

COMMISSION MEETING

November 9-10, 2023 | Riverside, California

AGENDA AND MEETING MATERIALS



“Innovating” for
Student Success and
Institutional Sustainability

WICHE COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

“Innovating” for Student Success and Institutional Sustainability

November 9-10, 2023

Marriott Riverside at the Convention Center

Riverside, California

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Noon

*Private Dining Room
Lobby Level of Hotel*

Optional Lunch for New Commissioners, Certifying Officers, and WICHE Staff

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Regency Ballroom

New Commissioner Orientation

6:00 p.m.

Meet in Hotel Lobby

Dinner for New Commissioners

WICHE Officers and new WICHE Commissioners are invited to dinner at *Palenque Kitchen by Mezcal*: 3737 Main St., Riverside, CA 92501

Thursday, November 9, 2023

7:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Orange Crest

Full Breakfast Available for Commissioners, Staff, and Guests

8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

Regency Ballroom

Executive Committee Meeting (Open Session)

1-1

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Grand Ballroom

Welcome and Opening Remarks

2-1

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Grand Ballroom

PLENARY SESSION: “Innovation” and What It Means for Students and Postsecondary Institutions in the West

3-1

Facilitator: Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Speaker: Kim A. Wilcox, Chancellor, University of California, Riverside

10:30 - 10:45 a.m.

Break

10:45 a.m. - Noon

Regency Ballroom

Programs and Services Committee Meeting

4-1

10:45 a.m. - Noon

Embassy

Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting

5-1

10:45 a.m. - Noon <i>University</i>	Behavioral Health Committee Meeting	6-1
10:45 a.m. - Noon <i>Imperial</i>	EdTech Committee Meeting	7-1
Noon - 1:15 p.m. <i>Orange Crest</i>	Networking Lunch	
<i>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.</i>		
1:15 - 2:30 p.m. <i>Regency Ballroom</i>	Roundtable 1 (Access & Success; Innovation) Changing the Face of Higher Education: The Popularity of Digital Learning and Three-Year Degrees	8-1
	Facilitators: Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education Kathryn Kerensky, Director, Digital Learning, Policy, and Compliance, WCET	
1:15 - 2:30 p.m. <i>Embassy</i>	Roundtable 2 (Workforce & Society; Innovation) Staffing Innovations in a Challenging New Era	8-1
	Facilitators: Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, State Authorization Network and WCET Policy Innovations Jory Hadsell, Vice Chancellor and Chief Technology Officer, Foothill-De Anza Community College District	
1:15 - 2:30 p.m. <i>Imperial</i>	Roundtable 3 (Access & Society; Workforce & Society; Innovation) Behavioral Health on Campus: Lessons from the WICHE Regional Summit	8-1
	Facilitators: Liliana Diaz, Senior Policy Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Christina Sedney, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Policy Analysis and Research	
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Break	

2:45 - 4:15 p.m. <i>Grand Ballroom</i>	PLENARY SESSION – Artificial Intelligence in Postsecondary Education: Leveraging Advancements for Good and Guarding Against the Bad	9-1
	<p>Facilitators: Dave Edwards, Founder, Sonder Studio Helen Edwards, Founder, Sonder Studio, and Commissioner, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission</p> <p>Panelists: Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET and Service Design and Strategy Officer, Every Learner Everywhere Marlene Garcia, Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission</p>	
5:00 - 6:00 p.m. <i>Hotel Poolside Patio</i>	Networking Reception	10-1
6:00 p.m.	Dinner on your Own	

Friday, November 10, 2023

7:00 - 8:30 a.m. <i>Orange Crest</i>	Full Breakfast Available for Commissioners, Staff and Guests	
	State Delegations can meet over breakfast to discuss the Committee of the Whole—Action Items	
	<i>The WICHE Roundtables will be held again to allow commissioners the opportunity to attend another interactive discussion.</i>	
8:30 - 9:45 a.m. <i>Regency Ballroom</i>	Roundtable 1 (Access & Success; Innovation) Changing the Face of Higher Education: The Popularity of Digital Learning and Three-Year Degrees	8-1
	<p>Facilitators: Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education Kathryn Kerensky, Director, Digital Learning, Policy, and Compliance, WCET</p>	

8:30 - 9:45 a.m. **Roundtable 2 (Workforce & Society; Innovation)** **8-1**
Embassy **Staffing Innovations in a Challenging New Era**

Facilitators:

Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, State Authorization Network and WCET Policy Innovations

Jory Hadsell, Vice Chancellor and Chief Technology Officer, Foothill-De Anza Community College District

8:30 - 9:45 a.m. **Roundtable 3 (Access & Society; Workforce & Society; Innovation) 8-1**
Imperial **Behavioral Health on Campus: Lessons from the WICHE Regional Summit**

Facilitators:

Liliana Diaz, Senior Policy Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research

Christina Sedney, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Policy Analysis and Research

9:45 - 10:00 a.m. **Break**

10:00 - 11:15 a.m. **Committee of the Whole – Business Session** **11-1**
Grand Ballroom

11:15 - 11:45 a.m. **Roundtable Roundup**
Grand Ballroom

Facilitator:

President Demarée Michelau

11:45 a.m. **Closing Remarks**
 Commissioner Matt Freeman, WICHE Chair



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, November 9, 2023
8:00 – 8:45 a.m.
Regency Ballroom

Agenda

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

8:00 -

8:45 a.m.

Regency
Ballroom

Committee Members

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair

Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair

David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair

Pearl Brower (AK)

Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)

Robert Shireman (CA)

Clayton Christian (MT)

Fred Lokken (NV)

Barbara Damron (NM)

Kyle Davison (ND)

Hilda Rosselli (OR) *proxy for Ben Cannon*

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 SEPTEMBER 14, 2023, EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES**

1-2

Discussion Item

**A PRIMER ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND INTERESTED COMMISSIONERS**

Facilitators:

Dave Edwards, Founder, Sonder Studio

Helen Edwards, Founder, Sonder Studio, and Commissioner, Oregon Higher
Education Coordinating Commission

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the September 14, 2023, Executive Committee Videoconference Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Committee Members Absent

Pearl Brower (AK)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Ann Millner (UT)

Other Commissioners Present

Bill Soules (NM)

Staff Present

Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access Programs, Programs and Services
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and the Commission
Ray Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Demarée Michelau, WICHE President
Craig Millburn, Chief Financial Officer

Guests

Brian Prescott, President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)
Sara Torres Lugo, Research Associate, NCHEMS
Nate Talley, Chief Financial Officer, Utah System of Higher Education

Call to Order

Chair Matt Freeman called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. MDT. Roll was called, and a quorum was confirmed.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 24, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Freeman requested comments on or corrections to the August 24, 2023, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were no comments or corrections. Chair Freeman declared the minutes approved as submitted.

Information Items

NEW COMMISSIONER

President Michelau reported that a new commissioner, representing Oregon, has been appointed since the August 24, 2023, Executive Committee meeting. She is Lisa Skari the president of Mt. Hood Community College.

Information Items

SARA POLICY MODIFICATION PROCESS UPDATE

Chair Freeman asked Patrick Lane to give an update on the SARA policy modification process. Lane noted that each regional compact must approve any proposed policy modification in order for it to advance for final consideration by the NC-SARA board. He reported that about 40 of the original 63 proposals were submitted to the regional compacts, six of which were approved by each compact's Regional Steering Committee (RSC). Two of the proposals were put forward to NC-SARA by the W-SARA RSC:

- ▶ One would require institutions to disclose any "adverse action against the institution and any investigation by an oversight entity related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability, student consumer protection policies or practices, or compliance with state and federal requirements within 30 days." A substantive public comment was submitted related to this proposal by a coalition of proprietary institutions that were strongly opposed for various reasons. The RSC was not convinced and with some minor adjustments approved the proposal, as did the other regions.
- ▶ The second proposal would marginally improve transparency, requiring public disclosure by NC-SARA about the reasons actions are taken against institutions.

Other approved proposals include:

- ▶ Allowing State Portal Entities (SPEs) to remove a provisional designation at any time after conditions to remedy the reason for such designation are satisfied
- ▶ Immediate removal of an institution with a financial score below 1.0
- ▶ Requiring NC-SARA to notify states when actions are taken against institutions
- ▶ Clarifying that arbitration agreements are to be applied for SARA-related issues.

A main topic of discussion for the RSC and others has been how the proposal process went and how it could be improved the next time. Among the suggestions made at the meeting were that the process be more formal, with adequate time for feedback earlier in the proposal submission process, and that proposers be given more time to build support and coalitions, and to fine-tune proposals as needed.

Chair Freeman asked for questions and discussion. Commissioner Robert Shireman said he was disappointed that there were no consumer-group proposals forwarded. He agrees that the process should allow more time for back-and-forth discussion and fine-tuning. Lane shared the concerns of Commissioner Shireman and others about the challenges of getting proposals moved forward, he also acknowledged how far the process has come in the past several years.

The process requires that the state voice is heard and considered, he noted, and building support within and among regions to address concerns was markedly better in the most recent proposal cycle. With 63 proposals, the magnitude of time required to review and discuss each one made it difficult to fully understand them and provide detailed feedback. A more fruitful approach would be to have back-and-forth discussions earlier in the process, thus allowing more time to improve the quality and the regulatory language in the proposals to avoid justified legal concerns.

Discussion Items

UPDATE ON THE PSEP REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Sarah Torres Lugo presented an update on the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) review and assessment that NCHEMS is conducting for WICHE. She noted that the purposes of the study are to:

- ▶ Assess participation in PSEP through the years
- ▶ Analyze workforce projections in relationship to educational supply in the WICHE region
- ▶ Identify potential additional programs for expansion of PSEP to meet the region's workforce needs.

The assessment approach consists of conducting data analysis, interviews, and focus groups. The NCHEMS team conducted interviews and focus groups to gather insights from WICHE staff and commissioners, PSEP certifying officers helping administer the program, and leaders of professional associations.

One key goal is to connect with key leaders in the Pacific territories and freely associated states to better represent WICHE members for whom comparable data are not publicly available. Gathering information from that segment of the WICHE membership is critical to fully understanding the entire region's workforce needs and how best to meet those needs.

Torres Lugo noted workforce demand and educational supply in current PSEP fields and workforce projections data in the most recent five years of IPEDS completions suggest there is a misalignment between the capacity of academic programs and projected workforce demand in the WICHE region.

She presented a summary of trends in PSEP participation and found:

- ▶ WICHE member participation in PSEP has varied over time and by field.
- ▶ There has been an average year-over-year percent change in PSEP graduates of -2% since 1986 (the peak year of number of graduates).
- ▶ There were 12% fewer PSEP graduates in 2022 than in 2013.
- ▶ Looking back over the past 20 years, there were 24% fewer PSEP graduates in 2022 than in 2003.

The WICHE members that are most reliant on PSEP to ensure residents have access to covered programs in a comparison between the years 2018 and 2022:

- ▶ Arizona funded of the most resident graduates in the past five years of data on PSEP graduates.
- ▶ Colorado has had the greatest growth in the number of resident graduates.
- ▶ Nevada has the greatest decline in the number of resident graduates.

The WICHE members that are most involved in supplying programs in PSEP in a comparison;

- ▶ Arizona graduated the most students through PSEP in a five-year average.
- ▶ Utah had the greatest growth in graduating students in the years between the years 2018 and 2022.
- ▶ Colorado had the greatest decline in graduating students between the years 2018 and 2022.

The research found that workforce demands in the WICHE region do align with current PSEP fields, although there are several overlapping workforce needs in the WICHE region at the postsecondary nondegree-and-above level in both healthcare and non-healthcare fields.

Commissioner Clayton Christian asked about WWAMI and WIMU and their relevance to the analysis since there are some states in the region, such as Montana, that may not participate in PSEP, but do have an option for its residents and make a substantial investment in WWAMI and WIMU. Including such bilateral programs would reflect that a state does have similar programming; not documenting this detail could be misleading as to what options a state provides for its residents. Brian Prescott agreed and said that currently, the Programs and Services unit has not requested that WWAMI, WIMU, and other bilateral programs be assessed and integrated into the analysis. However, the point is valid and could at least be acknowledged in the state breakdown of programs on the chart. Several other commissioners agreed that the bilateral programs should be included, to reflect where the bilateral programs do have a role and would more clearly show the investment a state is making in opportunities for its residents in certain medical fields.

The PSEP study resulted in two core questions outlined in the RFP for the study:

- ▶ What are key workforce needs impacting five or more states/territories?
- ▶ Which professional areas, including but not limited to healthcare, should be considered that may meet the region's current or future workforce needs?

Their study finds workforce demands in the WICHE region do align with current PSEP fields. An additional finding when looking at workforce projections data and completions data, is that there are several overlapping workforce needs in the WICHE region at the postsecondary nondegree and above in healthcare and non-healthcare fields.

Prescott summarized data related to the core questions. The PSEP study was primarily focused on workforce demands and programs that are aimed at solving workforce problems. The assessment took an expansive view of occupations to be considered for PSEP as anything that is a profession, or a career that is needed even if the profession does not require a graduate-level education; PSEP has traditionally only included graduate-level and higher professions. A list of high-demand professions that could be considered to be added to PSEP at the graduate level and higher include:

- ▶ Nurse Practitioners
- ▶ Rehabilitation Counselors
- ▶ Librarians and Media Collections Specialists
- ▶ Urban and Regional Planners
- ▶ Biochemists and Biophysicists
- ▶ Chiropractors
- ▶ Acupuncturists and Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners
- ▶ Curators

- ▶ Nurse Anesthetists
- ▶ Professional fields at the baccalaureate and below level.

Prescott indicated that the 10 fields that currently are included in PSEP are professions that are in demand in multiple states throughout the region. He acknowledged that Commissioner Ben Cannon's inquiry about behavioral health occupations in demand is valid, and the study should include the behavioral health field in the assessment.

The research has found that the extent to which states are relying on PSEP to provide students access to programs that are not offered in their home state is highly variable across the region. Some kind of exchange on the basis of the principles that underlie PSEP is still necessary and valuable in the WICHE region. He noted that although promoting the annual savings for participating students when justifying the role and value that PSEP plays in the region is important, so is promoting the value of accessibility to education and training needed for high-demand professions that meet the needs of workforce supply and development.

The research has found that awareness of the PSEP program is limited at times even within the programs that are served by PSEP. This study has proven that regularly evaluating the program is important.

Prescott gave the following recommendations:

- ▶ Gather and employ actionable data that lead to strategic decisions.
- ▶ Elevate focus on workforce needs in regularly scheduled WICHE Commission discussions about PSEP.
- ▶ Consider adjustments to criteria for program participation in PSEP. There are additional high-demand fields, such as nursing, that could be added to PSEP to specifically fill workforce needs.
- ▶ Engage occupationally specific advisory groups like VMAC for other PSEP fields.

Prescott and Torres Lugo will take the feedback from the preview of the study results during this Executive Committee meeting to refine the data presentation for the Programs and Services Committee meeting at the November Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Kathleen Goepfing thanked Chair Freeman for asking that the PSEP study and analysis be done and also commented on how effective program advisory groups can be. She was complimentary of the Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee (VMAC) that meets annually to discuss veterinary medicine programs across the WICHE region. The meetings are insightful, engaging, and robust with discussion, and the collaboration with vet schools across the region is invaluable.

Additional comments and requests about the presentation of the data include:

- ▶ State reports of the data. Prescott and Torres Lugo will discuss options with WICHE to determine what needs to be done to produce data reports.
- ▶ Commission discussions and collaboration to determine strategies for promoting PSEP funding and its value when requesting additional funding from state budgets. It was suggested that PSEP funding and WICHE dues should be separate line items in the state budgets.
- ▶ Identify programs at the baccalaureate or associate's level that are vital to solving workforce development problems and could be considered part of PSEP, even if it is initially in a pilot/test effort that includes monitoring effectiveness. Nursing is an example of a program that could be a good pilot effort.

- ▶ Pick several programs that are at capacity and research issues such as how many students were turned away, and what happened to them. Determine a way to recruit them back for a second chance at participating in the program.
- ▶ The study results validate that the way PSEP is structured and the 10 programs it currently encompasses are worthwhile and relevant to meeting a portion of the workforce needs of the WICHE region.
- ▶ There is a great need in the Pacific Island region for data to help determine how the Pacific Island members can be better served. A Pacific Island-centered focus group would be valuable in assessing need across the territories and freely associated states.
- ▶ Consider the type of minimum requirements that need to be in place for allowing institutions to participate in PSEP.
- ▶ How often should an analysis of PSEP be conducted?
- ▶ What process should be in place for the Pacific Island members to request that another field be added to PSEP based on their unique workforce needs?

WICHE COMMISSION MEETING AND DRAFT AGENDA

President Michelau reviewed key points of the November Commission Meeting agenda that have been developing since the August 2023, Executive Committee meeting. She said all speakers and facilitators had confirmed their participation in the meeting.

There were no questions about the agenda.

Other Business

Chair Freeman asked for other business, and there was none.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m. MDT.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Facilitators, Dave Edwards and Helen Edwards

Helen and Dave Edwards, of Bend, Oregon, specialize in empowering humans in this complex age of machines, data, and artificial intelligence (AI). They co-created *Artificiality*, a podcast, and other activities dedicated to understanding how humans and machines will co-evolve. Previously, they owned an AI company that was sold to Atlantic Media in 2016. Today, they are also researchers and educators at Sonder Studio,

working with a variety of international companies to help them make sense of the emerging AI world.

They co-authored *Make Better Decisions: How to Improve Your Decision-Making in the Digital Age*, which is focused on helping people understand decision biases and practice better decision-making techniques, particularly when AI and data are involved.

In addition, Helen Edwards is currently a commissioner on Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

WELCOME

and Opening Remarks

Thursday, November 9, 2023
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.
Grand Ballroom

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

9:00 -
9:30 a.m.

*Grand
Ballroom*

Agenda

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Matt Freeman (ID), WICHE Chair

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Commissioner Ellen Junn (CA)

WELCOME

Governor Gavin Newsom (INVITED)

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS, STAFF, AND GUESTS

REMINDER TO CAUCUS ON THE SELECTION OF 2024 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NEW COMMISSIONERS



Tom Begich (AK)

Tom Begich is the Executive Director of the Nick Begich Scholarship Intern Fund, a position he has held since 2002. Under Begich, the Fund, a public charity, has provided over \$530,000 in scholar support for students pursuing postsecondary degrees for careers in the fields of education and public service. He is also the owner/operator of CW Communications, a firm devoted to strategic planning, facilitation, and communications. Begich specializes in the areas of juvenile justice, education, substance abuse, and government relations. He has served as the Government Affairs Director for the Coalition for Education Equity. He is currently a faculty member and coach with Reclaiming Futures, a national juvenile justice/substance use/mental health initiative. Begich is a nationally recognized trainer/facilitator in the fields of justice, youth, substance abuse, mental health, and education, working extensively in Alaska and throughout the nation.

Begich is the former Alaska State Senator for District J. First elected in 2016; he was selected as Senate Minority Leader by his colleagues from 2018 to 2023. In the State Senate, he served on the Education, Health and Social Services, Rules, World Trade, and Ethics committees and helped found the Innovation Caucus.

Begich has served 20 years and three terms as chair of the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee and served in leadership positions for the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) from 1995 – 2008 and as National Chair in 1997. He is also a 2023 recipient of the John Dewey Award for Distinguished Public Service from his alma mater, Bard College. He is a published poet and professional musician with seven CDs and one book of poetry and continues to perform and write throughout the country.



Sean Parnell (AK)

Chancellor Sean Parnell leads the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), Alaska's largest institution of higher education. Since his appointment in 2021, the Chancellor has advanced UAA's role as Alaska's largest workforce provider, and the flagship university for health and Arctic public policy. Under his leadership, the university has pursued key initiatives focusing on college affordability, student success, and positioning UAA as a trusted community partner.

Prior to becoming Chancellor, Parnell was an attorney practicing law in Alaska for 25 years. Parnell served as the 10th Governor of the State of Alaska from 2009-2014. His leadership expanded funding for education, helped combat domestic violence and sexual assault, and lifted Alaska to record economic prosperity and employment. The Chancellor previously served in the Alaska State Legislature, and he was elected Lieutenant Governor in 2006.

Chancellor Parnell is a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University (BBA) and earned his juris doctor degree from Seattle University School of Law.



Todd Haynie (AZ)

President Todd Haynie's roots run deep in the area Eastern Arizona College serves. He was born in Morenci, lived in Payson, graduated from Thatcher High School, and is a proud alumnus of Eastern Arizona College. Prior to becoming the 22nd president of EAC in 2018, President Haynie worked in private industry as a producer for the Educational Management Group and as a software engineer for IBM. He was recruited by EAC to become an admissions counselor and was later promoted to the College's director of marketing and public relations.

Under his leadership, President Haynie has guided EAC through a comprehensive strategic planning process, launched new initiatives to strengthen programming in campus diversity, and transformed the College's approach to developmental education. President Haynie's guiding pillars for his administration are student success, community engagement, and financial responsibility. President Haynie was awarded a bachelor's degree in film studies from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in business administration from Northern Arizona University.

He serves in many roles within the community but considers the role of husband and father his greatest responsibility.



Lisa Skari (OR)

Dr. Lisa Skari currently serves as the President of Mt. Hood Community College, a role she has held since 2018. Prior to MHCC, she spent 26 years at Highline College in Washington in roles including adjunct faculty, mid-management positions in cooperative education/internships and budgeting, and as Vice President for Advancement.

She earned her master's degree in business administration from Pacific Lutheran University and her doctorate degree in education from Washington State University. Her research led to the development of a predictive model of community college alumni giving, for which she received the H.S. Warwick Award for Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation.

Prior to her work in community colleges, Dr. Skari spent seven years in the private sector in management, buying, and corporate training.



John Carmichael (WA)

Dr. John Carmichael was appointed as Evergreen's seventh president in 2021. Dr. Carmichael has deep ties to the college, earning a bachelor's and a master's of public administration from Evergreen. He joined the college's staff in 1998 as a secretary and served in a variety of roles for more than 20 years, including chief of staff and secretary to the Board of Trustees, and vice president for finance and operations. Dr. Carmichael earned a doctorate degree in education and human resource studies from Colorado

State University and attended Harvard's Finance for Senior Executives program. Dr. Carmichael is a lifelong Washington state resident and lives in Olympia with his husband, Michael Partlow.

In his role as president, Dr. Carmichael is responsible for engaging the campus, community, and external groups in promoting a liberal arts education and learning community models. He represents the college and helps develop and maintain a comprehensive vision for Evergreen's students, works to build relationships, strengthen partnerships, and collaborate with other college leaders to develop creative solutions.



Joseph Schaffer (WY)

Dr. Joe Schaffer considers himself a community college evangelist. Far from a success in his early college pursuits, an associate's degree changed his life for the better. In repayment, his professional commitment has been to strengthen the mission of the community college locally and nationally.

Dr. Schaffer currently serves as the President of Laramie County Community College (LCCC). LCCC is an aggressively innovative and comprehensive college with a main campus located in the state capital of Cheyenne, a branch campus in Laramie, and outreach sites located across Southeastern Wyoming. Since Dr. Schaffer's arrival at LCCC, the College has completed more than \$150 million in facility improvements, celebrated multiple record-setting graduating classes, and has seen the College's graduation rates increase by nearly 70%.

In addition to an associate's degree from Bemidji State University, he holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Montana, a master's degree in Technical Communication from Montana Tech, and a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Montana's College of Education and Human Sciences. Dr. Schaffer is an avid outdoorsman with a deep passion for hunting, fishing, and the great outdoors. At home, women rule his world, or at least that is what his lovely wife Brooke and daughters Samantha and Lia tell him.

PLENARY SESSION I

“Innovation” and What it Means for Students and
Postsecondary Institutions in the West

Thursday, November 9, 2023

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Grand Ballroom

PLENARY SESSION I

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

9:30 -

10:30 a.m.

*Grand
Ballroom*

“Innovation” and What It Means for Students and Postsecondary Institutions in the West

Innovation is increasingly viewed as the key to future success for every organization, including postsecondary institutions. Innovation does not happen by accident – it takes courage, inspiration, community, collaboration, and purpose – so ideas can grow beyond a buzzword in the pages of a strategic plan and instead come to life in tangible and measurable ways that support student access and success.

In this session, discover how innovation has the potential to re-energize your work and make higher education work for all students. Hear real-life examples of what university and college leaders, state policymakers, and other partners across the West are doing to spark and nurture cultures of innovation, what can stall or even suffocate these brave new worlds, and how to narrow the gap between the desire to be innovative and the ability to deliver on its promise.

FACILITATOR

Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon (CA)

SPEAKER

Kim A. Wilcox, Chancellor, University of California, Riverside

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Facilitator, Christopher Cabaldon (CA)

Christopher Cabaldon led West Sacramento as its mayor for a record-setting two decades, transforming what was a forgotten old industrial town into what is now the fast-growing, entrepreneurial city at the forefront of an emerging American metro—a story told in *Governing's* feature “Small City, Big Goals: How an Unconventional Mayor is Beating the System”. Cited as “America’s most interesting small city,” “America’s most livable small city,” and one of the world’s “21 Smart Cities to Watch,” West Sacramento, under his

leadership, deployed entrepreneurial strategies to tackle social challenges with how-did-a-little-city-do-that innovations. He is now mayor-in-residence at the Institute for the Future, senior fellow at the Center for Digital Government, and an advisory council member for the Kauffman Foundation and the DRK Foundation.

As the first mayor ever elected directly by the city’s voters, he led groundbreaking initiatives on urban farms, universal preschool, flood protection and floodplain management, college and career pathway internships, free college, sustainable land use, and next-gen transit and personal mobility—all of which have attracted national and international attention. He rapidly prototyped and implemented a pioneering automatic-enrollment initiative, sending a letter of college admission and free tuition to every graduating high school senior in the city. Globally, he has been a featured speaker at the World Urban Forum, the New Cities Summit, the Innovation Growth Lab, the World’s Fair/Expo, the Global Parliament of Mayors, and the Mayors’ Food Policy Compact.

At the U.S. Conference of Mayors, he chaired the Jobs, Education and the Workforce Committee, leading the work of the nation’s mayors on youth employment, college and career pathways, early learning, digital badging, and rebooting workforce development to meet the disruptive impact of trade and technology. He was the inaugural chair of the national LGBTQ Mayors Alliance, and former chair of the Asian/Pacific and LGBT caucuses of the League of California Cities. His journey out of the closet was the subject of an episode of the Logo network’s internationally syndicated Coming Out Stories series. A column on gay marriage that he wrote for USA Today with Julian Castro and Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was cited as evidence of changing social norms in cases cementing marriage equality in U.S. jurisprudence. He has also written columns and op-eds for the Los Angeles Times, Sacramento Bee, and Atlanta Journal-Constitution. A deeply personal profile in *Behind Closed Doors*, published in 2017, by *Comstock’s Magazine*, told the story of trauma, loss, and tragedy beneath the arc of his career.

As chair of the Sacramento region’s metropolitan planning organization and its transportation committee, his pioneering work on integrating transportation, land use, environmental justice, housing, air quality, and climate change has won numerous federal government and other national awards, and became the basis for some of California’s most sweeping transportation and climate reforms of the past two decades. Charged by policymaker colleagues crafting each of the region’s six successive metropolitan transportation plans since 1999, he led the deep transformation of the capital region’s transportation vision, modal mix, technology, and linkage to equity, health, and inclusive prosperity. He is commissioner for the Sacramento-Yolo Port District and has also chaired the county transit agency.

An appointed official by five governors of both political parties, Cabaldon served most recently for three terms as California’s delegate to the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE). He served previously as vice chancellor of the California Community Colleges and director of the state legislature’s Committee on Higher Education.



Facilitator, Kim A. Wilcox

Dr. Kim A. Wilcox serves as the ninth chancellor of UC Riverside (UCR), where he has overseen transformational change since assuming his role in 2013, including expansive growth in research, enrollment, graduation rates, and physical development.

Under his leadership the campus has added schools of medicine and public policy. Enrollment has grown more than 25%. UCR has received the Project Degree

Completion Award from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). And in 2023, UCR became a member of the Association of American Universities.

Prior to UCR, Dr. Wilcox served as provost at Michigan State University, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas, and president and chief executive officer of the Kansas Board of Regents, where he participated in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC). In 2023, Wilcox received the American Council on Education (ACE) Council of Fellows/Fidelity Investments Mentor Award.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, November 9, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Regency Ballroom

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

10:45 a.m. -
Noon

Regency
Ballroom

Committee Members

Patricia Sullivan (NM), Committee Chair
Diana VanderWoude (SD), Committee Vice Chair
Sean Parnell (AK)
Todd Haynie (AZ)
Ellen Junn (CA)
Angie Paccione (CO)
John Morton (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Dale Erquiaga (NV)
Danita Bye (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
John Carmichael (WA)
Joe Schaffer (WY)

Agenda

PRESIDING

Commissioner Patricia Sullivan (NM), Committee Chair

STAFF

Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access Programs
Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director, Operations and Program Implementation

GUESTS

Brian Prescott, President, National Center for Education Management Systems
Sarah Torres Lugo, Research Analyst, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

Action Item



APPROVAL OF MAY 8, 2023, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 4-4

Information Items

STUDENT ACCESS PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS	4-8
ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS UPDATES AND HIGHLIGHTS	4-11
COLLABORATIVE COST SAVING INITIATIVES UPDATES	4-15

Discussion Items

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP) FIELD ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW REPORT FROM NCHEMS

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), which was hired to complete the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) review and assessment, led the Executive Committee in a conversation about the PSEP. NCHEMS will share the purpose of the study and the approach to conducting the study, a brief overview of trends in PSEP participation, and findings related to workforce needs in the region. NCHEMS will provide feedback on how WICHE might ensure that one of its signature programs remains a vital resource helping Western states and territories meet critical workforce needs and support access to in-demand education programs.

Questions

- ▶ What are your observations about the report findings on current PSEP fields?
- ▶ What are your observations about high-need workforce fields ineligible for PSEP?
- ▶ What type of adjustments to the criteria for program participation in PSEP should WICHE consider?
- ▶ For PSEP participation, should WICHE consider programs that are vital to solving workforce needs but are at the baccalaureate or associate's levels?
- ▶ What type of minimum requirements should WICHE consider for institutional participation?
- ▶ Is there an appetite to fund research on a handful of programs that are at capacity and look at students who have been turned away to see if there might be options to attract them back?

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PERTAINING TO THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2025 (FOR CONSIDERATION IN MAY 2024)

The Programs and Services unit manages 14 current activities, which include ongoing services and resources and projects and initiatives. Each activity listed on 12-9 addresses one or more strategic priorities. If an activity sat solely in one priority, a value of one was given to the priority. If an activity had multiple priorities, the strategic priority was given either one-half if there were two strategic priorities, or one-third if there were three. We then summed the value across all activities to develop a priority score. Staff FTE across the strategic priorities is also listed.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	PRIORITY SCORE	STAFF FTE
Affordability & Finance	4.66	2.14
Access & Success	4.16	2.12
Workforce & Society	3.66	2.67
Innovation	0.5	0.625
Value & Accountability	0.5	0.075

Note: The values for Innovation come from Interstate Passport, which will sunset December 31, 2023.

Questions

- ▶ After reviewing the FY 2024 Workplan Current Activities, how might WICHE staff recategorize its work considering the new strategic priorities?
- ▶ What issues and concerns would allow WICHE staff to give more attention to the Innovation and the Value and Accountability priorities?

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM:

Approval of the May 8, 2023, Programs and Services Committee Minutes

Committee Members Present

Thomas L. (Les) Purce (WA), Committee Chair
Pearl Brower (AK)
Ellen Junn (CA)
John Morton (HI)
Matt Freeman (ID) *proxy for Rick Aman*
Laurie Bishop (MT)
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)

Committee Members Absent

Angie Paccione (CO), Committee Vice Chair
José Luis Cruz Rivera (AZ)
Rick Aman (ID)
Dale Erquiaga (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)

Staff Present

Demarée Michelau, President, WICHE
Raymonda Burgman Gallegos, Vice President,
Programs and Services
Margo Colalancia, Director of Student Access
Programs, Programs and Services
Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director of Operations
and Leadership Initiatives, Programs and
Services
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications,
WICHE
Katherine Springsteen, Assistant Director,
Student Access Programs, Programs and
Services

Guests

Merrisa Brechtel, University of Hawai'i System
Louise Lynch, Arizona Board of Regents
Patty Porter, Nevada Office of WICHE
Brian Prescott, NCHEMS
Cassidy Storz, Utah System of Higher Education
Sarah Torres Lugo, NCHEMS
Amy Unsworth, Montana University System
Brenda Zastoupil, North Dakota University
System

Call to Order

Committee Chair Les Purce called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. Kay Hulstrom called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Action Items

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2022 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Hilda Rosselli MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes, and Commissioner John Morton SECONDED. The motion was approved.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO APPROVE THE FY 2024 WORKPLAN SECTION OF THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UNIT

Raymonda Burgman Gallegos reported on staff changes in the Programs and Services unit, including the departure of Sarah Leibrandt, who accepted a position with the Jefferson County Library. Leibrandt's duties have been distributed among several staff members. Camelia Naranjo, with a background in mentoring and leadership, will lead the executive committees of the Alliance and Forum. Olivia Tufo will manage the membership and recruitment of new sponsors. Kay Hulstrom will manage the annual meeting speakers and current sponsors.

Burgman Gallegos reported on sunsetting the Interstate Passport program in a follow-up to the November 2022 Commission Meeting discussion. Funding for Interstate Passport will end in December 2023. The Interstate Passport Review Board has developed a communication plan to notify current Passport members and WICHE Commissioners of the sunsetting and subsequent dissemination of information.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has contacted Burgman Gallegos regarding possible available funds for a project around credit mobility. A meeting is in place for this discussion.

In addition, the initial STEM Passport grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) was rejected but is being resubmitted after reviewing and responding to the comments provided by NSF.

Burgman Gallegos reported on the No Holding Back project funded by Ascendium and Lumina Foundation. Ascendium has received an interim report including information obtained through institution communication and student focus groups regarding the impact of administrative holds and their impact on outcomes and student success. Some campuses are implementing policy changes using the data gained from this project. Ascendium is asking us to consider the next steps for this project. All the regional compacts are conducting projects regarding administrative holds. Programs and Services will provide a concept paper to Ascendium. Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has also expressed interest in joining this effort and moving forward.

Commissioner Dave Woolstenhulme MOVED TO APPROVE the Workplan, and Commissioner Rodney Jacob SECONDED. Committee Chair Purce called for discussion.

Commissioner Rosselli asked that a white paper be published that summarizes findings on administrative holds. Burgman Gallegos responded that AACRAO would draft a technical guide on completing the work. WICHE will then prepare a brief regarding lessons learned. Commissioner Kimberly Dale commented that these publications will assist institutions in determining hold fees. Committee Chair Purce agreed, saying that this type of discussion never occurred at his institution and that these holds are true inhibitors.

Commissioner Laurie Bishop asked if WICHE had a sense of the "tweaking" that might take place regarding Interstate Passport. Burgman Gallegos responded that there might be a slimmed-down version of the program. She is waiting to hear from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation about its goals in the credit mobility sector, including micro-credentials. Interstate Passport will not go national at this point. One of the lessons learned is that if an institution did not have a partner in the state, it did not want to continue its participation in the program.

Information Items

STUDENT ACCESS PROGRAM UPDATE

Student Access Programs Director Margo Colalancia reported that 220 institutions participate in all combined student access programs. She noted that California Governor Gavin Newsom has signed legislation that will allow a select group of California community colleges to participate in WICHE's Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). However, the number of WUE students than can enroll in eligible community colleges is limited. WICHE and the eligible community colleges are exploring a way to protect enrolled WUE students, so that they would not be harmed if the enrolling college exceeded its maximum number of WUE students.

Commissioner Rosselli complimented the way WICHE shows the return on investment to states. Commissioner Jacob thanked WICHE for its support to help Guam organize its administration of the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). Guam's first cohort of PSEP students is slated to enroll in cooperating PSEP healthcare programs in fall 2024.

PROPERTY PROGRAM EXPLORATION

Burgman Gallegos gave a reminder that the Master Property Program (MPP) at the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) will sunset on June 30, 2023. WICHE staff members, including President Michelau, are conversing with Marsh regarding WICHE establishing a project like MPP. There is nothing to report currently. Six of the affected institutions and one system have secured insurance for FY 2024.

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

Burgman Gallegos reported on the status of the new WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities, funded by the Mellon Foundation. A team of former WICHE Commissioners, a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) representative, and others are reviewing applications of nominees to attend the WICHE Institute for Leaders. There have been 23 nominations for the eight spots for this year's cohort. The cohort will consist of a mixture of two- and four-year institutions. This review will be completed by the end of this month.

PSEP ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW/COMMISSION FOCUS GROUP

Burgman Gallegos introduced Brian Prescott, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), to present their findings on the PSEP program.

Prescott began with the history of NCHEMS and how it branched off from WICHE in the 1970s. PSEP has been an integral part of WICHE since its inception in 1953.

The purpose of the study was to assess participation in the current PSEP program and analyze workforce projections in the current academic programs. NCHEMS used data analysis, interviews, and focus groups for the assessment. Prescott said that occupations are changing in terms of educational requirements. Also, different regions in a state may have different educational requirements, which can cause tension within the state.

The data analysis revealed that PSEP graduates increased yearly from the program's inception to the mid-1980s. The number then declined until 2019. Arizona and Wyoming have the most graduates from PSEP, and the veterinary field has the most graduates among the currently offered fields. The Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) program is PSEP's main competitor, but WWAMI only serves to educate allopathic medical physicians (MDs). Commissioner Matt Freeman stated

that his state would like to increase the number of students it sends to WWAMI, but the program lacks clinical capacity.

Commissioner Kimberly Dale asked about the number of states that require students to return to their home state to practice. Colalancia stated that about half of the states require students to do so. The time required to return to the state is usually a year of practice for each sponsored year. Guam requires a student to return for five years. Commissioner Rosselli inquired about employment trends, their impact on PSEP, and if there was a breakout of the number of programs offered online vs. hybrid vs. in-person. Colalancia stated that a couple of hybrid programs included in-state clinical experiences. Commissioner Jacob asked about including nursing in the PSEP program. Prescott said that the nursing shortage is being experienced in all the states and that there are capacity limits at the offering institutions. Commissioner Rosselli stated that the institutions' capacity is constrained by the salaries paid to professors and that clinicals are hard to staff. Colalancia noted that some California community colleges have the capacity to enroll nursing students seeking an associate's degree. Colorado community colleges used to send nursing students to the Anschutz Medical Campus, but now some of them offer BSNs, so CU Anschutz's pipeline has diminished, and now it is offering the WUE discount to nurses seeking the BSN.

Prescott asked about fields that commissioners would like to see included in PSEP. Commissioner Freeman mentioned cybersecurity, but this could fall under the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP). Commissioner Dale mentioned the nuclear industry because of the growing increase in advanced reactors. She said that Bill Gates visited rural Wyoming, where an advanced reactor will be operational by 2028. There is a possibility of an advanced reactor every 40 miles in Wyoming. Commissioner Freeman stated that the National Lab has 500 openings each year. Commissioner Bishop pointed to energy supply and transition, a field in which significant demand is expected in the next several years in Montana. Commissioners Danita Bye and Matt Freeman listed semiconductor manufacturing. Prescott stated that Idaho and Washington have programs in these fields.

Commissioner Bishop also mentioned veterinary technicians and radiologic technicians, and she inquired about the impact of virtual healthcare. Commissioner Woolstenhulme said he would like to see better alignment between PSEP programs and workforce needs in his state. Commissioner Rosselli stated that speech pathology online does not work as well as face-to-face, and the same is true for mental health services offered online.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

Committee Chair Purce asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dale MOVED TO ADJOURN, and Commissioner Rosselli SECONDED. The meeting was adjourned

INFORMATION ITEM:

Student Access Programs Highlights

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

In AY 2022-23, a total of 46,110 WUE students and their families saved \$520.8 million by paying 150% of the enrolling institutions' resident tuition, or less. The average student saved \$11,294. A total of 166 two- and four-year institutions participate in WUE.

Compared to the previous year (AY 2021-22), overall WUE enrollments dropped only 0.1%; WUE enrollment at four-year universities increased 1%, and WUE enrollment at two-year colleges dropped 9%. These enrollment changes are mostly consistent with national trends.

Lake Tahoe Community College began participating in WUE in January 2023. Since then, the state of California enacted new legislation that allows more rural California community colleges to participate in WUE. Lassen Community College and College of the Siskiyous have joined WUE for fall 2023, Feather River College will join WUE in spring 2024, and Barstow College has expressed interest in joining. Palo Verde College and College of the Redwoods are also eligible to participate.

WUE's newest partner is Oregon State University-Cascades. Walla Walla Community College has also expressed interest in joining WUE.

Final WUE enrollment numbers and savings estimates for 2023-24 will be available in late November.

Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)

WRGP allows graduate certificate, master's, and doctoral students who are residents of WICHE states and jurisdictions to affordably enroll in hundreds of graduate programs at 67 public institutions in the West. In AY 2022-23, a total of 3,269 students saved more than \$48 million in tuition through WRGP. Approximately 300 more graduate students are using WRGP this year, which marks an increase of 11% from AY 2021-22. Final WRGP enrollment numbers and savings estimates for 2023-24 will be available in late November.

Institutions recognize the value of WRGP as a tool to attract talent by offering affordable graduate options. More than 1,800 offerings are now available at reduced cost through WRGP.

Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)

PSEP provides affordable access to some 130 healthcare professional programs at approximately 60 institutions and in 10 healthcare fields ranging from optometry to dentistry to veterinary medicine for students in the Western region. In AY 2022-23, a total of 586 students received \$14.5 million (reflecting investment by their home legislatures) in tuition benefit through PSEP. Since its 1953 inception, PSEP has supported 15,953 graduates, many of whom return home to fill key healthcare positions. PSEP enrollment numbers and state/jurisdiction investment costs for 2023-24 will be available in late October.

Thanks to PSEP, a student can save between \$35,700 and \$139,800 on tuition over the lifespan of a professional health degree program, depending on the field of study—reducing financial pressures and possibly enabling them to afford to work in rural areas that typically have lower salaries compared to urban areas, or to pursue professional options that are less lucrative but sorely needed.

Western states and jurisdictions benefit by inspiring and, in most participating states, requiring professionals to return home to practice and strengthen their communities' professional healthcare workforce. Guam passed its "Birada" or "Return" Act in April 2022 and has established Guam Community College's Scholarship Office to administer Guam's participation in PSEP for its residents. The office is now accepting applications and will offer funding to students enrolling in fall 2024.

Finally, WICHE staff members are preparing a proposal to set the support fees for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 biennium. Commissioners will vote on the proposal at the May 2024 WICHE Commission Meeting.

WICHE Certifying Officers

Certifying officers play an important role in their state/jurisdictions' participation in WICHE's Student Access Programs. Typically, they are staff members of state higher education agencies or institutional systems in states/jurisdictions that do not have a state-level higher education agency. In states/jurisdictions that fund students through PSEP, certifying officers review the prospective students' applications for "certification" to determine whether they meet residency criteria and are eligible to be considered for support. Certifying officers administer all aspects of PSEP for their residents and serve as state/jurisdiction liaisons for the WUE and WRGP programs.

Certifying officers met on May 7, 2023, just before the WICHE Commission Meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. Discussions included state/jurisdiction reports from each certifying officer present, best practices to administer service payback, strategies to promote PSEP better, an update on Third-Party Servicers (TPS) that was first released in February 2023, and the new federal guidance. The group also discussed a student's total cost of attendance—beyond tuition and fees—and its implications for student persistence and success. Finally, NCHEMS staff presented its plan for the PSEP Field Review and Assessment and got preliminary feedback from certifying officers. The next certifying officer meeting will be in May 2024.

WICHE Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council — June 2023 Meeting

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

On June 12-14, 2023, the council met in Pullman, Washington, and was hosted by Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Members shared state and school roundtable reports and discussed the following topics: a new practice acquisition model for veterinary practices; an overview of the types of generative AI that are the most likely to impact higher education; perspectives on the post-

pandemic DVM workforce; changes in DVM admissions, including the use of supplementary assessment tools; and the pros and cons of letter grade-versus-pass/fail grading systems, as well as the use of GPA and class rank in veterinary medical education.

The next meeting will be held in June 2024 in either Las Cruces or Santa Fe, New Mexico.

INFORMATION ITEM:

Academic Partnerships Updates and Highlights

Alliance and Forum

The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (two-year college academic leaders) and the Western Academic Leadership Forum (four-year institution academic leaders) provide support and networking for senior academic leaders at colleges and universities across the West. These membership organizations serve as incubators for collaborating and problem-solving. Annually, both groups meet to discuss current issues and trends of interest to academic leaders in the West. The table below lists recent and upcoming meetings.

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION				
ORGANIZATION	THEME	HOST/LOCATION	DATE	ATTENDEES (INCLUDING STAFF)
Forum	Higher Education: Creating Pathways for Brighter Futures	University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ	April 2023	69
Alliance	Trailblazing a New Pathway: Challenging Assumptions about Community College	Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Tacoma, WA	October 4-6, 2023	61
Forum	Bridging Place and Purpose	University of Hawai'i System, Honolulu, HI	April 2024	40 (budgeted)
Alliance	After several virtual annual meetings, the Alliance moved its in-person 2022 meeting to October due to the pandemic. It will not hold an annual meeting in 2024 to realign the yearly meeting with an April date.			
Alliance and Forum Joint Meeting	TBD	Reno or Las Vegas, NV	April 2025	100 (budgeted)

At the start of FY 2024, Alliance membership was 69 institutions and eight systems, while the Forum had 53 institutions and 10 systems. Though membership has remained steady, in recent years lower meeting attendance and higher meeting expenses have impacted the overall budgets of both organizations. WICHE staff is having conversations with the Alliance and Forum Executive Committees about member engagement and programming, boosting membership, and increasing the number of sponsors. The April 2025 joint meeting will allow both organizations' leadership to learn more about working together, and better understand whether a merger would lessen both organizations' budgetary stress.

Western Academic Leadership Academy

On July 18, 2023, WICHE convened a three-day program of professional development for the 18 academic-affairs officials participating in the eighth cohort of the Western Academic Leadership

Academy. This year's cohort brings together emerging leaders from two- and four-year institutions in Alaska, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. Program participants learned about the provost's work and partnerships from the following regional leaders and guest speakers. Laura Woodworth-Ney is the Academy program and mentoring coordinator. Those with an asterisk by their name serve as cohort mentors.

- ▶ Laura Woodworth-Ney*, principal, ABG Search and former executive vice president and provost, Idaho State University
- ▶ Renny Christopher*, vice chancellor for academic affairs, Washington State University-Vancouver
- ▶ Veronica Dujon*, director for academic policy and authorization, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission
- ▶ Susan Jeffords*, former provost and vice president for academic affairs, Portland State University
- ▶ Landon Pirius*, vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, Colorado Community College System
- ▶ Todd Schwartz*, provost, College of Southern Idaho
- ▶ Jean Bannon, counsel, German, Burnette, & Associates LLC
- ▶ Kaylyn Bondy, vice president of student affairs, Bismarck State College
- ▶ Glen Nelson, vice president, administration and finance, California State University-Monterey Bay
- ▶ Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet, past president, Antioch University Seattle and Diné College

Some topics discussed during this year's Leadership Academy included life as provost, social and community impact in higher education, managing personnel and legal issues, building great teams, strategic decision-making, governance and unions, student success, financial management and budgets, and coalition building. The cohort will have a final meeting at the April 2024 Forum Annual Meeting in Honolulu. Applications for the next cohort will be available in late November 2023 and due in February 2024. The cohort is typically finalized by late March and will meet in Boulder during the 3rd week of July.

WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities

The WICHE Academy for Leaders in the Humanities, supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, launched this year. The Academy is a two-year fellowship program experience, including the WICHE Institute for Leaders, a three-day leadership workshop, and the fellows' on-campus mentor and leadership development experience. Each fellow also has an external advisor.

Eight faculty leaders and eight institutional mentors across seven WICHE states were selected to participate in the inaugural leadership development program. There were 23 applicants for the eight available fellowships. (WICHE staff running the program did not serve on the selection committee.) The mentors attended a 1.5-day workshop in Boulder to discuss their roles as mentors in the program. The main discussion topics included being an active listener and guide, building trust between the mentor and mentee, setting goals, encouraging and empowering the mentee, and giving good feedback. Every quarter, mentors will meet as a community of practice to discuss progress and challenges.

The fellows participated in a three-day seminar about program development and process improvement, career planning and development, and organization design and agility. The fellows will meet virtually once a month to further their development and discuss their progress and experience. The fellows

will also meet with their external advisors quarterly. For the first cohort, external advisors are certified executive coaches.

The application for the next cohort will be available by October 16, 2023, and close February 1, 2024. As stipulated by the grant, the first and second cohorts will meet jointly in fall 2024 for a professional development seminar. They will also attend the Alliance and Forum annual meeting and network with members of both organizations.

WICHE staff has begun conversations about how to sustain this work after the grant.

No Holding Back

In October 2023, WICHE successfully concluded its \$452,500 No Holding Back grant from the Ascendium Education Group and Lumina Foundation with the launch of an online resource center, including a toolkit and institutional and student perspectives to kickstart institutions' investigation into their usage of student registration and transcript holds. The resource center reflects the practical learnings of 12 Forum and Alliance member institutions that investigated the topic with WICHE and found quantitative evidence of their holds' usage and impact on students.

Also in October 2023, WICHE staff conducted a pre-conference workshop for 18 institutions and announced the online resource center via a live webcast from the three-institution Auraria Campus in Denver. Staff is developing a sustainability plan for this critical work, including pursuing funding for ongoing work with the other regional compacts.

Among the meetings that WICHE staff attended or plan to attend to share information about the No Holding Back project in 2023 are:

- ▶ July 25-26, 2023 – Portland, Oregon – Western Student Financial Services Annual Conference
- ▶ August 7, 2023 – Denver, Colorado – Regional Compact Collaboration on Administrative Holds (Planning Meeting)
- ▶ November 1-3, 2023 – Washington, DC – Convergence: Credential Innovation in Higher Education (UPCEA and AACRAO)
- ▶ November 8-10, 2023 – Baltimore, Maryland – Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Annual Conference

Interstate Passport

In late May, it was announced that WICHE would sunset the Interstate Passport Network on December 31, 2023. This decision was made after consulting with the Passport Review Board and surveying member institutions. WICHE hosted a webinar for network members on June 15, 2023, to share information about the decision to sunset the program, offer suggestions on how to sunset the program locally, answer questions about the final annual report, and discuss the planned resource center. WICHE staff is using the remaining funds to build a resource center to preserve the lessons learned from this 10-year project and provide resources to Interstate Passport Network members. Staff is also convening a group to develop an interstate transfer articulation agreement.

There are currently 68 Interstate Passport Network member institutions across 21 states, 62 of which are in the WICHE region. The initiative allows students to transfer their lower-division general education

as a block between member institutions. Network members 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 of the receiving institution's lower-division general education requirements. WICHE's work to design and implement this program has eased transfer for almost 100,000 students who earned a Passport at one of the 70+ institutions that adopted the program.

Interest in transfer and credit mobility initiatives is high among postsecondary leaders and professionals. WICHE staff shared the program evaluation and lessons learned from Interstate Passport at the following conferences in 2023:

- ▶ February 21-23, 2023 – Portland, Oregon – the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students
- ▶ March 26-28, 2023 – Chicago, Illinois – Higher Learning Commission

Note that WICHE received funds from an anonymous granting agency to support the technology capacity and student-facing support for the Network. WICHE will revise the focus of these funds to support technology innovations that address credit mobility and student success in the WICHE region.

INFORMATION ITEM:

Collaborative Cost Saving Initiatives Updates

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) cost-savings programs are competitively awarded contracts. The Master Property Program, MHECare, MHECTech, and cybersecurity 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 governmental agencies. The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) regions also participate in the cost-saving initiatives.

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 not-for-profit colleges and universities. The program ended on July 1, 2023. MHEC staff will continue managing dividends owed to program participants and payouts for claims brought before the program ended. The institutions and systems in the West that received property insurance either directly or indirectly through MPP met with Marsh USA Inc., a national insurance broker, to secure insurance for FY 2024. The impacted institutions and systems are the Nevada System of Higher Education's seven campuses and Desert Research Institute Centers, Lewis & Clark College (Oregon), Reed College (Oregon), Willamette University (Oregon), Seattle Pacific University (Washington), Whitman College (Washington), and the University of Wyoming.

In February 2023, the Executive Committee approved an action item for WICHE staff to discuss and design a property program for institutions and systems in the West. These conversations are ongoing.

After the May 2023 Commission Meeting, WICHE staff learned that the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and the University of Wyoming secured quotes and policies. The five independent colleges and universities could not do so without WICHE's assistance. On June 22, 2023, Marsh staff notified WICHE that these institutions, which are also College Liability Insurance Company (CLIC) members, needed a program sponsor. After consulting Commission Chair Matt Freeman, WICHE agreed to serve in that role. These institutions secured a policy and may have collectively saved \$2 million to \$3 million under the WICHE Group Property Program.

Cyber Insurance

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

MHECare

MHECare offers campuses with 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 Student Resources (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 utilized a competitive bid process to select UHCSR as the plan's carrier, which is fully equipped to respond rapidly to regulation changes. Public and private not-for-profit 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 over 150 brief, effective, evidence-based educational sessions covering more than 50 common topics and skills related to mental health, wellness, and substance use issues.

MHECTech

MHEC's Technologies Committee and staff use 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, almost 390 entities in California alone used these contracts to save \$1.15 million.

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, November 9, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Embassy

POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

10:45 a.m. -

Noon

Embassy

Committee Members

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair

John Arnold (AZ), Committee Vice Chair

Tom Begich (AK)

Jim Chavez (CO)

Colleen Sathre (HI)

Dave Lent (ID)

Vacancy (MT)

Cathy Dinauer (NV)

Bill Soules (NM)

Mark Hagerott (ND)

Lisa Skari (OR)

Vacancy (SD)

Kalani Kaneko (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/RMI)

Patricia Jones (UT)

Gerry Pollet (WA)

Kevin Carman (WY)

Agenda

PRESIDING

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair

STAFF

Liliana Diaz, Senior Policy Analyst

Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research

Christina Sedney, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives

Action Item

- | | | |
|---|---|------------|
|  ACTION ITEM | APPROVAL OF THE MAY 8, 2023, POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES | 5-3 |
|  ACTION ITEM | APPROVAL OF A PROJECT TITLED: "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOCUSED ON STATE AND SYSTEM GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR THE NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION" | 5-9 |

Information Items

SARA POLICY MODIFICATION PROCESS UPDATE

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

TUITION AND FEES IN THE WEST, 2023-24

5-11

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ROUNDTABLES UPDATE

Discussion Item

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PERTAINING TO THE POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2025 (FOR CONSIDERATION IN MAY 2024) 5-17

Other Business

Adjournment

ACTION ITEM:

Approval of the May 8, 2023, Policy Analysis and Research Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present

Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair
Barbara Damron (NM), Committee Vice Chair
Susan Anderson (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Rodney Jacob (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/Guam)
Patricia Jones (UT)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Kevin Carman (WY)

Committee Members Absent

Dave Lent (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Brian Maher (SD)

Other Commissioners Present

Robert Shireman (CA)

Staff Present

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

Call to Order

Committee Chair Cabaldon called the meeting of the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Patrick Lane to call roll. A quorum was established.

Action Items

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 11, 2022 POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Committee Chair Cabaldon introduced the action item—approval of the PAR committee minutes from the November 11, 2022, meeting. Commissioner Susan Anderson MOVED TO APPROVE the action item, and Commissioner Patricia Jones SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

APPROVAL OF A PROJECT TITLED “ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE WEST”

At Committee Chair Cabaldon’s request, Patrick Lane shared background on the project, which he described as the first step in broadening conversations around the value of postsecondary education. One goal is to shift the discourse from an exclusive focus on economic return, noting concerns among stakeholders about U.S. Department of Education’s proposals related to programs such as native-language studies, which provide considerable value outside of the economic return.

Lane went on to say that the project intends to identify areas where value is lacking, with a focus on

implications of students choosing to enroll in college but leaving before receiving a degree, and the impacts of not completing. Lane added that he hopes to focus on completion programs and efforts like wraparound services in Washington. He added that part of this work would be embedded discussions of the value of postsecondary education in WICHE's current work, as well as potentially convening communities of practice and conducting research and data analysis. The project currently does not have a funding partner.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked what initiated this project. Lane pointed to strategy sessions at the November 2022 Commission Meeting as well as suggestions from chief academic officers across the region during regular conversations that WICHE hosts. While chief academic officers suggested that WICHE undertake a much larger project, Lane said the focus of the proposed project would be more on embedding within WICHE's current scope of work. For example, he said, the unit's work on Open Education Resources focused on identifying how lower textbook costs could increase completion as a way to frame postsecondary value.

Commissioner Ben Cannon said that he appreciates the organization's interest in this exploratory work, but there is the risk of falling into the habit of reviewing surveys and then looking for demonstrated value. He added that there are changes needed within higher education to address value problems rather than just retelling the same story.

Commissioner Jones added that it is important to communicate the benefits of higher education to students, rather than just to advertise the features of higher education.

Commissioner Mark Hagerott said the project title could possibly include mention of artificial intelligence (AI) and how AI will impact student learning in the future.

Also regarding the project's title, both Commissioner Robert Shireman and Committee Chair Cabaldon raised concerns about the word "articulating," which Shireman said sounds like "promoting." In response, Lane said that staff came from a place of wanting to speak more clearly on the value of higher education and identifying where higher education is not delivering value.

Commissioner Gerry Pollet noted that the "action steps" included in the proposal would be attractive in terms of funders and states if they included tools for communicating with specific populations; for example, including culturally responsive messaging and making sure that career/technical education and workforce training are referred to specifically.

Committee Chair Cabaldon said he was supportive of moving forward but wondered if "articulating" is the right word, and noted that there is work to do to broaden and tighten the project.

Commissioner John Arnold said that it would help to discuss the project's end product. Lane said that communications have not been at the forefront of discussions on the project so much as policy. But he added that there could be a focus on bringing together communities of practice to help identify specific audiences to help create a toolkit.

Commissioner Jim Chavez said he supports the project and believes it is important to focus on policy rather than taglines. At this point he thinks it is better to keep the scope broad and not limited.

Commissioner Kevin Carman also stated support for the project and noted the large percentage of students who leave Wyoming because of lack of good jobs. He added that disruptive technologies are a big part of the conversation and there are challenges that arise with rapidly changing technologies.

Commissioner Colleen Sathre said it is important to center the value of postsecondary education in a

democracy, which is facing enormous challenges.

Committee Chair Cabaldon expressed support for adding the project to the workplan and incorporating feedback from the committee's discussion.

Committee Vice Chair Barbara Damron asked what funders WICHE is looking to partner with on this project. She suggested looking beyond traditional higher education funders, and noted that the conversation during this committee meeting underscores the difficulties and complexity of this topic. Lane agreed to look beyond traditional funders.

Commissioner Cannon MOVED TO APPROVE the action item, and Commissioner Chavez SECONDED the motion. Commissioner Cannon added a concern about not letting the funders drive the agenda. The motion passed.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO APPROVE THE FY 2024 WORKPLAN SECTION PERTAINING TO THE POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH UNIT

Patrick Lane called the committee's attention to the PAR unit's section of the Workplan that refers to "previously approved but have not received funding" projects. He said he hopes to have a more in-depth discussion at the November 2023 Commission Meeting to prioritize these projects.

Both Committee Chair Cabaldon and Committee Vice Chair Damron suggested developing priorities and preferences ahead of the November meeting, including querying committee members. Committee Chair Cabaldon recommended coming to the November meeting prepared to identify items to remove from the Workplan and help map strategies for next steps.

Lane said that previously there was pushback on removing items from the Workplan, but he noted that even when items are removed, there is still the "potential future projects" section.

Commissioner Pollet asked how to interpret the status of projects in the Workplan; for example, a behavioral health project listed as "funded" but also a "potential" project. Lane said that projects build on one another. For instance, there are behavioral health funders that are not interested in higher education but hope to add a block or two through the work. He said that the "Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus" project is about building WICHE's agenda, and that the PAR unit plans on working with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) as well as WICHE's Behavioral Health Program.

Commissioner Anderson asked how often WICHE assesses partnerships and if there are ways to look at partners for these projects that might lower WICHE's role in some cases.

Commissioner Carman said he liked the idea of surveying the committee ahead of time on priorities. Everyone would benefit from understanding the context of what resources WICHE has for costs and how long items have been on the Workplan or when they were approved. Commissioner Shireman suggested an expiration date.

Committee Chair Cabaldon asked for a motion to approve the action item.

Commissioner Carman MOVED TO APPROVE the action item, and Commissioner Sathre SECONDED the motion. The motion passed.

Information Items

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Patrick Lane shared an update on the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC), whose 2023 meeting will take place in Phoenix on September 12-13. He said that he would be reaching out to commissioners regarding vacancies on the LAC.

TUITION AND FEES IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WEST, 2022-23

Colleen Falkenstern shared an update about the recent issue of *WICHE Insights, Tuition and Fees, Appropriations, and Financial Aid: Trends and Implications*, which was sent to commissioners prior to the meeting. She added that the spring publication is a deeper analysis of the November Tuition and Fees report. Falkenstern said the key findings were that when adjusted for inflation, tuition and fees have decreased over the past decade, while appropriations per student and state financial aid have increased. She noted that despite the positive state economic context, institutions faced considerable budget challenges.

UPDATE ON WICHE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND MEETING CURRENT AND FUTURE HEALTH WORKFORCE NEEDS

Lane reported that WICHE received funding from Lumina Foundation to convene stakeholders focused on behavioral health in postsecondary education.

Falkenstern provided an update on the unit's work on the healthcare workforce in the West. She noted that this work stems from the WICHE Commission's May 2022 directive for staff to focus on this work, using \$50,000 in reserves to support the effort. The work was done in collaboration with a subject-matter expert, Dr. Nancy Ridenour, who was recommended by Committee Vice Chair Damron. WICHE staff facilitated three roundtables focused on faculty shortages and clinical placement shortages with stakeholders across the West, including representatives from boards of nursing, deans and faculty of nursing schools, nursing associations, nursing state workforce associations, hospitals, and hospital associations. WICHE staff are now working on a series of briefs to share key findings and examples from the West. Committee Vice Chair Damron and Commissioner Cathy Dinauer participated in the roundtables and have provided feedback and expertise throughout the project.

Committee Vice Chair Damron expressed appreciation for the group's work and said it was a good representation of WICHE's leadership role in the region in support of deep conversations across states.

Discussion Item

STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT (SARA) POLICY REVISION PROCESS

Lane briefed the committee on developments related to the new SARA policy revision process, beginning with revisions that have been proposed by Western states—through W-SARA—and the extent to which they align with revisions proposed by a group of state attorneys general.

Lane began by talking about one recommendation made by consumer-advocacy groups in concert with the attorneys general that would change SARA policy to allow states to enforce their own education-specific consumer protection statutes and regulations on out-of-state institutions. But state officials represented on the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC) do not support such a provision, Lane said, because they believe it would go against the basic principles of the reciprocity agreement.

Lane said that among the various revisions that have been put forth are proposals by the W-SARA RSC that would add important new justifications for placing institutions on provisional status. He noted that these proposals would address specific concerns that were raised by this committee during previous meetings in considering state renewals.

Separate coalitions of some attorneys general and consumer-advocate organizations have also called for changing the composition of the NC-SARA board, Lane said, adding that W-SARA is in support of this. NC-SARA actually already meets the recommendations of the attorneys general and consumer organizations, Lane said—and, besides, this goes beyond the scope of the policy modification process.

Lane concluded by looking ahead to the 2024 policy modification schedule and notes that one thing that interests WICHE is developing a process to address the financial implications of closures as well as developing an alternative to the federal composite score. He added that there are potential alternative methodologies that would provide a better picture of the financial standing of an institution.

Molly Hall-Martin provided an overview of the policy modification process and noted that the public comment period closes next week on May 17. She said that after a period of potential revision that ends July 5, WICHE and the other regional compacts must consider proposals by September 1. WICHE has approved a process to exercise its decisional authority by having the W-SARA RSC vote on most matters.

Committee Chair Cabaldon opened up the meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Pollet said that he appreciated seeing the proposals and discussion with WICHE staff on this matter. He added that Washington, has concerns and is considering withdrawal from SARA. He added that proposals are based on institutional approval without built-in consumer protections. He noted that Washington has strong consumer protections that vary by type of institution and believes there should be different standards by institution type. He said that the role of SARA is to protect students and not to facilitate distance education, and he is concerned that no W-SARA proposals consider basic student consumer protections. He does not disagree with the W-SARA proposals but does support the majority of the consumer-advocate proposals and unless they do both, there will be serious problems. He said he would like to see additional proposals put forward.

Commissioner Shireman said that if what Commissioner Pollet proposes were enacted, California would consider joining SARA. He said that he and others have been working to move SARA to a better place and he feels good about the progress that has been made. He noted that this will take time and won't happen in one year. He noted that as a reciprocity agreement some level of oversight must be waived and that Attorneys General worry that other states put misrepresentation in their education rather than their general purpose laws and Attorneys General can not go into court and have a school argue the language is unclear. He added that with that said, if NC-SARA becoming more state-focused and moving in the direction of consumer protection. He shared that he presented at NASASPS and was asked about recommendations for California to join and will provide an update to relevant parties. He concluded by adding that this is good progress and would like to build on it in coming years to create a strong consumer protection-focused SARA.

Committee Chair Cabaldon agreed, saying that the first year of the policy revision process was a test of good faith, which has been borne out. He added that he hopes governance changes would populate the board in a more balanced way that represents different schools of thought and represent Attorneys General and state consumer protection entities and noted that states should be in control. He concluded that wants to get to the same place as Commissioner Pollet suggested through the process.

Commissioner Carman said that Wyoming is facing some challenges, and mentioned that Purdue Global/Kaplan recently came into the state and negotiated with a local hospital for clinical placements for their students. Lane noted that this is something that is happening in other states, and may be an issue for SARA to consider in 2024.

Commissioner Cannon asked if all the regions are aligned on these proposals. Lane replied that these are just the W-SARA proposals and not all of the regions are in alignment. He added that some regions are not as concerned about consumer protection and some of the proposals from other regions would actually loosen consumer protection. He noted that those proposals will not pass in the West. Commissioner Jones asked if this makes W-SARA the outlier.

Committee Cabaldon asked if there is a signal in other regions' proposals moving forward to flag for future conversation for this group. Lane said that an update will be made after final approvals. Committee Vice Chair Damron suggested another meeting before November.

Commissioner Pollet moved to recommend that the W-SARA proposals be expanded to include the attorneys general requests. Commissioner Cannon said that in spirit he agrees, but believes that setting that direction is the role of the RSC, which should not be usurped. He added that he has relied on their regional steering committee appointee and would be uncomfortable supporting that motion today.

Commissioner Pollet followed up by suggesting a motion to support the consideration of expanding proposals to include Attorneys General requests, specifically amending SARA policy to allow states to enforce their own education laws. Committee Chair Cabaldon suggested adopting a motion to have the WICHE Commission direct the W-SARA RSC to give due consideration to the proposal enforcing education-specific consumer protection, and Commissioner Pollet MOVED TO APPROVE such a motion. Commissioner Cannon SECONDED the motion. The motion passed.

Adjournment

The Policy Analysis and Research Committee adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

ACTION ITEM:

Approval of a Project Titled: “Technical Assistance Focused on State and System Governance Models for the Nevada System of Higher Education”

Summary

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) has requested WICHE’s assistance in examining governance models of postsecondary education employed throughout the region and across the country. WICHE staff has strong governance, expertise and understanding of state and system postsecondary education governance models. This work will include substantial background research, qualitative data gathering, and presentations, culminating in a final report and recommendations to the state’s Committee on the Future of Higher Education.

WICHE, in partnership with other organizations, would assess the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the current system of governance of NSHE institutions.

Relationship to WICHE Mission

This project closely aligns with WICHE’s mission and strategic priorities, and the work aligns closely with WICHE’s focus on accountability and value and sound public policy.

Background

The Chancellor’s Committee on the Future of Higher Education in Nevada was established to consider the state’s funding formula (which would be beyond the scope of this proposed project), and other issues, including the system’s approach to governance of its institutions. WICHE has been identified as an organization with deep knowledge of Nevada’s existing structures and governance policies, with substantial knowledge of the approaches used by other WICHE members.

NSHE requested WICHE’s assistance in supporting the Committee’s work to consider broad governance issues by gathering information and data from the West and beyond and developing recommendations and a final report.

This proposed work will assist Nevada in considering vital questions about the future of its higher education structure, and it will benefit the rest of the region through WICHE’s continued development of expertise on the topic. WICHE expects to identify an appropriate subcontractor to assist with articulating the implications and lessons learned from governance structures outside of the West.

WICHE expects to produce several deliverables in support of the Committee’s work:

- ▶ Presentation on an overview of postsecondary education governance
- ▶ Presentation on advantages and disadvantages of different governance models
- ▶ Draft recommendations for the system’s approach to governance
- ▶ Final report and recommendations (paired with final presentation).

Action Requested

Staff requests that the Policy Analysis and Research Committee adopt a motion recommending that the Committee of the Whole approve this project, adding it to the unit’s workplan for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

Staff and Fiscal Impact

The expected fiscal impact of this proposed project is \$135,000, which would be fully funded by NSHE. WICHE estimates the project will utilize 0.5 FTE in FY 2024 and a modest amount in FY 2025.

INFORMATION ITEM:

Legislative Advisory Committee Update

Exploring the Concept of Value in Postsecondary Education

WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee Annual Meeting
September 12-13, 2023 | Phoenix, Arizona

Agenda

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

7:30–8:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:30–9:15 a.m. Welcome & Introductions

9:15–9:45 a.m. Exploring the Concept

The discussion will examine how different entities are defining the term in higher education—highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and the critical components and potential missing elements of various approaches—and lead to a discussion of how LAC members define and measure the value offered by higher education in their states and territories, and how these definitions are shifting over time. Legislators will be asked to consider how they define a valuable higher education to students, as well as to their state/territory as a whole.

Facilitator

Christina Sedney, Director of Policy & Strategic Initiatives, WICHE

9:45–10:00 a.m. Break

10:00 a.m.–Noon Breaking Down the Costs and Benefits to States

This two-part discussion will focus on the inputs (costs) and the outputs (benefits) to higher education at the state/territory level.

Higher Education Funding Models

This session will look at different ways that states and territories fund higher education, including performance-based funding, available evidence regarding the impact of different approaches, and key questions to consider when thinking about state investment.

Speakers

Robert Kelchen, Professor, Department Head, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, University of Tennessee Knoxville

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

Higher Education's Role in Workforce & Economic Development

How is higher education playing a role in developing the workforce your state needs? This conversation will explore initiatives in the West that have begun to explicitly link higher education efforts with their state's broader economic development agendas.

Speaker

Lauren Schoenfeld, Executive Director, Wyoming Innovation Partnership, and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Mark Gordon

Noon–1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:00–4:00 p.m.

Breaking Down the Costs and Benefits to Students

This three-part discussion will focus on the key components of the “value equation” from the student perspective, including affordability, completion, and ultimately return on investment.

Affordability

A key component in any value equation must include cost to the student for the education they receive. How are states and territories thinking about affordability in an era of inflation and rising costs?

Completion

For higher education to go from cost to investment for a student, they must get to and through programs that result in a credential of value. How can states and territories support this imperative? This session will include an in-depth look at WICHE’s work on Open Educational Resources (OER) and how new research is exploring the link between OER and time to completion for students.

Return on Investment

How are institutions, systems, and states supporting students in transitioning from education to the workforce, ensuring the investment in postsecondary education generates value for the student, and how are they measuring their progress? What do we know about the ROI of higher education and what questions remain unanswered?

Speakers

Liliana Diaz, Senior Policy Analyst, WICHE

Colleen Falkenstern, Senior Research Analyst, WICHE

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

Dinner

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

8:00–9:00 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00–10:00 a.m.

What Future Developments Could Shift the Paradigm of Our Value Discussions?

The final day will focus on exploring developments in policy and technology that have the potential to shift how we have previously thought about the value of higher education.

Federal Policy Considerations

What federal policy changes—whether recent, in-process, or possible—have the potential to impact how states think about higher education accountability, funding, and impact?

Speaker

Austin Reid, Senior Legislative Director, State-Federal Affairs, National Conference of State Legislatures

Artificial Intelligence

Over the past year, AI has exploded into the consciousness of the broader higher education world. What impacts is it having already and what issues might we expect it to raise moving forward?

Speaker

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

10:00–10:30 a.m. Extended break (check out of hotel)

10:30–11:00 a.m. Looking Ahead to the 2024 Sessions and Closing Reflections

Facilitator

Christina Sedney, Director of Policy & Strategic Initiatives, WICHE

Developing the Postsecondary Education System Your State Needs

WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee Annual Meeting
September 12-13, 2023 | Phoenix, AZ

Participant List

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*Denotes WICHE Commissioner

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*Denotes WICHE Commissioner

DISCUSSION ITEM:

Strategic Priorities pertaining to the Policy Analysis and Research Workplan Activities for FY 2025 (for consideration in May 2024)

Given the nature of Commission meetings and the numerous major topics brought before the PAR Committee, committee members have not had a chance to take time to weigh in substantively on the Policy Analysis and Research unit's section of the Workplan since the strategic visioning session in 2022. Through this discussion, committee members will be able to review and comment on the broader strategic directions that the unit will pursue and how individual projects may fit within that strategy.

As a result, at its November 2022 meeting, the WICHE Commission adjusted the organization's areas of focus to the following strategic priorities:

- ▶ **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, and continually improve how students, institutions, and WICHE members spend their time, effort, and money on postsecondary education and workforce training.

Additionally, in conversations with WICHE members and others, reaching and engaging underrepresented students and data completeness have regularly surfaced as important themes across the WICHE region.

With this as a framework, staff intends to substantially revise the existing workplan by thinning down the list of projects that have received Commission approval but not been funded. These were all, at the time, well-reasoned and important projects, but for one reason or another, never launched. Many are very specific projects that were designed to respond to a particular RFP or grant opportunity and were not successful.

To begin discussion, staff have focused on the “New Directions” and “Potential Future Projects” sections. Our hope is to receive guidance and counsel from committee members about how to thin the New Directions section and target the “Potential Future Projects” section to the strategic priorities previously identified by the Commission.

Staff’s broad objective is to winnow the list of previously approved projects to a manageable number and understand commissioners’ priorities for pursuing different areas of work. As a reminder, concepts that have been presented to this committee or the Executive Committee as action items are listed in the “New Directions” section if and until they are funded or the Commission elects to remove them.

Table 5-1: New Directions

■ = Project Recommended for deletion ■ = Project funded (or expected to be funded)

PROJECT	NOTES	STAFF SUGGESTION	DATE ADDED TO WORKPLAN
COVID-19 Reengagement Network	This item was added in the midst of the pandemic.	Recognizing that dis-engagement due to the pandemic is still a big concern, but also that the concern is broader and goes beyond just the pandemic, recommend moving a more general item to the “Potential Future Projects” section.	FY 2021
Building Evidence for Scale: Policy and Practice Solutions for Adult Learners	This item was originally intended as an extension of previous work on WICHE’s Adult College Completion Network and Non-Traditional No More work.	Supporting WICHE members in successfully engaging adult learners is crucial and would fit within the contours of the strategic vision discussed by commissioners in 2022. Recommend leaving this in the “New Directions” section.	FY 2018
Evaluation and Research Partnerships	Staff has undertaken work in the spirit of this concept through other projects. Examples include the research conducted on Prior Learning Assessment, Dual Credit in Idaho, and the link between time-to-degree and use of Open Educational Resources.	Staff has a vision of continuing to build WICHE’s capacity and infrastructure to support states and institutions in conducting policy-relevant research. This can continue to be a priority, but is likely better embedded within specific project proposals. In WICHE’s strategy for supporting behavioral health in postsecondary education, we have included a substantial research and evaluation component.	FY 2019

■ = Project Recommended for deletion ■ = Project funded (or expected to be funded)

PROJECT	NOTES	STAFF SUGGESTION	DATE ADDED TO WORKPLAN
Exploratory Research into Programs Designed to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Idaho	Originally crafted for a specific project and grant RFP.	Recommend deletion. Staff can approach the Commission for any specific ideas that would be similar for Idaho or other states	FY 2019
Policy Paper Series on Affordability	Crafted for a specific concept paper submission.	Affordability remains a key focus and is embedded in much of our work. This is an appropriate way for WICHE to engage on the topic. Recommend leaving in place.	FY 2021
Scaling Technology-Assisted Skill Building in Rural Areas	Project was originally crafted in response to an RFP from Strada. This idea resonates but funding opportunities have been limited.	Shift to a more general description and move to Potential Future Projects.	FY 2019
Western Postsecondary Data Users Network	Project was identified as a need due to limited opportunities for state/system research officers to network.	Recommend that staff consult with commissioners and state/system research officers to gauge interest, availability, and benefit of networking opportunities. Similar to the bimonthly Chief Academic Officer calls, if this is viewed as useful for WICHE members, a modest networking infrastructure could be set up with limited staff effort.	FY 2019
Improving Policy and Practice to Support Behavioral Health on Campus	WICHE has received funding and is engaging on the topic.	Duplicate. Recommend deletion, but also the addition of general item on providing regional support for behavioral health improvements as WICHE moves from the narrow, approved project to broader efforts.	FY 2020
Dual Credit Research and Implementation Network	This concept is being implemented by a group of academic researchers.	This is still a crucial and specific policy area in which WICHE has substantial expertise and infrastructure to successfully engage. But this could also fit in a broader "Future Directions" item on research and evaluation.	FY 2021

■ = Project Recommended for deletion ■ = Project funded (or expected to be funded)

PROJECT	NOTES	STAFF SUGGESTION	DATE ADDED TO WORKPLAN
Data with a Purpose	This concept would have built on WICHE's Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange, which has sunset.	Recommend deletion.	FY 2018
A Hole in State Policy: Alternative Providers in Postsecondary Education	WICHE is on track to receive initial funding to begin this work.	If/when funding is received, project will move to "Current Activities."	FY 2022
Improving the Value of Postsecondary Education in the West	This project is closely linked to the strategic priorities established by commissioners in 2022.	Recommend leaving in "New Directions" and staff prioritizing project development and implementation.	FY 2023
Recognizing Learning: Raising Awareness for Scale	This concept was developed at the request of Lumina Foundation but was not ultimately funded.	While WICHE retains substantial expertise in Prior Learning Assessment, recommend deletion of this project.	FY 2021
A Second Chance at Success: Reducing the Fiscal and Social Impact of Recidivism Through Inmate Education and Re-entry Programs	This concept is important, but WICHE has not engaged in this issue in some time. There may be new opportunities with incarcerated individuals being eligible for Pell Grants.	Recommend adding generally phrased item to "Potential Future Projects" and seeking Commission approval for any specific project that may develop.	FY 2014
Serving Student Soldiers of the West	This concept, designed in partnership with the Behavioral Health Program, has not been fully funded, although WICHE does engage on the topic through its work on Together with Veterans.	Recommend adding generally phrased item to "Potential Future Projects" and seeking Commission approval for any specific project that may develop.	FY 2012
Cybersecurity Training for Senior Nontechnical Leaders	This work is proceeding in some states at different points. While no discrete external funding has been provided, federal partners have contributed time and effort to make these successful.	Recommend moving to "Current Activities."	FY 2020

■ = Project Recommended for deletion ■ = Project funded (or expected to be funded)

PROJECT	NOTES	STAFF SUGGESTION	DATE ADDED TO WORKPLAN
Policy and Practice Solutions for Workforce Shortages	This work, which has focused primarily on healthcare workforce shortages, began with a modest allocation of WICHE reserves. This action followed a recommendation from the PAR Committee to start as quickly as possible.	Recommend leaving in “New Directions” section. Staff is actively seeking funding to support additional efforts.	FY 2023
Intermediaries for Scale Partnerships	In recent years, WICHE has successfully competed for modest contracts supporting these Gates-funded projects.	Although it is not clear that there are still substantial consulting opportunities that would further WICHE’s mission, recommend leaving this in place for now should opportunities arise.	FY 2020
Improving Credential Information in the West	This concept was developed in support of a likely funding opportunity with MHEC and Credential Engine that did not materialize.	Recommend deleting.	FY 2021

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, November 9, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
University

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

10:45 a.m. -
Noon

University

Committee Members

Pearl Brower (AK)
Antwan Jefferson (CO)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Kyle Davis (ND)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Agenda

STAFF

Janell Daly, Senior Administrative Coordinator
John Gomez, Director of Operations, Behavioral Health Program
Dennis Mohatt, Vice President, Behavioral Health and Co-Director, MHTTC
Bobbi Perkins, Director, Mountain Plains-Rural Opioid Technical Assistance
Center (ROTAC)/Technical Assistance Lead

Discussion Items

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM UPDATE

Dennis Mohatt

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

John Gomez

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Bobbi Perkins

Overview of the Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (ROTAC), which serves HHS Region 8 (CO, UT, MT, WY, ND, SD). An update of current efforts and priorities for the future.

DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PERTAINING TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2025 (FOR CONSIDERATION IN MAY 2024)

Dennis Mohatt and John Gomez

Other Business

Adjournment



EDTECH COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, November 9, 2023
10:45 a.m. – Noon
Imperial

Agenda

1 Executive

2 Welcome

3 Plenary I

4 Programs

5 Policy

6 Behavioral

7 EdTech

8 Roundtable

9 Plenary II

10 Reception

11 Business

12 References

TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED EDUCATION (EDTECH) COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

10:45 a.m. -
Noon

Imperial

Committee Members

Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
David Lassner (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)

Agenda

PRESIDING

Commissioner Fred Lokken (NV)

STAFF

Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET and Service Design and Strategy Officer,
Every Learner Everywhere
Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, State Authorization Network and WCET Policy
Innovations
Kathryn Kerensky, Director, Digital Learning Policy and Compliance, WCET
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President for Technology-
Enhanced Education
Megan Raymond, Senior Director, Membership and Programs, WCET

Information Items

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Lokken

WCET UPDATES

- ▶ **WCET and SAN Budgets and Reserves**
Cheryl Dowd and Russ Poulin
- ▶ **WCET Membership**
Megan Raymond
- ▶ **Every Learner Everywhere**
Van Davis
- ▶ **State Authorization Network**
Cheryl Dowd and Kathryn Kerensky

Discussion Items

NEW AND EMERGING U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S POLICIES REGARDING DISTANCE AND DIGITAL LEARNING: AN UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Cheryl Dowd, Russ Poulin, and Commissioner Lokken

- ▶ Guidance on "Third-Party Servicers"
- ▶ State Authorization and Reciprocity
- ▶ Programs Leading to Professional Licensure

WHAT ARE YOUR INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS DOING ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

SHARING AMONG COMMISSIONERS

Facilitators:

Commissioner Lokken

Van Davis

Other Business

Adjournment

ROUNDTABLE

Discussions

Thursday, November 9, 2023

1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

Friday, November 10, 2023

Before Committee of the Whole

8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

Regency Ballroom Roundtable 1

(Access & Success;
Innovation)

*Changing the Face of Higher
Education: The Popularity of
Digital Learning and Three-
Year Degrees*

Embassy Roundtable 2

(Workforce & Society;
Innovation)

*Staffing Innovations in a
Challenging New Era*

Imperial Roundtable 3

(Access & Society; Workforce
& Society; Innovation)

*Behavioral Health on Campus:
Lessons from the WICHE
Regional Summit*

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

1:15 -

2:30 p.m.

8:30 -

9:45 a.m.

ROUNDTABLE 1

*Regency
Ballroom*

ROUNDTABLE 2

Embassy

ROUNDTABLE 3

Imperial

Roundtable 1 (Access & Success; Innovation) Changing the Face of Higher Education: The Popularity of Digital Learning and Three-Year Degrees

► *Regency Ballroom*

This session focuses on two evolving academic trends that could have a great impact on WICHE institutions: 1) The shift from in-person to digital courses. Especially since the pandemic, faculty are shifting to greater use of Zoom or other digital technologies. Students are shifting their registrations to courses that blend online and in-person learning or are purely online. Are institutions prepared? Are institutions properly informing students about the modalities used? 2) The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities approved 90-credit-hour bachelor's programs at BYU-Idaho and Ensign College to begin in the spring. Will other programs be far behind? What is the long-term impact on the traditional bachelor's degree? What will be the impact on electives, general education courses, and the cross-subsidization these large-enrollment courses provide? We ask you to share what is happening in your state and at your institutions and how WICHE states, systems, and institutions are addressing these innovations.

FACILITATORS

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

Kathryn Kerensky, Director, Digital Learning, Policy, and Compliance, WCET

Roundtable 2 (Workforce & Society; Innovation) Staffing Innovations in a Challenging New Era

► *Embassy*

Workforce challenges are impacting higher education in countless ways, and state and institutional leaders are working hard to find creative solutions to systemic issues, such as steep housing prices, recruiting talent in positions that do not lend themselves to remote work, technological advances, competition in key positions with other industries that can and do pay higher salaries, and so on. And these challenges are often amplified on rural and remote campuses. This session will focus on brainstorming innovative solutions to a difficult staffing climate, such as: What are creative options for institutions to consider when filling available staffing positions and developing more-diverse employee pools? What tools and processes are available? What policies hinder or help? What innovative work arrangements are emerging? What interstate considerations should be contemplated when hiring remote employees from other states?

FACILITATORS

Cheryl Dowd, Senior Director, State Authorization Network and WCET Policy Innovations

Jory Hadsell, Vice Chancellor and Chief Technology Officer, Foothill-De Anza Community College District

Roundtable 3 (Access & Society; Workforce & Society; Innovation)

Behavioral Health on Campus: Lessons from the WICHE Regional Summit

► Imperial

Concerns about effectively meeting the behavioral health needs of students, faculty, and staff in postsecondary education are not new. However, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated pre-existing issues, leaving Western states, systems, and postsecondary institutions struggling to devise new and efficient policy and practice approaches. With funding from Lumina Foundation, WICHE recently convened education and health leaders from three WICHE members along with experts from key organizations, states, and federal agencies to examine broad-based approaches to meeting this important need. In this roundtable, WICHE staff will facilitate a discussion drawing on the lessons shared at the meeting, and commissioners will share insights and work from their states aimed at addressing the issue. Additionally, staff will provide information about WICHE's broader strategy for engaging across our membership to help tackle these complex challenges that span varied domains, from clinical treatment to broader wellness campaigns to identifying solutions for long-term workforce shortages.

FACILITATORS

Liliana Diaz, Senior Policy Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research

Christina Sedney, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Policy Analysis and Research

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

ROUNDTABLE 1



Facilitator, Russ Poulin

As executive director of WCET—the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies and vice president for Technology-Enhanced Education, Russ Poulin leads an organization focusing on the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET member institutions and organizations hail from all 50 states and Canada. As WICHE’s vice president for technology-enhanced education, he advises on policies and projects. Poulin served on federal negotiated rulemaking panels and received recognition for national policy contributions. He previously led distance-education collaboration for the North Dakota University System. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado Denver and a master’s degree from the University of Northern Colorado. Poulin is partial to movies, cats, and his wife.



Facilitator, Kathryn Kerensky

Kathryn Kerensky has served as the director of digital learning, policy, and compliance with the State Authorization Network (SAN), which is a division of WCET—the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies, since 2021. She assists with the overall activities of SAN, with a focus on related institutional and programmatic compliance rules and regulations, including accreditation requirements, international compliance issues, and strategies for institutional regulatory compliance when serving students by means of digital learning. Previously, she served as a state authorization compliance professional at the University of Louisville for seven years. Kerensky received her bachelor’s degree in psychology and juris doctor degree from the University of Louisville.

ROUNDTABLE 2



Facilitator, Cheryl Dowd

Cheryl Dowd serves as senior director of the State Authorization Network and WCET policy innovations, and as a cyber fellow for WICHE. Dowd directs the activities and research to manage state and federal regulatory compliance requirements for the out-of-state activities of member institutions. As a WICHE cyber fellow, Dowd is cultivating relationships with national education and security agencies to develop institutional data protection, privacy resources, and training opportunities to share with the WICHE community. Dowd earned a juris doctor degree from the University of Richmond, a master’s degree in criminal justice from Bowling Green State University, and a bachelor’s degree in political science from James Madison University.



Facilitator, Jory Hadsell

Dr. Jory Hadsell is the vice chancellor of technology for the Foothill–De Anza Community College District, which includes two of the nation’s premier community colleges leading in digital transformation and academic achievement: Foothill College and De Anza College, each located in the heart of Silicon Valley. With a background as a tenured professor of academic technology and experience leading initiatives aimed at modernization and interoperability, Dr. Hadsell is deeply committed to realizing the

benefits of digital innovations for the future of higher education.

Dr. Hadsell serves as chair of the WCET Steering Committee. He is also the executive sponsor for the California Virtual Campus-Online Education Initiative, expanding online learning and student access across 116 California community colleges and serves as an advisor for the Transformative Leadership in Disruptive Times program at the UC Riverside Extension as part of his commitment to improving the future state of higher education and building future leaders.

ROUNDTABLE 3



Facilitator, Liliana Diaz

Liliana Diaz, senior policy analyst with WICHE, works on a diverse range of activities, including conducting and communicating policy research on a wide array of higher education-related topics, developing and sustaining relationships with external stakeholders, and conceptualizing and executing short- and long-term collaborative projects with states. Diaz received her bachelor’s degree in journalism and mass communication, bachelor’s in film studies, and a certificate in Technology, Arts, and

Media from the University of Colorado. Dr. Diaz and earned a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in higher education administration from the University of Denver.



Facilitator, Christina Sedney

Christina Sedney is the director of policy and strategic initiatives at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and works on a variety of topics including policy approaches to serving underrepresented student populations, higher education governance issues and needs assessments, and policy solutions for adult learners. Prior to WICHE, Sedney worked for international nonprofit Teach For All and completed a fellowship with the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. She also held multiple

roles with the AmeriCorps program City Year, from classroom-based corps member to project manager on their public policy team. She holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Virginia and a master’s degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

PLENARY SESSION II

Artificial Intelligence in Postsecondary Education:
Leveraging Advancements for Good and Guarding
Against the Bad

Thursday, November 9, 2023

2:45 – 4:15 p.m.

Grand Ballroom

PLENARY SESSION II

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

2:45 -

4:15 p.m.

*Grand
Ballroom*

Artificial Intelligence in Postsecondary Education: Leveraging Advancements for Good and Guarding Against the Bad

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping every sector of the economy, and at a speed that is having an unprecedented impact on education. Postsecondary education leaders must lose no time in addressing key questions about AI if they want to ensure that they leverage AI's capability for good. For example: What does AI mean for student access, opportunity, and success? How will AI change the way institutions support students on their educational pathways? What policies should be considered to ensure that AI is appropriately regulated? What are the implications of AI for workforce development?

A recent report by WCET—the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies, titled *Supporting Instruction and Learning Through Artificial Intelligence: A Survey of Institutional Practices and Policies*, summarizes findings from a national survey aimed at ascertaining how and why postsecondary institutions are using AI to support instruction and learning, what policies are in place, and what are the perceived barriers to, and benefits of, its use. One of the institutional respondents to that survey wrote, "It's the wild, wild West. And we don't have any horses."

Indeed, many postsecondary institutions are struggling to make sense of AI and the role that it can and should play, and states are joining the conversation as well. This interactive panel, led by Helen and Dave Edwards, co-authors of *Make Better Decisions: How to Improve Your Decision-Making in the Digital Age* and co-hosts of the podcast *Artificiality*, will explore the uses, challenges, and opportunities of AI in postsecondary education. It will include a discussion of the California Student Aid Commission's recent introduction of "CALI"—a two-way chatbot engagement platform designed to help students complete their FAFSA or California Dream Act Application as they prepare for college.

FACILITATORS

Dave Edwards, Founder, Sonder Studio

Helen Edwards, Founder, Sonder Studio, and Commissioner, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

PANELISTS

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

Marlene Garcia, Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Facilitators, Dave Edwards and Helen Edwards

Helen and Dave Edwards, of Bend, Oregon, specialize in empowering humans in this complex age of machines, data, and artificial intelligence (AI). They co-created *Artificiality*, a podcast, and other activities dedicated to understanding how humans and machines will co-evolve. Previously, they owned an AI company that was sold to Atlantic Media in 2016. Today, they are also researchers and educators at Sonder Studio,

working with a variety of international companies to help them make sense of the emerging AI world.

They co-authored *Make Better Decisions: How to Improve Your Decision-Making in the Digital Age*, which is focused on helping people understand decision biases and practice better decision-making techniques, particularly when AI and data are involved.

In addition, Helen Edwards is currently a commissioner on Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission.



Panelist, Van Davis

Van Davis has served as both chief strategy officer for WCET and service design and strategy officer for Every Learner Everywhere since 2021. As chief strategy officer for WCET, he leads the organization's strategy and planning work, coordinates WCET's diversity, equity, and inclusion work, and provides research and policy analysis assistance. As service design and strategy officer for Every Learner Everywhere, Davis leads the development and implementation of new services and professional learning

opportunities for use at higher education institutions. Previously, he served as principal at Foghlan Consulting.

Davis has spent more than 20 years in higher education in a number of roles, including associate vice president at Blackboard Inc., director of innovation for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and a faculty member and academic administrator at several universities. He received his master's and Ph.D. in 20th-century United States history with an emphasis on civil rights from Vanderbilt University and a bachelor's in history from Southwestern University.



Panelist, Marlene Garcia

Marlene Garcia is the executive director of the California Student Aid Commission, where she oversees a budget of close to \$3.2 billion and a team of 125. She has more than 25 years of experience working on education policy issues for a variety of government and higher education institutions. She has been nationally recognized for her work and was featured as one of 11 “Higher Education’s New Generation of Thinkers” in the 2005 edition by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. She is passionate about expanding educational opportunities by removing financial barriers to college success.

NETWORKING RECEPTION AND DINING LOCATIONS

Thursday, November 9, 2023
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Marriott Hotel Poolside Patio

NETWORKING RECEPTION

Thursday

Nov. 9, 2023

5:00 -

6:00 p.m.

Marriott
Hotel
Poolside
Patio

Please join the one-hour reception from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. poolside at the hotel. Enjoy light appetizers and beverages and time to socialize before heading out for dinner on your own.

RESTAURANTS NEAR THE MARRIOTT RIVERSIDE HOTEL

BELLA TRATTORIA ITALIAN BISTRO (\$\$)-5 MIN, 0.2 MILE WALK

Romantic Italian eatery at the *Mission Inn Hotel with pizza, pasta, panini and many sidewalk tables.

<https://www.missioninn.com/dining/bella-trattoria-italian-restaurant>

3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

DUANE'S PRIME STEAKS & SEAFOOD (\$\$\$\$)-5 MIN, 0.2 MILE WALK

Richly-furnished steakhouse inside the *Mission Inn Hotel serving Duane's finest Wet-Aged USDA Prime Steaks and the freshest seafood prepared to perfection. Recipient of the AAA Four Diamond Award since 1996, the Golden Baccus Award for outstanding wine selections and most recently Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence.

<http://places.singleplatform.com/duanes-prime-steaks-seafood/menu>

3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

LAS CAMPANAS (\$\$)-5 MIN, 0.2 MILE WALK

Serving Riverside's best Margaritas and authentic Mexican cuisine creatively prepared using the freshest herbs and ingredients at the *Mission Inn Hotel. The restaurant offers casual outdoor dining for lunch and dinner.

<https://www.missioninn.com/dining/las-campanas>

3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

TIO'S TACOS (\$\$)-8 MIN, 0.4 MILE WALK

Casual Mexican fare served in a funky, uniquely decorated space, with a large patio with artwork.

<http://www.tiostacos1.com/>

3948 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

MARIO'S PLACE (\$\$\$)-6 MIN, 0.3 MILE WALK

Upscale Northern Italian spot offering a classy patio-enhanced atmosphere.

<http://mariosplace.com/>

3646 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

THE SALTED PIG (\$\$)-6 MIN, 0.3 MILE WALK

Stylish, lofty gastropub with teal and copper accents serving inventive takes on hearty comfort food.

<http://www.thesaltedpig.com/#menu-section>

3750 Main Street, STE 103, Riverside, CA 92501

LE CHAT NOIR FRENCH RESTAURANT (\$\$\$)-9 MIN, 0.4 MILE WALK

Charming French bistro offering a classic menu and robust wine list in a polished setting.

<http://www.lechatnoirfrenchrestaurant.com/>

3790 9th Street, Riverside, CA 92501

GRAM'S BBQ (\$\$)-ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE HOTEL

Informal restaurant serving Southern-style BBQ dishes, Cajun specialties.

<https://www.gramsbbq.co/>

3527 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501

THE TAMALE FACTORY (\$\$)-4 MIN, 0.2 MILE WALK

Stylish cantina with a patio and a menu of classic Mexican dishes.

<http://tamalefactory.net/>

3663 Main Street, STE C, Riverside, CA 92501

RIVERSIDE FOOD LAB (FOOD COURT)-4 MIN, 0.2 MILE WALK

More than a dozen stations offer everything from vegan burgers to ramen and coffee to cocktails.

<http://www.riversidefoodlab.com/>

3605 Market Street, Riverside, CA 92501

HERO'S RIVERSIDE-8 MIN, 0.3 MILE WALK

Fun brew pub.

<https://www.heroesriverside.com/>

3397 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

*THE MISSION INN

The Mission Inn is a beautiful, historic hotel. Walking through and around the hotel and property is allowed and if possible, it is a “must see”.

<https://www.missioninn.com/>

“Mission Inn Hotel and Spa began as a quaint adobe boarding house in 1876, becoming a full-service hotel in the early 1900s. Opened by Frank Miller, it expanded in 1903 with over 200 guestrooms and the addition of the Mission Wing, built in Mission-Revival style while incorporating architectural features from more than 20 different California missions. Three more wings materialized as demand grew, including the Cloister, Spanish Wing and the Rotunda Wing, completed in 1931. Miller filled the hotel with valuable items from across the globe, including artwork, furniture and religious relics. Mission Inn still houses the oldest bell in Christendom, dating back to 1247.”

3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

Reminder:

Second day of Roundtable Discussions

Friday, November 10, 2023
8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

See Tab 8 for locations and details

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Business Session

Friday, November 10, 2023

10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Grand Ballroom

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — BUSINESS SESSION

Friday

Nov. 10, 2023

10:00 -

11:15 a.m.

Grand
Ballroom

Business Session Agenda

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Matt Freeman (ID), WICHE Chair

 **APPROVAL OF THE MAY 9, 2023, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES** 11-3

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Commissioner Matt Freeman

11-13

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Demarée Michelau

11-15

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Commissioner Matt Freeman, Chair

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BETWEEN MAY 2023 AND SEPTEMBER 2023

Commissioner Matt Freeman, Chair

11-18

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Commissioner Patricia Sullivan (NM), Committee Chair

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Commissioner Christopher Cabaldon (CA), Committee Chair

 **APPROVAL OF A PROJECT TITLED: "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOCUSED ON STATE AND SYSTEM GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR THE NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION"** 5-9

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Laurie Bishop (MT)

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Commissioner David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past WICHE Chair

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election of Chair and Vice Chair as Officers of the WICHE Commission for 2024

Commissioner David Lassner, Immediate Past WICHE Chair

Action Item

 **APPROVAL OF REVISED WICHE RETIREMENT BENEFIT PERTAINING TO NEW ROTH CATCH-UP REQUIREMENT** 11-29

Discussion Item

UPDATE ON WICHE'S FY 2024 BUDGET 11-31

Information Item

NON-GENERAL FUND RESERVES FOR FY 2024 11-34

REMARKS BY MATT FREEMAN, OUTGOING CHAIR

REMARKS BY INCOMING CHAIR

REMINDER TO SUBMIT SELECTION OF 2024 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Other Business

Adjourn Committee of the Whole—Business Session

Meeting Evaluation

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Nov24CommMtg>



Thank you for your feedback!

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the May 9, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
David Lassner (HI), Immediate Past Chair
Pearl Brower (AK)
Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
Christopher Cabaldon (CA)
Ellen Junn (CA)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Jim Chavez (CO)
Colleen Sathre (HI)
Laurie Bishop (MT)
Clayton Christian (MT)
Cathy Dinauer (NV)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Bill Soules (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
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)
Ann Millner (UT)
David Woolstenhulme (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Les Purce (WA)
Gerry Pollet (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)
Kevin Carman (WY)
Kimberly Dale (WY)

Commissioners Absent

Susan Anderson (AK)
John Arnold (AZ)
José Cruz Rivera (AZ)
Angie Paccione (CO)
John Morton (HI)
Rick Aman (ID)
Dave Lent (ID)
Sheila Stearns (MT)
Dale Erquiaga (NV)
Patricia Sullivan (NM)
Danita Bye (ND)
Mark Hagerott (ND)
Danita Bye (ND)
Camille Preus (OR)
Brian Maher (SD)
Larry Tidemann (SD)

Staff Present

Ray Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs and Services
Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources, Human Resources
Van Davis, Chief Strategy Officer, WCET and Service Design and Strategy Officer, Every Learner Everywhere
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President and to the Commission, Office of the President
Colleen Falkenstern, Senior Research Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, W-SARA, Policy Analysis and Research
Kay Hulstrom, Associate Director of Operations and Leadership Initiatives, Programs and Services
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and Research
Demarée Michelau, President
Craig Milburn, Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Services

Staff Present (continued)

Jeanette Porter, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Office of the President
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Megan Raymond, Senior Director of Membership and Programs, WCET
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications, Communications

Guests

Merrissa Brechtel, Certifying Officer (HI)
Louise Lynch, Certifying Officer (AZ)
Cassidy Stortz, Certifying Officer (UT)
Patty Porter, Certifying Officer (NV)
Brian Prescott, President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

Call to Order

WICHE Chair Matt Freeman called the Committee of the Whole to order at 10:24 a.m. on May 9, 2023. Laura Ewing reported that the meeting had a quorum.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 10-11, 2022, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Freeman asked for any additions or corrections to the minutes. There were none, and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Report of the Chair

Chair Freeman summarized key findings from the strategic planning session at the November 2022 Commission Meeting in Portland, Ore., which included the need for:

- ▶ Greater commissioner engagement and group discussion during Commission meetings to determine what may occur in higher education based on trends and opportunities.
- ▶ Reconstituting and revising the five focus areas to better guide the organization to serve the residents of the WICHE region more effectively.

He said the work done during the November meeting was meaningful, and efforts have been made to operationalize productive outcomes from the strategy sessions. He said one positive outcome, in particular, was recognizing the need for WICHE leadership to have a stronger understanding of the needs of the Pacific Island region. In April 2023, Chair Freeman, Vice Chair Antwan Jefferson, Immediate Past Chair David Lassner, President Demarée Michelau, and Patrick Lane traveled to and met with key higher education individuals in Guam, CNMI, and the Marshall Islands. Chair Freeman acknowledged and thanked Commissioners Frankie Eliptico and Rodney Jacob for their effective work and time in coordinating multiple meetings while the leadership team toured the territories and jurisdictions.

Chair Freeman thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve in his leadership role.

Report of the President

President Michelau referred to the May 2023 Commission Meeting agenda book for her full report to the Commission on page 11-12. Among the highlights:

- ▶ Thanks to the Pacific Island members for their support in hosting the invaluable visit for the WICHE leadership, and to the WICHE staff involved in the planning and coordinating of the Commission Meeting and the Arizona commissioners for serving as hosts.
- ▶ The value of her travel throughout the WICHE region to understand the challenges that students and their families face, and to see trends in one part of the region that may occur in other parts of the region.
- ▶ The importance of cyber security training for campus leaders to eliminate the devastation to institutions in the event of a cyberattack. WICHE has hosted cyber security training in Colorado, North Dakota, Oregon, and Idaho. She acknowledged the work of Commissioner Rick Aman and Chair Freeman for their collaboration on the training and presentation in Idaho.
- ▶ Raymonda Burgman Gallegos' exploration of additional ways to fund the Interstate Passport project. It has been winding down since the initial grant funding, but there may be possibilities to continue the program if additional funding can be secured.
- ▶ Reflections on COVID-19 and the challenges the region faced during the peak years of the pandemic. She acknowledged the innovation and determination to provide quality education for students of the West.

Report and Recommended Action of the Executive Committee

Chair Freeman presented a report on the business conducted by the Executive Committee, starting with a summary of the committee's work with the annual review of President Michelau. The annual review has two main components: a self-evaluation and the Commission's evaluation of her performance. Additionally, the Commission conducted a "360 evaluation" with an external evaluator, including 26 interviews with staff members, commissioners, and external stakeholders. The evaluator also conducted a survey with 84 respondents from staff and the Commission. During the closed session of the Executive Committee on May 8, members reviewed the results of President Michelau's 360-evaluation, her self-evaluation, and her goals and objectives for FY 2024. He said the survey results were exceptional, showing that President Michelau is regarded as a highly effective and trusted leader. The Executive Committee is pleased with her performance, and the renewal of President Michelau was approved.

Chair Freeman summarized the action items of the Executive Committee between November 2022 and March 2023. The action items noted included the following:

- ▶ Approval of an assessment of the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)
- ▶ Approval to explore the establishment of a property insurance program for institutions
- ▶ Reviewed updates on the SARA modification process
- ▶ Approval of New Mexico's and Wyoming's SARA renewal
- ▶ Review and discussion of WICHE's FY 2023 Workplan, vision statements, strategic priorities, and the May 2023 Commission Meeting agenda.

Report and Recommended Action of the Programs and Services Committee

Programs and Services Committee Chair Les Purce reported on the committee's work, including discussion of the FY 2024 Workplan and an update from WICHE staff on major unit programs. Time was spent serving as a focus group for the Professional Student Exchange Program field assessment and review.

Highlights of the Programs and Services unit's work included:

- ▶ The Western Undergraduate Exchange program (WUE) reported in AY 2022-23, a total of 46,110 students enrolled at 163 institutions through WUE and saved \$520 million.
- ▶ Seven California community colleges will be eligible to participate in WUE, thanks to a bill signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in September 2022.
- ▶ WRGP enrollment increased by 11% from fall 2021 to fall 2022. A total of 3,269 students saved \$58 million through WRGP that academic year.
- ▶ PSEP, WICHE's longest-running access program, has served students preparing for degrees in the healthcare professions for 70 years. In AY 2022-23, with additional students funded by Arizona and Nevada, a total of 569 students were served, saving \$14.5 million. Guam will begin funding its residents through PSEP as of fall 2024.
- ▶ WICHE's Certifying Officers attended the committee meeting and also had their own meeting with WICHE staff and NCHEMS during a productive discussion about the PSEP evaluation.
- ▶ Discussions were held about the need to create and fund more opportunities that align with local workforce demands, the importance of continuing leadership programs for mid-management administrators, and working with legislators and their expectations so WICHE can be seen as a model; one that focuses on how to address and resolve issues that students and institutions face.
- ▶ The committee recommended that the Commission accept the Programs and Services Workplan for FY 2023.

Committee Chair Purce said that he will be resigning from the WICHE Commission after being appointed by Governor Jay Inslee to serve on the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. The council is to chart a course to the energy future with solar and wind energy while developing the nation's largest regional fish and wildlife protection and mitigation program in the Columbia River Basin. Saying that it has been a privilege to serve on the Commission for seven years, he ended his report by saying, "I believe in two specific endeavors that are fundamental to our future: to support and develop future education opportunities for the next generations, and to protect the future space of Mother Earth, the environment, and the effects of energy, while supporting economic needs. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to contribute and make a hopeful impact for both." His statement was met with applause from the attendees and an expression of appreciation and well wishes for his next endeavor from Chair Freeman.

Report and Recommended Action of the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE PAR UNIT'S SECTION OF THE WORKPLAN

Policy Analysis and Research Committee Chair Christopher Cabaldon said the committee discussed and is recommending two action items for approval by the Committee of the Whole:

The first action item was to consider a new project focused on the value of postsecondary education to be added to the FY 2024 Workplan. Chair Cabaldon said the committee supports this work, which must go beyond messaging and cheerleading about the benefits of postsecondary degrees. Instead, it must include tools and usable products to help WICHE members improve the value of their postsecondary offerings and better communicate that to a variety of audiences, including students and their families, as well as policymakers. The committee approved a motion to add this project to the Workplan and seek funding for it, with further direction to report back to the Commission and ensure that funders support, but do not necessarily direct, this effort.

The second action item was to consider the PAR sections of the Workplan. The committee had an extensive discussion on the ever-growing list of approved projects that have not been funded, which is a source of concern to both staff and committee members. Chair Cabaldon said the aim will be to reprioritize and potentially consider removing items from this list that are outdated or no longer a priority. In particular, committee members asked for better strategic alignment between the long list of projects previously approved and the discussions and conclusions of commissioners at the last meeting's strategy sessions. The committee adopted a motion to approve the Workplan and put that motion before the Committee of the Whole as its recommendation.

UPDATES ON PAR UNIT ACTIVITIES

- ▶ The Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) will meet in September, and staff will contact commissioners to identify appointments to fill LAC vacancies.
- ▶ WICHE released the latest iteration of its annual publication of tuition and fees in the West to commissioners last week. The report shows relatively flat growth for tuition and fees and declines over the past 10 years when adjusting for inflation.
- ▶ WICHE has received funding from the Lumina Foundation to commence work on behavioral health in postsecondary education, with this effort expected to begin immediately.
- ▶ WICHE recently convened policy roundtables focused on meeting nursing workforce challenges and will be publishing policy snapshots later this year.

SARA POLICY MODIFICATION DISCUSSION

Chair Cabaldon reported on the committee's discussion of the current status of numerous proposals to adjust policies of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), beginning with the staff's summary of nine proposals submitted for consideration by the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC). Steering committees have submitted additional proposals in the three other compact regions, and entities such as a group of state attorneys general and a coalition of consumer protection advocates. Proposals approved in each region will be considered by the NC-SARA Board for final adoption. Staff noted that the W-SARA RSC's proposals overlap with most, but not all, of the recommendations by the attorneys general.

Chair Cabaldon said much of the committee discussion centered on one particular recommendation by the attorneys general that has also been submitted into the process by a coalition of consumer advocate organizations. He mentioned the important role of Commissioner Robert Shireman in bringing together various perspectives to ensure the process is improved for consumer protection and students. Chair Cabaldon also recognized WICHE staff contributions throughout the process, including navigating the various political nuances. Their dedicated work has proven effective in moving the policy modification process to the next stage.

Another point of discussion, he said, was a proposal to change SARA policy to allow states to enforce their own education-specific consumer protection statutes and regulations on out-of-state institutions. Currently, SARA policy allows states to enforce general-purpose consumer protection requirements but not education-specific ones. After much discussion, the committee unanimously adopted a motion that requests that the W-SARA RSC consider and report to the PAR Committee on proposals prior to final consideration.

Proposals to modify SARA policy are open for public comment through May 17. The regional compacts must consider and select proposals by September 1. WICHE has approved a process to exercise its decisional authority by having the W-SARA RSC, comprised of state regulators and SARA points of contact in participating states, vote on most matters. Chair Cabaldon said impactful or controversial items may, based on consultation between the WICHE president, officers, and the PAR Committee chair, be brought to the full Commission or at least the Executive Committee.

Committee Chair Cabaldon noted that there are many priority issues still remaining for WICHE states and other interested parties including members of the Commission. These include:

1. Providing financial protections for students misled or defrauded by a SARA Institution.
2. Considering the issue of state enforcement capacity, which is more complicated than just saying that every state should have a certain level of staffing for a certain number of institutions.

Committee Chair Cabaldon also referenced advocacy by a coalition of attorneys general and others against the prohibition in SARA policy that prevents states from applying education-specific statutes and regulations to out-of-state institutions, noting that this is an area of particular interest for several WICHE states and commissioners. Acknowledging that this is a complex issue that, he reported that the PAR Committee directed the W-SARA Regional Steering Committee to give this question due consideration in its policy deliberations.

Report of the Behavioral Health Oversight Council

Commissioner Antwan Jefferson reported on the November 22, 2022, Behavioral Health Oversight Council (BHOC) meeting held in Boulder, Colo., in conjunction with the National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH) conference. Members of BHOC from several WICHE states and territories attended, along with several WICHE staff members.

The BHOC was established in 1976 to provide a point of coordination and information exchange for the WICHE Behavioral Health Program (BHP) and the member states and territories. The BHOC is composed of the chief state mental health executives of the member states, as well as he and Commissioner Rodney Jacob.

Guests from the National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors and SAMHSA Regional

Administrators for HHS Regions 6, 8, 9, and 10 (entire WICHE region) also attended. The BHOC is chaired by Theresa Arriola (Guam) and co-chaired by Neal Bowen (NM).

Dennis Mohatt, Vice President for WICHE's Behavioral Health Program (BHP), presented an update on BHP projects, which currently number 29 funded projects underway in 10 WICHE states and Guam. Among them are:

- ▶ ROTAC (Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center), funded by a grant from SAMHSA to develop a program providing training and technical assistance to address opioid misuse in SAMHSA's Region 8.
- ▶ TWV (Together With Veterans) Rural Suicide Prevention Project supports veteran-led suicide prevention in 31 rural communities in the WICHE region.
- ▶ Statewide Crisis Planning and implementation in Montana.
- ▶ ND Statewide Behavioral Health Workforce Planning, which helped the state of North Dakota with its behavioral health workforce task force and facilitated a statewide summit in September 2022.
- ▶ Psychology Internship Initiative now includes programs in 10 WICHE states and Guam. The program has graduated over 250 students, and 60% remain in the rural communities where they trained.

John Gomez, Director of Operations for BHP, presented a financial report showing that between 2017-18 and 2021-22, BHP's positive fund balance increased 106%. For the eighth straight year, there has been a financial gain. BHP anticipates over \$7.8 million in revenue in FY 2022-23.

WICHE staff presented an update on the project Supporting Adoption of Evidence-Based Practice Quality Improvement Through Fidelity Review. Reviews are currently being conducted in Arizona, Montana, and South Dakota.

The next BHOC meeting will be in July 2023 in conjunction with the NASMHPD Annual Meeting, where WICHE will participate in a special session focused on engagement with Tribal leaders.

After the BHOC report, Chair Freeman moved the meeting to the business portion with the following action items:

Action Items

APPROVAL OF WICHE'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PLAN

At Chair Freeman's request, President Michelau presented an overview of the action item to approve the proposal for WICHE's paid family leave plan. 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 comparable to the Colorado law. President Michelau said she hired Steve Cyboran of Humaculture Inc., and his team to help WICHE design a self-funded paid family leave program for Colorado WICHE employees; the plan would also meet the legal requirements of the states where remote employees live. The plan's goal is to be comparable to what Colorado requires for all employed residents. She said that in some ways, the WICHE proposed plan is better than or equal to the Colorado

FAMLI plan, and in a few ways, it is not as good—but overall, she believes it is a better plan. One benefit she does not want staff to lose is the sick leave conversion benefit. The plan will begin on January 1, 2024, at no cost to staff for the first year. The Colorado FAMLI plan does require payment from participants. President Michelau said she plans to use a third-party administrator to avoid adjudicating claims.

Chair Freeman called for questions, and there were none. Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE WICHE’s Paid Family Leave Plan, and Commissioner Kathleen Goepfinger SECONDED. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF THE REVISED WICHE INVESTMENT POLICY

Chair Freeman asked President Michelau to present the action item. The Investment Committee reconvened in March 2023 to discuss investments with the legal counsel to ensure compliance with member states’ laws and whether any potential modification to future investment strategies would be problematic. The legal counsel advised the committee that there is a clear legislative intent that public monies should be invested in short-term low-risk investment securities and said that the WICHE Investment Policy is largely consistent with this advice, but some policy updating is in order.

The last time the policy was reviewed prior to 2023 was in 1992, and WICHE is currently eligible to invest in the Colorado Surplus Asset Fund, a legislatively created fund. The investment fund is safe, it does not yield a significant return, but WICHE does not risk losing much. The Investment Committee expressed an interest in looking at the policy flexibility to invest a portion of the funds in longer-term invested funds at a higher level to generate additional revenue and a higher return.

Commissioner Cabaldon asked President Michelau how the Colorado Surplus Asset Fund compares to the same type of fund in other states. She said that she does not know for sure and is also unsure if other states have a fund comparable to what Colorado has. Commissioner Frankie Eliptico MOVED TO APPROVE the revised investment policy, and Commissioner Lokken SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was approved.

APPROVAL OF THE FY 2024 SALARY AND BENEFIT RECOMMENDATIONS

President Michelau presented the action item. WICHE has a merit-based salary program, and requested a 4% increase for all staff members, who have done an excellent job over the last year. The increased cost is included in the proposed budget for FY 2024. Commissioner Clayton Christian MOVED TO APPROVE the 4% staff salary increase, and Commissioner Lokken SECONDED the motion. There were no questions, and the motion passed.

APPROVAL OF FY 2024 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET – GENERAL AND NON-GENERAL FUND BUDGETS

Chair Freeman asked Craig Milburn to present the action item. Milburn reviewed the budget sheets comparing FY 2023 with the FY 2024 General Fund with the following noted explanations:

- ▶ The FY 2023 income is more significant than budgeted due to interest income, which ended up much more significant than anticipated and budgeted.
- ▶ The FY 2023 Communications budget line is a misprint; it should be \$490,000+ instead of \$499,000+.
- ▶ The Commission Meeting expense is higher than budgeted. The Commission budget during the pandemic was not increased due to virtual meetings and greatly reduced meeting expenses. Travel and hotel expenses have increased since 2020, so in-person meetings cost more. Travel for the

Pacific Island members/delegation also has significantly higher travel expenses. The costs from the business trip that the WICHE officers, President Michelau and Patrick Lane, took to Guam, CNMI, and Marshall Islands were charged to the Commission Meeting budget.

- ▶ The Miscellaneous General Fund is higher because several cloud services were paid out of this budget instead of using reserve allocation funds.
- ▶ FY 2023 will end with \$239,000+ in excess revenue.
- ▶ The FY 2023 reserves budget began and ended with a balance of \$432,372 with a surplus of \$239,436.
- ▶ The FY 2023 overall reserve budget is projected to end with \$4,569,739.
- ▶ According to an FY 2024 projected budget that will open with \$4,592,582, WICHE will finish in the black.

President Michelau commented on one additional expense for the Commission Meeting budget, stating that the bulk of Laura Ewing's salary has been accounted for in the President's Office budget. WICHE is now more accurately accounting for her time spent on Commission business and meetings, which results in additional expense to the Commission Meeting budget. Additionally, the Salesforce cloud base expense came out of the Miscellaneous General Fund due to the surplus in that fund; the cost would typically come out of the Reserve Allocation fund, but going to that fund for the Salesforce expense was not needed due to the surplus in the Miscellaneous General Fund.

Milburn asked for questions about the General Fund. There were none.

Milburn reviewed the budget sheets comparing FY 2023 with FY 2024 Program/Unit budgets with the noted explanations and said each program area is budgeting for a surplus and adding to the Reserves budget. He asked for questions, and there were none. President Michelau requested a name change from "Commission Meeting" to "Commission Expenses" to more accurately reflect the expenses charged to this fund, which is more than just meeting expenses. Commissioner Purce MOVED TO APPROVE the FY 2024 annual operating budget for the General and Non-General Fund budgets and to change the budget line-item title from Commission Meeting expense to Commission Expenses, and Commissioner David Lassner SECONDED. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF THE DEDICATED RESERVE LEVELS FOR NON-GENERAL FUND ACTIVITIES

President Michelau presented this action item. The General Fund requires and accumulates reserves, as do Non-General Fund accounts. WICHE policy states that dedicated reserves for Non-General Fund activities—categorized into minimum reserve, reserve for unexpected shortfall, and program development levels—shall be approved by the WICHE Commission for the upcoming fiscal year as part of the WICHE annual budget at the May meeting each year. Commissioner Christian MOVED TO APPROVE the Non-General Fund reserve amounts for Non-General Fund activities, and Commissioner Ann Millner SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed.

APPROVAL OF WICHE'S VISION, VALUE PROPOSITION, AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

President Michelau presented this action item. During the strategy session at the November 2022 Commission Meeting, commissioners provided feedback about the need for a draft statement. Subsequently, she worked with the WICHE officers, the Senior Leadership Team, and the Executive Committee to revise the statement and the WICHE's Value Proposition. The Commission also spent time on further developing the Focus Areas that serve as the foundation of the annual Workplan. The

officers suggested shifting Focus Areas to Strategic Priorities for a stronger and bolder statement for the organization. President Michelau recommended that the Commission approve the Vision Statement, Value Proposition, and Strategic Priorities to be reflected in the Workplan, website, Ambassador Toolkit, and other communications. Chair Freeman commented that the Value Proposition thoughtfully includes not only the state members but also the Pacific Island members. Commissioner Millner MOVED TO APPROVE WICHE's vision, value proposition, and strategic priorities, and Commissioner Barbara Damron SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF THE 2024 WORKPLAN

President Michelau presented the action item. The standing committees have reported and recommended that the entire Workplan be approved, noting that one adjustment for the Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Workplan will be updated for the final, published FY 2024 Workplan. Commissioner Damron MOVED TO APPROVE the FY 2024 Workplan with the noted and recommended updates for the PAR section in the final and published Workplan. Commissioner Diana VanderWoude SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

AFFIRMATION OF CODES OF ETHICS FOR THE WICHE COMMISSION, PRESIDENT, AND STAFF

President Michelau presented this action item. She said the Commission, president, and staff are expected to abide by a Code of Ethics and should review and affirm the Codes of Ethics annually. In 2023, the Code of Ethics is to be reaffirmed, and additionally, several edits were recommended by staff to bring the language of the code current to account for the Pacific Island membership and the associated alignment to the WICHE mission statement wording to change "citizens" to "residents." The suggested edits are found on pages 11-88 through 11-90 of the May 2023 Commission Meeting agenda book. Commissioner Christian MOVED TO APPROVE, and Commissioner Eliptico SECONDED the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

Other Business

Chair Freeman recognized Commissioner Purce and his service to the Commission, with the May 2023 Commission Meeting being his last as a WICHE Commissioner. Chair Freeman noted that Commissioner Purce has served on the Commission since 2018 with the Washington delegation. He also said that he is an Idaho native and has had a long career in a variety of leadership roles, including university president, city council member, mayor, director of the Idaho Department of Administration and the Department of Health and Welfare, and many more roles that have made an impact on the communities he has served. Chair Freeman extended a special thank you to Commissioner Purce, and the Commission responded with hearty applause.

Adjournment

The Committee of the Whole-Business Session adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Matt Freeman, Idaho

Commissioners,

When we last convened in May, we celebrated WICHE's 70th Anniversary together. It was a great evening of fellowship and food with old and new friends while overlooking a spectacular view of the Phoenix skyline. President Michelau wanted to provide WICHE staff (present and past) and friends of WICHE an opportunity to celebrate this remarkable milestone, so there was a second 70th Anniversary celebration at the WICHE headquarters in Boulder on August 18, 2023. Colorado Governor Jared Polis graciously attended along with other local elected officials. Vice Chair Antwan Jefferson (CO), Immediate Past-Chair David Lassner (HI), Jim Chavez (CO), and I also had the privilege of attending. It was a great turnout, and fun to watch the mingling of so many people who have dedicated much of their professional careers to the noble cause of increasing access to postsecondary education for residents of the West.

I am thrilled to welcome American Samoa into WICHE, expanding our Pacific Islands members to six U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States. We look forward to working with American Samoa to help them leverage the Compact for the benefit of their students, residents, and economy.

This past year, we helped to guide and inform the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) review and assessment. It had been a couple of decades since the inventory of PSEP healthcare programs had been evaluated for market demand, so we contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to undertake this work. The Programs and Services Committee will have an opportunity to see some preliminary findings at this meeting.

Together, we assisted and supported WICHE staff in their work on the SARA policy modification process.

We also assisted with a time-sensitive group property insurance challenge that resulted in WICHE serving as a sponsor for five private institutions in Oregon and Washington being able to be jointly covered – saving them a considerable amount of money.

These are only a few of the tactical things we accomplished together. Thank you for the time, talent, and service you give to WICHE. I leave you with these musings I shared during the August 18th Anniversary celebration.

On August 8, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Western Regional Education Compact, thereby making WICHE an official federally-recognized compact of states.

Remember where we were as a country in 1950. World War II had ended only five years prior. The G.I. Bill, passed in 1944, was an unprecedented catalyst for tens of thousands of young Americans to enroll in college. Yet, most Western states were sparsely populated and did not have the resources or infrastructure to meet the educational needs and demands of their students – especially at the graduate and professional levels. WICHE was borne from the idea that states could cooperatively provide educational opportunities to meet the needs of the Region and its students.

We are celebrating WICHE's 70th Anniversary, which is a remarkable milestone for any organization, but we are also celebrating the prescience and forethought of WICHE's founders who recognized the immense benefits for residents of the West to band together across state lines and create a compact founded on goodwill and nonpartisan collaboration to advance educational opportunities. This bold mission and vision still ring true 70 years later. Each year, we are providing educational opportunities

*for tens of thousands of students, generating student savings in the hundreds of millions of dollars.
What a remarkable legacy our founders left us.*

It has truly been a highlight of my professional career to have the opportunity to serve as your Chair. Thank you for entrusting me with this honor and responsibility.

Matt Freeman, Idaho

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Demarée K. Michelau

What a year! WICHE celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2023, and as we did so, I had many opportunities to reflect on the tremendous impact this organization has had on postsecondary education in the West. The forethought it took for a group of diverse leaders from states and territories to launch a compact focused on providing high-quality higher education to the region is remarkable. As we engage in thoughtful discussions around innovation, the value of postsecondary education, and serving an evolving student population in a rapidly changing context, I have the honor of leading this great organization. I often wonder what I did to get so lucky. It is impossible to share what we have accomplished these past few months in just a few paragraphs, so I will highlight a few key areas.

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

It is no secret that regional engagement is my favorite part of my job, but it is also the key to ensuring that WICHE remains relevant and a trusted partner to our states and Pacific Island members. Each May, I share with the Commission a comprehensive summary of the relevant engagement activities that I conduct, but for the purposes of this report, over the last six months, I have had the pleasure of visiting Arizona, Colorado (WICHE's home state), Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming. I look forward to upcoming legislative sessions as many of our states have experienced significant legislative turnover, and it is especially important to engage and support our legislators in whatever way we can.

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

I have prioritized developing and maintaining relationships with our key partners in the field and in philanthropy. Our partnerships run deep throughout the organization and in our initiatives, but to name a few, working closely with the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) comes in various forms through the State Higher Education Policy Center, data partnerships, the SHEEO conferences, etc. I have had meaningful and productive conversations with colleagues from Lumina Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts, and I continue to build and maintain relationships with other funders. We maintain open communication with federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, submitting comments when appropriate and meeting with them on a somewhat regular basis. We are especially pleased that the department appeared to have listened to our recommendation pertaining to "Gainful Employment." Specifically, in the final rule, institutions in the territories and freely associated states will be exempt from the portions of the rule that would have meant that certificate programs at the public institutions in the islands could have been ineligible for federal financial aid if they did not meet certain metrics for student earnings after completion. Our formal comments submitted in short said 1) the federal government does not have any earnings information for the residents of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau, so it does not make sense that it would apply and 2) the economies and labor markets in the territories are completely different than the mainland, and the implications of the rule should be thoroughly studied by experts in those regions prior to applying the rule.

PUBLICATIONS

In Winter 2023, WICHE hosted a series of policy roundtables with stakeholders of different backgrounds from across the West to identify scalable strategies for developing a robust nursing workforce that

meets current and future needs. The roundtables included WICHE Commissioners Barbara Damron (NM), Cathy Dinauer (NV), and Diana VanderWoude (SD), as well as nursing school faculty and administrators, hospital and other clinical-setting staff and administrators, state nursing workforce centers, boards of nursing, nursing associations, staff from state higher education offices, and other state workforce and healthcare agencies. Armed with data from these discussions, WICHE produced a series of briefs highlighting common challenges faced by states, institutions, and systems in the region, as well as some of the innovative approaches for addressing these challenges.

WCET published two key reports. The first titled, *Defining "Distance Education" in Policy: Differences Among Federal, State, and Accreditation Agencies*, was written in partnership with the State Authorization Network and reviews the definitions of "Distance Education" and how it is commonly used in higher education policies. The purpose of the review is to highlight the challenges the varied definitions (of just this one term) can cause for colleges and universities as they attempt to adhere to compliance and other regulatory responsibilities. The second publication, titled, *Supporting Instruction & Learning Through Artificial Intelligence: A Survey of Institutional Practices & Policies*, highlights survey results plus post-survey in-depth interviews that are derived from a national survey designed to ascertain how and why postsecondary institutions are using artificial intelligence to support instruction and learning, what policies are in place, and what are the perceived barriers to, and benefits for, its use.

FINANCE

WICHE remains in a positive financial position. Staff are doing relevant and valuable work, and, as a result, memberships, grants, and contracts are steady. All states have paid their dues, and WICHE is waiting for the next round of U.S. Department of Interior funding to apply for the Technical Assistance Grant Program, which supports the Pacific Island membership dues.

STAFFING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Staff continues to be stable overall, with the usual amount of turnover.

Space constraints prevent me from covering all that is happening at WICHE, so I will share highlights about several special projects. The first is 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 Programs and Services Committee will hear findings and recommendations from NCHEMS this November. And in other PSEP news, Guam Community College began operating as the administrative office for its newly established Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) and after the Biráda Act, introduced by Vice Speaker Tina Muña Barnes, was signed into law by Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero in 2022. Second, we have made significant progress on developing a paid family leave program. We worked with a team of consultants that helped us design a generous and sustainable plan for WICHE (to be implemented in January 2024). I continue to 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 president of NC-SARA to ensure that our organizations are working harmoniously toward common goals. I have re-engaged as a board member with the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration, an organization that was founded at WICHE and is now an independent 501(c)3.

I want to take a moment to highlight WICHE's communications work because an outcome of the 2016 Commission retreat was to increase capacity around communications. This was not fully realized until the last two years, and it has been an incredibly positive step for WICHE. In the last six months, the

Communications team has provided several trainings for WICHE staff to improve their understanding of key topics such as open records laws, interviewing with a journalist, and data visualization. The team also partnered with WCET to audit their websites and PDFs for accessibility, and they have worked together to adopt best practices such as improved keyboard access for those who use screen readers, using alternative text with photos and other media, better color contrast on design elements, and reducing redundant hyperlinks, which impacts half a dozen WICHE-related sites. This work is ongoing. The Communications team has also increased WICHE's audience engagement through LinkedIn, the e-newsletter, press releases, and media mentions. Finally, the team produced a video about WICHE's 70th anniversary and supported a 70th-anniversary celebration for staff and friends of WICHE in Boulder, as well as completed the branding refresh, which included new signage, an online storefront, and an ambassador toolkit.

CHALLENGES

Looking ahead, as I think about the challenges that the organization is facing, I am quite optimistic. We have a stellar staff, an experienced and engaged Commission, and wonderful colleagues and partners, all of which are necessary for WICHE's success. Our country, however, is becoming increasingly divided at a time when we need to come together to find solutions to some very complex problems in our society. Higher education needs to play a key role in that, and higher education in the West can and should lead.

Being the WICHE president through the pandemic was challenging and not something I care to repeat, so either because of that experience or despite it, I mostly see opportunity ahead for WICHE. I see endless opportunities for WICHE to play a meaningful role in addressing workforce challenges, to help our states and institutions think through what our campuses will look like and do in the future as they strive to demonstrate their value to their students and communities, and to support our policymakers as they work to produce sound public policy in an increasingly polarized environment.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to continue serving as WICHE's president. I am honored to work with an amazingly talented group of commissioners, the WICHE staff who demonstrate their professionalism and commitment every day, and all the wonderful partners and colleagues throughout the region and the country. Postsecondary education is facing serious challenges right now, but we have an opportunity to chart our future, and I am confident in our ability to work together toward solutions.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

WICHE Executive Committee Meeting Minutes — Approved May 8, 2023

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)
Diana VanderWoude (SD) *proxy for Larry Tidemann*
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Committee members Absent

Larry Tidemann (SD)

WICHE Staff Present

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources
Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President
and the Commission
Demarée Michelau, President
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Call to Order

Chair Matt Freeman called the meeting to order, and quorum was confirmed. He explained the WICHE President's performance evaluation process to take place during the meeting, stating that once the meeting moves to President Demarée Michelau's evaluation, the meeting will go to closed session, and everyone except Executive Committee members, President Michelau, and Deirdre Coulter will remain in the meeting room while all other meeting attendees will depart the room.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 15, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Freeman requested comments and corrections to the March 15, 2023, committee meeting minutes. There were no comments or corrections. Chair Freeman declared the minutes approved as submitted.

Action Item

REVIEW OF THE WICHE PRESIDENT'S PERFORMANCE AND ADOPTION OF THE FY 2024 WICHE PRESIDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Chair Freeman requested that the meeting move to a closed session, and all attendees except for the Executive Committee, President Michelau, and Deirdre Coulter were dismissed, and the committee went into closed session at 8:10 a.m. to conduct the formal review of President Michelau.

WICHE Executive Committee Meeting Minutes — Approved Videoconference — August 24, 2023

Committee Members Present

Matt Freeman (ID), Chair
Antwan Jefferson (CO), Vice Chair
Pearl Brower (AK)
Kathleen Goeppinger (AZ)
Robert Shireman (CA)
Colleen Sathre (HI) *proxy for David Lassner*
Clayton Christian (MT)
Fred Lokken (NV)
Barbara Damron (NM)
Kyle Davison (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
Frankie Eliptico (U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely
Associated States/CNMI)
Ann Millner (UT)
Michael Meotti (WA)
Fred Baldwin (WY)

Committee Members Absent

David Lassner (HI)

Other Commissioners Present

Tom Begich (AK)
Dale Erquiaga (NV)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)

WICHE Staff Present

Laura Ewing, Executive Assistant to the President
and the Commission
Ray Burgman Gallegos, Vice President, Programs
and Services
Molly Hall-Martin, Director, W-SARA, Policy
Analysis and Research
Patrick Lane, Vice President, Policy Analysis and
Research
Demarée Michelau, WICHE President
Craig Millburn, Chief Financial Officer
Shelley Plutto, Project Manager, W-SARA, Policy
Analysis and Research
Russ Poulin, Executive Director, WCET and Vice
President for Technology-Enhanced Education
Christina Sedney, Director of Policy and Strategic
Initiatives, Policy Analysis and Research
Melanie Sidwell, Director of Communications

Call to Order

Chair Matt Freeman called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. MDT, roll was called, and a quorum was confirmed.

Action Item

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 8, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Chair Freeman requested comments or corrections to the May 8, 2023, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were no comments or corrections. Chair Freeman declared the minutes approved as submitted.

Action Item

SARA POLICY MODIFICATION PROCESS: POLICY MODIFICATION PROPOSAL

Chair Freeman requested that President Demarée Michelau introduce the presentation of the action item. She noted the item is related to a proposal from the SARA policy modification process; specifically, the enforcement of certain education-specific requirements of out-of-state institutions that provide distance education to state residents. She explained that the Executive Committee is considering this proposal because it previously adopted a process in which a SARA policy proposal of high significance or interest to the Commission may be taken up by commissioners based on consultation with WICHE officers and the chair of the Policy Analysis and Research Committee. The W-SARA Regional Steering Committee (RSC) voted unanimously to oppose this proposal, but based on her consultation it was decided to bring the proposal before this committee. She requested that Patrick Lane present the details of the action item.

Patrick Lane said the action requested by staff is that the Executive Committee vote, in concurrence with the recommendation of the W-SARA RSC, to oppose SARA Policy Proposal 340 (PMP 340). PMP 340 proposes to amend SARA policy to allow states to request permission from their regional compact to enforce one or more of their own education-specific state laws on out-of-state institutions. The proposal was submitted by a coalition of higher education organizations that include consumer protection in their focus areas. He indicated that the reason the proposal is before the Executive Committee instead of the full Commission is timing; WICHE is required to issue its decision on all policy proposals by September 1, 2023. The proposal cannot be amended, but the Commission can provide justification for adjustments to the language within the proposal.

Lane said the first part of the proposal to add language at the end of section 2.5(k) would require states to identify which laws they waive as a part of their compliance with SARA policy. He said that no Western states waive regulations to participate in SARA and there is no objection from the RSC to this part of the proposal. Section 2.5(l) does cause concern for the RSC and the RSCs from the other regions. The proposed clause for insertion into the policy would allow states to request permission from the regional compact to enforce one or more education-specific state laws on out-of-state SARA institutions. Currently, SARA member states must agree not to apply any education-specific requirements on out-of-state institutions participating in SARA. He then described the membership of the RSC and said that the RSC voted unanimously to forward a recommendation to the Commission that it opposes the approval of this proposal. The RSC identified and articulated numerous justifications for its position to oppose proposal PMP 340, including that it would undercut the nature of state authorization reciprocity to some extent beyond what was initially envisioned in SARA agreements, and potentially allow states to enact and enforce any number of requirements on out-of-state institutions. The RSC said that PMP 340 has the potential to reduce SARA participation by institutions with smaller distance-learning programs, with the potential to reduce competition for larger distance-education programs and decrease consumer protection.

Lane said that the RSC expressed additional concerns about the increased regulatory effort that would require them to oversee more out-of-state institutions; they currently oversee 30-50 institutions. With the policy change, the number of institutions could jump to potentially 1,000 if all out-of-state institutions were subject to state compliance. The RSC noted that PMP 340 could create substantial confusion for students, and it has the potential to lead to inconsistent application of the agreement across different regions because there are no guidelines for what a compact could or could not

consider, including politicized requirements that are not appropriate for a national agreement. He said the RSC has been unanimous in sharing the broad conceptual goal aligned with the attorneys general who have weighed in on the issue along with consumer advocate organizations that want to identify ways to improve SARA policy to conduct the oversight of troublesome institutions. The W-SARA RSC believes there are better approaches to improving student protections in SARA such as through the nine policy proposals submitted by the RSC and an increased focus on using existing fraud and misrepresentation statutes, which SARA policy does not impact. In addition to the policies submitted this year by the RSC, there are other items being considered for the next policy modification cycle, including a greater focus on the financial stability of institutions and providing financial protections for students.

Lane went on to say that Policy Analysis and Research (PAR) Committee Chair Christopher Cabaldon attended an RSC meeting in July where PMP 340 was discussed. His attendance at the meeting came from a motion made by the PAR Committee in May 2023 that the RSC give this proposal due consideration. After attending the meeting, he was to report back the details of the meeting to the PAR Committee. Committee Chair Cabaldon summarized the position of the RSC after the July meeting and provided a message to PAR Committee members. Overall, the goals and work of the policy modification process will take more than one year to make a positive impact on SARA policy.

Lane said the important overarching aim for the Commission, consumer advocates, attorneys general, and the RSC is to be united in the mission for states to have a central voice in developing SARA policy. He said that some W-SARA RSC proposals are not going to be approved but recognized that the states have been able to voice their views and hoped to collaborate with other SARA partners to revise some of those proposals for the next cycle.

Chair Freeman asked Commissioner Barbara Damron to share any additional comments on PMP 340 and the work of W-SARA and the RSC. She said she is in support of the staff recommendation and that the policy, if passed, would negate and the reason for New Mexico to be set up in W-SARA.

Commissioner Robert Shireman thanked staff for bringing this issue to the Executive Committee. He noted that the topic has had a lot of his interest in his role as a consumer advocate and to California, which has concerns about the extent to which SARA overrules state laws. He voiced his concern about the interpretation of the proposal to oppose PMP 340 as it is so different from past proposals that consumer advocates have made, which were to allow all states to apply their consumer protection laws. He said that the targeted and specific proposal would allow a region like WICHE, or other regions, to hear from states about the specific laws from specific states that they would like to be able to enforce. He said that the provision is similar to what happened when Massachusetts joined SARA, requesting the ability to enforce certain laws. He said that its region permitted certain Massachusetts laws to be enforced and came up with a justification for the enforcement which is now not available to any other state in the country. The proposal would set up a similar situation that many states may be interested in and that RSCs in the different regions would have the ability to review those policies that states wished to enforce. He also said that the portrayal of the proposal being contrary to a reciprocity agreement is not accurate and that there is a diversity of approaches to these agreements. He said he recommends that WICHE support PMP 340.

Commissioner Michael Meotti said he agrees with Commissioner Shireman and is concerned about the RSC's portrayal of the proposal as undermining the foundational basis of reciprocity. He said that NC-SARA tends to take the approach that reciprocity is complete in total with limited exceptions and

that there is no foundational sense of reciprocity. In his experience with different types of reciprocity agreements, there are different approaches from the conception adopted by SARA. He said that his position is based on being the regulator in Washington State.

Commissioner Ann Millner said that SARA has helped many students obtain access to higher education. She said that the more complex the agreement is, the more difficult access becomes. She noted that states can choose to participate or not and that she supports the founding principles of SARA and they should be upheld and remain in place. She does not support policies that undermine reciprocity and she opposes and does not support PMP 340.

Commissioner Ben Cannon began by expressing appreciation to the RSC and WICHE staff for their work on the topic. He said that he supports the PMP 340 amendment. From his perspective, he is trying to balance the benefits of simple reciprocity with state prerogatives. He said that, as the state regulator, he is also sensitive to the concerns about implementation raised by the RSC but does not believe that those are insurmountable. He said his interpretation of the policy is that it is a modest change and gives the compact the ability to grant a participating SARA state the ability to apply an education-specific law. He said he was struck that the reaction was so strong because he views the proposal as being fairly limited and not affecting the foundations of reciprocity in SARA. He also expressed support for the overall goal of SARA in improving access to high-quality distance education but noted that the fact that California does not participate, limits options for Oregon students, while acknowledging that adopting the proposal would not ensure California's participation. He said supporting PMP 340 shows support for consumer advocates and also for California leaders to see that we are serious about striking the balance and raising the bar and standards for participation. The amendment allows states the ability to apply certain consumer protections for their residents.

Commissioner Fred Lokken said that SARA in Nevada has had a positive impact on its students. Consumer protection was missing for Nevada students and the decision to join SARA prompted the state and university system to step up and provide the level of student consumer protection that the SARA membership required, which has benefited the state's students. He said that the value of SARA is that it is consistent. Identifying exceptions creates a communication issue for students and has the potential to threaten the core of and the reason for creating SARA. He did note that the staff presentation expressed an openness from the SARA community in continuing these conversations. There is value in states like California and Washington to promoting the merits of their states' consumer protection standards to other states, and to have those standards adopted nationwide.

Patrick Lane had a few additional comments about the staff's recommendation not to support PMP 340 and the discussions by the RSC:

- ▶ The proposal is not clear on how compacts would evaluate requests from states.
- ▶ Guardrails are still needed for compacts to use to approve or not approve requested allowances, which could lead to inconsistent application across regions.
- ▶ Some states have taken advantage of the way SARA policy is structured to put in place workarounds to enforce their own regulations, including Massachusetts and Washington. Washington has defined certain practices as violations of general-purpose fraud and misrepresentation statutes, and those statutes remain unaffected by SARA policy. This approach is available to SARA states, but those with this regulatory approach have generally not tried to enforce their laws in this manner.

- There is a need to strengthen SARA policy; to the extent that questionable institutions are not welcome and would be subject to all states' laws.

Commissioner Colleen Sathre said she supports the staff recommendation to oppose PMP 340 and will vote as the proxy for Commissioner David Lassner, who also fully supports the staff recommendation. She complimented the staff on its summary and description of the proposal given its complexity. She asked that it be noted that both she and Commissioner Lassner are strong advocates of reciprocity. The SARA reciprocity policy greatly improved a difficult situation for students she served in her role as Vice President at the University of Hawai'i.

President Michelau said that states and regions are approaching this complicated policy from very different places. The leadership that WICHE has shown in its contributions to the development of SARA, including WICHE's SARA Resolution demanding the state voice throughout the policy process, has not gone unnoticed. The other regions, states, and the SARA community look to WICHE for its leadership and guidance, and what the WICHE Commission says about SARA policy does matter and does make an impact when policy decisions are being made.

She noted that there is a learning curve in this first year of establishing the new SARA policy modification process, and she is pleased with the process to date, comparing it to the legislative process in which proposals may not succeed the first time they are considered. President Michelau said she is cognizant of the propensity for instability in the system if proposals introduced have an easy pathway to change policies. She expressed appreciation for the thoughtfulness and deliberation that has gone into the proposals. The statement that WICHE makes is important and meaningful to the broader SARA community, and W-SARA is already considering how the 2024 proposal process can progress. The formulation of proposal writing is improving, and W-SARA has been conscientious about avoiding being too general in the language of proposals. The current process is producing a central voice for states, and she hopes that will lead to improving student protection while also finding a balance for the states to provide access. She complimented staff for their work and dedication to carefully review over 60 submitted proposals, and she thanked the Executive Committee for its willingness to address the important issues and the work of SARA.

Commissioner Shireman expressed concern about the first year of the new policy modification process, which he feels did not lend itself to an active discussion in terms of asking questions and getting answers, addressing concerns, and solving problems in proposal drafts. He said he hopes that the next round of proposals will provide the opportunity for two-way communication with inquiries. He recognized that it could take more than a year to refine the process and for enough changes to be made to encourage California to join SARA.

Patrick Lane said that the RSC leadership just had a videoconference call and had a similar discussion about what Commissioner Shireman mentioned. Lane said there is awareness of the need that the Compact needs to improve the process to encourage and provide opportunities for discussion and feedback on proposals, including W-SARA's proposals. There is potential to unite to have a stronger voice to encourage a dynamic rather than a static process for the 2024 proposals, unlike what took place during the 2023 proposal cycle.

Commissioner Fred Lokken MOVED TO APPROVE the staff recommendation and Commissioner Fred Baldwin SECONDED the motion. Chair Freeman noted that the staff recommendation is to approve the opposition of the SARA PMP 340 policy amendment, saying that a "yes" vote would be to oppose the PMP 340 policy amendment. There was no discussion. Chair Freeman and Commissioner Meotti further

clarified for the committee that voting “yes” indicates opposition to PMP 340 and a “no” vote is in favor of PMP 340. President Michelau called for Laura Ewing to give the result of the poll, which was 12 yes votes, three no votes, and one abstention. Chair Freeman confirmed that the motion passed.

Information Items

NEW COMMISSIONERS

President Michelau gave an update on new commissioners who have been appointed since the May 2023 Commission Meeting. They are:

Alaska

- ▶ Tom Begich, Executive Director, Nick Begich Scholarship Intern Fund and former state senator
- ▶ Sean Parnell, Chancellor, University of Alaska Anchorage

Arizona

- ▶ Todd Haynie, President, Eastern Arizona College

Washington

- ▶ John Carmichael, President, Evergreen State College

Wyoming

- ▶ Joe Schaffer, President, Laramie County Community College

President Michelau said that Camille Preus (OR) had resigned from the Commission, and that her replacement has not yet been appointed. It was noted that Preus had served on the Commission since April 2002, and could possibly be the longest-standing commissioner to serve. She was recognized for her superb service to the Commission.

Information Item

UPDATE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JULY 1, 2023, WICHE GROUP PROPERTY INSURANCE PROGRAM

Chair Freeman asked Raymonda Burgman Gallegos to present information on the WICHE Group Property Insurance Program, which was established on July 1, 2023. The group property insurance program is for a select set of institutions:

- ▶ Lewis and Clark College
- ▶ Reed College
- ▶ Seattle Pacific University
- ▶ Whitman College
- ▶ Willamette University

The institutions are all members of the College Liability Insurance Company (CLIC), a casualty company. Each of the institutions participated in the Master Property Program that was offered by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, and due to sunsetting of that program, they needed to secure property insurance. Marsh went out to market for each institution individually and was only able to secure a

quote for one of the five institutions; however, establishing group insurance for all of them was possible. WICHE is operating as the overarching sponsor of the program. The program is not structured as a captive, so each institution is responsible for its own losses. Burgman Gallegos said the program could generate some revenue, so as of next fiscal year, there will be a 1-2% administrative fee due to WICHE.

WICHE stepping in as a sponsor allowed the five institutions to secure insurance. The one institution that could have obtained insurance on its own, was able to save \$400,000 by being a part of the WICHE Group Insurance Program. This program is only for the CLIC institutions, and is not available to any other institutions. The program started on July 1, 2023, and will run through WICHE's fiscal year FY 2024. Commissioner Cannon asked if there are any other CLIC institutions that can participate. Burgman Gallegos confirmed that only the five CLIC institutions can participate. If this detail is to change, staff will come back to the Executive Committee for consideration.

President Michelau said that the Executive Committee had given staff the opportunity to explore a group property insurance program(s). This particular program with the CLIC institutions is a different program altogether. Marsh reached out to WICHE in late June 2023, and a decision was made to move forward to support the five WICHE-region institutions without having the time to request additional permission from the Executive Committee. She contacted Chair Freeman, who agreed that it was okay to move forward with the program, and she subsequently sent an email to Executive Committee members notifying them of her decision.

Chair Freeman called for discussion. There was none.

Information Item

UPDATE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Chair Freeman asked Christina Sedney to present an update on the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting. She said the meeting will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, September 12-13, 2023. The LAC will explore the theme of value in higher education with a focus on the legislative role. Discussions will include the value, the cost, and the benefits of higher education to the states and students.

Sedney said there will be 25 legislators in attendance and possibly a few more with recent appointments in Alaska and the CNMI. She noted that Commissioner Baldwin will be attending. Commissioner Shireman expressed concern about the lack of participation of the California LAC members, and asked whether legislative staff could participate in the place of appointed legislators who are not able to attend. President Michelau said legislative staff are welcome to attend and observe. The suggestion for staff to participate on behalf of legislators could possibly be considered under certain circumstances, and encouraged a follow-up conversation. Commissioner Shireman said he would check in with the commissioners of the California delegation to get their thoughts.

Commissioner Millner asked about determining the dates and locations of LAC meetings. Sedney said there is no formal process for determining location. When considering a location, staff contacts the LAC members in that state to see if they are available to attend the meeting. Hotels need to be booked a year in advance and that can be problematic given legislative committee meeting schedules. Staff members do their best to accommodate as many LAC members' schedules as possible. Commissioner Millner said that in Utah the legislature tends to have committee meetings mid-week and perhaps having the LAC meeting scheduled either at the beginning or the end of the week might allow for more LAC members to attend if other states are similar to Utah.

Discussion Item

UPDATE ON THE WICHE BUDGET AND ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT

President Michelau presented an update on the WICHE budget. She reported that the books closed and WICHE is officially in FY 2024 as of July 1, 2023. She said that WICHE did well financially in FY 2023 with excess revenues over \$350,000. There were a few areas in which overspending occurred, including the Commission Meeting budget, which had the 70th Anniversary celebration and the Strategy Session consultants charged to it instead of the reserves. The Miscellaneous General Fund does stand out. The Executive Committee approved a reserve allocation for Salesforce work. Due to high interest rates, there was an increase in interest revenue to the General Fund which easily provided funds for the Salesforce enhancements instead of going into the reserves.

WICHE is currently in the middle of audit season with the new auditors. President Michelau reported that the collection of dues from the states is in good shape, and better than in recent years with the amount of payments received. There is no concern with the remaining states that need to make their dues payment.

Craig Milburn said the new auditors will be onsite within the week and he is looking forward to a new set of eyes since the separation from RubinBrown who has been the WICHE auditor the past 11 years. He said that in future years, when interest rates come down, the interest revenue that WICHE has benefited from will also decrease, but for now WICHE is doing well with the high interest rates.

Discussion Item

WICHE COMMISSION MEETING DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW

President Michelau gave an overview of the Fall 2023 Commission Meeting to be held in Riverside, California, November 9-10, at the Marriott Riverside at the Convention Center.

The same program format will be used in November as in May 2023. New Commissioner Orientation will take place on Wednesday, November 8, and President Michelau does not anticipate much business for the Executive Committee to discuss on November 9. The first plenary in the morning will be a framing session, followed by the four committee meetings.

She reviewed the roundtable discussions that are planned focus on transformation, staffing innovations, and behavioral health on campus. The first day will close with the topic of artificial intelligence, with a state and institutional focus. There will be a networking reception and dinner on your own. The roundtables will repeat on Friday, allowing commissioners to attend two of the three discussions during the meeting. The Committee of the Whole business session will take place prior to the roundtable wrap-up. The main business that occurs during the November business session is the election of the WICHE officers and the approval of the audit.

President Michelau asked Russ Poulin to comment about the Institutional Transformation in the Context of the Post-Covid shift to Digital Learning Roundtable. Poulin said the emphasis of the roundtable will be on the post-COVID world as faculty are more frequently using Zoom and other digital technologies to deliver instruction. Students are increasingly enrolling in courses that blend online and in-person learning or are purely online. As a result, institutions face issues in defining these modalities, providing enough professional development and instructional design support, supplying support services, applying funding models that expect a bright line between online and in-person courses, and dealing

with cultural and structural changes. The discussions will be about how WICHE states, systems, and institutions address the challenges in policy and practice.

Commissioner Millner commented about Austin Reid, senior legislative director for state-federal affairs for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), speaking at the LAC meeting in September. He has been conducting the staff work for a new task force that NCSL is developing to look at affordability and access, outcomes in higher education, and the interplay between the states and the federal government. She suggested that a Commission conversation about what states are experiencing and what should be addressed in the work with the federal government would be timely to have.

Other Business

Chair Freeman asked for other business, and there was none.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m. MDT.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of Revised WICHE Retirement Benefit Pertaining to New Roth Catch-Up Requirement

Summary

Section 603 of the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (P. L. 117-328) requires that employees whose prior-year wages from their current employer that exceeded \$145,000 make any catch-up contributions as Roth (post-tax) beginning January 1, 2024. On August 25, 2023, the U.S. Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued Notice 2023-62, Guidance on Section 603 of the SECURE 2.0 Act with Respect to Catch-Up Contributions. Among other things, the notice announced a two-year delay of section 603, which would have generally required employees earning over \$145,000 to make any retirement plan catch-up contributions as Roth contributions, i.e., after-tax, beginning in 2024. The WICHE Commission approves all staff benefits, so therefore, staff are requesting approval of a change to the TIAA-CREF retirement benefit for staff that complies with the Secure 2.0 Act and requires that employees whose prior-year wages from WICHE that exceeded \$145,000 make any catch-up contributions as Roth (post-tax) beginning no sooner than January 1, 2024, and no later than January 1, 2026.

Background

Congress passed the Secure 2.0 Act in 2022, which provides a slate of changes designed to strengthen the nation's retirement system. Among the many changes is a provision related to higher catch-up contributions. A catch-up contribution is an additional contribution permitted to be made to a retirement plan by employees aged 50 or older over the normal contribution limit (i.e., \$22,500 for 2023). Employees over age 50 may contribute an additional ("catch-up") amount of up to \$7,500 for 2023.

Starting January 1, 2025, individuals aged 60 through 63 years old will be able to make catch-up contributions of up to \$10,000 annually to a workplace plan, and that amount will be indexed to inflation. Starting in 2024, for those individuals who earn more than \$145,000 in the prior calendar year, all catch-up contributions for those aged 50 or older will need to be made to a Roth account in after-tax dollars. Individuals earning \$145,000 or less, adjusted for inflation going forward, will be exempt from the Roth requirement (note: the \$145,000.00 is the current cap and is subject to change in future years as determined by maybe the IRS). Currently, IRAs have a \$1,000 catch-up contribution limit for people aged 50 and over. Starting in 2024, that limit will be indexed to inflation, meaning it could increase every year, based on federally determined cost-of-living increases.

On August 25, 2023, the U.S. Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued Notice 2023-62, Guidance on Section 603 of the SECURE 2.0 Act with Respect to Catch-Up Contributions. Among other things, the notice announced a two-year delay of the relevant provision. Notice 2023-62 provides a two-year "administrative transition period," during which the requirement that catch-up contributions for employees earning over \$145,000 be treated as Roth will not apply until January 1, 2026.

Previously, matching in WICHE-sponsored plans was made on a pre-tax basis. WICHE will now be able to provide employees with the option of receiving vested matching contributions to Roth accounts (although it may take time for TIAA-CREF to offer this and for the WICHE payroll system to be updated). Contributions to a Roth retirement plan are made after-tax, after which earnings can grow tax-free.

Unlike Roth IRAs, required minimum distributions (RMDs) from an employer-sponsored plan are required for Roth accounts until the tax year 2024.

Action Requested

Approval of a change to the TIAA-CREF retirement benefit for staff that complies with the Secure 2.0 Act and requires that employees whose prior-year wages from WICHE that exceeded \$145,000 make any catch-up contributions as Roth (post-tax) beginning no sooner than January 1, 2024, and no later than January 1, 2026.

DISCUSSION ITEM: Update on WICHE's Budget

In May 2022, the Commission approved a balanced budget for the FY 2023 General Fund. In June, at the end of FY 2023, the actual revenues exceeded the expenditures, leaving a surplus of \$353,035. This surplus can be seen in the report titled General Fund Budget comparing FY 2023 with FY 2024. Also, as seen on the second accompanying report titled Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary, all the WICHE program areas experienced gains as well, except for Programs and Services who experienced a loss of \$38,773. Overall, WICHE had a very positive financial year.

All the WICHE units that had excess revenue in FY 2023 added to their reserves for FY 2024. Programs and Services used \$38,773 of their \$649,185 previous reserve and begins FY 2024 with a reserve of \$610,412. The PSEP and Communications programs are fully funded by the General Fund and therefore experienced no gain or loss, as seen on the report titled Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary.

The General Fund began the year with a reserve of \$4,330,303. WICHE added to this reserve \$353,035 and now has a reserve of \$4,683,338. Of this total, the Commission has designated certain portions to be held for specific purposes. These are \$475,582 as a minimum reserve, \$396,319 for unexpected shortfalls, \$850,000 for operating accounts receivable, and \$150,000 for the President's Strategic Objectives. This leaves \$2,811,437 available for future designations by the Commission. These amounts can be seen on the report titled General Fund Budget Comparing FY 2023 with FY 2024.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2024

The FY 2024 General Fund Budget, approved by the Commission at the May 2023 meeting, is also a balanced budget. As of the time of this report, we are only one quarter into the current year, but it appears that the General Fund is operating within budget. Over the next months, the program managers will each monitor the progress of their programs and adjust as necessary to meet their budgets. WICHE staff will submit preliminary FY 2025 budgets to the Executive Committee in February 2024 and the complete, proposed FY 2025 budgets to the full Commission in May.

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
General Fund Budget

Comparing FY 2023 with FY 2024

Revenue and Expenditures

	FY 2023				FY 2024				
	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 Actual	Actual 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 Actual	
Revenue									
4102 Indirect Cost Reimbursements	\$1,200,000	\$1,559,500	\$359,500	30.0%	\$1,200,000	\$0	0.0%	(\$359,500)	-23.1%
4104 Indirect Cost Sharing-WICHE	(\$360,000)	(\$558,939)	(\$198,939)	55.3%	(\$600,000)	(\$240,000)	66.7%	(\$41,061)	7.3%
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	\$694,958	\$664,958	2216.5%	\$696,000	\$666,000	2220.0%	\$1,042	0.2%
4560 SHEPC excess rents	\$155,000	\$0	(\$155,000)	-100.0%	\$36,000	(\$119,000)	-76.8%	\$36,000	
4600 Other Income	\$25,000	\$42,043	\$17,043	68.2%	\$30,000	\$5,000	20.0%	(\$12,043)	-28.6%
4850 Credit Card Transaction Rev. / Units	\$120	(\$6)	(\$126)	-105.1%	\$30	(\$90)	-75.0%	\$36	-589.4%
Total Revenue	\$3,594,120	\$4,281,555	\$687,435	19.1%	\$3,986,030	\$391,910	10.9%	(\$295,525)	-6.9%
Expenditures									
0102 Student Access Program	\$433,151	\$420,382	(\$12,769)	-2.9%	\$454,807	\$21,656	5.0%	\$34,425	8.2%
0104 Policy Analysis & Research	\$466,677	\$472,895	\$6,218	1.3%	\$490,667	\$23,990	5.1%	\$17,772	3.8%
0105 Communications & Public Affairs	\$490,314	\$403,845	(\$86,469)	-17.6%	\$462,026	(\$28,288)	-5.8%	\$58,181	14.4%
0106 Programs & Services	\$114,729	\$135,615	\$20,885	18.2%	\$126,171	\$11,441	10.0%	(\$9,444)	-7.0%
0110 President's Office	\$598,098	\$602,663	\$4,566	0.8%	\$660,549	\$62,451	10.4%	\$57,885	9.6%
0111 Commission Expense	\$233,574	\$378,270	\$144,696	61.9%	\$400,670	\$167,095	71.5%	\$22,399	5.9%
0112 Administrative Services	\$896,107	\$884,846	(\$11,261)	-1.3%	\$930,369	\$34,262	3.8%	\$45,523	5.1%
0115 Miscellaneous Gen. Fund	\$279,101	\$560,236	\$281,135	100.7%	\$334,292	\$55,190	19.8%	(\$225,945)	-40.3%
0116 Program Development	\$15,450	\$5,014	(\$10,436)	-67.5%	\$25,000	\$9,550	61.8%	\$19,986	398.6%
0131 LAC Meeting	\$66,671	\$64,753	(\$1,918)	-2.9%	\$78,637	\$11,966	17.9%	\$13,884	21.4%
Total Expenditures	\$3,593,872	\$3,928,520	\$334,648	9.3%	\$3,963,187	\$369,315	10.3%	\$34,667	0.9%
Surplus (Deficit) for the Fiscal Year	\$248	\$353,035	\$352,788		\$22,843	\$22,595			
Reserves at Beginning of Year									
1 Minimum Reserve b	\$431,265	\$431,265	\$0	0.0%	\$475,582	\$44,317	10.3%	\$44,317	10.3%
2 Reserve for Unexpected Shortfall c	\$359,387	\$359,387	\$0	0.0%	\$396,319	\$36,932	10.3%	\$36,932	10.3%
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	\$2,539,651	\$2,689,651	\$150,000	5.9%	\$2,811,437	\$271,786	10.7%	\$121,786	4.5%
Reserves at Beginning of Year	\$4,330,303	\$4,330,303	\$0	-94.1%	\$4,683,338	\$353,035		\$353,035	
Reserves Dedicated during Year									
6 Deficit (Surplus) for the Fiscal Year above	(\$248)	(\$353,035)	\$352,788		(\$22,843)	\$22,595		(\$330,192)	93.5%
Reserves Dedicated during the Fiscal Year	(\$248)	(\$353,035)	\$352,788		(\$22,843)	\$22,595		(\$330,192)	
Reserves at End of Year	\$4,330,551	\$4,683,338	\$352,788		\$4,706,181	\$375,631			

- (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.

Program Area Revenue and Expense Summary for FY 2023

	Programs & Services	Policy Analysis	PSEP	Mental Health	WCET	Communications & Public Affairs
Revenue						
Membership Dues and Fees	\$ 327,387	\$ 600,234		\$ 207,000	\$ 1,677,046	
Conference Registration Fees	\$ 47,906			\$ 21,577	\$ 144,728	
Grants and Contracts	\$ 655,682	\$ 402,890		\$ 8,431,017	\$ 4,340,028	
Indirect Cost Sharing				\$ 352,949	\$ 198,066	
Interest					\$ 97,913	
Miscellaneous Income	\$ (3,992)	\$ 10,274		\$ 1,381	\$ (27,579)	
General Fund Allocation	\$ 135,615	\$ 472,895	\$ 420,381			\$ 403,844
Total Revenue	\$ 1,162,598	\$ 1,486,293	\$ 420,381	\$ 9,013,924	\$ 6,430,202	\$ 403,844
Expenses						
Salaries	\$ 436,629	\$ 703,357	\$ 262,127	\$ 2,817,234	\$ 1,540,209	\$ 223,702
Benefits	\$ 173,951	\$ 261,723	\$ 90,582	\$ 1,094,176	\$ 579,660	\$ 79,237
Audit, Legal & Consulting	\$ 23,473	\$ 34,413	\$ -	\$ 2,234,868	\$ 676,985	\$ 42,011
Subcontracts	\$ 147,034	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 631,850	\$ 2,319,684	\$ -
Travel	\$ 161,888	\$ 119,503	\$ 16,226	\$ 9,492	\$ 365,061	\$ 5,767
Printing and Copying	\$ 1,319	\$ 1,961	\$ 2,687	\$ 98,940	\$ 2,755	\$ 2,890
Rent	\$ 32,649	\$ 53,481	\$ 15,394	\$ 168,228	\$ 32,611	\$ 17,850
Computer/Network	\$ 36,730	\$ 60,399	\$ 26,437	\$ 32,283	\$ 117,994	\$ 18,939
Communications	\$ 4,340	\$ 7,550	\$ 2,266	\$ 96,550	\$ 16,713	\$ 3,489
Supplies and Expense	\$ 10,707	\$ 19,173	\$ 4,662	\$ 480	\$ 158,151	\$ 6,554
Marketing / Depreciation	\$ 56,831	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,416	\$ 3,405
Indirect Costs	\$ 115,820	\$ 118,300	\$ -	\$ 856,378	\$ 405,291	\$ -
Credits for other programs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (19,198)	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 1,201,371	\$ 1,379,860	\$ 420,381	\$ 8,040,479	\$ 6,202,332	\$ 403,844
Excess Revenue (Loss)	\$ (38,773)	\$ 106,433	\$ -	\$ 973,445	\$ 227,870	\$ -

INFORMATION ITEM: Non-General Fund Reserves for FY 2024

Background

As with the General Fund, the Non-General Fund accounts require and accumulate reserves. The Commission in the past has recognized this by establishing a policy that the self-funded units strive to achieve reserves of at least 25% of their annual operating funds. Similar to the General Fund, these reserves serve to cover three categories of unbudgeted expenditures:

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

Therefore, WICHE Commission policy states that dedicated reserves for Non-General Fund activities—categorized into minimum reserve, reserve for unexpected shortfall, and program development—shall be reported to the Commission at the Fall Meeting upon official close of the fiscal year and approved by the Commission for the upcoming fiscal year as part of the WICHE annual budget at the Spring Meeting. Further, reserves in excess of this approved amount revert to the General Fund reserve. This past May, the WICHE Commission approved the FY 2024 budget, along with the formula for determining the FY 2024 target reserves for Non-General Fund accounts. The following pages provide a summary of the FY 2024 reserves for the Non-General Fund accounts.

FY 2024 WICHE Unit Reserves

	Actual	Calculated
WCET		
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (Core Programs)	\$ 3,753,627	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 750,725
20% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 750,725
10% Program Development		\$ 375,363
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 1,876,814
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (SAN)	\$ 596,058	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 119,212
50% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 298,029
30% Program Development		\$ 178,817
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 596,058
WCET	FY 2023 Total Available Reserve	\$ 1,595,211
	FY 2023 Reserve Designations	
	SAN Dir DL Policy	\$ (140,615)
	SAN Outreach	\$ (28,397)
	FY 2023 Excess Revenue	\$ 227,870
	FY 2024 Total Available Reserve	\$ 1,654,069
	<i>Additional Allowed Reserve</i>	\$ 818,803
Policy		
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (Core Programs)	\$ 452,531	
0% Minimum Reserve		\$ -
N/A Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 100,000
25% Program Development		\$ 113,133
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 213,133
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (W-SARA)	\$ 523,461	
100% Minimum Reserve		\$ 523,461
0% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ -
0% Program Development		\$ -
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 523,461
Policy	FY 2023 Total Available Reserve	\$ 553,330
	FY 2023 Reserve Designations	\$ -
	FY 2023 Excess Revenue	\$ 106,432

FY 2024 WICHE Unit Reserves

	Actual	Calculated
Programs & Services		
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (MHEC)	\$ 183,635	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 36,727
50% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 91,818
30% Program Development		\$ 55,091
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 183,635
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (Academic Leadership)	\$ 1,002,025	
20% Minimum Reserve		\$ 200,405
50% Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 501,013
30% Program Development		\$ 300,608
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 1,002,025
FY 2024 Budget approved May 2023 (Remaining Programs)	\$ 1,423,227	
0% Minimum Reserve		\$ -
N/A Unanticipated Expenses		\$ 100,000
25% Program Development		\$ 355,807
FY 2024 Allowed Reserve		\$ 455,807
Programs & Services	FY 2023 Total Available Reserve	\$ 649,185
	FY 2023 Reserve Designations	\$ -
	FY 2023 Excess Revenue	\$ (38,773)
	FY 2024 Total Available Reserve	\$ 610,412
	<i>Additional Allowed Reserve</i>	\$ 1,031,055
Behavioral Mental Health		
FY 2024 Budget 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 Allowed Reserve		\$ 4,363,733
Behavioral Health	FY 2023 Total Available Reserve	\$ 3,000,425
	FY 2023 Reserve Designations	\$ -
	FY 2023 Excess Revenue	\$ 973,445
	FY 2024 Total Available Reserve	\$ 3,973,870
	<i>Additional Allowed Reserve</i>	\$ 389,863

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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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



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



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



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

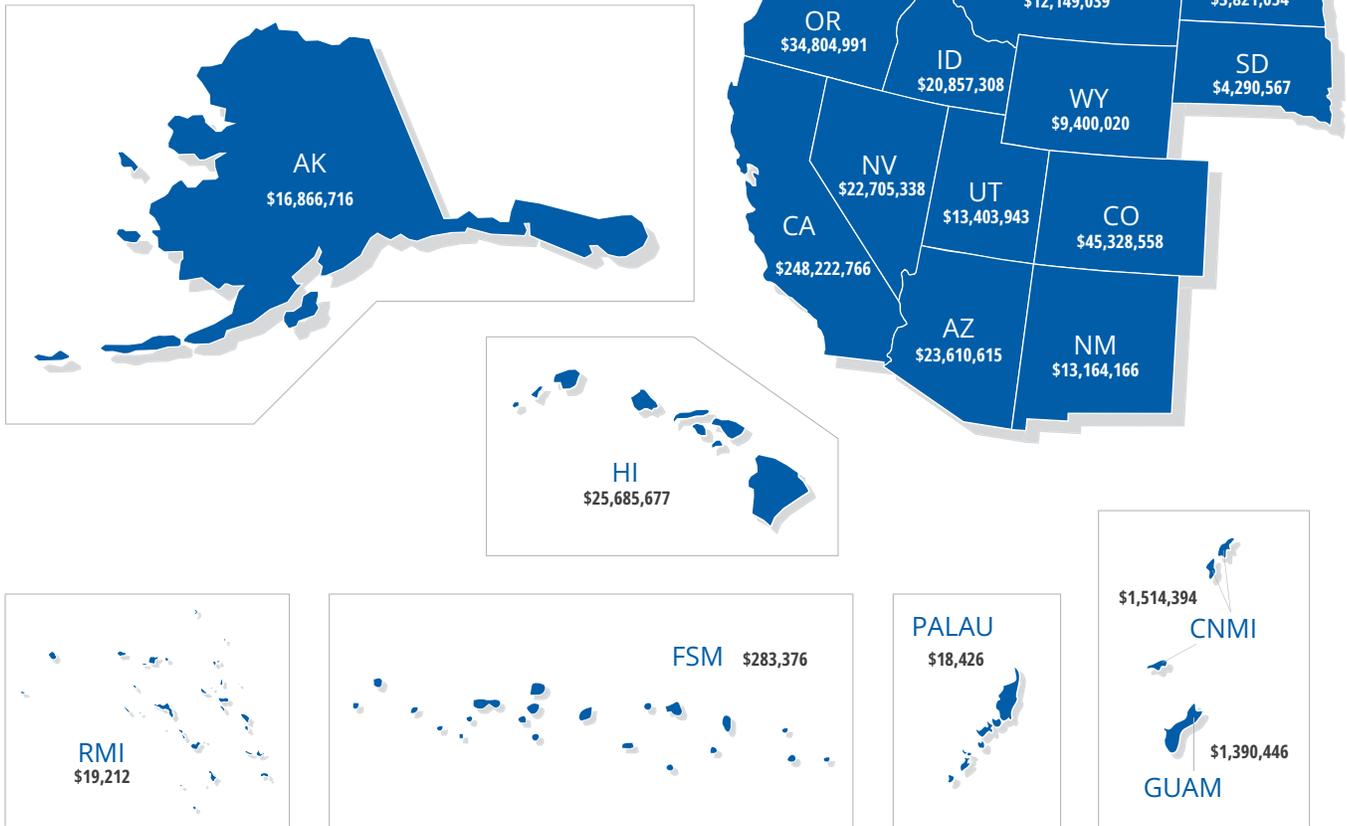
WCET - THE WICHE COOPERATIVE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. Its growing membership includes institutions, higher education agencies and systems, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations 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 August 2023

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Tom Begich
Pearl Brower
Sean Parnell

ARIZONA

John Arnold
Kathleen Goepfinger
Todd Haynie

CALIFORNIA

Christopher Cabaldon
Ellen Junn
Robert Shireman

COLORADO

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Antwan Jefferson (Vice Chair)
Angie Paccione

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U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES & FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

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WYOMING

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Kevin Carman
Joseph Schaffer



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

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.

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.

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.

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 wctetNEWS and wctetDISCUSS digital forums. SAN also uses wctetMIX 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

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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Future Commission Meeting Dates

- ▶ May 6-7, 2024 – Las Vegas, Nevada
- ▶ November 14 -15, 2024 – Hawai'i
- ▶ May 5-6, 2025 – Utah
- ▶ November 13-14, 2025 – Colorado

2023 COMMISSION COMMITTEES

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Kathleen Goepfinger (AZ)
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Kyle Davison (ND)
Ben Cannon (OR)
Larry Tidemann (SD)
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HUMAN RESOURCES

Deirdre Coulter, Director of Human Resources

Bonny Godoy, Human Resources Administrator

IT SERVICES

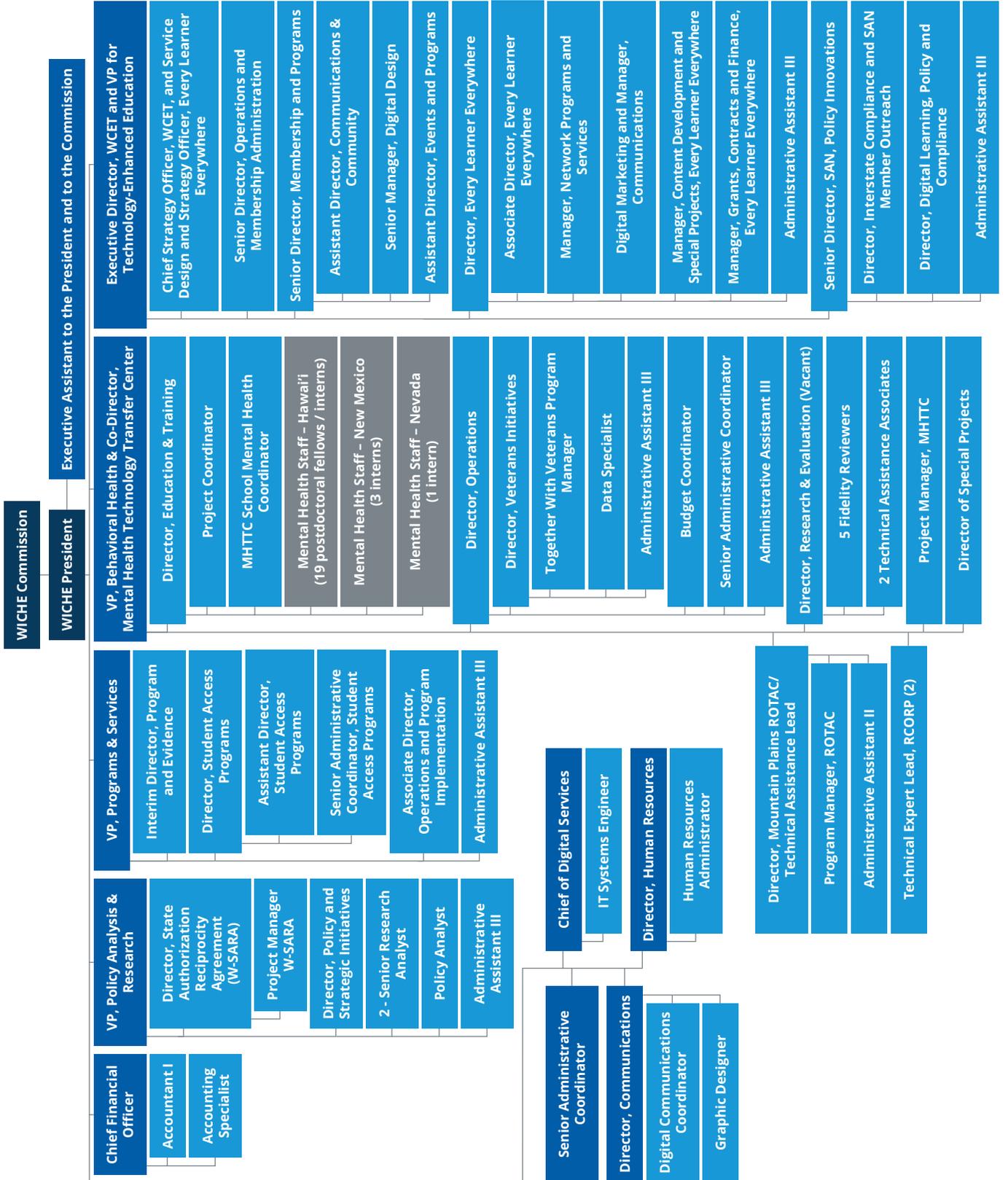
Dave Clark, Chief of Digital Services

Chris Cartwright, IT Systems Engineer

*Works across both units

October 2023

WICHE ORGANIZATION



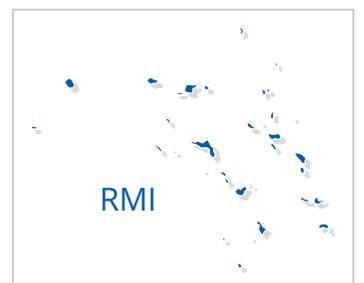
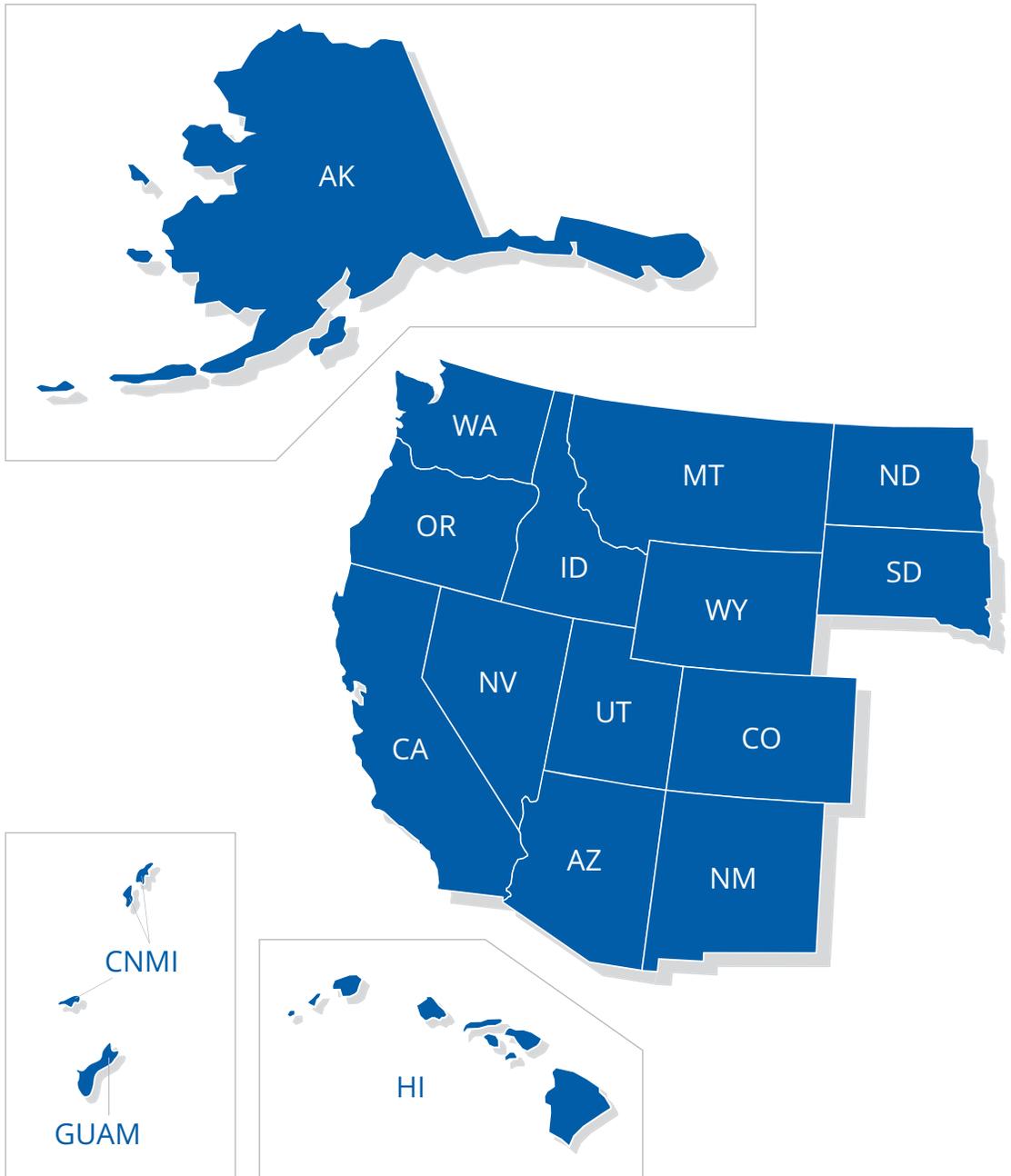
WICHE REGION

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
MSA/CHE	Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education	middlestates.org
N-SARA	New England State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	nebhe.org/sara
NAAL	National Assessment of Adult Literacy	nces.ed.gov/naal
NACAC	National Association of College Admissions Counselors	nacacnet.org
NACIQI	National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity	sites.ed.gov/naciqi
NACUBO	National Association of College and University Business Officers	nacubo.org
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress	nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard
NAFEO	National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education	nafeonation.org
NAFSA	An association of international educators	nafsa.org
NAICU	National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities	naicu.edu
NALEO	National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials	naleo.org
NARMH	National Association for Rural Mental Health	narmh.org
NASASPS	National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools	nasasps.org
NASDTEC	National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification	nasdtec.net
NASFAA	National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators	nasfaa.org
NASH	National Association of System Heads	nashonline.org
NASMHPD	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors	nasmhpd.org
NASNTI	Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions Program	www2.ed.gov/programs/nasnti
NASPA	National Association of Student Personnel Administrators	naspa.org
NASSGAP	National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs	nassgap.org
NASW	National Association of Social Workers	socialworkers.org
NC-SARA	National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements	nc-sara.org
NCA	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools	northcentralassociation.org
NCAN	National College Access Network	collegeaccess.org
NCAT	The National Center for Academic Transformation	thencat.org
NCCC	National Consortium for College Completion	n/a
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics	nces.ed.gov
NCHEMS	National Center for Higher Education Management Systems	nchems.org
NCPR	National Center for Postsecondary Research	postsecondaryresearch.org
NCSL	National Conference of State Legislatures	ncsl.org

NEASC-CIHE	New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education	neasc.org
NEBHE	New England Board of Higher Education	nebhe.org
NGA	National Governors Association	nga.org
NIH	National Institutes of Health (HHS)	nih.gov
NILOA	National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment	learningoutcomeassessment.org
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health (HHS-NIH)	nimh.nih.gov
NLA/SLA	New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability	newleadershipalliance.org
NPEC	National Postsecondary Education Cooperative	nces.ed.gov/npec
NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rule Making	fcc.gov/general/rulemaking-fcc
NPSAS	National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey	nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas
NRHA	National Rural Health Association	ruralhealthweb.org
NSC	National Student Clearinghouse	studentclearinghouse.org
NSSE	National Survey on Student Engagement	nsse.indiana.edu
NWCCU	Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities	www.nwccu.org
OCE	Online Course Exchange (WICHE)	wiche.edu/oce
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	www.oecd.org
OER	Open Educational Resources	wiche.edu/open-educational-resources-in-the-west-to-advance-college-affordability
OLC	Online Learning Consortium	onlinelearningconsortium.org
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment	oecd.org/pisa
PESC	Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council	pesc.org
PPIC	Public Policy Institute of California	ppic.org
PSEP	Professional Student Exchange Program	wiche.edu/psep
RMAIR	Rocky Mountain Association for Institutional Research	rmair.org
S-SARA	Southern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	sreb.org/state-authorization-sara
SACSCOC	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges	sacscoc.org
SAN	State Authorization Network	wcetsan.wiche.edu
SBAC	Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium	www.smarterbalanced.org
SCUP	Society for College and University Planning	scup.org
SFARN	Student Financial Aid Research Network	pellinstitute.org/sfarn.shtml
SHEEO	State Higher Education Executive Officers Association	sheeo.org
<i>SHEEO Offices in the West:</i>		
ABOR	Arizona Board of Regents	abor.asu.edu
ACPE	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education	acpe.alaska.gov/
CCHE	Colorado Commission on Higher Education	highered.colorado.gov/ccche.html
CDHE	Colorado Department of Higher Education	highered.colorado.gov
ISBE	Idaho State Board of Education	www.boardofed.idaho.gov
MUS	Montana University System	mus.edu
NDUS	North Dakota University System	ndus.edu
NMC	Northern Marianas College	marianas.edu
NMHED	New Mexico Higher Education Department	hed.state.nm.us
NSHE	Nevada System of Higher Education	nshe.nevada.edu/
HECC	Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission	education.oregon.gov

SDBOR	South Dakota Board of Regents	ris.sdbor.edu
USBR	Utah State Board of Regents	utahsbr.edu
WSAC	Washington Student Achievement Council	wsac.wa.gov
WCCC	Wyoming Community College Commission	commission.wcc.edu
UAS	University of Alaska System	alaska.edu
UH	University of Hawai'i System	hawaii.edu
UW	University of Wyoming	uwyo.edu
SHEPC	State Higher Education Policy Center	n/a
SLDS	State Longitudinal Data System	nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/
SMHA	State Mental Health Authority	amhsa.gov
SONA	Student Organization of North America	conahec.org/conahec/sona
SPRC	Suicide Prevention Resource Center	sprc.org
SREB	Southern Regional Education Board	sreb.org
SREC	Southern Regional Electronic Campus	electroniccampus.org
SSA	Single State Agency for Substance Abuse	samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ssadirectory.pdf
SURA	Southeastern Universities Research Association	sura.org
SVA	Student Veterans of America	studentveterans.org
TCUs	Tribal Colleges and Universities	sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-colleges-and-universities
UCEA	University Council for Educational Administration	ucea.org
UNCF	United Negro College Fund	uncf.org
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization	unesco.org
UPCEA	University Professional Continuing Education Association	upcea.edu
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	va.gov
W-SARA	Western State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement	wiche.edu/collaboration-leadership/w-sara
WAGS	Western Association of Graduate Schools	wagsonline.org
WASC-ACCJC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges	accjc.org
WCET	WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies	wcet.wiche.edu
WDQC	Workforce Data Quality Campaign	dataqualitycampaign.org
WDQI	Workforce Data Quality Initiative	dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/wdqi
WGA	Western Governors' Association	westgov.org
WICHE	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education	wiche.edu
WIN	Western Institute of Nursing	winursing.org
WIOA	Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act	dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa
WPSHA	Western Psychiatric State Hospital Association	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 all for joining us in Riverside, California, at the Fall Commission Meeting, as we close out 70 remarkable years filled with achievements and milestones. Since 1953, our collaboration and commitment to the West has served as a true north in our endeavors, and I am hopeful about what lies ahead for us, as a Commission and as a region. As we reflect on our past and set an ambitious vision for the future, I know we will make the next 70 years even more impactful. Your commitment continues to drive WICHE's success, and I am grateful for your investment of time and spirit.

I look forward to meeting with you next time in Las Vegas, Nevada, on May 6-7, 2024. Keep doing great things!

- Demarée Michelau, WICHE President

