unanimously.

Programs and Services Updates

Margo Colalancia, director of Student Access Programs, discussed the impact of the pandemic on enrollments in WICHE's regional programs. Twenty-four fewer students (down from 624) were funded in the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) due to states' fiscal constraints in the 2020-21 academic year, a four percent decrease from last year. The situation appears to be looking better for new students going forward. While three states' funding levels are down – in CO, HI, and NV – six states are sustaining support – AZ, MT, NM, ND, UT, and WY. AK and CNMI have not yet finalized their commitments.

Overall, enrollment in the Western Undergraduate Exchange – 42,481 students – dropped only 0.1 percent compared to last academic year, as compared to a 4.4 percent decline nationally (as reported by the National Student Clearinghouse). The Western Regional Graduate Program bucked the downward COVID-19 trend with graduate enrollments up 29 percent for AY 2020. Nationally, graduate enrollments are up by only 4.6 percent. Dixie State University is WRGP's newest partner. Overall, the cumulative tuition savings for these three WICHE programs during the 2020-21 academic year was \$460 million – a crucially important economic boost for students and their families.

Colalancia recognized WICHE's certifying officers for their tireless work and noted that without their dedication to serve students, WICHE would not have Student Access Programs.

WICHE's Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council met virtually on April 30, 2021. Doctor of Veterinary Medicine applications were up 19 percent nationally for the entering class of 2021, and Colorado State University's applicant pool increased by 46 percent; they attribute the surge to the fact that they did not require the GRE (Graduate Record Examinations) nor interviews for the entering class of fall 2021. Also, pet ownership increased during the pandemic, and veterinary practices are busy and are hiring. Washington State University's new dean, Dr. Dori Borjesson, started in July 2020. The University of Arizona has a new three-year accelerated program and enrolled its first class in fall 2020.

Suzanne Benally reported 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 \$1.09 million Lumina Foundation grant. The project engages Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) 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 and that number has increased to 39 currently.

During the grant period, WICHE provided planning grants to 11 of the NASNTIs to support their efforts to narrow attainment gaps, implement high-impact practices leading to greater student academic success, and establish program sustainability. An emergency 2020 Lumina grant enabled WICHE to provide additional funding to the campuses to support their transition to online learning and to improve online access for American Indian and Alaska Native students. WICHE staff have also developed several research reports, webinars for participating campuses, and, more recently, evaluation and summative grant reports.

Sarah Leibrandt, the new director of Academic Leadership Initiatives, gave an update on three WICHE networks that foster innovation and resource sharing, including the Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum). As of May 2021, the Forum includes 58 members -- 49 institutions represented by their provosts and vice provosts, and nine system and state agencies represented by their chief academic officers. The University of Guam joined the Forum this spring. The second network is the 81-member Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance), representing 72 institutions and nine systems. The Alliance engages two-year institution and system chief academic administrators. Both the Forum and Alliance executive committees are in the planning phases for spring 2022 face-to-face annual meetings.

The third network, Interstate Passport[®], is a nationwide program conceived of by leaders of the Alliance and Forum several years ago. It is designed to overcome barriers that cause students to lose time and money in the transfer process. The Interstate Passport Network addresses those longstanding issues by facilitating the block transfer of lower-division general education attainment based on learning outcomes, rather than specific courses. Currently, 58 institutions in 17 states are members. WICHE received \$800,000 in two grants in 2020-21 to expand the network. With an ECMC Foundation grant, WICHE is adding 20 new institutions, including 10 minority-serving institutions. Additionally, WICHE and New Mexico State University, in collaboration with its branch campuses, received a \$300,000 one-year grant from the National Science Foundation to bring more transfer students into its undergraduate engineering programs.

Adjournment

As there was no other business, Chair Purce adjourned the committee meeting.

Information Items

Student Access Program Highlights

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

In the 2020-21 academic year, 42,481 Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) students and their families saved \$411.7 million by paying 150 percent of the enrolling institution's resident tuition, or less. The average student saved \$9,050. A total of 163 two- and four-year institutions participate in WUE.

Despite the uncertainties fueled by COVID-19, WUE enrollment numbers saw only a slight drop of 0.1 percent from the year prior. Final WUE enrollment numbers and savings estimates for 2021-22 will be available in late November. According to our participating institutions' profiles, only 13 require an ACT or SAT test score, and 45 institutions list a high school GPA minimum. Among those, some may require a test score or a GPA minimum, but not both.

The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus will join WUE in fall 2021 and is offering two pathways to a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN). One is a 24-month option, designed for students who may or may not have earned a degree in the past, with admission offered once a year in the summer. It will also offer an accelerated BSN which is a full-time, 12-month program option with admission offered once a year in the spring. Applicants for the accelerated program must have earned a bachelor's degree prior to beginning the program. Many institutions do not offer their nursing degrees at the WUE discounted rate, so Anschutz's participation in WUE is an exceptional opportunity for nonresident students from other WICHE member states.

Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)

The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) allows graduate certificate, master's, and doctoral students who are residents of WICHE states and territories to affordably enroll in hundreds of graduate programs at 63 public institutions in the West. In academic year 2020-21, 2,441 students saved an estimated \$35 million in tuition through WRGP, marking a 28 percent increase in WRGP enrollment from the prior year. Final WRGP enrollment numbers and savings estimates for 2021-22 will be available in late November. Most WRGP institutions charge their students resident tuition rates. However, 10 institutions now charge 150 percent of resident tuition and one charges 110 percent.

Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)

Through PSEP, WICHE has provided Western residents with affordable access to professional education since the early 1950s; more than 15,300 practitioners have benefited. A student's home state legislature appropriates funds to buy down tuition costs in the fields the state or territory elects to support. Students selected for PSEP support can choose from some 135 fully accredited programs in 10 healthcare fields at more than 60 participating public and private institutions.

In the 2020-21 academic year, 567 students were supported with an investment of nearly \$14 million. As of this writing, PSEP funding assignments for all states have not been finalized, WICHE staff anticipate a moderate decline in the number of students once again for 2021-22. Final PSEP enrollment numbers for 2021-22 will be available in late November. Guam is actively pursuing future participation in PSEP.

Certifying Officers' May 2022 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 that do not have a state-level higher education agency. In states/territories that fund students through PSEP, certifying officers review prospective students' applications for "certification" to determine whether they meet residency criteria and are eligible to be considered for support. Certifying officers administer all aspects of PSEP for their residents and serve as state/territory liaisons for the WUE and WRGP programs. Certifying officers will meet just prior to the WICHE Commission meeting in South Dakota on May 16-17, 2022.

WICHE June 2022 Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council Meeting

The council provides a forum for communication and a 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 Executive Committee member on the WICHE Commission 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 and the director of WICHE's Student Access Programs are ex officio, nonvoting members. On June 7-9, 2022, the council will meet in Sedona, Ariz., where the meeting will be hosted by Midwestern University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Native-Serving Institutions Initiative Outcomes

Recognizing the vital role that Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs) play in meeting the educational needs of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students, WICHE initiated its "Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice" initiative in December 2017. The aim was to engage NASNTIs in a new consortium through networking and other strategies to support their efforts to increase AI/AN students' attainment rates and to formulate collective strategies to drive supportive policy implementation at the state and federal levels. The initiative was supported by \$1.09 million in two grants from Lumina Foundation through May 31, 2021.

The project promoted networking among NASNTIs through two national summits held in Denver and hosted by Lumina Foundation. The summits provided a unique opportunity for NASNTI teams, scholars, national education organization leaders, tribal education representatives, policymakers and others to come together to share practices and lessons learned; hear from nationally recognized Native scholars and speakers on topics relevant to AI/AN postsecondary success; and learn about the broader national state and federal legislative policy matters that impact NASNTIs. In addition, 11 campuses received planning grants to improve institution-wide responsiveness to Native student participation; connect the retention and persistence of Native students to meaningful and ongoing relationships with students, their families, cultures, and tribal nations; and adapt high-impact practices to the cultural values and identities of Native students. Regional summits planned in the spring and fall of 2020, beginning with a Four Corners Regional Summit to be hosted by Fort Lewis College, were cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. WICHE secured an emergency grant from Lumina Foundation and redeployed some project resources initially intended to support the regional summits to provide technology grants to the grantee campuses to support AI/AN students' access to online courses and provide virtual student-support services.

The initiative also responded to limited literature about NASNTIs, the AI/AN students they serve, and the unique practices they have adopted to promote AI/AN student attainment by undertaking several research studies and policy analyses for dissemination to NASNTIs, the education policy community, and the broader higher education community. These included: 1) Institutional Baseline Data Reports and updates (2018, 2019, 2020); 2) the American Council on Education Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2020 Supplement Essay on *Bridging the Gap in Native American Attainment in Higher Education: The Role of Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions*; 3) a policy brief, *Better Data for Supporting American Indian/Alaska Native Students*; 4) a case study report, *Supporting the Attainment of Native American Students in Higher Education: Approaches Taken by Five Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions*; and 5) a report entitled *An Analysis of Title III Funding in Support of Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions' Strengthening of American Indian/Alaska Native Postsecondary Attainment*. These can be found at wiche.edu/publications.

Based on WICHE staff's experience leading this initiative and partnering with NASNTIs, key findings of the initiative included:

- The annual National NASNTI Summits were highly valued for bringing together NASNTIs and strengthening collective institutional identity, recognition, and awareness. The summits provided a novel opportunity for NASNTIs to network, share strategies, and learn from one another.
- Networking is key to fostering NASNTI capacity building to support Native student attainment. Through formal and informal WICHE facilitation, institutional leaders, administrators, and faculty connected with one another by sharing information, discussing common problems, and advising one another on potential strategies to overcome obstacles.
- Strengthening NASNTI capacity to promote Native student attainment heavily relies on external funding provided by U.S. Department of Education Title III grants. The WICHE initiative provided modest additional grant funding for awardees to enhance existing strategies or develop new, culturally responsive high-impact practices. However, comprehensive planning and implementation to create systemic change to bolster AI/AN student attainment at NASNTIs and other higher education institutions would require significantly more grant funding.
- Many NASNTIs are rural institutions located close to Tribal Nations and serve Native students from these tribes. As rural institutions they often face enrollment and state funding challenges that impact efforts to sustain and extend capacity for serving Native students.
- Strengthening and building positive and mutually beneficial relationships with tribes is essential to advancing Native student attainment. Some NASNTIs have developed formal MOU relationships with tribes, while others have more-informal relationships with tribes. At the same time, NASNTIs may need support in forging and sustaining strategic relationships with tribes.

- Each institution has unique context, mission, relationships, and histories that inform the campus culture as well as its culture of change. The goal of strengthening Native student attainment needs both internal commitments and external partnerships.
- Presidential leadership is required to expand institutional capacity for Native student attainment, influence state and federal policy, build and sustain tribal relationships, and strengthen institutional and AI/AN student visibility. The NASNTI presidents' efforts to mobilize advocacy for the CARES Act funding demonstrated their commitment and the influence they can have in future coordinated institutional advocacy and support for Native student attainment.

WICHE's work with NASNTIs cultivated further interest in developing and implementing culturally responsive practices to advance AI/AN student attainment; creating well-structured regional pipelines and agreements with education communities and tribes for Native student pathways; building inclusive campus environments; and supporting NASNTIs in systemic, transformative change to benefit AI/AN students and their families and tribal communities. Notably, since the beginning of WICHE's project, NASNTIs have increased from 24 to 39 higher education institutions, which further indicates these institutions' crucial niche in the AI/AN higher education landscape.

Academic Leadership Initiatives Update

Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum)

The 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. Currently, the forum comprises 59 members (50 institutions and 9 systems). The Forum's newest members in 2021 include the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, the University of Guam, and the Idaho State Board of Education. For more information, see wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-academic-leadership-forum/.

Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance)

The 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. The Alliance comprises 82 members (73 institutions and 9 systems). In summer 2021, the Alliance welcomed Dakota College at Bottineau as its newest member. For more information, see wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-alliance-of-community-college-academic-leaders/.

The Forum and Alliance host annual meetings each spring. While their respective annual meetings were again canceled due to the pandemic, the executive committees continued to host virtual meetings throughout the year with session topics that responded to COVID and the impact of the pandemic on college campuses. Topics included "Keeping an Eye on the Prize: Equity and Inclusion During COVID," "Weathering the COVID-19 Economic Superstorm," "Smoothing the Bumps in the Road: How to Better Articulate Articulation," "Supporting Rural Colleges through Collaborations," "Campus Wellness in the COVID Era: Practical Tips and Tools," and "Campus and Community Collaborating on COVID-19." For more information, see wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-alliance-of-community-college-academic-leaders/meetings/.

The executive committees of the Alliance and Forum each year recognize a winning submission to the [Academic Leaders Toolkit](#) at their respective annual meetings. The toolkit, a joint project of the Forum and Alliance, is a peer-reviewed repository of programs and practices that have been successfully deployed in postsecondary institutions around the West. Forum and Alliance members are able to access the toolkit throughout the year. In a year when the pandemic compelled institution faculty and staff to innovate and change their traditional model of delivery, the executive committees for the Forum and the Alliance were thrilled to recognize institutions for that work.

The Forum committee selected University of Nevada, Reno, as the winner for development of the NevadaFIT Bootcamps for Academic Success, geared toward first-year student success. The Alliance committee selected Red Rocks Community College in Lakewood, Colo., as the winner for its submission, "Building Bridges in the Dark: Actions that Held Together a Theater Department in a Pandemic."

Western Academic Leadership Academy

The Academy, whose participants are nominated by members of the Forum, is designed to expand 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. The Academy's faculty consists of WICHE-region provosts and chief academic officers who are active in the Forum. While the Academy was canceled in 2020-21 due to the pandemic, the sixth cohort of participants was selected in February 2021 and included several candidates who were not able to participate in 2020-21. Academy faculty, guest

speakers, and participants participated in a two-day virtual Academy in July 2021. For more information, see www.wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-academic-leadership-forum/western-academic-leadership-academy/.

Interstate Passport®

Interstate Passport is a national network of institutions that enables block transfer of students' lower-division general education attainment based on learning outcomes. Its primary purpose is to benefit students by simplifying transfer and reducing repetition of learning already achieved, thus saving them time and money and fostering their successful degree completion. Currently in its fifth year of operation, the network includes 66 institutions spanning 20 states, including all of the public two- and four-year institutions in four of those states. To date, 49,000 students have earned a Passport. Students who earn a Passport and transfer to another network-member institution need not repeat courses to meet that institution's lower-division general education requirements. Multiple quality assurance measures are embedded in the Interstate Passport program. Students must earn a grade of C or better in every course counted toward a Passport that encompasses nine knowledge and skill areas. Also, the academic progress of students who transfer with a Passport to other network-member institutions is tracked through the National Student Clearinghouse and reported to students' sending institutions for use in continuous improvement and sustainability efforts. For more information, see interstatepassport.wiche.edu/.

In November 2020, WICHE received a two-year, \$500,000 grant as part of ECMC's Catalyzing Transfer Initiative to enable staff to recruit and enroll 20 additional member institutions in the Interstate Passport Network, including at least 10 Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). The grant supports two-year membership fee waivers for the 20 new member institutions and allows staff to expand capacity to support new member institutions through the implementation process and ongoing administration. As of September 2021, 15 institutions have signed letters of intent to join the network with support from the grant. WICHE is thrilled to welcome several Native-Serving Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and a Tribal College to the network.

In March 2021, WICHE and New Mexico State University (NMSU), in collaboration with its branch community colleges, received a one-year, \$300,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to bring more undergraduate transfer students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors to graduation and, ultimately, the job market. WICHE and NMSU are testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into undergraduate engineering programs and have hosted the first of four advisory board meetings.

WICHE Online Course Exchange (OCE)

OCE continues to offer consortia the ability to seamlessly enroll students, through their home institutions, in online courses offered by other two- and four-year institutions. The Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus) and New Mexico SunPath consortia contracted with WICHE for use of its robust OCE platform, designed to support the exchange of online course enrollments to provide more options for students and optimize use of institutional resources. Beginning in the 2021-22 academic year, NEXus is the only consortia participating in OCE as several community colleges in the SunPath began taking advantage of another online course-sharing program, administered by Acadeum. For more information, see wiche.edu/tuition-savings/online-course-exchange/.

Collaborative Cost-Sharing Initiatives Update

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) recently announced several new competitively awarded contracts as part of its MHECare, MHECTech, and cybersecurity cost-saving initiatives. WICHE partners with MHEC to leverage the benefits and potential volume of the region's purchasing power, while saving institutions and other entities time and money by simplifying the procurement process. All of the contracts are available to be utilized for the benefit of WICHE-region higher education institutions of all sizes, K-12 districts, and state and local governmental agencies as well as to those entities in the New England Board of Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board regions.

MHECare

MHECare provides campuses that offer a school-sponsored student health insurance plan the flexibility to tailor injury and sickness plans specifically for domestic and international students with national carrier UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR). Emergency medical travel services, vision and dental plans, and insurance for certain groups – like study abroad and special summer programs – also are available from UHCSR. MHEC utilized a competitive bid process to select UHCSR, a carrier that is Affordable Care Act-compliant and fully equipped to respond rapidly to changes in regulations.

A new offering under the MHECare umbrella provides mental health counseling services at a pre-negotiated, affordable rate to students enrolled at public and private not-for-profit postsecondary institutions in MHEC's, NEBHE's, SREB's, and WICHE's member states and territories. Through a competitive RFP process, MHEC awarded a sponsorship agreement to **META Teletherapy** that provides institutions and their students with access to a nationwide network of licensed mental health providers. Institutions that implement META augment their mental health services by improving their student-to-counselor ratio and expanding available times for counseling to include days, evenings, and weekends. Standard pricing and terms apply for all colleges and universities that subscribe and pay an annual fee based on the number of enrolled students.

Students may choose to connect with school counselors or select a META teletherapist from among the 600 providers through a mobile app for private, secure video, audio, and chat therapy sessions. The providers represent multiple ethnicities, faiths, and languages. Most META mental health providers hold multiple state licenses, allowing students more choices within a diverse marketplace of counselors. Through the app, students can filter counselors by gender, language, ethnicity, therapy style, and more. Students can see providers who are currently available for instant connection, or leave a message to schedule sessions for a later time. META providers average a response time to initial messages from students in under six hours. The META Teletherapy approach also enables institutions to provide additional support to remote students participating in courses online, regardless of location.

The WICHE Executive Committee on September 16 approved WICHE's collaboration with MHEC to offer the META Teletherapy to institutions in the WICHE region.

MHECtech

MHEC's Technologies Committee and staff follow extensive competitive procurement processes to select 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. The mhectech.org website provides details on vendors and eligible entities and links to vendor contracts.

MHEC recently announced a competitively awarded contract to Dell Technologies for innovative and cost-effective virtualization and data center modernization solutions to assist higher education institutions of all sizes, K-12 districts, and state and local governments throughout 47 states to transition their infrastructure to data center and networks across varied public and private cloud providers. This nationally available cooperative master agreement provides access to a wide range of tiered discounts for hardware, services, managed services, training, and financing solutions from Dell Financial Services. The contract offers comprehensive end-to-end solutions with the flexibility to choose from the full line of hardware, software, and as-a-service offerings related to networks, wireless, server, and storage options. The initial term of the Dell Technologies contract runs through February 2024 with options to renew for an additional four years.

Master Property Program

The Master Property Program (MPP) was developed by MHEC in 1994 to broaden property insurance coverage, reduce program costs, and encourage improved asset-protection strategies for two- and four-year and not-for-profit colleges and universities. The program's mission is to be the premier higher education-related property insurance program focused on strategic growth, program stability, and member value for the regional compacts. Institutions and systems in the West taking part in the program following the July 1, 2021, renewal process include 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), Willamette University (Oregon), Westminster College (Utah), Seattle Pacific University (Washington), Whitman College (Washington), and the University of Wyoming. One of the many benefits of the MPP is the existence of the loss fund (captive) layer within the program structure that offers the potential for institutions and systems to receive a dividend when an institution's and the program's loss experience is favorable.

The MPP is governed by a committee consisting of risk management 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.

Cyber Insurance

The MHEC Cyber Insurance initiative was established in 2018 to provide an option to institutions in the four regional compact regions to purchase cyber insurance coverage tailored to deliver the right mix of risk transfer and advisory solutions for institutions to assess, manage, and respond to their risk. Higher education institutions continue to face significant and increasing cyber threats due to the valuable information stored on their networks and challenges for

administrators to effectively secure the networks because of the size of the networks and the need for multiple campus stakeholders to access the information.

Marsh USA Inc. serves as the program administrator for both the MPP and the MHEC Cyber Insurance program and now offers institutions the flexibility of insurance carrier choice, the broadest coverage possible, and access to policy limits that meet institutional coverage needs. The Marsh approach analyzes institutions' threat environments, assesses the significance of their vulnerabilities in security controls, determines how much financial exposure institutions face, and can also provide benchmarking on how much cyber coverage institutions of similar risk are buying.



Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. MDT

Videoconference

(transfer to breakout room at 1:45 p.m.)

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

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 - 3:30 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
 Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III, Policy Analysis and Research
 Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives and State Authorization, Policy Analysis and Research

- 
Approval of the May 18, 2021, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes
4-3
- 
Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Adopt WICHE's Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy
4-7
- 
Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Adopt a Resolution in Support of the State Role in State Authorization Reciprocity
4-10

Information Items:

Legislative Advisory Committee Update 4-13

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West, 2021-22

Report on Unit Activities:

Evaluation of Dual Credit

Open Educational Resources

American Indian Higher Education Consortium Knowledge Management Project

Discussion Items:

State Postsecondary Policy Priorities Post-Pandemic

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Unit Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (for consideration in May 2022)

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee Minutes May 18, 2021

Committee Members Present:

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)

Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories
and Freely Associated States/Guam)

Gerry Pollet (WA)

Committee Members Absent:

Brian Maher (SD)

Patricia Jones (UT)

David Jones (WY)

Staff Present:

Demarée Michelau, WICHE President

Patrick Lane, Vice President, 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

Committee Chair Christopher Cabaldon convened the Policy Analysis and Research Committee on May 18, 2021, at 2:07 p.m. Patrick Lane called roll, and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

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

After Committee Chair Cabaldon asked committee members to review the minutes from the November 12, 2020, meeting, Commissioner Rodney Jacob MOVED TO APPROVE, and Commissioner Jim Chavez SECONDED. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

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

Patrick Lane provided background information about the desire for approval of this new project. The premise is that society has seen growth in different types of credentials, and some new providers of alternative credentials do not operate under existing state or federal regulatory frameworks for postsecondary education or workforce training. The key question is how to balance oversight and student protection with efforts to innovate to provide students with credentials of value in today's workplace. Ideally, the aim is to form an environment in which states can partner with and complement promising providers while protecting participants from bad-faith actors. The approach, provided that funding is secured, would be to collaborate with a small number of states to work through issues from a legal, policy, research, and legislative perspective.

Commissioner Ben Cannon stated his support for this complex issue and said he appreciated WICHE's recognition of it.

Commissioner Chavez agreed, but wanted to know what similar efforts had been made in the past. He also said that the cost for this project seems particularly high and asked how firm this grant request is and what happens if we do not receive that amount.

Lane replied that the proposed project requires a data approach in which the unit has expertise in, and that is reflected in the grant amount. The individual subgrants along with travel have added up quickly, he said. If the grant is not approved, the unit will have to adjust accordingly. This is not a new topic in higher education, he said.

Commissioner James Johnsen asked what role accreditation plays in WICHE's analysis. Lane replied that it is hands-off.

Commissioner Arnold asked for clarification of the goal regarding “quality assurance” and protection of students, and suggested that currently there is not quality assurance with most providers. Lane replied that there are a variety of approaches depending on states, workforce needs, government structures, etc. He said providers say that the market is their quality assurance, but economics requires thorough information that does not exist right now. With the traditional triad in higher education, there are a variety of protections around institutional closure, students’ rights, and data privacy and protections.

Commissioner Cabaldon expressed his concerns about the difficulty of assessing quality, and noted the irony of that issue now being in our domain. This sector has emerged from any area not previously explored in higher education, he said, and in terms of equity, it is difficult to find the right model. He said he worries about how normative this approach is, so it might be beneficial to have a different approach accompanied by humility. Additionally, assuring quality to the student is currently an open question, he said.

Commissioner Johnsen MOVED TO APPROVE, Commissioner Cannon SECONDED, and the motion carried.

ACTION ITEM

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

Patrick Lane walked the committee through the FY22 workplan, which is largely consistent with last year’s, except for the proposed addition of the new project previously mentioned and the completion of a few other projects in FY21.

Commissioner Cannon brought forth discussion about the potential future project “Data with a Purpose,” which he said raises the question of what role WICHE will play in helping inform states and federal policymakers on the Western perspective. How do we see WICHE’s role in potential federal legislation? Lane responded that the Policy Unit hosts a biweekly call with chief academic officers and President Demarée Michelau hosts regular SHEEO calls. The unit’s role is to represent states well and be in tune with their needs outside of D.C. As the discussion of WICHE’s role in federal policy develops, this can be explored further, he said.

Commissioner Sheila Stearns MOVED TO APPROVE, Commissioner Johnsen SECONDED, and the motion carried.

Information Item Completed Projects

Patrick Lane provided an update on several of the unit’s activities. The first was the Data Management Plan, which is focused on internal WICHE policy and practice. The work on this plan is the result of two separate reserve allocations by the Commission – one to develop the plan and the second to begin implementation. Work is firmly focused on implementation now and should result in much stronger data management policies and practices for WICHE.

Lane also provided an update on the unit’s work on Recognition of Prior Learning, a major research effort that ended in 2020. WICHE, in partnership with CAEL, completed the largest study to date of outcomes for prior learning assessment, with an advanced quantitative analysis to try to isolate the impact of receiving credit for prior learning. In short, the study found that the practice makes a difference, with a substantial increase in completion rates for those adults who receive credit for prior learning, but that too few students are able to access this credit, he said.

Finally, Lane provided an update on the Policy Analysis and Research Database, which is the result of a reserve request approved several years ago and which is slowly being expended. He said that the database now supports almost all of WICHE’s general fund-supported research activities, played a big role in facilitating publication of *Knocking at the College Door*, and has made WICHE’s work more responsive to requests.

Discussion Item WICHE Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy

Patrick Lane began the discussion with a summary of WICHE’s preparation for engaging in the federal policymaking process, which may or may not include a formal reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Lane asked the committee to provide feedback on a series of general principles and proposed positions. The plan is to bring the full package to the Commission for approval in November 2021. He reiterated WICHE’s longstanding approach to federal policy, which has been to adopt general rather than specific positions in order to be nimble as proposals may change relatively quickly.

In 2018, WICHE started with three general principles and minor adjustments have been made to each of them. Principle 1 essentially says that states and territories are important in ensuring high-quality postsecondary education and are crucial to the policymaking process. Principle 2 focuses on outcomes and results for those students who have not been served well by higher education and who are facing barriers going forward. These groups include students of color, low-income students, and rural students. Additionally, this principle also explicitly incorporates student and taxpayer protection against fraud. Principle 3 focuses on data, research, and evidence. From those, five potential positions have been developed. The first concerns federal data systems, with the proposal to remain neutral on federal student unit data systems but remain committed to ensuring that if such a system goes forward, it must meet state needs. The second position is in support of a state-federal partnership to improve affordability. The third aims to create balance among the principles by fostering innovation. The fourth focuses on digital learning and the broader use of technology. The fifth involves limitations on the GI Bill, which provides only 50 percent of the housing allowance for students enrolled through distance education.

Chair Cabaldon observed that the amount of federal activity and resources deployed is unprecedented. He voiced a desire to remove position number five, which sticks out as a policy action in a document focused on principles. Besides, he said, there are a lot of policies he would like to see fulfilled first. He also recommended adding a Western perspective to the document. The differences in the West, particularly for state-supported postsecondary education, are unique within the country, and debates around racial equity issues often miss some of the minority-serving institutions that are prevalent throughout the West. A key role that WICHE should play is to provide a Western perspective, he said.

Commissioner Barbara Damron mentioned that she does not put great stock in principles and positions, but would be comfortable if there is legislative input, and if it is leading somewhere significant. She said that simply putting forth a principles/position stance will make us an inefficient organization like so many others. She agreed with Chair Cabaldon's point about WICHE supporting a particular Western perspective in the federal process and, in particular, calling attention to the prevalence of Hispanic-serving institutions in the West. Patrick Lane replied that Commissioner Damron makes an excellent point, and emphasized that the goal is to provide helpful and effective principles and positions.

On position number two, regarding affordability, Commissioner Cannon said that meeting attainment goals will require significant federal investment, so the position should state this case more strongly. What is unique about the West is the rural and frontier regions that present their own specific challenges, he said. Additionally, in the West a greater proportion of students attend public institutions, and this should be brought to the attention of federal policymakers, he said.

Vice Chair Matt Freeman commented that for WICHE, the proposed principles are appropriate, especially in light of the political diversity of the states in the region. He also said he agreed with earlier comments that position number five seems too specific.

Commissioner Johnsen asked if something could be added to position number four to put greater emphasis on the problem of poor digital infrastructure throughout the region.

Commissioner Jacob said he felt that Guam and CNMI seemed completely forgotten. It is great to focus on the West, he said, but the far West needs to be fully included as well.

Commissioner Chavez agreed with Commissioner Johnsen about the need to focus on digital learning infrastructure, and with Commissioner Damron's point of focusing on actionable efforts that may push the envelope.

Commissioner Colleen Sathre noted that broadband deserts are a problem, even for high-density states. The infrastructure issues also involve difficulties in connecting to existing broadband through appropriate hardware, she said.

Discussion Item Legislative Advisory Committee Fall 2021 Meeting

The last item was a discussion about the upcoming Fall Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting, which is currently planned to be an in-person meeting November 17-18, in Sacramento, Calif. Among the themes under consideration are the general state of higher education in a post-pandemic context, overlaid with some pre-pandemic trends including the graying of the workforce, the rise of automation, and the decreasing number of high school graduates. Another possible focus is identifying and discussing key legislative lessons from the pandemic in terms of preparing for such events and the lessons that ought to be carried forward in regular policymaking.

Commissioner Chavez asked about the date of the meeting and suggested that the earlier time frame would be more advantageous. Patrick Lane replied that the date has been pushed back due to the hope of meeting in person.

Adjournment

As there was no other business, Chair Cabaldon concluded the session at 3:14 p.m.

ACTION ITEM

Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Adopt WICHE's Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy

Background

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 of states' efforts to promote 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.

Given the diversity of states in the region, 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.

WICHE also has a particular responsibility to expand information about and advocate for higher education in the West. As a region, the West faces unique challenges of geography, with large states and huge rural areas, as well as Pacific Islands, with relatively small land areas separated by vast stretches of ocean. Additionally, Western higher education tends to feature more public institutions and different racial/ ethnic distributions of students than other regions. The West is also home to more Tribal Colleges and Universities. WICHE's efforts on federal education policy will embed a focus on the West.

WICHE's Policy Unit has continued to refine and revise policy positions for consideration and potential adoption by the Commission. Staff presented these positions to the Policy Analysis and Research Committee at the May 2021 meeting and to the Executive Committee in September 2021, and has incorporated feedback from Commissioners. Major changes from the previously presented version include: a greater focus on the West as a principle and in proposed positions, specific acknowledgment of the importance and unique characteristics of the Pacific region, a new emphasis on the necessary infrastructure to support distance learning, and the removal of a specific position on federal support for distance education students receiving funding under the GI Bill.

Relationship to WICHE Mission

Given the importance of federal policy and its impact on postsecondary education in WICHE states and territories, WICHE should have an appropriate voice in the policy process. This voice must respect the political diversity in the West, strive for effective and useful interactions in the federal policymaking process, and identify policy areas where WICHE can make an impact. Through a thoughtful and transparent approach to federal policy, WICHE's efforts can positively impact excellence in postsecondary education for the West.

Summary of WICHE's proposed positions on federal postsecondary education policy

The WICHE Commission approved a set of principles and positions in 2018 in anticipation of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (which still has not happened). With high likelihood of further federal efforts to reexamine key higher education policy in the near future, staff are proposing an updated set of positions focused on states' needs and WICHE's mission.

WICHE's proposed federal positions are based on several high-level general principles.

- **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. Thus, 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 groups who have been poorly served in the past and 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.
- **Principle 4.** Higher education in the West has unique characteristics and requires intentional federal policymaking that recognizes the needs of the region.

These four principles are embedded in the following proposed positions:

1. **Actionable data and information are key to better outcomes for students and any data system(s) must be developed thoughtfully.** 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.

Additionally, federal policy should support the development of data resources that provide accurate and actionable information about states, territories, and institutions in the West (and, where appropriate, freely associated states). This should include appropriate data resources for and engagement with Tribal Colleges and Universities, which are prevalent throughout the West.

2. **A state-federal partnership will enhance affordability and be an essential part of the solution for improving student access and success.** Affordability of postsecondary education is a pressing topic throughout the West that is of wide concern. 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. States and territories will not be able to meet their postsecondary attainment goals without significant federal investment in ways that account for the different governance structures and characteristics of postsecondary education systems across the West. The federal government is uniquely positioned to provide resources to improve affordability and given the national and state interests in increasing attainment, a well-designed partnership is essential to improving affordability.

Federal proposals to provide “free college” should balance state characteristics, state and territorial support for postsecondary education, and research and evidence in developing the detailed models to design and implement such programs. Further, these models must be sustainable at the federal and state levels. WICHE has a history of developing financial aid models that would serve the development of a state-federal partnership well and has substantial expertise to contribute. Additionally, federal policy supporting minority-serving institutions should provide sufficient resources to promote equitable outcomes for underserved students.

3. **Higher education innovations to improve student outcomes should be supported but must also 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.

Further, innovations in postsecondary education and training that involve major departures from existing regulatory and oversight models can be a useful tool to demonstrate viability and effectiveness, but they must also provide appropriate assurances to students. New innovations must have appropriate protections and either have or lead to a strong base of evidence, along with rigorous evaluative requirements. As one example, WICHE joins other organizations in calling for the U.S. Department of Education’s “Experimental Sites Initiative” to be a true evaluation of educational innovations, to elevate new policies and programs that improve student outcomes, and to protect the students participating in the experiment.

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 pandemic’s disruption of face-to-face instruction has demonstrated the impact of “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. Additionally, the West, including Tribal lands and Pacific Islands, face particular challenges in developing the necessary infrastructure to support digital learning, which can be addressed through federal policy.

Federal policy also oftentimes differentiates between educational modalities, which may be appropriate in some instances, where there are evidence-based reasons. However, students enrolled in distance education should not face additional obstacles due to such differentiation without sufficient justification.

Action Requested

Staff request that the Policy Analysis and Research Committee issue a recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to approve these positions.

Staff and Fiscal Impact

No staffing or monetary impacts are associated with these positions. Staff will dedicate time to federal policy discussions where appropriate and in alignment with these positions.

ACTION ITEM

Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Adopt a Resolution in Support of the State Role in State Authorization Reciprocity

Summary

WICHE plays a central role in supporting the reciprocity of state authorization of distance-based higher education for the West. This role developed as WICHE – together with the other regional compact organizations – established the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). The regional compacts and a fifth organization the compacts created, known as the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), developed a framework for states to participate in reciprocity based on a contractual document known as the Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (or “Unified Agreement,” for short). Through this agreement and resultant governance structure and policy documents of NC-SARA, states maintained a strong voice in policymaking and policy implementation.

In recent months, WICHE staff have documented repeated and consistent efforts by NC-SARA staff to reduce the state voice in policymaking and policy implementation, and diminishing the role of the four compacts. WICHE believes that this would represent a fundamental shift in the governance and operation of SARA. Further, it would significantly diverge from the initial structure and processes to which states agreed (sometimes through legislation). NC-SARA board officers continue to indicate that the regional compacts remain central to the operation of SARA. WICHE staff are reassured by this commitment, but remain concerned when considering the totality of recent NC-SARA staff actions, which include proposing the elimination of a direct pathway for states to propose changes to SARA policy, unapproved changes to state application materials, and a unilateral effort to require states to implement new distance education guidelines.

WICHE staff continue to work diligently through numerous paths to attempt to rectify the situation and preserve the state voice in SARA operations. This includes formal communication to NC-SARA board officers, raising issues directly with NC-SARA staff, elevating these discussions at NC-SARA board meetings, and coordinating with other regional compacts to seek resolution to these issues.

WICHE’s interpretation of NC-SARA actions is shared by our states as well. Members of the Regional Steering Committee – a group of representatives from each of our SARA member states that is instrumental in implementing the reciprocity in the West – recently sent a letter to the NC-SARA board detailing their concerns with actions, coupled with a request to pause any organizational policymaking and major decisions until the Board reaffirms its commitment to the Unified Agreement and a strong state voice in SARA.

The Western Regional Steering Committee was joined by the other three Regional Steering Committees in sending the letter mentioned above to the NC-SARA Board. The roster of the Western Regional Steering Committee is included following the proposed resolution.

Based on staff conversations with state leaders, WICHE commissioners, and state staff working on state authorization issues, there is a very real and tangible concern that if NC-SARA continues to erode the role of states and the regional compacts in SARA, the agreement will fall apart as states withdraw from membership.

Through this action item, staff are asking the Policy Analysis and Research Committee to adopt a resolution (printed fully in the Action Requested section below) that reaffirms WICHE’s commitment to the Unified Agreement and our organization’s fundamental belief that states must have a strong voice in policy development and implementation in order for SARA to continue to succeed. Staff believe that such a resolution will bolster their efforts to reach constructive solutions with NC-SARA.

Should the resolution be adopted, it will be signed by WICHE’s officers.

Relationship to WICHE Mission

By affirming the centrality of state voice in the operation and implementation of the Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, the proposed resolution supports WICHE’s core mission of promoting a state-led approach to innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy.

Background

SARA is a voluntary initiative designed to establish comparable standards for U.S. states and territories regulating postsecondary distance education. With its reciprocity provisions, the agreement enables institutions to gain approval from their “home state” to offer distance education in member states without having to individually apply to each state for such approval. SARA expands postsecondary educational opportunities while ensuring meaningful consumer protections for students and reducing regulatory red tape for institutions. SARA also provides a platform for information sharing and peer learning among member states, and promotes distance-education program quality for all participants.

The agreement is coordinated by NC-SARA, in concert with the four regional higher education compacts. The relationship among these partners was contractually established through the Unified Agreement, which provides the framework for a governance structure embedding a strong state voice in SARA policy development. This is partially guaranteed by the prominent role of the regional compacts – which are governed by their states and territories.

As the compact serving the Western region, WICHE is responsible for overseeing the membership of SARA member states in the West.

As articulated in the Unified Agreement, the role of the compacts is to oversee state membership and to represent state voice and perspective on the National Council, while NC-SARA’s role is to coordinate amongst the four compacts to ensure interregional consistency and oversee the administrative functions of the agreement (data collection, institutional payments, communications, etc.). It was this structure that the WICHE Commission voted to be a part of and that our member states joined. Through state oversight of WICHE by commissioners, and through roles that WICHE and the other compacts specifically designed for states in developing SARA, the states have historically had a strong voice in SARA governance and policy setting. The key vehicle for this is the Regional Steering Committee for each compact.

Unfortunately, over the past few years NC-SARA has taken an increasing number of steps through proposed policy changes and shifting practices that diminish the ability of member states and territories to maintain a robust voice in the evolution of the policies that implement their own interstate agreement. Most troublingly, NC-SARA has pushed forward policy changes opposed by each of the four regional compacts and their state members. WICHE staff, Regional Steering Committee members, and legal counsel are deeply concerned that these actions—which sideline the voice of the agreement’s state members in favor of unilateral decisions made by an independent nonprofit organization—jeopardize the integrity of the interstate reciprocity agreement itself.

WICHE staff and W-SARA Regional Steering Committee members have repeatedly sought to address these concerns directly with NC-SARA staff, but have been unable to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution. The leadership of WICHE’s Regional Steering Committee escalated these concerns to NC-SARA’s board leadership, but no substantive improvements to NC-SARA’s actions have resulted to date. Therefore, WICHE’s Regional Steering Committee worked together with the other compacts’ steering committees to develop a joint letter to the full NC-SARA Board of Directors requesting an affirmation of the Unified Agreement, a pause on all policy modifications until an improved process is developed that appropriately reflects the voice of member states, and the opportunity to speak directly with the NC-SARA Board in an effort to resolve these concerns and preserve the integrity of SARA.

Consistent with WICHE’s foundational identity as an interstate organization, WICHE staff are thus proposing the following resolution to help preserve the state role and voice in the operation, implementation, and evolution of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement.

Action Requested

Staff request that the Policy Analysis and Research Committee recommend that the Committee of the Whole adopt the following resolution:

Whereas, WICHE played a central role in developing a workable approach to interstate reciprocity for the purposes of postsecondary distance education with the creation of the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA);

Whereas, WICHE and its regional compact partners, together with the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), synthesized W-SARA and the three other regional interstate reciprocity agreements into the singular Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (“Unified Agreement”) to form a uniform basis for reciprocity;

Whereas, the compacts designed a system for state authorization reciprocity that ensures strong state representation and voice in its implementation through compact oversight of state membership, compact presidents' seats on the NC-SARA Board, and the central role of the compacts' regional steering committees in the SARA policymaking process; and

Whereas a strong state voice in SARA is fundamental to its operation and a core part of what states agreed to;

Now, therefore be it resolved on November 4, 2021, that as one of the five signatories to the Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education affirms that the Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement is the foundation for the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement; that the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement cannot exist without a strong state role and voice in its operation; and that WICHE staff should continue to make all reasonable efforts to preserve that state role and voice, including continuing to support the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee in its work in this area.

Staff and Fiscal Impact

None

W-SARA Regional Steering Committee Roster

Alicia Armijo

Constituent Services Coordinator & New Mexico NC-SARA Coordinator, Legal Division, New Mexico Higher Education Department

Tyler Eggen

Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

Tamara Baysinger

State Authorization Manager
Idaho State Board of Education

Cynthia "Cyd" Grua

Assistant Commissioner of Academic Affairs,
Utah System of Higher Education

Terina Caserto

Senior Analyst, Academic and Student Affairs,
Nevada System of Higher Education

Katie Hubbart

Academic Affairs Specialist, South Dakota SARA Coordinator,
South Dakota Board of Regents

Heather DeLange (vice chair)

Director, Office of Private Postsecondary
Education, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Sam Loftin (chair)

Director of Consumer Protection, Washington Student
Achievement Council

Rob Dennis

Chief Operating Officer
Wyoming Community College Commission

Bobbi Lum-Mew

Program Administrator, Hawai'i Postsecondary Education
Authorization Program, Department of Commerce &
Consumer Affairs

Lanna Dueck (immediate past chair)

Executive Director, Arizona SARA Council

Hae Okimoto (at-large)

Associate Vice President for Student Affairs &
Director of Academic Technologies, University of Hawai'i
System

Veronica Dujon

Director, Office of Private Postsecondary
Education, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating
Commission

Joe Thiel

Director of Academic Policy & Research, Montana University
System

INFORMATION ITEM

Legislative Advisory Committee Meeting

Adjusting & Adapting: Crafting Postsecondary Policy in the COVID-19 Era

WICHE LAC Meeting
3:00-5:00 p.m. MDT | November 17 & 18 | 2021

Draft Agenda

Wednesday, November 17

3:00 - 3:15 p.m. Welcome & Member Introductions

3:15 - 5:00 p.m. How has COVID-19 Impacted Higher Education?

This session will explore the changes to the postsecondary landscape between 2019 and 2021. The session will open with an examination of the available data that illustrate regional and state shifts. The trends discussed in the data overview demonstrate that Western states and territories need to be thinking about a wide range of issues, from enrollment and retention to aligning higher education with changing workforce needs. How are states investing their state—and federal—resources to address these challenges?

Thursday, November 18

3:00 - 3:05 p.m. Welcome & Member Introductions

3:05 - 3:45 p.m. Interaction of Federal and State Policy: 2021 Edition

2021 has featured an unprecedented level of activity at the federal level with a direct impact on states, with potentially more to come. From an array of existing federal stimulus funding streams—each with different parameters and requirements—to the prospect of trillions of dollars in additional social spending, there is much for state lawmakers to consider as they craft their own budgets. This session will include an update from DC and discussions around how states are spending their stimulus dollars as well as how they might fare under different “free college” proposals.

3:45 - 5:00 p.m. Changing Demographics, Changing Perceptions

With strong demand from LAC members to explore these topics, this discussion will cover the changing landscape of higher education in the Western states and territories. As data demonstrate, the next generation of Western college students will be increasingly diverse. To meet attainment and economic goals we must effectively serve these students, yet there is no consensus as to how higher education should evolve in response. Our region features wide-ranging perspectives as to the level of legislative input into campus curricula and initiatives—including around the concept of Critical Race Theory—the types of supports students need, and the role of equity initiatives.



Behavioral Health Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. MDT

Videoconference

(transfer to breakout room at 1:45 p.m.)

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.

Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 - 3:30 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
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Agenda

Presiding: Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health & Co-Director, Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)

Staff: John Gomez, Director of Operations
Todd Helvig, Director of Education & Training
Janell Daly, Administrative Assistant III

Information Items:

Program Spotlight – WICHE Psychology Internship Initiative 5-3

Update on Current Behavioral Health Program Projects

Annual Report Review

Budget Update, *John Gomez*

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the Behavioral Health Program Unit Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (discussion only)

Other Business

Adjournment

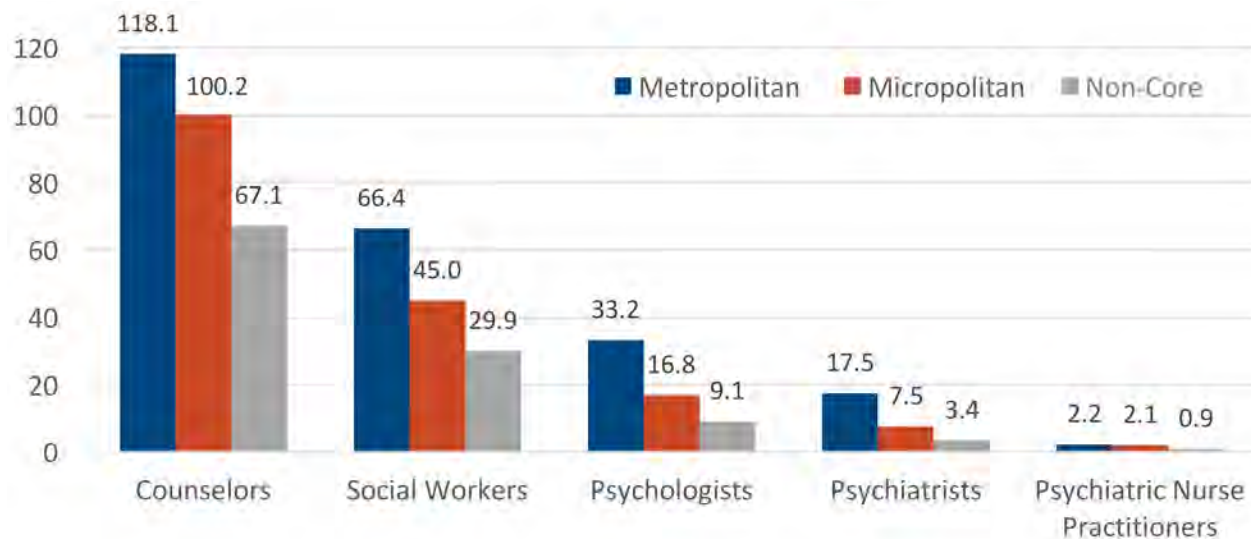


Addressing Rural Behavioral Health Workforce Shortages: Lessons Learned from a Rural Psychology Internship Initiative

Introduction

During the last 60 years, there has been little to no change in the percentage of rural people living in communities experiencing behavioral health provider shortages.¹⁻² For example, as of 2016 Non-core communities reported 9.1 psychologists per 100,000 population compared to 33.2 psychologists per 100,000 population in urban areas.³ See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Behavioral Health Providers per 100,000 Population in U.S. Counties by Urban Influence Category, 2016³



Data Sources: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI) data, October 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS) Urban Influence Codes, 2013, and the 2014 Claritas U.S. population data.

Professionals and advocates continue to discuss and research the challenges of rural access to well-trained, competent, and motivated behavioral health workers. Without local access, it is unlikely that people in rural and remote communities will have their behavioral health needs identified early and treated effectively. There are three factors strongly associated with a behavioral health professional entering rural practice. These include:

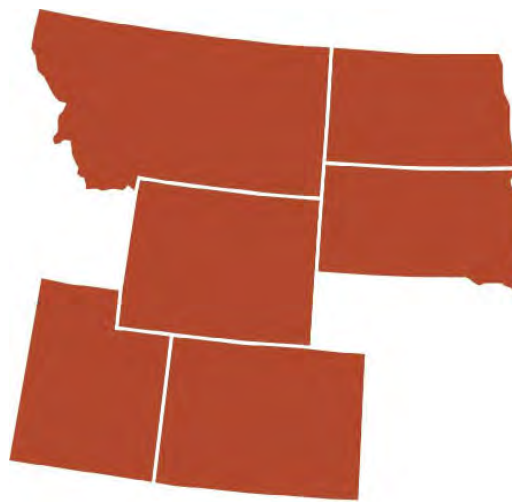
1. Having a rural connection (having lived rural or having family in a rural area).
2. Having a positive clinical and educational experience in a rural setting as part of undergraduate medical education.
3. Having targeted training for rural practice at the postgraduate level.⁴

This brief provides an overview and the lessons learned from a program implemented through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education’s Behavioral Health Program (WICHE BHP). This initiative focused on developing rural psychology internship opportunities in an effort to grow the rural workforce. These internships have proven effective for behavioral health workforce development and may apply to other health disciplines as well.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

The mission of the WICHE BHP includes work “to continually improve the qualifications of the behavioral health workforce.”⁵ Additionally, WICHE is a partner with the University of North Dakota on the Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC).⁶ The mission of the Mountain Plains MHTTC aligns with that of the WICHE BHP. The purpose of the Mountain Plains MHTTC is to provide training and technical assistance to individuals serving persons living with mental illness in a six-state region.

Service Area of the Mountain
Plains Mental Health
Technology Transfer Center



The Mountain Plains MHTTC has an additional priority of serving rural and remote communities.⁷ Both the Mountain Plains MHTTC and the WICHE BHP are dedicated to growing behavioral health capacity and workforce in rural areas in an effort to improve rural health equity. The Mountain Plains MHTTC is highlighting the success of one longstanding program created specifically to address rural recruitment and retention of newly graduated behavioral health providers, specifically clinical psychologists.

Shortage of Rural Behavioral Health Internship Opportunities

There is a shortage of accredited clinical psychology doctoral internship opportunities in many heavily rural states, forcing students to complete their internships in urban centers and/or out of state. As a result, there is a decreased likelihood that the students will return to their home or rural communities.⁴ As an example, the University of South Dakota graduates from six to eight clinical psychologists annually. However, there are only four in-state, accredited internship slots, all of which are with the Veteran Affairs (VA) Healthcare System. These slots are competitive and open to applicants across the nation. The scarcity of applied educational settings in rural underserved areas, such as the example in South Dakota, is a missed opportunity to nurture a committed and local rural workforce.

Developing Accredited, Rural, Psychology Internships

In 2007, the WICHE BHP was contacted by the director at the Center for Alaska Native Health Research, University of Alaska Fairbanks. The University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Alaska Anchorage had recently created a joint clinical doctoral program. The program was interested in creating a local and accredited psychology internship in the state in an effort to retain providers.

The WICHE BHP and the two collaborating universities began to explore opportunities to develop an accredited psychology internship in Alaska. The intent was to provide interns a broad but culturally relevant training experience. During the following year, the WICHE BHP assisted in the development of the Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium (AK-PIC), which focused on training psychologists for Alaska.

AK-PIC members included:

- Alaska Psychiatric Institute
- Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
- Providence Family Medicine Center/ Alaska Family Medicine Residency
- Norton Sound Health Corporation

AK-PIC accepted its first round of applicants in 2009 and received a seven-year accreditation from the American Psychological Association in 2012. Because of the geographical distances involved in training, the program's interns participated in weekly supervision and didactic seminars across all of the Alaska consortium sites via a secure videoconferencing platform.



Expanding the Program to Additional States

Following the success in Alaska, the WICHE BHP has supported the development of accredited internships in Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Nevada, and Texas. As of September 2019, rural internships are under development in Idaho, New Mexico, and Utah. With the exception of Oregon, these internships all place trainees in rural/remote/underserved areas and utilize the consortium model. In addition, all the internships utilize the consortium model, except Oregon.

The consortium model is preferred for rural areas where supervisors may work in smaller agencies with limited time to devote to accreditation activities. This model permits sharing the operational burden and costs among multiple agencies, sites, and supervising psychologists. This also enriches the professional practice and peer support of often more isolated internship faculty/supervisors. Gaining accreditation helps rural programs become competitive and attract quality trainees. This process can be made easier when a consortium has access to assistance with the accreditation process through an organization such as the WICHE BHP or through workforce development grants.

On average, more than 60% of the trainees completing their internships under this model remained in the state post internship. Building psychology internship opportunities across the rural West has proven effective for behavioral health workforce development. This effect may apply to other health disciplines as well.

Through this experience, the WICHE BHP has found that rural internships provide opportunities for all types of students and can promote rural practice among those who have lived rural, who are interested in a new rural experience, who have left their home state for graduate school, and those who remain in their local communities. Specifically:

- For students who are completing their degrees in their home states. This provides an opportunity to solidify their roots in the community and allows them to complete internships locally where they likely have strong ties to family and friends.
- For doctoral students who have left their home states for their graduate degree education. A local, home internship program serves as a “bridge,” providing them an opportunity to return to their communities, thereby increasing the chance that they will continue to live and work there.
- Rural internships may attract students from out of state who are interested in experiencing rural internships in new states and/or new communities and new practice environments.

Beyond the rural internship experience, rural communities may also benefit from student licensure requirements and loan repayment programs which can both be utilized to keep graduates practicing in a rural location. As an example, in order to obtain licensure for independent practice, post-grad psychologists must still obtain, in most states, an additional 2,000 hours of supervised practice. Rural agencies can then offer this supervision and practice as a post-doctoral position, encouraging new graduates to stay in the rural community an additional year post-internship, increasing the chances of them remaining long term. Loan repayment programs could retain that individual for an additional three years of practice.”

Application to Recruiting and Retaining Other Rural Health Professionals

Rural and underserved areas are typically in need of a variety of behavioral health disciplines in addition to clinical psychology. Social workers, school psychologists and school counselors, bachelor’s and master’s level behavioral healthcare providers, and other primary care providers, including family medicine and occupational therapists, are needed in rural and underserved areas as well. Most of these disciplines require a form of extended internship experience as a condition of graduate education completion and ultimate licensure. The consortia model has the potential to draw other health disciplines to rural areas.

The WICHE BHP has learned valuable lessons throughout the course of its rural psychology internship initiative that transfer to other health disciplines. These include:

1. Identifying new funding opportunities for rural internships and developing novel and unique collaborations and financial support to offset the costs of hosting students. As an example, one WICHE BHP-partnered internship benefitted from the state’s Medical Education Council. The council funded WICHE BHP’s assistance and provided a monthly stipend to offset high housing costs in a tourist community. The WICHE BHP has secured funding for internship development through a wide variety of sources, including foundations and trusts, state departments through vacancy savings and specific legislative requests, a state Board of Education, and a Medical Education Council.



Other potential funding partners may include:

- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Development Offices
- Local State Office of Rural Health⁷
- Local State Office of Public Health
- Area Health Education Centers⁸

For more information on workforce development funding opportunities, visit the Rural Health Information Hub's Health Workforce Education and Training funding list at <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/funding/topics/health-workforce-education-and-training>.⁹

2. Knowing the Medicaid billing regulations in your area. Many states now allow students working under professional supervision in some health disciplines (clinical psychology included) to bill for their services. Reimbursement can offset costs associated with training students.
3. Looking for partnerships when one rural agency lacks the staffing or resources to independently operate an internship or practicum. Because of the high demand for clinical direct service on rural clinicians, they often lack the time needed to organize and recruit for training programs. Teaming up with other agencies spreads the burden of administrative work and allows all of the agencies to benefit from increased staff time, expertise, and network connections. It is also important to develop relationships with universities that can serve as important recruitment sources. There is opportunity for strong collaborative relationships between providers and universities.
4. Utilizing technology for training and remote supervision in rural communities when permissible.
5. When first developing the program, make use of the people most passionate about building the behavioral health workforce in your community. Regardless of their position, a passionate and motivated individual will likely accomplish more than a well-intentioned, but overly committed, administrator. The latter can be brought onto the project after the initial details have been developed. The WICHE BHP-partnered internships found local champions in:
 - Various levels of state government behavioral health offices.
 - Local state universities (professors, regents, and others).
 - Local agency administrators or psychologists.
 - State hospital administrators.
 - Practicing psychologists.

Conclusions

The WICHE BHP and the Mountain Plains MHTTC endorse a multipronged, broad approach to building the behavioral health workforce, especially in rural, frontier, and underserved areas. What may work in one community may not work in another, and creativity may be the key to success. Additionally, efforts need not be on a grand scale; if one small rural agency succeeds in recruiting a provider-to-be to receive clinical experience that is one more chance to recruit and retain a qualified provider. It is also imperative to share lessons learned as other states and rural communities look for opportunities and innovations to address behavioral health workforce shortages.

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1. New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. (2004). Subcommittee on rural issues: Background paper. DHHS Pub. No. SMA-04-3890. Rockville, MD. Available at <http://annapoliscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/presidents-new-freedom-commission-background-paper.pdf>.
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3. Larson, E., Patterson, D., Garberson, L., & Andrilla, H. (2016). Supply and distribution of the behavioral health workforce in rural America [Data Brief #160]. Seattle, WA: WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington. Available at <https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/publications/1058>.
4. Strasser, R. & Neusy, A.J. (2010). Context counts: Training health workers in and for rural and remote areas. *Bull World Health Organ.*, 88, 777–782. 10.2471/BLT.09.072462.
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7. Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center. (2019). Area of Focus: Rural Mental Health. Available at <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhttc/area-focus>.

Authors



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Vice President for Behavioral Health, WICHE
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Dennis Mohatt is the Vice President of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Behavioral Health Program and Co-director of the Mountain Plains MHTTC. Mr. Mohatt has more than 30 years of public mental health experience. He is a 2019 recipient of the American Psychological Association’s Award for Distinguished Contributions to Practice in Community Psychology and has been a member of the National Rural Health Advisory Committee and Chief Consultant in rural issues to the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health.



Liza Tupa, PhD

Technical Trainer, Mountain Plains MHTTC
Director of Education and Research, WICHE

Dr. Liza Tupa is the Director of Education and Research for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Behavioral Health Program and a technical trainer for the Mountain Plains MHTTC. A licensed clinical psychologist, her work at the WICHE BHP has included expanding rural psychology internship development to seven western states, behavioral healthcare workforce training, service delivery system and clinical consultation, statewide behavioral health needs assessments, and developing toolkits for Suicide Prevention in Primary Care and School Behavioral Health Advocacy.



Shawnda Schroeder, MA, PhD

Co-chair of the Mental Health Workforce Group, MHTTC
Research Associate Professor, University of North Dakota

Dr. Shawnda Schroeder conducts rural health research, serves as lead on statewide program evaluation, and serves on several national and statewide rural and oral health work groups. She is the Director of the Rural Health Research Gateway, serves on the editorial board for the Journal of Rural Health, and is the Co-chair of the MHTTC Mental Health Workforce Development Working Group. Under the Mountain Plains MHTTC, Dr. Schroeder provides training on rural mental health, leads web content development, and conducts research on stigma as well as mental health training needs.

DISCLAIMER

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At the time of this publication, Elinore F. McCance-Katz served as SAMHSA Assistant Secretary. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SMHSA for the opinions described in this document is intended or should be inferred.





EdTech Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. MDT

Videoconference

(transfer to breakout room at 1:45 p.m.)

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
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:00 - 3:30 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

Welcome and Introductions: *Don Bennett*

Facilitating: Don Bennett, WICHE Commission Executive Committee Member

Staff:

Sherri Artz Gilbert, Senior Director, Operations and Membership Administration
Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET, and Service Design and Strategy Officer, Every Learner Everywhere
Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, Policy Innovations
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and WICHE Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Megan Raymond, Senior Director, Membership and Programs

Information Items:

WCET Updates: *Megan Raymond, Russ Poulin, Van Davis, and Cheryl Dowd*

WCET Membership

6-3

New WCET website (wcet.wiche.edu)

Every Learner Everywhere

WCET State Authorization Network

Discussion Items:

Professional Licensure Notifications: *Cheryl Dowd*

WCET's State Authorization Network has worked with state agencies, professional associations, programmatic/professional accrediting agencies, and institutions to improve the practice on this important consumer protection.

- Background on professional licensure notifications.
- How can WICHE Commissioners help to make the connections with regulators, state agencies, state professional associations and others?

**Cybersecurity Leadership Table Top Exercise (LTTX):
Invitation for States to Participate:** *Cheryl Dowd*

6-5

WICHE reestablished its collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to provide exercises (virtual threat event simulations) to train senior non-technical leaders (Presidents and Chancellors) in postsecondary education to lead and manage cybersecurity events at their institutions. WICHE has a call for states, systems, or groups of institutions to participate in future LTTX experiences.

Discussion of Priority Issues Pertaining to the WCET Workplan Activities for FY 2023 (discussion only): *Russ Poulin*

Commissioner Sharing and Discussion: *Don Bennett*

An open discussion and sharing of EdTech issues in Committee Members' states:

- Each Committee Member shares EdTech advances or issues from their state.
- Are there issues that WICHE / WCET should be exploring or for which you would like more information?

Other Business

Adjournment

WCET & State Authorization Network Members in WICHE States

WCET Members

SAN Members

Both WCET & SAN

ALASKA

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary
Education
University of Alaska Anchorage

ARIZONA

Arizona State University
AZ SARA Council
Coconino Community College
Grand Canyon University
Mesa Community College
Northern Arizona University
Prescott College
Rio Salado College
University of Phoenix

CALIFORNIA

AICCU
Allan Hancock College
American River College
Antelope Valley College
Art Center College of Design
Azusa Pacific University
Bakersfield College
Barstow Community College
Berkeley City College
Blackboard, Inc.
Butte College
Cabrillo College
California Baptist University
California College of the Arts
California Institute of Integral Studies
California Institute of Technology
California Maritime Academy
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
California State Polytechnic University, San Luis
Obispo
California State University, Bakersfield
California State University, Channel Islands
California State University, Chico
California State University, Dominguez Hills
California State University, East Bay
California State University, Fresno
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Long Beach
California State University, Los Angeles
California State University, Monterey Bay
California State University, Northridge
California State University, Office of the
Chancellor
California State University, Sacramento
California State University, San Bernardino
California State University, San Marcos
California State University, Stanislaus
Canada College
Cerritos College
Cerro Coso Community College
Chabot College
Chaffey College
Chancellor's Office of the California Community
Colleges
Citrus College
City College of San Francisco

Claremont Graduate University
Clovis Community College
Coastline Community College
College of Alameda
College of Marin
College of San Mateo
College of Sequoias
College of the Canyons
College of the Desert
College of the Redwoods
College of the Siskiyous
Columbia College
Concordia University Irvine
Contra Costa College
Copper Mountain College
Cosumnes River College
Coursera
Crafton Hills College
Creative Commons
Cuesta College
Cuyamaca College
Cypress College
De Anza College
Diablo Valley College
East Los Angeles College
El Camino
El Camino College Compton Center
Evergreen Valley College
Feather River College
Folsom Lake
Foothill College
Foothill-De Anza District
Fresno City College
Fullerton College
Gavilan College
Glendale Community College
Golden Gate University
Golden West College
Grossmont College
Hartnell College
Humboldt State University
Imperial Valley College
InStride
Irvine Valley College
John Paul the Great Catholic University
Keck Graduate Institute
La Sierra University
Lake Tahoe Community College
Laney College
Las Positas College
Lassen College
Loma Linda University
Long Beach City College
Los Angeles City College
Los Angeles Harbor College
Los Angeles Mission
Los Angeles Pacific University
Los Angeles Pierce College
Los Angeles Southwest College
Los Angeles Trade Technical College
Los Angeles Valley College
Los Medanos College
Loyola Marymount University
Mendocino College

Merced Community College
Merritt College
Mills College
MindWires
Mira Costa College
Mission College
Modesto Junior College
Monterey Peninsula College
Moorpark College
Moreno Valley College
Mount Saint Mary's University, Los Angeles
Mt. San Antonio College
Mt. San Jacinto College
Napa Valley College
National Laboratory for Education
Transformation (NLET)
National University
Norco College
North Orange Continuing Education
Ohlone Community College
Orange Coast College
Oxnard College
Pacific Union College
Palo Alto University
Palo Verde College
Palomar College
Pasadena City College
Point Loma Nazarene University
Porterville College
Reedley College
Rio Hondo College
Riverside City College
Sacramento City College
Saddleback College
Samuel Merritt University
San Bernardino Valley College
San Diego City College
San Diego Community College District
San Diego Continuing Education
San Diego Mesa College
San Diego Miramar College
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University
San Joaquin Delta College
San Jose City College
San Jose State University
Santa Ana College
Santa Barbara City College
Santa Monica College
Santa Rosa Junior College
Santiago Canyon College
Shasta College
Sierra College
Skyline College
Solano Community College
Sonoma State University
Southwestern College
Taft College
The NROC Project
University of La Verne
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco
University of Southern California
University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences

University of the Pacific
Vanguard University of Southern California
Ventura College
Victor Valley College
West Hills College Coalinga
West Hills College Lemoore
West Hills Community College District
West Los Angeles College
West Valley College
Western University of Health Sciences
William Jessup University
Woodland Community College
Yuba College

COLORADO

Aims Community College
American Sentinel College of Nursing & Health Sciences at Post University
Colorado Community College System
Colorado Mountain College
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Colorado State University-Global Campus
Colorado Technical University
Community College of Denver
Fort Lewis College
Innovative Educators
National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT)
NC-SARA
Pearson Learning Solutions
Regis University
United States Air Force Academy
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Colorado Denver
University of Colorado System
University of Denver
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
Wiley Education Services

HAWAII

Kapi'olani Community College
University of Hawai'i System
University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu

IDAHO

Boise Bible College
Boise State University
Brigham Young University - Idaho
College of Eastern Idaho
College of Southern Idaho
College of Western Idaho
Idaho State University
Lewis-Clark State College
Northern Idaho College
University of Idaho

NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

Northern Marianas College

MONTANA

Dawson Community College
Flathead Valley Community College
Montana State University, Billings
Montana State University, Bozeman
Montana State University - Northern

Montana University System
University of Montana
University of Montana Missoula
University of Montana -Western

NORTH DAKOTA

Bismarck State College
Dickinson State University
Lake Region State College
Mayville State University
North Dakota University System
University of North Dakota
Valley City State University
Williston State College

NEVADA

College of Southern Nevada
Great Basin College
Nevada State College
Nevada System of Higher Education
Roseman University of Health Sciences (Roseman)
Truckee Meadows Community College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Nevada, Reno
Western Nevada College

NEW MEXICO

Eastern New Mexico University
Navajo Technical University
New Mexico State University
NMSA Almogordo Community College
NMSU Carlsbad Community College
NMSU Dona Ana Community College
NMSU Grants Community College
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
University of New Mexico
Western New Mexico University

OREGON

Blue Mountain Community College
Central Oregon Community College
Chemeketa Community College
Eastern Oregon University
Lane Community College
Oregon Institute of Technology
Oregon State University
Portland Community College
Portland State University
Southern Oregon University
University of Oregon
Western Oregon University

SOUTH DAKOTA

Black Hills State University
Dakota State University
Mitchell Technical College
Northern State University
South Dakota Board of Regents
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
South Dakota State University
Southeast Technical College
University of South Dakota
Western Dakota Technical College

UTAH

Ameritech
Brigham Young University - Utah
Broadview University
Coursetune, Inc
Dixie State University
Eagle State College
Independence University
LDS Business College
Midwives College of Utah
Neumont University
New Charter
Nightingale College
Provo College
Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions
Salt Lake Community College
Snow College
Southern Utah University
University of Utah
Utah Education Network
Utah State University
Utah System of Higher Education
Utah Valley University
Weber State University
Western Governors University
Westminster College

WASHINGTON

Bates Technical College
Bellevue College
Big Bend Community College
Central Washington University
Clark College
Columbia Basin College
Community Colleges of Spokane
Eastern Washington University
Everett Community College
Grays Harbor College
Green River College
Heritage University
Highline College
Lower Columbia College
Olympia College
Peninsula College
Pierce College
Seattle Pacific University
Shoreline Community College
Skagit Valley College
Tacoma Community College
Walla Walla Community College
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Washington State University

WYOMING

Casper College
Central Wyoming College
Eastern Wyoming College
Laramie County Community College
Learning Corps, LLC
Northwest College
University of Wyoming
Western Wyoming Community College

WICHE Cybersecurity Leadership Tabletop Exercises (LTTX) for Senior Non-Technical Leaders

INVITATION FOR STATES TO PARTICIPATE

WICHE reestablished its collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide exercises (virtual threat event simulations) to train senior non-technical leaders (presidents and chancellors) in postsecondary education to lead and manage cybersecurity events at their institutions. LTTX half-day events were previously hosted as state events and were held in North Dakota, Colorado, and Oregon.

WICHE looks forward to engaging with more states to plan future LTTX events.

The purpose of the events is to test campus resilience and emergency preparedness from the viewpoint of senior non-technical leaders, such as the president, chancellor, chief academic officer, chief business officer, public relations director, legal counsel, and board leadership. During the event, leaders from a set of institutions are brought together in a peer-sharing, peer-learning, and peer-networking environment. While CIOs and IT staff are developed on what to do technically, the event focuses on institutional leadership who are asked to make key strategic decisions -- and to make these decisions quickly.

Participants are presented with "tabletop exercises" of scenarios drawn from real situations. Specific agenda items include unclassified threat briefings, case studies with discussion questions directed to the role of the senior leader, and a discussion of leadership options to consider for building campus resilience. The senior non-technical leaders will be led through a discussion of the institution's management of responses to a crisis caused by a cyber event that could affect data loss and infrastructure malfunctions as well as other ancillary issues.

The exercise is created by FEMA with input from state volunteers from institutions' IT, CISO, CIO, and campus security staff to ensure the exercise accurately portrays a realistic incident in that state.

A host state's responsibilities include choosing a key contact in the state to serve as a strong advocate to gain participation of the senior non-technical leaders and a staff member to work with WICHE to coordinate the venue and manage logistics.

Please share your state's interest or obtain additional information by contacting Cheryl Dowd, cdowd@wiche.edu.

WICHE



Western Interstate
Commission
for Higher Education

wiche.edu

Committee of the Whole Business Session

Thursday, November 4, 2021
3:45 – 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.

Agenda

Executive

Welcome

Programs

Policy

Behavioral Health

EdTech

Business

Reference

Thursday, November 4, 2021


3:45 - 5:00 p.m. MST

Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Reconvene Committee of the Whole: Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Report and Recommended Action of the Executive Committee: Susan Anderson

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


 Report and Recommended Action of the Audit Committee: Cam Preus, immediate past WICHE Chair

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]

 Approval of WICHE’s Positions on Federal Postsecondary Education Policy [Tab 4]

 Approval of a Resolution in Support of the State Role in State Authorization Reciprocity [Tab 4]

 Approval of a Location Change for the WICHE Commission Meeting, November 2022, Due to COVID-19 7-8

Report of the Legislative Advisory Committee

Discussion Item:

Update on WICHE’s Budget 7-9

Information Items:

Non-General Fund Reserves for Fiscal Year 2022 7-12

 Election of Chair and Vice Chair as Officers of the WICHE Commission for 2022

Remarks by Susan Anderson, Outgoing Chair

Remarks by Incoming Chair

Reminder to submit selection of 2022 committee members

Meeting Evaluation: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Nov2021CommMtg>

Other Business



Adjourn Committee of the Whole – Business Session

Closing Remarks by Susan Anderson, WICHE Chair

Adjournment

WICHE Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Committee Members 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)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Dave Woolstenhulme (UT) proxy
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Committee Members Absent:

Ann Millner (UT)

Additional Commissioners on the Call

Donn Liston (AK)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Matt Freeman (ID)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Diane Vanderwoude (SD)

WICHE Staff

Candy Allen, Senior Graphic Designer
Genevieve Berry, Project Manager, MHTTC, Behavioral
Health Program
Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services
Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access Programs
Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the
Commission
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Sarah Leibrandt, Director of Academic Leadership Initiatives
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Jere Mock, Vice President, Programs and Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health Program &
Co-Director, MHTTC
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications
Tanya Spilovoy, Director, Open Policy, WCET
Kate Springsteen, Assistant Director of Student Access
Programs
Gary Toon, Desktop and Windows Administrator

Chair Susan Anderson called the meeting to order. President Demarée Michelau called roll and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approve the April 8, 2021, Videoconference Meeting of the Executive Committee

Chair Susan Anderson asked for a motion to approve the April 8, 2021, Executive Committee meeting minutes. Commissioner Clayton Christian MOVED TO APPROVE the motion and Commissioner Barbara Damron SECONDED. The motion passed by voice vote.

DISCUSSION ITEM

May 2021 Meeting Schedule

President Michelau reviewed the Commission Meeting videoconference schedule with the committee.

ACTION ITEM

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

Chair Anderson called for other business for the open session. Hearing none, all attendees except for the Executive Committee, President Michelau, and WICHE Human Resources Director Deirdre Coulter were dismissed, and the committee went into closed session to conduct the formal review of President Michelau. During the review, President Michelau provided a summary of her self-evaluation and an overview of her proposed FY 2022 goals. President Michelau was excused from a portion of the committee discussion. Coulter remained throughout the entire meeting and provided information as needed to the committee.

The Executive Committee adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

WICHE Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 5, 2021

Committee Members 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)
Ray Holmberg (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)

Committee Members Absent:

Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Don Bennett (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Additional Commissioners on the Call

Cathy Dinauer (NV)

WICHE Staff

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the
President and the Commission
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET & Vice
President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy Initiatives
and State Authorization, Policy Analysis and
Research
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Chair Susan Anderson welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. She asked Laura Ewing to call roll of the Executive Committee and a quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the May 18, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Anderson asked for a motion to approve the May 18, 2021, Executive Committee meeting minutes. Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the motion and Commissioner David Lassner SECONDED. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Revised WICHE Holiday Schedule

At the request of Chair Anderson, President Demarée Michelau presented details of a proposed revision of the holiday schedule, which is part of the staff benefits package approved by the WICHE Commission. Currently, the package includes 11 paid holidays per calendar year.

The proposal would increase that number to 13, adding Juneteenth (June) and Veterans Day (November). The goal is to better align the WICHE schedule with federal holidays, while remaining consistent with the holiday schedules of the majority of Western states, President Michelau said.

Chair Anderson called for discussion and there was none. Commissioner Barbara Damron MOVED TO APPROVE the motion to revise the holiday schedule to include Juneteenth and Veterans Day, increasing the paid holidays to 13, and Commissioner Fred Lokken SECONDED. The motion passed with one abstention.

INFORMATION ITEM

Update on the Admission of the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States

President Michelau said that over the past few months, WICHE staff in partnership with CNMI and Guam colleagues have worked on the expansion of membership in the Pacific Island region to include the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI),

finalized on July 1, 2021, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), finalized on July 15, 2021. The addition of these countries, which has been under discussion since 2018, is a great asset to the Pacific Island members, President Michelau said.

The expansion was made possible by a technical assistance program grant from the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs. This renewable grant, which was awarded in June, covers the WICHE dues for the membership shared by the CNMI, Guam, RMI, and FSM. President Michelau said that work on legislation for Palau to also join WICHE is underway, and that discussions will continue with American Samoa, although the outcome in that case is still unclear.

President Michelau said that WICHE Student Access staff, led by Margo Colalancia, have sent out letters to all WUE and WRGP institutions introducing the new members and requesting that they work with currently enrolled students to grant them reduced tuition rates. WICHE can't demand that they extend the reduced rates, but it was noted there has been considerable cooperation so far with the request to extend WUE and WRGP benefits to those students.

Commissioner Frankie Eliptico thanked President Michelau and all WICHE staff involved with securing the Department of Interior grant, which he said will bring yield immense educational benefits to the region in the years to come.

President Michelau said that the grant additionally allows for Guam to engage in PSEP. There is a bill being brought before the Guam legislature in August 2021 that includes setting up an office to manage PSEP, and WICHE staff will testify at the legislative hearing. She also mentioned that Dennis Mohatt and his BHP team have been working to establish a behavioral health internship program on Guam.

Commissioner Lokken commented that he would encourage the pursuit of other grants that could help meet the higher education needs of the Pacific Island region. President Michelau agreed anything done collectively to pursue financial assistance for that region is worthy and will benefit the entire WICHE region.

President Michelau explained that the Commissioners representing the three territories and freely associated states will be in a rotation that she will discuss with the three current Commissioners – Frankie Eliptico, Jude Hofschneider, and Rodney Jacobs. Further details will be shared soon and the RMI will be up first for the next available delegation seat.

President Michelau was asked if the Pacific Island region will be considered as a meeting location for a future Commission meeting. She said it will be considered and the Commission will need to vote on the upcoming meeting locations for fall 2022 and beyond. The next two Commission meeting locations have already been approved: Portland, Ore., in fall 2021, and Rapid City, S.D., in spring 2022. She noted that Arizona was passed up for hosting the May 2020 Commission Meeting due to the pandemic and working that state back into the meeting location schedule is needed. Discussing and voting on upcoming meeting locations will be done at some point in FY 2022.

INFORMATION ITEM **Update on the Vice President of Programs and Services Search**

President Michelau thanked the several Commissioners whom she and the search consultant contacted for feedback on the position description and advice on how to move forward. She noted their feedback has been valuable to the process of narrowing down the pool of applicants to a list of nine semi-finalist candidates who will be interviewed the week of August 9, 2021. She said that final interviews that will be face-to-face in Boulder, Colo., are scheduled for the last week of August 2021. She plans to announce the new Vice President sometime in September. She said that the job posting attracted a well-qualified and diverse pool of 75 candidates. Jere Mock has not yet set an official retirement date, which will depend on when the new Vice President can join the team. President Michelau said that she is meeting with Jere Mock every other week to ask questions and discuss strategies for a smooth transition.

INFORMATION ITEM **Budget and Audit Update**

Craig Milburn gave a financial report that included the following points:

- The financial figures are down in both revenue and expenses, but down further in expenses than revenue.
- Revenue is down \$209,000 primarily due to loss in indirect cost recovery.
- Expenditures are down primarily because of fewer expenses for Commission Meetings and a few other activities.
- Expenses this year are \$469,000 less than budgeted.

- \$490,000 has been added to the reserves and the organization is in financially healthy going into FY 2022. Milburn also discussed the WICHE audit, which is done on site by RubinBrown the last two weeks of August. The Audit Committee will meet with RubinBrown in October and the audit findings and report will be presented during the November 2021 Commission Meeting. President Michelau identified the Audit Committee's five members, who are Cam Preus (chair), John Arnold, Clayton Christian, Barbara Damron, and Ray Holmberg. She acknowledged previous Audit Committee member Don Bennett, who having served the longest, rolled off the committee. Commissioner Bennett has done a tremendous job over the years and the Commission and staff are grateful for his knowledge and contributions to the committee.

DISCUSSION ITEM

WICHE Draft Commission Meeting Agenda

President Michelau reviewed the draft agenda and pointed out that if the pandemic progresses in a way that causes concern for an in-person meeting, the backup option is a virtual meeting should the Commission vote to pivot.

President Michelau discussed the planned plenary sessions, two of which will focus on WICHE and the Pacific Island Region and another that will focus on federal priorities and state alignment. As for the third plenary session, which has yet to be selected, she noted the survey given out to the Commission for feedback on plenary session options. She asked the committee for feedback on which session would be more compelling: the nexus of critical race theory and freedom of speech, or behavioral health on campuses since the pandemic. The behavioral health session would feature guest Alison Malmon.

President Michelau said several Commissioners have requested a healthy and productive conversation during the Commission Meeting about critical race theory, and possible ways to move forward on the issue. Acknowledging that the term itself generates a variety of thoughts and emotions, she asked for committee members' ideas and suggestions. Among the comments made during the discussion:

- Critical race theory may not be the best term to use. Using "diversity, equity, and inclusion" may be a better approach when discussing how states navigate various political contexts.
- Make sure the session has multiple perspectives when discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion and include panelists who can share their experiences and how they have been working through challenges. (Marlene Tromp, president of Boise State, was mentioned as a possible speaker or panelist.)
- Including diversity, equity and inclusion in the session title could turn some people off. The topic is a good one, but careful wording of the title will be needed to avoid either drama before the session even begins or people skipping the session altogether because of their past experience with ineffective presentations on DEI. Encouraging a robust discussion vs. presentation would be valuable.
- Critical race theory is the right framing for the session discussion whether it is called that or not.
- The session should include a broader conversation about what the landscape actually looks like in terms of options. Can campuses actually determine what can be taught? How do they handle pressures from elected officials?
- Discuss ways the Commission can give guidance to states challenged by the issue of DEI and critical race theory.
- In many cases, states are under pressure to respond to individual professors who might be having certain types of discussions, or to complaints from students about the way they are teaching and leading discussions.
- The session would be an opportunity to hear about examples of how to work through DEI -related issues from the perspective of both campus leaders and state policymakers.
- Allot plenty of time (perhaps two sessions) for this topic.
- It was requested to get a debrief after the Legislative Advisory Committee meets and discusses the DEI topic.
- Also requested was a summary of what is happening in the states, including directives from state governments.

Another session topic that was suggested is the scope and nature of changes will remain post-COVID. Additionally, there was no feedback on having a session focused on behavioral health concerns on campus.

Other Business

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

Adjournment

Commissioner Lassner MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Millner SECONDED. The motion passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m. MDT.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of a Location Change for the WICHE Commission Meeting, November 2022, Due to COVID-19

Summary

In March 2020, all WICHE events and meetings, including the WICHE Commission Meeting, were either moved online, postponed, or cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, the May 2020, WICHE Commission Meeting was to be held at The Benson hotel in Portland, Oregon. WICHE staff are currently in negotiations with The Benson to postpone the November 2021 in-person meeting with no penalty. The Benson hotel has moved the contract twice before (May 2020 and November 2020) without financial penalty. The Benson Hotel is signaling they are willing to allow the organization to hold the WICHE Commission Meeting at its property in November 2022, again without financial penalty. WICHE staff are requesting approval for this 2022 Commission Meeting location change.

Relationship to WICHE's Mission

Central to the WICHE mission is our Commissioners' leadership and ability to serve their states, territories, postsecondary institutions, and students. As we experience an unprecedented global pandemic, protecting the safety and well-being of our Commission must be our top priority and remains the best way to advance WICHE's mission.

Background

The context in which WICHE and all of us currently operate continues to change daily because of the pandemic. While the WICHE Commission decided it was wise to switch to a virtual meeting format from an in-person convening in November 2021, WICHE staff want to remain fiscally prudent. Having the fall 2022 Commission Meeting at The Benson hotel is an opportunity for WICHE to avoid a \$31,000 penalty instead of pursuing an undetermined location in Colorado, and WICHE staff are recommending that we do so. The WICHE Commission previously approved Colorado as the location for the November 2022 meeting, but the financial benefit of changing the location to Portland, Oregon, is significant. In the future, once there is more clarity around the impact of COVID-19 on in-person meetings, staff will ask the WICHE Commission to revisit the list of already approved locations for in-person Commission Meetings as several sites around the West have been skipped.

Actions Requested

If contract negotiations are successful, approval to hold the November 10-11, 2022, Commission Meeting at The Benson hotel in Portland, Oregon, instead of the previously approved Colorado location.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Update on WICHE's Budget

In May 2020, the Commission approved a balanced budget for the FY 2021 General Fund. In June, at the end of FY 2021, the actual revenues exceeded the expenditures, leaving a surplus of \$481,118. This surplus can be seen on the report titled General Fund Budget Comparing FY 2021 with FY 2022. Also, as seen on the second accompanying report titled Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary, all of the WICHE program areas experienced gains as well. Overall, WICHE had a very positive financial year.

All of the WICHE units had excess revenue in FY 2021 and so added to their reserves in FY 2022. As can be seen from the report titled Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary for FY 2021 each of the program areas ended with surplus revenue except for the PSEP and Communications areas which are fully funded by the General Fund. Those two General Fund areas have their expenses covered by General Fund Revenue.

The General Fund began the year with a Reserve of \$3,516,464. WICHE added to this reserve \$481,118 and now has a reserve of \$3,997,582. Of this total, the Commission has designated certain portions to be held for specific purposes.

These are \$427,872 as a minimum reserve, \$356,560 for unexpected shortfalls, and \$850,000 for operating accounts receivable. This leaves \$2,213,150 available for future designations by the Commission and the President. In August 2020 the Commission gave the President authority to designate up to \$150,000 of reserves each year for strategic objectives. These amounts can be seen on the report titled General Fund Budget Comparing FY 2021 with FY 2022.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2022

The FY 2022 General Fund Budget, approved by the Commission at the May 2021 meeting, is also a balanced budget. As of the time of this report, we are only one quarter into the current year, but it appears that the General Fund is operating within budget. Over the next months, the program managers will each monitor progress of their programs and make adjustments as necessary in order to meet their budgets. WICHE staff will submit preliminary FY 2023 budgets to the Executive Committee in February and completed proposed FY 2023 budgets to the full Commission in May.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

General Fund Budget

Comparing FY 2021 with FY 2022

Revenue and Expenditures

October 2021

	FY 2021				FY 2022				
	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2021 Actual	Actual 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 Actual	
Revenue									
4102 Indirect Cost Reimbursements	\$1,200,000	\$1,036,977	(\$163,023)	-13.6%	\$1,200,000	\$0	0.0%	\$163,023	15.7%
4104 Indirect Cost Sharing-WICHE	(\$360,000)	(\$365,441)	(\$5,441)	1.5%	(\$360,000)	\$0	0.0%	\$5,441	-1.5%
4201 Members/Fees States/Institutions	\$2,544,000	\$2,544,000	\$0	0.0%	\$2,544,000	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
4300 Interest	\$30,000	\$21,533	(\$8,467)	-28.2%	\$30,000	\$0	0.0%	\$8,467	39.3%
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	\$8,752	\$7,752	775.2%	\$1,000	\$0	0.0%	(\$7,752)	-88.6%
4850 Credit Card Transaction Rev. / Units	\$120	(\$53)	(\$173)	-143.8%	\$120	\$0	0.0%	\$173	-328.6%
Total Revenue	\$3,570,120	\$3,360,568	(\$209,552)	-5.9%	\$3,570,120	\$0	0.0%	\$209,552	6.2%
Expenditures									
0102 Student Access Program	\$417,147	\$417,031	(\$116)	0.0%	\$433,786	\$16,638	4.0%	\$16,755	4.0%
0104 Policy Analysis & Research	\$466,677	\$424,433	(\$42,244)	-9.1%	\$466,677	\$0	0.0%	\$42,244	10.0%
0105 Communications & Public Affairs	\$488,814	\$345,428	(\$143,386)	-29.3%	\$488,814	\$1	0.0%	\$143,387	41.5%
0106 Programs & Services	\$110,452	\$96,161	(\$14,290)	-12.9%	\$110,452	\$0	0.0%	\$14,291	14.9%
0110 President's Office	\$597,798	\$539,829	(\$57,969)	-9.7%	\$587,798	(\$10,001)	-1.7%	\$47,968	8.9%
0111 Commission Meeting Expense	\$228,024	\$35,823	(\$192,201)	-84.3%	\$228,024	\$1	0.0%	\$192,201	536.5%
0112 Administrative Services	\$892,343	\$780,227	(\$112,117)	-12.6%	\$892,343	\$0	0.0%	\$112,117	14.4%
0115 Miscellaneous Gen. Fund	\$275,281	\$212,336	(\$62,945)	-22.9%	\$275,281	\$0	0.0%	\$62,945	29.6%
0116 Program Development	\$25,750	\$27,879	\$2,129	8.3%	\$25,750	\$0	0.0%	(\$2,129)	-7.6%
0131 LAC Meeting	\$56,671	\$303	(\$56,368)	-99.5%	\$56,671	\$0	0.0%	\$56,368	#####
Total Expenditures	\$3,558,957	\$2,879,450	(\$679,508)	-19.1%	\$3,565,596	\$6,639	0.2%	\$686,146	23.8%
Surplus (Deficit) for the Fiscal Year	\$11,163	\$481,118	\$469,956		\$4,524	(\$6,639)			
Reserves at Beginning of Year									
1 Minimum Reserve	\$427,075	\$427,075	\$0	0.0%	\$427,872	\$797	0.2%	\$797	0.2%
2 Reserve for Unexpected Shortfall	\$355,896	\$355,896	\$0	0.0%	\$356,560	\$664	0.2%	\$664	0.2%
3 Reserve to Operate Accounts Receivable	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$0	0.0%	\$850,000	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
4 President's Strategic Objectives	\$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%	\$2,213,150	\$479,657	27.7%	\$329,657	17.5%
Reserves at Beginning of Year	\$3,516,464	\$3,516,464	\$0	-91.3%	\$3,997,582	\$481,118		\$481,118	
Reserves Dedicated during Year									
6 Deficit (Surplus) for the Fiscal Year above	(\$11,163)	(\$481,118)	\$469,956		(\$4,524)	(\$6,639)	59.5%	(\$476,594)	99.1%
Reserves Dedicated during the Fiscal Year	(\$11,163)	(\$481,118)	\$469,956		(\$4,524)	(\$6,639)		(\$476,594)	
Reserves at End of Year	\$3,527,627	\$3,997,582	\$469,956		\$4,002,106	\$474,480			

(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 the 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 WICHE President to dedicate up to \$150 each year for the President's Strategic Objectives.

Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary for FY 2021

	Programs & Services	Policy Analysis	PSEP	Mental Health	WCET	Communications & Public Affairs
Revenue						
Membership Dues and Fees	\$ 171,543	\$ 464,000		\$ 120,000	\$ 1,689,273	
Conference Registration Fees	\$ -					
Grants and Contracts	\$ 380,383	\$ 383,480		\$ 5,243,199	\$ 5,595,224	
Indirect Cost Sharing						
Interest	\$ (76)	\$ 36		\$ 7	\$ 3,878	
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 255,463	\$ 108,500		\$ 7,576	\$ 54,992	
General Fund Allocation	\$ 96,161	\$ 424,433	\$ 417,031			\$ 345,428
Total Revenue	\$ 903,473	\$ 1,380,449	\$ 417,031	\$ 5,370,781	\$ 7,343,367	\$ 345,428
Expenses						
Salaries	\$ 357,426	\$ 551,047	\$ 238,192	\$ 1,560,706	\$ 1,250,182	\$ 137,604
Benefits	\$ 149,101	\$ 205,986	\$ 93,369	\$ 583,671	\$ 478,974	\$ 52,560
Audit, Legal & Consulting	\$ 164,064	\$ 150,801	\$ 36,876	\$ 1,379,650	\$ 886,670	\$ 98,951
Subcontracts	\$ 1,204	\$ 20,742	\$ -	\$ 602	\$ 3,744,824	\$ -
Travel	\$ (484)	\$ 3,052	\$ -	\$ 37,263	\$ 37,287	\$ -
Printing and Copying	\$ 789	\$ 3,548	\$ 1,073	\$ 20,180	\$ 40	\$ 2,969
Rent	\$ 17,633	\$ 41,689	\$ 15,720	\$ 94,537	\$ 42,497	\$ 20,432
Computer/Network	\$ 26,505	\$ 43,530	\$ 22,465	\$ 120,788	\$ 114,230	\$ 19,203
Communications	\$ 3,703	\$ 7,227	\$ 1,873	\$ 24,815	\$ 15,590	\$ 2,039
Supplies and Expense	\$ 7,499	\$ 124,589	\$ 7,463	\$ 92,519	\$ 96,851	\$ 6,144
Marketing / Depreciation	\$ 900	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 200	\$ 9,718	\$ 5,525
Indirect Costs	\$ 68,240	\$ 103,486	\$ -	\$ 278,748	\$ 202,479	\$ -
Credits for other programs	\$ 1,734	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 28,659	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 798,314	\$ 1,265,698	\$ 417,031	\$ 4,193,679	\$ 6,908,001	\$ 345,428
Excess Revenue (Loss)	\$ 105,160	\$ 114,751	\$ (0)	\$ 1,177,103	\$ 435,365	\$ 0

INFORMATION ITEM

Non-General Fund Reserves for Fiscal Year 2022

Background

Just as the General Fund requires and accumulates reserves, so too must Non-General Fund accounts require and accumulate reserves. 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. Similar to 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.
3. A reasonable amount for one-time unbudgeted program development activities, such as proposal writing, unique software requirements, unique meeting opportunities, etc.

Therefore, WICHE Commission policy states that dedicated reserves for Non-General Fund activities, categorized into minimum reserve, reserve for unexpected shortfall, and program development, shall be reported to the Commission at the Fall Meeting upon official close of the fiscal year and approved by the Commission for the upcoming fiscal year as part of the WICHE annual budget at the Spring Meeting. Further, reserves in excess of this approved amount revert to the General Fund reserve. This past May, the WICHE Commission approved the FY 2022 budget, along with the formula for determining the FY 2022 target reserves for Non-General Fund accounts. The following pages provide a summary of the FY 2022 reserves for the Non-General Fund accounts

FY 2022 WICHE Unit Reserves

	Actual	Calculated
WCET		
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (Core Programs)	\$ 5,195,573	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 1,039,115
20% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 1,039,115
10% Program Development		\$ 519,557
		\$ 2,597,787
FY22 Target Reserve		
FY22 Actual Reserve	\$ 885,948	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ 1,711,839
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (SAN)	\$ 504,815	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 100,963
50% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 252,408
30% Program Development		\$ 151,445
		\$ 504,815
FY22 Target Reserve		
FY22 Actual Reserve	\$ 503,192	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ 1,623
Policy		
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (Core Programs)	\$ 760,811	* May Agenda Book
0% Minimum Reserve		\$ -
N/A Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 100,000
25% Program Development		\$ 190,203
		\$ 290,203
FY22 Target Reserve		
FY22 Actual Reserve	\$ 230,231	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ 59,972
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (W-SARA)	\$ 471,656	
100% Minimum Reserve		\$ 471,656
0% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ -
0% Program Development		\$ -
		\$ 471,656
FY22 Target Reserve		
FY22 Actual Reserve	\$ 306,000	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ 165,656

FY 2022 WICHE Unit Reserves

	Actual	Calculated
Programs & Services		
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (MHEC)	\$ 176,908	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 35,382
50% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 88,454
30% Program Development		\$ 53,072
		\$ 176,908
	FY22 Target Reserve	
	FY22 Actual Reserve	
	\$ 226,748	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ (49,840)
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (Academic Leadership)	\$ 251,679	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 50,336
50% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 125,840
30% Program Development		\$ 75,504
		\$ 251,679
	FY22 Target Reserve	
	FY22 Actual Reserve	
	\$ 320,501	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ (68,822)
FY22 Budget approved May 2021 (Remaining Programs)	\$ 1,318,160	
0% Minimum Reserve		\$ -
N/A Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 100,000
25% Program Development		\$ 329,540
		\$ 429,540
	FY22 Target Reserve	
	FY22 Actual Reserve	
	\$ 17,297	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ 412,243
Behavioral Mental Helath		
FY22 Budget approved May 2021	\$ 6,653,654	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 1,330,731
20% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 1,330,731
10% Program Development		\$ 665,365
		\$ 3,326,827
	FY22 Target Reserve	
	FY22 Actual Reserve	
	\$ 2,139,326	
<i>Additional Allowed (Excess) Reserve</i>		\$ 1,187,501

WICHE



References

[WICHE Factsheet](#)

[WICHE FY 2022 Workplan](#)

[WICHE Commission](#)

[Future Commission Meeting Dates](#)

[Commission Committees](#)

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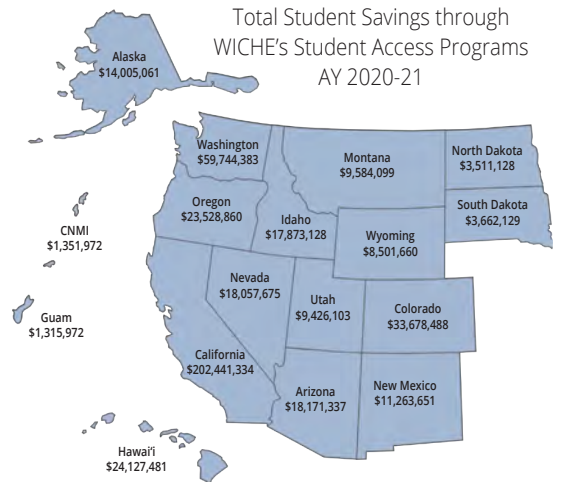
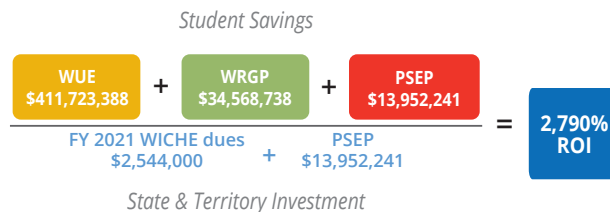
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

A trusted partner in regional collaboration, resource-sharing, sound public policy, and innovation since 1953

WICHE ...

Provides strong return on investment

- 45,489 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, Hawaii, 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 (TWW)** was created. Following well-researched models shown to effectively reduce suicide, TWW 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 66 institutions in 21 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 and WCET are working with the other regional higher education compacts to increase access, affordability, and equity using Open Educational Resources (OER) by working with leaders, policymakers, higher education systems, institutions, and other organizations to scale the usage of high-quality OER resources to promote success for students. WICHE's activities focus on the Western region.

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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Donn Liston

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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 continues to partner with our states, institutions, and partners to respond and be proactive during the COVID-19 pandemic. WICHE has facilitated peer-to-peer videoconferences for higher education leaders to connect and identify solutions to common challenges; followed legislation passed in response to the crisis; and identified 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 has hosted webinars that offer guidance to support the mental wellbeing of their students, and WCET has provided updates and resources to help institutions address issues that arise due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

October 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 Workplan FY 2022



FOCUS AREAS

Access & Success

Accountability

Finance &
Affordability

Technology &
Innovation

Workforce & Society

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 has prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

The WICHE 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) • 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

Programs and Services

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.

Programs and Services

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		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

Programs and Services

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.

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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.

Programs and Services

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.

Policy Analysis and Research

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

Policy Analysis and Research

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

Policy Analysis and Research


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

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.

Behavioral Health

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

Behavioral Health

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)	
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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.

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.

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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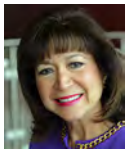
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October 2021

Future Commission Meeting Dates

2022

May 16-17, 2022 - South Dakota

November 10-11, 2022 - Colorado

2023

May 2023 - Nevada

November 9-10, 2023 - California

2021 COMMISSION COMMITTEES

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

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Larry Tidemann (SD)
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October 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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NEVADA

Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson
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NEW MEXICO

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NORTH DAKOTA

***Senator Ray Holmberg** (appointed 2015)
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Senator Karen Krebsbach (appointed 2021)
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Representative Bob Martinson (appointed 2021)
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Representative Mark Sanford (appointed 2021)
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OREGON

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Senator Rob Wagner (appointed 2021)
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SOUTH DAKOTA

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Senator Reynold Nesiba (appointed 2021)
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Representative Tim Reed (appointed 2021)
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Representative Larry Tidemann (appointed 2021)
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UTAH

Representative Melissa Ballard (appointed 2021)
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Senator Michael McKell (appointed 2021)
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Representative Kelly Miles (appointed 2021)
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***Senator Ann Millner** (appointed 2019)
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WASHINGTON

***Representative Gerry Pollet** (appointed 2015)

Washington House of Representatives

132C Legislative Building

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VACANCY

WYOMING

***Senator Fred Baldwin** (appointed 2017)

Wyoming State Senate

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Representative Mark Kinner (appointed 2021)

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September 2021

Changes to this list should be directed to:

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✉ csedney@wiche.edu

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

HUMAN RESOURCES

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Julie Esterline, Human Resources Assistant

IT SERVICES

Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services
Gary Toon, Windows Systems Administrator

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Raymonda Burgman, Vice President
Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access Programs
Cherie Curtin, Senior Administrative Coordinator
Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director of Operations & Leadership Initiatives
Sarah Leibrandt, Director of Academic Leadership Initiatives
Jennifer Raby, Administrative Assistant III
Kate Springsteen, Assistant Director of Student Access Programs

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
Jason Alves, Director of Veterans Initiatives
Madison Chamberlain, Data Specialist
Janell Daly, Administrative Assistant III
Jasmine Davis, Technical Assistance Associate
Nicole Eastin, Fidelity Reviewer (AZ)
John Gomez, Director of Operations
Vanessa Gonzalez, Technical Assistance Associate
Andie Hancock, Budget Coordinator
Todd Helvig, Director of Education and Training
Ann Jones, Director of Research and Evaluation
Bobbi Perkins, Technical Expert Lead, Rural Communities Opioid Response Project
Annette Robertson, Fidelity Reviewer (AZ)
Gretchen Stage, Together With Veterans Program Manager
Emma Tilson, Technical Assistance Coordinator
Ivory Tubbs, Technical Expert Lead, Rural Communities Opioid Response Project
Darlene Williams, Administrative Assistant III

WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES (WCET)

Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education, WICHE
Rosa Calabrese, Manager, Digital Design
Emilie Cook, Manager, Communications, Every Learner Everywhere
Laura DaVinci, Associate Director, Every Learner Everywhere
Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET, and Service Design and Strategy Officer, Every Learner Everywhere
Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, Policy Innovations, State Authorization Network
Lindsey Downs, Assistant Director, Communications and Community
Leigha Fletcher, Administrative Assistant III, State Authorization Network
Sherri Artz Gilbert, Senior Director, Operations and Membership Administration
Norma Hollebeke, Manager of Network Programs and Services, Every Learner Everywhere
Joyce Holliday, Administrative Assistant III
Kathryn Kerensky, Director, Digital Learning, Policy and Compliance, State Authorization Network

**WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL
TECHNOLOGIES (WCET) - continued**

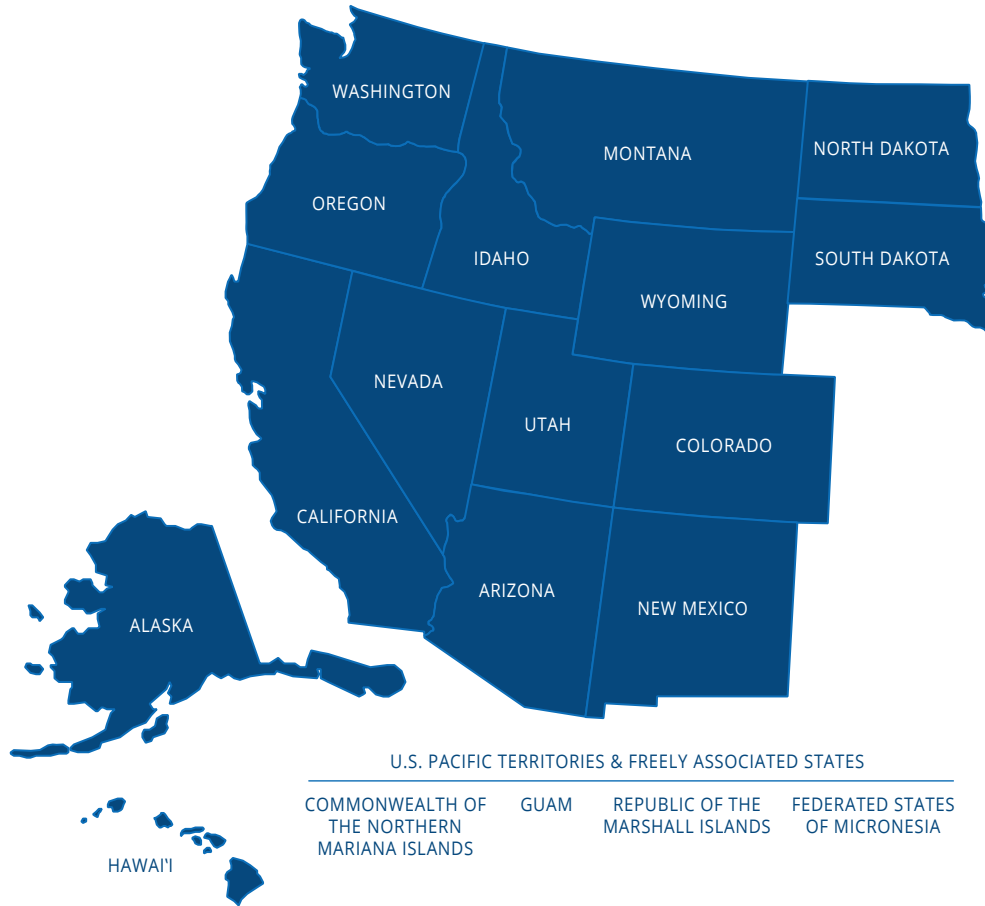
Kim Nawrocki, Coordinator, Events and Programs
Robert Perez, Senior Manager of Business Operations and
Strategic Initiatives, Every Learner Everywhere
Megan Raymond, Senior Director, Membership and
Programs
Tanya Spilovoy, Director, Open Policy
Rachael Stachowiak, Director, Interstate Policy and
Compliance, State Authorization Network
Jessica Rowland Williams, Director, Every Learner
Everywhere

September 2021

WICHE Organization



MAPS OF WICHE REGION



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	apiascholars.org
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
ACCT	Association of Community College Trustees	acct.org
ACE	American Council on Education	acenet.edu
ACT	College admission testing program	act.org
ACTA	American Council of Trustees and Alumni	goacta.org
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	ada.gov
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 Healthcare Research and Quality	ahrq.gov
AIHEC	American Indian Higher Education Consortium	aihec.org
AIR	American Institutes of Research	air.org
AIR	Association for Institutional Research	airweb.org
ALLIANCE	Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-alliance-of-community-college-academic-leaders	
APA	American Psychological Association	apa.org
APLU	Association of Public and Land-grant Universities	aplu.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

CIC	Council of Independent Colleges	cic.edu
CLASP	Center for Law and Social Policy	clasphome.org
CMHC	Community Mental Health Centers	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 Accreditation	accreditation.apa.coa
COE	Council for Opportunity in Education	coenet.org
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
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 (ESSA)	ed.gov/essa
ED-FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	studentprivacy.ed.gov
ED-FSA	Federal Student Aid	ed.gov/about/offices/list/fsa
ED-IES	Institute of Education Sciences	ies.ed.gov
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	oese.ed.gov
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
EDUCAUSE	An association for higher ed change via technology and info resources	educause.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
FORHP	Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (HRSA)	hrsa.gov/rural-health
FORUM	Western Academic Leadership Forum	wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/western-academic-leadership-forum/
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center	ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/federally-qualified-health-centers
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations	gdpr.edu
GME	Graduate Medical Education	aamc.org/professional-development/affinity-groups/gea/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/policy-advocacy/pages/HEA-ED/Higher-Education-Act.aspx
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	hhs.gov
HLC	Higher Learning Commission	hlcommission.org
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration	hrsa.gov
IES	Institute for Education Sciences	ies.ed.gov/

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/programs/midwestern-state-authorization-reciprocity-agreement
McREL	Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning	mcrel.org
MHA	Mental Health America	mhanational.org
MHEC	Midwestern Higher Education Compact	mhec.org
MHTTC	Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers	mhttcnetwork.org
MIRECC	Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center	miracc.va.gov
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/sara
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
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	nafeonation.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
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	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
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	wiche.edu/open-educational-resources-in-the-west-to-advance-college-affordability
OLC	Online Learning Consortium	onlinelearningconsortium.org
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment	oecd.org/pisa
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/state-authorization-sara
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/sfarn.shtml
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	acpe.alaska.gov/
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.edu
NMC	Northern Marianas College	marianas.edu
NMHED	New Mexico Higher Education Department	hed.state.nm.us
NSHE	Nevada System of Higher Education	nshe.nevada.edu/
HECC	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
WSAC	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
SLDS	State Longitudinal Data System	nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/
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
UCEA	University Council for Educational Administration	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
W-SARA	Western State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/w-sara
WAGS	Western Association of Graduate Schools	wagsonline.org
WASC-ACCJC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges	accjc.org
WCET	WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies	wcet.wiche.edu
WDQC	Workforce Data Quality Campaign	dataqualitycampaign.org
WDQI	Workforce Data Quality Initiative	dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/wdqi
WGA	Western Governors' Association	westgov.org
WICHE	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education	wiche.edu
WIN	Western Institute of Nursing	winursing.org
WIOA	Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act	dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa
WPSHA	Western Psychiatric State Hospital Association	wpsa.org
WRGP	Western Regional Graduate Program	wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wrgp
WSDSG	Western States Decision Support Group (WICHE BH Data Analysis Group)	wiche.edu/western-states-decision-support-group
WUE	Western Undergraduate Exchange	wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wue
YI	Young Invincibles	younginvincibles.org



Thank you for attending the Fall 2021 Commission Meeting. This has been a historic year for WICHE, with more aspiring students gaining access to tuition savings, workforce opportunities, and behavioral health programs, than ever before. Our efforts across the West are thanks to your continued support and spirit of collaboration, and this is sure to benefit us all – now and in the future.

We look forward to seeing you at the Spring Commission Meeting on May 16-17, 2022, in Rapid City, South Dakota.

-Demi Michelau

Working for the **West** 

Rapid City, SD May 16-17, 2022