WHAT’S UP IN THE WEST?
Where the Western States Are On College Completion Goals

Demarée K. Michelau
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College Completion Agenda

- President Obama
  60% college attainment, among 25–34 year olds, by 2020

- Lumina Foundation
  - 60% college attainment, including high-quality certificates, among 25 to 64 year olds by 2025

- And others....
  - Complete College America
  - Complete to Compete
Goals

- Review the goals and targets that WICHE members have identified through their strategic and master plans.
- Briefly examine what states are doing to reach their goals and targets.
- Set the context for a discussion about what the region can and should do to reach the goals in the future.
What is a Strategic Plan?

“A strategic plan is a dynamic roadmap for achieving a long-term vision of success. The plan must have measurable outcomes and results and the process must allow for appropriate corrections to account for changing conditions.”

–Evergreen Growth Advisors, LLC
Why Adopt a Strategic Plan?

“Failure to plan risks lost opportunities, bad decisions, depleted resources, organizational paralysis, poor morale, and possibly, [enterprise] failure.”

(–Evergreen Growth Advisors, LLC)
Why Adopt a Strategic Plan?

- Mandated by state law
- Encouraged by ambitious national degree attainment goals
- Provides policy and practice direction
- Provides clarity
- Demonstrates leadership
Principles of Effective Strategic Planning

- Long-term vision must represent ultimate goal
- Goal must be aggressive but realistic
- Plan should be systematic and organized
- Plan should be supported by those involved
- Strategies must be actionable
- Strategies must have measurable outcomes/metrics
- Long-term vision cannot be static
- Should be in an easy to digest format so people understand it
Higher Education Strategic Planning in the WICHE Region

- 11 WICHE states/territories have a strategic or master plan
Higher Education Strategic Planning in the WICHE Region

- 10 WICHE states/territories are part of the Complete College America Alliance of states
## Where Do the WICHE States Fall?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Overall Goal(s)</th>
<th>Achievable Goal(s)</th>
<th>Stretch Goal(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
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<td>Wyoming</td>
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Completion Targets – Observations

- Still woefully lacking is the answer to the question, “How do you know if you are going to accomplish your goal?”
  - Only 5 states have a goal with numerical targets/metrics to show whether the state is headed in the right direction
- It is unclear how well aligned state goals are aligned with CCA goals
Completion Targets – Observations

- Most states reference higher education’s relationship to workforce and/or economic development; far fewer reference its relationship to K–12
- **9 states** have a goal with specific attention to underserved students
  - Most lack clear indicators of progress
Relationship to Governance Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Coordinating Board</th>
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What are States Doing to Get There?

- More Reliance on Data
  - Certificates
  - Underserved Students

- Fiscal Issues
  - Outcomes-based Funding (most of the West)
  - Affordability/Financial Aid

- Remedial/Developmental Education Reform
  - Colorado
  - Idaho
  - Montana

- Common Core State Standards (all WICHE members except Alaska)
  - 12th Grade Options
    - Nevada
What are States Doing to Get There?

- Increased Focus on Specific Areas Related to Completion
  - Adult Learners
  - Transfer
  - Credit for Prior Learning
  - Veterans/Military
  - 15 to Finish

- Coordination with Other Agencies
  - K–12
  - Workforce/Labor/Economic Development
For more information...

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