Monday, May 20, 2013

11:00 am - noon
Health Sciences Building
Room 110 A-D

Programs and Services Committee Meeting
Patricia Sullivan (NM), chair
Clayton Christian (MT), vice chair

Diane Barrans (AK)
Eileen Klein (AZ)
Dianne Harrison (CA)
Dene Thomas (CO)
Sharon Hart (CNMI)
Carol Mon Lee (HI)
Mack Shirley (ID)
Committee vice chair (MT)
Joe Hardy (NV)
Committee chair (NM)
Duaine Espegard (ND)
Hilda Rosselli (OR)
Jack Warner (SD)
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT)
Larry Seaquist (WA)
Karla Leach (WY)

Agenda
Presiding: Patricia Sullivan, committee chair

Staff: Jere Mock, vice president, Programs and Services
Margo Colalancia, director, Student Exchange Program
Pat Shea, director, WICHE ICE, Western Academic Leadership Forum, and Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

Action Item
Approval of the Programs and Services Committee meeting minutes of November 12, 2012 4-3

Action Item
Approval of the Programs and Services FY 2014 workplan – Jere Mock 4-6

Information Items:
Interstate Passport Initiative: Update on the pilot – Pat Shea 4-9
Student Exchange Program update – Margo Colalancia 4-18

Other business

Adjournment
ACTION ITEM
Programs & Services Committee Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2012

Committee Members Present
Patricia Sullivan (NM), chair
Clayton Christian (MT), vice chair
Diane Barrans (AK)
Dianne Harrison (CA)
Dene Thomas (CO)
Carol Mon Lee (HI)
Mack Shirley (ID)
Joe Hardy (NV)
Duaine Espegard (ND)
Bonnie Jean Beesley (UT)

Committee Members Absent
Tom Anderes (AZ)
Carl Shaff (NV)
Tim Nesbitt (OR)
Jack Warner (SD)
Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney (WA)
Karla Leach (WY)

Chair Sullivan called the meeting of the Programs and Services Committee to order.

ACTION ITEM
Approval of the Programs and Services Committee Teleconference Minutes of September 17, 2012

Commissioner Clayton Christian moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2012, TELECONFERENCE, and Commissioner Duaine Espegard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Student Exchange Program Update
Margo Colalancia noted that the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), the largest program of its kind in the nation, now has record enrollment of nearly 31,000 students for the 2012-13 academic year. Staff will have the total tuition savings attributed to WUE in December. A recent analysis of enrollment shows that the most popular WUE majors are well-aligned with some of the West’s most crucial workforce needs. They include undergraduate offerings in the healthcare fields, biological and biomedical sciences, engineering, and business.

The first WUE college fair was held in October 2012 in Southern California and was a huge success. Parents were surprised and pleased at the tuition savings at WUE institutions; previously, they thought they couldn’t afford to send their children out of state. Students learned about the outstanding opportunities available in states that they had not previously considered. Recruiters from approximately 30 WUE institutions participated and were overwhelmed by the student interest; some said the number of leads they collected surpassed national college fairs. The counselor organizers plan to expand the fair to be held in 2013.

Colalancia noted that WICHE’s Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) continues to add more offerings; some 47 new programs were nominated during the fall 2012 solicitation. Of particular note, University of California San Francisco has nominated several doctoral research programs, which are funded to provide full tuition support for graduate students, as well as a living stipend (a significant savings compared with even the WRGP resident tuition rate). WICHE staff anticipates the review of nominated programs will be completed by March 2013; new programs will have the option to enroll students through WRGP as early as fall 2013.

Spokane, Washington
WICHE’s Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) is providing students in 12 WICHE states with access to a wide range of professional programs in healthcare fields that otherwise might not be available to them because the fields of study are not offered at public institutions in their home states.

Commissioner Sullivan had expressed concern about job opportunities after hearing from a PSEP veterinary medicine graduate who could not find employment in New Mexico to fulfill their service payback obligation for PSEP. WICHE’s other payback states are Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Washington – and recently, Hawai‘i and Wyoming have also become payback states. Colalancia interviewed certifying officers from the payback states and found that only New Mexico and Washington have noted some instances of graduates who could not find jobs. Certifying officers said that if the graduates demonstrate sincere effort to find employment and stay in communication with the state office, they can grant forbearance in six-month increments. Some graduates take several part-time jobs in their field if they cannot find one full-time position.

This issue also prompted staff to look at the possibility of allowing graduates to serve elsewhere in the region if they couldn’t find employment in their home state. Colalancia discussed this with certifying officers and learned that most state statutes require that residents return to their own state. A regional payback would be difficult to administer, since there is no parity of types of professionals that each WICHE state supports. Furthermore, the cost to educate different professionals varies widely. Finally, if states were to “share” graduates, states would have to agree on a time period in which they would be required to achieve a balance. WICHE is updating its service payback statistics for PSEP graduates who return and serve in their home state; they will be available in the “Statistical Report, 2012-13,” which will be published in January 2013.

With the encouragement of Commissioner Hardy, WICHE staff is beginning to explore the potential of developing a new initiative that would provide expanded residency options for graduates of family practice medicine for our smaller rural and frontier states. The interest was prompted by the Mental Health Program’s success in setting up accredited psychology internships in Alaska. Staff will conduct a feasibility study to explore potential roles for WICHE, recognizing that the establishment of graduate medical education (GME) residencies is a complicated process with many regulations and requirements.

**Interstate Passport Initiative**

Pat Shea reported on the progress to date of WICHE’s efforts to create friction-free transfers through the Interstate Passport Initiative, which is envisioned as a series of related projects over a five-year period. She said the first project, “Focusing on Outcomes to Streamline Transfer Pathways to Graduation,” had received a two-year grant of $550,000 from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It involves 23 institutions in five WICHE states (California, Hawai‘i, North Dakota, Oregon, and Utah). Shea directs the project, and WICHE serves as the fiscal agent.

The project has three primary goals:

- To research the status of the general education core in the WICHE states and its relationship to transfer.
- To conduct a pilot project to establish block transfer agreements for lower-division general education based on learning outcomes.
- To identify implications for institutional and state policy for a transfer framework based on learning outcomes.

Interesting research findings to date are based on data received from the National Student Clearinghouse for the fall 2006 cohort over a five-year period. The cohort consists of 668,583 full- and part-time precredential students enrolled in public institutions in the WICHE states. By narrowing the sample, staff was better able to determine the patterns of transfer. Of the total cohort, 33.6 percent of students transferred. Of those, 27 percent transferred across state lines. Most transfers occurred in years two and three. More findings and an interactive website that allows users to identify specific patterns in their WICHE state may be found at www.wiche.edu/passport/research.

The pilot project focuses on forging transfer agreements for lower-division general education based on the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) essential learning outcomes (ELOs), developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. In this first project, the partners limited the scope to three ELOs: oral communication, written communication, and quantitative literacy. Shea described the process they are using to arrive at a commonly agreed to set of Passport learning outcomes (PLOs): 1) Each institution submitted a list of its learning outcomes for these three areas; 2) the pilot state facilitator in each state compiled the lists, and faculty from the participating institutions developed a “state set” of learning outcomes to which their institutions’ learning outcomes mapped; 3) faculty representatives from each state then worked with the learning outcomes from the five state sets to
create a Passport set of learning outcomes to which all state sets would map; 4) criteria and assessment teams have now been formed to develop agreed-upon transfer-level criteria for the learning outcomes, which will become the basis of the agreement; and 5) institutions will be asked to identify the courses used to address the learning outcomes and the assessments used to measure student mastery.

Partners will complete their work on the outcomes and criteria by April 2013. Other work involves developing a tracking system that will provide data to sending institutions about the success of their Passport students at the receiving institutions. Draft agreements for this block transfer will be refined over the next several months, with a goal of making them available for signature next summer and launching the Passport for students in fall 2013.

Shea said the partners will continue to identify implications of a new transfer framework based on learning outcomes with a student performance-tracking mechanism through this final development and implementation stage. WICHE plans to seek funding for a second project to address the remaining learning outcomes for lower-division general education and the implications of the new framework. More information about the Interstate Passport Initiative can be found at www.wiche.edu/passport.

**Student Health Insurance Initiative**

Jere Mock reported that early interest in MHECare, the new regional student health program, has been encouraging in the WICHE region. Since last May when the WICHE Commission voted to partner with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to expand the program to public and private institutions in the West, five public institutions in Colorado have joined MHECare: Colorado State University–Pueblo; the University of Colorado Denver, Downtown Campus; the University of Colorado Colorado Springs; and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. In addition, Metropolitan State University of Denver’s board has approved the campus’ participation in MHECare beginning next fall, which will bring the total number of Colorado institutions to six. Staff is also acquainting Vic Redding and his colleagues at the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) with MHECare; the NSHE board will be determining how it plans to provide student health insurance in early 2013.

Collectively, MHECare now has 18 participating campuses and covers approximately 12,000 students, but those numbers are expected to increase as more institutions learn about this new initiative. The New England Board of Higher Education also has recently joined MHEC and WICHE in offering MHECare, so that institutions in 31 states are now eligible to participate.
**ACTION ITEM**

**Programs and Services FY 2014 Workplan**

The primary goals of the Programs and Services unit are to improve student access and success and to foster higher education collaborations to help boost institutional effectiveness. Programs and Services manages WICHE’s four-pronged Student Exchange Program and a number of other initiatives that help institutions and students – undergraduate, graduate, and professional – save money and make good use of available resources. It also oversees projects that bring together the West’s higher education leaders to work toward common goals; assist in smoothing the transfer process; link students with next-generation learning opportunities; and help institutions to achieve cost savings through group purchasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Geo-Scope</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)</td>
<td>Access and success; workforce and society</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>1.05 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)</td>
<td>Access and success; workforce and society</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>1.05 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE members, except SD &amp; CNMI (CA, HI, OR &amp; WA are receiving states only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)</td>
<td>Access and success; workforce and society</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>1.05 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WICHE Internet Course Exchange</td>
<td>Access and success; technology and innovation</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.30 FTE and consultants</td>
<td>12 institutions, 3 systems, 2 consortia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Academic Leadership Forum</td>
<td>Access and success; accountability</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.41 FTE</td>
<td>47 institutions, 11 systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders</td>
<td>Access and success; accountability</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>.40 FTE</td>
<td>56 institutions, 8 systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Leaders Toolkit</td>
<td>Access and success</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>(Forum/Alliance FTE)</td>
<td>Forum/Alliance members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHECare</td>
<td>Access and success; finance</td>
<td>WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE states</td>
<td>.20 FTE</td>
<td>MHEC/Mercer/United HealthCare Student Resources, 1 state (CO), 5 institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Property Program</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>WICHE/MHEC/NEBHE states</td>
<td>.15 FTE and consultant</td>
<td>MHEC/Marsh/Lexington, 7 states (AZ, CO, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY) 1 system, 17 institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHECtech</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>WICHE/MHEC states</td>
<td>.05 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Briefs</td>
<td>Workforce and society</td>
<td>Western/U.S.</td>
<td>.05 FTE and consultants</td>
<td>All WICHE members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WICHE website, print and electronic communications, media relations</td>
<td>Finance, access &amp; success, workforce &amp; society, technology &amp; innovation, accountability</td>
<td>Western/U.S.</td>
<td>3.0 FTE</td>
<td>All WICHE member states</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## EXISTING ACTIVITIES
### PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridges to the Professoriate</td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>National Institute of Health: $27,500 annually</td>
<td>.20 FTE</td>
<td>7/1/2008 - 6/30/2013</td>
<td>Southern Regional Education Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study</td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>U.S. Dept. of Education, FIPSE: WICHE share, $36,000</td>
<td>.05 FTE</td>
<td>1/2011 - 12/2013</td>
<td>National Center on Disability and Access to Education (lead) &amp; 3 other partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate Passport Initiative</td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Carnegie Corporation of New York: $550,000</td>
<td>1.15 FTE</td>
<td>10/2011 - 9/2013</td>
<td>23 two- &amp; four-year institutions in 5 states (CA, HI, ND, OR, UT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium for Health Education Online (CHEO)</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; technology &amp; innovation</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Department of Labor, Trade Adjustment Assistance CC &amp; Career Training: WICHE contract, $823,859</td>
<td>1.6 FTE</td>
<td>10/2012 - 9/2016</td>
<td>Pueblo Community College (CO), fiscal agent; &amp; 8 institutions in 5 states (AK, CO, MT, SD, WY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)</td>
<td>Access &amp; success; technology &amp; innovation</td>
<td>Western and national</td>
<td>Lumina Foundation: $2.16 million; $1.14 million, WICHE region &amp; national office share &amp; institutional fees</td>
<td>Nationwide, 3.3 FTE (1st year), based at WICHE: WICHE, 2.5 FTE</td>
<td>7/2013 - 6/2014</td>
<td>WICHE member states that sign the reciprocity agreement; &amp; MHEC, NEBHE, SREB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bridges to the Professoriate.** Provides National Institute of General Medical Sciences-Minority Access to Research and Careers’ predoctoral fellows with opportunities to participate in the annual Compact for Faculty Diversity’s Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, helping them to gain skills needed in doctoral programs and academic careers.

**Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study.** GOALS develops web accessibility tools that institutions can use in the continuous improvement process for reaffirmation by regional accrediting agencies.

**Interstate Passport Initiative.** The Interstate Passport Initiative is creating a new interstate block transfer framework for lower-division general education, one based on student-learning outcomes rather than seat time in courses and credits.

**Consortium for Health Education Online (CHEO).** Eight community colleges in five WICHE states are creating or transforming existing allied health courses for delivery in an online or hybrid format, incorporating new, web-based lab experiments from the recently completed North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) project, where it’s appropriate to do so.

**Implementation of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).** WICHE and the other three regional higher education compacts will administer SARAs so that any institution offering distance education may acquire authorization from its home state to reciprocally enable it to operate in other participating states.
NEW DIRECTIONS

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

- ⭐ = Urgency (mission critical)
- ● = Opportunity (funding)
- ■ = Competence (staff/consultants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
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<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) Expansion Project 1</td>
<td>Access &amp; success</td>
<td>⭐⭐⭐</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Previous grant, Next Generation Learning Challenges: $750,000</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Colorado Community College System, 5 institutions in CO, MT, WY, &amp; 1 institution &amp; organization in British Columbia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North American Network of Science Labs Online Expansion Project 1. NANSLO will seek funding to expand its collection of experiments, conduct research on the best practices in lab experiments for students in online courses, and add new member institutions to its network.

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

Work we’re considering pursuing (and bringing to the commission for approval); also previously considered projects that we propose to remove from the workplan.

Rural medical education residencies. Develop partnerships with federal and state agencies and funders to help increase the number of rural graduate medical education residencies in the West.

Previously considered projects we propose to remove from the workplan. None.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work that staff finished in FY 2013.

North American Network of Science Labs Online. NANSLO furthered the development of openly licensed online science courseware in first-semester introductory biology, physics, and chemistry courses and replicated a Canadian innovation known as the remote web-based science laboratory, through a NGLC grant.
INFORMATION ITEM
Programs and Services Regional Initiatives

WICHE Internet Course Exchange
The WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) is a robust administrative tool designed to support multi-institution collaboration among faculty offering online courses. Through ICE participating institutions expand their students’ access to high-quality online courses and programs taught by faculty at other member institutions. Seamlessly, students enroll, obtain advising, and use financial aid from their home campus, which transcript the course.

Currently, institutions and systems in seven WICHE states are members of ICE. Both two-year and four-year institutions may participate. In addition, WICHE ICE has two affiliate members. The Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus), powered by WICHE ICE, is a consortium of 14 universities sharing excess capacity in doctoral nursing courses; and the Online Consortium of Independent Colleges and Universities is a nonprofit consortium of 84 independent colleges and universities sharing enrollments in online courses.

Primary ICE members include:
- Boise State University (ID).
- Montana State University, Bozeman.
- Montana University System.
- Northern Arizona University.
- Oregon University System (Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, Western Oregon University).
- South Dakota System of Higher Education.
- University of Alaska Anchorage.
- University of Wyoming.

Affiliate ICE members include:
- Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus).
- Online Consortium of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Acting as the broker for the exchange of course and student information and funding among the primary members, WICHE ICE charges a 15 percent administrative fee per student enrollment for its services. Members pay annual dues and may participate as either an enrolling institution (EI), a teaching institution (TI), or both. They may engage in one or all three of the exchanges.

- **Seat exchange.** Members with excess capacity in online courses may offer extra seats to other members at an agreed-upon common wholesale price. For FY 2013 the price is set at $150 per credit hour for undergraduate courses and $200 per credit hour for graduate courses. The EI is encouraged to offer these imported seats to its students at its regular tuition, so that the exchange is transparent for the student. Since these seats would otherwise be empty, the TI earns additional revenue. The EI saves the funding it would otherwise use to create new courses or sections to serve its students.

- **Course exchange.** Members may contract with other members to create and supply a new online course or an entire section of an existing online course. The wholesale price and the number of enrollments are negotiated by the institutions involved. Again, the EI is encouraged to offer these imported seats to its students at its regular tuition, so that the exchange is transparent for the student. Since the EI counts the FTE for the students it enrolls in these exchange courses but has no expenses for course development or an instructor, it may also earn additional revenue.

- **Program exchange.** Members may contract with other members to jointly develop and deliver a full program using a variety of models. In general, the members agree both to a negotiated wholesale price (the price one institution charges another institution for a seat) and to a common retail price (the price institutions charge a student for a seat) for enrolling in courses in the program.
Affiliated members operate on their own business models and purchase services from WICHE ICE, according to their needs. The cost for these services varies with volume and frequency of use and is negotiated with each consortium.

ICE continues to pursue opportunities to support collaboration among faculty in small departments offering courses that often have low enrollment. These departments are struggling because of declining budgets, and ICE can help ensure the financial viability of some of these courses by aggregating the supply of online courses and students across the region. At the other end of the spectrum, the members of the steering board attending the ICE annual meeting in March 2013 agreed to develop “ICE Blocks,” or clusters of high-enrollment introductory courses, where some institutions could help to meet the overflow student demand of other member institutions. During FY 2014 the focus on creating ICE Blocks will be for lower-division general education, upper-division electives, social work, rural health, and park service training.

The WICHE ICE website (www.wiche.edu/ice) provides more information about how the program works, as well as resources for members. A listserv supports communication among members, while a secure encrypted database accessible via the web provides the ICE catalog of courses and exchange functionality.

**Western Academic Leadership Forum**

The Western Academic Leadership Forum (the Forum) gives academic leaders in the WICHE states a venue for sharing information, resources, and expertise as they address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions. This organization’s members are provosts; academic vice presidents at bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral-level institutions; and chief executives and chief academic officers for system and state coordinating and governing boards. The Forum is funded primarily via membership dues, with additional funding provided by sponsors of the annual meeting.

The Forum held its most recent annual meeting April 24-26, 2013, in San Diego. The theme was “Academic Leaders on the Race Track: Taking Advantage of the Turns.” In advance of the meeting, the members read two books to help inform their discussions: *That Used to Be Us* by Thomas Friedman and *The Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership* by Steve Sample. Program topics included higher education trends for the future; thinking beyond the credit hour; the role of assessment in assuring academic quality; leadership approaches in challenging times; a federal update; and a perspective on the changing nature of the student pipeline. A new feature of the meeting was the presentation of the Academic Tool of the Year Award to recognize the best tool submitted to the Academic Leaders Toolkit repository so far. More information about the Forum and recordings of these presentations can be found at www.wiche.edu/forum.

Current Forum members include:

**Alaska**
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University of Alaska Southeast
- University of Alaska System

**Arizona**
- Arizona Board of Regents
- University of Arizona

**California**
- California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- California State University, Fullerton
- California State University, Long Beach
- California State University, Northridge
- California State University System
- Humboldt State University
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- Sonoma State University
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Riverside
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, San Diego
- University of Nevada, Reno
- Nevada System of Higher Education

**Colorado**
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Colorado State University, Fort Collins
- Colorado State University–Pueblo
- Metropolitan State College of Denver

**Idaho**
- Boise State University
- Idaho State University
- University of Idaho

**Montana**
- Montana State University, Bozeman
- University of Montana, Missoula
- Montana University System
- Montana State University, Northern

**Nevada**
- Nevada State College
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- University of Nevada, Reno
- Nevada System of Higher Education

**New Mexico**
- New Mexico State University
- New Mexico Highlands University
- Western New Mexico University

**North Dakota**
- Mayville State University
- Minot State University
- North Dakota State University
- North Dakota University System
- University of North Dakota
- Valley City State University

**Oregon**
- Oregon State University
- Oregon University System
- Pacific University
- Portland State University
- University of Oregon
- Western Oregon University
Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders
The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders (the Alliance), established in 2010, is modeled after the Western Academic Leadership Forum. The Alliance provides academic leaders of two-year institutions and their related systems and state coordinating and governing boards with a venue for sharing information, resources, and expertise among community colleges and technical schools. Together, the members address issues of common concern across the region and work together on innovative solutions. Like the Forum, the Alliance is funded from membership dues and sponsorship of the annual meeting.

The Alliance held its second annual membership meeting in San Francisco on April 2-3, 2013, partially in conjunction with the California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers’ semiannual meeting. This year’s theme was “Readiness, Success, and Completion: On Whose Terms?” Topics included examining the success agenda to determine what is working; discussing the impact of external change agents, such as accrediting agencies and funders; exploring some of the ways students are fast-forwarding college on their way to a credential; learning more about the assessments of the Common Core State Standards; and supporting underserved students on pathways toward completion. More information about the Alliance and recordings of these presentations can be found at www.wiche.edu/alliance.

Current members include:

**Alaska**
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- University of Alaska Anchorage Community and Technical College
- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bristol Bay

**Arizona**
- Maricopa Community Colleges
- Arizona Western College
- Eastern Arizona College
- Chandler-Gilbert Community College
- Estrella Mountain Community College
- Glendale Community College
- GateWay Community College
- Mesa Community College
- Phoenix College
- Paradise Valley Community College
- Rio Salado College
- Scottsdale Community College
- South Mountain Community College
- Yavapi College

**California**
- California Community Colleges System
  - Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
  - Modesto Junior College

**Colorado**
- Colorado Community College System
  - Arapahoe Community College
  - Colorado Northwestern Community College
  - Community College of Aurora
  - Community College of Denver
  - Front Range Community College
  - Lamar Community College
  - Morgan Community College
  - Northeastern Junior College
  - Otero Junior College
  - Pikes Peak Community College
  - Pueblo Community College
  - Red Rocks Community College
  - Trinidad State Junior College

**Hawai‘i**
- University of Hawai‘i System
  - Honolulu Community College
  - Leeward Community College
  - Hawai‘i Community College
  - Windward Community College
  - University of Hawai‘i Maui College

**Idaho**
- University of Hawai‘i System
  - Kauai Community College
  - Kapi‘olani Community College
  - Hawai‘i Community College

**Montana**
- University of Hawai‘i System
  - Great Basin College

**New Mexico**
- San Juan College
- New Mexico State University Alamogordo
Academic Leaders Toolkit. The toolkit, which debuted in spring 2011, is a joint project of the Forum and the Alliance. This web-based repository (http://alt.wiche.edu) contains profiles of successful decision-making tools and processes used by academic leaders. Tools in a broad range of categories – such as program evaluation, creation, and elimination; faculty recruitment and retention; and student outcomes assessment – help academic leaders better address their increasing range of responsibilities. The toolkit is searchable by category, state, and type of institution or organization. The Academic Tool of the Year 2013 was awarded to Arizona’s Academic Programs Articulation Steering Committee for its Course Equivalency Guide and Arizona Course Equivalency Tracking System.

Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-study
WICHE is a partner in a three-year grant effort (January 2011-December 2013) sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study (GOALS, www.wiche.edu/goals) capitalizes on the products of an existing GOALS project and focuses on motivations of top administrators to choose to engage in self-study and continuous improvement on web accessibility. GOALS partners have created and are pilot-testing a set of blueprints that will help promote adoption of institutional web accessibility in higher education institutions.

One set of blueprints focuses on aligning institutional web accessibility with regional accreditation. The GOALS Consortium has identified ways in which web accessibility is, or could be, expressed in regional accreditation materials; created new materials with consortium partner Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; and developed materials and processes to assist accreditation review committees in assessing institutional web accessibility.

A second set of blueprints supports institutional adoption of web accessibility and those who wish to engage in the GOALS self-study process. GOALS offers workshops, training materials, and templates that institutions can use to evaluate and improve web accessibility across their web presence. A cost and economic resource analysis of web accessibility is also underway to assist institutions in understanding the costs and benefits associated with the inclusion of web accessibility in initial project development, versus retrofitting existing websites.

The GOALS six-member consortium is led by the National Center on Disability and Access to Education at Utah State University and includes: WICHE; Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; Southern Regional Education Board; and WebAIM. In this project WICHE has worked with its consortium partners in the development and dissemination of materials and information, as well as in the recruitment of 45 field test and case study sites.

Interstate Passport Initiative
The Interstate Passport Initiative (www.wiche.edu/passport) is a grassroots effort by academic leaders in the WICHE states to advance policies and practices supporting friction-free transfer for students in the region. Under the umbrella of this initiative, a set of related regional projects, which would take place during approximately a five-year time span, is envisioned. Participation at the institution, system, or state levels is purely voluntary. Some may choose to participate in some projects, not in others, or none at all. WICHE, at the request of the academic leaders involved in the Forum and the Alliance, provides direction and oversight for the initial project.

In October 2011 staff was notified that WICHE and participating institutions in its five partner states (California, Hawai‘i, North Dakota, Oregon, and Utah) had been awarded a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in the amount of $550,000 for work to be conducted over a two-year period. The work of this first project focuses on three primary goals:
• **Goal 1.** Provide data and information to understand the status of lower-division general education and its relationship to state transfer policies and patterns in the 15 WICHE states; the numbers of students who transfer among the WICHE states; the role of outcomes in defining the core; the process by which change in policy occurs in each pilot state; and other matters important to understanding the baseline circumstances relevant to this project and related projects in the future.

• **Goal 2.** Conduct a pilot project in five WICHE states to establish block transfer agreements within and among those states for lower-division general education, based on successful integration of LEAP’s (Liberal Education and America’s Promise’s) essential learning outcomes, developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. For purposes of this first project, the scope has been limited to lower-division general education learning outcomes in oral communication, written communication, and quantitative literacy.

• **Goal 3.** Identify the implications for institutional and state policy for a transfer framework based on learning outcomes for further research and projects.

A regional advisory board representing the participating entities and subject matter experts in transfer and articulation oversees this project. Ultimately, it will approve the Interstate Passport Agreement, establishing “Passport status” for those pilot institutions successfully aligning with the agreed-upon outcomes. Students who complete the general education requirements at one participating institution with this status would then be free to take their “Passport” to any other participating institution for friction-free acceptance. This new student-centric model will facilitate transfer and articulation among institutions across the region, giving students more freedom to choose where to finish their degrees.

The current list of participating institutions from the pilot states includes:

- **California:** California State University, Sacramento, and Sacramento City College.
- **Hawaii:** Leeward Community College and University of Hawai‘i West Oahu.
- **North Dakota:** Dickinson State University, Lake Region State College, North Dakota State University, North Dakota State College of Science, University of North Dakota, Valley City State University, and Williston State College.
- **Oregon:** Eastern Oregon University, Columbia Gorge Community College, University of Oregon, and Lane Community College.
- **Utah:** Dixie State College of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, Snow College, Southern Utah University, University of Utah, Utah State University, Utah Valley University, and Weber State University.

Pat Shea serves as the principal investigator for the project. Two consultants supported by the grant play key roles in the project’s management. One serves as the project coordinator and researcher, while the other is the pilot state coordinator. The grant also supports six other part-time positions: five are filled by individuals in the pilot states who act as facilitators for Passport activities in their state, plus a project evaluator.

Recent accomplishments include publishing the Passport Learning Outcomes and Transfer-Level Proficiency Criteria for lower-division general education in oral communications, written communications, and quantitative literacy. This six-month effort involved faculty from participating institutions in each of the partner states serving on outcomes and proficiency criteria teams. Institutions seeking Passport Status must agree that their learning outcomes map to these outcomes. (They are not required to use the same language.) They must also provide a list of courses that students would not be required to complete if they were to transfer with the Passport from another participating institution. These institutional profiles will be published on the WICHE website.

Additionally, the Passport Task Force on Student Tracking, whose members are registrars and institutional researchers from pilot institutions and others in the West, continues to develop a set of recommendations for the following: noting a student’s achievement of the Passport on his or her record; defining a tracking process for assessing Passport student success at receiving institutions; and providing that information to sending institutions as part of the continuous improvement process.

The Passport agreement will be ready for signature by pilot institutions this summer. Students could begin earning Passports at some institutions during the fall 2013 term. Funding permitting, Phase II of the project will begin with a focus on other areas of lower-division general education.

**North American Network of Science Labs Online**

The North American Network of Science Labs Online (NANSLO) is an international consortium whose members are postsecondary institutions and related organizations in the U.S. and Canada. It was established in 2011 with
a $749,994 grant from Educause through the Next Generation Learning Challenges initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates and William and Flora Hewlett foundations.

WICHE serves as NANSLO’s managing partner and fiscal agent. Other partners are the Colorado Community College System, Colorado School of Mines, University of Wyoming, Laramie County Community College (WY), Montana State University Bozeman, Great Falls College–MSU, North Island College in British Columbia, and BCcampus, a consortium of 25 institutions in British Columbia.

NANSLO incorporates online learning and remote web-based science labs (RWSL) that use open source software and a robotic interface to allow students to operate their Internet browser to access and control actual lab equipment and perform lab exercises in real time while obtaining real-world data that is as valid as data collected in a traditional laboratory. The lab experiments are not virtual or simulated; students log onto the website of a remotely located science lab and request control of remote instruments through an interface, including instruments and camera controls. Through the use of structured instructor-student and student-student interaction, RWSL technology, and real data, lab kits, and other delivery strategies, NANSLO enables learners to practice scientific observation, experimentation, data analysis, and logical thinking.

Some of NANSLO’s accomplishments include:

- Establishing an RWSL production lab at the Colorado Community College System.
- Working with faculty serving on cross-institutional discipline panels to develop curriculum for remote science experiments.
- Developing six remote lab experiments (two each in biology, chemistry, and physics).
- Incorporating the lab experiments in CCCOnline courses beginning in spring 2012.
- Creating a rubric and lab report review process designed to assess student performance, along the following dimensions: concept mastery, engagement, quality of writing, quality of conclusions, and whether the data had been gathered and analyzed.
- Developing several scaling resources: an environmental scan listing remote science education labs in the U.S. and Canada; a how-to adoption manual of case studies, policies, and procedures that other institutions can use in adopting RWSL technology; and a scale network template to facilitate the sustainable use of remote labs across all NANSLO partner institutions.

During the next four years, NANSLO will support institutions offering online lab courses developed in the Consortium for Healthcare Education Online project, described below. In addition, it will seek funding to conduct a robust research project identifying best practices in lab exercises using lab kits, remote labs, and simulations in online science courses. It will also explore opportunities for additional partnerships and expanding its collection of remote lab experiments.

**Consortium for Healthcare Education Online**

In September 2012 the Consortium for Healthcare Education Online (CHEO) was awarded a four-year grant of $14,171,229 through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training initiative (TAACCCT, www.doleta.gov/taaccct). TAACCCT funding assists colleges to meet the needs of displaced workers, veterans, and the underemployed by emphasizing the provision of educational and career-training programs that can be completed in two years or less. Work on the project began on October 1, 2012.

Funding for CHEO consortium members supports the development of allied health certificates delivered in a hybrid or online format and the development of comprehensive academic support and employment services, to include the hiring of a career coach for each college partner. The consortium is led by Pueblo Community College and includes seven other colleges: Kodiak College, AK; Otero Junior College, CO; Red Rocks Community College, CO; Great Falls College–MSU; Flathead Valley Community College, MT; Lake Area Technical Institute, SD; and Laramie County Community College, WY.

The following certificate and degree credentials will be made available by members of the consortium: polysomnography, emergency medical services (basic, intermediate, and advanced), health information technology, occupation endorsement certification, medical office support, medical lab technology, occupational endorsement certificate, nurse aide, home healthcare, hospice care, medication aide, healthcare core, prenursing, paramedicine, radiation technology, medical lab technician, practical nursing, nurse aide certificate, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and A.A.S. degrees.
Others involved in the project include the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), funded to support the use of the NANSLO production lab at CCCS and the development of a faculty “sandbox” lab for testing new experiments and training; BCcampus, which will develop two open textbooks supporting allied health courses; and North Island College (BC) which will develop, with the assistance of CCCS staff, 12 new allied health experiments for use by CHEO members and establish a new production lab to serve students involved in CHEO courses in Alaska.

Each institution will hire a career coach dedicated to supporting the academic and career needs of students enrolled in the online allied health certificate programs. These coaches will engage in professional development at both the consortium and local level and will make use of a career portal designed and supported by College in Colorado, an online resource designed to help students plan, apply, and pay for college. The CHEO portal will be a platform for interaction between allied-healthcare employers, community colleges, and local workforce centers as they train and employ dislocated workers, veterans, underemployed workers, and other adults. A new NANSLO production lab will be established at Great Falls College to support CHEO students in Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Pueblo Community College has contracted with WICHE to:

- Provide professional development activities, including annual workshops and webinars on best practices in career coaching, designing and teaching courses in online and hybrid environments, and the most effective use of RWSLs in lab exercises.
- Expand NANSLO discipline panels to include representatives from CHEO institutions, to work collaboratively in the development of new lab exercises for allied health courses.
- Provide a communications infrastructure to members of the discipline panels and coaches’ network to support ongoing sharing of promising practices in the use of online labs and in career counseling.
- Program and implement a software solution to support the multicampus use of NANSLO production labs and the financial transaction system associated with partner campuses providing lab services to other CHEO institutions.

This $823,859 contract will support a portion of the salaries and benefits for six current and one new employee, totaling 1.6 FTE in years one to three and one employee in year four at .50 FTE. Additionally, it will provide funds to hire consultants to assist with the professional development workshops and webinars; to support faculty experts leading discipline panel activities; and to contract with a consultant to develop the new NANSLO lab-scheduling software. Other funding will cover workshop costs and staff travel to conferences for presentations. WICHE will earn $62,837 in administrative overhead during the four-year period.

**MHECare: A New Regional Student Health Collaborative to Benefit Students and Institutions in the West**

At its semiannual meeting in May 2012, the WICHE Commission voted to partner with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) to expand the benefits of the MHECare student health program to public and private institutions in the 15 U.S. WICHE states. The New England Board of Higher Education subsequently joined MHEC and WICHE in the program, so that institutions in 31 states are now eligible to participate. Institutions in the 15-state WICHE region may now offer students MHECare coverage; the plan includes competitively priced medical benefits; vision or dental insurance is not included at this time.

Several campuses in Colorado signed on to the program shortly after last May's commission meeting: Colorado State University–Pueblo; the University of Colorado Denver, Downtown Campus (for both domestic and international students); the University of Colorado Colorado Springs; and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Since then, Metropolitan State University of Denver has also joined MHECare; its students will be enrolled beginning in fall 2013. The Nevada System of Higher Education is currently considering joining the program, and we recently provided a quote to the University of Alaska Anchorage and University of Alaska Fairbanks. We expect several other institutions in the WICHE region will explore the program as we continue to spread the word about MHECare within our region. Approximately 12,000 students currently participate in MHECare for the 2012-13 academic year, the first year that the program has been offered to institutions.

MHECare offers both standard and customized Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act-compliant student health insurance plans. The standard MHECare high or low PPO plans can be selected by institutions with less than 300 students enrolled in the plan and by institutions that do not currently offer a program. Rates for these plans will depend on whether the plan is voluntary or mandatory with waiver, but the rates will not be based on an institution’s claims experience. Institutions with more than 300 students enrolled have more options, including one of the standard MHECare high or low PPO plans; a quote for the institution’s current plan design with any changes that are required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; or a plan with design features tailored to the

Spokane, Washington
The cost for the plan will be underwritten based on the institution’s claim experience and utilization. The standard plans have been reviewed and approved by the MHEC Student Health Benefits Advisory Committee. Participating institutions must agree that MHECare will be the only plan offered to all of their eligible student populations. As more campuses decide to offer MHECare, rates will be more stable over time due to the spread of risk. Institutions participating in MHECare can continue to maintain their existing relationship with an insurance broker or align directly with the program.

In the MHEC region, six institutions in the Kansas Board of Regents system and five universities in the Missouri Consortium, along with Columbia College (MO), Des Moines University, and Oakland University (MI), have joined MHECare.

MHEC staff, working with its regional Student Benefits Advisory Committee and with financial support provided by Lumina Foundation, created this new initiative to provide colleges and universities with health insurance for their students with cost savings that could only be achieved by working collaboratively across institutions. They conducted competitive bid processes prior to entering into a contract with Mercer Health & Benefits (Mercer), an independent consulting firm, to serve as the program administrator for MHECare. Working with its MHEC Student Benefits Advisory Committee and Mercer staff, MHEC staff developed the plan design and then conducted another competitive bid process to select UnitedHealthcare StudentResources (UHCSR), a national healthcare carrier, to underwrite the program. UHCSR specializes in student health insurance plans, has a large national network of providers, offers web-based enrollment and support tools, and quotes competitive rates. It is a division of the national healthcare carrier UnitedHealthcare.

The first step for institutions interested in MHECare is to obtain a request for quote form via Jennifer Dahlquist, MHEC’s assistant vice president for cost savings and chief financial officer (jenniferd@mhec.org). Additional information will be required if quotes are requested for more than the standard high and low plans. The additional information may include a copy of the current plan design, requested benefits, and claims experience. Once all of the information is received, UnitedHealthcare StudentResources will provide a quotation in approximately 10 working days. MHECare questions may be addressed to Dahlquist at 612.626.1602 or to Jere Mock at jmock@wiche.edu or 303.541.0222. For more details on the plans’ key provisions and students’ out-of-pocket costs, see www.wiche.edu/mhecare and www.mhec.org/mhecare.

**Master Property Program**

WICHE offers participation in the Midwestern Higher Education Compact’s Master Property Program (MPP) to colleges and universities in the West. Institutional members benefit from comprehensive property insurance coverage tailored to their specific needs, while improving their risk management and asset protection strategies. The program is available to two- and four-year public and private higher education institutions, subject to approval by the MPP leadership committee. The base program rates are typically below industry averages and help members to reduce their insurance costs while improving their asset protection. Members also have the opportunity to earn annual dividends, based on the consortium’s comprehensive loss ratios. Currently, 145 campuses (54 members) have total insured values of $83 billion.

MPP members collectively have achieved savings of approximately $65 million in premiums and dividends. The MHEC program was created in 1994; WICHE has partnered with MHEC in offering the program since 2004. The New England Board of Higher Education began participating in the MPP in 2009. The program is currently underwritten by Lexington (AIG) and is jointly administered by Marsh and Captive Resources under the direction of a leadership committee representative of the participating insured institutions. Craig Kispert, associate vice president for business and planning at Seattle Pacific University, and Laura Peterson, risk manager at the University of Wyoming, represent WICHE member institutions on the MPP leadership committee. Jere Mock represents WICHE at the leadership committee meetings.

Nine institutions and two systems (with 14 campuses) in the WICHE region are members of the Master Property Program:

- Colorado College
- Lewis and Clark College (OR)
- Nevada System of Higher Education:
  - Community College of Southern Nevada
  - Desert Research Institute
• Great Basin College
• Nevada State College at Henderson
• Truckee Meadows Community College
• University of Nevada, Las Vegas
• University of Nevada, Reno
• Western Nevada Community College
• Pima County Community College system – six campuses and four learning and education centers (AZ)
• Reed College (OR)
• College of Idaho
• Seattle Pacific University (WA)
• Westminster College (UT)
• Willamette University (OR)
• University of Northern Colorado
• University of Wyoming

Representatives from several of these campuses participated in the March 5-7, 2013, MPP Loss Control Workshop in St. Louis that focused on topics relevant to risk management and current events in higher education. The workshop includes risk managers, campus security, facilities, and environmental health and safety staff who exchange best practices and lessons learned during the workshop.

WICHE staff continues to work with the program administrators to provide information on the Master Property Program to institutions in the West.

**MHECtech**

WICHE also partners with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact on its MHECtech program, which enables colleges and universities in the Midwest and West to purchase off competitively bid purchasing agreements to contain or reduce their purchasing costs. WICHE region institutions are eligible to purchase computers at discounted rates under the MHECtech contracts with Dell, Fujitsu, Oracle (Sun), Systemax Computers (also known as Global, GovED and CompUSA); Dell and Xerox printers and peripherals; and data networking offered by Juniper Networks.

Several of the purchasing agreements are also available to K-12 organizations; local, county, and state governments; and nonprofit organizations. The agreements aggregate volume purchases to lower product costs and reduce the time institutions must spend developing and conducting bids themselves. MHEC undertakes the time and expense of the RFP process, and institutions can purchase the goods or services knowing that the due diligence in selecting the vendor has already been done. The MHECtech website (www.mhectech.org) and WICHE’s website (www.wiche.edu/costSavingPurchasing) provide details on the vendors, contracts and eligible entities.
INFORMATION ITEM
Student Exchange Program Update

Western Undergraduate Exchange
The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a regional tuition-reciprocity agreement whereby students from WICHE states can enroll in participating two- and four-year public institutions at 150 percent of resident tuition. In the 2012-13 academic year, 31,058 students enrolled at 146 participating WUE institutions, saving more than $235.8 million in tuition costs. Despite the economic downturn affecting many of the WICHE states, WUE enrollment increased by 7 percent over the previous year (29,077 students). Since WUE began in 1988, students have benefitted from almost $2 billion in tuition savings. The annual “WUE Enrollment Report” (www.wiche.edu/info/publications/wueEnrollmentReport12.pdf) is available on WICHE’s website.

This has been a banner year for new WUE members. In the last 12 months, eight new institutions have joined: Northland Pioneer College (AZ); the University of California, Merced; California State University, San Marcos; California State University, Northridge; Colorado Mountain College; the University of Hawai’i Maui College; the University of Hawai’i West Oahu; and Great Falls College (MT). Tohono O’odham Community College (AZ) has also expressed interest in joining WUE, but staff has not received confirmation of their intention to join.

Residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) are eligible to be considered for WUE (and WRGP) as of April 1, 2013. WICHE staff wrote to WUE institutions and WRGP programs, asking them to consider granting any qualified CNMI students who had enrolled prior to this date the WUE (or WRGP) rate, though it is not obligatory. If institutions and graduate programs agree to do this, the impact should be minimal, as there are very few CNMI students studying in the mainland U.S. Most of them are enrolled in Hawai’i and have already receive a Pacific Islander rate that is equal to the WUE rate. Counseling staff of the Northern Marianas College will serve as the WUE and WRGP information resource center for CNMI residents.

Western Regional Graduate Program
The Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) is a growing resource for the West, allowing master’s, graduate certificate, and doctoral students who are residents of the 15 participating states and CNMI to enroll in high-quality programs. Forty-five new programs were added this spring, bringing the total to more than 320, offered by 56 participating institutions. WRGP is a tuition-reciprocity arrangement similar to WUE, whereby students enroll directly in the participating programs; but with WRGP they pay resident tuition rates. This represents a tremendous opportunity for WICHE states to share distinctive programs and the faculty who teach them and to build their workforce in a variety of disciplines, particularly healthcare. At this time some 110 healthcare-related programs are available through WRGP.

The 45 new programs broaden the academic options in several areas. In healthcare several new psychology and counseling programs have been added (Arizona State University West Campus, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, University of Colorado Denver, and University of Northern Colorado), as well as two programs in speech language pathology (Utah State University and University of Washington), and a doctorate of nursing practice, now offered by the University of Wyoming. The University of California San Francisco is new to WRGP and has added four doctoral programs: bioengineering (a joint program with Berkeley); biological and medical informatics; chemistry and chemical biology; and pharmaceutical sciences and pharmacogenomics. All four programs are National Institutes of Health-funded, and most doctoral students are fully supported.

The most recent nominations cycle also attracted many education-related programs, including graduate certificates in online teaching and learning (New Mexico State University) and education technology (Northern Arizona University). Arizona State University’s Tempe campus will now offer its professional science master’s in solar energy engineering and commercialization through WRGP; and Humboldt State University is offering a master’s in environmental systems. For a full list of the new programs, see the WRGP handout in your commissioner packets; new programs are marked with a star.

In fall 2012 more than 1,000 students enrolled through WRGP and saved an estimated $15.2 million dollars in tuition (based on full-time enrollment). Enrollment numbers for WRGP programs continue to increase, and a recent survey of WRGP cooperating programs shows that more than 40 of them are now offered fully or partially online, the perfect
solution for place-bound working adults who need to further their education for a change in career or professional advancement.

**Professional Student Exchange Program**
The Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) provides students in 11 Western states (all WICHE states except California, Idaho, Oregon, and South Dakota, as well as CNMI) with access to professional programs that otherwise would not be available to them because the fields of study are not offered at public institutions in their home states. In 2012-13, 678 students enrolled through PSEP to become allopathic or osteopathic doctors, dentists, veterinarians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, optometrists, podiatrists, physician assistants, and pharmacists. Students pay reduced tuition at some 50 out-of-state public and private institutions. Participating states determine the fields and the numbers of students they will support. The student’s home state pays a support fee to the admitting schools to help cover the cost of the students’ education. In the current academic year, sending states invested over $14.38 million to train healthcare professionals through WICHE.

Five new programs have joined PSEP, including two schools of osteopathic medicine: Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences (Yakima, WA) and Rocky Vista University (Parker, CO). Two new physical therapy programs have also joined: Touro University (Nevada) and San Francisco State University. Finally, Western University of Health Sciences’ podiatry program is now fully accredited and has joined the network.

WICHE staff worked with sending PSEP states to update their return rate statistics for graduates. Results are published in the “Student Exchange Program Statistical Report for Academic Year 2012-13.” The good news is that return rates are improving. Overall, an average of 68 percent of all PSEP graduates return to their states and served (up from 59 percent five years ago). Service payback states are seeing that 85 percent of their graduates return, on average (as compared to 74 percent when last measured). Even the nonpayback states have noted improvement: 52 percent of their graduates are now returning to their home state, compared to 39 percent five years ago.

WICHE asked states to collect the return rate data over a 10-year period for all healthcare professions except allopathic and osteopathic physicians. State offices counted PSEP alumni who graduated between 2002 and 2011 and who were licensed or practicing in their home state as of 2012 as having “returned.” Graduates who had fulfilled their practice obligations in their home state earlier were also counted as returned. All allopathic and osteopathic medicine graduates are required to complete three- to four-year residencies. Some new physicians complete their residencies in state, while others go elsewhere, though the latter may plan to return to their home state at a later date. For these professions WICHE counted PSEP alumni who graduated between 2002 and 2006, in order to allow time for them to complete their residencies and set up practice in their home state.

WICHE’s return rates are somewhat conservative; payback states that measure return rates over a longer timeframe will demonstrate higher return rates than shown in our calculations. This is especially true for fields where graduates may be completing a residency, internship, or clinical experience, or may be on deferment for other reasons, though they will ultimately return to serve their state at a later date.

Certifying officers noted a new trend during this cycle: a growing number of veterinary medicine and dentistry graduates are opting for one-year residencies after graduation, rather than going directly into practice. This used to be the case only for medical graduates who were completing their GME (graduate medical education) residencies, which last from three to four years. Some speculate that opting for postgraduate residencies in fields where it’s not required (veterinary medicine and dentistry) is a result of graduates postponing their entry into the workforce because of the poor economy. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues once the economy improves. When the students taking residencies identified themselves, they were counted as deferred because it’s very possible that they will return to their home state and serve at a later date. For more detail, please see the “Statistical Report, 2012-13” (www.wiche.edu/info/publications/statReport0113.pdf ), pp. 13-14.

**Increasing rural GME opportunities in the WICHE region.** Nevada WICHE Commissioner Senator Joe Hardy is a family physician and had asked WICHE how it might help increase the number of rural graduate medical education residencies in WICHE states. WICHE staff members are looking into the possibility of partnering with the University of Colorado Denver’s School of Medicine to convene states to promote establishing more GME rural residencies for physicians in the West and beyond. Residencies are very difficult to create and fund; it’s a complicated process with many requirements and restrictions. Creating rural residencies presents additional challenges. It can take years for a state to establish a new residency program in a rural area. Even though GME residency slots are no longer
restricted for rural residencies, the remuneration for primary care residency training is minimal. As a result sponsoring institutions, such as hospitals, cannot afford to get involved.

University of Colorado Denver’s School of Medicine is very interested in doing this; several of their key residency administrators and faculty are leading a national effort for GME reform, the GME Initiative, along with the Colorado Commission on Family Medicine. In collaboration with colleagues from Arizona and Idaho, they recently published a journal article entitled “A Proposal for Reform of the Structure and Financing of Primary Care Graduate Medical Education” (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23463428), which outlines the current problems and makes recommendations for reform. In addition to Colorado, individuals from the states of Idaho, Iowa, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas have endorsed this proposal.

Marguerite Salazar, regional director (Region 8) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has expressed interest in working with the University of Colorado Denver’s School of Medicine to help build awareness on this topic and improve the GME situation in the future. WICHE states in Region 8 include: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Region 9 includes: Arizona, California, Hawai’i, Nevada, and CNMI. Region 10 includes: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. New Mexico is in Region 6.

WICHE staff will meet with University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine staff and some other key individuals in May to discuss the possibility of convening state legislators and building awareness of GME issues through WICHE’s Legislative Advisory Committee at its September 2013 meeting.

A federal bill for GME reform was introduced in the 2013 legislative session (www.aamc.org/download/331004/data/residentphysicianshortagereductionactof2013.pdf). But even if it is passed, representatives of the GME Initiative believe that involvement of state legislators is crucial. In addition to Nevada and Colorado, other WICHE states have expressed an interest in involvement, including Arizona, Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming. Others may be interested, as well.

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies is conducting a study entitled “The Governance and Financing of Graduate Medical Education” (www.iom.edu/Activities/Workforce/GMEGovFinance.aspx). Study results are expected to be released some time after February 2014. At that time the GME Initiative group hopes to host a GME Summit in Washington, D.C., for legislative aides, to build awareness on the issues.

Veterinary medicine and available WICHE seats. PSEP currently cooperates with three colleges of veterinary medicine: Colorado State University, Oregon State University, and Washington State University. The University of California, Davis, and the Western University of Health Sciences are eligible to enroll PSEP students but have not signed on; they are trying to figure out how to coordinate offer dates with our current system. In 2011-12 an informal survey showed there were about 70 seats that could have gone to WICHE students but were given to national applicants instead because there was not enough state support to fund additional seats.

Despite current capacity and the downturn in hiring D.V.M. graduates, there is a proliferation of vet med programs in the region. Utah created its own 2+2 joint program in partnership with Washington State University (USU/WSU) and enrolled its first class in fall 2012. Midwestern University, a private institution in Glendale, AZ, is establishing a new D.V.M. program and will enroll its first class in fall 2014. Midwestern will likely be fully accredited by fall 2019 and could become a partner WICHE school at point. The University of Arizona is also looking at establishing its own public D.V.M. program on its Tucson campus. It is proposing an accelerated five-year program, where highly qualified second-year undergraduate students would be admitted to a three-year professional program. The University of Arizona has requested $250,000 for a feasibility study; as of this writing, it is still under discussion in the legislative session. The proposed program structure is unique; it’s an accelerated program completed during what would normally be considered a student’s undergraduate years, but it results in a professional degree, the D.V.M. Currently, all U.S. D.V.M. programs are four-year graduate professional programs, and students almost always a bachelor’s degree for entry. No information is available as to how the U.S. accrediting agency for veterinary medicine would evaluate such a program in the U.S., although a similar program does exist in New Zealand. However, the equivalent high school preparatory track for such a program abroad is likely very different and much more rigorous than we typically see here in the United States. Montana State University has proposed a 1+3 vet med program in partnership with Washington State University; one-time funding of $1 million for two years is still under discussion in the state legislature, as of this writing.
Regional Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council. Jere Mock and Margo Colalancia will meet with state, legislative, and institutional representatives of WICHE’s Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council on June 20-21, 2013, in Sedona, AZ. The council meets annually to review policies regarding PSEP support in veterinary medicine, the largest PSEP field. In 2012-13 eight states provided almost $5.9 million in support for 197 students studying in veterinary medicine. Agenda items for the meeting will include discussion of the state of veterinary affairs and workforce issues in the West; a dean’s panel on trends in veterinary education; policies on the use of social media by D.V.M. students; the increasing cost of veterinary education and rising student debt; state input on the selection of students applying for support through the WICHE vet med program; the proliferation of new veterinary schools in the face of currently diminishing workforce demand; the OneHealth initiative and interprofessional healthcare education models; guidelines for reasonable student duty hours for fourth-year D.V.M. students on rotations; and more.

Certifying officers’ May 2013 meeting. Certifying officers from several WICHE states met on May 19, 2013, to discuss WICHE’s Student Exchange Program. State budget limitations are prohibiting some certifying officers from participating. Officers will give state updates related to PSEP legislative appropriations; applicant pools and acceptances; current payback policies and new ones under consideration; workforce needs; and general administration of PSEP, WUE, and WRGP.