WICHE Mission

WICHE works with its 15 member states to expand access and excellence in higher education for all citizens of the West.

By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy among states and institutions, WICHE strengthens higher education’s contributions to the region’s social, economic, and civic life.

Several of our programs extend WICHE’s reach nationally and internationally.
Member States

Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Hawaii
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
New Mexico
North Dakota
Oregon
South Dakota
Utah
Washington
Wyoming

Celebrating 55+ Years
History

WICHE was created by an interstate compact in 1953. It was a time when there were few professional schools in the West and intense competition for space in those schools, especially for training in medicine and other health-related areas.

A Western Compact for Higher Education was proposed in the U.S. Congress; 11 states and two territories were the original signatories. Two states, North Dakota and South Dakota, became affiliate members in the 1980s.
Governance

45-member commission (three members per state)
Members include:
- state higher education executive officers.
- legislators.
- college and university presidents/administrators.
- K-12, business, and community leaders.
The full WICHE Commission meets semiannually.
Its Executive Committee convenes monthly via teleconferences.
Regional Priorities

- Expanding access through student exchange and other initiatives.
- Providing policy support and regional/national data to address higher education issues.
- Promoting the effective use of educational telecommunications.
- Fostering collaborations in the West and beyond to promote innovation and resource sharing.
Key Constituencies

- Students and their families.
- Governors and their staff in the member states.
- Legislative leaders and legislators serving on higher education and appropriations committees/staff.
- Institutional leaders and governing board members.
- State higher education executive officers/staff.
- Leaders of other regional, national, and international education and policy organizations.
Organizational Structure

Programmatic Units
- Programs and Services
- Policy Analysis and Research
- WCET
- Mental Health

Support Services
- Executive Director/Administrative Services
- Communications and Public Affairs (a part of Programs and Services)
Student Exchange Programs
Statistical Report
Academic Year 2008-09

Coordinated by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
POLICY BRIEF

EDUCATION BEYOND THE RHETORIC: MAKING “RIGOR” SOMETHING REAL

"What, then, do we see in the basic curricula for all students broadly defined, is a study of three conceptual ideas: experiences and traditions common in all of us by virtue of our membership in the human family, and a particular moment in history. These cultural experiences include our use of symbols, our sense of beauty, our membership in groups and institutions, our relationship to nature, our need for well-being, and our growing dependence on technology. Our heroes, our heroes, our heroes, are those who learn, not just pass, as traditional academic subjects. Together they form a curriculum that refines and uses, and they are not before appropriate for every student — not just the college-bound." — Dean L. Boyer

INTRODUCTION

For the past two decades, the future is uncertain — noisy, exciting and uncertain. The world these students inhabit is one in which technological advances, trade laws, and economic shifts have made near-great-great-grandchildren of the factories and farms their parents and grandparents worked in. These are biologically young adults, they are more likely to watch a product than to read a book. They are also less likely to be as well-educated as their parents. And though the borders that delineate countries are more meaningful in performance and demographics than before, these young people will be competing for jobs in global economy — one in which those who earn more and are more educated will be better educated than our young people.

A closer look at the 2011 National Summit on Educational Excellence and Opportunity report, America at Risk, presented the powerful “Once upon a time” beginning for education policy discussions today. The National Commission on Excellence in Education anticipated the concerns these students face. Among its recommendations, the commission called for a rigorous high school curriculum that would prepare students for a world that was changing fast and growing smaller each day. Since then, education policies and policies have been replicated by improving accessibility, systems, better education, and most importantly, student achievement.

Twenty-five years after America at Risk was published, its most important contribution might be characterized as the fact that the brain on a well-researced neural network (neural network) trained in today's education systems and served as the impetus for a discussion about how to educate high school students and prepare them for the future. It focused on questions of fundamental questions: Can all students learn? What tools do we want our students to use to promote access for all students?
Other Regional Compacts

Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)

New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)
Created in 1955. Serves six states. (www.nebhe.org)

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
Created in 1948. Serves 16 states. (www.sreb.org)