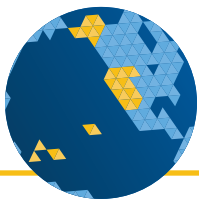




May 8-9, 2023 | Phoenix, Arizona

COMMISSION MEETING



ALASKA • ARIZONA • CALIFORNIA • COLORADO • HAWAII • IDAHO • MONTANA • NEVADA • NEW MEXICO • NORTH DAKOTA • OREGON • SOUTH DAKOTA • U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES • UTAH • WASHINGTON • WYOMING

WICHE COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, May 7, 2023 *Kimpton Hotel – Palomar Phoenix • All meeting rooms are on Level 3 of the hotel*

Noon - 1:00 p.m. **Optional lunch for New Commissioners, Certifying Officers, and WICHE Staff**
Calavera Junior Ballroom

1:00 – 4:00 p.m. **Certifying Officers Meeting**
Mural I

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. **New Commissioner Orientation**
Mural II

6:00 p.m. **Dinner for New Commissioners**
Meet in Hotel Lobby on Level 2

New WICHE Commissioners and WICHE Officers are invited to dinner at the nearby restaurant *Blanco Cocina + Cantina* at 123 E. Washington St.

6:00 p.m. **Dinner for Certifying Officers and Student Access Program Staff**
Meet in Hotel Lobby on Level 2

Certifying officers are invited to dinner with SAP staff at a nearby restaurant.

Monday, May 8, 2023

7:30 - 9:15 a.m. **Full Breakfast Available for Commissioners, Staff, and Guests**
Calavera Junior Ballroom

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. **Executive Committee Meeting (Open and Closed Sessions)** 1-1
Zia II

9:15 - 9:30 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks** 2-1
Dreamcatcher Ballroom

Welcome: Governor Katie Hobbs (INVITED)

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. **Plenary Session I – Questioning the Value of Postsecondary Education: What Does That Mean for the West and What Can We Do About It?** 3-1
Dreamcatcher Ballroom

Facilitator: Commissioner Matt Freeman (ID), WICHE Chair

Speaker: Commissioner José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)

10:30 - 10:45 a.m. **Break**

10:45 a.m. - Noon **Programs and Services Committee Meeting** 4-1
Zia II

10:45 a.m. - Noon **Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting** 5-1
Zia I

10:45 a.m. - Noon **Behavioral Health Committee Meeting** 6-1
Mural II

10:45 a.m. - Noon **Technology-Enhanced Education (EdTech) Committee Meeting** 7-1
Mural I

Noon - 1:15 p.m. **Networking Lunch**
Calavera Junior Ballroom

The WICHE Roundtables are facilitated, interactive discussions aimed at providing commissioners with the opportunity to leverage diverse perspectives to explore relevant topics aligned with WICHE's strategic priorities.

1:15 - 2:30 p.m. **Roundtable 1 (Access & Success) – The Intersection of Demographics, Declining Enrollments, and Dual Credit** 8-1
Zia I

Facilitator: Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research, WICHE

1:15 - 2:30 p.m. **Roundtable 2 (Workforce & Society) – Workforce in the West: Today and Tomorrow** 8-1
Mural I

Facilitator: Brian Prescott, President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

1:15 - 2:30 p.m. **Roundtable 3 (Value & Accountability) – Challenging the Assumptions About the Value of Postsecondary Education** 8-1
Zia II

Facilitator: Rob Anderson, President, State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

2:30 - 2:45 p.m. **Break**

2:45 - 4:00 p.m. **Special Plenary Session - Postsecondary Education at a Crossroads After 70 Years: What's Ahead for Postsecondary Education in the West?** 9-1
Dreamcatcher Ballroom

Introductions and Remarks: Demarée Michelau, President, WICHE

Facilitator: Commissioner Clayton Christian (MT)

Speaker: Casey Lozar, Vice President and Director of the Center for Indian Country Development, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and member, Montana Board of Regents

Honored Guests:

Richard Jonsen, Former Executive Director, WICHE

David Longanecker, Former President, WICHE

5:45 - 8:30 p.m. **Celebration of WICHE's 70th Anniversary – Reception and Dinner** 10-1
Location:

*Hyatt Compass Restaurant
Downtown Phoenix
122 N. 2nd Street*

The hotel sponsors a daily reception in the Level 2 lobby beginning at 5:00 p.m.

At 5:45 p.m. the dinner guests will depart from the hotel from the Level 2 lobby to walk (or ride) to the Hyatt Compass Restaurant.

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

7:00 - 8:30 a.m.

*Dreamcatcher Ballroom
Lobby*

Full Breakfast Available for Commissioners, Staff, and Guests

State Delegations will meet over breakfast to discuss the Committee of the Whole— Business Meeting action items in the lobby dining areas outside of Dreamcatcher Ballroom.

The WICHE Roundtables will be held again to allow commissioners the opportunity to attend another interactive discussion.

8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Zia I

Roundtable 1, (Access & Success) – The Intersection of Demographics, Declining Enrollments, and Dual Credit

8-1

Facilitator: Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research, WICHE

8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Mural I

Roundtable 2 (Workforce & Society) – Workforce in the West: Today and Tomorrow

8-1

Facilitator: Brian Prescott, President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Zia II

Roundtable 3 (Value & Accountability) – Challenging the Assumptions About the Value of Postsecondary Education

8-1

Facilitator: Rob Anderson, President, State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

9:45 - 10:00 a.m.

Break

10:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Dreamcatcher Ballroom

Roundtable Roundup

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.

Dreamcatcher Ballroom

Committee of the Whole – Business Session Agenda

11-1

11:45 a.m.

Closing Remarks: Commissioner Matt Freeman, WICHE Chair

Meeting Evaluation: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/May2023CommMtg>

Thank you for your feedback!





EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting

Monday, May 8, 2023
8:00 – 9:00 a.m.
Level 3, Zia II

Agenda

1 Executive

2 Welcome

3 Plenary I

4 Programs

5 Policy

6 Behavioral

7 EdTech

8 Roundtable

9 Special

10 Anniversary

11 Business

12 References

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday
May 8, 2023

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Zia II

Committee Members

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Agenda (Open)



Approval of the March 15, 2023, Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Discussion Item

Overview of the May 2023 Commission Meeting Schedule

Other Business

Agenda (Closed)



Review of the WCHE President's Performance and Adoption of the FY 2024 Performance Objectives

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the March 15, 2023, Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Sheila Stearns (MT) (*proxy for Clayton Christian*)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Kevin Carman (WY) (*proxy for Fred Baldwin*)

Commissioners Absent

Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Other Commissioners Present

Pearl Brower (AK)

Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the Commission
Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and Research
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-Director, MHTTC, Behavioral Health Program
Shelley Plutto, Project Manager, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and Research
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET & Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education

Call to Order

Chair Matt Freeman welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. He asked Laura Ewing to call the roll. A quorum was established.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Chair Freeman asked for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections. Chair Freeman declared the February 8, 2023, minutes approved as submitted and reviewed.

Information Item

SARA POLICY MODIFICATION PROCESS UPDATE

Patrick Lane provided an update on the SARA Policy Modification Process. He said a public forum for the SARA policy proposals was held on March 1, 2023. The public forum allowed those who submitted policy modifications to present their proposal. There is a window of opportunity to amend or withdraw any of the submitted proposals. The W-SARA region will not withdraw any of its proposals. There is a current discussion with the other regional compacts, and W-SARA staff will be reaching out to

others that have submitted similar proposals to determine the potential for alignment and combining proposals. There may be slight changes to the proposals if they are combined with others, but topical areas will remain the same. As soon as amended versions are received, there will be an opportunity to make public comments on the proposals. WICHE staff, with guidance from the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC), may provide limited public comments on some proposals. Any comments would be consistent with the 2021 WICHE resolution and the more recent resolution that originated from the Policy Analysis and Research Committee, which directs staff to support increased consumer protections. WICHE will exercise its decisional authority by September 1, 2023. Lane said that while the policy modification process is new and somewhat long, it is open and transparent.

During the discussion of the information item, Commissioner Robert Shireman said his colleague at The Century Foundation has been involved in the SARA policy modification process and that it has indeed been a cooperative and constructive process. Commissioner Shireman thanked Lane, President Demarée Michelau, and those involved with the process. He commented that the modification process is moving in the right direction and that stakeholders are adapting to the new, modified process well.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF NEW MEXICO'S SARA STATE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Molly Hall-Martin presented an overview of New Mexico's renewal of its membership in SARA for another two years. New Mexico currently has 24 total participating institutions that include 16 public, four private not-for-profit, three for-profit, and one tribal college, including two new institutions since the state's last renewal. According to the most recent SARA data available (fall 2021), New Mexico's SARA institutions enrolled 5,308 distance education students through SARA, and 12,121 students located in New Mexico were enrolled in distance education from SARA institutions based in other SARA member states/territories. During the renewal period, New Mexico reviewed and resolved two student complaints. No institutions were denied renewal, and one is on provisional status for accreditation-related issues.

Hall-Martin said that Luna Community College is on provisional status because it is on probation with its accreditor due to actions taken by its board. This is its second year on provisional status for this issue. Under current SARA policy, the issue must be resolved before the next renewal date.

She said one institution is undergoing a change of ownership per SARA policy, but it is not a traditional change of ownership case. A public institution that was formerly part of the New Mexico State system is in the process of becoming a stand-alone community college following legislative action. W-SARA has been working closely with Alicia Armijo, the State Portal Entity (SPE) and Regional Steering Committee (RSC) representative for New Mexico, and NC-SARA to ensure that the institution's transition goes smoothly.

During the renewal period, one institution was on the Heightened Cash Monitoring (HCM) list for a late audit due to a staffing transition. The issue has been resolved, and recent communications from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) staff indicate that the institution has been removed from HCM status and returned to good standing.

W-SARA staff has found New Mexico to be compliant with SARA policy, and the Regional Steering Committee has unanimously recommended the state for renewal.

Commissioner Barbara Damron MOVED TO APPROVE New Mexico's SARA renewal. Commissioner Fred Lokken SECONDED the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF WYOMING'S SARA STATE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Hall-Martin presented an overview of Wyoming's renewal of its membership in SARA for another two years. She said that

Wyoming currently has eight participating institutions, all of which are public. According to the most recent SARA data available (fall 2021), Wyoming's SARA institutions enrolled 783 distance education students through SARA, and 5,160 students located in Wyoming were enrolled in distance education from SARA institutions based in other SARA member states/territories.

Hall-Martin said the state of Wyoming's authorizing statutes have not changed since the state joined SARA. There have been no major changes to the agency that serves as the State Portal Entity (SPE), no student complaints, no institutions placed on provisional status or denied renewal, and no changes of ownership. There are no new SARA participating institutions in Wyoming since its last renewal. She said that in August 2021, the Gillette Community College District (GCCD) was formed. GCCD is currently under the accreditation status of Northern Wyoming Community College District and participates in SARA through that affiliation. When GCCD reaches full accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, it will apply to participate in SARA as a separate institution.

Hall-Martin reported that Eastern Wyoming College (EWC) is on HCM2 status as it works to recover from a cyberattack suffered in the summer of 2021. The cyberattack resulted in the institution's student and campus information systems being erased. It has worked to rebuild the networks, but student data and processes were lost. One of the consequences of this ransomware attack is that EWC could not report data to ED for financial aid purposes. It was able to make financial awards based on institution reserves and foundation money, but could not account for and back up the information as it usually would. Rob Dennis, the SPE, has reported that EWC remains on HCM2, but he anticipates the issue will be resolved and says that EWC has been working very diligently to repair its data systems.

W-SARA staff has found Wyoming to be in compliance with SARA policy, and the RSC unanimously recommended the state for renewal.

Commissioner Kevin Carman asked for clarification about the number of institutions listed as SARA members. He noted that Gillette College is a new institution and may not have been included on the original state renewal form due to the timing of the renewal process. Hall-Martin explained that Gillette College participates in SARA by affiliation with Northern Wyoming Community College District. The number will increase to nine institutions when Gillette College obtains full accreditation and applies for SARA participation.

Commissioner Carman MOVED TO APPROVE Wyoming's renewal. Commissioner Lokken SECONDED the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

Information Item

UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WICHE'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM

President Michelau gave an update on WICHE's Paid Family Leave Program. She and staff are working with a consultant to develop a program that the Commission will vote on during the May 2023 Commission Meeting. The program's goal is to maintain the current sick leave conversion program, not reduce current benefits, and make it affordable to WICHE. The program should be consistent with Colorado law and compliant with the states' laws where staff members reside outside of Colorado. She said the program will most likely not include the short-term disability (STD) benefit because the program will replace STD. She said she hopes to have a definitive plan by March 30, 2023; the plan details will move forward as an action item at the May 2023 Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Kathleen Goepfinger asked about WICHE'S deadline for the Paid Family Leave Program. President Michelau said WICHE's plan will be in place by January 1, 2024.

Information Item

UPDATE ON THE EVALUATION OF THE WICHE PRESIDENT

Chair Freeman reported that the evaluation of President Michelau is in progress. He said that the external evaluator has completed all staff and commissioner interviews. The next step is a survey that will go out to staff, the Commission, and

funders. President Michelau will submit her performance evaluation and FY 2024 goals, and the external evaluator will submit a written report to the Executive Committee during the May 2023 Commission Meeting.

Discussion Item

UPDATE ON THE WICHE BUDGET

President Michelau reported the following budget details:

- ▶ The Audit Committee met and selected a new auditor for the FY 2023 audit.
- ▶ The Investment Committee has met and will report to the Committee of the Whole during the May 2023 Commission Meeting.
- ▶ Only one state has not paid the FY 2023 dues. She has been in contact with the state and has been reassured that payment will soon be submitted.
- ▶ She and Craig Milburn are working with the federal government contacts on the TAP/DOI grant and reviewing their reporting requirements.
- ▶ Revenues exceed projections in both indirect revenues and interest gained.
- ▶ The FY 2023 Commission Meeting budget is higher than budgeted due to interest, consultants contracted for Commission Meeting activities, and travel expenses for the Pacific Island members to attend the fall and spring Commission Meetings.
 - ▶ The reserve budget has not been used to offset the Commission budget due to the positive overall revenue numbers.
 - ▶ President Michelau will request that the Commission Meeting budget be increased in FY 2024 to take into account the cost trends of meetings and the increase in travel-related expenses.
 - ▶ Forecasted travel and related expenses for President Michelau, Patrick Lane, and the officers to travel to the Pacific Islands are reflected in the FY 2023 Commission Meeting budget.

There were no questions or discussions following President Michelau's report.

Discussion Item

WICHE WORKPLAN, VISION STATEMENT, AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

President Michelau said that the unit projects and status updates pertaining to the Workplan draft will be discussed during the committee meetings at the May 2023 Commission Meeting. After the committees give feedback and suggestions on unit work and activities, the Workplan will be finalized by July 1, 2023.

She and staff have focused on feedback received during the November 2022 Strategy Session. The vision statement has been revised to be less wordy. The focus areas have also been revised and now are called WICHE's Strategic Priorities. The revisions will be presented to the Committee of the Whole at the May 2023 Commission Meeting. There were no questions or discussion following President Michelau's report.

Discussion Item

WICHE COMMISSION MEETING AND 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

President Michelau reviewed the May 2023 Commission Meeting agenda, which included speakers, facilitators, plenary sessions, and roundtable topics for commissioner discussion. Chair Freeman said he hopes that the Commission finds the introduction of roundtable discussions both helpful and engaging. President Michelau gave details about the 70th Anniversary celebration dinner and mentioned several guests who are invited. During the discussion, questions about transportation to the dinner were answered. Commissioner Antwan Jefferson shared his thoughts about the direction of the roundtable discussions.

The Strategic Priority of Innovation was discussed, and how it would not be included in the roundtables at the May 2023 Commission Meeting. President Michelau commented that possibly the theme of the November 2023 Commission Meeting could be dedicated to the Strategic Priority of Innovation. This focus area could be discussed in more depth, and an expanded exploration ensued on the topic.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

Adjournment

The Executive Committee adjourned at 4:40 p.m. MDT.

ACTION ITEM: Review of the WICHE President's Performance and Adoption of the FY 2024 Performance Objectives

Background

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

Evaluation of the WICHE President's Performance

According to the Commission policy established in May 2022, the annual performance review of the President is informed by the president's self-evaluation and the Commission's evaluation of the president. Once per year, at the May Commission meeting and during the closed portion of the Executive Committee meeting, the chair of the Commission, in concert with the Commission officers, presents, either in writing or orally, an evaluation of the president's performance, judged against the objectives that have been established and approved by the Commission at the previous May Commission meeting. Typically, they will invite input from all commissioners sitting in the closed Executive Committee meeting. The exception is during those years when the Commission chooses to secure an external consultant to review the president's performance as was done this year.

The following pages reflect five items:

- ▶ The WICHE President's self-evaluation summary statement;
- ▶ The FY 2023 performance objectives for the WICHE President that the WICHE Executive Committee approved on May 16, 2022, and the status that briefly describes the extent to which those goals have been met;
- ▶ The summary of regional engagement;
- ▶ The summary results of the staff engagement survey, and
- ▶ The proposed FY 2024 performance goals and objectives for the WICHE President.

Before the Commission Meeting, a separate evaluation of the President's performance by WICHE Chair Matt Freeman, which was informed by the external evaluation conducted by ITCB Consulting, was provided to the Executive Committee.

Action Requested

The following actions are requested:

- ▶ Determine the extent to which the President has fulfilled the responsibilities of her position over the previous year.
- ▶ Assist the President in understanding what portions of the job have been accomplished well and what needs to be improved upon.
- ▶ Determine the President's remuneration for the coming year, and
- ▶ Approve the FY 2024 performance goals and objectives for the WICHE President.

WICHE President Demarée Michelau FY 2023 Self-Evaluation

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The following pages outline my FY 2023 performance goals and objectives and the status of whether those goals have been met. While this is intended to provide a description of my key activities and accomplishments over the past year, this summary statement provides additional reflections and context. For FY 2023, the WICHE Commission approved my annual goals and objectives that exist within five key responsibility areas; they are to:

- ▶ Successfully administer the day-to-day WICHE operations
- ▶ Develop and maintain WICHE member relations
- ▶ Ensure relevant and innovative programs and services
- ▶ Provide high-quality policy guidance, research, and technical assistance to constituents
- ▶ Strategically develop the organization

SUCCESSFULLY ADMINISTER THE DAY-TO-DAY WICHE OPERATIONS

Successfully administering the day-to-day operations of WICHE requires a combination of decisiveness and flexibility. As I indicated in FY 2022, the need for high-level IT security is imperative at WICHE and at the same time, WICHE's business needs are evolving. To meet these demands, I continue to rely on a combination of staff and consultants to expand our capacity and more quickly and effectively evolve the organization. This is a business decision that I have made based on four primary reasons: 1) consultants allow us to expand and constrict staffing as the needs change; 2) overseeing technical staff is not in WICHE's area of expertise, and by relying on firms that specialize in these areas, they have the ability to help WICHE ensure that we receive high-quality services; and 3) the recruitment of IT and software talent in the current labor market is difficult, and there is high turnover. Consulting firms are better positioned to handle turnover without gaps in productivity; and 4) I am able to oversee the operations at a high-level, which is appropriate for my position.

This past year, WICHE has experienced the usual amount of turnover, and we have been able to attract larger, more diverse, and highly-qualified candidate pools than in recent years, which were plagued by the pandemic and a challenging labor market. WICHE has hired incredibly talented staff this past year, and they hit the ground running in their respective positions.

WICHE once again is in a solid financial position and received a clean audit for FY 2022. However, the auditors found a significant deficiency in internal control, which pertained to a contract with the Veterans Administration that supports Together with Veterans, an initiative of the Behavioral Health Program. Consistent with the provisions of the contract, revenue should be recognized when the contracted service has been completed at the monthly fee for the specified services. Under accrual basis accounting, revenue should be recognized in the period in which it is earned based upon the fee that is allocated to the service. WICHE staff are clear on what needs to occur going forward, and the Audit Committee is fully informed on what transpired.

Last year, I reflected on the fact that I was spending a disproportionate amount of my time managing the Salesforce environment and work related to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). I am pleased to share that I have streamlined our Salesforce governance and processes so that I am overseeing it at a high level, and my work around SARA is at a much more appropriate level. Changes at NC-SARA have resulted in much closer collaboration with compact staff, and while everyone was busy implementing the new policy modification process, I spent far fewer hours managing a difficult relationship.

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN WICHE MEMBER RELATIONS

Developing and maintaining strong relationships in the region is a top priority and my favorite part of this job. This past year, I spent a lot of time in the states, and I visited the Pacific. I continued virtual engagement, but nothing can replace face-to-face interaction. I continued peer-to-peer videoconferences for state higher education executive officers (although at a lesser frequency), provided legislative testimony, facilitated meetings, engaged in one-on-one interaction, etc., all of which can be referenced in the summary of regional engagement. I continue to have strong relationships with the presidents of the other

regional higher education compacts, similar organizations, as well as folks throughout higher education, all of which benefit the region. Through these relationships, I am better able to keep my finger on the pulse of what is happening throughout the West, be responsive to the region's needs, and anticipate what might be coming down the road.

ENSURE RELEVANT AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In its service to the West, WICHE always strives to identify relevant programs and services, but this year, staff are especially focused on doing so. Not only have we been informed through the recent Strategy Session, but our consistent engagement informs us as well. I will cite a few examples, but there are many others throughout the organization that are worth recognizing and are left out due to space constraints. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is convening the Western Working Group on Health Workforce Shortages, comprised of key stakeholders, whose goals are to: 1. Clearly identify the challenges that Western states and Pacific jurisdictions are facing with respect to the healthcare workforce. 2. Explore relevant data to inform discussions about the healthcare workforce in the West. 3. Identify and share promising strategies and solutions among WICHE members. 4. Identify ways that WICHE, either through its Student Access Programs or other initiatives, can support Western states and Pacific jurisdictions in improving the healthcare workforce. In addition, staff continue to develop the WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities, an academy in which faculty will offer leadership development to tenured humanities faculty members. With staff support from the Senior Director, State Authorization Network and WCET Policy Innovations, and with the assistance of Commissioner Rick Aman (ID), WICHE worked with the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), in coordination with the Idaho State Board of Education, and all eight of Idaho's public two-year and four-year higher education institutions, to conduct a Leadership Tabletop Exercise for Institutions of Higher Education that focused on cybersecurity threats. Finally, WICHE has engaged NCHEMS to conduct an assessment of the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) to examine whether the fields are still responsive to the West's workforce needs or whether adjustments should be made. These are just a few examples of how WICHE is evolving our programs and services across the organization to serve the West, and I am excited about what is to come.

PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY POLICY GUIDANCE, RESEARCH, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CONSTITUENTS

This past year, WICHE has been exceptionally strong in areas related to policy guidance, research, and technical assistance, most notably in areas related to state authorization of distance education and reciprocity. The Policy Analysis and Research staff, in collaboration with the WCET and State Authorization Network staff, have done a tremendous amount of high-quality work, and I have relied on their expertise to work to preserve the state and territorial voice in SARA. W-SARA's leadership, with the direct support of our Regional Steering Committee, has led to the adoption of a new policy modification process that is currently being implemented. The unit has also worked directly with states on issues pertaining to workforce pipeline and demand issues, governance, and mission. In addition, WICHE has continued to provide high-quality policy guidance, research, and technical assistance through its direct work with states and through the Behavioral Health Program.

STRATEGICALLY DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION

This year, WICHE engaged in a Strategy Session during the November 2022 Commission Meeting that resulted in action steps that will guide the organization into the future. WICHE is celebrating its 70th year, and this is the perfect time to examine the path forward to ensure our relevance and effectiveness. In addition, I continue to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones with funders. While relationships are important, philanthropic partners want to fund organizations that deliver, and WICHE has a long-standing tradition of doing relevant and trustworthy work. My role as the ambassador to the funders is important, but in the end, successful fundraising is a result of having innovative ideas that produce positive outcomes and align with funders' goals. That can only be accomplished by a committed and talented staff.

Overall, FY 2022 has been a productive and positive year. It has taken a while, perhaps due to the pandemic or maybe it simply took this long, but I finally feel like I am hitting my stride. There are challenges facing higher education and the West, but WICHE is uniquely positioned to be effective in this environment. The Commission is especially strong, with a clear understanding of its role and the opportunities before them, and I appreciate the commissioners' willingness to support my leadership and growth. Finally, I am fortunate to work alongside a committed and talented staff and with remarkable colleagues across the country.

WICHE President Demarée Michelau Self-Evaluation – FY 2023 Performance Objectives

The following FY 2023 performance objectives for the WICHE President were approved by the WICHE Executive Committee on May 16, 2022; also included is whether the goal was accomplished as of March 27, 2023.

KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 1: SUCCESSFULLY ADMINISTER THE DAY-TO-DAY WICHE OPERATIONS	
Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
1. Maintain a balanced budget for FY 2023 and find a way within a balanced budget to provide modest merit-based salary increases to staff.	Accomplished. The FY 2023 revenues exceeded expenditures, and while staying within a balanced budget, the Commission approved a 4.0% performance-based increase to staff who performed at exceptionally high levels over the past year. In addition, the Commission approved an additional scaled-flat rate increase for staff to mitigate the effects of inflation, which was aimed at staff on the lower end of the salary scale, especially those in administrative support positions.
2. Implement effective strategies to recruit and attract diverse applicant pools for position vacancies.	Accomplished, but this is an ongoing focus. Recruiting talent in the post COVID-19 environment has been challenging, but the applicant pools that WICHE have attracted have been high-quality and diverse in background, experience, and demographic composition as demonstrated by the recent staff who have joined the WICHE team.
3. Advance a workplace culture that supports and values diversity and inclusivity.	Accomplished, but this is an ongoing focus. The results of the staff engagement survey suggest that the work environment is supportive, collaborative, friendly, and inclusive. I work hard to promote these values and am heartened to see this come through in the survey.
4. Maintain the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity.	Partially Accomplished. Engaged in numerous staff events throughout the year and completed a staff engagement survey to assess the level of morale. Findings are summarized in subsequent pages, and they show that morale is respectable and improved from last year, but there is always room for improvement.
5. Implement continuous improvement principles for budgeting and IT processes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of a complex organization and implement necessary changes.	Partially Accomplished. I hired an external Salesforce team to manage the ongoing governance and technical needs of WICHE. WICHE's IT processes continue to be reliable and secure. Staff have raised certain concerns about accounting, and I am working with staff to address issues.
6. Prepare for and complete the annual financial audit resulting in "no material" findings.	Accomplished. Audit completed with "no material" findings; the Commission voted to accept on November 11, 2022. Unfortunately, the auditors found a significant deficiency in internal control that pertains to a contract with the Veterans Administration that supports Together with Veterans, an initiative of the Behavioral Health Program. Consistent with the provisions of the contract, revenue should be recognized when the contracted service has been completed at the monthly fee for the specified services. Under accrual basis accounting, revenue should be recognized in the period in which it is earned based upon the fee that is allocated to the service. The CFO and I understand what needs to occur going forward with this and similar contracts.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 2:
DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN WICHE MEMBER RELATIONS**

Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
1. Engage meaningfully with the WICHE Commissioners and other key stakeholders to ensure a solid understanding of current challenges facing the region and better anticipate what the West may face in years to come.	Accomplished. Maintained strong relationships with states and Pacific Island members in the region. In partnership with leaders in Guam, the CNMI, and WICHE staff, I am optimistic that American Samoa will soon join WICHE. In addition, staff convened regular meetings with state higher education executive officers, chief academic officers in state and system offices, and key stakeholders focused on workforce shortages in the West.
2. Participate, either on official visits or for WICHE-relevant occasions, in events in WICHE states, territories, and freely associated states.	Accomplished. Regional engagement has been a primary focus of mine over the past year. See regional engagement summary.
3. Participate in and contribute to national and regional conversations in higher education.	Accomplished. With support of W-SARA staff, I continued to represent the West and regional interests in conversations pertaining to issues surrounding the state authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA). I participated in the Lumina State Policy Conference and attended the SHEEO conference, among other things.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 3:
ENSURE RELEVANT AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
1. In collaboration with staff, examine the current suite of programs and services to identify new strategies for serving the region and recruitment in membership organizations (e.g., The Forum, The Alliance, WCET, State Authorization Network).	Accomplished. The Forum and Alliance have developed a revised membership recruitment strategy. The State Authorization Network continues to grow in membership and influence, and I presented to SAN about WICHE and my observations from traveling in the region.
2. Conduct at least three visits with philanthropic partners to ensure stability in external financial support.	Accomplished. Visited with Lumina Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Walmart Foundation.
3. Position WICHE to work collaboratively with our regional partners to advance the organizational mission.	Accomplished. WICHE continues to be well respected and viewed as a trusted partner which best positions the organization to work with states and Pacific Island members to advance the mission.
4. Work with the WICHE officers to plan an organizational strategy session in November 2022.	Accomplished. I worked with the WICHE officers, staff, and an external consultant to plan the strategy session that was held at the November Commission meeting. It was well received, and action steps were identified.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 4:
PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY POLICY GUIDANCE, RESEARCH, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CONSTITUENTS**

Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
1. Ensure the successful development, implementation, management, and oversight of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for the WICHE region.	Accomplished. The W-SARA director, W-SARA project manager, vice president for policy analysis and research, and I have worked with the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) to effectively implement SARA and preserve the state and territorial voice in the agreement. The primary focus over these last months has been adopting and implementing the policy modification process that is more transparent and elevates the state voice in policy decisions.
2. Further develop and sustain technical assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues.	Accomplished. Behavioral Health continues to demonstrate technical assistance expertise, and the Policy Analysis and Research team is continuing to partner with the Wyoming Community College Commission to provide project management for the Wyoming Innovation Partnership. The vice president for policy analysis and research and I have supported the Nevada System of Higher Education as they explored governance and mission issues.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 5:
STRATEGICALLY DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION**

Annual Goals and Objectives	Status of Goals Met
1. Actively engage the WICHE Commission to set strategic priorities in the context of the WICHE Workplan.	Accomplished. I worked collaboratively with the WICHE Officers and the entire Commission during the November strategy session to set Strategic Priorities (formerly referred to as Focus Areas).
2. Secure external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical assistance projects, consistent with WICHE's mission and priorities.	Accomplished. Two examples include: The Policy Analysis and Research unit secured a \$399,571 grant over two years from the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation for increasing access, affordability, and equity using OER. The Behavioral Health Program won a solicitation to provide technical assistance to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (state hospital) to prepare for hospital accrediting (\$197,000) for year one, with an option to renew over five years.
3. Continue successful implementation of the Strategic Communications Plan.	Accomplished. The expanded Communications team has continued the rebranding effort, including a refresh of the WICHE logo, that is grounded in the plan. They have prepared an ambassador's toolkit that will equip commissioners to be ambassadors for the organization.
4. Engage the Investment Committee to complete the revision of the investment policy and review the reserve policy.	Partially Accomplished. The Investment Committee reconvened, and after consulting outside counsel, is proposing revisions to the Investment policy. They are preparing to review the reserve policy.

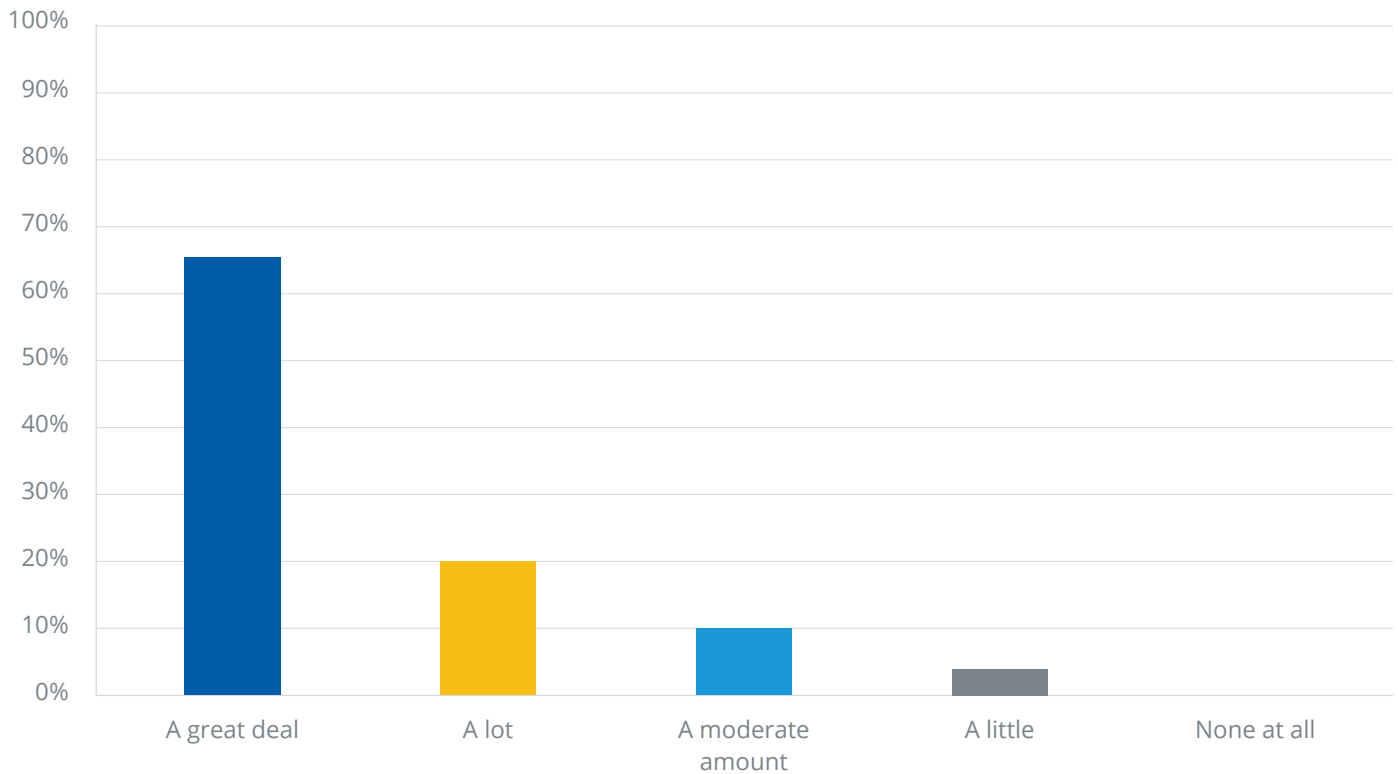
WICHE Staff Engagement Survey Summary

On February 13, 2023, I administered a staff engagement survey with 11 questions (including an option to include contact information). The purpose of the survey was to assess the level of staff engagement and the morale of the organization as well as to inform the evaluation of the WICHE President. The deadline for completion was February 24, 2024, although I left the survey open until mid-March. The survey garnered a 68% response rate. Below is a brief summary of the results.

The first question focused on staff perceptions of the respect demonstrated toward staff. About 86% of staff indicated that WICHE's management, at all levels, demonstrates either a great deal or a lot of respect for them or their colleagues — which is down 8 percentage points from last year. This was an important question, as we believe that a healthy organization can only function when there is mutual respect among colleagues. While the comments varied in nature, they revealed that WICHE may benefit from some additional training for mid-level managers. To address this, the Director of Human Resources is reviewing training options that will be provided to staff.

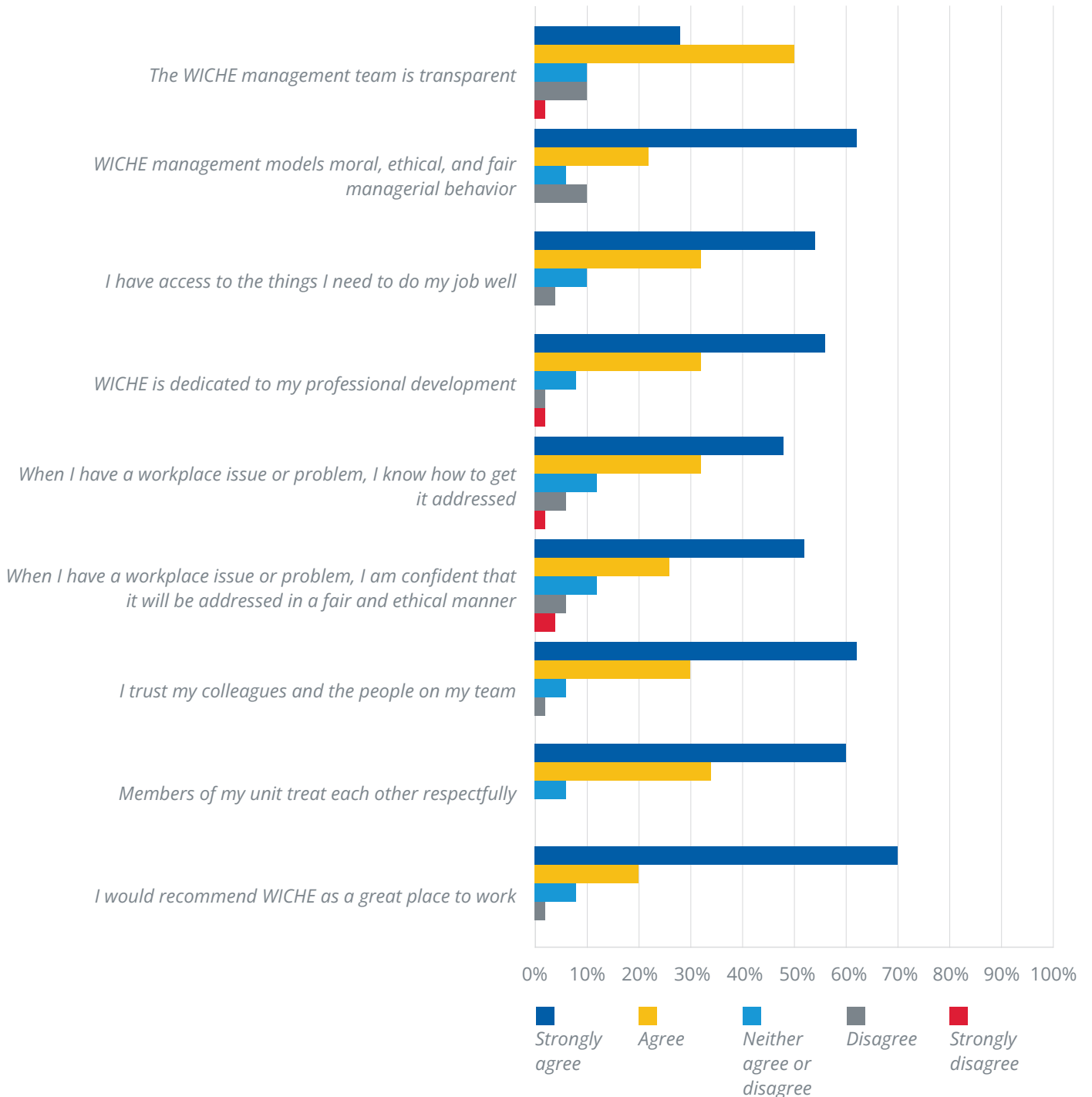
To what extent does WICHE's management, at all levels, demonstrate respect for you and your colleagues?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



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

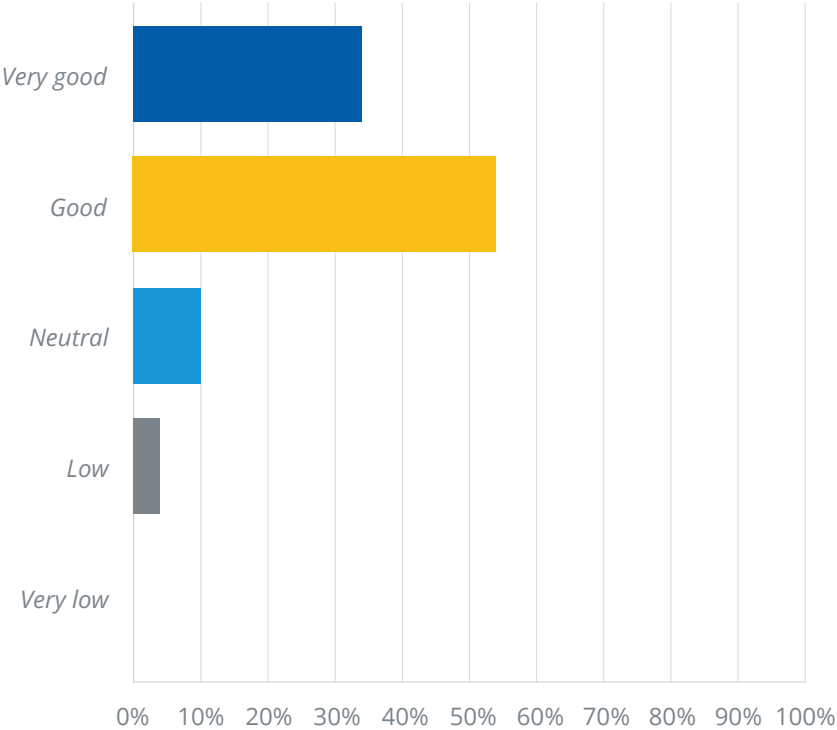
Please indicate to the extent you agree with the following statements.



One of the primary reasons that I administer the survey every year is to gauge the morale of the staff and to track it over time, so I asked staff how they perceive the morale of the organization. About 88% of staff indicated that the morale of staff was either very good or good – up from 84% last year and 80% the year before that. Coming out of the pandemic was not easy but overall, staff have once again hit their stride. While some staff would prefer to have a stricter policy around working in the office, most seem to appreciate the flexibility. WICHE had a flexible work policy before COVID, and returned to that flexible work approach post-COVID. The nature of our work, which includes the need for most staff to travel, is not conducive to across-the-board policies, such as requiring all staff to work in the office on designated days. I have chosen to continue giving the vice presidents reasonable flexibility in managing their teams as they know their work the best, but this has led to some inconsistencies across units. To support morale and engagement, I convene monthly all-staff meetings, and my office organizes various staff activities and events, such as treats, staff hikes, and a holiday party. We had a Halloween celebration that was well received, and we resumed our annual trip to Coors Field for a Rockies game. We had exceptionally high participation in both of those events, despite the Rockies being especially terrible.

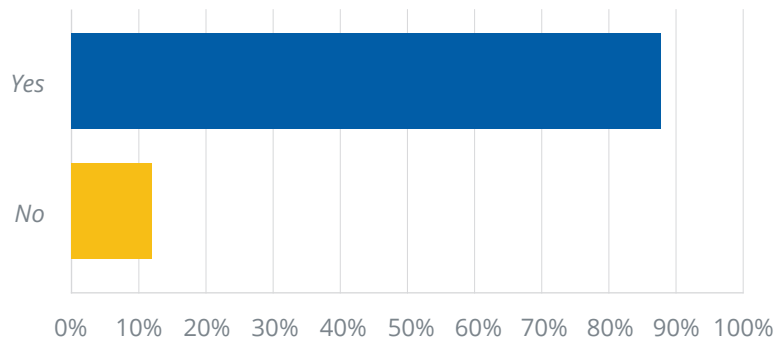
How do you perceive the morale of staff in the organization?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



I then asked whether staff have a clear sense of how their work advances WICHE’s mission, and 88% indicated that they do (down from 92% last year). When compared to last year’s comments, it is still apparent that there can be a disconnect to the broader mission and work, but generally speaking, staff have a clear sense of why they are doing what they do.

**Do you have a clear sense of how your work advances WICHE’s mission?
For WCET and Behavioral Health Staff, do you have a sense of how your work complements WICHE’s mission?**



Finally, I asked an open-ended question: “What three words would you use to describe WICHE’s culture?” The results are presented below in a word cloud. Last year, the top three words were similar – collaborative, supportive, and professional – but this year, friendly emerged. Perhaps this is a function of staff interacting more in person as we transition from the COVID workplace or perhaps it is due to the current composition of staff, but regardless of the reason, I am happy to see that as a word used to describe the workplace culture.



Summary

There continue to be areas in which I can support increased staff engagement and morale, and I have identified some key strategies for addressing those, but overall, I am pleased that staff continue to be excited about their work. Staff performed at exceptionally high levels during these past few challenging years, and they continue to work hard to advance WICHE’s mission. I expect them to be especially excited about the vision, value proposition, and strategic priorities that the Commission is considering in May.

President's Regional Engagement – FY 2023

2022

JULY

12-14	SHEEO Annual Meeting	Boston, MA
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AUGUST

15	Colorado Mountain College	Edwards, CO
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22	WICHE and Guam Scholarship office discussion	Virtual
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26	Nevada Board of Regents Meeting	Virtual
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30	Guam-University of New Mexico Psychiatry Residency Program Partnership Discussion	Virtual
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SEPTEMBER

20-22	Legislative Advisory Committee and Meetings with Commissioners	Sacramento, CA
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28-30	Lumina State Policy Conference	Indianapolis, IN
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OCTOBER

5	Meeting with University of Colorado Assistant Vice Chancellor for Local Government and Community Relations	Boulder, CO
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14	Colorado Mountain College LIFT Program	Dillon, CO
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19	WCET Annual Meeting	Denver, CO
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19	Western SHEEO Videoconference	Virtual
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26-28	NC-SARA Board Meeting	Seattle, WA
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NOVEMBER

7	APLU Annual Meeting	Denver, CO
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9-11	WICHE Commission Meeting	Portland, OR
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DECEMBER

4-6	North Dakota State Visit and Legislative Organization Session	Bismarck, ND
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7-10	Hawai'i State Visit and Council of State Governments Annual Meeting	Honolulu, HI
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15	Meeting with Colorado Commissioner and Faculty from University of Colorado Denver	Westminster, CO
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2023

JANUARY

6	Meeting with Colorado Commissioner	Boulder, CO
11-13	NCSL Non-Degree Credential Meeting and meeting with U.S. Department of Education staff	Washington, D.C.
17	Meeting with University of Colorado Assistant Vice Chancellor for Local Government and Community Relations and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Policy Advocacy	Boulder, CO
18	Western SHEEO Videoconference	Virtual
24-26	Idaho State Visit	Boise, ID
31	WICHE Officers Retreat	Denver, CO

FEBRUARY

2-3	Washington State Visit	Olympia, WA
20-22	Nevada State Visit	Carson City and Reno, NV

MARCH

1-2	California State Visit	Sacramento, CA
5-6	New Mexico State Visit	Santa Fe, NM

APRIL

1-7	Pacific Island Visit	Guam, CNMI, RMI
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MAY

8-9	WICHE Commission Meeting	Phoenix, AZ
9-11	NC-SARA Board Meeting	Kansas City, MO

*Attended various W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and NC-SARA Meetings

WICHE President Demarée Michelau – FY 2024 Goals and Objectives

The following performance objectives for the WICHE President are proposed for FY 2024. They are intended to build upon the foundation of the president's goals, objectives, and performance from FY 2023.

KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 1: SUCCESSFULLY ADMINISTER THE DAY-TO-DAY WICHE OPERATIONS

Annual Goals and Objectives

1. Maintain a balanced budget for FY 2024 and find a way within a balanced budget to provide modest merit-based salary increases to staff.
2. Implement effective strategies to recruit and attract diverse applicant pools for position vacancies.
3. Advance a workplace culture that supports and values diversity and inclusivity.
4. Maintain the morale of WICHE staff to achieve the highest possible level of productivity and professionalism.
5. Implement continuous improvement principles for budgeting and IT processes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of a complex organization and implement necessary changes.
6. Prepare for and complete the annual financial audit resulting in “no material” findings.

KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 2: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN WICHE MEMBER RELATIONS

Annual Goals and Objectives

1. Engage meaningfully with the WICHE Commissioners and other key stakeholders to ensure a solid understanding of current challenges facing the region and better anticipate what the West may face in years to come.
2. Participate, either on official visits or for WICHE-relevant occasions, in events in WICHE states, territories, and freely associated states.
3. Participate in and contribute to national and regional conversations in higher education.

KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 3: ENSURE RELEVANT AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Annual Goals and Objectives

1. In collaboration with staff, examine the current suite of programs and services to identify new strategies for serving the region and recruitment in membership organizations (e.g., The Forum, The Alliance, WCET, State Authorization Network).
2. Conduct at least three visits with philanthropic partners to ensure stability in external financial support.
3. Position WICHE to work collaboratively with regional partners to advance the organizational mission.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 4:
PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY POLICY GUIDANCE, RESEARCH, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CONSTITUENTS**

Annual Goals and Objectives

1. Ensure the successful development, implementation, management, and oversight of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for the WICHE region.
2. Further develop and sustain technical assistance capacity to support specific state and interstate needs for expertise on policy issues.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREA 5:
STRATEGICALLY DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION**

Annual Goals and Objectives

1. Actively engage the WICHE Commission to set strategic priorities in the context of the WICHE Workplan.
2. Secure external financial support for at least two major policy, research, or technical assistance projects, consistent with WICHE's mission and priorities.
3. Continue successful implementation of the Strategic Communications Plan and update as appropriate.
4. Engage in professional development to identify strategies for leadership capacity and improvement (e.g., working with other organizational leaders or an executive coach).
5. Write a policy brief or other publication that increases WICHE's impact and visibility.

WELCOME

and Opening Remarks

Monday, May 8, 2023
9:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Level 3, Dreamcatcher Ballroom

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Monday
May 8, 2023

9:15 - 9:30 a.m.

*Dreamcatcher
Ballroom*

Agenda

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Matt Freeman (ID), WICHE Chair

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Commissioner José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)

WELCOME

Governor Katie Hobbs (INVITED)

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONER, STAFF, AND GUESTS

NEW COMMISSIONER



Dale Erquiaga (NV)

Dale Erquiaga is acting chancellor for the Nevada System of Higher Education, beginning July 1, 2022. Chancellor Erquiaga was previously the national president and CEO of Communities In Schools (CIS), the nation's largest and most effective dropout prevention organization. He also served as Nevada's 27th superintendent of public instruction and as chief strategy officer for Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval. His earlier positions in government include executive director of government affairs, public policy, and strategic planning for the Clark County School District; director of the Nevada Department of Museums, Library & Arts; and chief deputy secretary of state. Chancellor Erquiaga's private sector experience

includes operating his consulting firm and working as vice president and managing director with an advertising firm in Nevada and Arizona.

The grandson of Spanish Basque immigrants, Chancellor Erquiaga, holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Nevada, Reno, and a master's degree in leadership from Grand Canyon University. His first novel, *Three Wives' Tales*, won the 2020 Basque Writing Contest sponsored by the University of Nevada, Reno, and Boise State University. The proud father of two and grandfather of five divides his time between Reno and Las Vegas.

Governor Steve Sisolak appointed Mr. Erquiaga in December 2022 as a Nevada Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) commissioner.

PLENARY SESSION I

Questioning the Value of Postsecondary Education:
What Does That Mean for the West and
What Can We Do About It?

Monday, May 8, 2023

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Level 3, Dreamcatcher Ballroom

PLENARY SESSION I

Monday
May 8, 2023

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

*Dreamcatcher
Ballroom*

Plenary Session: Questioning the Value of Postsecondary Education: What Does That Mean for the West and What Can We Do About It?

Discussions questioning the value of postsecondary education are taking place in state houses, on television, on the national stage, and at dinner tables all across the United States. In the context of the rising cost of attendance, these conversations are often narrowly centered on the financial return on investment to the individual. However, higher education can be transformative not only to the individual from a financial perspective but in other ways as well as to our communities and society. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is both our challenge and our responsibility in the West to strive to provide access to postsecondary education opportunities that are both valuable and equitable so that all may realize their potential as individuals and contribute to the region's economic, social, and cultural vitality. This opening plenary session will provide an opportunity to consider the challenges and opportunities facing higher education now and in the future.

FACILITATOR

Commissioner Matt Freeman (ID), Chair

SPEAKER

Commissioner José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Facilitator, Chair Matt Freeman (ID)

Matt Freeman is the executive director of the Idaho State Board of Education. The board is constitutionally charged with providing general supervision, governance and control of all public education (K – 20) in the state. Previously, Freeman served as the board's deputy director & chief fiscal officer for over five years. Prior to working for the board, Freeman spent nine years at the Idaho Legislative Services Office, Budget & Policy Analysis Division; the last four years as principal analyst for higher education. Freeman's professional experience also includes private sector government relations and communications work, and time in Washington D.C. where he served as counsel/legislative assistant for a member of Congress.

Freeman was awarded his J.D. from the University of Idaho and received his B.A. degree in political studies from Whitworth University in Spokane, WA.



Speaker, Commissioner José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)

José Luis Cruz Rivera is the 17th President of Northern Arizona University (NAU). Since beginning his tenure in June 2021, he has worked with the university community to create a bold vision for a New NAU focused on the delivery of equitable postsecondary value and to enact several signature initiatives designed to position NAU as the nation's preeminent engine of opportunity, vehicle of economic mobility, and driver of social impact.

Before joining NAU, Dr. Cruz Rivera served as President of Lehman College of The City University of New York (CUNY) and as Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost of the 25-campus CUNY system. He has also served as provost of California State University, Fullerton, vice president of Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust in Washington, D.C., and Chief Student Affairs Officer for the University of Puerto Rico system, and other faculty and administrative positions.

A leading national advocate for policies to expand opportunities and improve educational outcomes for all students—especially those who have historically been underserved—Cruz Rivera is a frequent keynote speaker and writer on higher education issues and serves on several regional and national boards of organizations that work to advance equitable educational policies and practices. He earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Puerto Rico and his master's and doctorate degrees from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Meeting

Monday, May 8, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Level 3, Zia II

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday
May 8, 2023

10:45 a.m. - Noon

Zia II

Committee Members

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

Pearl Brower (AK)
José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)
Ellen Junn (CA)
John Morton (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Dale Erquiaga (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Danita Bye (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
Dave Woolstenhulme (UT)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

Agenda

PRESIDING

Commissioner Les Purce (WA), Committee Chair

STAFF

Margo Colancia, Director, Student Access Programs
Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director, Operations and Academic Leadership Initiatives
Katherine Springsteen, Assistant Director, Student Access Programs

Action Item

-  Approval of the November 11, 2022, Programs and Services Committee Meeting Minutes **4-3**
-  Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Approve the FY 2024 Workplan Section of the Programs and Services Unit **4-8**

Information Items

- Student Access Program Highlights **4-14**
- Strategy, Impact, and Academic Partnerships Update **4-16**
- Collaborative Cost-Savings Initiatives Update **4-18**

Discussion Item

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), which was hired to complete the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) review and assessment, will lead the Programs and Services Committee in a conversation about the PSEP.

Brian Prescott, President, NCHEMS
Sarah Torres Lugo, Research Associate, NCHEMS

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM:

Approval of the November 11, 2022, Programs and Services Committee Minutes

Committee Members Present

Thomas L. (Les Purce (WA), Committee Chair
Ellen Junn (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO) (*proxy for Angie Paccione*)
John Morton (HI)
Matt Freeman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Danita Bye (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Dave Woolstenhulme (UT)
Fred Baldwin (WY) (*proxy for Kimberly Dale*)

Committee Members Absent

Angie Paccione (CO), Committee Vice Chair
Pearl Brower (AK)
José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

Staff Present

Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Sarah Leibrandt, Director of Strategy, Impact, and Academic Partnerships, Programs and Services
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications
Joseph Garcia, Graphic Designer

Call to Order

Committee Chair Les Purce called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Sarah Leibrandt called the roll and a quorum was established.

Action Items

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 2022 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Hilda Rosselli MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes and Commissioner Patricia Sullivan SECONDED. The motion was approved.

Information Items

STUDENT ACCESS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Raymonda Burgman Gallegos reported on behalf of Student Access Programs Director Margo Colalancia that the states' investment of \$14.2 million is supporting 559 students in the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). The number of participating students is down 34 students from AY 2021. Colalancia is anticipating 10+ additional students but thinks it unlikely that last year's numbers of 586 students and \$14.5 million in support fees will be reached.

Burgman Gallegos reported that 46,110 students are participating in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program, compared to 46,170 students in AY 2021. This marks a decrease of 60 students. She said 3,269 graduate students are participating in the Western Graduate Regional Program (WRGP), an increase of 322 students, compared to 2,947 graduate students in AY 2021.

She said it is hard to pinpoint why numbers have fluctuated but hypothesized that the strong labor market has pushed some students to enter the workforce instead of seeking a degree.

Burgman Gallegos confirmed that a draft RFP for a survey on PSEP fields has been completed and is ready for distribution to prospective contractors. The PSEP Assessment and Review, which is part of the unit's FY 2023 Workplan, was drafted by

Burgman Gallegos in consultation with Commissioner Matt Freeman, President Demarée Michelau, Behavioral Health Vice President Dennis Mohatt, and the Student Access Programs team.

The PSEP Assessment and Review will focus on the following questions:

- ▶ What is happening in the current health professions (dentistry, allopathic medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) covered by the PSEP program? What requirements must someone complete before entering the workforce, and are there experiences that provide additional preparation? What is the need for internships, residencies, apprenticeships, externships, or clinical experiences in these fields?
- ▶ What are the major workforce priorities and needs of Western states/territories? What are Western states/territories doing to generate interest in these fields? What methods of instruction (e.g., hybrid, distance, in-person) are used in academic programs that address these workforce priorities?
- ▶ How do the current PSEP fields meet Western state/territory and regional workforce needs? What are the key fields impacting five or more states/territories? What professional areas, including but not excluding healthcare, should we consider that may help meet the region's current or future workforce needs? We are also interested in learning more about fields associated with providing licensed behavioral health services that are not currently included in PSEP.

Burgman Gallegos said the assessment and review will be carried out primarily in consultation with PSEP program stakeholders, state/territory workforce development councils and agencies, and state departments of workforce development. She noted that the RFP is a draft document that has been reviewed by Program and Services staff, WICHE leadership, and Commissioner Freeman.

Commissioner Rosselli asked if new methods of data collection would tease out trends in access to online coursework, and Burgman Gallegos confirmed that data will be collected on the method of instruction being used. Commissioner Rosselli followed up with a question about the challenges students face when they are required to complete a preceptor or clinical experience. Burgman Gallegos replied that this is a subpoint of one of the assessment questions. It asks about additional requirements students must complete before entering the workforce.

Commissioner John Morton asked about the timeline for this project. Burgman Gallegos said the goal is to complete the work before the May 2023 Commission Meeting in order to have a report ready. WICHE has strong candidates for the assessment and review work, including some groups that already have workforce data, she said.

Commissioner Freeman asked about the scope of the PSEP assessment and review and if it was limited to current PSEP programs. Burgman Gallegos said that the scope is not limited. The current PSEP rule is that other fields can be added if two or more states are interested. She hopes the assessment and review will help identify five or more such programs.

Commissioner Rosselli asked if one of those additional fields might be education, considering that many states are experiencing teacher shortages. Burgman Gallegos said this would be discussed in the report, but, as education is covered through WUE and WRGP, she suggested that more work could be done in those programs to increase the supply of teachers.

STRATEGY, IMPACT, AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

Interstate Passport. Sarah Leibrandt said that the number of institutions participating in the Interstate Passport program stands at 72, and the number of passports awarded to students has grown from 74,000 to just under 100,000 since May 2022.

Commissioner Rosselli had suggested WICHE consider the Education Innovation and Research competition within the U.S. Department of Education at the May 2022 Commission Meeting. Leibrandt said she has learned that applications will become available at the end of April 2023, and deadlines have been set for submitting a letter of intent (end of May) and submitting a proposal (end of July). She also noted that the Interstate Passport staff has been invited to present at the Higher Learning Commission's annual conference in March 2023 and will submit proposals to other agencies as they arise.

Leibrandt went on to note that the Passport program has been considering ways to remain relevant given that the initiative

began 10 years ago, and the transfer landscape has shifted. Several institutions have expressed interest in professional development workshops using Passport as a tool to improve the assessment of general education learning outcomes. WICHE is starting with a single institution, and one of our faculty advisor consultants will lead this pilot with the support of the six-month no-cost extension we received from ECMC Foundation.

In July, WICHE submitted a proposal for \$2 million over three years to continue to develop a STEM passport, building on the one-year capacity-building grant awarded by the National Science Foundation last year to develop a proof of concept. Eight institutions—four of which are in the WICHE region—would participate in this project if accepted. WICHE is hosting a meeting with several HBCUs, community colleges, and our partners in this work to talk about the STEM pipeline.

Leibrandt received questions from several commissioners. Commissioner Laurie Bishop asked about the assessment inquiry, and Leibrandt responded that new member institutions requested a rubric for assessment. Commissioner Patricia Sullivan asked about changing the language around the Passport program to focus on program quality and expediting the time to graduation. Leibrandt said a marketing firm had been hired to conduct some focus groups, and that new messaging is in the works.

Alliance and Forum. Leibrandt also reported on the hiring of a firm to assist WICHE in growing the membership of the Western Academic Leadership Forum and the Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders. The firm conducted focus groups and found that personal connections and in-person meetings were most valuable to stakeholders. The Alliance and Forum members also want to have a better understanding of their connection to WICHE and each other. The firm found similarities and key differences between the groups that will be used in outreach and marketing. The WICHE communications unit has put together a package of talking points and other materials that will be shared with the Alliance and Forum executive committees, and efforts to modernize logos and taglines are underway. Also, in the interest of fostering greater collaboration between sectors, the Forum and Alliance will be encouraged to host joint annual meetings every three years.

No Holding Back. This project is off to a great start, with 12 institutions participating in research on the impact of administrative holds on student outcomes. Initial findings suggest that some institutions have over 400+ different types of holds. A few institutions are working in concert with their states; for example, the University of Arizona is participating in both our project and a statewide initiative to develop policy changes. Oregon is proposing legislation involving holds and suggested steps for institutions to take. WICHE and AACRAO will produce two written works: an interactive technical guide and a seminal brief.

Commissioner Sullivan commented on how New Mexico State University is tracking holds within its engineering program. She noted that progressive degree-program completion has been impacted by holds, which can add up to a year to students' completion time.

WICHE Academies. For the first time, the Western Academic Leadership Academy has extended invitations to those working at two-year institutions. The participants found it valuable to be with and learn from colleagues from both sectors. Participants will meet at the Alliance and Forum annual meetings and with mentors throughout the year. WICHE will begin the nomination process for the academy's next cohort at the end of November 2022.

The WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities is a new initiative, supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation. It provides two years of campus-based mentorship to senior faculty in humanities to help them gain experience in academic affairs.

Commissioner Rosselli asked why the new academy is focused on the humanities. Burgman Gallegos replied that it grew out of a specific request from the Mellon Foundation to meet with President Michelau and other leaders to learn more about professional development for humanities faculty.

COLLABORATIVE COST-SAVINGS INITIATIVES UPDATE

WICHE's partnership with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) includes the Master Property Program, MHECare (which includes TAO Connect and META Teletherapy, two services that campuses and systems can access), MHECtech, and Cyber Insurance.

Only postsecondary institutions are eligible for most of these programs, but MHECtech is open to K-12 schools and districts, local and state governments, and education nonprofits.

The Programs and Services unit receives \$100,000 in revenue from these programs. Burgman Gallegos expressed appreciation for commissioners who share information about these cost-saving initiatives within their states.

Discussion Items

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF WICHE'S ONLINE COURSE EXCHANGE PROGRAM?

Sarah Leibrandt led a discussion about the status and future of the Online Course Exchange (OCE), a robust administrative tool developed by WICHE to support collaboration among institutions offering online courses. As members of a consortium using OCE, institutions expand their students' access to high-quality online courses and programs taught by other institutions participating in a consortium.

One group, NEXus, a collaborative of nursing programs, is using OCE through December 2022. NEXus pays \$7,500 annually to list shared courses on OCE. In January 2021, the programmer who developed the proprietary technology for WICHE stated that it would cost at least \$37,500 to update OCE, which requires significant security updates to ensure hackers do not infiltrate the database. There are several companies (such as Acadeum and Quottly) operating in this space. Some states have created online course-sharing systems with these companies.

Leibrandt noted that NEXus will be moving to a platform called ExpanSIS as of January 1, 2023. SunOnline had already moved to Acadeum through an independent community college group.

Leibrandt asked commissioners for their thoughts on several options: updating and maintaining OCE in its current format, drafting an RFP to contract with one of the industry vendors to develop a system like OCE, or negotiating a joint purchasing agreement with an online course-sharing vendor that would offer cost savings to WICHE states and territories. Another option would be for WICHE to serve as a consultant and develop a brief on best policies and practices regarding online course sharing, an effort in which Programs and Services could partner with WCET, PAR, and other units.

Commissioner Freeman spoke about Idaho's move to stand up a platform using Quottly, and Commissioners Dave Woolstenhulme and Ellen Junn spoke about current challenges with online course sharing in their states.

Commissioners Rosselli, Junn, and Freeman all commented in favor of WICHE not spending additional dollars on this investment and thought that a research paper or brief would be worth doing.

IDENTIFYING COMMISSIONERS' DATA AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Leibrandt led a discussion on the data and information needs of commissioners. She noted that the Programs and Services unit has primary responsibility for two annual reports. The Student Access Programs team collects and summarizes the data WICHE publishes in [By the Numbers](#) (BTN). The Strategy, Impact, and Academic Partnerships team drafts the [Interstate Passport Annual Report](#). Some of the information in these two documents is accessible on the state, freely associated state, and territory pages at <https://www.wiche.edu/our-region/>.

She noted that the Policy unit had requested funds to set up the PARD (policy analysis and research database), combining data from multiple sources including IPEDS. Such data is used for the quadrennial Knocking at the College Door and WICHE's tuition analysis work. Programs and Services could leverage this work by contributing to the ongoing costs of PARD and setting up Salesforce to provide richer data.

Leibrandt posed several questions for commissioners: How does your state or territory use the information we currently provide? What postsecondary education data do you most need? Is there a certain time of the year when the information is most useful?

Commissioner Morton talked about WUE students who come to Hawai'i and never plan to graduate from the University of Hawai'i. He wondered whether some students are using the program as an affordable study-abroad opportunity. He asked if there was information on graduation completion.

Commissioner Sullivan said that WICHE has tremendous depth and scope of data, but that perhaps it can dig deeper and uncover interesting and emerging trends among students.

Commissioner Rosselli asked about press releases and other means to heighten awareness of data. At Burgman Gallegos' request, Communications Director Melanie Sidwell outlined plans for improving the rollout and distribution of WICHE news, including the use of webinars in combination with press releases.

Commissioner Bishop suggested having a better understanding of who the audience is for certain data, and Commissioner Rosselli suggested asking members of the Legislative Advisory Committee for their ideas on data needs in their states.

HOW CAN WE ASSIST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITH UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT?

Raymonda Burgman Gallegos kicked off the discussion by noting that during the pandemic, conducting in-person college fairs was impossible in many locations. More recently, there has been a return to in-person fairs and a continuation of virtual college fairs. She said that college fairs are a space in which WICHE could offer greater support.

One way to do so, she said, would be to contract with one of various vendors that specialize in organizing and providing material for virtual college fairs. One potential vendor has given WICHE an estimate of \$5,000 to create a platform that WICHE would then be responsible for building out—or \$10,000 if the vendor does the build-out work itself. Institutions would be asked to pay a fee of \$200-\$500 for their “booth.”

Another regional compact, the New England Board of Higher Education, is using this same vendor, Burgman Gallegos said, and it recommends going with the more expensive option.

Commissioner Junn said that all but two of the California State University system's 23 institution are experiencing enrollment declines. During the pandemic, they did online recruitment, with unsatisfactory results. Commissioners Rosselli and Freeman agreed, saying that high school students are not participating in online recruiting options.

Commissioner Antwan Jefferson inquired about students who attended college and then stopped out. Is that part of the discussion around college fairs? Are those students being reached? Burgman Gallegos responded that there has been little discussion to date of reaching students who stop out.

Commissioner Morton asked about the purpose of this discussion. Do we want to create a strategy to advertise WUE to students? Burgman Gallegos said that we want to advertise to students as well as guidance counselors. Commissioner Morton asked if WUE schools would participate. Burgman Gallegos said the schools would have a booth, like at an in-person college fair, where they would have an opportunity to speak with students, share videos, and the like.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

ACTION ITEM:

Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Approve the FY 2024 Workplan Section of the Programs and Services Unit

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the general fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
MHEC Cyber Insurance	A/F	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB	.10	All WICHE members are eligible
MHECare	A/F; A/S	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB	.10	MHEC/United HealthCare Student Resources, META Teletherapy, and TAO Connect
MHECtech	A/F	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB	.30	All WICHE members
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)	A/F; A/S; W/S	Western	1.20	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam, FSM, RMI and Palau; 130+ programs at 60+ participating institutions
PSEP Field Assessment and Review	A/F; A/S; W/S	Western	.05 FTE complete program review by end of FY 23; NCHEMS hired to complete the assessment and review	Western postsecondary institutions, workforce development agencies, certifying officers, other stakeholders
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; V/A	Western	.15 and consultants	Forum and Alliance members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) • Professional Development: 2024 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; W/S	Western	.70	All WICHE members; 52 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) • Professional Development: 2023 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; W/S	Western	.70	All WICHE members; 68 institutions, 8 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)	A/F; W/S	Western	.90	All WICHE members; 66 participating institutions
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/F; W/S	Western	.90	All WICHE members; 163 participating institutions

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 **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 Student Resources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process. MHECare now includes META Teletherapy, which offers teletherapy services for students seeking counseling services.

MHECTECH, a third partnership, 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 the WICHE region benefit from aggregated volume purchases that lower product costs and save institutions money and time.

The **PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP)** provides affordable access for students to 130+ healthcare professional programs at more than 60 institutions and in 10 healthcare fields. In 2022-23, 559 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received \$14.2 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped some 15,800 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key healthcare positions.

The **PSEP FIELD ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW** is investigating the current health professions (dentistry, allopathic medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) served by the PSEP program. The inquiry will report on how well the current fields meet regional workforce needs. It will also recommend other professional areas that may help meet the region's current or future workforce needs. The field assessment and review will be presented to the Commission after completion.

The **WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** is a year-long professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for two- and 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 Forum and the Alliance, commenced in July 2022. The Academy is funded by registration fees and Forum and Alliance support. Two-year institutions were added for the summer 2022 cohort only.

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

The **WESTERN ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC LEADERS** (Alliance) brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and annual meeting sponsors.

The **WESTERN REGIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM (WRGP)** allows WICHE-region residents to cross state lines yet pay reduced tuition rates for approximately 1,850 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 66 participating public universities. In 2022-23, 3,269 students saved an estimated \$48.1 million in tuition through WRGP. The WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement was lifted several years ago, 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.

Participating institutions also now have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150% of resident tuition, but the vast majority continue to charge students resident tuition.

The **WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE (WUE)** is WICHE’s signature undergraduate tuition savings program and the nation’s largest of its kind, saving 46,110 students an estimated \$520.9 million in tuition in 2022-23. Currently, 163 public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150% of resident tuition, instead of full nonresident 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 & Initiatives

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

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Interstate Passport®	A/S; I	National	ECMC Foundation \$500,000 grant; General Fund support (approved at Nov. 2020 Commission Meeting from Programs and Services reserves) National Science Foundation \$300,000 grant	3.25 and consultants (11/20-10/22; received a no-cost extension through April 2023) 1.25 and consultants (3/21-2/23)	72 institutions in 21 states across the country are members; Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploratory stage New Mexico State University and its four community colleges
No Holding Back: Using Data to Review and Revise Administrative Hold Policies among Public Postsecondary Institutions in the Western Region	A/S; A/F	Western	Ascendium Education Foundation and Lumina Foundation grants totaling \$452,500	.75 FTE; grant ends in October 2023	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and members of the Alliance and Forum, Policy Analysis and Research, MHEC, NEBHE
WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities	A/S; W/S	Western	Andrew W. Mellon Foundation \$1.5 million grant	1.15 FTE	Western postsecondary institutions

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 provides overall direction and support for this innovative program. A two-year grant from ECMC Foundation is enabling WICHE to further expand the Passport Network by providing 20 institutions (10 of which are minority-serving institutions) a two-year membership fee waiver and personalized onboarding support.

The award from NSF is supporting a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges to address issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. WICHE is conducting a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within engineering disciplines, articulate a theory of change, and recruit leaders of national organizations and two- 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.

NO HOLDING BACK: Staff members are collaborating with the American Association of College Registrars to assess the use of administrative holds at colleges and universities in the West. WICHE and AACRAO propose a collaboration to develop tools and guidelines that institutions and others can use to monitor administrative holds, which are ubiquitous at U.S. institutions. Recent research found that 99% of institutions use registration holds, and 95% use transcript holds. However, most institutions do not regularly review or seek alternatives to administrative holds. Moreover, less than half are confident in analyzing the hold data for potential equity issues. There is a range of data limitations institutions face: access to the data, what information matters most, and examining the data. This lack of understanding is presumed to be particularly problematic for institutions serving a high percentage of first-generation students.

The **WICHE ACADEMY FOR LEADERS IN THE HUMANITIES** would offer leadership development to tenured humanities faculty members. WICHE is collaborating with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and other key stakeholders to develop a two-year, campus-based immersive experience for faculty leaders. These leaders will also attend a three-day WICHE Institute for Leaders (WIL) in the Humanities in Boulder, Colo., focused on three key competencies: career planning and development, project management, and organizational design and agility. They also will join upper-level academic administration to learn more about day-to-day operations, craft a campus project, receive internal and external mentoring, and develop a new network with the fellows appointed at other institutions.

New Directions

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Interstate Passport®	A/S; I		National	Seeking grant funding from other foundations and self-sustaining model	TBD	Interstate Passport Network members and potential members
Compact for Faculty Diversity	A/S; W/S		National	TBD	TBD	MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice	A/S		National	Seeking additional external funding to further assist NASNTIs and sustain an institutional network	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 **COMPACT FOR FACULTY DIVERSITY:** Staff members 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. The 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 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.

Projects to be Removed from Workplan

Work that staff previously considered pursuing but now proposes to remove from the Workplan.

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Online Course Exchange – FlexPATH Alliance	A/S; I		National	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation subaward (5 years) The FlexPATH grant was not funded.	1.9	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign; and their respective community colleges
Online Course Exchange	A/S; I		National		0	1 consortium serving 16 institutions

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing and bringing to the WICHE 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 2023:

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- 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 providing 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.

STUDENT ACCESS PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

As WICHE marks its 70th year, its signature Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) celebrates its 35th year of exchanges. WUE remains the nation's largest regional tuition-savings program. Students from a WICHE state or Pacific island jurisdiction can choose from 163 two- or four-year public colleges or universities and pay no more than 150% of that institution's resident tuition.

In the 2022-23 academic year (AY), 46,110 WUE students and their families saved more than \$521 million in tuition. WUE enrollment decreased slightly, by 0.1% from fall 2021. These enrollment changes are consistent with national trends. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, overall national undergraduate enrollment dropped by 0.6%.

In September 2022, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB1998, which allows a limited number of rural California community colleges to participate in WUE. Following the bill's passage, Lake Tahoe Community College became WUE's newest member. Lassen Community College has also expressed interest. In addition, College of Eastern Idaho is planning to join WUE, effective fall 2023.

Our annual report, WICHE Student Access Programs: By the Numbers 2022-23, was published in March 2023. The latest edition is available exclusively online at: <https://www.wiche.edu/resources/student-access-programs-by-the-numbers-ay-2022-23/>.

Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)

In AY 2022-23, 3,269 students saved \$48.1 million in tuition through WRGP. This year, the additional 322 graduate students using WRGP mark an increase of 11% from AY 2021-22.

Nevada State College is planning to join WRGP in fall 2023 and will offer its master's in speech language pathology at the discounted tuition rate. Several other institutions have expressed interest in WRGP but have not officially joined: CSU Sacramento, CSU Northridge, Adams State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology.

Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)

The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) has been a critically important mechanism for Western states to increase the supply of physicians, dentists, optometrists, veterinarians, and other healthcare professionals. Over the past 70 years, WICHE member states and territories have supported the education of roughly 15,800 Western residents with affordable access to professional healthcare degrees. Through PSEP, 62 institutions offer 129 accredited programs.

In AY 2022-23, 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands invested more than \$14.2 million to grow their healthcare workforce by reducing the educational costs of 559 students. Thus, the number of students funded is down from the final number of 586 students at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Staff anticipates continuing declines in enrollment in the coming year. CNMI will not fund any new students for fall 2023 because of budget cuts. Arizona will cease funding new students in veterinary medicine by fall 2024 and likely earlier, as the University of Arizona Tucson's new School of Veterinary Medicine will probably be fully accredited within a year or less. Typically, once a new public program becomes fully accredited, the state where the institution is located will stop funding students through PSEP in that healthcare field. On the positive side, Guam will begin funding PSEP students as early as fall 2024.

WICHE has contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to conduct an in-depth assessment and review of PSEP. The review and assessment will evaluate the West's workforce needs and provide guidance on current PSEP fields and whether regional needs dictate adding more fields to the program. The evaluation team will consider non-healthcare fields if warranted by regional workforce needs. The assessment began in February 2023, and we expect a final report by the end of 2023.

Certifying Officers' May 2023 Meeting

Certifying officers play an essential role in the participation of their states/territories in WICHE's Student Access Programs. They are staff members of state/territory higher education agencies or institutional systems in states/territories that do not have a state/territory 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 liaisons for the WUE and WRGP programs.

Certifying officers will meet on May 7, 2023, just before the WICHE Commission Meeting in Phoenix, AZ. NCHEMS staff will meet with the certifying officers and commissioners as part of the PSEP assessment and review.

WICHE's 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, aiming to ensure the region's workforce needs are 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 state higher education agencies and the state veterinary association.

Council members may include legislators with professional expertise, state veterinarians, and practicing veterinarians who are members of state veterinary associations. The College of Veterinary Medicine Deans, the Director of Student Access Programs, and the Vice President, Programs & Services, are ex-officio, nonvoting members. On June 13-14, 2023, the council will convene in Pullman, WA, with Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine hosting the meeting.

STRATEGY, IMPACT, AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

Since November 2022, SIAP staff have engaged with more than 150 institutions in the WICHE region on various projects and initiatives.

Interstate Passport

Seventy-three institutions across 21 states (63 WICHE institutions) are members of the Interstate Passport program. This initiative allows students to transfer their lower-division general education as a block between member institutions. Members of the Interstate Passport Network are accredited, nonprofit, public and private two- and four-year institutions. Students who earn a Passport and transfer to another network member institution will have met all or nearly all the receiving institution's lower-division general education requirements. For the sixth year in a row, data indicate that students who transfer with a Passport have a higher GPA and enroll in more semester credit hours than their peers who transfer without a Passport.

Western Academic Leadership Forum

WICHE hosted the Forum's annual meeting in Tucson, Ariz., in April 2023. University leaders from across the West gathered for two days to leverage their collective knowledge and experience to address issues related our region's unique demographic, geographic, and economic character. One such topic was the proposed changes to the Carnegie classification system which will impact several WICHE institutions beginning in 2024. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Council on Education (ACE) are working together to develop new and refined versions of the Classifications to better reflect the public purpose, mission, focus, and impact of higher education. In 2024, two Universal classifications will be released: an updated version of the Basic classification and a new Social and Economic Mobility classification.

Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

The Alliance Executive Committee, with support from WICHE staff, currently plans to hold its annual meeting in Tacoma, Wash., in October 2023. The sessions will focus on community college academic leaders' unique needs, highlighting workforce development and supporting students at open-access institutions.

No Holding Back

[Ascendium Education Group](#) and [Lumina Foundation](#) jointly awarded \$452,500 in grants to WICHE and AACRAO to help institutions better understand the impact that the practice and policies of administrative and/or student success holds can have on student outcomes. The 18-month project will collaboratively build upon [existing work](#) by AACRAO and runs through October 2023. Twelve institutions are revising campus policies related to administrative and/or student success holds after analyzing student-level data as part of WICHE's No Holding Back initiative. Additionally, a seminal brief and technical handbook will be published this summer.

The Leadership Academy

One hundred forty institutions and systems of higher education paid membership dues to WICHE to enable their chief academic officers, provosts, and others to participate in two membership networks: the [Western Academic Leadership Forum](#) (Forum) and the [Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders](#) (Alliance). Drawing participants from the Forum and the Alliance, 20 aspiring academic leaders have been selected to participate in WICHE's yearlong 2023 Leadership Academy.

The WICHE Academy

[WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities](#), funded by the Mellon Foundation, calls for eight institutions and their selected fellows to participate in the inaugural WICHE Academy. The fellows are tenured humanities faculty members with interest in academic administration. They will have a two-year fellowship on their campus. WICHE will work with the fellows' internal mentors during a 1.5-day workshop in Boulder, August 3-4, 2023. In the fall, WICHE staff will bring the inaugural fellows' cohort together for a three-day leadership boot camp on career planning and development, project management, and organizational development and agility. This program allows institutions to grow their leadership from within and begins addressing the pipeline for new academic leadership in the coming years. The request for proposals from institutions wishing to participate closed on April 12, 2023.

Stakeholder Engagement

SIAP staff have hosted several virtual offerings since November 2022 for members of the WICHE community. In particular, we held a three-part series on change, which aimed to provide leaders in higher education with strategies to successfully lead through times of change—whether the individual is creating or reacting to change. Activities included a workshop, panel, and small-group discussion. SIAP staff continue to assess the needs of stakeholders in terms of leadership development and will share that feedback with the Commission in the coming months.

SIAP staff also promoted WICHE's work at conferences and meetings around the country.

CONFERENCE OR MEETING	PROGRAM DISCUSSED	DATE
American Association of Colleges and Universities Diversity Equity and Student Success	No Holding Back	March 2023
American Association of Colleges and Universities General Education and Pedagogy Conference	Interstate Passport	February 2023
American Conference of Academic Deans	Leadership Programs	February 2023
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers	No Holding Back	March 2023
American Association of Community Colleges	No Holding Back	April 2023
Higher Learning Commission	Interstate Passport	March 2023
National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students	Interstate Passport	February 2023
PACWEST SFS	No Holding Back	May 2023

COLLABORATIVE COST-SAVINGS INITIATIVES UPDATE

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) cost-savings programs are competitively awarded contracts. The Master Property Program, MHECare, MHECTech, and cybersecurity cost-saving initiatives 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. The MHECTech contracts are available to benefit WICHE-region higher education institutions of all sizes, K-12 school districts, and state and local government agencies. In addition, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) regions participate in the cost-saving initiative.

Cyber Insurance

The MHEC Cyber Insurance initiative was established in 2018 to provide an option for 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., the program administrator for the cyber insurance program, offers institutions the flexibility of insurance carrier choice, the broadest coverage possible, and access to policy limits that meet institutional coverage needs.

Master Property Program

MHEC developed the Master Property Program (MPP) in 1994 to broaden property insurance coverage, reduce program costs, and encourage improved asset-protection strategies for two- and four-year and nonprofit colleges and universities. The program will end on July 1, 2023. MHEC staff will continue managing dividends owed to program participants and payouts for claims brought before the program ends. The institutions and systems in the West that received property insurance either directly or indirectly through MPP have met with Marsh USA Inc., a national insurance broker, to secure insurance for FY 2024. The impacted institutions and systems are Colorado School of Mines, University of Northern Colorado, Nevada System of Higher Education's seven campuses and Desert Research Institute Centers, Lewis & Clark College (Oregon), Willamette University (Oregon), Seattle Pacific University (Washington), Whitman College (Washington), and the University of Wyoming.

In February 2023, the WICHE Commission Executive Committee approved an action item for WICHE staff to explore a property program for institutions and systems in the West.

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 specific groups—like study-abroad and special summer programs—also are available from UHCSR. MHEC utilizes a competitive bid process to select UHCSR as the plan's carrier, which is fully equipped to respond rapidly to changes in regulations. Public and private nonprofit postsecondary institutions in MHEC's, NEBHE's, SREB's, and WICHE's member states and territories, under the MHECare umbrella, have access to two mental health counseling services at pre-negotiated, affordable rates for their students. META Teletherapy provides access to a nationwide network of licensed mental health providers. MHEC also added TAO (Therapist Assistance Online) Connect Inc., which offers institutions of higher education access to more than 150 brief, effective, evidence-based educational sessions covering over 50 common topics and skills related to mental health, wellness, and substance use issues.

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 purchasing options. The MHECTech website details vendors and eligible entities and links to the vendor contracts. For example, the Dell Technologies contract offers 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 centers and networks across various public and private cloud providers. In the suite of cost-saving programs, MHECTech is one of the most accessed programs. This past year, roughly 390 entities in California alone used these contracts to save \$1.15 million.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Meeting

Monday, May 8, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Level 3, Zia I

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday
May 8, 2023

10:45 a.m. - Noon

Zia I

Committee Members

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair
Barbara Damron (NM), Committee Vice Chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Dave Lent (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)
Kalani Kaneko (US Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/RMI)
Patricia Jones (UT)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Kevin Carman (WY)

Agenda




PRESIDING

Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair

STAFF

Colleen Falkenstern, Senior Research Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, Policy Analysis and Research
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research

Action Item

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------|
|  ACTION ITEM | Approval of the November 11, 2022, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes | 5-3 |
|  ACTION ITEM | Approval of a Project Titled "Articulating the Value of Postsecondary Education in the West" | 5-8 |
|  ACTION ITEM | Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Approve the FY 2024 Workplan Section of the Policy Analysis and Research Unit | 5-10 |

Information Items

Legislative Advisory Committee Update

Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West, 2022-23

Update on WICHE Activities Related to Behavioral Health in Postsecondary Education and Meeting Current and Future Health Workforce Needs

Discussion Items

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement Policy Revision Process

5-18

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM:

Approval of the November 11, 2022, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Minutes

Committee Members Present

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair
Barbara Damron (NM), Committee Vice Chair
Susan Anderson (AK)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID) (*proxy for Dave Lent*)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Kyle Davison (ND) (*proxy for Mark Hagerott*)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD) (*proxy for Brian Maher*)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
Patricia Jones (UT)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Kevin Carman (WY)

Commissioners Absent

John Arnold (AZ)
Dave Lent (ID)
Sheila Staerns (MT)

Other Commissioners Present

Robert Shireman (CA)
Michael Meotti (WA)

Staff Present

Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Molly Hall Martin, Director, WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement
Demarée Michelau, President
Russ Poulin, Executive Director of WCET and Vice President for Technology- Enhanced Education
Nathaniel Longmore, Digital Communications Coordinator

Call to Order

Committee Chair Christopher Cabaldon called the meeting of the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee to order at 8:00 a.m. and asked Patrick Lane to call the roll. A quorum was established.

Action Items

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 16, 2022 POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH (PAR) COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Committee Chair Cabaldon introduced the first action item: approval of the PAR committee minutes from its May 16, 2022, meeting. Commissioner Susan Anderson MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes and Commissioner Rodney Jacob SECONDED. The minutes were approved unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO APPROVE ARIZONA'S STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT STATE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Committee Chair Cabaldon introduced the second action item. Patrick Lane provided a brief introduction, describing how such state renewals have typically been considered by the Executive Committee due to timing issues. He then introduced Molly Hall-Martin, who is director of the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA).

Hall-Martin summarized Arizona's application, noting that 37 state institutions participate in the agreement, and noted that WICHE's staff review found the state to be fully in compliance with SARA policy. She also said that the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC) reviewed the application and posed numerous questions to the Arizona SARA staff before unanimously recommending that the Commission approve the renewal application (with Arizona's RSC member abstaining from the vote).

Committee Vice Chair Barbara Damron raised a question about an item in the state's application mentioning that state SARA

staff believed existing policy related to the consideration of an institution's initial application was insufficient and required states to accept institutions' attestations that they meet policy without conducting sufficient due diligence. Only after an institution is accepted, the application noted, is a state allowed to examine an institution's compliance in appropriate detail. Committee Vice Chair Damron asked whether this was a deficiency in Arizona's work.

Commissioner Jacob asked whether the PAR Committee could provide a conditional approval of Arizona's application.

Commissioner Gerry Pollet said that he had numerous concerns about the state's application and more generally about SARA policy. Specifically, he noted concerns that states may not have the capacity and resources to investigate student complaints, and that the process for admitting institutions and renewing states focuses on the application checklist rather than investigating compliance.

Patrick Lane replied that the questions raised about Arizona, specifically the inability to fully investigate institutional compliance prior to admitting an institution, are due to SARA policy not Arizona's capacity or willingness. He said that the Arizona SARA staff included that mention in hopes of elevating the issue for inclusion in the SARA policy revision process, which will be further discussed later in the meeting.

Commissioner Pollet also expressed concerns that institutions may be able to misrepresent outcomes if they are located in a state with a less stringent regulatory structure. He suggested that institutions could list completion rates or earnings numbers that differ substantially from those that are either reported to the federal government or derived from federal data. Further, he expressed concerns that institutions may move from states with stronger student protections to other SARA members with fewer protections.

Questions were also raised about whether the Arizona SARA office has the capacity to address student complaints.

Lane responded that across SARA, there have been relatively few formal SARA complaints that have come through the process, and that although state regulatory offices may receive numerous complaints, only a small number actually relate to SARA policy. When they do, SARA staff in the student's state and the institution's states are generally in close communication. Additionally, one of the criteria for state participation in SARA is the capacity to receive and act on student complaints, and both WICHE's staff analysis and the Regional Steering Committee's assessment found that Arizona is in compliance with these criteria.

Committee Vice Chair Damron noted that Arizona has considered and accepted institutions based on the existing criteria of SARA policy and raised the issue of wishing to more fully evaluate institutional compliance prior to admitting an institution to drive change in policy.

Commissioner Pollet said that it is problematic that SARA states do not accept anonymous complaints and require students to pursue complaint processes through the institution first. He cited examples of now-closed institutions that removed students who pursued complaints. He also expressed concerns that students' home states may not be able to forward complaints to the institution's home state, and that institutions can relocate to seek out a less-stringent regulatory environment.

Commissioner Jacob shared his strong concerns about letting institutions into SARA without full vetting and suggested that if the WICHE Commission (the Commission) is being asked to approve states' applications on such a basis, the PAR Committee should have concerns.

Commissioner Jim Chavez said that if there are concerns with Arizona's application, the committee should express those concerns clearly.

Committee Vice Chair Damron clarified that two separate issues are before the committee. The first is whether SARA policy needs to be improved; the second is whether the state in question has complied with policies. Committee Chair Cabaldon added that capacity to enforce SARA policy is another issue worth consideration and requested that in the future, the Regional Steering Committee provide a summary of its considerations and recommendations on state renewals, including information about the number of complaints received.

Commissioner Ben Cannon said that he would abstain from all approvals, including Oregon's, but asked whether Arizona has sufficient capacity to carry out SARA policy, particularly vetting institutions. Committee Chair Cabaldon pointed out that Arizona was the state that flagged the issue of not being able to fully examine institution compliance at the initial application.

Commissioner Jacob asked staff about the impact on Arizona if the application is not approved by the committee. Lane replied that the impact would be significant. But he also noted that Arizona would likely appeal such a decision using the appeal process previously approved by the Commission, and the state would remain approved while that process unfolded. He said that it would likely hinge on the question of whether Arizona was compliant with SARA policy.

Hall-Martin noted that institutions would need to pursue direct authorization by each state in which they educate students or risk a loss of access to federal financial aid. She also said that prior to SARA, proprietary institutions were generally authorized by each state already because they had sufficient compliance staff and resources to pursue this approach, while public institutions were less compliant.

Commissioner Kevin Carman noted that denial would have a substantial impact on the University of Phoenix, which is one of the largest proprietary institutions. He also asked whether the committee could potentially approve a separate resolution directing staff to further investigate the issues raised by commissioners.

Commissioner Pollet said that his goal in raising questions and concerns was not to deny a specific state's application, but rather to push SARA to increase minimum student protections.

Commissioner Chavez asked for clarification about the specific issues of concern with SARA policy. Committee Vice Chair Damron asked if the main concern is about how students may submit complaints. Commissioner Pollet added that it may also be worth considering policy related to teach-outs when institutions or programs close and whether meaningful surety bonds are required.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked for perspective from President Demi Michelau, who said that one approach would be that suggested by Commissioner Carman to have a separate resolution about the committee's concerns, with the resolution taking into account how the SARA framework sits within the broader regulatory triad in postsecondary education.

Commissioner Kyle Davison advocated for a renewal of Arizona's membership in SARA as the other participating states have determined it complied with SARA policy. He MOVED TO RECOMMEND approval to the Committee of the Whole. Commissioner Carman SECONDED the motion.

Commissioner Jacob stated that he also favored the idea of a resolution, and Committee Vice Chair Damron agreed, noting that the concerns with Arizona are likely applicable across the region and that the issues may not be perfectly clear, but it appears that the state is compliant with policy.

President Michelau raised concerns about changing the criteria under which states are considered, noting that the criteria are detailed in SARA policy and the concerns raised are more focused on overall SARA policy than on Arizona's compliance.

Commissioner Davison suggested moving the discussion to a conclusion, saying that it was appropriate to rely on the staff's analysis of Arizona's compliance and the recommendations of the Regional Steering Committee. Commissioner Anderson agreed but said the committee should come back to clarify the broader policy issues under consideration and any issues specific to Arizona.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked if there was any further discussion about the motion on the table. Hearing none, he asked Lane to conduct a roll call vote. The motion passed with 11 commissioners in favor, two opposed, and one abstention.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO APPROVE OREGON'S STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT STATE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked Molly Hall-Martin to provide background on Oregon's renewal application to participate in SARA. She shared a summary of the application and noted that WICHE staff have found the state to be in compliance with SARA policies. She further noted that the W-SARA RSC has recommended that the WICHE Commission (the Commission) approve Oregon's renewal application.

Commissioner Cannon provided further context about Oregon's participation, noting that, as shown in the data presented in the agenda book, the vast majority of participating institutions are public. He mentioned that the state is in the process of adding capacity to its oversight office and refining the process for student complaints.

Committee Vice Chair Damron MOVED TO RECOMMEND to the Committee of the Whole that Oregon's renewal application to participate in SARA be approved. Commissioner Anderson SECONDED the motion. Committee Chair Cabaldon asked Lane to conduct a roll call vote. The motion passed with 13 commissioners in favor and one abstention.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO APPROVE SOUTH DAKOTA'S STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT STATE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Committee Chair Cabaldon requested that Molly Hall-Martin present background information related to South Dakota's renewal application to participate in SARA. Hall-Martin provided a summary of South Dakota's application, noting that WICHE staff has found the state to be in compliance with SARA policies and that the W-SARA RSC has recommended that the WICHE Commission approve the state's renewal application.

Commissioner Colleen Sathre MOVED TO RECOMMEND to the Committee of the Whole that South Dakota's renewal application to participate in SARA be approved. Commissioner Davison SECONDED the motion. The motion carried with 12 commissioners in favor and two abstentions.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO APPROVE A PROJECT TITLED "STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR IDAHO'S ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE GROWTH INITIATIVE" AND ADD THE PROJECT TO THE FY 2023 WORKPLAN

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked Patrick Lane to present the remaining action item. The proposed project would aim to assess opportunities to increase the production of graduates in these fields from Idaho's public institutions.

Commissioner Anderson asked where the money to fund the project would be coming from and Lane stated that it has been appropriated by the Idaho Legislature.

Commissioner Davison MOVED TO RECOMMEND approval of the project to the Committee of the Whole, and Commissioner Patricia Jones SECONDED. The item passed with 13 commissioners in favor and Commissioner Rick Aman abstaining.

Discussion Item

STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT POLICY REVISION PROCESS

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked Patrick Lane to provide an update on the newly adopted SARA policy modification process. Lane noted that, with the support of a resolution passed by the Commission in November 2021, WICHE and the W-SARA RSC took the lead in the proposal and development of the new policy modification process, which the NC-SARA Board voted to adopt at its June 2022 meeting and retreat.

Lane shared the basics of the process, including that each of the four regional compacts plus the NC-SARA board must approve any proposal to change SARA policy. He also described opportunities for amendments, for public review and comment, and for any stakeholders with an interest in SARA policy to submit proposals.

Commissioner Cannon asked how NC-SARA has addressed the concerns expressed in the letter from the attorneys general. In response to a question from Commissioner Cannon, Lane said that written feedback from a group representing attorneys general was taken into account in the adoption of the new policy modification process.

Committee Vice Chair Damron noted that the RSC brings to light the issues as technical experts and asked if feedback from other entities is built into the process. She also asked how staff would ensure that issues and concerns expressed by the committee would be addressed moving forward. Lane responded by asking how the committee would like to proceed. Commissioners Damron and Jacob said they wanted to conclude with a resolution stating specific SARA-related concerns raised earlier in the meeting.

Among her concerns, Committee Vice Chair Damron said, are the adequacy of the student complaint process, the dependability of the Federal Financial Responsibility Score, and teach-out requirements. Lane responded by saying that WICHE staff plans to speak with higher education finance experts as part of exploring better ways to assess the financial health

of institutions. One proposal under consideration is to require non-Title IV institutions to be required to have their federal financial responsibility score calculated as part of their annual audit.

Commissioner Pollet said that he would prefer a resolution that does not list specific items, but instead recommends that WICHE convene a process — including external partners — to consider how to improve interstate student consumer protections. He noted a concern that SARA does not ensure records retention policies or records transfer between states for investigations. He said that the process for improving student consumer protections should include external partners and references to the letter from the attorneys general.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked if WICHE is already working on proposals for SARA policy modifications. Lane said that proposals are under development, but the process is being led by the states.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked about the role of the Commission and if it can weigh in early in the process or wait until later stages of the process. Lane said that proposals could be submitted from the Commission rather than from the RSC.

Committee Vice Chair Damron asked for assurance that staff will carry expressed concerns through the proper channels.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked that WICHE staff communicate to the RSC that the Commission supports certain proposals such as those related to consumer protections. He also asked that the PAR Committee be briefed on, and schedule a discussion of, the attorneys general letter. Lane said that staff would share summary documents related to current policy proposals with the committee via email.

Commissioner Davison asked for clarification on what student consumer protections each state has in place.

Commissioner Pollet said that the attorney general of Washington has expressed strong concerns that SARA weakened Washington consumer protections, so there is not a universal feeling that it has improved student protections so much as regulatory efficiency in approving institutions.

Commissioner Jacob said that he has immediate concerns including laws that encourage institutions to move to other states. He noted that it would be unfair to vote no for a state's renewal and leave a class of students completely unprotected. He wanted clarification on when it would be okay to vote "no" on a renewal application and said he would like to see a resolution before end of business so there is no question about commissioners' concerns. Lane asked if there was proposal for a formal resolution.

Committee Chair Cabaldon said the motion should direct the president to move the discussion topics into the policy modification process and that there should be dedicated time at the May Commission meeting to discuss existing proposals.

Committee Chair Cabaldon MOVED TO PASS a resolution directing the WICHE President to advance and support proposals in the policy modification process that elevate student consumer protections. Committee Vice Chair Damron SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Tidemann asked if WICHE would be consistent with other regions. Committee Chair Cabaldon commented WICHE will have to be. Commissioner Tidemann said that previously there were rules in place, but they were not enforced. The protections included in SARA are much better than what was in place before.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The PAR Committee adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m.

ACTION ITEM:

Approval of a Project Titled “Articulating the Value of Postsecondary Education in the West”

Summary

Higher education policymakers and experts oftentimes assume that the value of postsecondary education is clear and obvious to students, their families, and the communities in which they reside. However, survey data, opinion research, and news reports show that increasingly this value is under question by some students, graduates, employers, political leaders, and others.¹ While postsecondary education researchers and experts can point to robust research that shows an increasing individual return on investment, such analyses are failing to address growing concerns about the overall value proposition.²

WICHE’s Policy Analysis and Research Unit cannot singlehandedly address these concerns and issues, but will work on multiple approaches to understand and articulate the value of postsecondary education for diverse stakeholders, including a focus on where that value is not meeting broader expectations. This effort will begin with a general articulation of the broad dimensions of value, including the economic return to individuals and communities, civic and cultural value, and other social dimensions of value that are not easily captured in earnings data.

In addition to seeking external funding for this effort, the work will embed analyses of value within the unit’s other areas of work.

Relationship to WICHE Mission

This project closely aligns with WICHE’s mission and strategic priorities. This work will help WICHE members identify different areas of value and help develop and implement sound public policy. In particular, this work will focus on the strategic priorities of workforce and society, value and accountability, and technology and innovation.

Background

There is robust research showing that on average, individuals who complete a postsecondary degree receive a positive economic return and this economic return is increasing.³ But this economic return – which many higher education experts and some policymakers often take for granted – does not fully address concerns about a potential lack of value for postsecondary degrees. “Value,” as is being used across policy discussions, has more nebulous and far-reaching connotations that are not often well articulated. While some national efforts have attempted to drive definitions of value that have a broad base, such work has generally not yet impacted discussions at the state and local levels.⁴

The WICHE Policy Unit proposes a broad-based effort that will engage in discussions across WICHE’s membership to identify and articulate definitions of value that encapsulate different dimensions of the concept and embed a Western perspective. In particular, this work will aim to identify areas of economic, social, civic, and cultural value created by postsecondary education for individuals, communities, states/territories, and nations. Additionally, the work will aim to identify areas in which postsecondary education, as it currently operates, falls short in providing appropriate value.

Project Description

The Policy Unit will seek external funding and engage in the following activities in support of this effort:

- ▶ Embed analyses of value within existing WICHE efforts. WICHE engages in numerous projects and activities where an analysis of value (again, broadly defined) is fully appropriate and beneficial to that specific work. Staff will aim to address questions of value across the diverse portfolio of efforts.
- ▶ Develop communities of practice. WICHE will virtually convene small teams from across the region to identify key questions and challenges in identifying value and communicating about the concept to diverse stakeholders, including students and their families, employers, policymakers, and others.

- ▶ Identify opportunities to highlight value propositions. Particularly for areas where there is less substantial research, WICHE staff will work to identify ways to share information about how higher education provides broadly defined value to individuals, local communities, and society in general.
- ▶ Curate research and resources. The policy team will collect and disseminate research and resources on the diverse value of postsecondary education with an emphasis on areas that are particularly relevant for the West.
- ▶ Develop action steps for enhancing value. There are certainly areas where the value of postsecondary education falls short of the ideal, and improving that value can be a complex process of policy and practice. Staff will work to identify action steps that WICHE can take to help improve the value proposition in these areas.
- ▶ Incorporate student voices. Oftentimes, discussions like these can revolve solely around data and research without intentional space created for the student voice. Through these efforts, staff will work to incorporate the perspectives of current, potential, and former students into these activities.

Action Requested

Staff requests that the Policy Analysis and Research Committee approve this project and allow WICHE to seek and expend external funding to support the effort, which would be added to the FY 2024 workplan.

Staff and Fiscal Impact

WICHE proposes to seek funding for a three-year project at a cost of \$600,000, which would support 1.5 FTE.

¹ See for example: Nichole Torpey-Saboe, "Value Beyond the Degree: Alumni Perspectives on How College Experiences Improve Their Lives," 2022, Strada Education Network, Indianapolis, IN, accessed February 15, 2023, at https://stradaeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Strada_November-outcomes-survey_BNL-11162022.pdf; Monica Potts, "Is College Worth It? Voters are Split," October 24, 2022, FiveThirtyEight, accessed February 15, 2023 at <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/invisible-divides-college/>; Doug Lederman, "The Public's Growing Doubts about College 'Value'," September 27, 2022, Inside HigherEd, accessed February 15, 2023, at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/09/27/publics-growing-concern-about-higher-eds-value-key-podcast>.

² Douglas Webber, "Decomposing Changes in Higher Education Return on Investment Over Time," July 13, 2022, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, accessed February 15, 2023, at <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/decomposing-changes-in-higher-education-return-on-investment-over-time-20220713.html>.

³ See for example, "Kristin Blagg and Erica Blom, "Evaluating the Return on Investment in Higher Education," 2019, Urban Institute, accessed February 15, 2023 at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592627.pdf>; Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz, "Despite Rising Costs, College Is Still a Good Investment," 2019, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, accessed February 15 from <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2019/06/despite-rising-costs-college-is-still-a-good-investment/>.

⁴ See for example, "Postsecondary Value Commission," n.d., Institute for Higher Education Policy, accessed February 15, 2023, at <https://postsecondaryvalue.org>.

ACTION ITEM:

Recommendation to the Committee of the Whole to Approve the FY 2024 Workplan Section of the Policy Analysis and Research Unit

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the general fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	A/F; A/S; W/S; V/A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Peer-to-Peer Virtual Convenings	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.15	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	A/F; A/S; W/S; V/A	Western	.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	National	.20	N/A
Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West	A/F	Western	.025	All WICHE members
WICHE Insights	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.10	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.10	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	A/S; I; V/A	Western	2.25	NC-SARA; Western SARA signatories; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB

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 (PARDB), the Benchmarks data dashboard now includes state information as well as regional metrics.

The **LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAC)** informs the WICHE 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.

As the pandemic appears to be winding down and reaching a new endemic phase, Policy Analysis and Research unit staff will continue to provide support to the region through regularly scheduled **PEER-TO-PEER VIRTUAL CONVENINGS** on federal funding issues, campus responses, and policy approaches to address the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and other relevant policy issues.

WICHE’s **REGIONAL FACT BOOK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WEST** presents regional and state-by-state data and analysis on policy indicators across a range of topics. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide up-to-date information for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The Fact Book’s downloadable data tables are updated periodically throughout the year. WICHE released 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 and is examining the overall utility of the full suite of data resources.

WICHE will continue building out **STATE POLICY AND DATA PROFILES** that capture state and territory postsecondary contexts. The development of the Policy Analysis and Research Database (PARDB) will enable the Policy unit to provide more detailed and relevant information specific to each WICHE member. WICHE has been consulting with key stakeholders in the West about how our data resources can be most useful and expects to begin rolling out these new profiles in FY 2023.

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, territory, and the region over the past one, five, and 10 years, as well as what proportion of total tuition and fees they represent.

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 2023 will likely continue to focus on COVID-19 recovery with particular attention to enrollment declines and potentially worsening equity gaps due to changes in college-going behavior.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCALITY AGREEMENT (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 coordinates the membership of SARA states in the West through the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA). WICHE collaborates with the other regional compacts and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) to provide national coverage and ensure consistency in the implementation of the agreement.

Current Activities – Projects & Initiatives

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	A/F; A/S	Western/ National	\$450,000	2.25 2023-24	Hewlett Foundation, WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Support for the Wyoming Innovation Partnership	A/S; W/S; I	Western	\$264,000	1.05 FY 2022-24	Wyoming Community College Commission
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	A/S; W/S	National	\$50,000	.25 in FY 2024	TBD
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S	Western/ National	\$100,000 +	.5 FTE in FY 2024	Lumina Foundation, Behavioral Health Program, Programs and Services, Federal Agencies

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. This effort started in FY 2021 and WICHE expects additional funding to continue this work into FY 2024. There is significant collaboration and coordination across regions, with WCET serving as the “backbone” of the effort.

SUPPORT FOR THE WYOMING INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP: WICHE has been contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission to provide project management for a broad initiative that will seek to modernize and focus Wyoming’s efforts to develop a resilient workforce and economy. The effort aims to better align Wyoming’s economic development agenda by increasing collaborations among state entities and ultimately local partners.

KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR: The Policy Analysis and Research unit released the 10th edition of state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates in December 2020. During FY 2024, staff will continue dissemination activities and produce tools that can help users understand the potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, and develop analysis related to socioeconomic status.






IMPROVING POLICY AND PRACTICE TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS: WICHE has secured a funding commitment from Lumina Foundation to support an initial convening of exemplar states/systems focused on improving behavioral health and wellness in postsecondary education. Additionally, conversations continue with other partners about large-scale efforts to scale healthy practices through policy.

New Directions

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	A/F; 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 - 2million	1.75 4 years	TBD
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	A/S; V/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; V/A		Western	\$385,313	.0825 2 years	Idaho State Board of Education
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	A/F; A/S		Western	\$500,000	1.50 2 years	TBD

New Directions *(continued)*

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
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; V/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	A/F; A/S	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$400,000	2.0 2 years	TBD
Data with a Purpose	W/S; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	\$497,475	.05 2 years	Strada Education Network
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD
Articulating the Value of Postsecondary Education in the West	W/S; A/S; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$600,000	1.5 FTE 3 Years	TBD
Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale	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; I; V/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
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$100,000	2 years	WCET, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Policy and Practice Solutions for Workforce Shortages	A/S; W/S; I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western	\$400,000	2 years	TBD
Intermediaries for Scale Partnerships	A/F; A/S; I	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western/ National	TBD	TBD	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

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 WICHE members, postsecondary systems and 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. The project will also seek to partner with WICHE members and other key stakeholders 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 WICHE members, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed at increasing adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS: WICHE members 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 WICHE members and help advance overall knowledge in the field.

WICHE is interested in bolstering efforts to improve access and success by engaging in partnerships wherever it is useful 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 WICHE members to carry out such an evaluation would help address capacity issues, provide actionable information to the participants, 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: Flowing from the previous item on Evaluation and Research Partnerships, WICHE has recently completed an evaluation of Idaho's dual-credit funding model. This work identified numerous potential avenues for further research that meets Idaho's needs and can inform all WICHE members about effective policies. Information about the efficacy of innovative programs is valuable not only to the WICHE member 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 additional research where opportunities and funding are available, and the research meets Idaho's needs.

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 AREAS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES 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 across the region to identify pilot sites for project implementation that involves expanding such 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: 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, territories, and freely associated states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to 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 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 system and institutional education and workforce researchers, as well as key staff from WICHE members, 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-age students. Additionally, they can be a major 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 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 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 decision makers and data available through the MLDE 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 policy and practice.

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 partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure WICHE members can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of substandard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from project participants 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 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 WICHE members and territories about efforts to improve information about the different types of credentials offered. The overall aim would be to work with WICHE members – 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.

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 members to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection. This initiative was previously approved by the Commission but paused during the height of the pandemic due to the inability to convene in person. Staff will look to relaunch this effort in FY 2024.

POLICY AND PRACTICE SOLUTIONS FOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGES: As part of its general efforts to support COVID-19 recovery (discussed above), the Policy unit began convening key staff from WICHE members to focus on ways to address short- and long-term workforce shortages in health fields using general fund dollars. Staff has developed a broader proposal to carry out a project that would implement solutions being developed while focusing on building a strong research base into effective and sustainable long-term policy and practice.

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP: Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE has completed multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE was previously brought in by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate its efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. 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.

ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE WEST: WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work on multiple approaches to understand and articulate the value of postsecondary education for diverse stakeholders, including a focus on where that value is not meeting broader expectations. This effort will begin with a general articulation of the broad dimensions of value, including the economic return to individuals and communities, civic and cultural value, and other social dimensions of value that are not easily captured in earnings data. This work will have an explicit focus on how value is articulated in diverse Western contexts.

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 WICHE members 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 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 and territorial 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- and territory-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 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 2023:

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM: WICHE completed its initial work to support AIHEC's knowledge-management efforts as funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Based on that initial work, AIHEC selected WICHE (working with NCHEMS) to carry out further work in support of its knowledge-management infrastructure.

OREGON COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS AND OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION LANDSCAPE STUDY: WICHE was contracted by NCHEMS to participate in an environmental scan of postsecondary education in the state and to assess the ways in which policy and practice can be improved to serve the needs of the state and its residents more effectively. WICHE provided data analysis and participated in stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

AdvanceCTE POLICY ROUNDTABLES: WICHE received a small subgrant from AdvanceCTE to help convene policy roundtables focused on enhancing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the West and across the nation. WICHE assisted by convening virtual roundtables that focused on key policy and practice issues and participated as a thought partner in AdvanceCTE's efforts to develop a broad set of recommendations for states and others.

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM: WICHE completed additional work to support AIHEC's knowledge-management efforts as funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR IDAHO'S ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE GROWTH INITIATIVE: WICHE completed this work for Idaho, with a focus on high-level recommendations to spur growth in the production of necessary degrees to support the state's economy.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement Policy Revision Process

Introduction

At the November 2022 WICHE Commission meeting, the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee adopted a resolution directing the WICHE President and staff to advance and support proposals in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) policy modification process that elevate student consumer protections. Further, the Committee expressed an interest in additional updates about proposals submitted by the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee and how these proposals align with previous recommendations by various stakeholders, including a group of Attorneys General and consumer advocate organizations.

This memorandum provides an update on activities by our staff in response to this resolution, further background on the policy process, and additional information that may be useful for commissioners. Staff will continue to communicate with you and address any questions or concerns you may have through our regularly scheduled executive committee meetings, the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee meeting at our May 2023 Commission Meeting, or via direct communications.

Background: The SARA Policy Process

As previously communicated to commissioners, the National Council for SARA (NC-SARA) board adopted a new process for modifying policies governing the agreement in June 2022. To greatly simplify, the process allows anyone to submit a proposal for consideration. To be adopted, proposals must be approved by each of the four regional higher education compacts and the NC-SARA board (the five signatories to SARA). The principles behind this process of transparency, openness, and a strong state voice guiding the agreement were endorsed by the Commission, through its resolution on SARA adopted in November 2021, as well as numerous consumer advocate-focused organizations, and a coalition of state attorneys general through correspondence to NC-SARA. Key Western state staff, along with WICHE's own team, were instrumental in securing approval of this new process.

The 2023 policy modification cycle launched on January 3, 2023, with proposals accepted until February 3. Sixty-three proposals were submitted by a wide cross section of stakeholders, including all four regional steering committees, a coalition of consumer advocate groups, SAN & WCET, and five institutions. The proposals are now subject to public comment, opportunities for amendment and consolidation by submitters, and further public comment before final action by the regional compacts, and if they approve, NC-SARA's board at its fall meeting.

W-SARA Proposals

WICHE facilitates Western participation in SARA through the W-SARA regional steering committee, which includes representation from all SARA-participating WICHE members. W-SARA has submitted nine specific and detailed proposals that are responsive to the PAR committee's resolution. A summary of all W-SARA proposals is attached to this memorandum (Attachment A), with highlights as follows:

- ▶ **Allow states to assess institutional compliance upon application.** Currently, SARA policy limits the extent to which states can assess the compliance of institutions with SARA requirements until after they are admitted. This policy gap, identified by a WICHE state in its SARA renewal application (among others), generated substantial discussion among PAR committee members. The W-SARA proposal will allow states to assess compliance prior to admitting institutions. This proposal aligns closely with recommendations from the coalition of Attorneys General and other consumer advocate organizations.
- ▶ **Strengthened institutional requirements for eligibility.** The W-SARA proposals also provide new criteria for continued institutional eligibility around investigations by any oversight entity (which must be disclosed to states) and add new triggers for the loss of eligibility with the intention of increasing protections for students.; This proposal aligns closely with recommendations from the coalition of Attorneys General and other consumer advocate organizations.

- ▶ **Removal of arbitrary limits on provisional status.** One W-SARA proposal would remove the requirement that limits the amount of time an institution can stay on provisional status. Previously, policy dictated that if an institution reached the time limit for provisional status, states would be forced to return it to regular status. This new proposal will allow a state to keep an institution on provisional status, with the attendant criteria that were imposed, until the situation is resolved. This proposal aligns closely with recommendations from the coalition of Attorneys General and other consumer advocate organizations.
- ▶ **Improvements to transparency.** Additional W-SARA proposals will require improved institutional disclosures related to institutional status changes, the reason(s) why institutions are on provisional status, investigations institutions are the subject of, and public notice of student complaint data. These proposals align closely with recommendations from the coalition of Attorneys General and other consumer advocate organizations.

In addition to working through the alignment process with the other regional steering committees, W-SARA staff are committed to working with consumer advocate groups to move shared priorities forward. Staff have been engaged in outreach to and engagement with various stakeholders, including working to schedule regular meetings with a number of student consumer advocate organizations and meeting with Department of Education staff to talk about the policy modification process and proposals from the W-SARA RSC.

The next step for these proposals is working closely with organizations that have submitted similar proposals to develop common language that will receive support from the other three regional compacts and the NC-SARA board. Staff will keep the commissioners apprised of these developments.

Next Steps: WICHE Staff and Commissioner Roles

As noted above, in the coming months, WICHE staff will work closely with a diverse range of stakeholders, including WICHE members, the other regional compacts, consumer advocate organizations, and, as appropriate, Western Attorneys General who are focused on these issues. Following a July 7 deadline to amend or withdraw proposals, the four regions will begin their review and voting processes on the final versions of proposals.

As a reminder, WICHE's process for proposal review was approved by the Executive Committee at the August 2022 Executive Committee meeting. In this process, the W-SARA RSC will review and vote on most proposals. Those proposals carrying a particular weight or impact—as determined by the WICHE President in consultation with WICHE officers and the chair of the PAR committee—will be voted on by the Commission with a recommendation from the RSC.

Regional reviews and votes will be finalized by September 1.

Areas of Policy Focus and Research for Future Cycles

WICHE staff have also developed a list of particularly complex and important topics that will require additional analysis with the intent of working with higher education experts and key consumer advocate stakeholders to develop proposals for the 2024 policy revision cycle.

Those topics include developing better metrics to assess the financial stability of institutions; improving the student complaint and reporting process; ensuring tribal sovereignty in the participation of Tribal Colleges & Universities; and developing finance-related student protection mechanisms.

Additionally, WICHE staff have developed a process for utilizing data resources to assess the existence of a potential “race to the bottom,” in which some have suggested that the existence of SARA could lead institutions to migrate to low-regulation states. Although work on this analysis is ongoing, our initial assessment shows limited movement of institutions that participate in federal financial aid programs, and that movement does not appear consistent with the idea that institutions are seeking out states with the fewest possible regulations.

Conclusion

The details and nuances of SARA policy are extremely complex, and staff welcome the Commission's continued focus on this topic. WICHE's leadership, evidenced through the Commission's 2021 resolution and carried forward by our team and the Western states participating in SARA, has already led to vast improvements in the operation of the agreement.

One of the key changes that external critics of SARA have advocated for is improved transparency and a stronger role for states in deciding SARA policy. These are central priorities for WICHE, and the new policy process has delivered on this front. The next, more complicated step, is where we find ourselves now: crafting and adopting new and better policies to govern the agreement. We look forward to engaging with WICHE members, commissioners, and the varied other stakeholders with an interest in distance education to support WICHE's mission in this important work.

ATTACHMENT A: W-SARA Policy Proposals for 2023 Cycle

The proposed policy modifications from the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee are designed to meet the needs of our SPEs in the day-to-day operations of consistently implementing the SARA agreement with the institutions they work with. In many cases, concerns raised by SPEs mirrored those raised by stakeholders like the Attorneys General and consumer advocate groups. Policy proposals developed by the RSC address many, but not all, of the recommendations from these groups. Broadly, W-SARA's proposals for the 2023 cycle focus on addressing gaps in SARA policy to help states better protect students and hold institutions accountable through changes related to institutional eligibility, provisional status, and increased transparency.

Our proposals related to institutional eligibility allow SPEs to assess institutional compliance prior to admitting them to SARA, providing new criteria for continued eligibility, and add new triggers for the loss of eligibility with the intention of increasing protections for students. These proposals aim to provide SPEs with more tools in working with institutions and create a smoother off-ramp for those institutions who fail to live up to the standards of participation while still serving students. Our proposal related to provisional status is designed to strengthen this powerful tool for our states and SPEs by removing arbitrary limits on the length of provisional status, centering the states' role in the review and approval process, and expanding the reasons an institution may be placed on provisional status. The focus on transparency can be seen throughout our proposals and include increasing disclosures for all stakeholders encompassing public notice about institutional status changes and the reason(s) institutions are on provisional status, disclosures from institutions about investigations they are the subject of, and public notice of student complaint data.

Together, we believe this package of policy proposals provides a strong first step towards improving SARA policy to better serve our SPEs, states, and students across the West and the country as a whole.

PROPOSAL #1: INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS – SECTION 3.1

This proposal would add criteria for initial participation and introduce differentiated criteria for initial participation and renewal of participation. The proposed changes would add additional safeguards to ensure SARA institutions maintain a reasonable and appropriate level of stability at the time they become participating institutions.

PROPOSAL #2: STATE REVIEWS OF INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS – NEW SECTION 3.1(D)

This proposal is intended to add consumer protections by providing additional discretion to states in their evaluations of institutional applications for SARA participation. Specifically, the proposal would allow states to deny an institution's initial or renewal application based on concerns related to a list of named circumstances.

PROPOSAL #3: PROVISIONAL STATUS – SECTION 3.2

This proposal is intended to accomplish several consumer protection-related outcomes. It would provide states discretion to determine the appropriate length of time an institution should be placed on provisional status, expand the reasons an institution may be placed on provisional status, and require public notice regarding SARA institutions currently placed on provisional status and the reason(s) for such designation.

PROPOSAL #4: LOSS OF INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY – SECTION 3.8(C-D & H)

This proposal is intended to accomplish several consumer protection-related outcomes. It would expand the criteria a state may rely on to determine an institution located in its state should be removed from SARA participation, encourage states to apply additional flexibility towards students enrolled in SARA institutions that withdraw or lose eligibility to participate in SARA, and clarify that institutions that withdraw or lose eligibility to participate in SARA may no longer benefit from SARA and must meet state-specific authorization requirements based on the institution's activities.

PROPOSAL #5: PUBLIC NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL STATUS CHANGE – NEW SECTION 3.8(G)

This proposal would benefit students, states, and members of the public by providing transparency regarding changes in the status of SARA institutions. It would require NC-SARA to provide public notice regarding the withdrawal, loss of eligibility, or removal of an institution from SARA participation on its website.

PROPOSAL #6: INSTITUTIONAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS – NEW SECTION 3.9

This proposal would strengthen consumer protections by requiring SARA institutions to provide notice to their home state regarding any adverse action against the institution by an oversight entity or any changes in the institution's operations that would impact the institution's ability to meet the requirements of the *SARA Policy Manual*.

PROPOSAL #7: SCOPE OF APPLICATION – SECTION 4.1

This proposal would expand the scope of consumer protections by clarifying that SARA standards and requirements apply to various corporate entities acting in concert with, or on behalf of, the institution including, but not limited to, corporate parent(s), corporate affiliate(s) or partner(s), and online program manager(s).

PROPOSAL #8: MANDATORY ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS – SECTION 4.4(G)

This proposal is intended to clarify existing language in the Policy Manual that prohibits the use of mandatory arbitration agreements for the resolution of complaints that fall under SARA and require disclosures related to mandatory arbitration agreements for those institutions that employ them for the resolution of non-SARA complaints or disputes.

PROPOSAL #9: PUBLIC NOTICE OF COMPLAINTS – NEW SECTION 7.2(C)

This proposal would benefit students, states, and members of the public by providing transparency regarding student complaints made against SARA institutions. It would require NC-SARA to publish institutional complaint data on its website.

Comparing Attorneys General Policy Modification Requests and W-SARA Policy Responses

AG Request: NC-SARA should allow member states to enforce education-specific consumer protection laws.

W-SARA Proposals: This item is not included in W-SARA's proposals.

AG Request: NC-SARA should implement minimum consumer protection standards, including: Prohibiting unfair and deceptive admissions and financial aid practices; requiring schools to provide links to Consumer Financial Protection Bureau information; prohibiting transcript withholding; restricting the use of lead generators; impose specific requirements related to financial protections for all students in the event of unanticipated closure; and requiring a minimum percent of total revenue be spent on student instruction.

W-SARA Proposals: These items are not included in W-SARA's proposals. Fraud and deceptive practices are generally already against state and federal law (and not affected by SARA participation). W-SARA intends to examine financial protections for students in preparation for the 2024 cycle.

AG Request: NC-SARA should clarify and enforce its current rule prohibiting the use of mandatory arbitration clauses.

W-SARA Proposals: W-SARA has directly addressed this request in Proposal #8 for the 2023 policy modification cycle, proposing a modification to Section 4.4(g).

AG Request: NC-SARA should require the self-reporting of investigations.

W-SARA Proposals: W-SARA has directly addressed this request in Proposal #6 for the 2023 policy modification cycle by proposing a new section — Section 3.9 — related to institutional disclosure requirements.

AG Request: NC-SARA should give SPEs authority to consider government action taken against a school's online program manager, corporate parent, or corporate affiliate.

W-SARA has directly addressed this request in Proposal #7 for the 2023 policy modification cycle, proposing a modification to Section 4.1.

AG Request: NC-SARA should give SPEs clear authority to place institutions on provisional status after the resolution or settlement of government investigations or lawsuits.

W-SARA Proposals: This request is addressed, in part, in Proposals #2 & 3 — related to institutional eligibility and provisional status — if the resolution or settlement results in an outcome that is likely to impact the institution's authorization status, accreditation status, eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs, or its ability to maintain ongoing operations.

AG Request: The conclusion of a government agency's investigation or litigation should not prohibit SPEs from using provisional status.

W-SARA Proposals: This request is addressed, in part, in Proposals #2 & 3 — related to institutional eligibility and provisional status — if the resolution or settlement results in an outcome that is likely to impact the institution's authorization status, accreditation status, eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs, or its ability to maintain ongoing operations.

AG Request: Loss of federal recognition by a school's sole accreditor should trigger immediate protections for students, including provisional status.

W-SARA Proposals: SARA policy already requires institutional accreditation from an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education whose scope includes distance education. Proposals #2 & 3 add language related to changes in institutional status related to accreditation.

AG Request: More specific guidance should be given to SPEs related to the conditions that can be placed on institutions that are on provisional status.

W-SARA Proposals: While we are interested in future proposals related to defining options available to SPEs in the employment of provisional status — possibly as an appendix, the current discretion afforded to SPEs by SARA policy did not make this request particularly urgent for the inaugural policy modification cycle with the new process.

AG Request: NC-SARA's website should disclose the reasons a school is on provisional status and the conditions placed upon the school.

W-SARA Proposals: W-SARA has directly addressed this request, in part, in Proposal #3 for the 2023 policy modification cycle, proposing a modification to Section 3.2(g). While we have proposed requiring disclosure for reason(s) an institution is on provisional status, we did not propose disclosing conditions placed on the institution as a result of that status.

AG Request: NC-SARA should not arbitrarily limit the duration of provisional status.

W-SARA Proposals: W-SARA has directly addressed this request in Proposal #3 for the 2023 policy modification cycle, proposing a modification to Section 3.2(j).

AG Request: NC-SARA should clarify its policies related to removing and denying a school from participating schools in SARA and set student-focused eligibility standards.

W-SARA Proposals: This request is addressed in Proposals #1 & 2 related to institutional eligibility requirements and state reviews of institutional applications. These proposals create differing requirements for initial and renewal applications and make it clear that SPEs may deny or remove an institution for failing to meet the outlined requirements.

AG Request: NC-SARA's board should rectify its lack of state control, dearth of representatives from consumer advocate organizations, and failure to transparently lobby for federal and state policy.

W-SARA Proposals: This request is beyond the scope of the policy modification process, but WICHE continues to work behind the scenes on increasing state representation on the NC-SARA board in concordance with the 2021 WICHE Resolution. The Attorneys General and numerous consumer advocate organizations have repeatedly requested that states make up more than half of the NC-SARA board. Currently, 10 of the 19 seats are held by state staff or staff from organizations representing states, such as WICHE and SHEEO.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Meeting

Monday, May 8, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Level 3, Mural II

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday
May 8, 2023

10:45 a.m. - Noon

Mural II

Committee Members

Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Agenda

PRESIDING

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

STAFF

Jason Alves, Director of Veterans Initiatives
John Gomez, Director of Operations

Information Items

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM FY 2024 WORKPLAN DRAFT

6-2

CURRENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROJECTS

Dennis Mohatt

BUDGET UPDATE

John Gomez

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OVERSIGHT COUNCIL (BHOC) ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

Dennis Mohatt

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: PRESENTATION ON THE TOGETHER WITH VETERANS PROGRAM, WITH A SPOTLIGHT ON THE VETERANS COALITION OF CENTRAL ARIZONA (YAVAPAI COUNTY)

Jason Alves
Jeff Russell, Veterans Coalition of Central Arizona (VCCA) Facilitator

Other Business

Adjournment

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FY 2024 WORKPLAN DRAFT

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$100,000	7/23-6/24	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$20,000	.05 7/23-6/24	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Arizona: Evidence- Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S; V/A	Western	\$409,250	2.75 7/22-6/23	State of Arizona
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western & Pacific Territories	\$250,000	.50 2.5 years	The U.S. Territory of Guam
Hawai'i Early Intervention Services - Rates Study	W/S	Western	\$55,800	1/23-6/23	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$1,850,733	.50 7/22-6/23	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School- Based Clinical Psychologists*	W/S	Western	\$100,000	Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$20,657	7/22-6/23	State of Idaho
Montana Fidelity Reviews*	W/S; V/A	Western	\$90,900	.50 7/22-9/23	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP- MHTTC)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$445,559	1.5 5 years	University of North Dakota
Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center	W/S	Western	\$541,258	2.65 2 Years	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
NASMHPD Technical Assistance	W/S	National	\$250,000	.75 1/23–8/23	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Institutes of Health – Behavioral Health Aide Assessment	W/S	Western	\$153,088	.75 4 years	AK Native Tribal Health Consortium' Northwest Indian College; University of AK – Anchorage
National Institutes of Health - Online Publication Update	W/S	National	\$15,977	.15 9/20-9/22	National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$162,401	.25 8/22-8/23	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$110,070	.25 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico; Indian Health Service
North Dakota Behavioral Health Workforce Study	W/S	Western	\$60,300	5/22-1/23	University of North Dakota
Oregon Psychology Internship Program*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$3,000	7/22-6/23	State of Oregon

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives (continued)

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	W/S	Western	\$843,219	3.0 9/22-9/23	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention	W/S	National	\$2,892,797	4.5 4/22-3/23	US Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
Sanford Health Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$200,000	.50 3 Years	Sanford Health
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews*	W/S; V/A	Western	\$49,750	.25 6/22-5/23	State of South Dakota
South Dakota Optimal Capacity T/A – Phase III	W/S	Western	\$50,000	.25 1/23-5/23	State of South Dakota
South Dakota Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$175,000	.25 8/22-8/23	State of South Dakota
University of Wisconsin Technical Assistance	A/S; W/S	National	\$52,659	.40 4 years	University of Wisconsin
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$6,720	7/22-6/23	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	W/S	Western	Varies annually	.10 Ongoing	WICHE Member States and Territories

* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2024.

ALASKA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (AK-PIC) INTERNS: The WICHE BHP supports the ongoing operations of the AK-PIC for interns and faculty, including its engagement in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and achievement/maintenance of American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation.

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). The AK-PIC consists of a multi-site consortium of Alaska agencies that maintain at least one supervising psychologist on-site to provide supervision and didactic training to interns.

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 a team of fidelity reviewers who review approximately 20 different providers in Maricopa County each year. The project was expanded in FY 2019 to include fidelity reviews of two EBPs in Northern and Southern Arizona.

GUAM PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM: The WICHE BHP has partnered 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 is guiding all phases of the development of a psychology internship consortium to attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories. Guam-PIC is participating in the 2022 APPIC National Intern Match, and the first cohort of two interns began their internship in September 2022.

HAWAII EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES – RATES STUDY: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai'i Department of Health has contracted with the WICHE BHP to complete another comparative review of early childhood services compensation methodology and pricing structures for both contracted services and related professional salaries such as General Educator, Occupational and Physical Therapies, and Speech Language Pathologist. The EIS seeks to compare Hawai'i rates to those in other, analogous states to ensure competitive pay to help maintain a sufficient workforce.

HAWAII PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (HI-PIC): WICHE supports 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. In the current year, there are 10 interns participating in HI-PIC.

HAWAII RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS: The Hawai'i Department of Education contracts with the 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 Department of Public Health and Human Services' Behavioral Health and Disabilities Division has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to the division on the implementation of its Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for 13 PACT programs operating across the state, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation on outcomes and dashboard development.

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, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

MOUNTAIN PLAINS RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER: In October of 2022, WICHE was awarded a two-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish the Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (MP-ROTAC), which is dedicated to supporting opioid and stimulant prevention, treatment, and recovery in HHS Region 8, comprising Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. MP-ROTAC develops and disseminates resources, training, and technical assistance to rural communities across the continuum of care.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM DIRECTORS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP will be a subcontractor to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) on its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Technical Assistance Coalition and Transformation Transfer Initiative. The BHP will focus on implementing and expanding 988 crisis services in rural and frontier regions by providing a series of training and technical assistance sessions to providers across the country.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT: The WICHE Behavioral Health Program, in collaboration with the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), was awarded a National Institutes of Health (NIH) research grant. This project will evaluate the behavioral health aide 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.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) ONLINE PUBLICATION UPDATE: The NIH has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide an update to its publication *Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography*. The revision will expand the publication's focus to include substance use and addiction, with special emphasis on opioid addiction in rural and frontier areas of the U.S.

NEVADA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (NV-PIC): The WICHE BHP assists the state of Nevada in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Nevada's behavioral health workforce. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health and Nevada-WICHE provides support and funding for the BHP's ongoing development and operation 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 New Mexico Department of Health, and the federal Indian Health Services, the WICHE BHP will facilitate program development, and help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards. NM-PIC accepted its first cohort of interns in 2021-22, and its accreditation self-study was submitted in March 2022.

NORTH DAKOTA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STUDY: The University of North Dakota (UND) contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to UND as part of the North Dakota Behavioral Health Plan Aim 7: Behavioral Health Workforce. WICHE convened and facilitated a Behavioral Health Workforce Summit with key stakeholders and facilitated the development of a Behavioral Health Workforce Strategic Plan.

OREGON STATE HOSPITAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: WICHE continues 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 and psychostimulant misuse in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortia. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides technical assistance to designated grantee sites.

RURAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION – TOGETHER WITH VETERANS: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and implement Together With Veterans, a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. The program became operational in FY 2019, with four initial sites: two in Colorado, one in Montana, and one in North Carolina. Since then, the program has grown to 34 sites that are fully operational in FY 2023. The TWV Program sites are located in rural communities throughout the country, stretching from as far east as New Hampshire and as far west as the Territory of Guam.

SANFORD HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM: The WICHE BHP worked with the leadership of Sanford Health to begin planning and preparation for a psychology internship designed to provide a broad and culturally relevant training program to support the preparation and retention of doctoral level psychologists in North Dakota and Minnesota. Sanford Health has a large national footprint, and they are a leading agency in the advancement of integrated health services (physical and behavioral). The internship development began primarily with Sanford's integrated health sites in North Dakota.

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.

SOUTH DAKOTA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM: The University of South Dakota recently contracted with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program for the development of a psychology internship consortium. The BHP is working with the state to identify core partners for the internship, including the South Dakota Human Services Center in Yankton and other community-based partners. WICHE's work will extend from planning and development to supporting achieving accreditation of the internship program.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: WICHE is working in partnership with the University of Wisconsin through a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to provide education and training to graduate students, practitioners, educators, and trainers. These learning collaboratives will focus on the integration of substance use disorder and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery in rural communities. WICHE will provide expert trainers for a series of

six trainings over the course of 12 weeks, twice a year for the next four years. Many of the expert trainers will be provided in conjunction with the ongoing work of WICHE’s Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP).

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 that might need WICHE President approval for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/TIMELINE	PARTNERS						
Alaska Psychiatric Institute Regulatory Compliance - Technical Assistance	W/S; V/A	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #0070C0;">■</td> <td style="background-color: #0070C0;">■</td> <td style="background-color: #0070C0;">■</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #0070C0;">■</td> <td style="background-color: #0070C0;">■</td> <td style="background-color: #0070C0;">■</td> </tr> </table>	■	■	■	■	■	■	Western	\$197,100	5 years	State of Alaska
■	■	■										
■	■	■										

ALASKA PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE: Through a competitive bid process, the WICHE BHP was awarded a contract by the state of Alaska to provide technical assistance to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) to help maintain compliance with regulating agencies by performing reviews and providing guidance on how to address shortcomings in policies and execution. The project is scheduled to begin July 1, 2023, and the contract can be renewed for up to four additional years.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing:

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY – TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED SUPERVISION OF POST-GRADUATE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has asked WICHE for a proposal to complete an analysis of state policies related to use of telehealth technology to supervise new professionals seeking hours of supervised practice for licensure. WICHE BHP would prepare a literature review, and review requirements in other rural states. Currently, Alaska licensure requires all such postgraduate supervised practice to be delivered in-person and face-to-face. This creates a burden for many remote locations in the state. WICHE BHP would author a policy analysis paper, and present findings to the licensure boards in Alaska.

COLORADO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The state of Colorado’s Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) has approached WICHE regarding an opportunity for the BHP to provide technical assistance on the establishment of a Behavioral Health Aide Program in Colorado. The WICHE BHP has unique expertise in the development and operation of the Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program, and multiple states are considering replicating this program to address workforce shortages. WICHE would provide technical assistance to the Colorado BHA in its efforts to establish a similar program.

HAWAII 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. As part of its pandemic-related budget strategy, the state of Hawaii eliminated funding for this contract. However, the workforce need is still critical, and the state has indicated its interest in re-establishing this successful recruitment effort.

HAWAII PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM – EXPANSION: The state of Hawai'i is considering an expansion of the Hawai'i Psychology Internship program by placing additional interns at several new sites, including the Hawai'i State Hospital.

MERCY CARE ARIZONA EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES (EBPS): WICHE is planning to provide training, education, and guidance concerning adult EBPs and fidelity tools to ensure Mercy Care AZ provider staff offers high-quality EBPs and to ensure fidelity to identified EBPs protocols. Additionally, WICHE will provide Evidence Based Practices Training for providers, paraprofessionals, and family members serving infant, child, adolescent, and transitional-age youth populations with developmental delays/disabilities, social/emotional disorders, and/or who are engaged in the foster care system.

STUDENT WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH: WICHE continues to seek opportunities and funding to partner with the WICHE Policy unit and the Lumina Foundation to support and improve college student wellness and mental health, with the goal of improving college completion and degree attainment for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or mental health status.

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

Completed Projects

Work that staff completed in FY 2023:

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT: The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), in conjunction with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, contracted with the WICHE BHP to assess ANTHC's Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) Program. The BHP assessed the efficacy of the BHA training program in the provision of training and technical assistance to Alaska Tribal Health Organizations. The BHP produced a written report emphasizing the strengths of the BHA Program, areas for improvement, and recommended changes.

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).

AVONDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-ACCREDITATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP supported the Avondale Elementary School District's re-accreditation of its Doctoral School Psychology Internship Program by providing technical assistance in its submission of re-accreditation to the American Psychological Association.

MONTANA CRISIS SYSTEM: The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assess and make recommendations regarding Montana's implementation of its Mobile Crisis System, including an assessment of individual crisis-stabilization facilities, existing mobile crisis response teams, and its crisis-system data reporting and technology solutions. In addition to a high-level statewide assessment, the BHP also assessed seven county-based crisis services.

SOUTH DAKOTA HUMAN SERVICES CENTER OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE I: The South Dakota Department of Social Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assist the state in establishing the optimal capacity and patient programming at the South Dakota Human Services Center.

SOUTH DAKOTA HSC OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE II: Provided policy guidance, technical assistance, and support for the implementation of focused programming and staffing models.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Jason Alves, Director of Veterans Initiative

Bringing to the Behavioral Health programs over 13 years of service to Veterans in public and community led mental health. He serves as implementation manager for the Together with Veterans rural veteran suicide prevention program, in partnership with the Rocky Mountain MIRECC. Previously, he served as president of Washington State Chapter for the Farmer Veteran Coalition, Programs Manager for the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. Alves utilized his G.I. Bill and received his B. S. in Political Science from the University of Oregon and M.P.A. in Public Non-Profit management from The Evergreen State College.



Jeff Russell, Facilitator, Veterans Coalition of Central Arizona

Jeff has more than three decades of successful operations and business development experience focusing on healthcare. Over the past five years he has focused on consulting with rural clinics and hospitals, with areas of focus including home health, mobile medical clinic, telehealth, and urgent care. He primarily develops and orchestrates growth strategies.

Jeff served in the United States Air Force for 12 years until 1988.

Jeff is a board member and Treasurer for the Weaver Mountains Health Initiative, a remote and medically underserved rural Arizona community with 3,000 residents, located approximately 90 miles outside of Phoenix. He is actively involved in helping Veterans and others in need of support. He is the President of Veterans Coalition of Central Arizona (VCCA). As a part of his VCCA duties, Jeff is also proudly serving as the Facilitator to support the local Together With Veterans (TWW) program.

EDTECH COMMITTEE

Meeting

Monday, May 8, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Level 3, Mural I

TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED EDUCATION (EDTECH) COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday
May 8, 2023

10:45 a.m. - Noon

Mural I

Committee Members

Robert Shireman (CA)
David Lassner (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Camille Preus (OR)
Ann Millner (UT)

Agenda

PRESIDING

Commissioner Fred Lokken (NV)

STAFF

Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET, Service Design and Strategy Officer, Every Learner Everywhere

Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET & Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education

Megan Raymond, Senior Director, Membership and Programs, WCET

Information Items

WCET MEMBERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES (APPENDIX A)

7-3

Since 1989, WCET has fostered cooperative activities regarding digital learning among member institutions, state agencies, accrediting agencies, nonprofit organizations, and corporations. We will provide a brief update on WCET's membership, activities for the year, and the four focus areas for 2023 as selected by our Steering Committee:

- ▶ **Digital Learning Definitions:** As modalities change, definitions and communications have been difficult for faculty, administrators, policymakers, and, most importantly, students.
- ▶ **Microcredentials:** The growth in microcredentials and alternative credentials is both a threat and an opportunity for traditional accredited higher education.
- ▶ **Artificial Intelligence:** As these tools become ubiquitous, how do we tackle instructional, academic integrity, and equity issues?
- ▶ **Higher Education Enrollments:** As higher education faces enrollment challenges, what are the ways in which digital learning can help?

STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK AND EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE UPDATE (APPENDIX B)

7-6

Russ Poulin

WICHE CYBER SECURITY LEADERSHIP TABLE TOP EXERCISE (LTTX) IN IDAHO (APPENDIX C)

7-7

Commissioner Rick Aman (ID) and Russ Poulin

Russ Poulin, Megan Raymond, and Van Davis

Discussion Items

THE EMERGING ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Van Davis

In November, OpenAI released ChatGPT, a chat interface for its GPT 3.5 large language model AI. Using the chat interface, users can make a seemingly endless array of queries of GPT 3.5 that result in often stunning responses. The relative ease in getting the program to create everything from poems to short answers to complete essays has led many faculty and administrators to worry about the academic integrity of coursework. Others are urging faculty to rethink assessment practices and find ways to integrate generative artificial intelligence, especially ChatGPT, into coursework. Our discussion will include a brief overview of the types of generative AI that are the most likely to impact higher education, with most of our time being spent discussing the pedagogical, policy, and equity concerns related to incorporating generative AI into higher education coursework, especially general education coursework.

FUTURE ROLE OF WICHE IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DISCUSSIONS

Commissioner Lokken

What can WICHE do to inform and/or assist member states in considerations around the use of educational technologies in postsecondary education?

Other Business

Adjournment

APPENDIX A:

WCET MEMBERSHIP UPDATES: SPRING 2023

WCET Website: <https://wcet.wiche.edu/>

The WCET Executive Council approved adjustments for membership dues, effective January 1, 2023. The dues changes were the first since 2017. Annual membership dues decreased or stayed the same for two-year institutions and increased slightly for four-year institutions:

	PRIOR DUES	DUES AS OF 1/1/2023
2 Year Institution, less than 5,000 Student FTE	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,600
2 Year Institution, more than 5,000 Student FTE	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600
4 Year Institution, less than 5,000 Student FTE	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,850
4 Year Institution, more than 5,000 Student FTE	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,850

WCET was proactive about notifying members of the dues increases and offered to let them lock in membership for two full years at the 2022 rates. A few members took advantage of this. We have received very few complaints and members see the added value of increased benefits such as: Member-only events, including monthly “Closer Conversations,” and our annual Member-only Virtual Summit. Additionally, WCET will be adding more member-only content and resources throughout the year.

- ▶ Members as of July 1, 2021: **397**
- ▶ Members as of July 1, 2022: **405**
- ▶ Members as of February 1, 2023: **412, of which 138 or 34% are in WICHE states and territories**

List of WCET Members in WICHE States and CNMI as of February 1, 2023

ALASKA

- ▶ University of Alaska Anchorage
- ▶ University of Alaska Fairbanks

ARIZONA

- ▶ ActiveClass
- ▶ Arizona State University
- ▶ Coconino Community College
- ▶ Grand Canyon University
- ▶ Mesa Community College
- ▶ Northern Arizona University
- ▶ Prescott College
- ▶ Rio Salado College
- ▶ University of Arizona – Supporting Member
- ▶ University of Phoenix

CALIFORNIA

- ▶ Anthology Inc.
- ▶ California Institute of Integral Studies
- ▶ California State University, Fullerton
- ▶ California State University, Northridge
- ▶ California State University, Office of the Chancellor – Supporting Member
- ▶ Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges
- ▶ City College of San Francisco
- ▶ College of the Redwoods
- ▶ Coursera
- ▶ Creative Commons
- ▶ Foothill-De Anza District
- ▶ Golden Gate University
- ▶ La Sierra University
- ▶ Loyola Marymount University
- ▶ MindWires
- ▶ Mount Saint Mary’s University, Los Angeles
- ▶ National Laboratory for Education Transformation (NLET)

CALIFORNIA (CONTINUED)

- ▶ National University
- ▶ Point Loma Nazarene University
- ▶ San Diego Community College District
- ▶ The NROC Project
- ▶ University of San Francisco
- ▶ West Hills Community College District

COLORADO

- ▶ Adams State University
- ▶ 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 – Supporting Member
- ▶ Colorado Technical University
- ▶ Community College of Aurora
- ▶ Community College of Denver
- ▶ Fort Lewis College
- ▶ Innovative Educators
- ▶ National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT)
- ▶ Nazarene Bible College
- ▶ NC-SARA
- ▶ Pearson Learning Solutions
- ▶ Regis University
- ▶ United States Air Force Academy
- ▶ University of Colorado Boulder
- ▶ University of Colorado Denver
- ▶ University of Denver
- ▶ Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
- ▶ Wiley University Services

HAWAII

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

IDAHO

- ▶ Boise State University
- ▶ College of Eastern Idaho
- ▶ Idaho State University
- ▶ Lewis-Clark State College
- ▶ University of Idaho

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

- ▶ Northern Marianas College

MONTANA

- ▶ Montana State University, Billings
- ▶ Montana State University, Bozeman
- ▶ Montana University System
- ▶ University of Montana

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

NEW MEXICO

- ▶ Eastern New Mexico University
- ▶ Navajo Technical University
- ▶ New Mexico Highlands University
- ▶ New Mexico State University
- ▶ Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
- ▶ University of New Mexico
- ▶ Western New Mexico University

NEVADA

- ▶ College of Southern Nevada
- ▶ Great Basin College
- ▶ Nevada State College
- ▶ Nevada System of Higher Education
- ▶ Truckee Meadows Community College
- ▶ University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- ▶ University of Nevada, Reno
- ▶ Western Nevada College

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

SOUTH DAKOTA

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

UTAH

- ▶ Coursetune Inc.
- ▶ Brigham Young University
- ▶ Salt Lake Community College
- ▶ University of Utah
- ▶ Utah State University
- ▶ Utah System of Higher Education
- ▶ Western Governors University

WASHINGTON

- ▶ Bellevue College
- ▶ Central Washington University
- ▶ Community Colleges of Spokane
- ▶ Eastern Washington University
- ▶ Pierce College
- ▶ Seattle Pacific University
- ▶ Seattle University
- ▶ Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- ▶ Washington State University

WYOMING

- ▶ Casper College
- ▶ Central Wyoming College
- ▶ Eastern Wyoming College
- ▶ Laramie County Community College
- ▶ Northwest College
- ▶ University of Wyoming
- ▶ Western Wyoming Community College

APPENDIX B:

STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK UPDATE

State Authorization Network website: <https://wcetsan.wiche.edu/>

The State Authorization Network (SAN), a division of WCET, currently serves close to 900 institutions and agencies nationwide to address and support state and federal compliance management for the interstate activities of postsecondary institutions to ensure student protection.

Key accomplishments in the past year:

- ▶ Developed new public and member-only resources and charts housed on the SAN website
- ▶ Provided more than 20 virtual and in-person presentations addressing compliance strategies
- ▶ Provided a Basic State Authorization three-day workshop
- ▶ Provided an Advanced Topics three-day workshop addressing Succession Planning for Compliance Continuity.

Key plans for the next year:

- ▶ Restructuring the SAN Basics Workshop into two components:
 - ▶ Part A: virtual course to introduce the state and federal requirements
 - ▶ Part B: in-person implementation workshop including mentors for participants.
- ▶ Provide timely updates, publications, and events addressing the SARA Policy Modification Process and Federal Rulemaking, including a new Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in Spring 2023 and the next federal rulemaking expected to begin in late 2023.

APPENDIX C: WICHE CYBER SECURITY LEADERSHIP TABLE TOP EXERCISE IN IDAHO

WICHE developed the Cyber Security Leadership Table Top Exercise (LTTX) program in 2018, in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to provide training for senior non-technical leaders at postsecondary institutions in WICHE states. The half-day, in-person training brings presidents and chancellors together to participate in a state-specific exercise depicting realistic cyber threat situations as developed by DHS with assistance from institution technical staff. A subject-matter expert from DHS facilitates the exercise to lead participants through an escalating cyber event at a postsecondary institution. Previous LTTX events were held pre-pandemic in North Dakota, Colorado, and Oregon. The most recent event was held in Idaho in February 2023.

The exercise provides the opportunity for institution non-technical senior leaders to discuss implications for their institution community, create emergency management processes to mitigate further impact, develop procedures for protection, and address effective communication strategies. The primary goal of the LTTX is to provide a better understanding of possible consequences of a cyber event to enable the non-technical senior leader to work more effectively with technical leaders if such a cyber crisis occurs.

The planning process takes approximately 5-6 months. This timeframe is important to provide for virtual planning meetings led by DHS and coordination with a key point of contact in the state to help find a host location for the exercise and to be a strong advocate for engaging participation by the senior non-technical leaders at postsecondary institutions in the state. Under the coordination of Cheryl Dowd, State Authorization Network Director, WICHE serves as an intermediary and relationship builder between DHS and the state.

The most recent event was held in Boise, Idaho, on February 17 of this year. We wish to thank Commissioner Rick Aman for his leadership in promoting the idea among his colleagues and ensuring that the event happened. We also thank Commissioner and WICHE Chair Matt Freeman for his support in promoting it among institutional leadership and coordinating the event with an existing meeting.

WCET FY 2024 WORKPLAN DRAFT

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by WCET dues, event fees, grants, and contracts. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
WCET Member Service and Support	A/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	412 member institutions, agencies, organizations
Digital Learning Practice	A/F; A/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, Every Learner Everywhere, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S; I; V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET members, SAN, NASASPS, NC-SARA, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, sponsors
WCET Leadership Summit	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, sponsors
WCET Webcast Series	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Member-only Resources	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET, SAN, and member leadership
System and Consortia Digital Learning Leaders	A/F; A/S; I	U.S.	WCET staff	Higher education systems and multi-institution consortia
WCET Steering Committee Annual Priorities	A/F; A/S; I; V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET elected Steering Committee and other members
State Authorization Network (SAN)	A/S; I; V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	131 members representing ~ 888 institutions. Partners: Regional compacts, NASASPS, NC-SARA

WCET MEMBERSHIP SERVICE AND SUPPORT helps colleges, universities, higher education organizations, state agencies, and companies understand both the practice and policy of digital learning by providing them with timely information and a collaborative community. The popular WCET Frontiers blog features promising practices, innovations, emerging policies, compliance advice, and member features. The WCET Frontiers podcast series was introduced to provide engaging interviews about solutions and innovations in the practice and policy of digital learning in higher education.

WCET and the State Authorization Network (SAN) continue to collaborate to provide in-depth analysis of **DIGITAL LEARNING POLICIES** (federal, state, accreditation, and regulatory) that have an impact on faculty and students. WCET and SAN are noted for their expertise on policy issues including consumer protections for digital learning students, “regular and substantive interaction” for distance education, state authorization of out-of-state activities, out-of-state professional licensure regulatory requirements, and digital learning definitions.

WCET events include the **ANNUAL MEETING, MEMBER-ONLY VIRTUAL SUMMIT**, and **MONTHLY WEBCAST SERIES**. WCET’s annual meetings are in-person events held at locations across the United States and bring together up to 400 leaders and practitioners interested in good practices in digital learning in postsecondary education. Members and non-members attend. The Member-Only Virtual Summit takes place in the spring and is a half-day, topic-focused event. The 2022 Summit had over 450 attendees and the 2023 Summit focused on emerging business models. The webcast series showcases innovative practices and effective policies in digital learning. Webcasts take place monthly, with an average of 150 members and non-members attending.

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 wctNEWS and wctDISCUSS digital forums. SAN also uses wctMIX to support communication and sharing among its members.

The **STATE SYSTEM OR MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL CONSORTIA DIGITAL LEARNING LEADERS** meet monthly to share their unique challenges and solutions in using cooperation and shared services to better meet the needs of students, faculty, and administrators at their member institutions.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** is a membership organization, created in 2011 as a division of WCET, that empowers its members to successfully resolve state and federal regulatory challenges to improve student consumer protections in digital and experiential learning across state lines. SAN serves postsecondary institutional staff who must translate and implement educational technology regulations as well as the agencies that support that work. Related issues include state institutional approvals, reciprocity, professional licensure, employment law issues, international compliance, and military-related considerations. SAN does this through providing members with a library of resources and tools on the SAN website, policy analysis, and virtual and in-person training, as well as facilitating communication so that members can cooperate to identify common needs, track emerging policies and regulations, evaluate their efficacy, and share lessons learned.

Each year, the **WCET STEERING COMMITTEE** selects **ANNUAL PRIORITIES** for providing insights and resources to assist members. Working groups are formed to advise and assist in developing webinars, conference sessions, blog posts, reports, and other resources to inform the membership. For the 2023 calendar year, the selected topics are:

- ▶ Digital Learning Definitions – As modalities change, definitions and communications have been difficult for faculty, administrators, policymakers, and, most importantly, students.
- ▶ Microcredentials – The growth in microcredentials and alternative credentials is both a threat and an opportunity for traditional accredited higher education.
- ▶ Artificial Intelligence – As these tools become ubiquitous, how do we tackle the instructional, academic integrity, and equity issues related to generative artificial intelligence?
- ▶ Higher Education Enrollments – As higher education faces enrollment challenges, what are the ways in which digital learning can help?

Current Activities – Projects & Initiatives

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

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Every Learner Everywhere	A/F; A/S; I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$6,688,840 (Oct 2022 – Dec 2024)	6.4-7.8 / 2017-25	11 partner organizations as identified by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (more to be added)
Every Learner Everywhere Equity Advisory Board	A/S; I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE Staff + 6 Board members 2022-23	Five higher education professionals advising on equity activities

EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE is a network of 11 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, Latino/a, 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. During FY 2022, Every Learner offered a number of ecosystem and field-facing services including two webinar series for the general field. The most involved partner organizations included Achieving the Dream, American Public and Land-Grant Universities, and Digital Promise. Service topics included information on adaptive learning, equitable pedagogical practices in digital learning, evidence-based teaching practices for digital learning, and information on the development of faculty communities of practice.

Every Learner Everywhere's **EQUITY ADVISORY BOARD** consists of six higher education professionals chosen by the Every Learner Everywhere staff and Steering Committee to assist Every Learner in better centering equity considerations in its work.

New Directions

Projects that might need WICHE President approval for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Emerging Federal Policies	A/F; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Internal	2.0 1 year	WCET, SAN, WICHE Policy Unit
Artificial Intelligence: Policy & Practice in Higher Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Internal	.5+ 1 year	WCET, external consultants
Price and Cost of Distance Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Internal	.5+ 1 year	WICHE Policy Unit

The years 2023 and 2024 will be unusually full of **EMERGING FEDERAL POLICY** discussions regarding digital learning in higher education. Both the Department of Education and the Veterans Administration have rules regarding professional licensure programs. The Department of Education announced likely rulemaking on accreditation, distance education definition, state authorization, and third-party services. The Department also released updated guidance on third-party services. NC-SARA is facilitating a new SARA Policy Modification Process intended to be more inclusive and transparent. Legislation is likely in Congress on short-term Pell and on housing allowance for veterans studying at a distance. WCET and SAN staff will continue to follow these policy proposals and inform members.

The impact of **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** has had a long ramp-up, but it is suddenly upon us. In November, OpenAI released ChatGPT, a chat interface for its GPT 3.5 large language model AI. Using the chat interface, users can make a seemingly endless array of queries of GPT 3.5 that result in often stunning responses. The relative ease in getting the program to create everything from poems to short answers to complete essays has led many faculty and administrators to worry about the academic integrity of coursework. Others are urging faculty to rethink assessment practices and find ways to integrate generative artificial intelligence, especially ChatGPT, into coursework. Artificial Intelligence will be one of WCET's four focus areas in 2023 and will include the production of several blogs, webinars, and both public-facing and member-only reports including Artificial Intelligence: Policy and Practice in Higher Education and Supporting Learning through Artificial Intelligence: A Survey of Institutional Policies and Practices. This work is being funded through internal investment but may lead to additional funding opportunities.

In 2017, WCET conducted national research on the **PRICE AND COST OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**. A survey of institutions sought to collect information on the “price” that institutions charge students for a distance education course and the “cost” to create that course. The work led to the realization that the views of practitioners and policymakers are completely at odds. An update of this analysis is needed for the post-COVID higher education world.

Completed Projects

Work that staff finished in FY 2023:

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT FOR WCET AND SAN: WCET and SAN used the services of WebAIM, part of the Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice, at Utah State University to improve website accessibility. WCET has long been a leader in the advocacy of accessible digital learning content and wanted to ensure that its websites are highly accessible. The State Authorization Network has begun a similar extensive review with the help of WebAIM and hopes to have the work completed early in the next fiscal year.

EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE has successfully closed out six grants and three contracts during this time period and has primarily transitioned to using a new three-year network investment grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The focus of this year has been on the major reinvestment grant, and with it the new deliverables focused on a new governance system, new Technical Assistance Providers, selecting and onboarding a new Equity-First Organization, and creating a menu of services, an Institutional Digital Learning Assessment Tool, and Quality Service Standards. The network continued to be a recognized leader in equity in digital learning through multiple conference presentations, resources, and blog posts. The Every Learner director resigned in February 2023, and the network searched for a new director in the spring.

The **WCET ANNUAL MEETING** was the first in-person event since 2019 and took place in Denver, with a mix of 350 member and non-member attendees. Sessions covered an array of digital learning and higher education topics including potential changes in the Online Program Management (OPM) marketplace, the array of digital learning definitions and need for clarity, microcredential strategies, accreditation challenges and changes, and quality in digital learning.

The **MEMBER-ONLY VIRTUAL SUMMIT** topic for 2022—high-quality digital learning—resonated well with the members as many institutions were emerging from the pandemic and seeking strategies for improving digital learning. Over 450 people participated in the one-day virtual event. The March 2023 event focused on emerging business models in higher education.

The **WCET WEBCAST SERIES** is popular with the WCET community because the webcasts are free and open to all and feature experts and practitioners sharing pragmatic advice and lessons learned on a variety of digital learning topics. Topics for 2022 included guidance for navigating the confusing array of digital learning definitions, strategically evaluating edtech tools, microcredentials, and the higher education policy landscape.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** created, in early FY 2023, the Getting Started with Compliance Management Gateway. Found on the SAN website, the Gateway provides quick access to SAN-developed tools and resources to understand and implement an institutional compliance plan. These tools and resources include a series of issue-based one- and two-page abstracts for basic compliance and beyond-basics issues. Additionally, tables and charts are provided with contact information for multi-state, multi-country, and professional licensing agencies to facilitate research. SAN papers and handbooks are also accessible from the Getting Started with Compliance Management Gateway.

In addition to twice monthly member-only meetings addressing timely topics, SAN held training workshops. A virtual three-day Basics of State Authorization Workshop was led by subject-matter experts and included mentors to assist attendees to understand and develop compliance strategies. A virtual three-day Advanced Topics Workshop was provided for more experienced compliance staff members, addressing Succession Planning for Compliance Continuity. In September 2022, SAN unveiled a new logo that reflects the collaboration of SAN with its members, regulators, and other entities within the institution compliance community.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

Project prioritization:  Relevance (mission critical)  Opportunity (funding)  Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/TIMELINE	PARTNERS
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A		Western	\$1.2M	2.5 3 years	WICHE Policy Unit

A HOLE IN STATE POLICY – ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research unit (assisted by WCET) will work with 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 substandard providers.

ROUNDTABLE

Discussions

Monday, May 8, 2023

1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Before Committee of the Whole

8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

**Level 3, Zia I
Roundtable 1**

(Access & Success)

*The Intersection of
Demographics, Declining
Enrollments, and Dual Credit*

**Level 3, Mural I
Roundtable 2**

(Workforce & Society)

*Workforce in the West: Today
and Tomorrow*

**Level 3, Zia II
Roundtable 3**

(Value & Accountability)

*Challenging the Assumptions
About the Value of
Postsecondary Education*

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Monday
May 8, 2023

1:15 - 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday
May 9, 2023

8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

**ROUNDTABLE 1
(ACCESS &
SUCCESS)**

Zia I

**ROUNDTABLE 2
(WORKFORCE &
SOCIETY)**

Mural I

**ROUNDTABLE 3
(VALUE &
ACCOUNTABILITY)**

Zia II

Roundtable 1 (Access & Success) – The Intersection of Demographics, Declining Enrollments, and Dual Credit

Zia I

For the past decade, WICHE has been projecting a peak in the number of high school graduates around 2025 before a moderate decline. In addition, the country's graduating classes are diversifying. While birth rates are increasing among some races and ethnicities, overall declining birth rates have driven these trends for years. And while this is not the complete demographic picture, it is an important part of the overall story. And when considering the significant yet still uncertain long-term impacts of the pandemic on K-12 and postsecondary enrollments and the effects of low unemployment rates, higher education leaders at all levels are challenged with how to strategically plan for the future. This roundtable discussion will focus on conditions affecting student enrollment in the West, including demographics, the value of higher education, and the impact of dual credit and other similar programs on student outcomes and institutional sustainability.

FACILITATOR

Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research, WICHE

Roundtable 2 (Workforce & Society) – Workforce in the West: Today and Tomorrow

Mural I

The world of work changed considerably during the pandemic. We experienced everything from a massive shift to remote work to a Great Resignation or Great Reshuffle, depending on how you look at it, to people retiring early and others leaving the workforce altogether. This all resulted in severe labor shortages in many fields, which can also increase burnout of remaining employees as well as shifting dynamics that we may not yet fully understand. This roundtable discussion will focus on defining the current and future workforce needs in the WICHE region and brainstorming how we, independently and collectively, can work to address the challenges we are facing today and tomorrow.

FACILITATOR

Brian Prescott, President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

Roundtable 3 (Value & Accountability) – Challenging the Assumptions about the Value of Postsecondary Education

Zia II

People seem to be increasingly questioning the value of postsecondary education for a variety of reasons. For instance, those who start and do not complete are perhaps at more of a disadvantage than if they never enrolled in the first place. Others face large amounts of debt after graduation, are unable to obtain a job in their field, or perceive higher education to be counter to their value or belief system. With postsecondary education policymakers and experts often starting from the assumption that the enterprise clearly produces value, this roundtable discussion is a unique opportunity to encounter the devil's advocate and have frank conversations about what others may be saying about us, and brainstorm how we as a region can address these challenges.

FACILITATOR

Rob Anderson, President, State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Facilitator, Robert E. Anderson

Robert E. Anderson became president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) in August 2017. In this role, Dr. Anderson provides strategic leadership for the association and is an essential member of the broader higher education community. Dr. Anderson is a strong and vehement advocate for public policy that addresses the postsecondary needs of all. He currently works out of SHEEO's Washington, D.C., office.

Prior to accepting the appointment at SHEEO, Dr. Anderson served as a vice chancellor at the University System of Georgia, executive vice chancellor for administration at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, and as the director of research and planning at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. A native of Augusta, Georgia, Dr. Anderson holds degrees from The Citadel (B.A.), The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education (Ph.D.).



Facilitator, Patrick Lane

Patrick Lane is the vice president of WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research. He previously was its director of data initiatives, a role that has included managing the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange, which seeks to improve linkages between state data systems to provide better information to students and their families while also improving education, workforce, and economic development policy. He previously coordinated WICHE's Adult College Completion Network and has worked extensively on the Non-Traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners project. Both projects focused on identifying policy and practice solutions to help adults with prior college credit return to postsecondary education

to complete their degrees. Lane also coordinated WICHE's College Access Regional Network, which focused on increasing the number of low-income students prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. He came to WICHE having spent several years working in education policy in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Lane received a master's degree from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in 2007 and completed a Ph.D. in public administration at the University of Colorado Denver in 2015.



Facilitator, Brian Prescott

Brian Prescott is President at NCHEMS, where he sets the organization's strategic direction and leads a team of accomplished and committed policy experts, information analysts, and creative thinkers working to improve how postsecondary education serves the nation's needs. He also leads and supports projects on behalf of states, state agencies and systems, and institutions related to state strategic planning, postsecondary finance and affordability, governance and organization, demographics, and student success and workforce outcomes. Before joining NCHEMS in 2016, he served as Director of Policy Research at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. He is a current board member of the National

Student Clearinghouse Research Center and a past board member of the National Association of College Admission Counseling. He has degrees from the University of Virginia, the University of Iowa, and the College of William and Mary.

SPECIAL PLENARY SESSION

Postsecondary Education at a Crossroads After
70 Years: What's Ahead for Postsecondary
Education in the West?

Monday, May 8, 2023

2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Dreamcatcher Ballroom

SPECIAL PLENARY SESSION

Monday
May 8, 2023

2:45 - 4:00 p.m

*Dreamcatcher
Ballroom*

Postsecondary Education at a Crossroads After 70 Years: What's Ahead for Postsecondary Education in the West?

We are now 23 years into the 21st century, and postsecondary education and WICHE are at a crossroads – one that must honor and learn from their rich history, while also proactively preparing for a rapidly changing future. A look back on the past 70 years of postsecondary education in the West reveals an evolution of institutional creation and expansion that began with the early establishment of religious institutions, which in most states, predated public colleges and universities. Often, the public institutions were located in population centers and along rivers, railroads, and the like rather than the result of a well-thought-out strategy to create desired economies. During the 1970s and 1980s, this combined with the GI Bill that resulted in significantly increased enrollments in postsecondary education, during the 1970s and 1980s, laying the foundation for higher education in the region today.

Ultimately, the West shaped higher education as much as higher education shaped the West, and WICHE played an important part in that story. While perhaps postsecondary education has always been subject to the financial and cultural realities affecting our states and Pacific Island members, the country's political climate and diverse economic challenges and opportunities make 2023 and beyond seem different. During a time of low unemployment, high cost of living, and a rapidly changing and unpredictable job market, the value of postsecondary education—once assumed to be an indisputable principle of our work—has come under increasing scrutiny. The deep political divisions permeating our society are beating down the doors of our colleges and universities. And all of this comes against the short-term backdrop of substantial workforce shortages in key areas of the economy and potential demographic changes that will necessitate higher education operating in new and innovative ways to meet the needs of both individuals and society as a whole. If the West is to continue to thrive economically, socially, and culturally, and WICHE is to continue playing a key role, the Commission must consider what the future holds and chart a course for success.

INTRODUCTIONS AND REMARKS

Demarée Michelau, President, WICHE

FACILITATOR

Commissioner Clayton Christian (MT)

SPEAKER

Casey Lozar, Vice President and Director of the Center for Indian Country Development, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and member, Montana Board of Regents

HONORED GUESTS

Richard Jonsen, Former Executive Director, WICHE
David Longanecker, Former President, WICHE

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Introductions and Remarks, President Demarée Michelau

Demarée Michelau is president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), an interstate compact that partners with states, Insular areas, and postsecondary institutions to share knowledge, create resources, and develop innovative solutions that address some of society's most pressing needs. From promoting high-quality, affordable postsecondary education to helping states leverage their technology investments and addressing behavioral health challenges, WICHE improves lives across the West through innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy. Michelau previously was WICHE's vice president of policy analysis and research and was responsible for data and research and externally-funded projects. She has experience in higher education policy issues, including closing attainment gaps, adult learners, affordability, and workforce. Previously, she held positions with the National Conference of State Legislatures and former Colorado Congressman David Skaggs. Michelau earned her B.S. from Northern Illinois University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Colorado at Boulder.



Facilitator, Commissioner Clayton Christian (MT)

For over a decade, Clayton Christian has proudly served the students of Montana. During his tenure on the Board of Regents (5/2006-12/2011) Christian was a champion for common course numbering, tuition freezes, and other system initiatives aimed at increasing student access, success, and affordability. As chair of the Board of Regents, he continued to focus on implementing measures to improve system accountability, transparency, productivity, and increased confidence in higher education. He was and continues to be an advocate for increased opportunities in distance learning, a measure that continues to have a significant impact on a state that encompasses over 147,000 square miles. In 2012, Christian was asked to continue his service to Montana as the Commissioner of Higher Education. Under his leadership and on behalf of the Board of Regents and in partnership with university presidents, he has elevated Montana's educational system that serves nearly 45,000 students and 9,000 faculty annually at 16 public colleges and universities. As commissioner, Christian has leveraged public and private partnerships to dramatically increase growth in workforce development, implemented innovative state investments which yielded record amounts of university-based research, and implemented performance-based funding with institutional incentives for student retention.



Speaker, Casey Winn Lozar

Mr. Lozar is vice president at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the director of the Center for Indian Country Development. In this role, he brings to life actionable research and policy development to advance Indian Country economic self-determination with a focus on access to affordable capital, tribal public finance and advancing economic infrastructure. Previously, he led regional economic intelligence gathering in the Federal Reserve Ninth District as well as policy development in Montana.

Prior to joining the Federal Reserve, Mr. Lozar served as an administrator and tribal policy advisor for the State of Montana and directed the State Tribal Economic Development Commission. Additionally, he served Indian Country through national Native organizations as vice president of the American Indian College Fund and chief marketing and development officer at the Notah Begay III Foundation.

Mr. Lozar holds a B.A. in history from Dartmouth College, a M.Ed. from Harvard University and an MBA from the University of Colorado-Denver and serves on the Montana Board of Regents. Born and raised on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, Mr. Lozar is an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Monday, May 8, 2023

5:45 – 8:30 p.m.

Hyatt Compass Restaurant

122 N. 2nd Street

Downtown Phoenix

70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Monday
May 8, 2023

5:00 - 5:45 p.m.

*Hotel Sponsored
Reception – Level 2
Lobby*

5:45 - 8:30 p.m.

*Hyatt Compass
Restaurant
122 N. 2nd Street
Downtown Phoenix*

WICHE Celebrates 70 Years

WICHE's 70th Anniversary celebration is on Monday night, May 8, at *The Compass* restaurant in the Hyatt Regency downtown; the restaurant is a Phoenix award-winning dining experience. The reception and dinner will be complemented by breathtaking 360° views of the Valley of the Sun from the 24th floor.

This is an opportunity for commissioners, staff, and guests to relax and enjoy each others' company as we celebrate this important milestone.

The Hyatt Regency is a few blocks from the Kimpton Hotel. If transportation is needed to or from the event, please stop by the WICHE Help Desk before 4:00 p.m., Monday, May 8, and Jeanette Porter can assist you. At 5:45 p.m., the dinner guests will depart from the hotel from the Level 2 lobby to walk (or ride) to *The Compass* restaurant at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Historical Documents of Interest

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TIMELINE OF WICHE MEMBERSHIP

COLORADO

1951

MONTANA

1951

NEW MEXICO

1951

OREGON

1951

UTAH

1951

ARIZONA

1952

IDAHO

1953

WYOMING

1953

ALASKA

1955

CALIFORNIA

1955

WASHINGTON

1955

HAWAI'I

1959

NEVADA

1959

NORTH DAKOTA

1985

SOUTH DAKOTA

1988

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

2012

GUAM

2016

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

2021

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

2021

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

2022

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES November 29, 1951

Minutes of Meeting

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

of

THE WESTERN REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Brown Palace Hotel
Denver, Colorado
November 29, 1951

ATTENDANCE

Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Chairman, Utah
Dr. Tom L. Popejoy, Vice-Chairman, New Mexico
Dr. Floyd Cross, Colorado
Dr. Frank McPhail, Montana
Dr. Charles D. Byrne, Oregon
Stewart G. Wilson, Council of State Governments, Acting Secretary

By-Laws

The Executive Committee discussed the need for by-laws for the operation of the Commission. It was suggested that among the matters for inclusion in the by-laws, when prepared, should be the perpetuation of the present method used in selecting the executive committee, limitation of tenure of office of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and executive committee to one year; provision for holding of meetings of either the executive committee or the entire Commission on call of the chairman; mention of the Commission's relationship to private institutions in the area; as well as delegating authority to the Chairman to have wide latitude in working with the Acting Secretary and making decisions without calling together the entire Executive Committee. The Committee directed its Acting Secretary to prepare a tentative set of by-laws to send to all members of the Executive Committee for their comments, criticisms and suggestions.

Contributions

The Committee adopted a motion that each state attempt to contribute \$500 for the next calendar year to the Council of State Governments as a token payment by the Commission for services rendered by the Council.

Arizona

The Committee directed its Acting Secretary to prepare a letter on behalf of the Committee to Governor J. Howard Pyle, of Arizona, urging that the Governor consider placing the adoption of the Compact before the January 1952 session of the Legislature of Arizona for their consideration.

Montana

The Montana member of the Committee pointed out that, in seeking appropriations in Montana, it would be of the greatest help to the members of the Commission from that state, if they might have available statistics concerning student applications, number of eligible students, and numbers of accepted or rejected students from Montana as well as other states. The Committee directed its Acting Secretary to work directly with the University of Colorado and the University of Utah Medical Schools, in obtaining such information.

Tuitional Fees

Members of the Committee felt that while it might not prove possible to establish a standard cost fee for each of the four fields of study now contemplated, an effort should be made to do so if feasible. The Committee directed its Acting Secretary to collect all of the information possible looking toward the establishment of such fees, and to report his findings back to the Committee. Dr. Cross of Colorado agreed to undertake such a fee study in the field of Veterinary Medical Education in the western states. It was pointed out that in attempting to reach an agreement in this field the Committee must keep constantly in mind fees that would be acceptable to states not yet members of the Commission, but who are eligible to adopt the Compact at a later date.

Legislative Program

The Committee agreed that it should embark on a promotional program looking toward the adoption of the Compact by all of the western states and territories at the earliest possible time. It was pointed out that it would be of the greatest help if individual members of the executive committee would keep the Secretariat informed of legislative action, as well as promotional action in compacting and non-compacting states. It directed its Acting Secretary to prepare a list of persons with whom the Compact should be discussed in the non-compacting states.

Western Governors' Conference

The Committee directed its Acting Secretary to keep the Western Governors Conference fully informed, at all times, concerning action by the Commission and its Executive Committee.

Meetings

The Committee discussed the advisability of the Commission's meeting in Arizona, during the session of the Legislature there in 1952, in Colorado during the 1952 session of the General Assembly there, and was invited to hold its next meeting in Utah. The Committee decided that the time and place of holding the next meeting should rest with the Chairman.

SFO-110

Organization Meeting
of Commission

Minutes of Meeting

Western Regional Commission for Higher Education

Brown Palace Hotel
Denver, Colorado
November 29, 1951

ATTENDANCE

Dr. Ward Darley, Colorado
Dr. Floyd Cross, Colorado - Exec. Committee
Mr. R.E. Pate, Jr. Colorado
Miss Mary M. Condon, Montana
Dr. J.R. Van Pelt, Montana
Dr. Frank McPhail, Montana - Exec. Committee
Dr. John W. Branson, New Mexico
Dr. Tom L. Popejoy, New Mexico - Vice Chairman
Dr. Floyd Golden, New Mexico
Dr. Charles D. Byrne, Oregon - Exec. Committee
Mr. A.R. Watzek, Oregon
Senator Alonzo F. Hopkin, Utah
Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Utah - Chairman
Hon. Dilworth S. Woolley, Utah

MORNING SESSION

In reviewing the background leading up to the adoption of the Interstate Compact, Mr. Frank Bane, Executive Director of the Council of State Governments, pointed out that the most pressing need for expanded educational facilities had been found to be in the fields of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and public health administration. He reviewed the meetings of the technical advisory committee and the legal committee, both appointed to work out the compact by the Western Governors' Conference.

It was agreed that discussion would be limited to five problems: (1) Organization of the Commission; (2) the election of officers; (3) the staff that might be needed to carry out the work of the Commission; (4) the establishment of chronological deadlines for necessary action in the implementation of the Compact; and (5) the feasibility of the first actual exchange of students by September 1952.

Members of the Commission discussed in some detail the legislative experience of the Compact in the 1951 sessions, and the appropriations for administrative expenses of the Commission in the several states.

Only Oregon and Utah made direct appropriations for the financing of the Commission. In addition, New Mexico has possible sources of administrative funds, and Colorado will hold a budget session of its General Assembly in January of 1952, when it would be possible to secure an appropriation. Arizona holds a regular session in January 1952, and the Commission received encouraging word from that state concerning the possibility of action on the Compact at that time.

The Commission discussed the advisability of the present five compacting states beginning operations without waiting for further action by the remaining western states and territories. It was pointed out that the presently compacting states contain all of the necessary professional schools to begin operations, with the exception of a school of public health administration. It was moved, seconded, and adopted "that as provided in the Compact, we proceed with the organization of the Western Regional Commission for Higher Education, with the purpose of implementing the Compact at the earliest possible date, and that permanent officers be elected to begin operation of the plan/"

In discussing possible applications of the regional plan, it was pointed out by members of the Commission that it is not contemplated that there will be a perfect balance from state to state, as to the numbers of students exchanged, but rather that each state shall send as many students to other states as may be accepted, and which the sending state may be in a position to finance. It was emphasized that the financing means the actual cost of such education to the receiving school. It is contemplated that the receiving schools shall use such funds for the expansion of their facilities.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The Commission discussed the type of coordinating machinery that may be necessary to begin the program and to maintain the necessary momentum. Since only two of the Compacting states have appropriated administrative expenses to the Commission, it was suggested that the western regional office of the Council of State Governments might become Secretariat for the Commission on a temporary basis until further money for administrative expenses has been appropriated by the states involved. Members of the Commission stated that they would like to have that office serve as a clearing house agency as well as a survey and fact-finding agency. On inquiry from the Commission, Mr. Frank Bane, Executive Director of the Council of State Governments, proposed that the western regional representative of the Council would act as temporary secretary of the Commission, and that the Council would agree for the calendar year 1952 to finance the Secretariat and run it to the best of its ability, with

the understanding that during the period it might be necessary to request the Commission to furnish the Council with some financing. It was moved, seconded, and adopted "that the Commission accept this plan".

It was moved, seconded and adopted that officers of the Commission be a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. It was further moved, seconded and adopted that the Commission establish an executive committee, to consist of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and one member be selected by each of the state delegations provided under the terms of the Compact.

The Commission unanimously elected the following officers: Chairman: Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Utah; Vice-Chairman: Dr. Tom L. Popejoy, New Mexico. The remaining states designated their respective members of the Executive Committee as follows: Colorado: Dr. Floyd Cross; Montana: Dr. Frank McPhail; Oregon: Dr. Charles D. Byrne.

The Commission voted as a matter of policy to give the Executive Committee the widest possible freedom, in conformance with the terms of the Compact, to determine policy and program for the entire Commission.

Members of the Commission pointed out that, in all fairness to the Compacting states, it likely would be necessary for institutions in those states to cease accepting students from western states that have not as yet adopted the Compact, unless the student be charged the full cost of tuition otherwise paid by the compacting states.

The Commission adjourned its meeting at 4:00 P.M., subject to call by the Chairman.

SFO-109

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 1952

Minutes of Meeting

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of

THE WESTERN REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Hotel Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah
Saturday, April 12, 1952

ATTENDANCE

Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Chairman - Utah
Dr. Tom L. Popejoy, Vice-Chairman - New Mexico
Dr. Floyd Cross - Colorado
Dr. Frank McPhail - Montana
Dr. Charles D. Byrne - Oregon
Stewart G. Wilson, Council of State Governments, Acting Secretary

The second meeting of the Executive Committee of the Western Regional Commission for Higher Education was held at the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City, on Saturday, April 12th, 1952.

BY-LAWS

Proposed by-laws, prepared by the Secretariat, were discussed by members of the Executive Committee, together with revisions suggested by the Montana members of the Commission. The Committee decided that the by-laws as submitted by the Montana members should be altered in two respects: 1) The Committee decided that regular annual meetings should be provided for - and chose the second Monday in August as the best date for such meeting; and 2) The Secretary of the Commission should also be designated as the Treasurer, to act as Custodian of all Commission funds, and to keep proper accounts and records for the Commission. The following amended sections were adopted:

Article III. Meetings. Section 1. Regular Annual Meetings: The second Monday in August shall be the date upon which the regular Annual meeting of the Commission shall be held. This meeting shall be in addition to any special meetings of the Commission of its Executive Committee as herein provided for.

Article IV. Officers, Terms, Duties. Section 3. Secretary-Treasurer. It shall be the duty of such person as the Executive Committee shall appoint to act as its Secretary and Treasurer. It shall be his duty to keep minutes of all meetings of the Commission and its Committees. He shall file, index, and preserve carefully all minutes, papers and documents pertaining to the business and proceedings of the Commission and its Committees. He shall act as custodian of all funds

of the Commission and shall keep proper accounts concerning the disposition of all such funds. The Commission shall cause the books of account of the Commission to be audited annually.

TUITION COSTS

It was decided that the Committee's task was to arrive at a standard fee which can be used in negotiations with the several states for the placement of students in their schools. It was pointed out that the Committee should assume that the Commission is making possible schools for those that have none, and should arrive at a figure that will be agreed upon for all of the schools in the area. In the case of medical schools, the gross costs of a medical education will be figured by arriving at the average gross cost for the states of each student, the amount to be deducted to be the average resident fee. When negotiations proceed, this will be the figure each state should pay for each student placed in one of the out-of-state schools. Each state will then charge the student his regular resident tuition, the state thereby will essentially be buying part of an out-of-state medical school.

The Committee adopted a motion that a Committee be appointed, composed of men from the educational field, to work out the cost of such professional education and arrive at the fixed fee desired. The Committee voted to request Floyd Reeves of the University of Chicago to act as Chairman, and to request the following persons to serve with him on the Committee; Dean Noyes of the University of Oregon Dental School, Dean Darley of the University of Colorado Medical School, and Dean Cross of the Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College Veterinary Medicine School. The task of this Committee will be to discover a fair and average gross cost in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine, and a fair average resident tuition. They will then use these figures to discover a fair average rate that may be charged to any state when the Commission negotiates to place a student from one state in the school of another state. The Committee was requested to establish these rates in time for the Executive Committee to have two weeks to study them prior to the annual meeting of the Commission in August of 1952. It was decided that the Executive Committee would meet on the Sunday preceding the annual meeting of the Commission in order that the adjusted figures might be presented to the entire Commission.

FINANCES

The Committee directed the Acting Secretary-Treasurer to set up accounts in the Commission's name. He was also directed to request from each member of the Executive Committee \$1000 to be paid by each of the several compacting states or territories for

the next year's operations of the Commission, including the payment of travel costs. It was decided by the Committee, in accordance with the terms of the compact, that members of the Committee should be reimbursed for actual travelling expenses, which should include air travel cost, first class Pullman, or its equivalent, should travel be made by other means.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Committee decided that the Commission, as a matter of policy, would successively meet in each of the compacting states. It was decided that the 1952 Annual meeting of the Commission would be held in the State of Oregon on Monday, August 11th.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES WITH FIRST BYLAWS August 10-11, 1952

Minutes of Meeting

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of THE WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Timberline Lodge, Timberline, Oregon
Sunday, August 10, 1952

ATTENDANCE

Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Chairman - Utah
Mr. Tom L. Popejoy - Chairman - New Mexico
Dr. Floyd Cross - Colorado
Dr. Frank McPhail - Montana
Dr. Charles D. Byrne - Oregon
Dr. Harold Noyes (Cost Committee) - Oregon
Miss Mary Condon (Cost Committee Chairman) - Montana

COMMISSION FINANCES

The third meeting of the Executive Committee of the Western Interstate Committee for Higher Education was held at Timberline Lodge, Timberline, Oregon on Sunday, August 10, 1952.

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held in Salt Lake City on April 12th were read by the Secretary. That portion of the minutes dealing with finances of the Commission were amended by the Executive Committee to conform to the action taken at the earlier meeting on November of 1951. This paragraph of the minutes of the Salt Lake City meeting was amended to read "The Committee directed the Acting Secretary-Treasurer to set up accounts in the Commission's name. He was also directed to request from each member of the Executive Committee \$1,000 to be paid by each of the several compacting states or territories for the next fiscal year's operations of the Commission, beginning July 1, 1952, including travel costs*****"(amendments underscored).

It was moved and seconded that "funds in the Commission's treasury be used to reimburse all necessary expenses of all commissioners who attend this Executive Committee meeting and the full Commission meeting, and all further such meetings." (See Article VI of the Compact for Western Regional Cooperation in Higher Education). The motion was unanimously adopted.

It was further moved and seconded that it be a matter of policy of the Executive Committee that all intra-state meetings of members of the Commission be regarded as not at the expense of the Commission. The motion was unanimously adopted.

BY-LAWS

The Acting Secretary-Treasurer was directed to draft proposed Articles VI and VII. He was directed to model Article VII of the By-Laws on Article VI of the Compact.

It was moved, seconded and carried that it should be the duty of the Secretary-Treasurer to submit a report of attendance of commissioners at all meetings to the respective Governors of the several compacting states.

COMMISSION OFFICE AND STAFF

The Executive Committee agreed that it should be the policy of the Commission to have its Director, when appointed, prepare and submit for approval a manual of contract procedures, similar in purpose to that prepared for the Southern Regional Board.

Chairman Wilson reviewed the suggestions he received by telephone from Dr. John Ivey of the Southern Regional Board. The Southern office was initially set up with a budget of \$33,000 for the first 9 months. These funds were provided by the General Education Board. Its staff consisted of 2 Professionals (A Director at an annual salary of \$15,000 and an Associate Director at a \$13,000 annual salary) one Junior Professional at a \$7,000 salary and two Secretaries. The Southern Regional Board initially requested appropriations of \$7,000 from each participating state for administrative expenses. At the present time each participating state is requested to appropriate \$13,000 annually for administrative expenses.

After discussion of the staff needs for the Western Commission it was decided that the Executive Committee would recommend to the Commission that two professionals and one secretary be authorized - one professional at a salary of \$15,000 per year and one at \$10,000. There was unanimous agreement that the Committee would recommend that the Commission ask for \$7,000 per year from each of the compacting states for administrative expenses, beginning July 1, 1953.

The Committee decided to ask the Commission for direction to go ahead and establish the Commission's office in advance of July 1, 1953 if funds can be obtained. The Committee voted to seek help for this period from the General Education Board which

originally made such a grant to the Southern Board to begin its operations.

The Committee unanimously voted to recommend to the Commission that the Commission's office be established in Salt Lake City, Utah.

COMMITTEE ON COSTS

Miss Mary Condon, Chairman of the Committee on Costs asked Dr. Darley to report concerning medical education costs, Dr. Noyes to report on dentistry and Dr. Cross on veterinary medicine. The full report of the Committee will be found as Appendix A to these minutes. She urged that the report be considered only one of progress and in no sense final.

It was suggested that the figure of \$2,500 plus or minus be used by the Commission for the time being, as the approximate cost of medical educations perstudent, in seeking state appropriations for the education of students out of state. Dr. Darley reported that he hoped a firmer figure could be reached by agreement among the several schools of this region, not later than November 1st.

Dr. Noyes reported that the formula used by Dr. Darley in determining medical education costs was satisfactory for use in determining costs in dental education, and, using such a formula, the Commission should use for the time being, the figure of \$1,700 plus or minus, as the per-student cost of dental education in considering state appropriations. At the same time Dr. Cross estimated that the Commission might use for this purpose in the case of veterinary medicine education, the figure of \$1,200 plus or minus.

ANNUAL COMMISSION MEETING

The Executive Committee agreed thatthe following agenda should be considered by the entire Commission at its annual meeting to be held the following day, August 11, 1952:

1. ADOPTION AND RATIFICATION OF THE COMMISSION'S BY-LAWS.
2. DISCUSSION ON CONTRACTS: FORM, CONTENT, PROCESSING, ESTABLISHMENT OF A MANUAL OF CONTRACT PROCEDURES.
3. CONSIDERATIONS OF COMMISSION FINANCES: APPROPRIATIONS, DISBURSEMENTS, ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT STAFF.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PROMOTION OF THE COMPACT IN NON-COMPACTING STATES.
5. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SUGGESTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON COSTS RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARD COST PROCEDURES IN EACH FIELD OF TRAINING.
6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Minutes

First Annual Meeting

WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Timberline Lodge
Mt. Hood, Oregon
August 11th, 1952

ATTENDANCE

Dr. Floyd Cross, Colorado
Dr. Ward Darley, Colorado
Miss Mary M. Condon, Montana
Dr. F. L. McPhail, Montana
Dr. J. R. Van Pelt, Montana
Dr. J. W. Branson, New Mexico
Dr. Floyd Golden, New Mexico
Mr. Tom L. Popejoy, New Mexico, Vice-Chairman
Dr. Charles D. Byrne, Oregon
Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Utah, Chairman

GUESTS

Mr. Thomas S. Dabagh, California
Dr. Harold J. Noyes, Oregon
Dr. Henry Schmitz, Washington
Dr. Franklin D. Yoder, Wyoming

COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Stewart G. Wilson
Ralph R. Johnson

The first Annual Meeting of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education convened at 9:30 A.M., Monday, August 11th, 1952, at Timberline Lodge, Mt. Hood, Oregon.

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, APRIL 12, 1952

The Commission first considered the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 12th, 1952. The paragraph concerning finances was amended as follows:

"The Committee directed the Acting Secretary-Treasurer to set up accounts in the Commission's name. He was also directed to request from each member of the Executive Committee \$1,000 to be paid by each of the

several compacting states or territories for the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 1952 for the operation of the Commission, including the payment of travel costs....." (new material underlined.)

The first paragraph of the section concerning tuition costs was amended by changing the last sentence to read as follows:

Each (state) receiving institution will then charge the student his regular resident tuition... " (Deleted material bracketed, new material underlined.)

As amended, the Minutes of the April 12th, 1952 Executive Committee meeting were unanimously approved.

MINUTES OF ORGANIZATION MEETING OF WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The Minutes of the organization meeting of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, held in Denver, Colorado, on November 29th 1951, were unanimously approved as submitted.

ADOPTION OF COMMISSION BY-LAWS

On motion of Dr. Darley, Section 2(h) of Article I was amended to read:

"Draft and recommend to the Governors of the various compacting states and territories after consultation with the appropriate institutions within the region, uniform legislation dealing with the problems of higher education in the region." (New material underlined.)

On motion of Miss Condon, Section 3(d) of Article I was amended to read:

"The Commission shall endeavor at all times to work with all accredited institutions in the region regardless of the source of their finances." (New material underlined.)

The Secretary was instructed that the minutes should show a statement of policy in connection with Section 3(d), that it was the intent of the Commission to work also with agencies, institutions and organizations outside the region as well as those within.

The Commission added a new Section 3 to Article II, as follows:

"Section 3. Vacancies. If any commission office becomes vacant for any reason, the Secretary-Treasurer shall inform the appropriate Governor, and request the Governor to fill the office for the remainder of the unexpired term."

Section 1 of Article III was amended to read, in part, as follows:

"The second Monday in August shall be the date upon which (the) a regular annual meeting of the Commission shall be held." (Deleted material bracketed) (new material underlined)

The Commission amended Section 2 of Article III to read, in part, as follows:

"Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chairman, or upon the request of (a majority of Commissioners of) the delegations of three or more compacting states..." and was further amended to read in part "notice in writing as to time and place such special meeting is to be held, unless such notice is waived by the written action of a majority..." (Deleted material bracketed; new material underlined.)

Section 2 of Article IV was amended to read in part as follows:

".....or until their successors are elected and qualified." (New material underlined.)

Section 3 (c) of Article IV was amended to read, in part, as follows:

".....It shall be his duty to keep minutes of all meetings of the Commission and its Committees, and it shall be the duty of the Secretary-Treasurer to send copies of the minutes of all Commission and Executive Committee meetings to the several Governors; and to transmit to each a record of the attendance from his state..." (New material underlined.)

Section 4 of Article IV was amended to read as follows:

"The officers shall execute such bond as may be required from time to time by the Executive Committee. The cost of such bond shall be charged against Commission funds." (New material underlined.)

Article VI, "Director and Staff", not previously formulated was adopted by the Commission to read:

"There shall be a Director and such staff as may be deemed necessary by the Commission. The Commission's office shall be established in one of the compacting states, as may be determined by the Commission."

Article VII, "Finance", not previously formulated was adopted by the Commission to read:

"At the direction of the Executive Committee the Director shall submit a proposed annual budget for the consideration of the Commission. The Commission shall act upon such proposed budget at its annual meeting."

The Commission voted unanimously to adopt the By-Laws as amended.

MANUAL OF CONTRACT PROCEDURES

The Chairman suggested that the problem of preparing a manual of contract procedures was essentially a business and technical process that should be left to the discretion of the Director, when appointed. It was the consensus of the Commission that the Director should not be prematurely bound by any formal action by the Commission. It was suggested that the southern manual be used by the Commission as a guide to what their manual might contain.

COMMISSION FINANCES AND PERMANENT STAFF

The Chairman announced that financial statements had been placed before each member of the Commission. He pointed out that up to this time all expenses of Commissioners in connection with Commission affairs had been paid out of institutional or personal funds. Since the Commission was now operating fully under the terms of the Compact and the By-Laws, he felt that the Commission should assume fully responsibility for such expenditures. The Commission adopted a motion that all expenses of Commissioners in connection with the first annual meeting should be paid from Commission funds.

It was explained that it was the policy of the Commission that intra-state meetings of state Commissioners should not be a financial obligation of the Interstate Commission.

The Chairman outlined to the Commission a telephone conversation he had with Dr. John Ivey, Director of the Southern Regional Education Board concerning the original staff set-up in that area. He then outlined to the Commission a proposed annual budget of \$42,000 for administrative expenses. This would amount to \$7,000 per year from each of the states which have now ratified the Compact. It would provide for a Director with a salary of \$15,000, an assistant at \$10,000, and a Secretary at \$3,000 annually. The proposed budget was unanimously adopted by the Commission, and the Secretary was instructed to see that each legislative agency concerned with the individual state budgets was notified of the amount of the requested appropriation. The requests to individual states are to be made by the Secretary-Treasurer, with information to the state delegations concerned.

PROMOTION OF THE COMPACT IN NON-PARTICIPATING STATES

The Commission unanimously adopted a motion that its members would hold themselves available for any help that the Council of State Governments might ask of them in connection with the promotion of the Interstate Compact in those states which have not yet ratified -- but that the Commission recognized that the primary responsibility in this connection would remain with the Council.

OUTSIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Commission unanimously adopted a motion "that the Chairman of the Commission, after consulting with interested parties, be authorized to initiate a request for funds from appropriate agencies for an adequate amount to partially underwrite the administrative expenses of the Commission during the early years of its existence."

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COSTS

The full report of the Commission's Committee on Costs, of which Miss Mary Condon of Montana was Chairman, will be found as Appendix A to the Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Commission, held on August 10th, 1952.

Miss Condon pointed out that the Committee's report was not final, but should be considered in the nature of a progress report. It was suggested that the final report of the Committee be divided into three fields: Medicine - \$2500; Dentistry - \$1,700; Veterinary Medicine - \$1,200.

The Commission unanimously voted to accept the report, with thanks to the Committee for the work already accomplished, as well as their willingness to carry on the necessary studies to complete the work and make the report final.

1953 CONTRACTS

Dr. Darley pointed out that with the advent of the Selective Service Law, and the regulations issued under its authority, it has become the custom of medical schools to select their incoming classes six months earlier than previously. This means that at the present time most medical schools are selecting their freshmen one year in advance. It was pointed out, however, that this situation does not obtain in dental schools nor in schools of veterinary medicine.

The Commission instructed its Secretary to obtain a list of the latest possible dates for filing admissions applications in the three fields in the western area. The Commission also instructed its Secretary to obtain as complete a list as possible of available places in the schools of the compacting states for the academic year beginning in September, 1953.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Commission unanimously approved a motion to re-elect Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Utah, Chairman, and Mr. Tom L. Popejoy, New Mexico, Vice-Chairman of the Commission for the coming year. It likewise unanimously approved a motion that the Commission go on record as thanking the Executive Committee and the Council of State Governments for the work accomplished during the past year.

The Commission adopted a motion that the Executive Committee be empowered to appoint the Director and staff, and that it was the sense of the Commission that its central office should be located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

At the invitation of Dr. McPhail of Montana, the Commission voted to hold its annual meeting in Glacier National Park.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

BY-LAWS

WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION

As Adopted At Timberline Lodge, Oregon
August 11, 1952

article 1

Purpose, Functions and Policies.

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, shall be to promote technical, professional, and graduate training in the eleven western states and two territories, or groups thereof, under the terms of the Western Regional Higher Education Compact.

Section 2. Functions. The Commission, in carrying out its general purposes, shall:

- (a) Administer interstate agreements for regional educational services.
- (b) Determine the cost of educational services under contract in the several cooperating institutions.
- (c) Execute contracts with the compacting states and territories or with educational institutions within the compacting states and territories upon suitable terms and conditions, (1) to provide educational services for residents of other compacting states and territories, and (2) to assist in placing properly qualified residents of other compacting states and territories as students in contracting institutions.
- (d) Serve as fiscal agent for carrying out interstate arrangements for regional educational services.
- (e) Undertake studies of needs for professional and graduate educational facilities in the region, the resources for meeting such needs, and the long-range effects of the Compact for Western Regional Cooperation in Higher Education.
- (f) Serve as a research facility on institutional and regional problems related to improve higher education.

- (g) Serve as a clearing house on information regarding regionally significant activities among institutions and agencies concerned with higher education in the western region.
- (h) Draft and recommend to the Governors of the various compacting states and territories, after consultation with the appropriate institutions within the region, uniform legislation dealing with the problems of higher education in the region.

Section 3. Policies. The Commission shall be guided by the following policies:

- (a) Regional services shall be subject to applicable state or territory and federal laws and court decisions.
- (b) Interstate cooperation in higher education shall be established, continued, modified, or discontinued in accordance with the needs of the compacting states and territories.
- (c) The quality of educational services provided shall be the highest possible consistent with the resources of the compacting states and territories.
- (d) The Commission shall endeavor at all times to work with all accredited institutions in the region regardless of the source of their finances.
- (e) In undertaking research, the Commission shall secure, insofar as possible, the collaboration of existing agencies, institutions and organizations.

ARTICLE II

Membership

Section 1. Members. The membership of the Commission shall consist of three residents of each compacting state or territory, at least one of whom shall be an educator engaged in the field of higher education. The Commissioners from each state and territory shall be appointed by the Governor thereof as provided by law in such state or territory. Any Commissioner may be removed or sus-

pended from office as provided by the law of the state or territory from which he shall have been appointed.

Section 2. Tenure. The terms of each Commissioner shall be four years; provided, however that the first three Commissioners shall be appointed as follows: one for two years, one for three years, and one for four years. Each Commissioner shall hold office until his successor shall be appointed and qualified.

Section 3. Vacancies. If any commission office becomes vacant for any reason, the Secretary-Treasurer shall inform the appropriate Governor, and request the Governor to fill the office for the remainder of the unexpired term.

ARTICLE III

Meetings

Section 1. Regular Annual Meetings. The second Monday in August shall be the date upon which a regular annual meeting of the Commission shall be held. This meeting shall be in addition to any special meetings of the Commission or its Executive Committee as herein provided for.

Section 2. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chairman, or upon request of the delegations of three or more compacting states or territories, provided, however, that all members shall be given at least thirty (30) days notice in writing as to the time and place such special meeting is to be held, unless such notice is waived by the written action of a majority of the whole number of compacting states and territories.

Section 3. Quorums. One or more Commissioners from a majority of the whole number of compacting states and territories shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 4. Voting. Each compacting state and territory represented at any meeting of the Commission is entitled to one vote.

ARTICLE IV

Officers, Terms, Duties

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, and may include a

Secretary-Treasurer who may be a person not a member of the Commission. The Executive Committee is authorized to appoint a Secretary-Treasurer at its discretion.

Section 2. Election. All officers shall be elected at the regular annual meeting and shall hold office until the next annual meeting, or until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 3. Duties. The officers shall perform the usual duties of their respective offices, including the following:

- (a) Chairman. The Chairman of the Commission shall serve also as Chairman ex officio of the Executive Committee. He shall call and preside at all meetings of the Commission and of the Executive Committee, prepare agenda for these meetings, and appoint the appointive members of all committees. In the intervals between meetings of the Commission and of the Executive Committee, he shall represent these bodies. At the next following meeting of each body he shall report to them all action taken by him in their behalf. All such acts of the Chairman shall be taken subject to ratification by the Executive Committee or the Commission, according to their respective jurisdictions.
- (b) Vice-Chairman. In the absence of the Chairman of the Commission or in the event that he is present but desires the Vice-Chairman of the Commission to do so, it shall be the duty of such Vice-Chairman to perform all the duties of the Chairman.
- (c) Secretary-Treasurer. It shall be the duty of such a person as the Executive Committee shall appoint to act as its Secretary-Treasurer. It shall be his duty to keep minutes of all meetings of the Commission and its Committees, and it shall be the duty of the Secretary-Treasurer to send copies of minutes of all Commission and Executive Committee meetings to the several Governors; and transmit to each a record of the attendance from his state. He shall file, index, and preserve carefully all minutes, papers and documents pertaining to the business and proceedings of the Commission and its Committees. He shall act as custodian of all funds of the Commission and shall keep proper accounts concerning the

disposition of all such funds. The Commission shall cause the books of account of the Commission to be audited annually.

Section 4. Bond. The officers shall execute such bond as may be required from time to time by the Executive Committee. The cost of such bond shall be charged against Commission funds.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of one member from each compacting state and territory. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Commission shall represent their states or territories. The other members shall be selected by their respective state or territorial delegations by whatever procedure each delegation may determine.

Section 2. Powers of the Executive Committee. Except as otherwise provided in the Compact, during the intervals between the meetings of the Commission the Executive Committee may exercise all of the powers of the Commission. The Executive Committee may fix its own rules of procedure, and it shall keep a record of its proceedings and shall report these proceedings to the Commission at the next regular or special meeting of the Commission after such action has been taken by the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Special Committees. The Commission may, at any meeting, authorize the creation of such special committee as it deems necessary and appropriate and may fix their size, duties, and tenure.

ARTICLE VI

Director and Staff

There shall be a Director and such staff as may be deemed necessary by the Commission. The Commission's office shall be established in one of the compacting states as may be determined by the Commission.

ARTICLE VII

Finance

At the direction of the Executive Committee the Director shall submit a proposed annual budget for the consideration of the Commission. The Commission shall act upon such proposed budget at its annual meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Changing By-Laws

Section 1. Any by-law may be adopted, amended or repealed by the affirmative vote of a majority of the whole number of compacting states and territories; provided, however, that notice of the proposed action shall be included in the call for the meeting at which they are to be considered, and copies of all proposed changes shall be sent with the call to all members of the Commission.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 1951-1952

REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

1952

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

Dr. O. Meredith Wilson, Utah, Chairman
Mr. Tom L. Popejoy, New Mexico, Vice-Chairman
Dr. Dermont W. Melick, Arizona
Mr. Alexander A. Raisin, Arizona
Dr. O. H. Wedel, Arizona
Dr. Ward Darley, Colorado
Dr. Floyd Cross, Colorado
Mr. R. E. Pate, Jr., Colorado
Miss Mary M. Condon, Montana
Dr. J. R. Van Pelt, Montana
Dr. F. L. McPhail, Montana
Dr. John W. Branson, New Mexico
Dr. Floyd Golden, New Mexico
Dr. Charles D. Byrne, Oregon
Senator Dean Walker, Oregon
Mr. A. R. Watzek, Oregon
Senator Alonzo F. Hopkin, Utah
Hon. Dilworth S. Woolley, Utah

The Compact creating the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education was adopted by Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah in 1951, thereby bringing the Commission into existence, under the terms of the Compact. The sixth state, Arizona, ratified the Compact at its regular legislative session in 1952.

The Commission held its first meeting in Denver, Colorado on November 29th, 1951. In organizing, at the meeting "with the purpose of implementing the Compact at the earliest possible date", the Commission provided for the election of a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, together with an Executive Committee consisting of one member to be elected by each state to act for the Commission and to whom was delegated "the widest possible freedom, in conformance with the terms of the Compact, to determine

policy and program for the entire Commission". The Commission elected Dr. O. Meredith Wilson of Utah, Chairman; and Mr. Tom L. Popejoy, President of the University of New Mexico as Vice-Chairman. Other members of the Executive Committee, designated by the participating states, were Dr. Floyd Cross, Colorado; Dr. Frank McPhail, Montana; and Dr. Charles D. Byrne, Oregon. The Executive Committee held its first meeting on the same day, and directed its Acting Secretary to prepare a tentative set of by-laws for the Commission's future consideration.

The Executive Committee of the Commission held its second meeting at the Hotel Utah, in Salt Lake City, on Saturday, April 12, 1952. In revising the proposed by-laws of the Commission the Executive Committee provided that the Acting Secretary should also act as Treasurer, and directed that he should solicit each of the Compacting states for \$1,000 each, for administrative expenses of the Commission for the fiscal year 1952-53.

Immediately preceding the Annual Meeting of the Commission, the Executive Committee held its third meeting at Timberline Lodge, in Oregon, on August 10, 1952. At this meeting the Executive Committee made a final revision of the proposed by-laws for submission to the entire Commission for its consideration. After consideration of the experience of the Southern Regional Board, the Executive Committee decided to recommend to the Commission that a central office of the Commission be established in Salt Lake City, Utah, with an initial staff to consist of two professionals and one secretary---one professional at a salary of \$15,000 per year, and one at \$10,000. To finance this administrative center it was decided to recommend to the Commission that each of the compacting states be asked to appropriate \$7,000 per year for administrative expenses of the Commission, beginning July 1, 1953.

Among the problems of particular significance to the Commission and its

operations, is that of a possible uniform cost to be placed upon education in the fields of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and public health education. While uniformity in this matter is virtually impossible, due to different costs in the several schools involved, the Commission determined that it would select an arbitrary figure, as near average as possible, in each case, for the purpose of facilitating the budgeting of funds in the several legislatures for the exchange of students. Accordingly a Committee on Costs was appointed, Chairmanned by Miss Mary Condon of Montana, which reported that the Commission might well use for annual figures \$2500 plus or minus in the case of medical education, the figure of \$1700 for dental education, and the figure of \$1200 for education in veterinary medicine.

The Commission at its annual meeting at Mount Hood reelected its incumbent Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Each of the States reported reelection of its member of the Executive Committee.

Reminder:

Second day of Roundtable Discussions

Tuesday, May 9, 2023
8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

See Tab 8 for locations and details

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Business Session

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Dreamcatcher Ballroom

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — BUSINESS SESSION

Tuesday
May 9, 2023

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

*Dreamcatcher
Ballroom*

Business Session Agenda

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Matt Freeman (ID), WICHE Chair



Approval of the November 10-11, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

11-3

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Commissioner Matt Freeman

11-11

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Demarée Michelau

11-12

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Commissioner Matt Freeman, Chair

REPORT ON THE PRESIDENT'S EVALUATION

Commissioner Matt Freeman, Chair

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BETWEEN NOVEMBER 2022 AND MARCH 2023

Commissioner Matt Freeman, Chair

11-16

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Les Purce (WA), Committee Chair

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair

REPORT OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Commissioner Antwan Jefferson (CO), WICHE Vice Chair

Action and Information Items



Approval of WICHE's Paid Family Leave Plan

11-25



Approval of the Revised WICHE Investment Policy

11-37



Approval of the FY 2024 Salary and Benefit Recommendations

11-44



Approval of FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget – General and Non-General Fund Budgets

11-45



Approval of Dedicated Reserve Levels for Non-General Fund Activities

11-53



Approval of WICHE's Vision, Value Proposition, and Strategic Priorities

11-57



Approval of FY 2024 Workplan

11-59



Affirmation of Codes of Ethics for the WICHE Commission, President, and Staff

11-88

Other Business

Adjourn Committee of the Whole—Business Session

Meeting Evaluation
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/May2023CommMtg>



Thank you for your feedback!

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the November 10, 2022, Committee of the Whole—Call to Order Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present

David Lassner (HI), Chair
Matt Freeman (ID), Vice Chair
Susan Anderson (AK), Immediate Past Chair

Ellen Junn (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Jim Chavez (CO)
John Morton (HI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Danita Bye (ND)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
Kalani Kaneko (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/RMI)
Patricia Jones (UT)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Thomas L. (Les) Purce (WA)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kevin Carman (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Pearl Brower (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)
Kathleen Goepfing (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Angie Paccione (CO)

Commissioners Absent (continued)

Dave Lent (ID)
Mark Moores (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)
Ann Millner (UT)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

Staff Present

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the Commission, Office of the President
Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Joseph Garcia, Graphic Designer, Communications
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and Research
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Nathaniel Longmore, Digital Communications Coordinator, Communications
Demarée Michelau, President, Office of the President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health, and Co Director, MHTTC
Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Office of the President
Russ Poulin, Executive Director of WCET and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Guests

Allison Faeder, Project Manager, Arrow Performance Group
Renny Fagan, Senior Consultant, Arrow Performance Group
Stuart Thomas, Founder and Senior Consultant, Arrow Performance Group

Call to Order

Chair David Lassner called the meeting to order and welcomed commissioners, guests, and staff. Laura Ewing reported there was a quorum of the Committee of the Whole.

Land Acknowledgement

Chair Lassner acknowledged the Native American land upon which the metropolitan area of Portland was built. He reported that Portland rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, Cowlitz, and Watlala bands of the Chinook, and many other tribes and bands. The Indigenous people living on the land created communities and summer encampments along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers to harvest and enjoy the abundant natural resources of the area, going back 11,000 years.

Lassner said the contributions of Indigenous communities, past and present, should be honored and respected. They developed and preserved a body of Indigenous knowledge, ingenuity, and practice that enabled them to live sustainably and in harmony on the land. As a community committed to higher education, there is a responsibility to advance the well-being of indigenous people, and work to preserve and promulgate their culture, language, knowledge, and practices.

Introduction of New Commissioners

Chair Lassner acknowledged and welcomed new commissioners attending the November 2022 Commission Meeting—Danita Bye (ND), Senator Kalani Kaneko (RMI), Michael Meotti (WA), and Kevin Carman (WY)—and Pearl Brower (AK), who was not in attendance.

He also mentioned three commissioners who have completed their terms over the past year: Jim Johnsen (AK), Jill Louters (ND), and David Jones (WY).

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2021, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Chair Lassner asked for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections requested. He declared the minutes approved as submitted and reviewed.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Commissioner Susan Anderson, chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee has recommended that Commissioner Antwan Jefferson be approved to serve as WICHE's 2023 vice chair. She said that the committee—which includes Commissioners Clayton Christian, Camille Preus, Colleen Sathre, and Patricia Sullivan—chose Commissioner Jefferson from a field of outstanding and highly qualified candidates nominated. The vote to approve Commissioner Jefferson's appointment will be on Friday, November 11, 2022.

Report of the Chair

Chair Lassner thanked commissioners for their service to the WICHE region over the past year while higher education continued to recover from the pandemic. He noted the importance of sharing with one another the lessons learned while navigating the enormous challenges posed by the pandemic.

He welcomed the Republic of Palau into the shared Pacific Island membership of WICHE in 2022, and noted the importance of that growing shared membership.

Chair Lassner commended the Commission and the WICHE staff for their key role in the collaborative work done at the national level with NC-SARA and W-SARA, which he said has created a more positive path forward and more concrete expectations of institutions to better serve their students.

He concluded by saying that a formalized process has been implemented for the evaluation of the WICHE President, and that WICHE is in solid shape organizationally and financially.

Report of the President

President Michelau began her report by noting that despite the scheduling challenges posed by the pandemic, the Commission was finally able to convene in Portland. She thanked the state of Oregon for hosting, WICHE staff for the time invested in preparation, and the Benson Hotel staff for its contributions to supporting the goal of a well-organized Fall 2022 Commission Meeting.

She welcomed the Republic of Palau to the shared Pacific Island membership, and said that conversations continue with the leadership of American Samoa with hopes that legislation will be passed allowing American Samoa to also join the shared membership.

She said that her travel schedule has improved as the pandemic restrictions lift. Being able to go beyond Zoom meetings and to interact in person throughout the region is crucial to WICHE's work.

President Michelau said that her work with NC-SARA is going well and the policy process adopted in June 2022 is much more conducive to including the state voice and leadership. She thanked the Commission for its involvement and support, as well as the W-SARA and State Authorization Network (SAN) teams for their hard work and dedication to ensuring that the process modifications were implemented.

Other Business

Chair Lassner reviewed the meeting agenda for November 10 and 11 and asked that delegations caucus to determine committee assignments for 2023.

Recess

The Committee of the Whole recessed until Friday, November 11 at 9:45 a.m.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the November 11, 2022, Committee of the Whole—Business Session Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present

David Lassner (HI), Chair
Matt Freeman (ID), Vice Chair
Susan Anderson (AK), Immediate Past Chair

Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Ellen Junn (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Jim Chavez (CO)
John Morton (HI)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Danita Bye (ND)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Camille Preus (OR)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
Kalani Kaneko (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/RMI)
Patricia Jones (UT)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Thomas L. (Les) Purce (WA)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kevin Carman (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Pearl Brower (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Angie Paccione (CO)
Dave Lent (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Mark Moores (NM)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Brian Maher (SD)
Diana VanderWoude (SD)
Ann Millner (UT)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

Staff Present

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the Commission, Office of the President
Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Joseph Garcia, Graphic Designer, Communications
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and Research
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Sarah Leibrandt, Director of Strategy, Impact, and Academic Partnerships, Programs and Services
Nathaniel Longmore, Digital Communications Coordinator, Communications
Demarée Michelau, President, Office of the President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Services
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health, and Co Director, MHTTC
Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Office of the President
Russ Poulin, Executive Director of WCET and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Reconvene Committee of the Whole

Chair David Lassner called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and acknowledged Veterans Day. He asked Veterans present to stand to be recognized and honored. Laura Ewing reported to Chair Lassner that the Committee of the Whole had a quorum.

Review of Action Items of the Executive Committee, May 2022 to November 2022

Chair Lassner said that during the Executive Committee meeting on November 10, 2023, it was discussed that an action item on the Committee of the Whole - Business Session agenda the following day to approve an external evaluation of the WICHE President was to be under the purview of the Executive Committee as an action item on its meeting agenda. He said the Executive Committee received an overview of the evaluation process, the firm and consultant performing the external evaluation, and the fee for the consultant's work.

He gave an overview of some of the activity of the Executive Committee since May 2022:

- ▶ SARA renewal approvals for Montana and Utah
- ▶ Discussions about the paid family leave requirement for the state of Colorado that affects staff
- ▶ Approval of WICHE's decisional authority as part of SARA's policymaking process
- ▶ Approval of minutes from the May, June, August, and September Executive Committee meetings; the minutes are included in the agenda book in the business session tab.

Report and Recommended Action of the Audit Committee

Audit Committee Chair Susan Anderson reported that the committee met via videoconference on October 26, 2022, with committee members Anderson (AK), John Arnold (AZ), Jim Chavez (CO), Clayton Christian (MT), and Camille Preus (OR) in attendance. Additional meeting attendees were President Demarée Michelau, Chief Financial Officer Craig Milburn, Executive Assistant to the President and to the Commission Laura Ewing, and Matthew Marino from Rubin Brown, WICHE's auditing firm.

Chair Anderson said Marino walked the committee through the FY 2022 financial statements and the governance report. The auditor investigation resulted in an unmodified opinion, a "clean audit," with no disagreements with staff. The auditors did, however, find a significant deficiency in internal control that pertains to a contract with the Veterans Administration supporting Together with Veterans, an initiative of the Behavioral Health Program. Consistent with the provisions of the contract, revenue should be recognized when the contracted service has been completed at the monthly fee for the specified services. Under accrual basis accounting, revenue should be recognized in the period it is earned based on the fee allocated to the service. Chair Anderson said WICHE understands what needs to occur going forward with this and similar contracts.

She reported that WICHE has been with the RubinBrown auditing firm for 12 years. The committee voted to seek bids for a new auditing firm for the FY 2023 audit.

She concluded her report with a MOTION TO APPROVE the FY 2022 audit and financial statements, and Commissioner Fred Lokken SECONDED the motion. The motion passed.

Report and Recommended Action of the Programs and Services Committee

Committee Chair Les Purce reported on the November 11, 2022, Programs and Services Committee meeting, and included discussion of the following items:

- ▶ Current enrollment for WICHE's Student Access Programs.
- ▶ The Interstate Passport® program (IP), which has entered a new phase of its organizational development, has funding through May 2023. IP has over 100,000 students that have earned a Passport; 72 institutions in 21 states are members, and 46% of those institutions are minority serving institutions.
- ▶ An update on the cost-saving initiatives partnership with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

- ▶ A grant of \$1.5 million from the Mellon Foundation for the WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities, a two-year, on-campus fellowship program.
- ▶ WICHE's work with the Association of American College Registrars and Admissions Officers to evaluate the impact of administrative holds on student success. A 12-institution cohort has begun to review campus data and consider policy changes.
- ▶ The ongoing efforts to ensure alignment between degree options, academic program capacity, and workforce needs. One outcome of this discussion is the need for an assessment of current and potential Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) fields.

Report and Recommended Action of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee

Committee Chair Christopher Cabaldon reported on the activities of the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee. He said the committee thoroughly reviewed and discussed the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) application renewals up for approval for Arizona, Oregon, and South Dakota, and recommends that the Commission approve all three applications for renewal. The committee also recommends that President Michelau oversee the exploration of ways to improve student protections within SARA and present a plan for improvements at the May 2023 Commission Meeting.

Committee Chair Cabaldon MOVED TO APPROVE the SARA application renewals for Arizona, Oregon, and South Dakota and a directive to President Michelau to examine ways to improve student protections and present an action item to the PAR committee and the Committee of the Whole. Commissioner Lokken SECONDED the motion.

During the discussion of the motion, Commissioner Gerry Pollet said that an in-depth discussion about the need to protect SARA students was worthwhile, and that NC-SARA should not be allowed to undermine individual states' ability to protect students. He said he was concerned about an August 2021 letter submitted by 25 state attorneys general (six of them from WICHE states) which urged that SARA policy regarding student protections should be improved. He said the letter was why he voted "no" for the renewal of Arizona's application during the PAR committee meeting.

The motion passed.

Committee Chair Cabaldon presented an additional PAR committee recommendation and MOVED TO APPROVE that the Commission approve the project entitled *Strategic Planning for Idaho's Engineering and Computer Science Growth Initiative* and add it to the FY 2023 Workplan. Commissioner Larry Tidemann SECONDED the motion. During the discussion, Commissioner Matt Freeman noted that the governor of Idaho included funds for the project in his budget appropriation. The motion passed.

Report of the Legislative Advisory Committee

Commissioner Pollet reported on the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC), which returned to an annual in-person meeting for the first time since 2019, convening in Sacramento, Calif., on September 21–22, 2022. The conference's theme was "Adjusting & Adapting: What's Next for Postsecondary Education?" Among the diverse topics covered were addressing enrollment challenges, improving retention and completion, meeting workforce needs, behavioral health in postsecondary education, and state authorization of distance education.

Commissioner Pollet said 15 legislators from nine WICHE states and territories attended, representing Alaska, Colorado, Guam, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington. He reported that the meeting evaluation received a 40% response rate, with 100% of respondents saying the meeting was worth their time and effort to attend, and 100% of respondents anticipated using information they learned during the meeting in their legislative work.

Commissioner Pollet said WICHE staff would be reaching out to commissioners in January to begin the process of appointing LAC members for 2023, and are currently working to finalize dates and the location for the 2023 LAC meeting.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FAMLI) PROGRAM

President Michelau began with an overview of the FAMLI program. In November 2020, Colorado voters passed Proposition 118, which requires paid family leave by all Colorado employers. The plan provides 12 weeks of paid leave for qualifying and eligible events such as childbirth or the care of a family member. Similar to unemployment insurance, the program is funded through employer and employee premium contributions, with claims submitted to and disbursed by the state of Colorado. Contributions to the program fund begin on January 1, 2023; claims for payment from the fund will not begin until January 1, 2024.

President Michelau said that WICHE qualifies as a local government and can opt out of the plan. WICHE has remote employees who can't pay into the Colorado FAMLI program and are prohibited from participating. WICHE needs to treat all employees equally (treating the remote staff the same as those that reside in Colorado), and in order to do so, she recommends opting out of the Colorado-based FAMLI program, and instead going with a private plan or creating WICHE's own self-funded paid leave program. Colorado law requires a vote of the governing body (the Commission) to opt out of the plan, and the deadline for doing so is December 1, 2022. She said she will present additional information about the status of a WICHE paid leave plan during the May 2023 Commission Meeting when she presents the FY 2024 employee benefits package for approval. She said the earliest that the shared contributions to the WICHE paid leave program by employees and WICHE would be July 1, 2023, and that the program would not collect more from employees than what the FAMLI program would require.

Chair Lassner said that the Executive Committee has heard multiple presentations about the FAMLI program and agrees with President Michelau's recommendation. Commissioner Antwan Jefferson MOVED TO APPROVE that WICHE opts out of the Colorado FAMLI program, and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF WICHE'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

In presenting the action item, President Michelau noted that WICHE is a 501c(3) entity. One of the annual requirements is the completion of form 990, which asks whether the organization has a written conflict of interest policy for the previous year. She said that WICHE has such a policy for staff in the staff handbook, but not for the WICHE Commission. She recommended that the Commission have a conflict of interest policy that requires the signature of each commissioner. Commissioner Anderson MOVED TO APPROVE the action item and Commissioner Freeman SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

Action Item

ELECTION OF WICHE COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2023

Commissioner Anderson MOVED TO APPROVE the election of the following 2023 officers of the WICHE Commission: Commissioner Matt Freeman to serve as chair, Commissioner Antwan Jefferson to serve as vice chair, and Commissioner David Lassner to serve as immediate past chair. Commissioner Lokken SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed with two abstentions (Commissioners Freeman and Jefferson).

Discussion Item

UPDATE ON WICHE'S FY 2023 BUDGET

Craig Milburn gave a report on the WICHE budget. He said that FY 2022 ended strong, with \$332,000 in excess revenue. The reserve fund has a surplus of \$4,300,000. He said that excess revenue was due to reduced operating expenses, greatly reduced in-person meetings, and the lack of staff travel due to the pandemic. Commissioner Jefferson asked about the current work of the Investment Committee. President Michelau said that the Investment Committee activity was paused during the pandemic and will resume in 2023. Commissioner Kyle Davison asked what the established minimum investment amount is with the excess revenue. Milburn said that over the years, investments have been conservative and the Commission has not established a certain amount to be invested. The Investment Committee will discuss a plan for investment strategies when it meets in 2023.

NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

President Michelau gave a report on the Non-General Fund reserves. She said the Commission sets the reserve levels at each May meeting. There were no unit reserves forfeited to the WICHE reserves. Units are using reserve dollars for program development. As two examples, she said, WCET used \$80,000 for technical development and the Behavioral Health Program invested reserves in research work on workforce shortages in the field of behavioral health.

Final Remarks

Chair Lassner expressed thanks for the dedication that each commissioner brings to advancing the unique and valuable work in the WICHE region and acknowledged the partnership and collaboration with the officers he has served with.

Vice Chair Freeman gave accolades to Chair Lassner for his effective leadership of the Commission. He also thanked Commissioner Anderson for her role as immediate past chair. He acknowledged the demands that each commissioner faces with their professional and civic responsibilities, and their dedication to serving as an engaged WICHE Commissioner.

President Michelau thanked Commissioner Anderson for her time as an officer for the past three years and presented outgoing Chair Lassner with a gift, expressing appreciation for his partnership, wisdom, and leadership in the work of the Commission in 2022.

Chair Lassner said he was especially grateful to his fellow Hawai'i Commissioners, who have been supportive of his work professionally. He acknowledged the strong bond he has with Commissioners Colleen Sathre and John Morton, their respect for one another, and their notable dedicated service to the WICHE region.

Adjournment

The Committee of the Whole adjourned on Friday, November 11, at 11:20 a.m.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Matt Freeman, Idaho

Commissioners,

It has been only six months since you elected me as WICHE chair, but there has been no shortage of activity during that time.

In late January, President Demarée Michelau and Vice President Patrick Lane graciously came to Idaho for a state visit. Their time in Boise coincided with Education Week at the Idaho Legislature. During this week, the presidents of all the state's public institutions presented their FY 2024 budget requests to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, and their annual reports to the House and Senate Education Committees. President Michelau was also afforded the opportunity to provide an overview of WICHE to the House and Senate Education Committees, which was especially helpful given the significant attrition on the committees following the November election. President Michelau and Vice President Lane got to see up close and personal the incredibly challenging political environment that public higher education continues to weather in Idaho.

The WICHE officers convened for a retreat in February. President Michelau ordered frigid weather and snow for this special occasion, which was especially appreciated by our past chair, who traveled to Denver from warmer climes. We used this time to plan and outline key WICHE governance activities for 2023 and discuss critical issues, risks, and opportunities facing the organization. Based on outcomes from the Commission's November 2022 strategy session, we reimagined the structure of Commission meetings. For example, commissioners expressed a general preference for structured time to interact with one another, which has informed the agenda for the May 2023 meeting. You will recall that President Michelau presented her draft vision for WICHE at the 2022 strategy session. The officers provided input on further refining the vision statement. Finally, with respect to WICHE's annual Workplan, we decided to change "Focus Areas" to "Strategic Priorities." The change is intended to be more than semantics. We want to ensure that the Workplan is both strategic and forward-leaning.

The Commission retained an external consultant to facilitate a first-ever 360-degree evaluation of President Michelau. The officers are working with the consultant and overseeing the engagement. The consultant will produce a final report which will be shared with the Executive Committee for consideration during President Michelau's annual evaluation in May.

I continued to be so impressed by the expertise and professionalism of the WICHE staff that so ably supports the work of the Commission. I want to extend my sincere gratitude for all they do to provide opportunities and services to people and students of the West.

Sincerely,

Matt Freeman

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Demarée K. Michelau

As WICHE celebrates its 70th anniversary, I am excited about the work we are doing and the opportunities ahead. Since the last Commission meeting this past November, many things that are happening at WICHE are having positive impacts throughout the region. My report is a high-level summary of the last six months, but there are many more important efforts that are making a difference not mentioned here.

STRATEGY AND VISION

In November, the Commission engaged in a strategy session that was aimed at leveraging the diverse expertise and perspectives of WICHE Commissioners to develop a vision for WICHE and forward-looking strategic priorities. The session was facilitated by Arrow Performance Group (APG) and resulted in a set of concrete next steps that hopefully will be noticeable as soon as this meeting. The executive summary of the APG report is an attachment to this report.

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Engaging regional partners is essential for WICHE to remain connected to commissioners, agency staff, policymakers, college and university leaders, and others. By going to the various places where policy is made and where our students learn and live, I see first-hand the context, challenges, and opportunities facing the West. Since November, I have traveled to North Dakota, Hawaii, Idaho, Washington, Nevada, California, and New Mexico. Accompanied by the WICHE officers, I also had the privilege of visiting three of WICHE's Pacific Island members—the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. This provided the officers with an opportunity to learn about the various educational and economic contexts and cultures. It also demonstrates WICHE's commitment to collaborating with our colleagues in the Pacific.

Finally, in February WICHE and WCET staff worked with Commissioner Rick Aman (ID) to convene higher education leaders from all eight of Idaho's public two- and four-year higher education institutions to learn about the cybersecurity threat landscape and work through simple steps that school leaders can take to measurably reduce their cyber risk and protect students and faculty. This engagement, in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and in coordination with the Idaho State Board of Education, was well received and will inform future meetings.

It is important for me to recognize and thank the commissioners for their time and energy as we planned and attended the various meetings that make the visits so worthwhile.

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

Travel in the region is not the only way to stay connected, however, so I devoted a great deal of time to connecting with longstanding and new partners. I am fortunate to be surrounded by talented and brilliant colleagues from all over the country, including those at WICHE. In the spirit of brevity, I will not list all the colleagues whom I lean on and who I hope lean on me, but I could not do my job without their friendship and support. In particular, the presidents of the other regional higher education compacts and the presidents of the organizations that comprise the State Higher Education Policy Center—the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), which are doing great work.

Two issues that are high-priority for WICHE are workforce shortages in healthcare and behavioral health on campus. The Policy Analysis and Research unit is collaborating with the Behavioral Health Program to host a regional convening focused on promoting a healthy college campus, especially as it pertains to behavioral health. Staff have been in discussions with Lumina Foundation and the regional director for the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in Region VIII (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, and 33 federally recognized tribes).

PUBLICATIONS

WICHE recently released a series of new reports. To name a few, these include our FY 2022 Annual Report that highlights the great work of the staff; Student Access By the Numbers AY 2022-23, which outlines key data elements related to WUE, WRGP,

and PSEP; a brief from the State Authorization Network on the many terms used in higher education to describe course delivery options, and their policy and compliance implications; the Behavioral Health Program's Annual Report; and a policy brief about how the pandemic compounds education pipeline challenges.

FINANCE

WICHE remains in a positive financial position. I am pleased to share that we have hired a new auditor who will partner with us for the next three years—Forvis, a professional services firm providing assurance, tax, and advisory services. Forvis is ranked among the top 10 public accounting firms in the country, and they demonstrated their commitment to clear communication, timeliness, and a thorough understanding of the Governmental Standards Accounting Board (GASB) standards. Finally, the Investment Committee is recommending changes to the WICHE investment policy that has not been updated since 1992.

STAFFING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Staff continues to be stable overall, with the usual amount of turnover. The director of the Every Learner Everywhere Initiative moved on with an opportunity at Georgia State University, and WCET is searching for her replacement. WICHE has hired several new staff members who have hit the ground running in their respective positions.

In addition, I am engaged in a number of special projects. The first is collaborating with the vice president, Programs and Services, to oversee an assessment of the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). The goal is to better understand the healthcare demands in the region and how PSEP can continue to meet those needs. The second project I will mention is developing a paid family leave program. I hired an experienced consultant to write up a plan for WICHE, and I have been working closely with our director of Human Resources to oversee that process.

In my role as WICHE President, I serve on the board of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). I work collaboratively with my sister compact colleagues and the interim president of NC-SARA to ensure that our organizations are working harmoniously toward common goals. In my capacity as a board member, I am serving on the search committee for a new president as well as on the policy committee. Compared to nine months ago, I am now devoting an appropriate amount of time to NC-SARA. Finally, I continue to oversee the work of W-SARA, but the W-SARA director and the vice president, Policy Analysis and Research, have the day-to-day implementation well in hand.

Finally, I work with states and Pacific Island members on projects of various sizes on an as-needed basis.

CHALLENGES

Despite all the wonderful things that are happening at WICHE and in the West, challenges remain. Political polarization continues to be a risk for higher education and WICHE. I am heartened because WICHE prioritizes its role of bringing people of different views and perspectives together, but it is not always easy in our states and within the organization.

The Interstate Passport Network, which 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, has been a key WICHE initiative since 2010. Data show positive outcomes for students, but the current model appears to be financially unsustainable. WICHE has received philanthropic and federal support for the program over the years, which allowed institutions to participate at no cost, but it was designed to eventually be self-sustaining. That relies on institutions' willingness to pay for participation in the network. As we transition to the self-sustaining model, evidence suggests that institutions love Interstate Passport when it is free, but there is not as much of a commitment when they must pay for it.

CONCLUSION

The last six months have been productive and fulfilling. The WICHE staff continues to do the impactful work that is felt throughout the region, and the Commission's engagement is the foundation for WICHE's success. I extend my gratitude to each of you.

WICHE STRATEGY SESSION

Portland, Oregon

November 10, 2022

Executive Summary

Goals for Strategy Session

WICHE Commissioners convened in Portland on November 10, 2022, to conduct their first strategy planning session since 2016. The goals of the session were:

1. Ensure a shared understanding of current WICHE priorities, programs, and activities.
2. Develop a shared understanding of the context for postsecondary education in the West, including state and regional priorities and future directions.
3. Build awareness and understanding of the president's vision and leadership goals for WICHE.
4. Leverage diverse expertise and perspectives of WICHE Commissioners to co-develop forward-looking strategic priorities for WICHE.
5. Foster enthusiasm and personal engagement among WICHE Commissioners in WICHE's strategic direction.

Summary of Discussion

WICHE's future role

The Commissioners prioritized equitable access to postsecondary education.

The concept of "equity" should be construed broadly to include historically marginalized communities, low-income families, access to technology, opportunities for learning opportunities that fit the educational needs and circumstances of individuals no matter where they are on life's journey.

Future of Postsecondary Education in the West

The Commissioners also recognized that the perceived value proposition for postsecondary education needs to be clearly articulated for prospective students and families as well as policymakers responsible for public funding.

Postsecondary education itself needs to evolve its offerings and approach to remain relevant and attract enrollment.

WICHE as a Trusted Organization

The Commissioners affirmed that WICHE is well-positioned as a trustworthy resource and respected thought leader due to its credible programs and data, and because of the strength of the compact’s member network.

WICHE can effectively serve as a leader of bold conversations about the complex challenges and opportunities faced by the postsecondary education in the West and can spark and co-create innovative ideas with its members.

Commission Relationship Building

Commissioners engaged in several interactive activities and discussion that provided opportunities for each Commissioner to voice ideas and opinions.

The session planning format allowed Commissioners to deepen their personal understanding of each other’s perspective and to build relationships.

What’s Next? Guiding WICHE Toward Future Success

- The Commission will revise WICHE’s vision statement based on the Commissioner’s work and ideas at the Strategy Session.
- WICHE will strive to be “the first to be called” for leadership, insight, and data, while also recognizing that we may not be the best positioned organization to engage in certain issues.
- The Commission will reconstitute and revise the content of WICHE’s five focus areas.
- The Commission will set aside time at each meeting to “look around the corner” and continually view future trends impacting its role in an evolving operating environment.
- Commissioners will regularly engage in discussions about complex and emerging issues and will also leverage the knowledge of WICHE members to be partners in these discussions.
- WICHE should encourage and facilitate regional efforts that would position members for funding now available in the post-pandemic recovery.
- WICHE should be more visible about what an impactful organization it is through the continued development of communication resources that tell the story through data of WICHE’s impact in each jurisdiction.
- WICHE will continue to provide Commissioners with communication resources and suggested channels to serve as ambassadors of WICHE’s purpose and effectiveness.
- WICHE will consider using its upcoming milestone 70th anniversary as focus for heightening awareness of the organization and engaging member jurisdictions in our future vision.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Between November 2022 and February 2023

WICHE Executive Committee Meeting Minutes — Approved Videoconference — February 8, 2023, 4:00 p.m. MST

Committee Members Present

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair

Susan Anderson (AK)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and
Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Other Commissioners Present

Kevin Carman (WY)

WICHE Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the
Commission
Molly Hall Martin, Director, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and
Research
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Millburn, Chief Financial Officer
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-
Director, Mental Health Technology Transfer Center,
Behavioral Health Program
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and Vice President
for Technology-Enhanced Education
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Call to Order

Chair Matt Freeman welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. He asked Laura Ewing to call the roll. A quorum was established.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2022, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Chair Freeman asked for any corrections to the minutes. He noted that the November minutes include an action item to approve the 2023 external evaluation of the president of WICHE. The minutes accurately record the amount approved for contracting with ITCB Consulting, with the evaluation cost not to exceed \$20,000. When the officers met in late January, he said, they discussed the work of the external evaluator and agreed to increase payment to not exceed \$30,000. This is not a November 2022 minutes correction, but an update to the record for the November action item. There were no corrections to the November 2022 minutes. Chair Freeman declared the November 10, 2022, minutes approved as submitted and reviewed.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF A RESERVE ALLOCATION OF UP TO \$75,000 TO SUPPORT THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP)

Chair Freeman invited President Demarée Michelau to provide information about this action item. President Michelau said

that during the November 2022 meeting of the Programs and Services Committee, members discussed the PSEP program and the lack of an overall program review of the participating PSEP fields. She said that PSEP has not been assessed in at least 20 years. In May 2022, the WICHE Commission (the Commission) voted to approve an assessment of the entire PSEP program as part of the FY 2023 Workplan. This action item is to approve funding to conduct a study and assessment of the current list of PSEP programs to ensure that they are aligned with the changing postsecondary education environment, evolving workforce demands, and trends in professional programs. The proposed assessment work is to include establishing a scheduled process to evaluate the fields that are included in PSEP. A proposal to conduct the study has been received from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). President Michelau said they are qualified to do the assessment.

The study will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is happening in the current health professions (dentistry, allopathic medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) covered by the PSEP program? What requirements must someone complete before entering the workforce, or are there experiences that provide additional preparation? Examine the need for internships, residencies, apprenticeships, externships, or clinical experiences in the fields.
2. What methods of instruction are used—e.g., hybrid, distance, in-person—in academic programs that address these workforce priorities?
3. How do the current PSEP fields meet Western state/territory and regional workforce needs? What are the key fields impacting five or more states/territories? What professional areas, including but not excluding healthcare, should be considered that may meet the region's current or future workforce needs? Additional research will be done to learn more about fields associated with providing licensed behavioral health services that are not currently included in PSEP.

Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE a reserve allocation of \$75,000 to support the assessment of PSEP. Commissioner Ann Millner SECONDED the motion. During the discussion of the action item, Commissioner Susan Anderson asked for clarification of why NCHEMS reduced its original proposal of \$84,000. President Michelau said that NCHEMS and WICHE negotiated the contract to \$75,000. The motion passed.

Action Item

APPROVAL TO EXPLORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WICHE-ORGANIZED PROPERTY INSURANCE PROGRAM WITHIN THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UNIT

Chair Freeman asked Raymonda Burgman Gallegos to present the action item. She said the Programs and Services unit is requesting approval to explore the development of a WICHE Property Insurance Program. MHEC founded and currently facilitates the Master Property Program (MPP) along with Marsh Inc., the world's leading insurance broker and risk advisor. MHEC notified WICHE in November 2022 that it would end its participation in the program with Marsh on July 1, 2023. (WICHE has partnered with MHEC in the program since 2004.) This action item is a request for approval for the Programs and Services unit to continue exploring a program like MPP under WICHE's direction, beginning in July 2023. Burgman Gallegos said the program provides cost savings to participants (member institutions) acquiring property insurance coverage. The acquired coverage as a group provides stability through the shared services throughout the participating campuses. (In December 2022, President Michelau met with Marsh to discuss strategies for ensuring success if WICHE were to pursue its own program. At that time she asked that Marsh develop a proposal for a WICHE program that builds upon MHEC's MPP).

President Michelau said when meeting with Marsh, she asked why WICHE should take on a program that MHEC is discontinuing its involvement in after many years. In reply, she said that MHEC took on the program a few years after its establishment as a compact. Marsh pointed out that the governance of the MPP is in the hands of participating members—rather than the compact—and recommended that if WICHE were to take on the program, it should be the governing body. Marsh also recommended that, in the interest of program stability, members be required to stay in the program for three to five years with

a waiting period to opt back in. The current structure allows members to opt out on an annual basis with no waiting period to opt back in. She also reported that Marsh has about 35 successful group insurance programs. President Michelau said that she has not yet determined that the program is worthy of WICHE's participation, but she does think it is worth continued exploration.

Commissioner Larry Tidemann said at the peak of the MPP program's success, there were over 100 participating institutions and it has dropped to 19. When the participating membership drops, costs go up for those still participating. He said that South Dakota has not joined MPP and instead, five years ago, created its own group property insurance program for its institutions. At the time of establishing the South Dakota program, insurance was affordable, but over the past five years, the costs have tripled. Their member claims have greatly increased due to weather and other related issues that consistently hit the Midwest. He also noted that the MHEC MPP only insures the education facilities themselves, while the South Dakota group program covers all of the state and university systems' properties.

Commissioner Susan Anderson urged caution in WICHE's exploration of such a program if the action item is approved. Commissioner Lokken said that exploring the opportunity is worth WICHE's time, and suggested investigating all the reasons that it did not work for MHEC. Commissioner Kathleen Goeppinger asked if the percentage of required staff time is adequate and reasonable for the exploration of this opportunity, and both President Michelau and Burgman Gallegos said that the staff time involved is worthwhile. Chair Freeman said he would be supportive of the exploration, as long as it includes consideration of whether this type of program fits WICHE's mission. Commissioner Tidemann asked whether Marsh would be renting the captive or WICHE would be required to buy the captive. President Michelau confirmed determining the ownership of captives is a part of the exploration of feasibility.

During further discussion, Commissioner Antwan Jefferson asked for an explanation of what a captive is. Commissioner Tidemann said it is the entity that covers the base insurance. He said that South Dakota paid \$5 million to buy the captive. Commissioner Michael Meotti gave additional information, explaining that captive insurance means the entities that are insured collectively own the insurance company, and the captive insurance pool is self-insurance through the owner of the captive. He said this is how it was when he was involved as an attorney in the insurance industry, but added that specific details may have changed since then.

Commissioner Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the motion to allow staff to explore the establishment of a WICHE-organized property insurance program. Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED the motion. The motion passed with one opposed.

Information Item

REPORT OF THE WICHE OFFICERS' RETREAT

Chair Freeman reported on the Officers Retreat, in which he, Vice Chair Jefferson, Immediate Past Chair Lassner and President Michelau met in Denver on January 31 and February 1. The following items were discussed:

- ▶ Review of the draft vision statement and focus areas resulting from the November 2022 Strategy Session
- ▶ How to carry forward the outcomes of the Strategy Session
- ▶ WICHE succession planning
- ▶ External evaluation of President Michelau.

There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Information Item

UPDATE ON THE EVALUATION OF THE WICHE PRESIDENT

Chair Freeman reported that during the Officers' Retreat, the officers and President Michelau discussed the external evaluation

process and consultant-related activity. He reported the following items:

- ▶ WICHE entered into a contract with ITCB Consulting in December 2022. After a discussion with the consultant, the officers approved an additional \$10,000 for the contract (a total of up to \$30,000). Kevin Miiller is the evaluator and his evaluation work is underway.
- ▶ The officers and President Michelau gave ITCB the scope of who should be interviewed.
- ▶ Miiller has completed 10 of the 14 interviews slated to occur with staff and commissioners.
- ▶ Miiller's evaluation work will be reported in May during the Executive Commission closed session.
- ▶ Commissioners will receive a survey from ITCB/Kevin Miiller in the coming weeks.

There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Information Item

UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WICHE'S PAID MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM (FAMLI)

President Michelau said that, as directed by a vote of the Commission during its November 2022 meeting, WICHE has opted out of Colorado's state-run FAMLI program. WICHE is developing its own paid medical leave program and has entered into a contract with Steve Cyboran and Humaculture to create a plan for all WICHE staff regardless of their state of residence. Cyboran, an actuary with over 30 years of experience, was recommended to WICHE by CBIZ, its insurance broker. It will take him approximately six weeks to build a proposed plan. President Michelau plans to have another update on the plan development at the March 14 Executive Committee meeting.

Commissioner Lokken asked if the custom-built WICHE medical leave program was to maintain independence from the state or to be more cost-effective than the state-run program. President Michelau said the Colorado paid-leave program will not cover WICHE's out-of-state, remote staff—meaning that WICHE would have to have two different paid-leave programs to accommodate both in-state and out-of-state staff. Customizing WICHE's own paid-leave program will ensure that all staff members receive the same benefit. The customized plan will be comparable to or even better than the most stringent of states in which WICHE remote workers reside.

Information Item

SARA POLICY MODIFICATION PROCESS UPDATE

Molly Hall Martin presented this action item. She gave an extensive update on work done to modify SARA policy. At the November Commission Meeting, the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee adopted a resolution directing the WICHE President and W-SARA staff to advance and support proposals that elevate student consumer protections—via a new policy modification process adopted by the NC-SARA board in June 2022. At the November 2022 meeting, the Executive Committee expressed an interest in regular updates about proposals that the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC) submits, and the extent to which they align with previous recommendations by consumer advocate organizations, a group of state attorneys general, and other stakeholders.

Under the guidance of RSC member Sam Loftin—who is director of consumer protection for the Washington Student Achievement Council—the 2023 policy modification cycle launched on January 3, 2023, with the proposal submission window open until February 3, 2023. There were 63 proposals submitted by a wide cross-section of stakeholders including all four regional steering committees, a coalition of consumer advocate groups, SAN and WCET, and five institutions. All of the proposals can be reviewed by any interested party on the NC-SARA website.

Hall Martin, said the next step in the process is for the four regional steering committees to come together to begin discussing the alignment of related proposals at the interregional steering committee's February meeting. Additionally, there is a public

forum scheduled for March 1, 2023, in which proposers will make presentations on the items they have submitted.

Before any policy modification proposal is implemented, Hall Martin said, it must be approved by all four regional compacts and the NC-SARA board. The Executive Committee approved WICHE's process for proposal reviews at its August 2022 Executive Committee meeting, including a requirement that the RSC will review and vote on all proposals. Those proposals carrying a particular weight or impact (as determined by the WICHE President and Commission officers) will be voted on by the WICHE Executive Committee, on the recommendation of the RSC.

The policy proposals crafted by the W-SARA RSC are designed to provide increased student protections, meet the needs of participating states in the day-to-day operations of implementing the SARA agreement, and address several concerns expressed by state portal entity (SPE) staff and other stakeholders.

Hall Martin said that broadly, the focus of the proposals for this inaugural cycle is on addressing gaps in SARA policy to help states better protect students and hold institutions accountable through changes related to institutional eligibility, provisional status, and increased transparency.

The proposals related to institutional eligibility provide new criteria for continued eligibility, add new triggers for the loss of eligibility with the intention of increasing protections for students, and allow SPEs to assess institutional compliance prior to admitting them to SARA.

The proposal related to provisional status is designed to strengthen this powerful tool for our states and SPEs by removing arbitrary limits on the length of provisional status, centering the states' role in the review and approval process, and expanding the reasons an institution may be placed on provisional status.

She said the focus on transparency can be seen throughout the proposals, including increased institutional disclosures related to institutional status changes, the reason(s) why institutions are on provisional status, any investigations that institutions are the subject of, and public notice of student complaint data.

Hall Martin said that W-SARA continues to consider next steps, and has also begun discussions around identified priority topic areas for the next policy cycle. There are a number of complex topics of interest that will take time to develop proposals for, including the financial stability of institutions, the student complaint process, tribal sovereignty, professional licensure requirements, the creation of a provisional status menu of sorts, and finance-related student protection mechanisms.

She said W-SARA is pleased with how this inaugural cycle has gone so far, with wide engagement from stakeholders across SARA, and is excited to take a leading role in the process as it continues.

During the discussion, Commissioner Robert Shireman commended W-SARA on its work to address concerns that were voiced at the PAR Committee meeting in November 2022. Commissioner Barbara Damron echoed his comments, and thanked Hall Martin and staff for the quick and thorough work that has taken place in response to the PAR Committee's concerns.

Discussion Item

UPDATE ON THE WICHE BUDGET

President Michelau reported that the budget included in the meeting materials is based on reported figures through December 2022. She said that with forecasting work in February by all units, the budget that will be delivered for the March 2023 Executive Committee meeting will be much more succinct.

She said there is one remaining state to pay its FY 2023 dues. She is in contact with the state and expects payment soon. The process of drawing down funding from the Department of Interior for the payment of Pacific Island members' dues is underway.

President Michelau said the Commission Meeting line item will be over budget. This is largely due to inflation that the budget does not adequately take into account. She and the officers have discussed increasing the budget for the FY 2024 Commission Meeting so that it is a more realistic target. If an adjustment is not made, she said, this line item will consistently be over budget.

When the fiscal year is complete, the FY 2023 projection for the miscellaneous general fund will be higher than the budget in the February 2023 meeting materials. She noted a line item includes Salesforce maintenance but said that higher-than-anticipated revenue currently might offset the Salesforce funding from that line item. She said, overall WICHE is on track to finish the fiscal year strong. She has no concerns about any aspects of the budget and the upcoming FY 2024 budget preparation.

President Michelau said 2023 is the year for selecting a new auditor. The auditor RFP deadline is February 15, and Craig Milburn reports that there has been a good response to the RFP. The Audit Committee will review and discuss the submitted RFPs and will put forward its recommendation by March 31.

In response to a question by Chair Freeman, Milburn said that even with some of the line items over budget, overall FY 2023 is trending to be under budget.

Discussion Item

WICHE COMMISSION STRATEGY SESSION: NEXT STEPS

Chair Freeman led a discussion about the draft vision statement and strategic priorities. He said after the officers and President Michelau met and the senior leadership team was consulted, it was determined that the term “focus areas” should be changed to “strategic priorities” to be bolder and more intentional about driving the mission of WICHE forward. The vision statement and strategic priorities will feed into the FY 2024 Workplan and the Ambassador Toolkit. He reminded the committee that the Workplan will be up for approval during the May 2023 meeting.

Chair Freeman asked for feedback and suggested edits from committee members on the draft vision statement, which is as follows:

WICHE will strive to ensure that all residents of the West have access to postsecondary education opportunities that are both valuable and equitable, so that they may realize their potential as individuals and contribute in meaningful ways to the region's economic, social, and cultural vitality. By embracing the region's rich and distinct features, WICHE will drive innovation and collaboration as a trusted and forward-thinking partner to our states and Pacific Island members.

Commissioner Goeppinger said that the statement is very good, but may be too long. If the mission statement is to be memorable, it should be shorter and more direct. She agrees with using “strategic priorities” rather than “focus areas.” The priorities are specific and represent what the organization is striving to accomplish and will drive the action of the Workplan.

Commissioner Anderson said she agreed that the vision statement is long. She suggested changing the statement “to our states and Island members” to “with our states and Island members.”

Chair Freeman asked for feedback on the description of the strategic priority for “innovation.” Commissioner Shireman suggested saying “developing and supporting improvements.” He said the term “innovation” tends to be overused and vague, and in this case, does not clearly explain the focus of the strategic priority.

There were no other comments.

Discussion Item

WICHE MAY 2023 COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Freeman said that during the Officers Retreat, it was decided to build the May 2023 meeting around the strategic priorities and the feedback received, and allow more time for commissioners to brainstorm and collaborate.

President Michelau walked through the May 2023 Commission Meeting agenda. A new agenda plan includes having three roundtable discussions with three different topics. Additionally, each delegation will have time to caucus prior to the Committee of the Whole-Business Session to discuss action items and provide opportunities for all commissioners to have a voice through their Executive Committee member.

President Michelau led a discussion to determine which three topics should be included in the roundtable discussions. Commissioner Shireman suggested dropping the innovation topic. Commissioner Jefferson commented that innovation could potentially find its way into all three roundtables as it has a role in all of the topics.

Commissioner Meotti said he would like to see a discussion that includes the significance of dual enrollment and the variations and trends across the states. Commissioner Damron said that if dual enrollment is discussed, it is important to keep the conversation comprehensive and thorough. She said dual enrollment and dual credit have been problematic issues in New Mexico and likely in other and recommended if they are a topic, all sides of the issue need to be fully considered.

Chair Freeman said that in Idaho, the state basically pays for any student to earn up to an associate degree through dual credit. He said that limiting the number of electives should be considered. This would eliminate the prospect of spending a lot of money to take elective credit hours that will not necessarily contribute enough toward degree progress. He said there are interesting questions to consider in a discussion on dual credit and dual enrollment.

Chair Freeman also mentioned that the relevancy of artificial intelligence might be a worthy discussion item.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m. MST.

WICHE Executive Committee Meeting Minutes — Approved Portland, Oregon, The Benson Hotel — November 10, 2022, 8:00 a.m. MST

Committee Members Present

David Lassner (HI), Chair
Matt Freeman (ID), Vice Chair
Susan Anderson (AK), Immediate Past Chair
Robert Shireman (CA)

Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
David Woolstenhulme (UT) (*proxy for Ann Millner*)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Committee Members Absent

Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
Ann Millner (UT)

Staff Present

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
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET & Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education

Call to Order

Chair David Lassner welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. He asked the committee members to introduce themselves; a quorum was established.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2022, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Chair Lassner asked for any corrections to the minutes, and there were none. He declared the September 14, 2022, minutes approved as submitted and reviewed.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF WICHE

Chair Lassner said an agenda item was added to the Executive Committee meeting. He explained that the Executive Committee has authority over the President's evaluation; therefore, the action item should be on the agenda of the Executive Committee instead of the Committee of the Whole. An external evaluation of the WICHE President is to occur at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Historically, the external evaluation has occurred every three to five years. The external evaluation is coordinated by an appointed evaluator, and it is a much more in-depth survey and evaluation than the annual evaluation. In 2023, an external evaluation of the WICHE President will take place. The proposed evaluator is ITCB Consulting from Bismarck, North Dakota, to conduct the 2023 performance evaluation of President Demarée Michelau. ITCB's fee will not exceed \$20,000. It is recommended that the WICHE officers manage and oversee the evaluation process. Commissioner Clayton Christian MOVED TO APPROVE the WICHE Officers to oversee the evaluation process in conjunction with ITCB Consulting as

the appointed external evaluator, and ITCB's services will not exceed \$20,000. Commissioner Larry Tidemann SECONDED the motion. The motion passed with no abstentions.

Information Item

President Demarée Michelau reviewed the agenda of the November 2022 Commission Meeting, and the Strategy Session. She reminded the committee that the Executive Committee set the goals of the Strategy Session. Each goal has a supporting session.

Other Business

Chair Lassner called for other business. There was no other business discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 a.m. PST

ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL OF WICHE'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PLAN

Summary

In November 2020, Colorado voters approved Proposition 118, which paved the way for a state-run, paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. As a Colorado employer, WICHE must comply with this new law. However, as an interstate compact, WICHE qualifies as a local government, and FAMLI affects Colorado local government employers differently than private businesses. Since WICHE has remote employees across several states, WICHE cannot participate in the state-run FAMLI program. In November 2022, the Commission voted to opt out of FAMLI and pursue an alternative paid family leave plan that was comparable to the Colorado law. The WICHE President hired an experienced consultant to help design a paid family leave program for consideration this May.

Background

In November 2020, Colorado voters approved Proposition 118, which paved the way for a state-run, paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. As a Colorado employer, WICHE must comply with this new law. However, as an interstate compact, WICHE qualifies as a local government, and FAMLI affects Colorado local government employers differently than private businesses. Since WICHE has remote employees across several states, WICHE cannot participate in the state-run FAMLI program. In November 2022, the Commission voted to opt out of FAMLI and pursue an alternative paid family leave plan that was comparable to the Colorado law.

The WICHE President hired Steve Cyboran, CEO, Consulting Actuary, Chief Behavioral Officer, of Humaculture, Inc., and his team to help WICHE design a paid family leave program that would meet the legal requirements of the states where our remote employees live and be comparable to what Colorado is requiring.

WICHE's benefits are very robust, and some of the provisions of the Colorado law would have been worse than what we offer. In developing the plan, the WICHE President kept certain goals in mind:

- ▶ It was important to develop a plan that is comparable to FAMLI, is one that WICHE can afford, and is one that does not create a perverse incentive for staff to choose not working over working.
- ▶ WICHE intends to use a third-party administrator so that WICHE staff does not have to be the arbiter of claims.
- ▶ WICHE does not want to jeopardize the sick leave conversion benefit.
- ▶ The WICHE President intends to implement this program for one year at no cost to staff and make adjustments as lessons are learned. This is a complicated task, and a pilot program will allow for necessary adjustments.

A summary of the proposed plan is attached to this action item. The intent is to provide enough detail to the Commission so that members are sufficiently informed about the overall benefit but also leave some flexibility for further refinement before implementation on January 1, 2024. Below are key points:

- ▶ Staff would be eligible for benefits starting January 1, 2024.
- ▶ WICHE will discontinue its short-term disability plan through the Standard Insurance Company in favor of a paid family leave plan that is self-funded.
- ▶ In opting out of Colorado's FAMLI, the WICHE President indicated her intent to adopt a plan that was comparable to or better than the provisions laid out in Colorado's plan. The proposed plan overall is comparable, with some provisions that are better, some that are the same, and some that are worse, but overall, the plan is better and meets the objectives set forth above.
- ▶ In consultation with Humaculture and WICHE's insurance broker, the WICHE President made some informed decisions on the provisions of the plan that best coordinated with WICHE's current benefits and results in the best possible plan for WICHE.

- ▶ The first year, beginning January 1, 2024, the plan will be at no cost to staff, and beginning on January 1, 2025, staff will cover up to 50% of the cost, initially .045% of the covered wages up to the Social Security Income Limit.

Action Requested

Approval of the proposed paid family leave plan at 75% benefit with limited flexibility given to the WICHE President for adjustments prior to implementation, including the understanding that for one year the plan will be at no cost to staff so that appropriate adjustments can be made.



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Paid Family and Medical Leave



Steve Cyboran, ASA
Consulting Actuary,
Chief Behavioral Officer

Wes Rogers
Humaculturist®
Chief Guidance Officer

Caroline Cyboran, ASA
Consulting Actuary

April 11, 2023



Our Understanding

- Would like to not have multiple plans
- Want one plan to cover everything
- WICHE already opted out of FAMLI
- Committed to staff and board that a comparable plan and will cover them in the most stringent state
- Would like it to be administratively defensible
- Would like consistent benefits for all employees
 - The majority of the employees are in Colorado
 - They need to compete for employees in Colorado
 - Staff has been asking about what we are doing with PFML
 - Mostly in the context of fathers
- Turnover is low
- Many don't use vacation, need to get people to use their vacation



Family and Medical Leave Related Benefits Current Plans/Leaves

	WICHE Sick	WICHE STD	WICHE Military	FAMLI	FMLA
Eligibility Requirement	0.25 FTE	18.74 hours/week	None	Earned at least \$2,500 in CO	1,250 hours worked in previous 12 months
Elimination Period	None	6 days after disability	None	None	None
Covered Exigencies	Medical, Appointment, Care (Family), Maternity	Medical, Maternity	Military leave of absence	Bonding, Care (Family, Affinity), Military (Family), Maternity, Medical	Bonding, Care (Family, Affinity), Military (Family), Maternity, Medical
Covered Benefit	100%, up to 1 day per month, accrues up to 120 days	60% of first \$1,667 of pre-disability earnings (Max \$1,000 per week)	100%	Wages up to \$670 replaced at 90%; wages over \$1,340 replaced at 50% up to \$1,100	None, requires use of accrued leave while on FMLA
Reset Timing	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Date of leave	Date of leave
Maximum Benefit Period	Based on accrued days, up to 120 days	180 days	15 days	12 weeks (16 weeks if pregnancy/childbirth complications)	12 weeks
Job Protection Waiting Period	None	None	USSERA	6 Months	12 Months
Treatment of Unused Days	Carried over	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Buy/Sell/Cash-in	-Donate up to 5 days/year to colleague -30% to 50% conversion at retirement	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Employee Cost	None	None	None	50% of the cost, initially 0.45% of covered wages up to the Social Security Income Limit	None



Family and Medical Leave Related Benefits Illustration for Discussion – Coordination with Sick Leave

	Illustrative Plan				
	WICHE Sick	Disability (Own Medical)	Own Maternity	Bonding/Care/ Military	FMLA
Eligibility Requirement	0.25 FTE	18.74 hours/week	18.74 hours/week	18.74 hours/week	1,250 hours worked in previous 12 months
Elimination Period	None	Later of 6 days after disability, or exhaustion of 75 hours Sick Leave	Later of 6 days after disability, or exhaustion of 75 hours Sick Leave	Later of 6 days after disability, or exhaustion of 75 hours Sick Leave	None
Covered Exigencies	Medical, Appointment, Care (Family), Maternity	Own Medical	Maternity, Bonding	Care (Family, Affinity), Military (Staff or Family)	Bonding, Care (Family), Military (Family), Maternity, Medical
Covered Benefit	100%, up to 1 day per month, accrues up to 120 days	75% of first \$2,308 of pre-disability earnings (\$1,500 max benefit)	75% of first \$2,308 of pre-disability earnings (\$1,500 max benefit)	75% of first \$2,308 of pre-disability earnings (\$1,500 max benefit)	None, requires use of accrued leave while on FMLA
Reset Timing	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Date of leave	Date of leave	Date of leave
Maximum Benefit Period	Based on accrued days, up to 120 days	Up to 26 weeks (additional 14 weeks)	12 weeks (16 weeks if pregnancy/childbirth complications)	12 weeks	12 weeks
Job Protection Waiting Period	None	None	12 Months	12 Months	1,250 hours worked in previous 12 months
Treatment of Unused Days	Carried over	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Buy/Sell/Cash-in	-Donate up to 5 days/year to colleague -30% to 50% conversion at retirement	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Employee Cost	None	None for 1 year and up to 50% of the cost, initially 0.45% of covered wages up to the Social Security Income Limit beginning 1/1/2025			None

Simplifies the program, increased disability benefit maximum, avoids FMLI contribution, extends Military benefit, minimizes moral hazard, avoids excessive sick balances.



Family and Medical Leave Related Benefits Illustration for Discussion – Coordination with Sick Leave

	Illustrative Plan					Comparison
	Current STD	Disability (Own Medical)	Own Maternity	Bonding/Care/Military	FAMLI	
Eligibility Requirement	18.74 hours/week	18.74 hours/week	18.74 hours/week	18.74 hours/week	Earned at least \$2,500 in CO	Immediate for PFML
Elimination Period	6 days after disability	Later of 6 days after disability, or exhaustion of 75 hours Sick Leave	Later of 6 days after disability, or exhaustion of 75 hours Sick Leave	Later of 6 days after disability, or exhaustion of 75 hours Sick Leave	None	FAMLI does not allow employers to require use of sick leave
Covered Exigencies	Medical, Maternity	Own Medical	Maternity, Bonding	Care (Family, Affinity), Military (Staff or Family)	Maternity, Medical, Bonding, Care (Family, Affinity), Military (Family)	Same
Covered Benefit	60% of first \$1,667 of pre-disability earnings	75% of first \$2,308 of pre-disability earnings (\$1,500 max benefit)	75% of first \$2,308 of pre-disability earnings (\$1,500 max benefit)	75% of first \$2,308 of pre-disability earnings (\$1,500 max benefit)	Wages up to \$670 replaced at 90%; wages to \$1,340 replaced at 50% up to \$1,100	100% Sick Pay > FAMLI PFML > FAMLI over \$1,833 PFML < FAMLI under \$1,833
Reset Timing	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Date of leave	Date of leave	Date of leave	Same
Maximum Benefit Period	180 days	Up to 26 weeks (additional 14 weeks)	12 weeks (16 weeks if pregnancy/childbirth complications)	12 weeks	12 weeks (16 weeks if pregnancy/childbirth complications)	PFML > FAMLI for Medical/Maternity
Job Protection Waiting Period	None	None	12 Months	12 Months	6 Months	PFML < FAMLI
Employee Cost	Not Applicable	None for 1 year and up to 50% of the cost, initially 0.45% of covered wages up to the Social Security Income Limit beginning 1/1/2025			50% of the cost, initially 0.45% of covered wages up to the Social Security Income Limit	PFML > FAMLI

Simplifies the program, increased disability benefit maximum, avoids FMLI contribution, extends Military benefit, minimizes moral hazard, avoids excessive sick balances.



Illustrative Pricing

	Proposed Benefit Level					
	Current	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Sick Leave						
Earned	\$138,000	\$141,000	\$141,000	\$141,000	\$141,000	\$141,000
Accrued	\$55,000	\$59,000	\$59,000	\$59,000	\$59,000	\$59,000
Total Sick	\$193,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Short Term Disability	\$30,000					
Total PFML		\$31,000	\$33,000	\$35,000	\$38,000	\$42,000
Total	\$223,000	\$231,000	\$233,000	\$235,000	\$238,000	\$242,000
	Disability	PFML	PFML	PFML	PFML	PFML
Weekly Covered Payroll	\$59,000	\$65,000	\$70,000	\$74,000	\$79,000	\$82,000
Illus. Rate / Covered Pay	\$0.424	\$0.397	\$0.393	\$0.394	\$0.401	\$0.427
Weekly SS Wage Base	\$112,000	\$112,000	\$112,000	\$112,000	\$112,000	\$112,000
Illus. Rate / SS Wage Base	0.52%	0.53%	0.57%	0.60%	0.65%	0.72%

- Calculations:
 - Only address annual cash costs. Liability impact not addressed.
 - Benefits reflected in the previous two pages. Requires use of available Sick Leave for Elimination Period plus up to 2 weeks.
 - Represents 69 benefit eligible staff, excludes POSTDOCS and Interns.
 - WICHE will contract with a TPA to administer PFML, so we included 20% for administration.
 - Sick leave model developed based on experience from 2019 through 2022, excluding Public Health Emergency Leave (may not fully reflect the cultural impact of the recently implemented Paid Sick Leave under the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplaces Act (HFWA)).
 - PFML is based on a model adapted from an experience study of the State of Washington PFML program.



Scenarios – 60% Benefit, \$2,500 Max Weekly Earnings

FAMLI

				Maximum Annual Benefit			
Weekly Wage	Weekly Deduction	Annual Deduction	Weekly Benefit	Leave	Maternity Complications	Percent Of Weekly Wage	Staff Count (>= Weekly Wage) ¹
\$800	(\$3.60)	(\$187)	\$670	\$8,041	\$10,722	84%	9
\$1,000	(\$4.50)	(\$234)	\$770	\$9,241	\$12,322	77%	24
\$1,500	(\$6.75)	(\$351)	\$1,020	\$12,241	\$16,322	68%	24
\$2,000	(\$9.00)	(\$468)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600	55%	5
\$2,500	(\$11.25)	(\$585)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600	44%	2
\$3,000	(\$13.50)	(\$702)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600	37%	5

PFML

				Maximum Annual Benefit			
Weekly Wage	Weekly Deduction	Annual Deduction	Weekly Benefit	Leave	Maternity Complications	Percent of weekly wage	Staff Count (>= Weekly Wage) ¹
\$800	\$0	\$0	\$480	\$5,760	\$12,480	60%	9
\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$600	\$7,200	\$15,600	60%	24
\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$900	\$10,800	\$23,400	60%	24
\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,200	\$14,400	\$31,200	60%	5
\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	60%	2
\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	50%	5

¹Staff counts represent the number of employees greater than the Weekly Wage in the row and less than the Weekly Wage in the next row. There were no staff members below \$800 per week.



Scenarios – 70% Benefit, \$2,143 Max Weekly Earnings

FAMLI				Maximum Annual Benefit			
Weekly Wage	Weekly Deduction	Annual Deduction	Weekly Benefit	Leave	Maternity Complications	Percent Of Weekly Wage	Staff Count (>= Weekly Wage) ¹
\$800	(\$3.60)	(\$187)	\$670	\$8,041	\$10,722	84%	9
\$1,000	(\$4.50)	(\$234)	\$770	\$9,241	\$12,322	77%	24
\$1,500	(\$6.75)	(\$351)	\$1,020	\$12,241	\$16,322	68%	24
\$2,000	(\$9.00)	(\$468)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600	55%	5
\$2,500	(\$11.25)	(\$585)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600	44%	2
\$3,000	(\$13.50)	(\$702)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600	37%	5

PFML				Maximum Annual Benefit			
Weekly Wage	Weekly Deduction	Annual Deduction	Weekly Benefit	Leave	Maternity Complications	Percent of weekly wage	Staff Count (>= Weekly Wage) ¹
\$800	\$0	\$0	\$560	\$6,720	\$14,560	70%	9
\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$700	\$8,400	\$18,200	70%	24
\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,050	\$12,600	\$27,300	70%	24
\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,400	\$16,800	\$36,400	70%	5
\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	60%	2
\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	50%	5

¹Staff counts represent the number of employees greater than the Weekly Wage in the row and less than the Weekly Wage in the next row. There were no staff members below \$800 per week.

RECOMMENDED PLAN FOR APPROVAL



Scenarios – 75% Benefit, \$2,000 Max Weekly Earnings

FAMLI

Weekly Wage	Weekly Deduction	Annual Deduction	Weekly Benefit	Maximum Annual Benefit			% Weekly Wage	Staff Count ¹
				Leave	Maternity Complications			
\$800	(\$3.60)	(\$187)	\$670	\$8,041	\$10,722		84%	9
\$1,000	(\$4.50)	(\$234)	\$770	\$9,241	\$12,322		77%	24
\$1,500	(\$6.75)	(\$351)	\$1,020	\$12,241	\$16,322		68%	24
\$2,000	(\$9.00)	(\$468)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600		55%	5
\$2,500	(\$11.25)	(\$585)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600		44%	2
\$3,000	(\$13.50)	(\$702)	\$1,100	\$13,200	\$17,600		37%	5

PFML

Weekly Wage	Weekly Deduction	Annual Deduction	Weekly Benefit	Max Annual Benefit					
				Leave	Disability/ Maternity Complications	% Weekly Wage	Staff Count	% Weekly FAMLI Ben	% Max FAMLI Ben
\$800	\$0	\$0	\$600	\$7,200	\$15,600	75%	9	90%	145%
\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$750	\$9,000	\$19,500	75%	24	97%	158%
\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,125	\$13,500	\$29,250	75%	24	110%	179%
\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	75%	5	136%	222%
\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	60%	2	136%	222%
\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	\$18,000	\$39,000	50%	5	136%	222%

¹Staff counts represent the number of employees greater than the Weekly Wage in the row and less than the Weekly Wage in the next row. There were no staff members below \$800 per week.



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ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL OF REVISED WICHE INVESTMENT POLICY

Summary

The Investment Committee reconvened on March 14, 2023, after a long hiatus. The Investment Committee previously indicated its desire to investigate member states' laws to make sure WICHE investment policies and procedures are compliant and whether any potential modification to future investment strategies would be problematic. WICHE's outside legal counsel provided an opinion (included in these materials), which was reviewed and discussed at the most recent committee meeting, that resulted in the recommended changes now before the committee.

Background

In addition to its annual budgeting responsibilities, the Commission is responsible for ensuring the funds available to the organization are invested in sound, legal, and appropriate ways. According to Article VI, Section IV of the WICHE Bylaws, the WICHE president is responsible for directing the management of investments in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Commission. Since the WICHE investment policy has not been reaffirmed or modified since 1992, the Commission approved the creation of a special Investment Committee to examine and recommend changes as appropriate.

The Investment Committee asked the president to work with legal counsel to investigate member states' laws to ensure that WICHE's investment policies and procedures are compliant and whether any potential modification to future investment strategies would be problematic. Legal counsel provided an opinion that states, in sum, "WICHE has a strong basis to support the position that it is not subject to the regulation by its various members states with regards to its investment decisions. However, the laws of various member states evince a clear legislative intent that public monies be invested in short-term, low-risk investment securities. As a result, we believe that the Investment Policy, as currently drafted, provides for a reasonable strategy for governing WICHE's investments by restricting the investments to a relatively short list of investment securities that are low-risk, which investment strategy is largely consistent with the goals of the laws governing investments of public funds in its various member states." Based on their research, counsel recommended the following modifications as shown below:

(Approved by the Commission on August 9, 1979; as revised by the Investment Committee on June 16, 1986, the Executive Committee on June 16, 1989, and the Commission on December 5, 1992.)

Because **certain of** WICHE's funds are public funds, investments **must essentially be risk-free of WICHE's funds should be in the form of short-term, low-risk investments**. It would be unwise to invest where there is possible loss of principal. Most of the funds are held by WICHE for only a very short time, so for the most part, the length of the investment must be relatively short-term. Accordingly, the following investment procedure will be used at WICHE.

- ▶ Funds may be deposited at banks and savings and loan associations that are covered by federal insurance.
- ▶ Funds that are deposited that exceed insured amounts will require the institution to escrow government securities pledged in the name of WICHE in amounts at least equal to the amount not covered by the federal insurance (currently \$250,000). Any type of account repurchase or agreement may be used as long as it is either covered by insurance or backed by securities pledged to WICHE.
- ▶ Funds also may be invested directly in U.S. government securities and in the Colorado Surplus Asset Fund Trust (CSAFE), a money market fund for governmental entities.

Maturities of all deposits and investments up to \$750,000 **will be no longer than 10 years must be made on a short-term basis**. Maturities of all deposits and investments above \$750,000 will be no longer than one year.

- ▶ Decisions about deposit of funds and investment in government securities, as described above, will be made jointly by the WICHE President and the WICHE chief financial officer.

Unless specific funding agency regulations or conditions require otherwise, all income earned from investments will be credited to the WICHE General Fund.

Next Steps

Since WICHE is an agency of the state of Colorado, it is eligible to participate in the Colorado Surplus Asset Fund Trust (CSAFE). CSAFE was created by the state of Colorado in 1988 as a local government pool to serve government entities in Colorado to meet investment objectives; there is an emphasis on high security and competitive yields. WICHE's investment portfolio includes investment in the Core Fund and Cash Fund with CSAFE. The Core Fund accounts are long-term investments, and the Cash Fund accounts are short-term and are set up so that WICHE can draw back funds as needed. Funds are drawn out of the WICHE CSAFE cash fund account approximately 12 times per year.

The Investment Committee expressed a desire to look into the possibility of investing a portion of the longer-term invested funds at a higher risk that could generate more revenue with a higher return potential. The committee discussed the benefits and disadvantages of doing so, including the cost of paying for an investment advisor. The WICHE President and chief financial officer are going to research possible partners and welcome insights from the Commission.

Action Requested

Approval of the Revised WICHE Investment Policy as proposed.



Memorandum

To: Demarée Michelau
From: Dan Fritze; Sean Hastings
Date: April 30, 2021
Re: Analysis of Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Investment Policy

You previously asked us to review the Statement on Investment Procedure for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (“WICHE”), as most recently revised on December 5, 1992 (the “Investment Policy”), in order to determine if, based upon our review, any changes are needed to modernize the policy and better comply with the laws of WICHE’s various member states. This memorandum first sets forth a summary of our response, and then sets forth the two key areas of analysis: (1) the applicability of state laws to WICHE investments, and (2) state laws regarding the investment of public funds.

Summary

Based upon WICHE’s structure, the laws regarding entities created by state compacts, and the laws of the various member states regarding the investment of state funds, WICHE has a strong basis to support the position that it is not subject to the regulation by its various members states with regards to its investment decisions. However, the laws of various member states evince a clear legislative intent that public monies be invested in short-term, low-risk investment securities. As a result, we believe that the Investment Policy, as currently drafted, provides for a reasonable strategy for governing WICHE’s investments by restricting the investments to a relatively short list of investment securities that are low risk, which investment strategy is largely consistent with the goals of the laws governing investments of public funds in its various member states.

The Investment Policy could certainly be modified to expand the list of allowable investments, but it is recommended that any such expanded list still be limited to short-term, low-risk investment securities, consistent with the laws and policies of the various member states. If there are particular additional investment securities that WICHE desires to add to the policy as permissible investments, we would be happy to discuss whether such securities would be, based on our review, within the range of reasonable investment securities pursuant to the laws of the various member states.

With regards to specific revisions to the Investment Policy, we have the following recommendations. First, since not all of WICHE’s funds are public funds (as it is our understanding that some of WICHE’s funds are provided by grants from private foundations, etc.) and since we believe it is appropriate to specify that investments should be low-risk (not that they “must essentially be risk-free”), we recommend modifying the opening sentence to read: “Because certain of WICHE’s funds are public funds, investments of WICHE’s funds should be in the form

of short-term, low-risk investments.” Second, we recommend modifying the language which allows maturities of all deposits and investments up to \$750,000 to be for up to ten years, as that seems to be in conflict with the concept of short-term investments. We recommend removing any specific period of time, and instead just referring to making such investments on a short-term basis, which would leave discretion in determining the term of any investment on a case-by-case basis. Third, we recommend ensuring that the Investment Policy’s description of how investment decisions are made is accurate and reflects current practice, as the Investment Policy provides that all decisions about the deposit of funds and investment in government securities will be made jointly by the WICHE President and CFO.

Applicability of State Laws to WICHE Investments

The ability of any particular member state to impose its own laws or regulations on WICHE is directly related to WICHE’s unique status as an entity created pursuant to a multi-state compact adopted by each member state and approved by Congress. Such compact-created agencies fall within a legal gray area with respect to the application of state law, with courts taking different approaches and building a body of law regarding the extent to which any individual member state can seek to apply their laws and regulations to such an agency.

As a general matter, agencies created by a multi-state compact such as WICHE are “beholden only to the compacts that created them,” with states retaining only limited powers to regulate their activities. See Matthew S. Tripolitsiotis, *Bridge Over Troubled Waters: The Application of State Law to Compact Clause Entities*, YALE L. & POLICY REV. 163, 165 (2005). Courts have largely held that the member states “do not retain power over the agencies’ *internal workings*,” including “decisions regarding the compensation to be paid by the commission to its officers.” See *id.* at 166. Other examples of regulations of an agency’s “internal operations” include minimum wage requirements and employment discrimination laws. See *id.* at 181 n. 153. Conversely, courts have largely held that states are able to apply their state laws to purely “*external*” actions of a compact-created agency, or actions that “have effects wholly external to the compact entity.” See *id.* at 166. State regulations over “external operations” of a compact-created agency include such matters as state health, safety and environmental laws. See *id.* at 151. In other words, to the extent a compact-created agency is acting as if it were any other legal entity and affirmatively acting within a state (such as by carrying out operations or performing services within a state), such agency would be subject to the laws of the state in which it is acting with regards to such actions. However, to the extent a compact-created agency is purely making decisions regarding its internal governance and management, a state retains no power to apply its own laws to such decisions unless such power is expressly provided by the terms of the compact creating the agency.

Courts within WICHE’s footprint have largely adopted this approach, holding that states which are parties to multi-state compacts can impose their own state laws on a compact-created agency “only if the compact specifically reserves the right to do so.” See *Seattle Master Builders Ass’n v. Pac. N.W. Elec. Power & Conservation Planning Council*, 786 F.2d 1359, 1370 (9th Cir. 1986). Similarly, courts in WICHE member states have held that the provisions of a Congressionally approved interstate compact regarding a particular subject take precedent over state laws regarding the same subject. See *People ex rel. Hal D. v. Nine Mile Canal Co.*, 828 F. Supp. 823 (D. Colo.

1993) (holding that an interstate compact regarding allocation of water in a river drainage basin preempted a conflicting state law on the same subject). Unfortunately, we were not able to locate any case law directly on point within any of WICHE’s member states regarding state regulation of a compact-created agency’s investment decisions or fiscal policies.

In light of the above principles, WICHE, as an agency created pursuant to a multi-state compact, has a strong argument that it is not subject to the laws of any of its member states with regards to the regulation of its internal investment decisions. Support for this conclusion can be found in the following:

- The Western Regional Education Compact, which created WICHE and was approved by Congress, makes no mention of the ability of any member state to apply its laws to WICHE, thereby weakening any attempt by a member state to regulate WICHE’s internal affairs.
- Much like decisions regarding an entity’s staffing and compensation, deciding how funds held by a compact-created agency are to be invested for the agency’s benefit relates to the “internal workings” of an entity and therefore should be beyond the reach of member-state regulation.
- Moreover, the policy reasons for prohibiting member-state regulation of compact-created agencies is the desire to prevent one state from unilaterally “re-writing” a multi-state compact without the consent of the other member states. This policy applies equally as well with regards to the regulation of investment decisions. If any member state attempted to enforce its laws regarding investment of public funds on WICHE’s investments, it would effectively implement new control on WICHE’s use of funds without the consent of the other member states. Rather, if any particular member state desired to implement greater control over WICHE’s investment decisions, the proper way to bring about this result would be to join with the other member states in amending the Regional Compact accordingly.

Despite WICHE having a strong basis that its Investment Policy need not comply with any particular law of WICHE’s member states, it is by no means a certainty that a court would not find that the law of a particular member state regarding the investment of state funds applies to WICHE (however unlikely). Due to this uncertainty, and in order to ensure that its investments are of a type that do not attract greater investment regulatory scrutiny by its member states, it is advisable that WICHE make the Investment Policy generally consistent with the laws of its member states regarding investments of public funds, even if only in spirit. The next section outlines these laws in greater detail.

State Laws regarding Investment of Public Funds

State regulation of the investment of “public funds” is a complicated area that necessitates, for proper explanation, an understanding of the background surrounding laws regarding investments by state entities. As a means of protecting state funds from speculation and loss, the constitutions of nearly all states, including those of WICHE’s member states, have some form of prohibition against the use of public monies for private purposes. *See, e.g., Ralph Finlayson, State Constitutional Prohibitions Against Use of Public Financial Resources in Aid of Private*

Enterprises, 1 EMERGING ISSUES ST. CONST. L. 177, 177 (1988). These restrictions are sometimes structured as general requirements that public funds be used for “public purposes,” but are more often structured as blanket restrictions against the investment of public funds in, or loaning of public funds to, private enterprises (with some exceptions). *Id.* As a result, states and their political subdivisions are largely barred from directly owning stock, and instead are permitted to only invest public funds in a less risky subset of investment vehicles that are constitutionally permissible. The scope of these permissible investment securities in each state has largely been specified by statute by the applicable state legislature.

It is also important to note that state laws generally *do not* permit all state agencies that receive public funds to invest these funds unilaterally. Rather, state laws generally provide that the power to invest funds held by a state rests with a single government entity – such as a state treasurer or an investment commission – which is then subject to certain legislative restrictions prescribed by statute. *See, e.g.*, North Dakota Century Code, Chapter 21-10 (outlining restrictions on the investment of funds placed in various statutorily sanctioned funds by the North Dakota State Investment Board); Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 293 (outlining the power of the Oregon Investment Council to make investments with various legislatively sanctioned funds).

As a result, laws that outline permissible investments that can be made with public funds are generally not structured as general laws that apply to all “state agencies,” including compact-created state agencies such as WICHE. Such statutes are instead typically drafted to apply to a single agency or governmental entity that is charged with the investment of a defined subset of state funds. *See, e.g.*, AK ST § 37.23.020 (listing various permissible investments for “investment pools” created by political subdivisions of Alaska); ID ST § 67-1210 (outlining various types of investments in which the Idaho state treasurer may invest “idle moneys in the state treasury”); NV ST 355.060 (outlining various permissible investments for monies held by the Nevada State Permanent School Fund).

Due to this overall legal structure, the investment of “public funds” by a multi-state compact-created agency such as WICHE does not fit neatly into any state law regulatory framework that would allow WICHE to easily determine which (if any) investments by WICHE are permissible. As a result, such agencies are left to determine how to tailor their investment decisions in a way to minimize the risk that member states would seek to subject such investment decisions to state oversight.

Reviewing the laws governing investments of public funds in various WICHE member states, it is clear that there is a strong policy preference by the member states in favor of the investment of public funds in short-term, low-risk investment securities. Statutes which prescribe permissible investment securities for state agencies or political subdivisions empowered to invest public funds frequently name the following as permissible securities (which is by no means exhaustive): (i) bonds, treasury bills, and other obligations issued by the United States federal government and its instrumentalities (AK ST § 37.23.020; AZ ST § 35-323; CO ST § 24-75-601.1; HI ST § 36-21; ID ST § 67-1210; ND ST 21-06-07; NV ST 355.170; SD ST § 4-5-26; WA ST 39.59.040), (ii) municipal revenue bonds and other obligations issued by state and local governments (AZ ST § 35-323; CO ST § 24-75-601.1; ID ST § 67-1210; ND ST 21-06-07; NV ST 355.170; SD ST § 4-

5-26; WA ST 39.59.040), (iii) bonds, notes and other obligations issued by federally-owned or state-owned corporations (AZ ST § 35-323; ID ST § 67-1210), (iv) certificates of deposits (AK ST § 37.23.020; AZ ST § 35-323; CO ST § 24-75-601.1; HI ST § 36-21; ND ST 21-06-07; NV ST 355.170), (v) highly-rated commercial paper (AK ST § 37.23.020; AZ ST § 35-323; CO ST § 24-75-601.1; HI ST § 36-21; ND ST 21-06-07; NV ST 355.170; WA ST 39.59.040), (vi) highly-rated bonds issued by private corporations (AK ST § 37.23.020; AZ ST § 35-323; CO ST § 24-75-601.1; NV ST 355.170; SD ST § 4-5-26; WA ST 39.59.040), (vii) short-term cash-equivalent investments (AK ST § 37.23.020), (viii) mutual funds consisting of bonds/securities issued by or guaranteed by the United States or an agency thereof (HI ST § 36-21); and (ix) highly-rated money market mutual funds (HI ST § 36-21).

The WICHE Investment Policy already incorporates this member-state policy preference towards investment of public funds in low-risk, short-term securities, and is thus consistent with the spirit of these laws. By providing that funds may be deposited in FDIC-insured banks and savings and loan associations, or invested in (i) insured/secured repurchase agreements (an investment vehicle explicitly authorized in states including Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii and Idaho), (ii) U.S. government securities, and (iii) the Colorado Surplus Asset Fund Trust, WICHE has authorized various investment securities that are consistent with those authorized by its member states for use by state agencies charged with investing state funds or by municipalities and other political subdivisions allowed to invest their own funds. As a result, as currently constructed, WICHE's investment practices, if carried out in conformance with the Investment Policy, would have a low likelihood of attracting regulatory scrutiny from WICHE's member states.

However, as evidenced by the above, the range of potential investment securities that are sanctioned by various WICHE member states for use by agencies managing state funds, as well as by municipalities and other political subdivisions within their borders, is broader than those permitted by the Investment Policy. In the event that WICHE is contemplating amending the policy to add any specific type of investment security as an additional option for the investment of WICHE funds, we would be happy to discuss whether such investment securities appear to be consistent with the laws of WICHE's member states.

ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL OF THE FY 2024 SALARY AND BENEFIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

All standard salary increases at WICHE are provided on the basis of performance; WICHE does not provide across-the-board raises, step increases, or cost-of-living adjustments. President Demarée Michelau recommends a 4% FY 2024 performance-based increase to staff members who have performed at exceptionally high levels over the past year.

Background

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

Salary

As reflected in the proposed budget agenda item, President Demarée Michelau is pleased to recommend a 4% FY 2024 performance-based increase to staff who have performed at exceptionally high levels over the past year.

Benefits

The proposed budget also includes a 3% increase in benefits for staff, all of which are related either to benefits directly associated with salary (i.e., WICHE contributions to the retirement plan, life insurance, workers’ compensation, unemployment compensation, and Social Security) or to projected changes in the costs of general benefits (i.e., health/ dental insurance premiums, Social Security, and workers’ compensation).

Major benefits to staff include the following:

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

The full amount of a 4% average salary increase is approximately \$384,665. The General Fund portion is \$94,085 and the Non-General Fund portion is \$290,580. These proposed increases are reflected in the proposed FY 2024 budget.

Action Requested

Approval of a 4% average salary increase for WICHE staff.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget – General Fund and Non-General Fund Budgets

Background

The General Fund budget proposed by staff for FY 2024 (July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024) is for a suite of WICHE programs that provide services to members and support a wide range of highly significant projects. General Fund revenue not only supports basic WICHE program activities, such as the work of the Student Access Programs, the Policy Analysis and Research unit, and Communications, it also provides an organizational structure that allows WICHE to become involved in other regional resource-sharing and collaborative activities in higher education, many of which are supported by non-state dollars. The proposed FY 2024 budget shows a slight budget surplus and reflects a 3% dues increase compared to FY 2023.

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

Action Requested

Approval of the FY 2024 General Fund and Non-General Fund budgets.

General Fund Budget

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education General Fund Budget

Mar 2023

Comparing FY 2023 with FY 2024

Revenue and Expenditures

	FY 2023				FY 2024				
	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 Projection	Projection Higher or (Lower) than Budget		FY 2024 Budget	FY 2024 Budget Higher or (Lower) than FY 2023 Budget		FY 2024 Budget Higher or (Lower) than FY 2023 Projection	
Revenue									
4102 Indirect Cost Reimbursements	\$1,200,000	\$1,410,071	\$210,071	17.5%	\$1,200,000	\$0	0.0%	(\$210,071)	-14.9%
4104 Indirect Cost Sharing-WICHE	(\$360,000)	(\$512,737)	(\$152,737)	42.4%	(\$600,000)	(\$240,000)	66.7%	(\$87,263)	17.0%
4201 Members/Fees States/Institutions a	\$2,544,000	\$2,544,000	\$0	0.0%	\$2,624,000	\$80,000	3.1%	\$80,000	3.1%
4300 Interest	\$30,000	\$659,710	\$629,710	2099.0%	\$696,000	\$666,000	2220.0%	\$36,290	5.5%
4560 SHEPC excess rents	\$155,000	\$38,750	(\$116,250)	-75.0%	\$36,000	(\$119,000)	-76.8%	(\$2,750)	-7.1%
4600 Other Income	\$25,000	\$27,535	\$2,535	10.1%	\$30,000	\$5,000	20.0%	\$2,465	9.0%
4850 Credit Card Transaction Rev. / Units	\$120	\$24	(\$96)	-80.1%	\$30	(\$90)	-75.0%	\$6	25.7%
Total Revenue	\$3,594,120	\$4,167,353	\$573,233	15.9%	\$3,986,030	\$391,910	10.9%	(\$181,323)	-4.4%
Expenditures									
0102 Student Access Program	\$433,151	\$434,917	\$1,766	0.4%	\$454,807	\$21,656	5.0%	\$19,890	4.6%
0104 Policy Analysis & Research	\$466,677	\$484,137	\$17,460	3.7%	\$490,667	\$23,990	5.1%	\$6,531	1.3%
0105 Communications & Public Affairs	\$499,545	\$403,823	(\$95,722)	-19.2%	\$462,026	(\$37,519)	-7.5%	\$58,203	14.4%
0106 Programs & Services	\$114,729	\$126,815	\$12,085	10.5%	\$126,171	\$11,441	10.0%	(\$644)	-0.5%
0110 President's Office	\$598,098	\$597,691	(\$407)	-0.1%	\$660,549	\$62,451	10.4%	\$62,858	10.5%
0111 Commission Meeting Expense	\$233,574	\$441,697	\$208,122	89.1%	\$400,670	\$167,095	71.5%	(\$41,027)	-9.3%
0112 Administrative Services	\$896,107	\$871,585	(\$24,522)	-2.7%	\$930,369	\$34,262	3.8%	\$58,785	6.7%
0115 Miscellaneous Gen. Fund	\$279,101	\$482,038	\$202,937	72.7%	\$334,292	\$55,190	19.8%	(\$147,746)	-30.7%
0116 Program Development	\$15,450	\$15,464	\$14	0.1%	\$25,000	\$9,550	61.8%	\$9,536	61.7%
0131 LAC Meeting	\$66,671	\$69,753	\$3,082	4.6%	\$78,637	\$11,966	17.9%	\$8,884	12.7%
Total Expenditures	\$3,603,103	\$3,927,917	\$324,814	9.0%	\$3,963,187	\$360,084	10.0%	\$35,270	0.9%
Surplus (Deficit) for the Fiscal Year	(\$8,983)	\$239,436	\$248,420		\$22,843	\$31,826			
Reserves at Beginning of Year									
1 Minimum Reserve b	\$432,372	\$432,372	\$0	0.0%	\$475,582	\$43,210	10.0%	\$43,210	10.0%
2 Reserve for Unexpected Shortfall c	\$360,310	\$360,310	\$0	0.0%	\$396,319	\$36,009	10.0%	\$36,009	10.0%
3 Reserve to Operate Accounts Receivable d	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$0	0.0%	\$850,000	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
4 President's Strategic Objectives e	\$150,000	\$0	(\$150,000)	-100.0%	\$150,000	\$0	0.0%	\$150,000	
5 Reserve Available for Dedication	\$2,537,621	\$2,687,621	\$150,000	5.9%	\$2,697,838	\$160,217	6.3%	\$10,217	0.4%
Reserves at Beginning of Year	\$4,330,303	\$4,330,303	\$0	-94.1%	\$4,569,739	\$239,436		\$239,436	
Reserves Dedicated during Year									
6 Deficit (Surplus) for the Fiscal Year above	\$8,983	(\$239,436)	\$248,420		(\$22,843)	\$31,826		(\$216,593)	90.5%
Reserves Dedicated during the Fiscal Year	\$8,983	(\$239,436)	\$248,420		(\$22,843)	\$31,826		(\$216,593)	
Reserves at End of Year	\$4,321,320	\$4,569,739	\$248,420		\$4,592,582	\$271,262			

(a) At the August 2020 Executive Committee meeting the Commission decided to keep WICHE dues at the \$159K FY 2021 level for FY 2022 and FY 2023 due to the Covid pandemic. At the May 2022 meeting the Commission set the FY 2024 dues to \$164K and the FY 2025 dues to \$169K.

(b) Minimum reserve set by the commission is 12% of Budgeted Expenses. Set May 2000.

(c) Unexpected Shortfall reserve set by commission at 10% of Budgeted Expenses. To be used only if anticipated funding does not materialize. Set May 2007.

(d) Reserve amount needed float accounts receivable until payments are received for contracted work. Approved by Executive Committee February 2016.

(e) Authorization given to the President to dedicate up to \$150K each year for the President's Strategic Objectives.

Programs and Services Budget

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Two Year Budget for FY 2023 and FY 2024

PRS
Mar 2023

Programs and Services

Object / Description	FY 2023		FY 2023		FY 2024	
	<i>Total</i>		<i>Budget</i>		<i>Budget</i>	
	<i>Actual ></i> <i>Forecast ></i>	01-Jul-22 -- 31-Mar-23 01-Apr-23 -- 30-Jun-23	01-Jul-22 30-Jun-23	01-Jul-23 30-Jun-24	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
9 months elapsed 3 months remaining						
					FY 2024 budget higher or (lower) than	FY 23
11-20 MHEC Master Property Program	\$0	\$23,897	\$23,897		(\$23,897)	-100.0%
11-21 MHECtech	\$120,557	\$154,500	\$154,500	\$188,000	\$33,500	21.7%
11-22 MHECare	\$2,369	\$2,342	\$2,342	\$2,013	(\$330)	-14.1%
12-02 Interstate Passport ECMC	\$172,235	\$162,562	\$162,562		(\$162,562)	-100.0%
12-05 Fidelity - Technology Capacity	\$435,000	\$435,000	\$435,000	\$355,888	(\$79,112)	-18.2%
12-48 Anticipated Projects 2	\$0	\$279,481	\$279,481		(\$279,481)	-100.0%
12-49 Anticipated Project 1	\$723,115	\$723,115	\$723,115	\$1,000,000	\$276,885	38.3%
14-71 NSF - Building Capacity	\$26,166	\$130,000	\$130,000		(\$130,000)	-100.0%
15-01 Western Academic Leader Forum	\$131,500	\$159,596	\$159,596	\$164,467	\$4,871	3.1%
15-15 Online Course Exchange	\$3,750	\$3,750	\$3,750		(\$3,750)	-100.0%
15-20 Western Alliance Comm Colleges	\$164,215	\$151,711	\$151,711	\$154,128	\$2,417	1.6%
15-25 Mellon - WICHE Academy	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$670,675	(\$79,325)	-10.6%
15-30 Forum Academy	\$51,062	\$53,677	\$53,677	\$59,780	\$6,103	11.4%
52-36 No Holding Back	\$307,929	\$307,928	\$307,928	\$91,204	(\$216,724)	-70.4%
Revenue	\$2,887,898	\$3,337,559	\$3,337,559	\$2,686,155	(\$651,404)	-19.5%
Total Revenue	\$2,887,898	\$3,337,559	\$3,337,559	\$2,686,155	(\$651,404)	-19.5%
11-20 MHEC Master Property Program	\$3,947	\$23,897	\$23,897		(\$23,897)	-100.0%
11-21 MHECtech	\$139,396	\$154,500	\$154,500	\$181,622	\$27,122	17.6%
11-22 MHECare	\$842	\$2,342	\$2,342	\$2,013	(\$330)	-14.1%
12-01 Interstate Passport	\$25,959				\$0	
12-02 Interstate Passport ECMC	\$175,301	\$123,805	\$123,805		(\$123,805)	-100.0%
12-05 Fidelity - Technology Capacity	\$156,379	\$418,890	\$418,890	\$352,600	(\$66,290)	-15.8%
12-48 Anticipated Projects 2	\$69,830	\$279,321	\$279,321		(\$279,321)	-100.0%
12-49 Anticipated Project 1	\$723,115	\$723,115	\$723,115	\$1,000,000	\$276,885	38.3%
14-71 NSF - Building Capacity	\$122,920	\$106,518	\$106,518		(\$106,518)	-100.0%
15-01 Western Academic Leader Forum	\$123,368	\$158,501	\$158,501	\$164,467	\$5,966	3.8%
15-15 Online Course Exchange	\$1,666	\$1,875	\$1,875		(\$1,875)	-100.0%
15-20 Western Alliance Comm Colleges	\$126,137	\$150,446	\$150,446	\$154,128	\$3,682	2.4%
15-25 Mellon - WICHE Academy	\$119,820	\$310,949	\$310,949	\$631,486	\$320,537	103.1%
15-30 Forum Academy	\$42,731	\$53,435	\$53,435	\$51,944	(\$1,491)	-2.8%
52-36 No Holding Back	\$151,779	\$136,632	\$136,632	\$70,629	(\$66,003)	-48.3%
Expense	\$1,983,190	\$2,644,227	\$2,644,227	\$2,608,887	(\$35,340)	-1.3%
Total Expense	\$1,983,190	\$2,644,227	\$2,644,227	\$2,608,887	(\$35,340)	-1.3%
Revenue over (under) Expense	\$904,708	\$693,332	\$693,332	\$77,268	(\$616,064)	

Policy Analysis and Research Budget

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Two Year Budget for FY 2023 and FY 2024

PAR
Mar 2023

Policy Analysis & Research

Object / Description	FY 2023		FY 2024		Variance	%
	<i>Total</i>		<i>Budget</i>			
	<i>Actual ></i> 01-Jul-22 -- 31-Mar-23 <i>Forecast ></i> 01-Apr-23 -- 30-Jun-23		01-Jul-22 30-Jun-23	01-Jul-23 30-Jun-24		
17-05 W-SARA	\$494,531		\$494,532	\$523,461	\$28,929	5.8%
50-01 Policy Core Account	\$1,000				\$0	
50-28 CTE Without Borders	\$9,493		\$10,000		(\$10,000)	-100.0%
50-29 Oregon-NCHEMS Consultation	\$6,413		\$12,500		(\$12,500)	-100.0%
51-07 Idaho Eng. Growth Initiative	\$100,000		\$100,000		(\$100,000)	-100.0%
51-14 AIHEC IFS Consulting Phase II	\$48,387		\$40,000		(\$40,000)	-100.0%
52-16 BH Policy Roundtable	\$0		\$230,000	\$100,000	(\$130,000)	-56.5%
53-14 Data for the American Dream	\$43,740				\$0	
53-16 Wyoming Innovation Partnership	\$102,561		\$202,302	\$150,000	(\$52,302)	-25.9%
53-35 OER - Hewlett (Policy Unit)	\$36,019		\$30,598		(\$30,598)	-100.0%
53-36 OER Hewlett Phase II (Policy)	\$246,981		\$163,736	\$202,537	\$38,801	23.7%
Revenue	\$1,089,125		\$1,283,668	\$975,998	(\$307,670)	-24.0%
Total Revenue	\$1,089,125		\$1,283,668	\$975,998	(\$307,670)	-24.0%
17-05 W-SARA	\$506,923		\$494,532	\$523,461	\$28,929	5.8%
50-28 CTE Without Borders	\$6,692		\$11,230		(\$11,230)	-100.0%
50-29 Oregon-NCHEMS Consultation	\$0		\$12,046		(\$12,046)	-100.0%
51-07 Idaho Eng. Growth Initiative	\$101,528		\$99,589		(\$99,589)	-100.0%
51-14 AIHEC IFS Consulting Phase II	\$30,205		\$38,449		(\$38,449)	-100.0%
52-16 BH Policy Roundtable	\$13,838		\$230,000	\$100,000	(\$130,000)	-56.5%
53-16 Wyoming Innovation Partnership	\$135,460		\$202,302	\$149,994	(\$52,308)	-25.9%
53-35 OER - Hewlett (Policy Unit)	\$3,403		\$30,598		(\$30,598)	-100.0%
53-36 OER Hewlett Phase II (Policy)	\$141,185		\$163,736	\$202,538	\$38,802	23.7%
Expense	\$939,234		\$1,282,482	\$975,992	(\$306,490)	-23.9%
Total Expense	\$939,234		\$1,282,482	\$975,992	(\$306,490)	-23.9%
Revenue over (under) Expense	\$149,892		\$1,186	\$6	(\$1,180)	

Behavioral Health Program Budget

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Two Year Budget for FY 2023 and FY 2024

MHH
Mar 2023

Mental Health

Object / Description	FY 2023		FY 2024		Variance	%
	Total		Budget	Budget		
	Actual > 01-Jul-22 -- 31-Mar-23 Forecast > 01-Apr-23 -- 30-Jun-23		01-Jul-22 30-Jun-23	01-Jul-23 30-Jun-24		
9 months elapsed 3 months remaining						
					FY 2024 budget higher or (lower) than FY 23	
40-01 MH - State Affiliation Fees	\$534,951		\$478,000	\$485,000	\$7,000	1.5%
40-10 MH - Decision Support Group	\$48,000		\$54,000	\$54,000	\$0	0.0%
40-21 MH - Suicide Prevention Toolkits	\$236				\$0	
41-01 MH - Consulting Main Account	\$92,500		\$0		\$0	#Num!
41-20 AZ Evidence Based FY14--FY15	\$409,250		\$409,250	\$409,250	\$0	0.0%
41-30 AZ Mercy Maricopa EBP FY15-16	\$30,892		\$0		\$0	#Num!
41-39 AZ MMIC Training 2017	\$65,471		\$52,500		(\$52,500)	-100.0%
41-45 SD DBH Annual Fidelity Review	\$49,750		\$49,000	\$49,000	\$0	0.0%
41-46 SD HSC Optimal Capacity	\$50,000		\$0		\$0	#Num!
41-54 University of Wisconsin TA	\$70,677		\$99,998	\$52,659	(\$47,339)	-47.3%
41-80 VA Rural Suici FY 15, 16 and 17	\$2,625,623		\$2,935,368	\$2,865,913	(\$69,455)	-2.4%
42-51 AK - BHA Assessment	\$121,443		\$221,632	\$153,088	(\$68,544)	-30.9%
42-75 ND Behavioral Health Workforce	\$60,300				\$0	
43-54 Montana PACT Fidelity Reviews	\$178,400		\$101,500	\$90,900	(\$10,600)	-10.4%
43-55 Montana Crisis System TA	\$255,407		\$238,898		(\$238,898)	-100.0%
43-70 SAMHSA MHTTC Grant	\$334,538		\$280,558	\$306,321	\$25,763	9.2%
43-73 SAMHSA MHTTC Supplemental	\$259,796		\$273,635	\$181,126	(\$92,509)	-33.8%
43-74 HRSA Rural Opioid Response TA	\$699,905		\$730,967	\$865,127	\$134,160	18.4%
43-75 SAMHSA Supplement Well-Being	\$24,617				\$0	
43-76 ROTA-Regional Center	\$487,132			\$655,179	\$655,179	
43-77 NASMHPD Technical Assistance	\$187,500			\$62,500	\$62,500	
44-48 AK API Regulatory Compliance	\$0			\$197,100	\$197,100	
44-77 NIMH Book Project	\$18,345		\$14,657		(\$14,657)	-100.0%
45-40 AK Trust PIC FY17/18	\$20,000		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	0.0%
45-43 MH - AK PIC Interns FY11-FY19	\$75,000		\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	0.0%
46-01 HI - DOH	\$24,150		\$24,150	\$25,300	\$1,150	4.8%
46-02 HI - DPS	\$38,525		\$24,150	\$25,300	\$1,150	4.8%
46-03 HI - DOE	\$24,150		\$24,150	\$25,300	\$1,150	4.8%
46-06 HI - DOE Interns	\$330,566		\$499,574	\$637,499	\$137,925	27.6%
46-07 HI - DPS Interns	\$619,415		\$195,749	\$774,985	\$579,236	295.9%
46-08 HI - DOH Interns	\$321,494		\$281,465	\$363,877	\$82,412	29.3%
46-17 HI Recruitment of Clinical Psy	\$76,702		\$72,500	\$72,500	\$0	0.0%
46-24 NM Psychology Internship	\$102,095		\$175,000	\$173,720	(\$1,280)	-0.7%
46-27 SD Psychology Internship	\$68,750			\$75,000	\$75,000	
46-31 OR Psych Internship FY 15-18	\$3,000		\$7,200	\$3,000	(\$4,200)	-58.3%
46-32 Idaho Psychology Internship	\$20,657		\$125,000	\$36,470	(\$88,530)	-70.8%
46-33 Sanford Psychology Internship	\$72,000			\$66,667	\$66,667	
46-36 UT Psychology Internship	\$1,680		\$6,720		(\$6,720)	-100.0%
46-40 NV Intern Stipends FY 15-16-17	\$125,190		\$195,227	\$166,100	(\$29,127)	-14.9%
46-41 Guam Psychology Internship	\$63,080		\$77,500	\$77,500	\$0	0.0%
46-51 NV Psych Internship FY 15	\$45,677		\$49,830	\$45,063	(\$4,767)	-9.6%
Revenue	\$8,636,860		\$7,818,178	\$9,115,444	\$1,297,266	16.6%
Total Revenue	\$8,636,860		\$7,818,178	\$9,115,444	\$1,297,266	16.6%

Behavioral Health Program Budget (continued)

		FY 2023	FY 2023	FY 2024		
9 months elapsed						
3 months remaining						
<i>Object / Description</i>	<i>Actual ></i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
	01-Jul-22 -- 31-Mar-23		01-Jul-22	01-Jul-23	FY 2024 budget higher	
	<i>Forecast ></i>		30-Jun-23	30-Jun-24	or (lower) than	FY 23
40-01 MH - State Affiliation Fees		\$966,658	\$774,493	\$785,000	\$10,507	1.4%
40-10 MH - Decision Support Group		\$25,791	\$50,000	\$46,000	(\$4,000)	-8.0%
41-01 MH - Consulting Main Account		\$54,711			\$0	
41-20 AZ Evidence Based FY14--FY15		\$377,873	\$400,250	\$395,000	(\$5,250)	-1.3%
41-30 AZ Mercy Maricopa EBP FY15-16		\$30,892			\$0	
41-39 AZ MMIC Training 2017		\$65,471	\$45,000		(\$45,000)	-100.0%
41-45 SD DBH Annual Fidelity Review		\$51,840	\$41,500	\$42,500	\$1,000	2.4%
41-46 SD HSC Optimal Capacity		\$40,707			\$0	
41-54 University of Wisconsin TA		\$64,676	\$89,500	\$47,250	(\$42,250)	-47.2%
41-80 VA Rural Suici FY 15, 16 and 17		\$2,406,845	\$2,635,000	\$2,533,100	(\$101,900)	-3.9%
42-51 AK - BHA Assessment		\$107,089	\$201,822	\$145,500	(\$56,322)	-27.9%
42-75 ND Behavioral Health Workforce		\$30,058			\$0	
43-54 Montana PACT Fidelity Reviews		\$175,650	\$88,261	\$85,350	(\$2,911)	-3.3%
43-55 Montana Crisis System TA		\$101,530	\$207,737		(\$207,737)	-100.0%
43-70 SAMHSA MHTTC Grant		\$331,686	\$265,500	\$295,321	\$29,821	11.2%
43-73 SAMHSA MHTTC Supplemental		\$232,528	\$260,300	\$174,776	(\$85,524)	-32.9%
43-74 HRSA Rural Opioid Response TA		\$593,602	\$685,000	\$750,850	\$65,850	9.6%
43-75 SAMHSA Supplement Well-Being		\$13,234			\$0	
43-76 ROTA-Regional Center		\$486,050		\$643,100	\$643,100	
43-77 NASMHPD Technical Assistance		\$151,855		\$56,500	\$56,500	
44-48 AK API Regulatory Compliance		\$0		\$182,318	\$182,318	
44-77 NIMH Book Project		\$21,832	\$12,745		(\$12,745)	-100.0%
45-40 AK Trust PIC FY17/18		\$18,391	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$0	0.0%
45-43 MH - AK PIC Interns FY11-FY19		\$73,250	\$93,023	\$98,500	\$5,477	5.9%
46-01 HI - DOH		\$21,349	\$24,150	\$25,300	\$1,150	4.8%
46-02 HI - DPS		\$24,320	\$24,150	\$25,300	\$1,150	4.8%
46-03 HI - DOE		\$21,349	\$24,150	\$25,300	\$1,150	4.8%
46-06 HI - DOE Interns		\$306,412	\$471,600	\$599,700	\$128,100	27.2%
46-07 HI - DPS Interns		\$581,408	\$184,350	\$739,700	\$555,350	301.2%
46-08 HI - DOH Interns		\$324,136	\$261,450	\$340,200	\$78,750	30.1%
46-17 HI Recruitment of Clinical Psy		\$77,750	\$65,909	\$64,500	(\$1,409)	-2.1%
46-24 NM Psychology Internship		\$104,749	\$159,090	\$165,000	\$5,910	3.7%
46-27 SD Psychology Internship		\$64,064	\$0	\$68,500	\$68,500	#Div/0!
46-31 OR Psych Internship FY 15-18		\$91	\$7,200	\$2,000	(\$5,200)	-72.2%
46-32 Idaho Psychology Internship		\$19,850	\$115,000	\$34,500	(\$80,500)	-70.0%
46-33 Sanford Psychology Internship		\$97,181		\$58,900	\$58,900	
46-36 UT Psychology Internship		\$0	\$5,169		(\$5,169)	-100.0%
46-40 NV Intern Stipends FY 15-16-17		\$117,282	\$169,565	\$162,000	(\$7,565)	-4.5%
46-41 Guam Psychology Internship		\$84,247	\$74,500	\$73,500	(\$1,000)	-1.3%
46-51 NV Psych Internship FY 15		\$41,764	\$44,500	\$42,500	(\$2,000)	-4.5%
Expense		\$8,308,168	\$7,500,414	\$8,727,465	\$1,227,051	16.4%
Total Expense		\$8,308,168	\$7,500,414	\$8,727,465	\$1,227,051	16.4%
Revenue over (under) Expense		\$328,693	\$317,764	\$387,979	\$70,215	

WCET Budget

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
Two Year Budget for FY 2023 and FY 2024

WCT
Mar 2023

WCET

9 months elapsed 3 months remaining	FY 2023 <i>Total</i>	FY 2023	FY 2024	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
		<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>		
<i>Object / Description</i>	<i>Actual > 01-Jul-22 -- 31-Mar-23</i> <i>Forecast > 01-Apr-23 -- 30-Jun-23</i>	<i>01-Jul-22</i> <i>30-Jun-23</i>	<i>01-Jul-23</i> <i>30-Jun-24</i>	<i>FY 2024 budget higher or (lower) than FY 23</i>	
20-01 WCET Core Revenue	\$6,067			\$0	
20-02 WCET Indirect Cost Share	\$213,581	\$165,000	\$192,892	\$27,892	16.9%
20-03 WCET Membership Dues	\$72,460	\$900,000	\$925,000	\$25,000	2.8%
20-04 WCET Sponsorships	\$70,853	\$75,000	\$50,000	(\$25,000)	-33.3%
20-05 WCET Dues Alt	\$894,666			\$0	
20-06 WCET FY24 Membership Dues	(\$184)			\$0	
20-10 WCET - Administration	(\$53)			\$0	
20-22 WCET Annual Meeting 2022	\$156,826	\$205,420		(\$205,420)	-100.0%
20-23 WCET Annual Meeting 2023	\$34,507		\$220,000	\$220,000	
20-24 WCET Annual Meeting 2024	\$0		\$20,703	\$20,703	
20-42 WCET Summit Spring 2022	\$6,175			\$0	
20-43 WCET Summit Spring 2023	\$5,000			\$0	
23-35 OER - Hewlett NCOER (WCET)	\$14,319	\$24,467		(\$24,467)	-100.0%
24-03 WCET ELE RPA-AASCU-01	\$32,866			\$0	
24-04 WCET ELE APLU Cohort	\$94,933	\$91,530	\$45,000	(\$46,530)	-50.8%
24-05 WCET ELE AASCU Cohort 1b N	\$75,975	\$0		\$0	#Num!
24-10 Gates Reinvestment	\$2,192,117		\$2,217,185	\$2,217,185	
24-11 Gates Capacities	\$100,624		\$95,174	\$95,174	
24-20 Gates Backbone	\$388,167	\$308,034		(\$308,034)	-100.0%
24-22 WCET ELE - AFP Planning	\$53,423	\$39,757		(\$39,757)	-100.0%
24-23 Gates - Bridge Funding Grant	\$824,368	\$880,900		(\$880,900)	-100.0%
24-25 Gates-Partnership Refresh DLS	\$704,078	\$429,684		(\$429,684)	-100.0%
24-26 Gates ITA DL Rubric Refresh 22	\$8,517			\$0	
24-40 Gates - ELE Network Investment	\$553,009	\$393,750		(\$393,750)	-100.0%
24-49 WCET ELE General	\$2,129			\$0	
24-53 WCET ELE TX Digital Transform	\$331,657			\$0	
25-12 State Authorization Net Yr 12	\$622,421	\$610,000		(\$610,000)	-100.0%
25-13 State Authorization Net FY24	\$0		\$629,000	\$629,000	
26-23 State Auth Workshop Sept 2022	\$8,845			\$0	
Revenue	\$7,467,347	\$4,123,542	\$4,394,953	\$271,411	6.6%
Total Revenue	\$7,467,347	\$4,123,542	\$4,394,953	\$271,411	6.6%

WCET Budget (continued)

		FY 2023	FY 2023	FY 2024		
9 months elapsed						
3 months remaining						
<i>Object / Description</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>Actual > 01-Jul-22 -- 31-Mar-23</i>		<i>01-Jul-22</i>	<i>01-Jul-23</i>	<i>FY 2024 budget higher</i>	<i>or (lower) than FY 23</i>
	<i>Forecast > 01-Apr-23 -- 30-Jun-23</i>		<i>30-Jun-23</i>	<i>30-Jun-24</i>		
20-10	WCET - Administration	\$1,064,694	\$1,190,025	\$1,155,565	(\$34,460)	-2.9%
20-22	WCET Annual Meeting 2022	\$193,203	\$205,420		(\$205,420)	-100.0%
20-23	WCET Annual Meeting 2023	\$34,507		\$220,000	\$220,000	
20-24	WCET Annual Meeting 2024	\$0		\$20,703	\$20,703	
20-42	WCET Summit Spring 2022	\$1,440			\$0	
20-43	WCET Summit Spring 2023	\$5,000			\$0	
23-35	OER - Hewlett NCOER (WCET)	\$14,319	\$24,467		(\$24,467)	-100.0%
24-03	WCET ELE RPA-AASCU-01	\$32,866			\$0	
24-04	WCET ELE APLU Cohort	\$94,932	\$91,530	\$45,000	(\$46,530)	-50.8%
24-05	WCET ELE AASCU Cohort 1b N	\$75,976			\$0	
24-10	Gates Reinvestment	\$2,192,117		\$2,217,184	\$2,217,184	
24-11	Gates Capacities	\$100,625		\$95,174	\$95,174	
24-20	Gates Backbone	\$388,167	\$308,034		(\$308,034)	-100.0%
24-22	WCET ELE - AFP Planning	\$53,423	\$39,757		(\$39,757)	-100.0%
24-23	Gates - Bridge Funding Grant	\$824,368	\$880,900		(\$880,900)	-100.0%
24-25	Gates-Partnership Refresh DLS	\$704,078	\$429,684		(\$429,684)	-100.0%
24-26	Gates ITA DL Rubric Refresh 22	\$8,517			\$0	
24-40	Gates - ELE Network Investment	\$553,009	\$393,750		(\$393,750)	-100.0%
24-49	WCET ELE General	\$2,130			\$0	
24-53	WCET ELE TX Digital Transform	\$331,657			\$0	
25-12	State Authorization Net Yr 12	\$488,316	\$553,466		(\$553,466)	-100.0%
25-13	State Authorization Net FY24	\$0		\$596,058	\$596,058	
26-23	State Auth Workshop Sept 2022	\$1,790			\$0	
Expense		\$7,165,131	\$4,117,033	\$4,349,685	\$232,651	5.7%
Total Expense		\$7,165,131	\$4,117,033	\$4,349,685	\$232,651	5.7%
Revenue over (under) Expense		\$302,216	\$6,509	\$45,269	\$38,760	

ACTION ITEM: Approval of Dedicated Reserve Levels for Non-General Fund Activities

Background

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

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

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

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE WICHE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM:

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$8,727,465
20% Minimum Reserve	\$1,745,493
20% Unanticipated Expenses	\$1,745,493
10% Program Development	\$872,747
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$4,363,733

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

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR WCET (WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES):

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$3,753,627
20% Minimum Reserve	\$750,725
20% Unanticipated Expenses	\$750,725
10% Program Development	\$375,363
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$1,876,814

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

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE WICHE STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN):

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$596,058
20% Minimum Reserve	\$119,212
50% Unanticipated Expenses	\$298,029
30% Program Development	\$178,817
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$596,058

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

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH UNIT:

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$452,531
0% Minimum Reserve	\$0
N/A Unanticipated Expenses	\$100,000
25% Program Development	\$113,133
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$213,133

Justification: Because Policy Analysis and Research has only one program that annually generates revenues, its only source of revenues in excess of expenses (reserves) are funds remaining in grants and contracts, if WICHE is allowed by the funding source to retain those funds. As a result, there is no need for a minimum reserve fund, given that the WICHE General Fund covers this potential liability. The unit, however, does need funds to cover unanticipated expenditures, such as possible grant or contract overruns, or bridge funding to sustain a project between funding cycles. The \$100,000 request does not represent a percentage of the unit’s annual appropriation, but rather simply an amount deemed reasonable for FY 2024 to cover such unanticipated expenditures. The unit can also benefit from a modest amount of funding to pursue program development activities, such as grant writing, seed funding for prospective projects, etc. Annual General Fund financing of 25% would adequately cover this type of expenditure. Should the Policy Analysis and Research unit exceed its target reserve, after closing out contracts and grants, WICHE would transfer those funds to the General Fund reserve.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE WICHE STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT (W-SARA):

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$523,461
100% Minimum Reserve	\$523,461
0% Unanticipated Expenses	\$0
0% Program Development	\$0
FY 2024 Target Reserve (Required NC-SARA Reserve)	\$523,461

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

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UNIT:

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$2,054,715
0% Minimum Reserve	\$0
N/A Unanticipated Expenses	\$100,000
25% Program Development	\$513,679
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$613,679

Justification: In addition to its General Fund support and revenues garnered from Non-General Fund programs that generate annual revenues, the Programs and Services unit, like the Policy Analysis and Research unit, receives support from various grants and contracts. As a result, there is no need for a minimum reserve fund, given that the WICHE General Fund covers this potential liability. This unit also needs some reserves to support unanticipated expenses and to fund modest amounts of program development funds to cover unanticipated expenditures. The \$100,000 recommended for FY 2024, commensurate with the request for Policy Analysis and Research, is not reflected as a percent of the unit's operating budget, but rather as a reasonable reserve to cover unanticipated but possible expenditures, such as possible grant or contract overruns, or bridge funding to sustain a project between funding cycles. The unit can also benefit from a modest amount of funding (25%) to pursue program development activities, such as grant writing, seed funding for prospective projects, etc. If the resources available in the Academic Leadership Initiatives or the joint-purchasing collaboratives exceed their reserve requirements, it is once again proposed, as the Commission approved last year, that the excess funds transfer to the Programs and Services reserve. Should the Programs and Services unit exceed its target reserve, after closing out contracts and grants, WICHE would transfer those funds to the General Fund reserve.

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE JOINT PURCHASING COLLABORATIVES (WITHIN THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UNIT):

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$183,635
20% Minimum Reserve	\$36,727
50% Unanticipated Expenses	\$91,818
30% Program Development	\$55,091
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$183,635

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

APPROVAL OF NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVE AMOUNTS FOR THE ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES (WITHIN THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UNIT):

FY 2024 Budget to be Approved May 2023	\$370,539
20% Minimum Reserve	\$74,108
50% Unanticipated Expenses	\$185,270
30% Program Development	\$111,162
FY 2024 Target Reserve	\$370,539

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

Action Requested

Approval of the categories and amounts reflected above.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of WICHE's Vision, Value Proposition, and Strategic Priorities

Summary

WICHE is a mission-driven organization, yet it had not created a vision that communicates its values and commitment to achieving its goals. During the strategy session at the November 2022 Commission meeting, commissioners provided feedback to the WICHE President about a draft statement. Subsequently, she worked with the WICHE officers, Senior Leadership Team, and the Executive Committee to revise the statement and separately call out WICHE's Value Proposition. The Commission also spent time thinking about the Focus Areas that serve as the foundation of the annual Workplan. The officers suggested changing the Focus Areas to Strategic Priorities to be stronger and bolder. The WICHE President recommends that the Commission approve the Vision Statement, Value Proposition, and Strategic Priorities. These will then be reflected in the Workplan, on the website, in the Ambassador Toolkit (that has been on hold until these have been established), and in a variety of other communications.

Background

At the November 2022 Commission meeting, the Commission engaged in a strategy session that was aimed at developing a vision for WICHE, something that had previously never been done. In addition, the Commission leveraged the diverse expertise and perspectives of WICHE commissioners to develop forward-looking strategic priorities. An outcome of the strategy session was a draft vision statement and productive discussions that led to revised Focus Areas that are the foundation of the WICHE Workplan.

With feedback from the Executive Committee, WICHE officers, and the Senior Leadership Team, the WICHE President revised the Vision Statement, which is presented below. In addition, the Executive Committee members were concerned that the original draft of the Vision Statement was too long, although it captured the important elements. To address this concern, the last part was called out as WICHE's Value Proposition. Finally, the Focus Areas were changed to Strategic Priorities to be bolder and more intentional about driving the mission of WICHE forward.

The Vision Statement, Value Proposition, and Strategic Priorities are reflected in the Proposed FY 2024 Workplan, but they are important enough to be independently considered for approval by the Commission. If approved, they will also be reflected on the website, in the Ambassador Toolkit (that has been on hold until these have been established), and a variety of other communications.

VISION

WICHE will strive to provide access to postsecondary education opportunities that are both valuable and equitable for residents of the West, so that all may realize their potential as individuals and contribute to the region's economic, social, and cultural vitality.

VALUE PROPOSITION

By embracing the region's rich and distinct features, WICHE drives innovation and collaboration as a trusted and forward-thinking partner with our states and Pacific Island members.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Each May, WICHE's 48-member commission develops and approves the organization's annual Workplan. The Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the WICHE Commission has prioritized for the fiscal year, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission. The Commission has identified five key strategic priorities to guide the work of the organization:

Affordability & Finance (A/F): supporting the alignment of appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels to make postsecondary education more accessible for those who seek it.

Access & Success (A/S): improving access to and success in postsecondary education for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved, by developing and sharing evidence-based strategies to increase student outreach and engagement.

Workforce & Society (W/S): collaborating across all sectors, including but not limited to behavioral health, business, and industry, to meet the region's workforce needs so that our communities can thrive.

Innovation (I): developing and supporting advancements in teaching and learning, student services, and technology to help students access and succeed in postsecondary education and increase the value of their investment after completion.

Value & Accountability (V/A): collecting and measuring sound data about postgraduate outcomes to determine the true value of WICHE's partnerships for students and society at large so that we can continually improve how students, institutions, and WICHE members spend their time, effort, and money on postsecondary education and workforce training.

Action Requested

Approval of WICHE's Vision, Value Proposition, and Strategic Priorities.

ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL OF THE FY 2024 WORKPLAN



FY 2024 WORKPLAN *(DRAFT)*



FY 2024 WORKPLAN

Vision

WICHE will strive to provide access to postsecondary education opportunities that are both valuable and equitable for residents of the West, so that all may realize their potential as individuals and contribute to the region's economic, social, and cultural vitality.

WICHE's Value Proposition

By embracing the region's rich and distinct features, WICHE drives innovation and collaboration as a trusted and forward-thinking partner with our states and Pacific Island members.

Introduction

Each May, WICHE's 48-member Commission develops and approves the organization's annual Workplan. The Workplan outlines the diverse set of activities, projects, and initiatives that the Commission has prioritized for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, all of which are intended to advance WICHE's mission.

The Commission has identified five strategic priorities to guide the work of the organization:

- ▶ **AFFORDABILITY & FINANCE (A/F):** supporting the alignment of appropriations, tuition, and financial aid policy and practice at the institutional, state, and federal levels to make postsecondary education more accessible for those who seek it.
- ▶ **ACCESS & SUCCESS (A/S):** improving access to and success in postsecondary education for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved, by developing and sharing evidence-based strategies to increase student outreach and engagement.
- ▶ **WORKFORCE & SOCIETY (W/S):** collaborating across all sectors, including but not limited to behavioral health, business, and industry, to meet the region's workforce needs so that our communities can thrive.
- ▶ **INNOVATION (I):** developing and supporting advancements in teaching and learning, student services, and technology to help students access and succeed in postsecondary education and increase the value of their investment after completion.
- ▶ **VALUE & ACCOUNTABILITY (V/A):** collecting and measuring sound data about postgraduate outcomes to determine the true value of WICHE's partnerships for students and society at large so that we can continually improve how students, institutions, and WICHE members spend their time, effort, and money on postsecondary education and workforce training.

WICHE implements the Workplan by conceptualizing and managing a vast array of programs, projects, and initiatives, and by developing valuable resources that address the needs of members through four operational units:

- ▶ **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:** The Programs and Services unit is where students thrive and institutional leaders collaborate. The unit's primary goals are to broaden student access and success and to foster higher education collaborations that address institutional strategic goals. The Programs and Services unit manages WICHE's three Student Access Programs and other initiatives that help institutions and students—undergraduate, graduate, and health professional—save money and efficiently use available resources. The unit also oversees initiatives that bring together the West's higher education leaders to address common goals and concerns and develop a new cadre of academic administrative leaders. In addition, it helps institutions achieve cost savings through three 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 by providing a variety of policy analysis and data resources and leveraging its convening power to foster regional collaboration. The unit leads research projects and collaborative initiatives that focus on open educational resources, the West's workforce

challenges, and supporting postsecondary education and completion. WICHE staff provides expertise on higher education issues including demographic change, governance, equitable opportunity in higher education, adult learners, state and federal financial aid, finance, articulation and transfer, federal policy, and college completion initiatives. WICHE is responsible for implementing the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for the western region. The unit's publication series WICHE Insights explores 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, established in 1955, seeks to support 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 and campus behavioral health.
- ▶ **WCET – 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 be the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of digital learning in higher education. Today, WCET supports more than 400 member colleges, universities, state higher education agencies, and nonprofits and for-profit companies across the U.S. and Canada, with more than 5,000 active users of WCET resources. Dues paid by WCET and State Authorization Network members, event income, sponsorships, and grants (such as Every Learner Everywhere) help enable WCET to be a self-supporting unit. WCET's strategic plan focuses on practice, policy, equity, and community in fulfilling its vision of advancing learner access and success through postsecondary digital learning for a more equitable world.

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. When appropriate, some initiatives also extend beyond the WICHE region.

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) and Projects and 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 2023.

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 – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the general fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Academic Leaders Toolkit	A/S	Western	(included in Forum and Alliance)	Forum and Alliance members
MHEC Cyber Insurance	A/F	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB	.10	All WICHE members are eligible
MHECare	A/F; A/S	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB	.10	MHEC/United HealthCare Student Resources, META Teletherapy, and TAO Connect
MHECtech	A/F	WICHE/MHEC/ NEBHE/SREB	.30	All WICHE members
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)	A/F; A/S; W/S	Western	1.20	All WICHE members send and/or receive students except Guam, FSM, RMI and Palau; 130+ programs at 60+ participating institutions
PSEP Field Assessment and Review	A/F; A/S; W/S	Western	.05 FTE complete program review by end of FY 23; NCHEMS hired to complete the assessment and review	Western postsecondary institutions, workforce development agencies, certifying officers, other stakeholders
Western Academic Leadership Academy (Academy)	W/S; V/A	Western	.15 and consultants	Forum and Alliance members
Western Academic Leadership Forum (Forum) • Professional Development: 2024 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; W/S	Western	.70	All WICHE members; 52 institutions, 9 systems
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (Alliance) • Professional Development: 2023 Annual Meeting • Collaborative projects	A/S; W/S	Western	.70	All WICHE members; 68 institutions, 8 systems
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)	A/F; W/S	Western	.90	All WICHE members; 66 participating institutions
Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)	A/F; W/S	Western	.90	All WICHE members; 163 participating institutions

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 **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 Student Resources (UHCSR). UHCSR was selected through a competitive bid process, enabling member institutions to avoid a time- and resource-consuming request-for-proposal process. MHECare now includes META Teletherapy, which offers teletherapy services for students seeking counseling services.

MHECTECH, a third partnership, 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 the WICHE region benefit from aggregated volume purchases that lower product costs and save institutions money and time.

The **PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP)** provides affordable access for students to 130+ healthcare professional programs at more than 60 institutions and in 10 healthcare fields. In 2022-23, 559 students from 10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands received \$14.2 million (reflecting investment by their home-state legislatures) in tuition benefits through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has helped some 15,800 students, many of whom return to their home states to fill key healthcare positions.

The **PSEP FIELD ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW** is investigating the current health professions (dentistry, allopathic medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, podiatry, and veterinary medicine) served by the PSEP program. The inquiry will report on how well the current fields meet regional workforce needs. It will also recommend other professional areas that may help meet the region's current or future workforce needs. The field assessment and review will be presented to the Commission after completion.

The **WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** is a year-long professional development program aimed at expanding the pipeline of qualified chief academic leaders for two- and 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 Forum and the Alliance, commenced in July 2022. The Academy is funded by registration fees and Forum and Alliance support. Two-year institutions were added for the summer 2022 cohort only.

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

The **WESTERN ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC LEADERS** (Alliance) brings together academic leaders at community colleges and technical schools and related systems and state agencies to exchange ideas and information, share resources and expertise, and collaborate on regional initiatives supporting the two-year higher education sector. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded by membership dues and annual meeting sponsors.

The **WESTERN REGIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM (WRGP)** allows WICHE-region residents to cross state lines yet pay reduced tuition rates for approximately 1,850 master's, graduate certificate, and doctoral programs at 66 participating public universities. In 2022-23, 3,269 students saved an estimated \$48.1 million in tuition through WRGP. The WRGP program-distinctiveness requirement was lifted several years ago, 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.

Participating institutions also now have the option to charge WRGP students up to 150% of resident tuition, but the vast majority continue to charge students resident tuition.

The **WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE (WUE)** is WICHE’s signature undergraduate tuition savings program and the nation’s largest of its kind, saving 46,110 students an estimated \$520.9 million in tuition in 2022-23. Currently, 163 public two- and four-year WICHE-region institutions allow WUE students to pay no more than 150% of resident tuition, instead of full nonresident 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 & Initiatives

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

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Interstate Passport®	A/S; I	National	ECMC Foundation \$500,000 grant; General Fund support (approved at Nov. 2020 Commission Meeting from Programs and Services reserves) National Science Foundation \$300,000 grant	3.25 and consultants (11/20-10/22; received a no-cost extension through April 2023) 1.25 and consultants (3/21-2/23)	72 institutions in 21 states across the country are members; Institutions in these and several other states are in the exploratory stage New Mexico State University and its four community colleges
No Holding Back: Using Data to Review and Revise Administrative Hold Policies among Public Postsecondary Institutions in the Western Region	A/S; A/F	Western	Ascendium Education Foundation and Lumina Foundation grants totaling \$452,500	.75 FTE; grant ends in October 2023	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and members of the Alliance and Forum, Policy Analysis and Research, MHEC, NEBHE
WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities	A/S; W/S	Western	Andrew W. Mellon Foundation \$1.5 million grant	1.15 FTE	Western postsecondary institutions

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 provides overall direction and support for this innovative program. A two-year grant from ECMC Foundation is enabling WICHE to further expand the Passport Network by providing 20 institutions (10 of which are minority-serving institutions) a two-year membership fee waiver and personalized onboarding support.

The award from NSF is supporting a collaboration with New Mexico State University (NMSU) and its four community colleges to address issues related to engineering degree attainment by testing the feasibility of using sets of lower-division student learning outcomes (SLOs) as the basis of block transfer into engineering programs. WICHE is conducting a literature review to further identify factors that inhibit transfers within engineering disciplines, articulate a theory of change, and recruit leaders of national organizations and two- 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.

NO HOLDING BACK: Staff members are collaborating with the American Association of College Registrars to assess the use of administrative holds at colleges and universities in the West. WICHE and AACRAO propose a collaboration to develop tools and guidelines that institutions and others can use to monitor administrative holds, which are ubiquitous at U.S. institutions. Recent research found that 99% of institutions use registration holds, and 95% use transcript holds. However, most institutions do not regularly review or seek alternatives to administrative holds. Moreover, less than half are confident in analyzing the hold data for potential equity issues. There is a range of data limitations institutions face: access to the data, what information matters most, and examining the data. This lack of understanding is presumed to be particularly problematic for institutions serving a high percentage of first-generation students.

The **WICHE ACADEMY FOR LEADERS IN THE HUMANITIES** would offer leadership development to tenured humanities faculty members. WICHE is collaborating with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and other key stakeholders to develop a two-year, campus-based immersive experience for faculty leaders. These leaders will also attend a three-day WICHE Institute for Leaders (WIL) in the Humanities in Boulder, Colo., focused on three key competencies: career planning and development, project management, and organizational design and agility. They also will join upper-level academic administration to learn more about day-to-day operations, craft a campus project, receive internal and external mentoring, and develop a new network with the fellows appointed at other institutions.

New Directions

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Interstate Passport®	A/S; I		National	Seeking grant funding from other foundations and self-sustaining model	TBD	Interstate Passport Network members and potential members
Compact for Faculty Diversity	A/S; W/S		National	TBD	TBD	MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Reducing the Postsecondary Attainment Gap for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Linking Policy and Practice	A/S		National	Seeking additional external funding to further assist NASNTIs and sustain an institutional network	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 **COMPACT FOR FACULTY DIVERSITY:** Staff members 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. The 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 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.

Projects to be Removed from Workplan

Work that staff previously considered pursuing but now proposes to remove from the Workplan.

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Online Course Exchange – FlexPATH Alliance	A/S; I	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> </div> </div>	National	Grant request pending: \$1,416,883 National Science Foundation subaward (5 years) The FlexPATH grant was not funded.	1.9	University of Nevada, Reno; New Mexico State University; University of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign; and their respective community colleges
Online Course Exchange	A/S; I		National		0	1 consortium serving 16 institutions

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing and bringing to the WICHE 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 2023:

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- 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 providing 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.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by the general fund or by fees. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Benchmarks: WICHE Region	A/F; A/S; W/S; V/A	Western	.025	N/A
Legislative Advisory Committee	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.25	All WICHE members
Peer-to-Peer Virtual Convenings	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.15	All WICHE members
Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West	A/F; A/S; W/S; V/A	Western	.025	N/A
State Policy and Data Profiles	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	National	.20	N/A
Tuition and Fees in Public Higher Education in the West	A/F	Western	.025	All WICHE members
WICHE Insights	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.10	N/A
WICHE Policy Webinar Series	A/F; A/S; W/S; I; V/A	Western	.10	Variable
WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	A/S; I; V/A	Western	2.25	NC-SARA; Western SARA signatories; MHEC, NEBHE, and SREB

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 (PARDB), the Benchmarks data dashboard now includes state information as well as regional metrics.

The **LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAC)** informs the WICHE 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.

As the pandemic appears to be winding down and reaching a new endemic phase, Policy Analysis and Research unit staff will continue to provide support to the region through regularly scheduled **PEER-TO-PEER VIRTUAL CONVENINGS** on federal funding issues, campus responses, and policy approaches to address the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and other relevant policy issues.

WICHE’s **REGIONAL FACT BOOK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WEST** presents regional and state-by-state data and analysis on policy indicators across a range of topics. These fiscal, demographic, economic, and social indicators provide up-to-date information for policymakers, educators, and researchers in the West. The Fact Book’s downloadable data tables are updated periodically throughout the year. WICHE released 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 and is examining the overall utility of the full suite of data resources.

WICHE will continue building out **STATE POLICY AND DATA PROFILES** that capture state and territory 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. WICHE has been consulting with key stakeholders in the West about how our data resources can be most useful and expects to begin rolling out these new profiles in FY 2023.

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, territory, and the region over the past one, five, and 10 years, as well as what proportion of total tuition and fees they represent.

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 2023 will likely continue to focus on COVID-19 recovery with particular attention to enrollment declines and potentially worsening equity gaps due to changes in college-going behavior.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT (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 coordinates the membership of SARA states in the West through the WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (W-SARA). WICHE collaborates with the other regional compacts and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) to provide national coverage and ensure consistency in the implementation of the agreement.

Current Activities – Projects & Initiatives

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

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Increasing Access, Affordability, and Equity Using OER: A National Consortium	A/F; A/S	Western/ National	\$450,000	2.25 2023-24	Hewlett Foundation, WCET, MHEC, NEBHE, SREB
Support for the Wyoming Innovation Partnership	A/S; W/S; I	Western	\$264,000	1.05 FY 2022-24	Wyoming Community College Commission
Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates	A/S; W/S	National	\$50,000	.25 in FY 2024	TBD
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	A/S; W/S	Western/ National	\$100,000 +	.5 FTE in FY 2024	Lumina Foundation, Behavioral Health Program, Programs and Services, Federal Agencies

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. This effort started in FY 2021 and WICHE expects additional funding to continue this work into FY 2024. There is significant collaboration and coordination across regions, with WCET serving as the “backbone” of the effort.

SUPPORT FOR THE WYOMING INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP: WICHE has been contracted by the Wyoming Community College Commission to provide project management for a broad initiative that will seek to modernize and focus Wyoming’s efforts to develop a resilient workforce and economy. The effort aims to better align Wyoming’s economic development agenda by increasing collaborations among state entities and ultimately local partners.

KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR: The Policy Analysis and Research unit released the 10th edition of state-by-state forecasts of high school graduates in December 2020. During FY 2024, staff will continue dissemination activities and produce tools that can help users understand the potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, and develop analysis related to socioeconomic status.

IMPROVING POLICY AND PRACTICE TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS: WICHE has secured a funding commitment from Lumina Foundation to support an initial convening of exemplar states/systems focused on improving behavioral health and wellness in postsecondary education. Additionally, conversations continue with other partners about large-scale efforts to scale healthy practices through policy.

New Directions

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	A/F; 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 - 2million	1.75 4 years	TBD
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	A/S; V/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; V/A		Western	\$385,313	.0825 2 years	Idaho State Board of Education
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	A/F; A/S		Western	\$500,000	1.50 2 years	TBD

New Directions *(continued)*

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
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; V/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	A/F; A/S	■ ■ ■	Western	\$400,000	2.0 2 years	TBD
Data with a Purpose	W/S; V/A	■ ■ ■	National	\$497,475	.05 2 years	Strada Education Network
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A	■ ■ ■	Western	\$975,000	2.5 3 years	WCET, TBD
Articulating the Value of Postsecondary Education in the West	W/S; A/S; V/A	■ ■ ■	Western	\$600,000	1.5 FTE 3 Years	TBD
Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale	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; I; V/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
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	I	■ ■ ■	Western	\$100,000	2 years	WCET, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Policy and Practice Solutions for Workforce Shortages	A/S; W/S; I	■ ■ ■	Western	\$400,000	2 years	TBD
Intermediaries for Scale Partnerships	A/F; A/S; I	■ ■ ■	Western/ National	TBD	TBD	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

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 WICHE members, postsecondary systems and 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. The project will also seek to partner with WICHE members and other key stakeholders 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 WICHE members, postsecondary systems and institutions, employers, and local leaders; and measure the impact of initiatives aimed at increasing adult postsecondary credential completion to drive continuous improvement.

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS: WICHE members 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 WICHE members and help advance overall knowledge in the field.

WICHE is interested in bolstering efforts to improve access and success by engaging in partnerships wherever it is useful 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 WICHE members to carry out such an evaluation would help address capacity issues, provide actionable information to the participants, 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: Flowing from the previous item on Evaluation and Research Partnerships, WICHE has recently completed an evaluation of Idaho's dual-credit funding model. This work identified numerous potential avenues for further research that meets Idaho's needs and can inform all WICHE members about effective policies. Information about the efficacy of innovative programs is valuable not only to the WICHE member 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 additional research where opportunities and funding are available, and the research meets Idaho's needs.

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 AREAS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES 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 across the region to identify pilot sites for project implementation that involves expanding such 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: 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, territories, and freely associated states must have highly competent staff that can analyze the available data and convert it to usable information for improving programs and policies. Additionally, researchers must have opportunities to explore new areas of research that can drive policy conversations. Barriers to 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 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 system and institutional education and workforce researchers, as well as key staff from WICHE members, 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-age students. Additionally, they can be a major 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 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 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 decision makers and data available through the MLDE 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 policy and practice.

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 partners to develop appropriate frameworks to address the rise of alternative providers of postsecondary education. This work will help ensure WICHE members can take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of substandard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from project participants 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 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 WICHE members and territories about efforts to improve information about the different types of credentials offered. The overall aim would be to work with WICHE members – 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.

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 members to provide training for institutional non-technical leaders for cyber protection. This initiative was previously approved by the Commission but paused during the height of the pandemic due to the inability to convene in person. Staff will look to relaunch this effort in FY 2024.

POLICY AND PRACTICE SOLUTIONS FOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGES: As part of its general efforts to support COVID-19 recovery (discussed above), the Policy unit began convening key staff from WICHE members to focus on ways to address short- and long-term workforce shortages in health fields using general fund dollars. Staff has developed a broader proposal to carry out a project that would implement solutions being developed while focusing on building a strong research base into effective and sustainable long-term policy and practice.

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP: Although not selected to be one of the Intermediaries for Scale grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WICHE has completed multiple partnerships with those organizations that were selected. WICHE was previously brought in by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium to facilitate its efforts to develop an effective data infrastructure and staff capacity. 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.

ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE WEST: WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research Unit will work on multiple approaches to understand and articulate the value of postsecondary education for diverse stakeholders, including a focus on where that value is not meeting broader expectations. This effort will begin with a general articulation of the broad dimensions of value, including the economic return to individuals and communities, civic and cultural value, and other social dimensions of value that are not easily captured in earnings data. This work will have an explicit focus on how value is articulated in diverse Western contexts.

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 WICHE members 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 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 and territorial 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- and territory-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 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 2023:

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM: WICHE completed its initial work to support AIHEC's knowledge-management efforts as funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Based on that initial work, AIHEC selected WICHE (working with NCHEMS) to carry out further work in support of its knowledge-management infrastructure.

OREGON COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS AND OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION LANDSCAPE STUDY: WICHE was contracted by NCHEMS to participate in an environmental scan of postsecondary education in the state and to assess the ways in which policy and practice can be improved to serve the needs of the state and its residents more effectively. WICHE provided data analysis and participated in stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

AdvanceCTE POLICY ROUNDTABLES: WICHE received a small subgrant from AdvanceCTE to help convene policy roundtables focused on enhancing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the West and across the nation. WICHE assisted by convening virtual roundtables that focused on key policy and practice issues and participated as a thought partner in AdvanceCTE's efforts to develop a broad set of recommendations for states and others.

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM: WICHE completed additional work to support AIHEC's knowledge-management efforts as funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR IDAHO'S ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE GROWTH INITIATIVE: WICHE completed this work for Idaho, with a focus on high-level recommendations to spur growth in the production of necessary degrees to support the state's economy.

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Continuing work supported by WCET dues, event fees, grants, and contracts. All work in this category is considered high priority.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
WCET Member Service and Support	A/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	412 member institutions, agencies, organizations
Digital Learning Practice	A/F; A/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, Every Learner Everywhere, other organizations
Digital Learning Policy	A/S; I; V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET members, SAN, NASASPS, NC-SARA, other organizations
WCET Annual Meeting	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, sponsors
WCET Leadership Summit	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET members, sponsors
WCET Webcast Series	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	Various, depending on the topic
wcetMIX (Member Information Exchange) and Member-only Resources	A/S; W/S; I	U.S. and Canada	WCET staff	WCET, SAN, and member leadership
System and Consortia Digital Learning Leaders	A/F; A/S; I	U.S.	WCET staff	Higher education systems and multi-institution consortia
WCET Steering Committee Annual Priorities	A/F; A/S; I; V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	WCET elected Steering Committee and other members
State Authorization Network (SAN)	A/S; I; V/A	U.S.	WCET staff	131 members representing ~ 888 institutions. Partners: Regional compacts, NASASPS, NC-SARA

WCET MEMBERSHIP SERVICE AND SUPPORT helps colleges, universities, higher education organizations, state agencies, and companies understand both the practice and policy of digital learning by providing them with timely information and a collaborative community. The popular WCET Frontiers blog features promising practices, innovations, emerging policies, compliance advice, and member features. The WCET Frontiers podcast series was introduced to provide engaging interviews about solutions and innovations in the practice and policy of digital learning in higher education.

WCET and the State Authorization Network (SAN) continue to collaborate to provide in-depth analysis of **DIGITAL LEARNING POLICIES** (federal, state, accreditation, and regulatory) that have an impact on faculty and students. WCET and SAN are noted for their expertise on policy issues including consumer protections for digital learning students, “regular and substantive interaction” for distance education, state authorization of out-of-state activities, out-of-state professional licensure regulatory requirements, and digital learning definitions.

WCET events include the **ANNUAL MEETING, MEMBER-ONLY VIRTUAL SUMMIT**, and **MONTHLY WEBCAST SERIES**. WCET’s annual meetings are in-person events held at locations across the United States and bring together up to 400 leaders and practitioners interested in good practices in digital learning in postsecondary education. Members and non-members attend. The Member-Only Virtual Summit takes place in the spring and is a half-day, topic-focused event. The 2022 Summit had over 450 attendees and the 2023 Summit focused on emerging business models. The webcast series showcases innovative practices and effective policies in digital learning. Webcasts take place monthly, with an average of 150 members and non-members attending.

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 wctNEWS and wctDISCUSS digital forums. SAN also uses wctMIX to support communication and sharing among its members.

The **STATE SYSTEM OR MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL CONSORTIA DIGITAL LEARNING LEADERS** meet monthly to share their unique challenges and solutions in using cooperation and shared services to better meet the needs of students, faculty, and administrators at their member institutions.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** is a membership organization, created in 2011 as a division of WCET, that empowers its members to successfully resolve state and federal regulatory challenges to improve student consumer protections in digital and experiential learning across state lines. SAN serves postsecondary institutional staff who must translate and implement educational technology regulations as well as the agencies that support that work. Related issues include state institutional approvals, reciprocity, professional licensure, employment law issues, international compliance, and military-related considerations. SAN does this through providing members with a library of resources and tools on the SAN website, policy analysis, and virtual and in-person training, as well as facilitating communication so that members can cooperate to identify common needs, track emerging policies and regulations, evaluate their efficacy, and share lessons learned.

Each year, the **WCET STEERING COMMITTEE** selects **ANNUAL PRIORITIES** for providing insights and resources to assist members. Working groups are formed to advise and assist in developing webinars, conference sessions, blog posts, reports, and other resources to inform the membership. For the 2023 calendar year, the selected topics are:

- ▶ Digital Learning Definitions – As modalities change, definitions and communications have been difficult for faculty, administrators, policymakers, and, most importantly, students.
- ▶ Microcredentials – The growth in microcredentials and alternative credentials is both a threat and an opportunity for traditional accredited higher education.
- ▶ Artificial Intelligence – As these tools become ubiquitous, how do we tackle the instructional, academic integrity, and equity issues related to generative artificial intelligence?
- ▶ Higher Education Enrollments – As higher education faces enrollment challenges, what are the ways in which digital learning can help?

Current Activities – Projects & Initiatives

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

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Every Learner Everywhere	A/F; A/S; I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$6,688,840 (Oct 2022 – Dec 2024)	6.4-7.8 / 2017-25	11 partner organizations as identified by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (more to be added)
Every Learner Everywhere Equity Advisory Board	A/S; I	U.S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	ELE Staff + 6 Board members 2022-23	Five higher education professionals advising on equity activities

EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE is a network of 11 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, Latino/a, 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. During FY 2022, Every Learner offered a number of ecosystem and field-facing services including two webinar series for the general field. The most involved partner organizations included Achieving the Dream, American Public and Land-Grant Universities, and Digital Promise. Service topics included information on adaptive learning, equitable pedagogical practices in digital learning, evidence-based teaching practices for digital learning, and information on the development of faculty communities of practice.

Every Learner Everywhere’s **EQUITY ADVISORY BOARD** consists of six higher education professionals chosen by the Every Learner Everywhere staff and Steering Committee to assist Every Learner in better centering equity considerations in its work.

New Directions

Projects that might need WICHE President approval for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Emerging Federal Policies	A/F; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Internal	2.0 1 year	WCET, SAN, WICHE Policy Unit
Artificial Intelligence: Policy & Practice in Higher Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Internal	.5+ 1 year	WCET, external consultants
Price and Cost of Distance Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	National	Internal	.5+ 1 year	WICHE Policy Unit

The years 2023 and 2024 will be unusually full of **EMERGING FEDERAL POLICY** discussions regarding digital learning in higher education. Both the Department of Education and the Veterans Administration have rules regarding professional licensure programs. The Department of Education announced likely rulemaking on accreditation, distance education definition, state authorization, and third-party services. The Department also released updated guidance on third-party services. NC-SARA is facilitating a new SARA Policy Modification Process intended to be more inclusive and transparent. Legislation is likely in Congress on short-term Pell and on housing allowance for veterans studying at a distance. WCET and SAN staff will continue to follow these policy proposals and inform members.

The impact of **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** has had a long ramp-up, but it is suddenly upon us. In November, OpenAI released ChatGPT, a chat interface for its GPT 3.5 large language model AI. Using the chat interface, users can make a seemingly endless array of queries of GPT 3.5 that result in often stunning responses. The relative ease in getting the program to create everything from poems to short answers to complete essays has led many faculty and administrators to worry about the academic integrity of coursework. Others are urging faculty to rethink assessment practices and find ways to integrate generative artificial intelligence, especially ChatGPT, into coursework. Artificial Intelligence will be one of WCET’s four focus areas in 2023 and will include the production of several blogs, webinars, and both public-facing and member-only reports including Artificial Intelligence: Policy and Practice in Higher Education and Supporting Learning through Artificial Intelligence: A Survey

of Institutional Policies and Practices. This work is being funded through internal investment but may lead to additional funding opportunities.

In 2017, WCET conducted national research on the **PRICE AND COST OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**. A survey of institutions sought to collect information on the “price” that institutions charge students for a distance education course and the “cost” to create that course. The work led to the realization that the views of practitioners and policymakers are completely at odds. An update of this analysis is needed for the post-COVID higher education world.

Completed Projects

Work that staff finished in FY 2023:

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT FOR WCET AND SAN: WCET and SAN used the services of WebAIM, part of the Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice, at Utah State University to improve website accessibility. WCET has long been a leader in the advocacy of accessible digital learning content and wanted to ensure that its websites are highly accessible. The State Authorization Network has begun a similar extensive review with the help of WebAIM and hopes to have the work completed early in the next fiscal year.

EVERY LEARNER EVERYWHERE has successfully closed out six grants and three contracts during this time period and has primarily transitioned to using a new three-year network investment grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The focus of this year has been on the major reinvestment grant, and with it the new deliverables focused on a new governance system, new Technical Assistance Providers, selecting and onboarding a new Equity-First Organization, and creating a menu of services, an Institutional Digital Learning Assessment Tool, and Quality Service Standards. The network continued to be a recognized leader in equity in digital learning through multiple conference presentations, resources, and blog posts. The Every Learner director resigned in February 2023, and the network searched for a new director in the spring.

The **WCET ANNUAL MEETING** was the first in-person event since 2019 and took place in Denver, with a mix of 350 member and non-member attendees. Sessions covered an array of digital learning and higher education topics including potential changes in the Online Program Management (OPM) marketplace, the array of digital learning definitions and need for clarity, microcredential strategies, accreditation challenges and changes, and quality in digital learning.

The **MEMBER-ONLY VIRTUAL SUMMIT** topic for 2022—high-quality digital learning—resonated well with the members as many institutions were emerging from the pandemic and seeking strategies for improving digital learning. Over 450 people participated in the one-day virtual event. The March 2023 event focused on emerging business models in higher education.

The **WCET WEBCAST SERIES** is popular with the WCET community because the webcasts are free and open to all and feature experts and practitioners sharing pragmatic advice and lessons learned on a variety of digital learning topics. Topics for 2022 included guidance for navigating the confusing array of digital learning definitions, strategically evaluating edtech tools, microcredentials, and the higher education policy landscape.

The **STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN)** created, in early FY 2023, the Getting Started with Compliance Management Gateway. Found on the SAN website, the Gateway provides quick access to SAN-developed tools and resources to understand and implement an institutional compliance plan. These tools and resources include a series of issue-based one- and two-page abstracts for basic compliance and beyond-basics issues. Additionally, tables and charts are provided with contact information for multi-state, multi-country, and professional licensing agencies to facilitate research. SAN papers and handbooks are also accessible from the Getting Started with Compliance Management Gateway.

In addition to twice monthly member-only meetings addressing timely topics, SAN held training workshops. A virtual three-day Basics of State Authorization Workshop was led by subject-matter experts and included mentors to assist attendees to understand and develop compliance strategies. A virtual three-day Advanced Topics Workshop was provided for more experienced compliance staff members, addressing Succession Planning for Compliance Continuity. In September 2022, SAN unveiled a new logo that reflects the collaboration of SAN with its members, regulators, and other entities within the institution compliance community.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/ TIMELINE	PARTNERS
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/A		Western	\$1.2M	2.5 3 years	WICHE Policy Unit

A HOLE IN STATE POLICY – ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: In this project, the Policy Analysis and Research unit (assisted by WCET) will work with 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 substandard providers.

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: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium: Interns*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$100,000	7/23-6/24	State of Alaska
Alaska Internship Consortium: Technical Assistance*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$20,000	.05 7/23-6/24	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Arizona: Evidence- Based Practices Fidelity Monitoring*	W/S; V/A	Western	\$409,250	2.75 7/22-6/23	State of Arizona
Guam Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western & Pacific Territories	\$250,000	.50 2.5 years	The U.S. Territory of Guam
Hawai'i Early Intervention Services - Rates Study	W/S	Western	\$55,800	1/23-6/23	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$1,850,733	.50 7/22-6/23	State of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Recruitment of School- Based Clinical Psychologists*	W/S	Western	\$100,000	Ongoing	State of Hawai'i
Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$20,657	7/22-6/23	State of Idaho
Montana Fidelity Reviews*	W/S; V/A	Western	\$90,900	.50 7/22-9/23	State of Montana
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MP- MHTTC)	A/S; W/S	Western	\$445,559	1.5 5 years	University of North Dakota
Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center	W/S	Western	\$541,258	2.65 2 Years	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
NASMHPD Technical Assistance	W/S	National	\$250,000	.75 1/23–8/23	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Institutes of Health – Behavioral Health Aide Assessment	W/S	Western	\$153,088	.75 4 years	AK Native Tribal Health Consortium' Northwest Indian College; University of AK – Anchorage
National Institutes of Health - Online Publication Update	W/S	National	\$15,977	.15 9/20-9/22	National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$162,401	.25 8/22-8/23	State of Nevada
New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$110,070	.25 2.5 Years	State of New Mexico; Indian Health Service
North Dakota Behavioral Health Workforce Study	W/S	Western	\$60,300	5/22-1/23	University of North Dakota
Oregon Psychology Internship Program*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$3,000	7/22-6/23	State of Oregon

Current Activities – Projects and Initiatives (continued)

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

Focus: A/F Affordability and Finance A/S Access & Success W/S Workforce & Society I Innovation V/A Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	GEO SCOPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE	PARTNERS
Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)	W/S	Western	\$843,219	3.0 9/22-9/23	JBS International
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention	W/S	National	\$2,892,797	4.5 4/22-3/23	US Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health & Office of Suicide Prevention
Sanford Health Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$200,000	.50 3 Years	Sanford Health
South Dakota IMP(ACT) Fidelity Reviews*	W/S; V/A	Western	\$49,750	.25 6/22-5/23	State of South Dakota
South Dakota Optimal Capacity T/A – Phase III	W/S	Western	\$50,000	.25 1/23-5/23	State of South Dakota
South Dakota Psychology Internship Consortium	A/S; W/S	Western	\$175,000	.25 8/22-8/23	State of South Dakota
University of Wisconsin Technical Assistance	A/S; W/S	National	\$52,659	.40 4 years	University of Wisconsin
Utah Psychology Internship Consortium*	A/S; W/S	Western	\$6,720	7/22-6/23	State of Utah
Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG): Annual Membership Program	W/S	Western	Varies annually	.10 Ongoing	WICHE Member States and Territories

* WICHE expects these projects will be renewed, or they have already been renewed, for FY 2024.

ALASKA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (AK-PIC) INTERNS: The WICHE BHP supports the ongoing operations of the AK-PIC for interns and faculty, including its engagement in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and achievement/maintenance of American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation.

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). The AK-PIC consists of a multi-site consortium of Alaska agencies that maintain at least one supervising psychologist on-site to provide supervision and didactic training to interns.

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 a team of fidelity reviewers who review approximately 20 different providers in Maricopa County each year. The project was expanded in FY 2019 to include fidelity reviews of two EBPs in Northern and Southern Arizona.

GUAM PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM: The WICHE BHP has partnered 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 is guiding all phases of the development of a psychology internship consortium to attract and retain qualified and highly trained behavioral health professionals in the territories. Guam-PIC is participating in the 2022 APPIC National Intern Match, and the first cohort of two interns began their internship in September 2022.

HAWAII EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES – RATES STUDY: The Early Intervention Services Section (EIS) of the Hawai'i Department of Health has contracted with the WICHE BHP to complete another comparative review of early childhood services compensation methodology and pricing structures for both contracted services and related professional salaries such as General Educator, Occupational and Physical Therapies, and Speech Language Pathologist. The EIS seeks to compare Hawai'i rates to those in other, analogous states to ensure competitive pay to help maintain a sufficient workforce.

HAWAII PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (HI-PIC): WICHE supports 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. In the current year, there are 10 interns participating in HI-PIC.

HAWAII RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS: The Hawai'i Department of Education contracts with the 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 Department of Public Health and Human Services' Behavioral Health and Disabilities Division has contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to the division on the implementation of its Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). This project includes conducting fidelity reviews for 13 PACT programs operating across the state, developing plans and focused training to promote the improvement of services, and consultation on outcomes and dashboard development.

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, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

MOUNTAIN PLAINS RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER: In October of 2022, WICHE was awarded a two-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish the Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (MP-ROTAC), which is dedicated to supporting opioid and stimulant prevention, treatment, and recovery in HHS Region 8, comprising Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. MP-ROTAC develops and disseminates resources, training, and technical assistance to rural communities across the continuum of care.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM DIRECTORS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP will be a subcontractor to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) on its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Technical Assistance Coalition and Transformation Transfer Initiative. The BHP will focus on implementing and expanding 988 crisis services in rural and frontier regions by providing a series of training and technical assistance sessions to providers across the country.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT: The WICHE Behavioral Health Program, in collaboration with the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), was awarded a National Institutes of Health (NIH) research grant. This project will evaluate the behavioral health aide 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.

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

NEVADA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM (NV-PIC): The WICHE BHP assists the state of Nevada in the development and operation of an accredited psychology internship consortium. A primary goal of the internship program is to establish a pipeline to build Nevada's behavioral health workforce. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health and Nevada-WICHE provides support and funding for the BHP's ongoing development and operation 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 New Mexico Department of Health, and the federal Indian Health Services, the WICHE BHP will facilitate program development, and help ensure the program meets American Psychological Association accreditation standards. NM-PIC accepted its first cohort of interns in 2021-22, and its accreditation self-study was submitted in March 2022.

NORTH DAKOTA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STUDY: The University of North Dakota (UND) contracted with the WICHE BHP to provide consultation and technical assistance to UND as part of the North Dakota Behavioral Health Plan Aim 7: Behavioral Health Workforce. WICHE convened and facilitated a Behavioral Health Workforce Summit with key stakeholders and facilitated the development of a Behavioral Health Workforce Strategic Plan.

OREGON STATE HOSPITAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: WICHE continues 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 and psychostimulant misuse in high-risk communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortia. As a partner in this project, WICHE provides technical assistance to designated grantee sites.

RURAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION – TOGETHER WITH VETERANS: WICHE is collaborating with the Denver-based federal Veterans Administration, Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) to develop and implement Together With Veterans, a veteran suicide-prevention program for rural communities. The program became operational in FY 2019, with four initial sites: two in Colorado, one in Montana, and one in North Carolina. Since then, the program has grown to 34 sites that are fully operational in FY 2023. The TWV Program sites are located in rural communities throughout the country, stretching from as far east as New Hampshire and as far west as the Territory of Guam.

SANFORD HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM: The WICHE BHP worked with the leadership of Sanford Health to begin planning and preparation for a psychology internship designed to provide a broad and culturally relevant training program to support the preparation and retention of doctoral level psychologists in North Dakota and Minnesota. Sanford Health has a large national footprint, and they are a leading agency in the advancement of integrated health services (physical and behavioral). The internship development began primarily with Sanford's integrated health sites in North Dakota.

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.

SOUTH DAKOTA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM: The University of South Dakota recently contracted with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program for the development of a psychology internship consortium. The BHP is working with the state to identify core partners for the internship, including the South Dakota Human Services Center in Yankton and other community-based partners. WICHE's work will extend from planning and development to supporting achieving accreditation of the internship program.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: WICHE is working in partnership with the University of Wisconsin through a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to provide education and training to graduate students, practitioners, educators, and trainers. These learning collaboratives will focus on the integration of substance use disorder and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery in rural communities. WICHE will provide expert trainers for a series of

six trainings over the course of 12 weeks, twice a year for the next four years. Many of the expert trainers will be provided in conjunction with the ongoing work of WICHE's Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP).

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 that might need WICHE President approval for which staff is actively seeking funding, prioritized as follows.

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

Project prioritization: ■ Relevance (mission critical) ■ Opportunity (funding) ■ Competence (staff/consultants)

PROJECT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	GEO COPE	FUNDING	STAFF FTE/TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Alaska Psychiatric Institute Regulatory Compliance - Technical Assistance	W/S; V/A	■ ■ ■	Western	\$197,100	5 years	State of Alaska

ALASKA PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE: Through a competitive bid process, the WICHE BHP was awarded a contract by the state of Alaska to provide technical assistance to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) to help maintain compliance with regulating agencies by performing reviews and providing guidance on how to address shortcomings in policies and execution. The project is scheduled to begin July 1, 2023, and the contract can be renewed for up to four additional years.

Potential Future Projects

Work that staff is considering pursuing:

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY – TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED SUPERVISION OF POST-GRADUATE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has asked WICHE for a proposal to complete an analysis of state policies related to use of telehealth technology to supervise new professionals seeking hours of supervised practice for licensure. WICHE BHP would prepare a literature review, and review requirements in other rural states. Currently, Alaska licensure requires all such postgraduate supervised practice to be delivered in-person and face-to-face. This creates a burden for many remote locations in the state. WICHE BHP would author a policy analysis paper, and present findings to the licensure boards in Alaska.

COLORADO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The state of Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) has approached WICHE regarding an opportunity for the BHP to provide technical assistance on the establishment of a Behavioral Health Aide Program in Colorado. The WICHE BHP has unique expertise in the development and operation of the Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program, and multiple states are considering replicating this program to address workforce shortages. WICHE would provide technical assistance to the Colorado BHA in its efforts to establish a similar program.

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. As part of its pandemic-related budget strategy, the state of Hawaii eliminated funding for this contract. However, the workforce need is still critical, and the state has indicated its interest in re-establishing this successful recruitment effort.

HAWAI'I PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIUM – EXPANSION: The state of Hawai'i is considering an expansion of the Hawai'i Psychology Internship program by placing additional interns at several new sites, including the Hawai'i State Hospital.

MERCY CARE ARIZONA EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES (EBPS): WICHE is planning to provide training, education, and guidance concerning adult EBPs and fidelity tools to ensure Mercy Care AZ provider staff offers high-quality EBPs and to ensure fidelity to identified EBPs protocols. Additionally, WICHE will provide Evidence Based Practices Training for providers, paraprofessionals, and family members serving infant, child, adolescent, and transitional-age youth populations with developmental delays/disabilities, social/emotional disorders, and/or who are engaged in the foster care system.

STUDENT WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH: WICHE continues to seek opportunities and funding to partner with the WICHE Policy unit and the Lumina Foundation to support and improve college student wellness and mental health, with the goal of improving college completion and degree attainment for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or mental health status.

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

Completed Projects

Work that staff completed in FY 2023:

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE ASSESSMENT: The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), in conjunction with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, contracted with the WICHE BHP to assess ANTHC's Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) Program. The BHP assessed the efficacy of the BHA training program in the provision of training and technical assistance to Alaska Tribal Health Organizations. The BHP produced a written report emphasizing the strengths of the BHA Program, areas for improvement, and recommended changes.

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).

AVONDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-ACCREDITATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: The WICHE BHP supported the Avondale Elementary School District's re-accreditation of its Doctoral School Psychology Internship Program by providing technical assistance in its submission of re-accreditation to the American Psychological Association.

MONTANA CRISIS SYSTEM: The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assess and make recommendations regarding Montana's implementation of its Mobile Crisis System, including an assessment of individual crisis-stabilization facilities, existing mobile crisis response teams, and its crisis-system data reporting and technology solutions. In addition to a high-level statewide assessment, the BHP also assessed seven county-based crisis services.

SOUTH DAKOTA HUMAN SERVICES CENTER OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE I: The South Dakota Department of Social Services contracted with the WICHE BHP to assist the state in establishing the optimal capacity and patient programming at the South Dakota Human Services Center.

SOUTH DAKOTA HSC OPTIMAL CAPACITY REVIEW – PHASE II: Provided policy guidance, technical assistance, and support for the implementation of focused programming and staffing models.

COLLABORATIONS ACROSS WICHE UNITS

Current Activities – Ongoing Services and Resources

Focus: **A/F** Affordability and Finance **A/S** Access & Success **W/S** Workforce & Society **I** Innovation **V/A** Value & Accountability

PROJECT	FOCUS	UNITS*	ACTIVITY CATEGORY	DETAILS OF COLLABORATION
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	A/S; W/S; I; V/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 and territories take advantage of legitimately innovative and disruptive ideas while also protecting students from predatory practices of substandard providers. WICHE will also develop and execute a major education campaign to share findings and lessons from these states and territories with policymakers across the country.
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders*	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; 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	Projects and Initiatives (variously funded)	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.
Intermediaries for Scale Partnership	A/F; A/S; 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 was previously selected 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 opportunities fit with WICHE's mission and staff expertise.
No Holding Back: Using Data to Review and Revise Administrative Hold Policies among Public Postsecondary Institutions in the Western Region*	A/S; A/F	Programs and Services, Policy Analysis and Research	Projects and Initiatives (grant-funded)	WICHE's Programs and Services unit and Policy Analysis and Research unit are collaborating with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions to provide institutions in the West with tools to (re)evaluate their administrative hold policies to improve student success and to better use their data in policy formation.
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.

* Project is currently funded

ACTION ITEM: Affirmation of Codes of Ethics for the Commission, President, and Staff

Background

The WICHE Commission, President, and staff are expected to abide by a Code of Ethics. The WICHE Commission should review and affirm the Codes of Ethics annually. Below are the three Codes of Ethics with suggested changes to account for the Pacific Island membership and the associated adjustment to the WICHE mission, as well as one edit for consistency.

COMMISSION CODE OF ETHICS

The Western Regional Education Compact calls upon commissioners appointed by each participating state **and Pacific Island members** to oversee the development of WICHE's programs in order to strengthen higher education's contribution to the social and economic life of the region. Ethical practices are essential to the creation, implementation, and continued operation of effective, equitable programs that benefit the **citizens residents** of the West.

It is essential that WICHE espouse its own standards of ethical conduct since codes differ by state and do not apply to an interstate agency such as WICHE. In this regard, each WICHE commissioner agrees individually to:

- ▶ Fulfill his or her responsibilities in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, dignity, fairness, and civility.
- ▶ Act in an informed, competent, and responsible manner, and with due diligence to provisions of the Western Regional Education Compact, the WICHE Bylaws, and the approved policies and procedures of the organization.
- ▶ Avoid possible conflicts of interest between his or her responsibilities as a state-appointed official and the policies, procedures, and operations of the multistate organization. Should a potential conflict arise, a commissioner has the responsibility to disclose this to the Commission and to recuse herself or himself for any discussion or actions with regard to the potential conflict of interest.
- ▶ Foster high standards of professional and ethical conduct within WICHE and the Commission.
- ▶ Support the principles of due process and civil and human rights of all individuals while being vigilant to resolve circumstances of discrimination, inequity, inappropriate behavior, harassment, or abuse within WICHE.
- ▶ Assure that allegations of ethics violations raised by any staff person or **citizen resident** served by WICHE concerning a member of the staff or commission are thoroughly investigated and resolved.
- ▶ Refrain from accepting duties, incurring obligations, accepting gifts or favors of monetary value, or engaging in private business or professional activities where there is, or would appear to be, a conflict between the commissioner's personal interests and the interests of WICHE or its members **or affiliated states**.
- ▶ Avoid exploiting his or her position for personal gain through the use of political, social, religious, economic, or other influence.
- ▶ Obey local, state, and national laws and to pursue any changes in those laws, policies, and regulations only through legal, ethical, and otherwise appropriate means.
- ▶ Support this WICHE Code of **Ethics Conduct** as a fundamental underpinning for the values, the decisions, and the actions of the commission and the organization.

WICHE PRESIDENT CODE OF ETHICS

A Code of Ethics has been adopted by the commission for the president. It is as follows:

The president is the chief executive officer of the commission, as stated in the Bylaws for WICHE. The president's ethical practices are essential to the creation, implementation, and continued operation of effective, equitable programs that benefit the **citizens residents** of the West.

It is essential that WICHE espouse its own standards of ethical conduct, since codes differ by state and may not apply to an interstate agency such as WICHE. In this regard, the president agrees to:

- ▶ Fulfill his or her responsibilities in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, dignity, fairness, and civility.
- ▶ Act in an informed, competent, and responsible manner, and adhere with due diligence to provisions of the Western Regional Education Compact, the WICHE Bylaws, and the approved policies and procedures of the organization.
- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest between his or her responsibilities and the policies, procedures, and operations of WICHE; and through policies, procedures, and actions ensure the appropriate ethical conduct of the WICHE staff.
- ▶ Disclose any potential conflict of interest, should one ever arise, to the officers of the Commission.
- ▶ Support principles of due process and civil and human rights for all individuals, while being vigilant to resolve circumstances of discrimination, inequity, inappropriate behavior, harassment, or abuse within WICHE.
- ▶ Refrain from accepting duties, incurring obligations, accepting gifts or favors of monetary value, or engaging in private business or professional activities where there is, or would appear to be, a conflict between the president's personal interests and the interests of WICHE or its members.
- ▶ Avoid exploiting his or her position for personal gain through the use of political, social, religious, economic, or other influence.
- ▶ Obey local, state, and national laws and pursue any changes in those laws, policies, and regulations only through legal, ethical, and otherwise appropriate means.
- ▶ Support this WICHE Code of Ethics as a fundamental underpinning for the values, the decisions, and the actions of the commission and the organization.

Staff members believing that the president may have breached this code of ethics have a responsibility to seek appropriate **remedy remedies** including referring the potential breach to the officers of the Commission.

WICHE STAFF CODE OF ETHICS

WICHE staff ethical practices are essential to the creation, implementation, and continued operation of effective, equitable programs that benefit the **citizens residents** of the West.

It is essential that WICHE espouse its own standards of ethical conduct since codes differ by state and may not apply to an interstate agency such as WICHE. In this regard, it is crucial for WICHE staff **members** to:

- ▶ Fulfill their responsibilities in a professional manner with honesty, integrity, dignity, fairness, and civility.
- ▶ Act in an informed, competent, and responsible manner, and with due diligence to provisions of the Western Regional Education Compact, the WICHE Bylaws, and the approved policies and procedures of the organization.
- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest between their responsibilities and the policies, procedures, and operations of WICHE. Through policies, procedures, and actions, ensure appropriate ethical conduct. If staff members have any question whether a situation is a conflict of interest, (s)he should discuss the matter with their supervisor. If it remains unresolved, refer the matter to the president for final determination.
- ▶ Should a potential conflict arise for any staff member, he or she has the responsibility to disclose this to their immediate supervisor.
- ▶ Foster high standards of professional and ethical conduct within WICHE and with external interactions.
- ▶ Support the principles of due process and civil and human rights of all individuals, while being vigilant to resolve circumstances of discrimination, inequity, inappropriate behavior, harassment, or abuse within WICHE.

- ▶ Refrain from accepting duties, incurring obligations, accepting gifts or favors of monetary value, or engaging in private business or professional activities where there is, or would appear to be, a conflict between the staff member's personal interests and the interests of WICHE or its members **or affiliated states**. Activities directly related to WICHE business, such as business dinners with colleagues or vendors, are not considered to be a conflict of interest.
- ▶ Avoid exploiting his or her position for personal gain through the use of political, social, religious, economic, or other influence.
- ▶ Obey local, state, and national laws and pursue any changes in those laws, policies, and regulations only through legal, ethical, and otherwise appropriate means.
- ▶ Support this WICHE Code of Ethics as a fundamental underpinning for the values, the decisions, and the actions of the commission and the organization.

Action Requested

President Michelau is asking the WICHE Commission to reaffirm the Codes of Ethics for the WICHE Commission, President, and staff.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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WICHE REGIONAL FACT SHEET

2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR

\$583.1M
TOTAL SAVED

by students in AY 2022
through WICHE Student
Access Programs

\$520.8M
SAVED
through WUE
AY 2022

\$48.1M
SAVED
through WRGP
AY 2022

\$14.2M
SAVED
through PSEP
AY 2022

WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE



WUE

Saves **UNDERGRADUATE** students on out-of-state tuition. They pay no more than 150% of in-state tuition at partner institutions across the West.

46,110
STUDENTS

chose WUE schools in the West

\$11,294
AVERAGE SAVINGS
for undergraduate students

WESTERN REGIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM



WRGP

Saves students on out-of-state **GRADUATE** certificate, master's, and doctoral programs. They pay no more than 150% of in-state tuition at partner institutions across the West.

3,269
STUDENTS

chose WRGP schools in the West

\$14,703
AVERAGE SAVINGS
for graduate students

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM



PSEP

Helps students pursuing careers in **10 HEALTH FIELDS**. They can enroll in programs in the WICHE region and receive substantial tuition support from their home state/territory.

10 WICHE states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands **invested \$14.2 million to grow their healthcare workforce and reduced the educational costs of 559 students.**

More than **120 accredited programs** are offered through PSEP at **62 institutions.**

A student can save between \$34,900 and \$136,700 on tuition over the lifespan of a professional health degree program, depending on the field of study.

Regional collaboration



WICHE brings together senior academic leaders to foster dialogue about issues facing individual institutions through its leadership and professional development networks.

WESTERN ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACADEMIC LEADERS The Alliance is a consortium of leaders at community colleges, technical schools, and systems and state governing and coordinating boards associated with two-year institutions.

WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP FORUM

The Forum is a consortium of academic officers at four-year institutions, including those awarding bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as chief executives and chief academic officers for systems and state governing boards.

WESTERN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

is a year-long professional development program for academic leaders aspiring to become chief academic officers in the WICHE region's postsecondary sector.

NO HOLDING BACK Twelve WICHE institutions are participating in a community of practice in which institutions are analyzing data and revising policies related to transcript and student holds in 2022-23.

INTERSTATE PASSPORT® is a national network of institutions that simplifies the transfer process, as well as saves students time and money as they successfully complete their degree.

COSTS-SAVINGS PROGRAMS Thanks to collaboration with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), one of four U.S. regional higher education compacts, WICHE-region educational institutions, nonprofits, and public education entities can benefit from three programs: MHECtech, which provides competitively bid purchasing contracts for an array of hardware, software, and technology services; MHECare, which provides a student health insurance plan and teletherapy services; and a MHEC Cyber Insurance Program, which offers risk transfer and advisory solutions.

STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT

(SARA) is a voluntary agreement that provides reciprocity for the state authorization of distance education. WICHE Commissioners have been strong advocates for protecting the state voice in important governance decisions affecting this agreement and staff continue to support participating states and improving student protections while bolstering access.

Optimal behavioral healthcare



WICHE Behavioral Health Program's (BHP) fastest-growing initiative is the **PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP CONSORTIA**, which helps build the behavioral health workforce pipeline, particularly in rural or remote areas. WICHE contributes an administrative framework, American Psychological Association accreditation, and other support for consortia across the WICHE region, which include:

- ▶ Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium (AK-PIC)
- ▶ Guam Psychology Internship Consortium (GU-PIC)
- ▶ Hawai'i Psychology Internship Consortium (HI-PIC)
- ▶ Idaho Psychology Internship Consortium (Idaho-PIC)
- ▶ Nevada Psychology Internship Consortium (NV-PIC)
- ▶ New Mexico Psychology Internship Consortium (NM-PIC)
- ▶ Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Program (OSH-PIP)
- ▶ Utah Psychology Internship Consortium (UT-PIC)

RURAL COMMUNITIES OPIOID RESPONSE PROGRAM

(RCORP) is a multiyear initiative supported by the Health Resources & Services Administration to identify treatment barriers and best practices for preventing and treating substance use disorder. BHP provides technical assistance to 76 grantees across the U.S., supporting 36 grantees in the WICHE region.

TOGETHER WITH VETERANS (TWV) – RURAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

enlists rural Veterans and local partners to join forces to reduce Veteran suicide in their own community. Funded by the US Department of Veterans Affairs and administered by the WICHE BHP, TWV provides communities with individualized coaching, tools, training, technical assistance, and resources to implement the program in their own communities. The BHP supports 35 rural communities as far east as New Hampshire and as far west as Guam, and of those, supports 11 rural communities in the WICHE region.

WICHE BHP, in partnership with the University of North Dakota College of Education and Human Development and with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), co-administers the **MOUNTAIN PLAINS MENTAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER (MP-MHTTC)**. The MP-MHTTC provides comprehensive training, resources, and technical assistance to mental health providers and other practitioners in the SAMHSA Region 8. Region 8 is comprised of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

In October 2022, WICHE BHP was awarded a multiyear grant from SAMHSA to establish the **MOUNTAIN PLAINS RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (MP ROTAC)**. The MP ROTAC develops and disseminates resources, training, and technical assistance that focuses on opioid and stimulant misuse in rural areas throughout SAMHSA's Region 8.

Sound public policy



KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR is the leading U.S. resource for projections of college-ready students. *Knocking*, which includes a quadrennial publication with additional analysis, is essential for postsecondary policymakers, planning and workforce efforts, and economic development. Visit knocking.wiche.edu to access reports, interactive dashboards, webinars, presentations, as well as state-level data.

DATA RESOURCES WICHE offers curated data and policy resources to support better-informed decision-making. WICHE's research projects and collaborations cover postsecondary completion, health workforce development, behavioral health in postsecondary education, open educational resources (OER), state finance, prior learning assessment, and more.

- ▶ **Tuition and Fees in the West** includes tuition, fees, and enrollment data about 350+ public institutions in the West.
- ▶ **Benchmarks: WICHE Region** presents information on the West's progress in improving access to, success in, and financing of higher education.
- ▶ Data on over 35 indicators in WICHE's **Regional Fact Book for Higher Education in the West**.

DATA EXPERTS WICHE staff provide analysis on finance, financial aid, articulation and transfer, strategic planning, student demographics, and more, as well as host peer-to-peer calls of state, system, and institutional chief academic officers to identify areas of potential collaboration and resource sharing across the West.



Innovative solutions

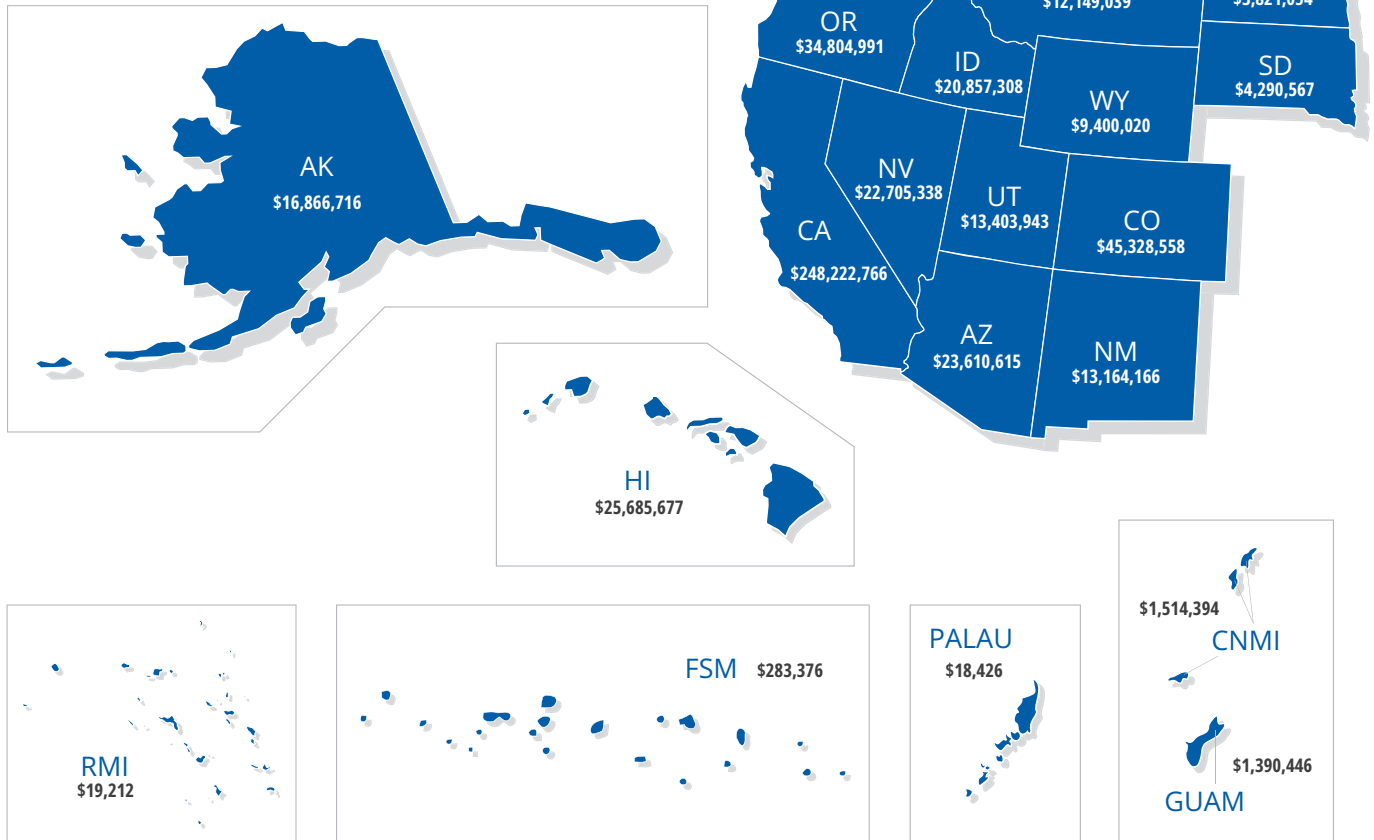
WCET – THE WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Its growing membership includes institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in all U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. See wcet.wiche.edu/current-members for a complete list.

STATE AUTHORIZATION NETWORK (SAN) helps guide institutions through state regulations around online courses and programs. See wcetsan.wiche.edu/member-institutions-organizations for a complete list.

WICHE has convened the **OERWEST NETWORK**, which is part of a nationwide collaborative to scale the development and adoption of free course materials. Open educational resources (OER) have shown promise in improving student outcomes, particularly for poverty-affected students, for whom the high cost of textbooks can be a barrier to postsecondary success.

WICHE Region

\$583,087,208 = Total student savings through WICHE's Student Access Programs AY 2022



WICHE Commission April 2023

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Ellen Junn
Robert Shireman

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Dave Lent

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Sheila Stearns

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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 residents of the West. WICHE's 48 commissioners, who are appointed by the governors of the 15 Western states and U.S. Pacific Territories and the presidents of the 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.

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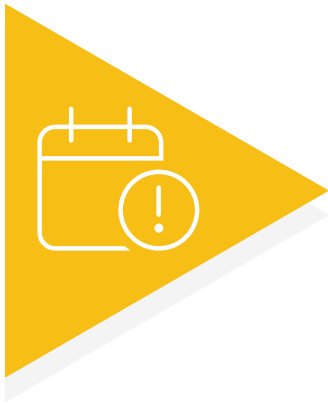
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Future Commission Meeting Dates

- ▶ November 9-10, 2023 – California
- ▶ May 6-7, 2024 – Nevada
- ▶ November 14 -15, 2024 – Hawai'i
- ▶ May 5-6, 2025 – Utah
- ▶ November 13-14, 2025 – Colorado

2023 COMMISSION COMMITTEES

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Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair
Susan Anderson (AK)
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Robert Shireman (CA)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

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Dave Lent (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
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Ben Cannon (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)
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Kevin Carman (WY)

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John Morton (HI)
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Danita Bye (ND)
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Diana VanderWoude (SD)
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Dave Woolstenhulme (UT)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

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Jim Chavez (CO)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Camille Preus (OR)

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Susan Anderson (AK)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Camille Preus (OR)

Special Committees

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Clayton Christian (MT)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED EDUCATION (EDTECH) COMMITTEE

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David Lassner (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Fred Lokken (NV)
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April 2023

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3731 Edison Court
Cheyenne, WY 82009
☎: 307.630.0582
✉: Landon.Brown@wyoleg.gov

Senator Wendy Schuler (appointed 2023)

Wyoming State Senate
200 Liberty Avenue
Evanston, WY 82930
☎: 307.679.6774
✉: Wendy.Schuler@wyoleg.gov

Representative Art Washut (appointed 2023)

Wyoming House of Representatives
4031 Crystie Lane
Casper, WY 82609
☎: 307.251.4725
✉: Art.Washut@wyoleg.gov

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 Elksholder, Accounting Specialist
Diane Haslett, Accountant I

COMMUNICATIONS

Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications
Joseph Garcia, Graphic Designer
Nathaniel Longmore, Digital Communications Coordinator

HUMAN RESOURCES

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Bonny Godoy, Human Resources Administrator

IT SERVICES

Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services
Chris Cartwright, IT Systems Engineer

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President
Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access Programs
Cherie Curtin, Senior Administrative Coordinator
Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director of Operations & Leadership Initiatives
Kate Springsteen, Assistant Director of Student Access Programs
Olivia Tufo, Member Services Coordinator
Ray Vann, Administrative Assistant III
Carmelia Naranjo, Program Manager

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 Manager, W-SARA
Melissa Sanders, Administrative Assistant III
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, WICHE State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-Director, Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)
Jason Alves, Director of Veterans Initiatives
Genevieve Berry, Project Manager, MHTTC
Erin Briley, MHTTC School Mental Health Coordinator
Madison Chamberlain, Data Specialist
Janell Daly, Senior Administrative Coordinator
Jasmine Davis, Technical Assistance Associate
Karly Dickinson, Psychologist - Technical Assistance Associate
Nicole Eastin, Fidelity Reviewer (AZ)
Ashley Fortier, Technical Assistance Lead - Psychologist
John Gomez, Director of Operations
Vanessa Gonzalez, Technical Assistance Associate
Andie Hancock, Budget Coordinator
Todd Helvig, Director of Education and Training
Heather Holladay, Project Coordinator
Ann Jones, Director of Research and Evaluation
Sarah Jordon, Together with Veterans Program Manager
Mikayla Nelson, Administrative Assistant III, Together With Veterans
Bobbi Perkins, Technical Expert Lead, Rural Communities Opioid Response Project
Annette Robertson, Senior EPB Fidelity Reviewer (AZ)
Allison Treu, Quality Assurance and Fidelity Reviewer
Ivory Tubbs, Technical Expert Lead, Rural Communities Opioid Response Project
Jessica Jones, Project Manager, Rural Opioid Technical Assistance – Regional Center of Excellence
Margie DeAnda, Administrative Assistant II
Madison Dupre, Administrative Assistant III

WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES (WCET)

Russell Poulin, Executive Director, WCET, and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education

Jenni Atwood, Grant Manager, Every Learner Everywhere

Rosa Calabrese, Manager, Digital Design

Emilie Cook, Manager, Communications, Every Learner Everywhere

Laura DaVinci, Interim Director, Every Learner Everywhere

Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET, and Service Design and Strategy Officer, Every Learner Everywhere

Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, State Authorization Network & WCET Policy Innovations

Lindsey Downs, Assistant Director, Communications and Community

Leigha Fletcher, Administrative Assistant III

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, Every Learner Everywhere

Kathryn Kerensky, Director, Digital Learning, Policy and Compliance

Kim Nawrocki, Assistant Director, Events and Programs

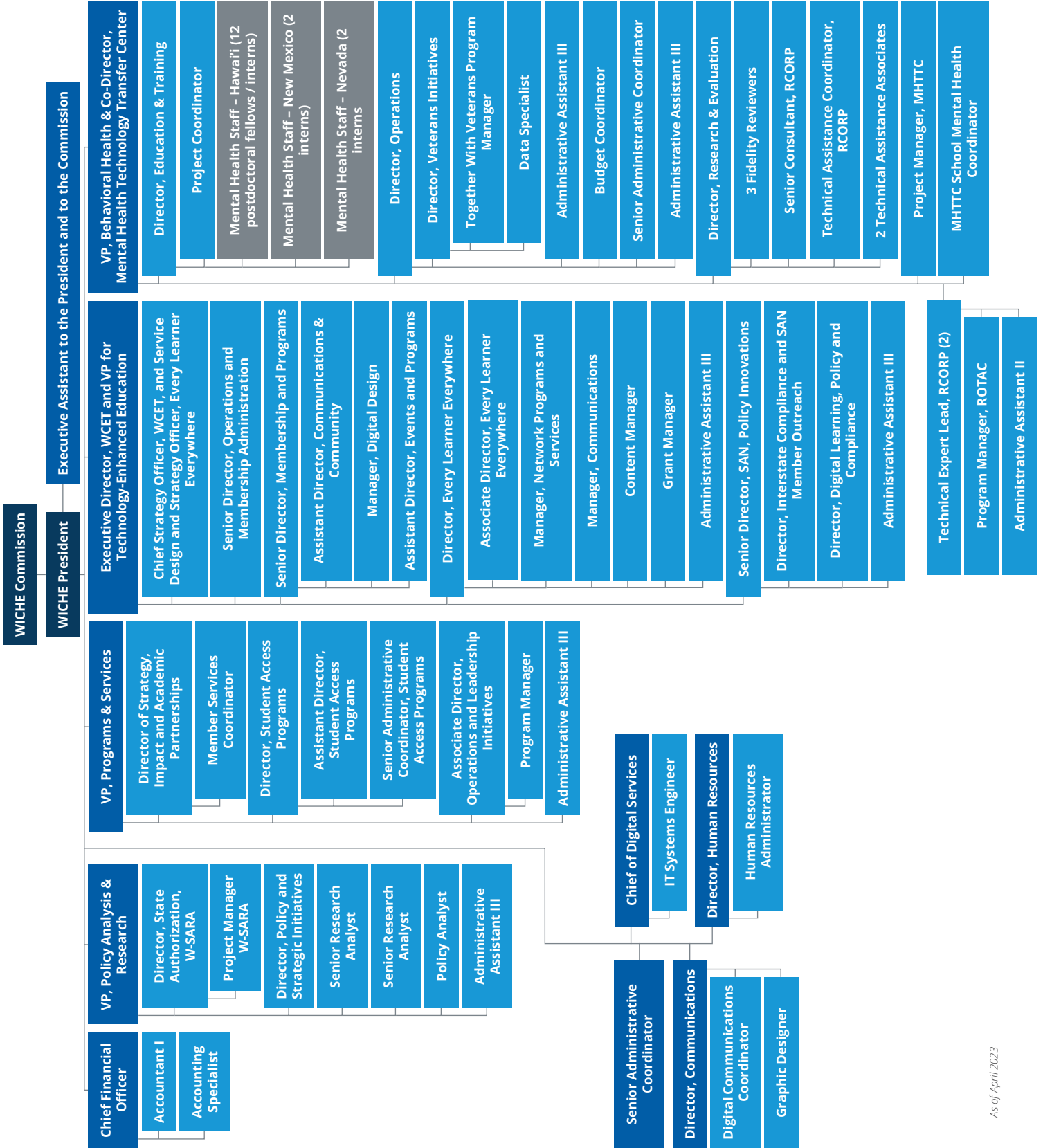
Patricia O'Sullivan, Content Manager, Every Learner Everywhere

Megan Raymond, Senior Director, Membership and Programs

Jana Walser-Smith, Director, Interstate Compliance and SAN Member Outreach

April 2023

WICHE ORGANIZATION

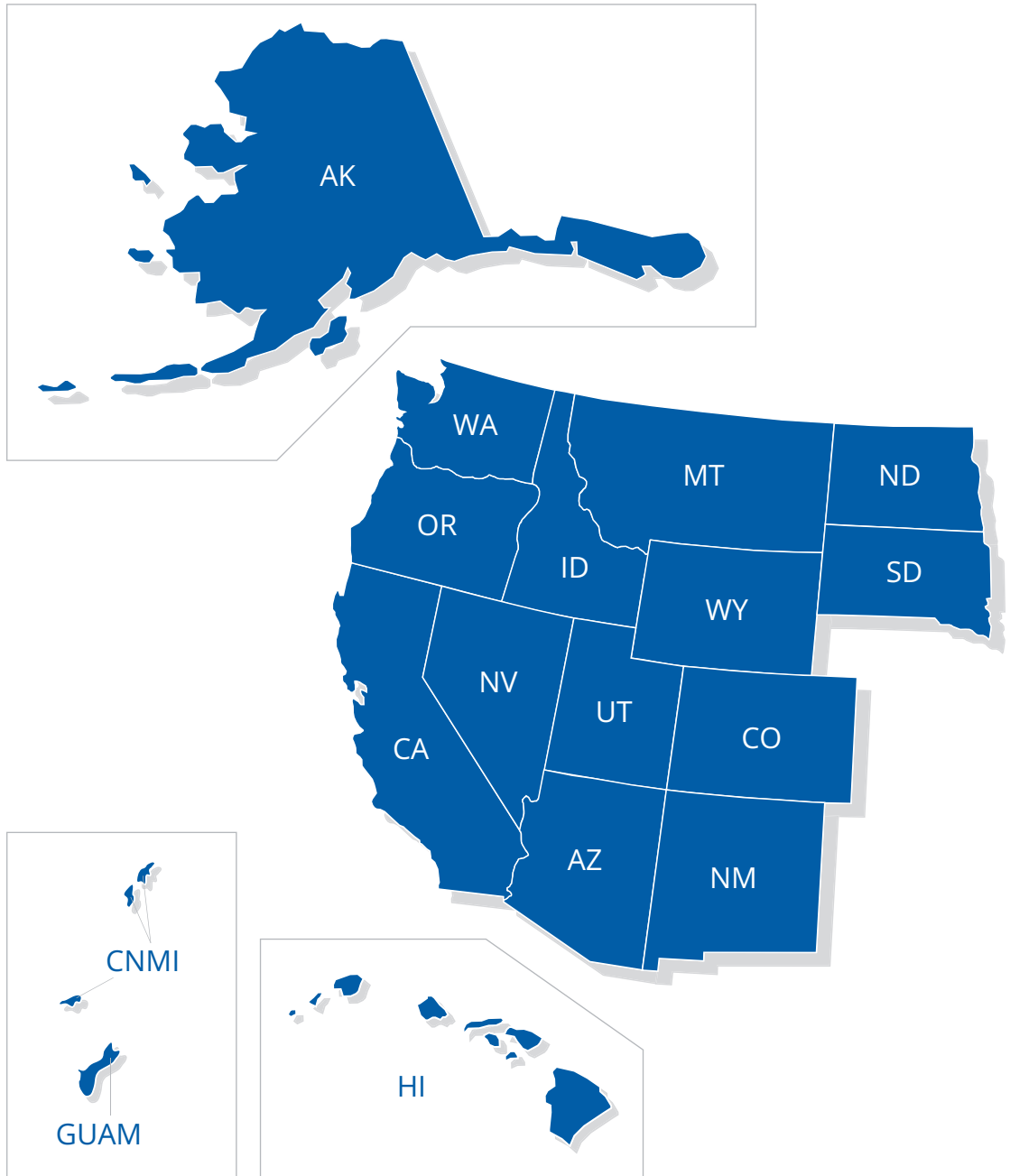


As of April 2023

WICHE REGION

WICHE STATES

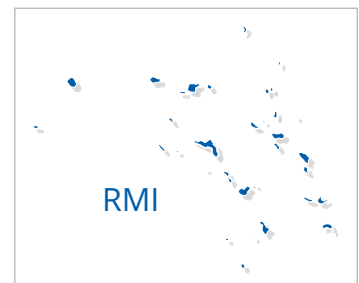
- Alaska (AK)
- Arizona (AZ)
- California (CA)
- Colorado (CO)
- Hawai'i (HI)
- Idaho (ID)
- Montana (MT)
- Nevada (NV)
- New Mexico (NM)
- North Dakota (ND)
- Oregon (OR)
- South Dakota (SD)
- Utah (UT)
- Washington (WA)
- Wyoming (WY)



U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES & FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
- Guam
- Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)
- Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
- Republic of Palau

*Not to scale



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	mirecc.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

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	wpscha.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 joining us in Phoenix, Arizona, for the Spring Commission Meeting and helping us mark the founding of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) in 1953. WICHE was born out of a desire for interstate collaboration and resource-sharing, and this idea continues to endure 70 years later. This spring has been busy with in-person visits across the West, and I hope to meet with more of our friends and partners in the coming year. I am certain that our founders would be pleased with the vision, leadership, and good works of the WICHE Commission today and, on behalf of the entire WICHE staff, I can say that we are excited for what lies ahead.

*I look forward to when we can connect again at the Fall Commission Meeting, which will be held in California on **November 9-10, 2023**. Keep doing great things!*

*- **Demi Michelau**, WICHE President*

